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*Mrs
Thatcher*

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

6th September, 1978.

John Mansour

I wonder if we are making a big enough song and dance about the Schools Council proposal to abolish the GCE examination and to introduce a single examination to replace both this and the CSE.

There is widespread concern about educational standards throughout the country, but so far the only really practical peg on which we have hung this issue has been the preservation of grammar schools, which is a big issue only in a very small number of areas. By contrast, the abolition of the GCE affects children and parents everywhere, and the threat of it is already causing considerable concern in my area, and in particular among working class parents. I realise, of course, that the Government is not committed to accepting this proposal; but it is well known to be of left-wing origin inspired by Socialist educational philosophy; and it is clear that the Government has not rejected the proposal, nor, I believe, is it likely to do so. It seems to me therefore, that we have the opportunity to make this into a big educational issue in the Election Campaign if we run it hard enough now, and that we might be able to persuade many "floating" parents to vote Conservative as the only means of ensuring that the GCE is not abolished.

*Yours truly
Nigel*

*P.S. Good luck!
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The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.