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Prime MinisterSir Keith might raise this
on Sunday

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AT 4/5

PRIME MINISTER

RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS

1. Your Private Secretary's letter of 27 April is an excellent record of our discussion on that day. I should like, however, to clarify one or two points.

2. In the fifth paragraph of the letter it is suggested that the negotiations with the teachers about performance-related pay have in view a system under which increments would be abolished and replaced by merit increases. This is not quite accurate. Under the proposed system increments would still exist but would not be automatic (as in practice they are now) and in addition there would be provision for merit pay and salary acceleration.

Quality of the Teaching Force

3. Of course I agree with you that one of the main obstacles in the way of our policy to raise standards in schools is the poor quality of some of the existing teacher force. It would be possible in theory for the Government to fund a programme to buy out the numerous mediocre teachers and expand the intakes to initial teacher training (where quality will now be monitored against the more exacting criteria that I have just promulgated). But the cost would be too great.

4. The policy aim is to improve the mediocre teachers at a reasonable cost - via systematic management of the teacher force by the local authority employers. It has three key parts:

- i. A professional appraisal system - local authorities cannot exercise their responsibilities for managing the teacher force properly without this.

- ii. A new salary structure - designed to enable employers to reward teachers who perform well, show commitment and accept responsibility: and to withhold increments from those who do not.
- iii. In-service training which - like the Open University mathematics teaching programmes to which you referred during our talk - is based on techniques that have been shown to work.

5. Of course you are right to say that good heads appraise their staff now and that all heads ought to do so. But the local authorities ought to require the heads to do so, using known criteria, and ought also to appraise their heads. It is the employer who must dismiss an incompetent teacher, and he must have a case which, if challenged, stands up before an industrial tribunal. A systematic professional appraisal system would certainly facilitate the process. This is one of the aims of the policy.

A Pilot Project

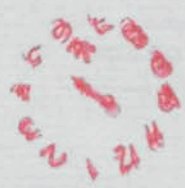
6. You suggested a pilot project to test the integrity of a professional appraisal system. I have now persuaded the LEAs to consider how we might seek hard evidence on this by examining the professional appraisal systems with which some authorities are experimenting. Our new Education (Grants and Awards) Act will provide the means of developing new and better ones.

7. I hope to be able to report back to you before the recess on progress.

8. I shall in addition be letting you have, in the near future, a note about what we can learn from France and Germany about the schools curriculum.

LY

Edward Arnold Pol. Pt 2



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