

# Conservative Party Conference 1

## 'union irresponsibility'

Reports: Alan Wood, Bernard Withers, Geoffrey Browning, Sara Bonner and Tony Hodges

The Government had to hammer home the need for common sense about pay, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer, told the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool yesterday.

All the jobs saved by a courageous management could be destroyed by irresponsible union action, he said. There could not be a choice between measures to combat inflation and measures to combat unemployment.

Sir Geoffrey, winding up the debate on economic policy and taxation, quoted the Conservative manifesto of 1970 under which the party had won the election: "In implementing economic policy, the Government will be guided by the need to curb inflation while at the same time ensuring that the strategy succeeds."

Conditions in the world were far more hostile today than they were 10 years ago, he said. Inflation was not just a fact of life, it was a social evil in the country today.

There was no difference between them on that. He had been born and brought up in Port Talbot in the heart of the once proud Welsh steel industry, and he had seen the queue had been an unforgettable part of the background.

Believe me, a chancellor of the Exchequer does not just do the sums. It is because of my past experience of unemployment that I feel and I care deeply about the people who are outside this hall about them.

Understand the anxiety and the uncertainty about whether we have got the right answers, and solutions that will work in the long run.

The causes of today's unemployment had been building for many years. Last year, a barrel of oil cost 22 times as much as it had 10 years before.

In the campaign for more jobs, the main battle must be against inflation. Those people who said they had to use every penny to pay for their mortgages were absolutely right.

If their critics were to be believed, people would imagine that the Government had imposed severe cuts in investment in the nationalized



Mr Heath — conducting his own symphony

## Rating review

# Minister pledges long term reform; referendums stay

The government will shortly be publishing its review of the ways in which the rating system could be reformed, Mr Peter King, Minister for Local Government and Environmental Services, announced when replying to a question in the House of Commons.

Mr King explained that the government would then consider the merits of a referendum on the subject.

The conference backed the government's plans for local referendums on the subject of raising higher rates.

Mr John Dawson, Keighley, said that most of the Tory Party's voters were in the South-east, just like most of the SDP voters.

Mr David Evans, St Albans, said that the Conservative Party's policies were the people's policies.

Mr J. J. Vernon, Birmingham, said that the industry had suffered from years of consensus politics.

Mr Cyril Taylor, Ruislip, North, moved an addendum urging the government in the House of Commons to pass immediate legislation requiring local authorities to seek the approval of the electorate through a referendum.

Mr Jim Cooper, national vice-chairman of the Young Conservatives, said the resolution failed to take account of the problem. The whole of local government financing was in a mess.

Mr Anthony Durant, MP for Reading, north, and chairman of the National Advisory Committee on Local Government, said that local government had generally spent its budget within its targets.

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# Unilateralism the enemy of disarmament

Unilateralism not its enemy, Mr Peter King, Minister for Local Government and Environmental Services, said in the defence debate.

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## 'We both want a united party'

Reiterating his call for "one man, one voice" in the Conservative Party, Mr Edward Heath, the former prime minister, declared that people wanted to know if the Government was prepared to accept a united party.

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## Food and farming Survival, and success too

During two years of recession, British agriculture had not only survived but had thrived, Peter Walker, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, said when he replied to a debate on the subject in the House of Commons.

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## Industry Telecom investment

A government announcement is expected soon about the raising of new capital for investment in British industry.

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## Race relations Repatriation rejected

Britain could not wish any situation to arise in which families could be massive repatriation, Mr Timothy Raison, Minister of State for the Home Office, said in the debate on race relations.

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