



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 June 1985

Dear Sir William

Thank you for your letter of 7 May about the recently announced Engineering and Technology programme.

I am sorry you were unable to come to what I think proved to be a very useful meeting on 21 May. It was good of you to write setting out your views and explaining the action BICC proposes to take. I am particularly glad that BICC, like other companies represented at the meeting, will be providing additional assistance to institutions benefiting from the programme.

I was interested in the other points in your letter and am pleased to be able to tell you that we have now decided that there should be some provision for selected polytechnics in the second phase of this programme. In line with the objectives for the programme as a whole, this provision will be mainly at undergraduate level, though it is possible that there will be some postgraduate (including "conversion") courses at selected polytechnics included in the programme.

BM

I am looking forward to our follow-up meeting next year, which my office will be arranging in due course, when we can assess the progress which has been made.

Yours sincerely
Napaul Keliker

Sir William Barlow



CF pps.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Mark Addison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

5 June 1985

Dear Mark,

at Rep.

I am replying to your letters of 10 May, concerning Sir William Barlow's letter to the Prime Minister, and 23 May, concerning Mr Sam Toy's letter, both relating to the 'Switch'.

I attach draft replies for the Prime Minister's signature.

Yours ever,

I M HUGHES
Private Secretary

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DRAFT REPLY TO LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER FROM SIR WILLIAM BARLOW (BICC)

Thank you for your letter of May 7 about the recently announced Engineering and Technology programme.

^{unable to come to}
I am sorry you were prevented by absence overseas from attending what, proved to
^{I think}
be a most useful and supportive meeting on May 21. I was, however, pleased to see ^{very} ~~that~~ ^{it was good of you to write not saying at your meeting and explaining the} ~~from your letter that your Company, like those represented at the meeting, will be~~ ^{action BICC propose to take.}
providing additional assistance to institutions benefiting from the programme. ^{I am very} ~~We are~~
grateful for this.

ⁱⁿ
I was interested to ~~note~~ the other points in your letter and I ^{am pleased to be able to} ~~can now~~ tell you that,
^{we have now}
in the light of further consultation with industrialists and others, the Government has
decided that there should be some provision for selected polytechnics in the second
phase of this programme. In line with the objectives for the programme as a whole,
this provision will be mainly at undergraduate level, though it is possible that there
will be some postgraduate (including "conversion") courses at selected polytechnics
included in the programme.

I am looking forward to our follow-up meeting next year,
while ~~my~~ my office will be away in the course, when
we can cover the progress which has been made.

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DRAFT REPLY TO LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER FROM MR TO Y (FORD)

Thank you for your letter of May 21 about the Engineering and Technology programme and related matters. *I am glad you share my feeling that we had a very useful meeting.*

I was pleased to learn how much your company is already doing to ^{help} assist the work of higher education institutions in engineering and technology subjects. ^{not very} I am grateful for your promises of additional assistance, ^{Bar Kid of King} of this kind: such concrete support from you and your colleagues in industry is vital to the success of this programme.

~~The Government agrees that the polytechnics can make a valuable contribution to the production of engineers and technologists which industry and the nation so urgently require.~~ We have ^{consequently} just announced that there will be scope for including selected polytechnics in the second phase of the Engineering and Technology programme. We do, however, also see a most important role for creating additional graduate output from universities in this programme in line with much of the advice we have received on this programme from industry and others.

I know that Tom King will be responding separately to your comments on the YTS. ^{certainly} I share your views on the importance of the scheme and I know that Tom is as concerned as you are about the way in which some have been misrepresenting it.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 May, 1985.

RECEIVED 13 MAY 1985

Secs Club
YC for SSPS
for advice, and
draft as necessary:
urgent please.
11/5

Dev Elizabeth

SSPA/11963/pm

I attach a letter from Sir William Barlow raising a number of points in relation to the meeting with Industrialists to discuss the switch on 21 May.

I think all the Prime Minister needs to do in reply is to welcome the indication Sir William gives that BICC would offer additional sponsorship and places for sandwich course students, and to express her thanks for his interest in the debate. You may think, however, that one or two other points need to be covered as well, in which case I should be grateful for a draft reply.

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Mark Addison

(Mark Addison)

Miss Elizabeth Hodkinson,
Department of Education and Science.



BICC plc

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Telephone: 01-637 1300 - Telex: 628811 BICC G-Station Code BIGHO

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Sir William Barlow
Chairman

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
The Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
Whitehall,
LONDON SW1.

7th May 1985

Dear Prime Minister,

As you know I am prevented, by absence overseas, from attending the meeting you have convened on the subject of education and training in engineering and technology.

In view of the critical nature of the subject I know that you will understand my wish to make one or two points which seem to me important to the debate.

We welcome the size and weight of the programme you outline and note that discussions are taking place to decide which institutions should benefit from it.

Given the time-scale likely to be involved in the production of fully fledged university graduates in reasonable numbers I wonder whether greater attention, and possibly some part of the available financial support, might not be given to the polytechnics which, under the auspices of the National Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education (NAB), might be able to produce reasonable numbers via conversion or retraining programmes in a much shorter period. I am aware of the NAB proposals to the Butcher Committee relative to IT, made in 1984, but no reply appears to have been made so far. A small part of the £43m spent in this direction could well help fill a critical gap.

In response to you specific questions we see no problem in offering additional sponsorships or places for sandwich course students or in providing jobs and a career path for graduates. We would also be willing to help in course design. What assistance we might be able to offer in the provision of equipment and teaching staff will depend on the scale of the particular requirements but we are, as a minimum, prepared to look at specific requests.

/Cont'd....

/Cont'd....

7th May 1985

We hold no strong view about the types of graduate but feel that a spread is always going to be required whether from universities or polytechnics. Whatever their discipline or place of learning it is essential that students are given a thorough grounding in the fundamentals of their subject. Such a foundation produces, in our view, a stronger engineer or technologist capable of tackling a range of jobs while graduates from courses which are broad but not deep lack the base from which to grow.

Finally, I believe that it is most important that we take a "GB Limited" and so centralised approach to this matter. Fragmented efforts, no matter how well intended, will hinder the country's progress in developing technological education and training.

Yours sincerely,
William Barber.

SCIENCE Budget

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