

PRIME MINISTER

INDOCTRINATION IN EDUCATION

You will know that Baroness Cox won on Tuesday. The Lords accepted her amendment to forbid the pursuit of partisan political activities in primary schools by 117 to 87. An amendment moved by Lord Renton to forbid the promotion of partisan political views generally (i.e. in secondary schools) was then agreed to without a vote. The Government's amendment, to impose a duty to see that political issues were handled responsibly was therefore not moved.

On freedom of speech in higher education, Baroness Cox withdrew her amendment having received an assurance that the Government would introduce its own amendment, to tidy up her wording, at Third Reading.

I attach copies of the Hansard on these two amendments in case you would like to look at them. Lord Denning's intervention on indoctrination seems to have been the most important one. He asserted that the concept of "responsibility" was no easier for the judges to deal with than the question of "partisan" political material so that the only issue remaining was how far down the road of banning politics one wished to go. The DES wanted to put beyond doubt the ability of primary schools to pay visits to the House of Commons. But Baroness Cox thought that would be a sacrifice worth making for the wider benefits of a clear cut ban.

Lady Cox and her colleagues ran a very effective and powerful campaign. She took on the DES and beat them. I am not sure if they yet realise that the battle has been lost.

by G. E. G. very
 20/5/86
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