

From: Sir Peter Hordern, M.P.



Secretary *GCBA*

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

SJT

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23rd April, 1986.

My dear Keith,

I have been asked by the Executive of the 1922 Committee to write to you about education. If I may say so, we all admire the new initiatives which you have introduced into education, and we accept that expenditure per school child has continued to increase since you have been Secretary of State. We also accept that, if teachers accept the principle of ~~comparability~~ *Aspirational*, that an additional £1250 million will be available, which will do much to improve morale.

It remains the case, however, that, despite all the expenditure for which our Government is responsible, the state of our schools, and the manifest shortage of equipment, stands in stark contrast with the personal prosperity which most people in ~~Parliament~~ *Employment* now enjoy. Perhaps this is the fault of the Rate Support Grant mechanism. But whatever the reason, we wish to say that we find the present position unsatisfactory, and one in which we should like to see an early and marked improvement. We are all convinced that extra resources are urgently required. Further, if the Rate Support Grant mechanism is to be used, we favour specific grants, made to education authorities for the purchase of books, equipment and stationery, and for repairing and renewing school buildings. Recently, you were good enough to announce an increase of £20 million on books and equipment to prepare for the new GCSE examination. This was widely welcomed. Yet if it is possible to make such a specific grant, it is our view that the amount should be substantially increased.

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I should say that we are all aware of the importance of the PSBR and the need to contain public expenditure. In our opinion, however, education has become the most urgent priority, and one which demands immediate action. No doubt there is greater room for efficiency amongst local education authorities. But we cannot but be aware of the disparity between the growing prosperity of very many parents, and the shabby conditions of the schools to which they deliver their children every day. This contrast is doing us no good at all, and will do us no good, with the electors.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, as I have been asked to do so.

Tom, Sir
Ken.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt., MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science.