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cc BG.

Pime Pliska².

LORD PRESIDENT

ATTACHED

1. Before the election I consulted H Committee colleagues on our proposals to make changes to the arrangements regarding academic tenure in our universities (H(87)3rd meeting). The response to our consultation paper has been predictably less than enthusiastic, although at least a few people concerned with university management have had the courage and good sense to express approval for what we propose. Some useful points of detail have been made, for example on building in a little more flexibility to deal with the rather peculiar constitutions of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges and we shall be taking those on board. I need not trouble colleagues with all the details.

2. There is one point, however, on which I think we should go rather further than we indicated in consultations in order to get the best value out of this new legislation.

3. The memorandum H(87)9, paragraph 6, proposed that there should be no question of legislating to deprive existing university academic staff of tenure. However we proposed that future appointments, including a move to another university, should be on contractual terms allowing dismissal on grounds of redundancy and financial exigency. That was the basis on which we went out to consultation.

4. At the same time, we decided that when a university teacher was promoted within his own university that his right to tenure should not be forfeited.

5. I think that we should reconsider this. The arguments for retaining tenure on internal promotion were that good people might refuse promotion, and that if there were a further squeeze the better people might be less protected. But on reflection I am not convinced of the strength of these objections. Only about 50 per cent of universities have the strict tenure we propose to abolish. I consider that the advantages to able individuals

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or promotion should outweigh the disadvantages of loss of tenure. I am sure that university managements will not let the better people go in preference to their dead wood. Moreover, UGC sponsored rationalisation should normally provide for the retention of the better staff in academic life - perhaps at another university.

6. Moreover, there is a powerful argument for removing strict tenure on internal promotion as well as on transfer - namely that this will speed up the process. There are only about 30 transfers a year, compared with roughly 600 internal promotions. The universities' managers should be grateful for a speedier removal of tenure than would be possible if we removed it only in respect of external transfer.

7. Such a change will of course leave us open to the charge that we are toughening up proposals on which we went out to consultation: but consultations should not only lead to the weakening of government proposals. I do not think that the criticism we face on this issue will be much worse if we make this change than what we face anyway - and the gain will be considerable.

8. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, to other members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong. I should be grateful if colleagues would let me know by the end of 13 November if they see any difficulties in what I now propose.

KS.

KB
Department of Education and Science

12 November 1987



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PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

20 November 1987

nbpm

Dear Kenneth

ACADEMIC TENURE

You minuted me on 12 November seeking H Committee's agreement to your extending the provisions in the Education Reform Bill on removal of academic tenure to include staff promoted within their own universities. John Moore wrote indicating that he was content on the understanding that the job security for clinical academics would be similar to that for their NHS counterparts. No other colleague has commented on your proposal, and this is to confirm that you have H Committee's agreement to it.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, the members of H Committee and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours
W. Baker

The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP

Education

Policy

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From the Secretary of State for Social Services

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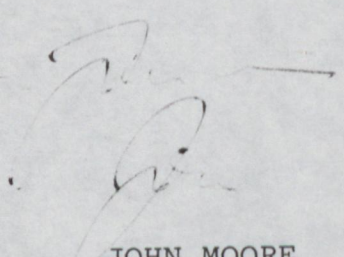
19 November 1987

ACADEMIC TENURE

In your letter of 12 November to the Lord President you proposed that university teachers should forfeit their tenure if they are promoted within their university, in the same way as if they transfer to another university.

I am concerned, as I am sure you are, that the terms and conditions of clinical academics should be broadly comparable with those of NHS consultants. I am assured that under your proposals clinical academics would have similar job security to that of their NHS counterparts and indeed to that of other senior people in the public sector. On this basis I see no substantial difficulties for academic medicine.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to the other members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.


JOHN MOORE

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