



CC NO

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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

JH 1576

14 June 1983

Mr Patrick .

You will know that the draft Queen's Speech which the Cabinet are to discuss on Thursday includes the promise of legislation to enable Nicholas Edwards and me to pay education support grants (ESGs) to local authorities.

On 28 January this year, just before H Committee endorsed ESGs, you said in a letter to Tom King "I support the proposal wholeheartedly and hope that your Department will also support the idea". I should like to think that I can count on your continued support on Thursday. Local education authorities, at a time of retrenchment, are often reluctant to embark on innovations (and to abandon activities which are no longer relevant) in order to ensure a quicker rate of response from within the educational system to the present and future needs of society at large, and industry and commerce in particular. ESGs, at the margin and without adding to the total of public expenditure or of Exchequer grant, would greatly increase my ability to induce the local education authorities to do what is needed.

will request if required

The sentence in the draft Queen's Speech was put in square brackets at my request so that I could draw the Cabinet's attention to a tactical issue. It may be argued that the local authorities world will take offence at our announcing a decision to legislate in the 1983-84 Session before we have completed our consultations with them. My view is that the commitment ought to be included in the Queen's Speech in order to make them realise that we mean business and that the further consultations are concerned with the details and not with the alleged constitutional principles on which some of them are standing. I am of course very ready, as I gather was suggested in QL, to propose a clearer form of words than that in the present draft.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Nicholas Edwards and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,
Kevin

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
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