

RESTRICTED - HONOURS

*Richard,*  
*Grateful if you could sign the attached*

*Signed,*

DPA 19/12

DPA 20/12

FROM: Miss Wrighton

DATE: 18 December 2000



SIR RICHARD WILSON

**FORFEITURE: Robin David Peverett OBE**

We have been considering the case of forfeiture involving Mr Robin David Peverett OBE.

2. The members of the Forfeiture Committee have reviewed the case and have agreed that Mr Peverett should forfeit his OBE. The case is set out in detail in the attached papers, but in essence on 8 June 2000, at Maidstone Crown Court, he pleaded guilty to nine offences of indecent assault against children between 1969 and 1977, and was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment (suspended for two years). The case has been widely reported in the Press and we have received many letters from the public (seeking forfeiture).

3. Accordingly, I attach a draft minute for you to send to William Chapman with the draft submission for him to send to the Palace seeking The Queen's decision.

**DPA**

MISS J A WRIGHTON

RESTRICTED - HONOURS

**COMMITTEE ON THE FORFEITURE OF HONOURS**

**Note by the Ceremonial Officer, as Secretary**

The Chairman would be grateful if the committee would consider the case of Mr Robin David Peverett OBE, formerly Director of Education of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS).

**Background**

2. Mr Peverett was awarded the OBE in the New Year Honours List 1996, in recognition of his 37 years' service to education in the independent sector, as a result of a recommendation by the Department for Education and Employment. In addition to his work with IAPS (1985-1995), he was employed at Dulwich College Prep School, London between 1960 and 1990, serving as Headmaster from 1970 until his retirement in 1995.

3. In September 1999, following a police investigation of allegations of assault against pupils at the school between 1969 and 1977, Mr Peverett was charged with 16 counts of indecent assault against six girls and one boy (aged between 10 and 13) who were in his charge during that time. During the trial it came to light that all the assaults occurred whilst Mr Peverett was giving the children extra tuition and involved him spanking and fondling their private parts.

4. The case was subsequently heard at Maidstone Crown Court, and Mr Peverett pleaded guilty to nine of the offences. On 8 June 2000, he was sentenced to a total of 18 months imprisonment (suspended for two years), ordered to pay £6,500 prosecution costs and registered for 10 years under the Sex Offenders Act 1997. After widespread public concern over the undue leniency of the sentence, the Attorney General referred the case to the Court of Appeal. The case was heard on 16 October 2000, but the application was turned down on the grounds that Mr Peverett had pleaded guilty only after being advised that seven of the charges would not be proceeded with, and that he would be spared imprisonment by the judge at his trial. The appeal judges said the sentence could not be challenged because prosecuting

## RESTRICTED – HONOURS

counsel was actively involved in plea-bargaining. Throughout the investigation and subsequent trial the case has received a lot of media attention, the most recent being a television documentary in October 2000.

### **The forfeiture rule**

5. As the Committee will be aware, the rule is that forfeiture should be considered where the holder of an award is convicted of a crime, civil or criminal, which leads to a term of substantial imprisonment (usually three months or more) including suspended sentences. In recent years, forfeiture has also been considered in cases not involving conviction (or even charges) when the case is sufficiently serious as to call into disrepute the honours system. Particular regard is also paid to convictions that reflect adversely on the achievement for which the award was made, and in the last 10 years, there have been a number of cases of forfeiture involving child abuse/assault.

6. In Mr Peverett's case, the OBE was awarded for his work in education including his time at Dulwich. As he has now been convicted of serious offences against children (all of which occurred during the service recognised by his OBE), this appears to be a case that falls squarely within the rules for forfeiture.

### **Department's comments**

7. The Department for Education and Employment has been consulted and supports forfeiture action.

### **Comments by the Secretary**

8. Mr Peverett was awarded his OBE in the belief that he had made a meritorious contribution to education – as an adviser, counsellor and supporter of heads, teachers and parents in preparatory and senior schools alike as well as his own time as a headteacher. However, his conviction for offences against children must call his suitability to continue to hold the honour into question, and also constitutes a betrayal of the trust placed in him as a master and headmaster of a school. It would seem that to allow him to continue to hold the OBE would bring the honours system into disrepute.

RESTRICTED – HONOURS