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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE  
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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Tim Flesher Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON

21 October 1985

Dear Tim,

TEACHERS' DISPUTE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

My Secretary of State has seen and is content with the statement which the Secretary of State for Scotland intends making tomorrow afternoon.

As you know, he also proposes to make a statement and I enclose a draft for clearance.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Morris (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), Michael Stark (Cabinet Office), Joan McNaughton (Lord President's Office), Andy Rinning (Scottish Office), Richard Broadbent (Chief Secretary's Office), David Beamish (Lords' Chief Whip's Office), the Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Bernard Ingham.

Yours sincerely,  
Rob Smith

R L SMITH  
Private Secretary

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STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 1985

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TEACHERS' DISPUTE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the teachers' dispute in England and Wales.

Intense efforts have been made in recent months by the Government to bring this damaging dispute to a satisfactory conclusion.

I regret to say that they have so far been unsuccessful.

Some of the teacher unions have chosen to continue to disrupt the education of the pupils in their charge rather than accept - or even to discuss - the offer made to them. I deplore this, the damage it causes and the example it sets.

In August the Government offered the prospect of an additional £1,250m for teachers pay over four years from next April, a sum equivalent to 4% on the present pay bill rising to 9% by the fourth year. On 12 September the employers made an offer constructed upon the conditional Government willingness to see this massive extra investment on teachers' pay. Under that offer all teachers stood to receive increases in April and November. Those on their scale maxima would have got additional increases in either September or next March. The average end-of-year increase would have been over 8%. In

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addition one in five classroom teachers would have benefited substantially from the additional 70,000 promotions planned from September 1986. All of this would have been on top of any normal annual increase negotiated from April 1986. All classroom teachers at present on scale 1 or scale 2, even without promotion, could have looked forward to £10,500 plus whatever is negotiated each year on pay. In return for these proposals, which would have brought substantial benefits to the education service, as well as significant improvements in teachers' pay generally and in promotion prospects, the teachers were asked for a clear commitment to the professional fulfilment of their duties and an acceptance of a pay system which would have offered relatively greater rewards to promoted teachers and to those holding senior leadership posts.

The teacher unions took just twenty minutes to reject this offer. Since then some unions have been engaging in forms of industrial action deliberately intended to cause the maximum disruption to the education service at the minimum cost to the teachers involved in the disruption. This is deplorable and underlines why we so urgently need an agreement to define more clearly the teachers' professional responsibilities.

Since then I regret to say that the employers have been willing to make offers relating to pay alone. Even before the teacher unions confirmed that their demands far outstrip the employers' capacity to pay, I repeated the Government's position. We refuse to provide any additional resources for a "no strings" pay deal which would be a reversion to the discredited approach where negotiations on pay are separated from negotiations

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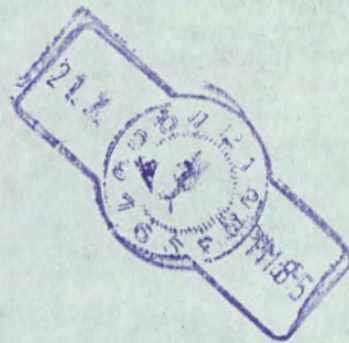
on pay structure and conditions of service. Separation has always meant "you pay us now and we will talk about reform later" - simultaneous negotiation of all elements provides the only credible way forward. Notwithstanding the passage of the original deadline therefore, the Government remains ready to consider whether additional resources could still be approved within the £1,250m envelope for 1986-87 and subsequent years provided the conditions for reform are met. The Government is also willing to set aside resources - from within the total of £1,250m - to help employers cover the cost of supervising pupils at midday. I have discussed this proposition with the employers and it is agreed between us that officials should now discuss the way ahead.

The Government will continue to make every effort to see a bargain struck which would provide improved pay and prospects for teachers in return for a better career and promotion structure, the clarification of teachers' duties, the certain delivery of education in the schools and an end to the disruption.

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