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Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

CABINET OFFICE,
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27 September 1985

Prime Minister 2.

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
Secretary of State for Education
and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON SE1 7PH

DWS
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D Keith.

TEACHERS' PAY DISPUTE

I fully recognise the considerable efforts which you have been making to explain the generosity of the settlement on offer to the teachers, particularly through letters to Conservative Members of Parliament. However, all the evidence which we receive suggests that many teachers are still quite unaware of the facts. We clearly have to ensure that somehow our message gets home to the individual teachers without its being distorted by the trades union leaders. I was glad therefore to see your article in the Times Education Supplement and your letter of 26th telling me of your intention to write to all backbenchers.

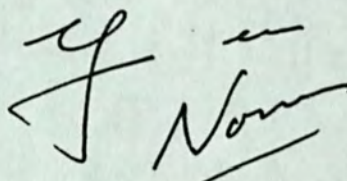
Despite that I feel that many teachers will not see the details of the offer. What is more, the events of yesterday have been skillfully portrayed by the BBC as the Government slamming the door on the employer efforts to bridge the gap.

I believe that there is much to be said for your writing directly to Head Teachers with full details of what is on offer, asking them to relay this information to their staff. If full publicity were given to such a letter, even politically unsympathetic Head Teachers would be reluctant to suppress the information which you supplied. Indeed, if it is possible, I would support you in writing to every teacher.

I realise that some will argue that this constitutes something improper, an attempt to 'go behind the backs of the employers'. But those employers, of course, are Labour-led and I am sure that you would agree that we cannot allow over-sensitivity to their wishes to postpone the successful resolution of the strike.

As you know, Conservative Central Office is circulating a leaflet to the Constituencies which sets out the facts of the offer and urges Conservative Councillors to bring it to the attention of teachers. We shall, of course, continue to do all that we can to help you. But, as I am sure you will recognise, Party political literature of this sort is much less likely to reach its target effectively than would a communication stemming directly from you as Secretary of State for Education.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, members of E(PSP) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Norman Tebbit', with a stylized flourish above the name.

NORMAN TEBBIT

