



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

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Private Secretary
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Prime Minister. ②
Documents from DES
reflecting current
state of play.

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13 September 1985

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Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of today's date about publicity for the offer the teachers' unions rejected in Burnham yesterday.

The Secretary of State has today given interviews to education correspondents of the national daily papers, and followed this up with a formal press release (copy attached). He has also given two interviews for use on BBC radio over the weekend, and is giving an interview to ITN later this evening; and he has had a separate interview with Sunday newspaper correspondents. In all this he had been at pains to publicise the benefits of the package for teachers and pupils and to protect the Government's position on finance.

The management panel document which sets out the package is today being distributed by the employers' secretariat to all local education authorities, and we know already that some will be sending it direct to all their schools. The document is also going today to all Conservative MPs, under cover of a letter from the Secretary of State bringing them up to date with developments. A copy of this is also attached. Finally, the Secretary of State is seeking a talk with Stuart McClure, Editor of TES, to encourage him to carry as full a summary as possible on the - rather long - document.

DES confirm that they are actively considering this.

The questions of advertising and letters to all teachers have been under consideration for some time. Neither is a straight-forward issue and we must consider further who might advertise or write, and when, given that the local education authorities are the employers.

You asked on the telephone for a report on the present position on the dispute, and on the Secretary of State's meeting with Mrs Harrison this morning. This is contained in the Secretary of State's letter to the Chancellor (copied to the Prime Minister, but a further copy is attached for ease of reference).

A copy of this letter goes to Rachel Howax - Flag A.

Yours sincerely,
Rob

R L SMITH
Private Secretary



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NEWS

13.9.85

PRESS STATEMENT

The Secretary of State issued the following statement today:

"Everyone must regret that yesterday's meeting of the Burnham Committee did not bring about a solution to the harmful and long-running teachers' pay dispute. The package tabled by the management side was a bold initiative, constructed upon the Government's willingness to see an extra £1,250 million applied to teachers' pay over the next four years, and designed to bring about fundamental and desirable changes in the outdated system which now governs the appointment, career development and promotion of teachers and the management of schools. A great deal was contained in the offer:

- . better induction for new entrants, reduced load, more structured help
- . appraisal for all to help professional development and to inform promotion decisions
- . far more promotions - an extra 70,000 or one-fifth of all scale teachers - opening up the promotion blockage caused by falling pupil numbers
- . better opportunities for rewarding excellence and skills in short supply
- . better rewards for those responsible for running the schools - heads and deputies

Taken together, the package offers immediate and important gains for large numbers; it enhances prospects for all. It would mean a significant boost to the education service's efforts to recruit, retain and motivate the good quality people needed to teach in schools with higher and improving standards.

This would be good news for the country and especially for parents. The set of duties listed in the offer contains nothing which the ordinary, conscientious teacher does not already do. Why then object to it? We need changes which will allow heads to run their schools without any of the uncertainty which so afflicts the everyday operations of the schools at the moment. We all need to be certain that cover will be provided, that parent meetings will be held etc etc. There is nothing unfair about this but the leaders of the NUT persist in labelling it as "worsening conditions of service".

The offer would also clear up the difficulties we now have about midday supervision. We are willing to see teachers and others paid separately for this - it would no longer be a part of the teachers' professional range of duties. This again would be good news for parents whose working and social lives have been so disrupted by the refusal of teachers to help heads supervise at midday.

Yesterday the teachers said "no" to all of this. They took very little time to come to that decision. Now it is time for reflection. I hope that the union leaders will reflect very carefully on the management's package. I do not think that the public will understand continued negative thinking and resumed disruptive action. The Government's willingness to see £1,250 million additional expenditure provides a great opportunity for progress; the teachers should think very hard about what their leaders are at the moment rejecting.