

E(81)17
10 February 1981

COPY NO 57

CABINET

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STRATEGY

TEACHERS' PAY: ACCESS TO ARBITRATION 1981

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Education and Science

1. At the meeting of E Committee on 14 January 1981 I was invited to consult formally with the bodies represented in the Burnham Committees with a view to changing the arbitral arrangements in time for the coming 1981 pay negotiations. That I have now done; this paper is to report the outcome.

2. So far as the employers are concerned, the Association of County Councils (ACC) have made no public statement but remain in favour of changing the access rules for this year. The Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) have come out privately and publicly against the change, and the Welsh Joint Education Committee have also advised against change this year.

3. On the union side, I saw a formal deputation from all the unions. They unanimously opposed the proposal to change the arrangements for this year. They were adamant that the Government's changing the rules for teachers in England and Wales when parallel changes were not proposed for Scottish teachers, nor apparently for the rest of the local authority world, was discriminating unfairly against them. Secondly, they thought that such action would invite confrontation. Thirdly, whereas they would willingly discuss arbitration in the context of my wider review of negotiating machinery for the future determination of pay and other conditions of service, they said that changing the access rules for this year in isolation would seriously affect their attitude to those longer-term negotiations.

4. I find it difficult to assess fully the effect of going ahead now with action of this kind. I suspect that in practice it may make little difference to the outcome of this year's pay negotiations, but I fear it would harden

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attitudes and make it more difficult for us to gain what we want from the subsequent negotiations on the review of future machinery for settling teachers' pay and other conditions of service. I do not think that we should lightly ignore this industrial relations aspect.

5. Burnham meets on Wednesday next. Any action must be taken before then.
6. I should be grateful for the views of colleagues.

MC

Department of Education and Science
10 February 1981

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