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CONFIDENTIAL

2. Prime Minister (2)

BT (3)

SC 16



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

6 March 1985

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Dear George,

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INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY SCOTTISH TEACHERS

At Cabinet on 28 February, Michael Havers and I were invited to consider whether there were any further legal and other arguments which could be put to the House authorities on the possibility that industrial action concentrated on Ministers' constituencies might involve a breach of privilege.

Michael and I have considered this point very carefully since this is clearly a matter of great concern. However, it is the emphatic view of the House authorities that action by teachers could not be held to be a contempt since such action is essentially an attempt to put pressure on Ministers in carrying out their executive duties. It does not relate to a specific item of Parliamentary business and there are no precedents for such action to be held to be a breach of Parliamentary privilege.

Our unanimous view, therefore, is that it would be unwise to try and pursue this matter further with the House authorities since the Speaker would undoubtedly rule against us.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and other Cabinet colleagues, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours  
John Biffen

JOHN BIFFEN

Rt Hon George Younger MP  
Secretary of State for Scotland



Education: Teachers Pay; Pt 4



- 6 MAR 1985