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PRIME MINISTER

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TEACHERS' PAY

Throughout last year, every time there was the prospect of the teachers and the employers finding a settlement to the pay dispute, an article would appear in the Guardian hinting that the DES were about to come forward with their own new proposals, eg to establish an independent inquiry. These leaks made reaching a settlement very much more difficult. Presumably because of these leaks, papers on teachers' pay were made subject to CMO security procedures (subsequently lifted) although some leakage still continued.

Now, with the threat of the ACAS talks reaching a settlement, and in particular with the likelihood of ACAS proposing free collective bargaining for the future (to which the DES are strongly opposed) there has yet again been a damaging leak, and yet again in the Guardian (attached).

Such leaks proved counter-productive to the Government throughout last year, and are almost certain to be equally counter-productive now.

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THE GUARDIAN

Baker is ready to axe school 2 pay talks body

By Sarah Boseley,
Education Correspondent.

Mr Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary, plans to call for the scrapping of the Burnham pay negotiating committee at a local authority conference on Friday.

He may also give the teachers' employers some indication of how much money the Government is prepared to make available for a satisfactory long-term settlement of teachers' pay and conditions at the Council of Local Education Authorities' annual conference in Coventry.

The Labour-led local authorities and the trade unions hope to confront the Government in September at the end of negotiations with a united front and a joint demand for much more money.

The future of the Burnham committee was due to be discussed at a meeting of ministers this week so that Mr Baker can make an announcement.

Mr Baker fears that if the teachers' pay and conditions talks come up with proposals, particularly on contractual duties, which the Government can largely accept, any settlement could be wrecked if it has to go through Burnham.

The committee has to ratify teachers' pay increases. Conditions of service are officially negotiated in the Council of Local Education Authorities/Secondary Teachers, of which one teachers' union is not a member and where it is uncertain how many votes each of the others has.

Mr Baker has been working on alternatives to Burnham which would allow pay and conditions to be decided

jointly, which ministers and the local authorities agree is vital to reform of the profession.

The Department of Education has criticised the employers' preferred alternative, a joint negotiating council, and points continually to Scotland, where the teaching profession has collective bargaining, which has not prevented a pay dispute longer than that in England and Wales.

It seems likely that the department would prefer a pay review body similar to that for doctors, nurses, the armed forces and top civil servants. All parties would make submissions to an independent panel, which would make recommendations for a decision by the Government.

The Government's submissions to the Scottish inquiry on teachers' pay and conditions suggest two possible options. One is that it withdraws from negotiations—at the moment the Government is represented alongside teachers and local authorities—leaving it to decide whether to fund a settlement agreed by other people. The second; that of more government intervention, is far more likely.

If local authorities south of the border follow the example of those in Scotland they will recommend huge increases for teachers' pay next week.

Scottish employers have suggested starting salaries about 30 per cent higher than now, with a maximum of £12,555, a 10.4 per cent increase for secondary teachers and 16.4 per cent for primary teachers. Senior teachers would receive a £13,399 maximum, a 6.7 per cent increase.