



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

To All Conservative MPs

26 September 1985

Dear Colleague -

I hope that you will be able to draw on my open letter in this Friday's Times Educational Supplement (copy of text attached) in continuing to make the Government case for the £1.25 billion offer to teachers.

As you will see, the general drift of my letter is that the Government wants better schools and higher standards; it is the pursuit of this prize which explains our willingness to see an extra £1.25 billion invested in the reform of the teachers' pay and career structure; there is real gain for all teachers in what is on offer (see the inset piece); and the alternative - more disruption to chase 1974 relativities - is as pointless as it will be fruitless.

I am also enclosing a table which provides a set of examples showing how individual teacher's pay will move if the offer were to be accepted.

We need to convince the ordinary teacher that he has nothing to fear and a good deal to gain from this offer. We also need to persuade parents and the general public that the teacher unions rejected a good offer.

I look forward to your continued support in getting this message across.

Yours ever,

Keith

I am grateful to the Times Education Supplement for asking me to contribute an open letter to teachers as my personal contribution to their 75th Anniversary Celebrations. Each week the TES does all of us in education a service by printing the facts and reporting a range of opinions on the issues of the day. I welcome this chance to explain some of my views to teachers and to other readers of the TES. Above all, I am grateful for the chance of setting out why I believe the dispute with the teachers' unions should be ended forthwith and how we can best accomplish this.

The Government intensely wishes to secure better schooling for children of all abilities. I am sure that teachers and their unions want that too.

Much has been achieved in recent years. We are introducing a single examination system at 16 plus which all candidates can face on equal terms in confident expectation that their individual abilities and achievements will be fairly recognised. Greater purposefulness is being injected into the initial training of teachers. We plan a new regime for in-service training which would establish the career development of individual teachers as a major part of the local management of schools, backed by direct Government grant. We are building bridges between school and work to prepare young adults better for the world of work. But when all is said and done, the key factor in raising educational standards has to be the experience, skills and professionalism of teachers.

The Government recognises that we can only expect to recruit, retain and motivate teachers of the right quality if they receive suitable pay along with proper arrangements for career development and opportunities for promotion. That is why the Government has offered £1250 million over 4 years from next April, on top of whatever is negotiated each year on pay, in return for acceptance by teachers of the full range of their professional duties and a shift towards better promotions for competence in the classroom.

The NUT rejected an offer by the Burnham Management Panel on this basis after just twenty minutes. Why?

The NUT slogan is "back to Houghton". But that would also be back to the 20% inflation which Houghton and similar awards helped unleash. Every other group would strive to return to its "best" year - its own "Houghton" - and the result would be endless leapfrogging, huge inflation, repeated erosions of "restored" pay levels and even more unemployment. The Houghton award was eaten away by inflation even before Labour lost office in 1979.

The NUT trumpet member support for a further escalation in disruptive action. But their ballot was mounted before the latest Burnham offer. Does the public believe that disruption should be escalated in the face of that offer? Do teachers themselves understand the detail of what is on offer? The offer has now been given extensive publicity and was printed in full in last week's TES. Let me pick out the highlights:

- higher starting salaries for new teachers (£7,035) with a reduced teaching load and better induction.
- better salaries and prospects for all teachers:-
 - . Every classroom teacher would look forward to £10,509 plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay
 - . Teachers now on scales 1 and 2 would have their maxima increased by 23% (scale 1) or 10% (scale 2) plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay.
 - . Some 53,000 of these teachers would be promoted to senior teacher with a maximum of £12,087, (41% and 26% above scale 1 and 2 maxima) plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay.
 - . Teachers now on scale 3 would have their maximum increased by 10% plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay.

- . Some 21,000 teachers would be promoted to principal teacher with a maximum of £14,658, (33% above the scale 3 maximum) plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay.
- . Teachers now on scale 4 and senior teachers would have their maxima increased by 19% and 9% respectively, plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay.

Some of these teachers working in the larger schools would be eligible for responsibility allowances of £500 or more.

- . Deputy heads would have their maxima range lifted by 24% to £12,087 in the smallest schools and by 17% to £19,461 in the largest schools, plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay.
 - . Heads would have their maxima range lifted by 19% to £12,714 in the smallest schools and by 18% to £26,994 in the largest schools, plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay.
- a more structured way of making promotions, including some 74,000 extra promotions generated by this package, with better, fairer appraisal and known criteria including additional responsibility, the availability of scarce skills, the individual school's special needs and effectiveness of performance.
 - appraisal for all to help the professional development of all teachers.
 - greater clarity and certainty about the scope of the teacher's job. This proposed definition excludes the supervision of pupils at midday, and offers separate contracts for volunteers undertaking this duty.

I cannot see in this the "worsening of conditions of service" claimed by some union negotiators. The proposed definition of the teacher's job is closely in line with the work long undertaken by teachers; only the proposed systematic arrangements for appraising performance are new. What I see here is a breakthrough in the promotion blockage caused by falling pupil numbers. I see better induction for newcomers and continued professional support for all serving teachers. And I see the opportunity for all teachers to have a midday break free of responsibility for pupils.

What is the alternative? The pursuit of some long-gone relativity cannot succeed. We will not go back to the destructive spiral of wage inflation. Continued disruption of schools is both wrong and pointless. Parents and children will not understand how teachers, normally a model for moderation and civilised values, can risk jeopardising children's futures. I do not believe that teachers want that any more than I do.

The Government's offer of an additional £1250 million is on the table, tied to acceptance of a bargain which will substantially improve our education service. We have to decide by mid-October whether or not to include the first tranche of £200 million for 1986/87 in local authority expenditure and the Rate Support Grant Report for next year. That money cannot be put into the process provisionally, and frozen pending an agreement, for there must soon be a decision by Parliament about local authority expenditure and entitlements for next year. Time is short.

I believe that some union leaders have got things badly wrong. I invite individual teachers, parents and the public at large - yes, and union leaders too - to address the proposals for a settlement on their merits. That must offer the best chance of securing the higher standards in schools that we all want.

SOME EXAMPLES OF NEW PAY RATES UNDER THE LATEST PROPOSALS

	(1) For all teachers			20% of the group
	Current Salary rate	Pay at 1 Nov 1985	Pay at 1 Nov 1986	Pay at 1 Nov 86 if promoted say at 1 Sept 86 *
New graduate entrant (Point 6 Scale 1)	6732	7278	7524	N/A
Top Scale 1	8556	9456	9774	10509
Mid-point Scale 2	7734	8292	8565	9123
Bottom Scale 3	7734	8292	9456	-
Top Scale 2	9597	10173	10509	11298
Top Scale 3	11031	11694	12087	13104
Top Scale 4	12363	13104	13740) At this
Top Senior Teacher	13395	14199	14658) level
Deputy Head (2) Group 2 primary	9753	10338	12087) each case
Head Teacher as above	11073	11736	13026) needs to be
Deputy, group 12 secondary (3)	15567	16500	18150) considered
Head Teacher as above	20706	21948	24363) separately

* Assuming continuation of existing promotion increase arrangements, ie 2 increments

Notes

- (1) All teachers in the various scales will benefit as in the first 3 columns. About 20% of each scale group may expect promotion as in the last column.
- (2) 50-100 pupils
- (3) eg 8FE comprehensive (1500 + pupils)

Educational
Teachers Pay

