PRIME MINISTER

EDUCATION - MAINTAINED SCHOOLS AND POLYTECHNICS

I attach the latest papers on two issues where you have been pressing Kenneth Baker on Education Bill matters.

Admission of pupils to maintained schools

Last month you pressed DES to implement the open enrolment provisions in full by September 1989 rather than waiting until September 1990.

At Flag A are Kenneth Baker's response of 9 May and Brian Griffiths' comments on it. As Brian says the response is less than convincing. But I think you have persuaded Mr. Baker substantially to speed up the operation, and he is now aiming to have most schools implementing the new provisions by September 1989.

I think Brian's quid pro quo for accepting the latest proposals - namely instituting six monthly monitoring meetings on progress in implementing the full range of the Bill's provisions - is an excellent one.

Content to respond as Brian proposes? Yes

Polytechnics

You expressed concern about the limitations in Schedule 5 of the Bill on polytechnic directors' ability effectively to manage. At Flag B is the DES response of 10 May and Brian's comments on it.

You will see that Lady Cox has proposed amendments to Schedule 5 of the Bill in line with the changes being

requested by some of the polytechnic directors. I have also attached a marked up copy of the Bill showing you the effect these would have.

Kenneth Baker proposes to resist these amendments, but undertakes to adopt a tough line in drawing up the articles of Government on polytechnics, which he thinks would give adequate responsibilities and authority to directors.

Brian suggests that you accept this approach subject to spelling out your requirements for the articles of the Government bodies.

Content with Brian's approach?

But surely the approach that Brian outlines – in particular the authority of the Chief Executive, and that he is responsible to the Board of Governors should be spelt out in the Statute? Is Kenneth Baker undertaking to commit himself absolutely to putting the contents list into articles of Government? Is that enough. I fear the articles could be changed all too easily and

PRCG.

PG
13 May 1988

KAYACM