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*Dear Tim*

TEACHERS' DISPUTE

I attach a draft of the statement which my Secretary of State intends making tomorrow afternoon about the teachers' dispute in Scotland and would be grateful for your clearance.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Morris (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), Michael Stark (Cabinet Office), Joan McNaughton (Lord President's Office), Rob Smith (Department of Education and Science), Richard Broadbent (Chief Secretary's Office), David Beamish (Lords' Chief Whip's Office) and Bernard Ingham.

ANDY RINNING  
Private Secretary

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND

TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 1985  
HOUSE OF COMMONS

TEACHERS' DISPUTE

WITH PERMISSION, MR SPEAKER, I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT ABOUT THE TEACHERS' DISPUTE IN SCOTLAND, AND IN PARTICULAR THE REPORT LAST WEEK OF THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND'S BALLOT.

IN JULY THE MANAGEMENT SIDE OF THE SJNC (SCHOOL EDUCATION) SUBMITTED PROPOSALS TO ME INVOLVING A SUBSTANTIAL REDEFINITION OF TEACHERS' CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF PAY SCALES. IN EARLY AUGUST I TOLD THE MANAGEMENT SIDE IN REPLY THAT IF A PACKAGE ON THESE LINES COULD BE NEGOTIATED WITHIN THE SJNC, I WOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE, ON A SCALE BUILDING UP TO 10% OF THE PRESENT SALARY BILL, OVER A PERIOD OF 4 YEARS BEGINNING IN 1986/87. THIS WOULD BE OVER AND ABOVE THE NORMAL ANNUAL PAY NEGOTIATIONS AND WOULD ADD AN EXTRA £125M TO TEACHERS' SALARIES OVER 4 YEARS.

THE MANAGEMENT SIDE THEN PUT AN ABBREVIATED FORM OF THEIR PROPOSALS TO THE TEACHERS' SIDE AND ASKED THEM TO CONSIDER IT AS A BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT SHOULD FUNDING ADDITIONAL TO WHAT I HAD OFFERED BE MADE AVAILABLE.

THE TEACHERS' SIDE REPLIED THAT THEY SAW THIS AS A NON-OFFER AND PRONOUNCED CERTAIN ASPECTS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. THEY REFUSED TO FALL IN WITH THE MANAGEMENT SIDE'S PROPOSAL OF A JOINT APPROACH TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE MANAGEMENT SIDE PROPOSALS; AND INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD REJECT ANY PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD LEAD TO DETERIORATION IN THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF TEACHERS.

IN A FURTHER ATTEMPT TO FIND A WAY FORWARD I INVITED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TEACHERS' SIDE TO MEET ME ON 27 SEPTEMBER. IT WAS SUGGESTED AT THAT MEETING THAT, PROVIDED SUBSTANTIALLY MORE MONEY WERE OFFERED WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS, THE TEACHERS WOULD BE PREPARED SUBSEQUENTLY TO DISCUSS CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT. MY OFFICIALS HAVE EXPLORED ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSALS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TEACHERS' SIDE TO SEE IF A BASIS COULD BE FOUND FOR NEGOTIATIONS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A SETTLEMENT. THESE DISCUSSIONS HAVE PRODUCED SOME USEFUL CLARIFICATION OF THE TEACHERS' POSITION AND I HOPE THEY WILL CONTINUE. BUT I HAVE TO SAY THAT AS THEY STAND THE TEACHERS' PROPOSALS DO NOT APPEAR TO ME TO OFFER A WAY FORWARD.

MEANTIME THE EIS ANNOUNCED LAST WEDNESDAY A MAJORITY VOTE IN FAVOUR OF A BOYCOTT OF PUBLIC EXAMINATION PROCEDURES IN 1986. THIS IS CAUSING GREAT ANXIETY FOR PUPILS WHO ARE WORKING FOR QUALIFICATIONS TO SECURE THEIR OWN FUTURE. I MUST THEREFORE MAKE QUITE CLEAR THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IN THE LIGHT OF THE EIS DECISION. THE SCOTTISH EXAMINATION BOARD HAS A STATUTORY DUTY TO CONDUCT EXAMINATIONS EACH YEAR FOR THE AWARD OF CERTIFICATES RELATING TO SECONDARY EDUCATION. THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER IN THE MINDS OF ANY PUPIL, PARENT OR TEACHER THAT THE BOARD IS DETERMINED TO DO EVERYTHING WITHIN ITS POWER TO CARRY OUT THAT DUTY AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT ARE FULLY COMMITTED TO DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT CANDIDATES NOW WORKING FOR SCE AND CSYS EXAMINATIONS IN 1986 WILL NOT BE LET DOWN.

THE PRESENT POSITION THEREFORE IS THAT THE TEACHERS HAVE ASKED FOR A LARGE PAY SETTLEMENT WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT ON THEIR PART TO CHANGES, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE TEACHER'S JOB. THE LOCAL AUTHORITY EMPLOYERS AND I ARE ENTIRELY AGREED THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RUN AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL SYSTEM IF TEACHERS HAVE THE POWER TO PICK AND CHOOSE WHICH PIECES OF WORK THEY WILL DO. THE EXAMINATIONS BOYCOTT DEMONSTRATES EXACTLY WHAT I MEAN.

I HAVE ALWAYS RECOGNISED THE VITAL CONTRIBUTION WHICH TEACHERS HAVE IN THE PAST MADE TO THE RUNNING OF THE EDUCATION SERVICE BY THEIR WORK OUTSIDE THE NORMAL SCHOOL DAY, PARTICULARLY IN CARRYING FORWARD NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CURRICULUM AND EXAMINATIONS. WE NEED THE CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHERS IN THESE ACTIVITIES AND THE PURPOSE OF THE PACKAGE PREPARED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY EMPLOYERS IN JULY WAS TO GIVE FAIR AND APPROPRIATE RECOGNITION TO THIS FACT IN A FRESH APPROACH IN CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, THE DEFINITION OF THE TEACHERS' ROLE AND A NEW PAY STRUCTURE.

IT WAS IN RECOGNITION OF THIS THAT I WAS ABLE TO ANNOUNCE THAT SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL RESOURCES COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. THE OFFER REMAINS OPEN, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. BUT I HOPE THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT ITS STATUS. IT WAS MADE CONDITIONAL ON NEGOTIATION, WITHIN THE SJNC, OF NEW CONDITIONS OF SERVICE. I KNOW THAT MANY TEACHERS, BOTH LEADERS AND RANK AND FILE, DESPERATELY WANT TO SEE THIS DISPUTE RESOLVED AS DO I AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY EMPLOYERS. BUT I HAVE TO SAY THAT AFTER ALL THE DAMAGE THAT HAS BEEN CAUSED AND PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THIS LATEST THREAT THE PUBLIC HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT THAT ONE ELEMENT IN A SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE A FIRM CLARIFICATION OF TEACHERS' DUTIES, SO THAT THEY CANNOT AGAIN INFLICT SUCH CHAOS AND DEMORALISATION ON OUR SCHOOLS AT SO LITTLE COST TO THEMSELVES.

