

CONFIDENTIAL



*From the
Minister of State*

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

The Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher MP
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

17 November 1980

Dear Prime Minister,

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

As you know Peter Walker is in Brussels for the meeting of Fisheries Ministers and is unable to attend the meeting of E Committee tomorrow when Jim Prior's memorandum on Industrial Training is to be considered.

I have no doubt that Peter Walker will want to consult the other Agriculture Ministers about the future of the Agricultural Training Board in the light of the decisions which have been, and are, taken in the ITB sector. Earlier this year they appointed a new young Chairman, Christopher Vavasour, they cut the size of the Board from 26 to 8 members and are looking to this new Board to consider the future training needs of agriculture. The Ministry's staff inspectors are also engaged at present in a major inspection of the Board following the recent linkage of the Board's staff to civil service rates of pay. The factors which lead to agriculture being treated differently from other industries in the Employment and Training Act 1973 still apply, notably the problem of levy funding in an industry where the employment of many regular workers is the exception rather than the rule.

In the circumstances, I think that Agriculture Ministers would want to reserve their position on the possibility of any future significant change relating to the ATB. In the meantime, I am sure that Peter Walker would wish me to put down a marker in case it should seem desirable to include some provision relating to the ATB in the Bill which Jim Prior proposes to introduce in the coming session.

I am copying this letter to other members of E Committee, to the Secretaries of State for Education, Social Services, Scotland and Wales, to Robin Ibbs and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours,
Robin*

FERRERS