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From the Principal Private Secretary

6 June 1988

Dear Tom,

## TORONTO SUMMIT: DISCUSSION OF LONG TERM ISSUES

It might help those preparing the briefing if I summarised the discussion among Sherpas of the sort of ground which might be covered in the Leaders' discussion of education and training under the heading of long term issues.

This topic was put forward at the third Sherpa meeting by my French colleague, though I wonder whether he had then consulted his President. Before the Sherpas discussed the topic at our weekend meeting, Attali had had to return to Paris. So what President Mitterrand will say when he leads off on this item is unclear!

That aside, the topics covered in the Sherpas discussion included:

- the effect of changes in the labour market on education, the growth of the service and hi-tech economy; growing illiteracy, in the old fashioned sense of "can't read and write", and in the new sense of "can't operate a computer"; training and retraining throughout a worker's life, both on the job and in educational and training institutions;
- budgetary constraints on education; is there sufficient "investment" in education? Should educational institutions be encouraged to compete with each other so as to help stimulate the sort of educational provision which economies need, and if so how? Encouragement of education/industry links;
- opportunity offered by hi-tech for delivering educational services; distance learning etc;
- broadening of education aspirations to illustrate the interdependence of the world; the need to convey national culture and history to young people.

All rather vague, I fear, and not much help to our briefers. But I suggest Mrs. Thatcher's briefing should be of a background nature, with the emphasis on facts and figures which can be used to illustrate the UK dimension of the points listed above. The briefs should avoid philosophising.

Pm



As my report to the Prime Minister noted, the US may suggest a topic for discussion. If there is one, we are promised news of it by the middle of the week.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Geoffrey Littler (HM Treasury), Rodric Braithwaite (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

*Truly  
Nigel Wicks.*

(N. L. WICKS)

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office