



FROM: THE RT.HON. SIR KEITH JOSEPH, Bt. MP.

KJ/SMC

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I entirely understand the content of your letter.

The intention of Mrs. Thatcher, I believe, is to instruct all her Ministers to take the interests of small businesses especially into account in all their work.

The difference between the two main Parties is that the Conservatives are, in principle, intensely concerned with the health of small businesses - on economic, social and political (that is, freedom) - grounds, while the Labour Party is, in general, antagonistic to free enterprise in all its forms.

It still remains true, despite this philosophic difference, that Conservative governments have not always taken the interests of small businesses enough into account and that Labour has now sought to redeem some of its brutalities by the belated appointment of Harold Lever to remedy part of the harm - but, as you say, only part of the harm - they have done.

Whether Mrs. Thatcher will, in fact, give a senior Minister a specific charge to oversee the work of the government in relation to small businesses, or whether she will just count on her relevant Ministers to put small business interests among their top priorities, I cannot say. This must be for her.

But I am sending on your letter to her, so that she will see your views. Do please bear in mind that the appointment of a Minister without a large Department behind him will have far less effect for good than the appointment of Ministers to key

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Departments who really ~~care~~, as I think you can be sure that all her existing Shadow appointments care, for the interests of small businesses.