

PRIME MINISTER

Mr Prime Minister (2)

AT 23/2

#3
You were justifiably aggrieved that a letter you had signed during the election to the AUT has since been quoted against you and against the Government for the sentence it contains that 'the period of contraction is now nearing the end' and that our intention was to hold university spending 'steady in real terms after 1984/1985'.

You were certainly entitled to assume that the letter had been carefully considered before being put to you for signature.

It did reflect our then intention - as we had often articulated it, but it could have been drafted more cautiously.

It was not drafted by the DES. It was drafted by William Waldegrave and Oliver Letwin for my scrutiny and it was approved by me.

I thought that I should clear up where the responsibility lay. I am sorry that I did not ensure that cautionary words were included.

KJ

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