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From The Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

15 March 1985

John Keck

THE SWITCH TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Thank you for copying your letter to Norman Tebbit of 8 March to me.

I agree that it is important to get the Switch programme under way as quickly as possible. Industry needs the additional graduates urgently and early action on the Government's part should encourage companies to play their part.

When I agreed that my Department should contribute to the funding of the programme it was on the understanding that there would be an increase in the number of science and technology under-graduates at the University of Wales. I am pleased therefore to see that the list of courses in Annex A of your letter includes courses at Bangor and Swansea; and I note that the criteria you suggest for the second phase of the programme include a need to ensure an appropriate balance as between England, Wales and Scotland. I am content with your proposals for Phase 1.

Your comments about the possibility of including the public sector institutions in the Switch programme were also encouraging. I believe there is much to be said for widening the Switch programme to include the public sector - or at the least the Polytechnics. While there is only one Polytechnic in Wales it does have some expertise to offer in the IT field and I am confident that it could demonstrate that industry will support its work with gifts of equipment etc. As far as Wales is concerned I believe the Polytechnic, and possibly other higher education institutions, are capable of the degree of excellence which we are looking for and could play a useful part in the Switch programme.

/ I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

John Keck

Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science