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Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

5 March 1985

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
Secretary of State for Education & Science
Department of Education & Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
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MBA 6/3

D Keith,

Thank you for your letter of February 28.

As regards the polytechnics, I am content with the compromise you propose. My concern was and remains twofold. First, if we ignore the polytechnics we would miss a most valuable source of graduates whose courses have proved in many cases more relevant to industry's needs than those of the universities. Second, I was conscious that the polytechnics had put forward proposals to John Butcher's Skills Shortages Committee, and will need to feel that their willingness to join this exercise is fully accepted and encouraged; the alternative may be damaging recriminations. However, I accept that your proposals which we discussed on February 6 were intended to relate to the universities only, and I am ready therefore to agree that we should rely on industry's advice in deciding which, if any, polytechnics should be included within the scope of the exercise.

On the procedural front events have, as you say, moved on and I am content with the arrangements that have been made. I gladly accept your suggestion that a member of the IT Skills Agency should be involved in the second phase of the programme, and my officials will be in touch with yours.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

Norman Tebbit

Science & Tech

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Budget

15 MAR 1985

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