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The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
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23 January 1985

SWITCH TO ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

I promised to come back to you after our meeting to see if there was any way in which I could make a contribution to the costs of your proposed engineering and technology "switch". As you know, I very much support the need for universities and colleges to give greater emphasis to the areas of engineering and technology where there are already such evident skill shortages in this country.

I am concerned however that it has not yet been possible to do more within the existing £3 billion budget for higher education in switching resources rather than additional inputs from Government. We discussed at the meeting the figures Peter Morrison had for the subjects where there is so clearly a surplus of graduates and there must surely be more scope for some cut back in these subject areas to help finance the expansion in priority areas. I would therefore hope that any support that we give in extra resources is additional to a substantial switch programme within the universities and colleges themselves.

Against this background, and recognising the difficulties which you explained in your minute, I have considered very carefully whether I could help out of our much smaller resources. I have identified £1 million in 1985/86 which, subject to the agreement of Peter Rees, I would be glad to make available to you as part of a package from all four economic



departments. With matching contributions from Norman Tebbit, George Younger and Nick Edwards, together with the £3-4 million you mention from the UGC itself, this would be well on the way to providing the £10 million you are seeking in the first year. Whilst I can make no promise at this stage about the two following years, I would certainly be prepared to consider it at the appropriate time.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

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