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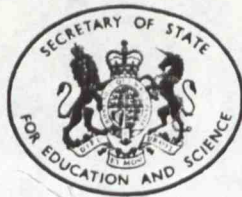
2.  
PRIME MINISTER

THE BISHOP OF LONDON 15/5.

1. I had a very good meeting with the Bishop of London on Thursday evening, when I explained to him our main education proposals.
2. I explained that our proposals on opting out aimed to create a new class of schools; a middle ground between the 93% local authority maintained sector and the 7% independent sector. Schools would have the opportunity of receiving direct grants from the Department and getting an even greater degree of independence than the Church Schools now enjoy. He welcomed this. The anxiety that he had expressed some two weeks ago was that we intended to abolish local education authorities altogether. He expressed the traditional suspicion of the Church towards state controlled education. He particularly welcomed the fact that opting out would allow schools, including Church Schools, in Brent and Haringey to become independent.
3. On ILEA, I told him that we intended to allow individual boroughs to opt out. He thought this was also a good thing. He was again concerned at the possibility of the disappearance of local education authorities in London.
4. I think this meeting did much to clear the air, and it's quite clear that he will be strongly supportive of these two proposals. He does not intend to say anything about this in the Election, but it's always possible that other Bishops may and they may not take his supportive line.
5. He also was very welcoming towards our proposals on rural schools.
6. He did take the opportunity to raise one other matter about which I believe he has written to you. That is the

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position of the Church under the community charge. He and the Church believe that the proposals not to give some exemption to Church property will cost the Church of England £10m and go back on the White Paper, and I think that the Church may well raise this in the Election. I thought you should just be aware of this.

7. I am copying this minute to Willie Whitelaw and Norman Tebbit.

*WJ*

KB  
Department of Education and Science

15 May 1987

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