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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-923 9222
FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Chancellor of the Exchequer
The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON
SW1P 3AG

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30 January 1980

Dear Geoffrey,

You asked me yesterday to consider a further reduction in non-teaching staff in the education service rising to 3 per cent by 1983-84, and this is reflected in paragraph 7 of C(80)9.

I have examined this again carefully, but I am clear that, as I indicated yesterday was likely to be my conclusion, this would not be possible without severe damage to education. The following points are relevant:-

- i. Whereas total numbers employed by local authorities in other services have risen by 3 per cent in the last five years, non-teaching staff (despite a growth in pupil and student numbers) have fallen by 2 per cent.
- ii. In the same period the cost of administration in the local authority education service has fallen by 10 per cent, and there are now fewer than 30,000 staff directly employed on educational administration to cope with a budget of £6 billion, nearly a million employees and 10 million pupils and students (and their parents).
- iii. The decisions we have already taken imply a further reduction of 15 per cent in non-teaching staff by 1983-84, a bigger fall either than in the school population or than in other services, in most of which you are seeking no further cuts of this kind.
- iv. Two fifths of non-teaching staff are employed in schools, either in support of teachers (as laboratory assistants, librarians and so) or on the routine but vital upkeep of premises. A further cut here would inevitably mean that teachers would have to undertake more essential non-teaching duties.

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- v. Nearly all the rest are employed either in school meals, where our plans already entail a 20 per cent cut in staffing in 1980-81 itself, or in further education, where there will be further reductions as part of the 5 per cent cut in polytechnics and colleges on which we agreed yesterday.

I am sending copies of this letter to the other members of the Cabinet, Norman Fowler and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever

Mark

MARK CARLISLE

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