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CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

MISC 122

1. I am expecting to receive the report of Sir Peter Main's Committee within the next week or so, probably around 19 September and I propose to publish it, if you and other colleagues agree, on 2 October. As soon as the text comes to hand I shall circulate it to colleagues.

2. As well as completing their work very promptly the Committee have been notably discreet about it, and even now it is possible only to guess at what their report will contain. It seems reasonable to expect however that they will give us broadly acceptable recommendations on the question of teachers' contractual duties; and that their recommendations on salary structure will recognise the importance of adequate rewards for teachers of proven quality and those who bear extra responsibility. They will address seriously the question of negotiating machinery and it will be no surprise, given the tenor of most of the evidence submitted to them by other parties, if they recommend some form of standing review, which may not necessarily be modelled precisely on existing review bodies, and may be presented as a means of securing freedom from future disruption. As to the overall cost of their salary recommendations I know at present only that they have taken a close interest in the proposals advanced by the Scottish employers, which would add at least 15% to the current salary bill.

3. Be that as it may we must be prepared for a report which delivers much of what the Government is looking for in terms of definition of duties and of pay structure but at a considerably higher cost than the £125m which my predecessor had conditionally offered last year. In any case we will be expected to respond quickly and, unless the report is obviously flawed, positively. Any delay in our response will generate suspicion, making it more difficult for the moderate voices on the Teachers' Side to restrain their more militant colleagues and thus



increasing the chances of renewed disruption in the schools. In my initial response on the report's publication I shall repeat what I have said previously, that I shall await the responses of the teachers and the employers before giving a considered view; but I expect that those parties will give their reactions very quickly, perhaps within a week or so of publication. I shall then be under great pressure to declare the Government's hand, without which substantive negotiations will not begin.

4. I shall minute again when the report is received. For the moment I ask colleagues simply to note what I have said above and to bear in mind that if we fail to make what the public can see is a fair and prompt response to the report next month we shall lose the initiative, perhaps irretrievably.

5. Copies go to members of MISC 122 and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

MR

MALCOLM RIFKIND

11 September 1986

Education: Teachers Pay

PTT.

