

PRIME MINISTER

✓ FM

cc Mr Parkinson

... You asked for comments on Ferdinand Mount's paper
"Renewing the Values of Society". I attach a note.

2 I am sending copies of this to Willie Whitelaw,
Geoffrey Howe, Michael Heseltine, Patrick Jenkin,
David Howell, Norman Fowler, Norman Tebbit,
Cecil Parkinson and to Sir Robert Armstrong and
John Sparrow.

KJ

26 August 1982

RENEWING THE VALUES OF SOCIETY

Building on Mr Mount's paper, I list some areas where I suggest that we need to go on vigorously as we have started - and some where we need to make a start.

A Much of the work already in hand has close links with the values of society by encouraging responsibility and by restoring more direct links than monopoly and nationalisation permit between economic effort and economic reward. Hence work already in hand should be carried further:

Denationalisation

Competition when we cannot denationalise

Ownership - derelict town land not otherwise bought to be used for allotments?

Share ownership - reduce institutional advantages

Council housing sales

Trade union law reform

Buy-outs - to encourage entrepreneurship

Deregulation where regulation excessive

Tax reductions

B Work that needs to be begun:

Extend the scope for a resumption of family responsibility - particularly in connection with education and health.

Education:

- i Prepare the ground for a possible gradual shift to vouchers - as a leap in parental choice. Paper to colleagues later this year.
- ii Encourage a voucher experiment - which may need legislative facilitation.
- iii Consider enabling parents - with an allowance - to have day schools of their own, subject to fulfilling minimum conditions for standards and curriculum - as in Holland and Denmark. Paper coming forward.

iv Try to improve existing schools by every way we can:

Training Heads (as FM suggests);

Improving initial and in-service training;

Plugging away at pruning bad Heads and bad teachers;

Publishing and following up HMI reports.

Action in hand on all these.

v Extend parent and teacher governors - as FM suggests.

Action in hand.

vi Increase community use of school facilities - as FM suggests. Action in hand.

vii Introduce the encouragement of reasoning into teacher techniques. Action in hand.

viii Try to create a curriculum more suitable for the non-academic 40% - just initiated on a pilot scale.

ix Seek to encourage responsibility among students by shifting new students from grants to half-grant, half-loan - in the direction FM suggests. Paper coming forward.

x Seek to reduce extent to which universities have become tax-dependent and nationalised - by encouraging endowment and other methods. Paper coming forward.

xi I sympathise with FM's suggestion that schools should teach "the grammar of society". I am discovering how many "civics" papers are set and how many take them in CSE, O and A Levels. I am sending FM copies of some such papers. There are good arguments for wanting to increase the numbers who take them.

On the other hand it is probably best to limit the coverage of the subject to:

- a an understanding of the main institutions of our society; and
- b a general familiarity with the law, and with the rights and duties it confers.

To go further - as FM suggests and as I at one stage wanted - and seek to enable people to understand, for instance, the conditions under which a society can remain free or how an economy works, would be dangerous: are most teachers competent to be able to teach such subjects: would they be able to answer the questions that might be put to them: could they be expected to avoid injecting, innocently or otherwise, political bias into their lessons?