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MR TURNBULL

23 November 1984

SCOTTISH TEACHERS' PAY

George Younger wants a response to his note on Monday morning in advance of his meeting with the SJNC on Thursday. The Chancellor is unlikely to agree with his proposals and may want a meeting.

Scottish teachers are taking unconstitutional industrial action in pursuit of an independent review of their pay. Although cloaked in the usual terms (erosion of living standards etc) it has been triggered by the 5.1% arbitration award to English teachers compared to their (non-arbitrated) 4.5%. Each have different pay structures but the Scottish office is surprisingly unable to say which is best.

George Younger's proposal to refuse an independent review but have one by the SJNC instead is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He states in his letter that the management side are in sympathy with the teachers: the result is a foregone conclusion. Any statement by him short of a guarantee that no extra funds will be available will have the opposite effect of that wanted.

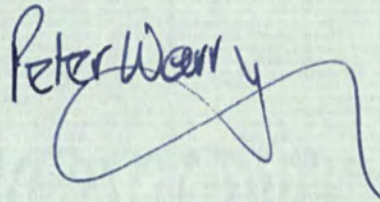
There is virtue in trying to wrap this up with the structural issues of staffing levels, conditions, curricula etc. Keith Joseph is facing similar problems introducing his teaching reforms. Any review will cost money but if it achieves the changes to the education system then it could be worth it.

If we give in to industrial action and agree the review it will inevitably lead to a chain reaction across the public sector. On the other hand a straight refusal, although correct, may be politically insupportable.

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The least bad option may be to say that we will do nothing whilst unconstitutional industrial action damages our childrens' education. But if the action ends we could be disposed to recommend that the SJNC should consider structural issues and any consequent salary adjustment and report in time for the next pay review. If the report recommends extra money then the authorities will have to find it from savings elsewhere.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Warry". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish that loops back under the name.

PETER WARRY

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