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SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph BT MP
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
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✓
30 April 1984

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 12 April to Willie Whitelaw.

As you probably know the legal position regarding corporal punishment is much the same in Northern Ireland as in England and Wales and we issued a consultative document, based on yours, to the various interests there. The reaction was similar to that in England and Wales; most of those who responded criticised the proposed exemptions scheme as unworkable. I also received a Report from the Northern Ireland Assembly supporting corporal punishment in schools and making a number of recommendations. A copy of that Report and a summary of the other comments received has been sent to your Department.

Since the position is similar here and since we would not wish a Northern Ireland case to cause embarrassment for the Government at the European Court of Human Rights, we will seek to introduce legislation for Northern Ireland on the same lines as you propose for England and Wales. A separate Northern Ireland Education Order will allow some account to be taken of local views and we do not have your problem of extending the legislation to certain pupils in independent schools. There are only a few independent schools here and the education and library boards do not normally place children in them. However some children from Northern Ireland are placed in independent special, music and ballet schools in England and Wales and it would probably be preferable for your Bill to extend the exemption arrangements to those children rather than for a Northern Ireland Education Order to seek conditions on schools in England and Wales.

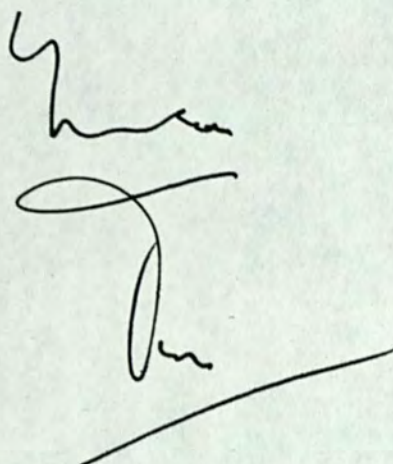
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Perhaps we could pursue this point when the detailed drafting is under way.

I am copying this to those who received copies of your letter.



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