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Margaret Thatcher

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KEY CABINET POST FOR MRS. THATCHER

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P. for Finchley and Friern Barnet for over 10 years, became Minister of Education when the Conservatives swept into power at the General Election last week.

Mrs. Thatcher, who was watching television at the Savoy Hotel, London, when the Tory victory began to become reality, was summoned to Downing Street on Saturday morning and asked to take over the post, formerly held by Edward Short, of Secretary of State for Education and Science.

She accepted the job and set to work straight away, reading papers over the week-end. She was in her office at the ministry early on Monday morning. On Tuesday she told the *Finchley Press* she had not been surprised by the Conservative victory—it was only the opinion polls which had led to confusion.

"I would have been happy with a majority of 20 seats," she said. "Most of the marginal seats I visited were won."

On polling day Mrs. Thatcher toured every polling station in the constituency, and later had a get-together with party workers at the Conservative Hall, North Finchley. She also spent some time at the Conservative Central Office, where she described the atmosphere as "terrific."

After visiting a party at the Daily Telegraph offices she went on to the Savoy, returning for the Finchley count on Friday morning. "I got only one and a half hours' sleep," she said, "but it was worth it."

As Minister of Education Mrs. Thatcher—who is said to have "one of the best brains in the Commons"—holds a key position in the Cabinet.

Would she like to become the first woman Prime Minister? "No," she answered emphatically, "there will not be a woman Prime Minister in my lifetime—the male population is too prejudiced."[\[fo 1\]](#)

NEW MOVES IN SCHOOL ROW

PLAN C: IT'S UP TO THE COUNCIL

The ball of Plan C is back in Barnet Council's court. This is the effect of the move made this week by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P., the new Education Minister, in withdrawing the compulsion on local authorities to make their schools comprehensive.

She followed this announcement by inviting representatives of the Barnet Borough Council rebels to meet her, and on Tuesday she told the Finchley Press that this withdrawal of compulsion, coupled with the continuing protests from teachers and parents, could not be ignored by the council.

"I continue to be bombarded by ordinary people about the present plan, and it seems to me that, on ordinary democratic grounds, the protests are getting so great that I would hope the local education authority would reconsider the plan."

The last position with Plan C before the Conservatives took over, was that it had been approved in principle by the then Education Minister, Mr. Edward Short, but final permission had been delayed pending a review of educational legislation: "If Plan C is submitted, I cannot say what my position would be because I would then be in a judicial capacity," said Mrs. Thatcher.

The need to draw up a comprehensive scheme for Barnet came when the Labour Government issued a circular compelling all local education authorities to do so.

Now this has been withdrawn: "We can go forward once again without compulsion, and will expect plans to be based on educational considerations rather than on the comprehensive principle."
interview