

PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr. Howe

(F)

Boundary Commission for Scotland

Attached is a short summary of the report of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Scotland which the Secretary of State has now received and which he proposes to lay before the House on 24 February. The Commission proposes 72 constituencies, an increase of one. This of course perpetuates the over-representation of Scotland compared with England and Wales. The electoral quota for England is 66,000, that for Wales 59,000 and for Scotland 54,000.

The recommendations of the Commission are radical. Only 2 constituencies (Orkney and Shetland and the Western Isles) remain unchanged. The main loser is Glasgow which goes down from 14 seats to 11 (which is one more than it should have on a strict application of the quota). The changes will lead to a considerable number of Labour MPs having to seek selection against each other.

T. FLESHER

22 February 1983



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CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
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21 February 1983

Dear Willie,

PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND

When I wrote to you on 10 February I indicated that I hoped to receive the Scottish report shortly and aimed to lay the draft Scottish Order in time for it to be considered by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments on 1 March. I am glad to say that I have now received the report. I now plan to lay it with a draft constituencies order on Thursday 24 February. Printing is in hand to meet this timetable.

In my letter I said that I proposed to proceed on the basis of the Commission's recommendations, and the Constituencies Order is drafted accordingly. I enclose a brief analysis of the Commission's recommendations together with a note on the various representations made, all of which have been considered by the Commission, from whose recommendations I see no good reason to depart.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to members of the Cabinet, the Lord Advocate, the Attorney General, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours ever,
George.*

PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND

ANALYSIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Scotland have recommended 72 constituencies, one more than at present. (The Commissions for England and Wales have recommended 523 and 38 constituencies, ie 7 and 2 more, respectively, than at present.)

The number of seats

The Commission's recommendation for an additional seat arose out of their consideration of the report of the local inquiry into their original proposals for 10 seats in the City of Glasgow District. They decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation for 11 seats in order to accord more closely with the Rules in the Schedule to the House of Commons (Redistribution of Seats) Act 1949, as amended. The recommendation for 11 seats in Glasgow is likely to prove contentious, in view of their rejection of claims for additional seats in Grampian, Highland and Tayside Regions and especially because they have limited Grampian Region to 6 seats despite the recent and continuing growth in electorate. The chief gain in seats falls to Fife Region, where the number of seats recommended is 5 instead of the present 4, partly because of Glenrothes New Town.

Overall view

The Commission's proposals for new constituencies are radical. Only the 2 islands area constituencies (Orkney and Shetland, and Western Isles) remain completely unchanged in either electorate size or area. The main reason is the change in local authority areas following the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Under the Rules, the Commission must have regard to the boundaries of local authority areas. They decided to adhere to the new regional boundaries in all cases. In addition population shifts have led to electoral disparities, resulting in large electorates in the areas with New Towns and small electorates in some city constituencies in Edinburgh and Glasgow; these cities accordingly lose one seat and 3 seats respectively. Almost one third of the existing constituencies have electorates within a margin of 10% above or below the 1978 electoral quota of 53,649 (on which the recommendations are based) and more than a further quarter are within 20% above or below. More than a half (57%) of the recommended constituencies are within the 10% margin above or below the quota, and a further third are within 20% above or below.

CONTENTIOUS AREAS

General: The increase in the number of seats from 71 to 72, particularly arising from the allocation of 11 seats to Glasgow instead of 10 as the Commission originally proposed.

Central Region:

(i) The removal from the proposed Stirling constituency of ED13 in Stirling District and its inclusion, as recommended by the Assistant Commissioner, in the proposed Clackmannan constituency; and the Commission's refusal to hold a further inquiry.

(ii) The splitting of Stenhousemuir between 2 constituencies.

Grampian Region:

(i) The allocation of 6 rather than 7 constituencies (and 2 instead of 3 for Aberdeen City) despite recent and continuing growth in the electorate. The proposed Gordon constituency, which includes parts of Aberdeen City, had a 1982 electorate of 64,200.

(ii) The loss of the present Banff constituency (1978 electorate 33,176) and the use of the name "Moray county" for the new constituency, which contains much of the former county of Banff.

Highland Region:

(i) The allocation of 3 rather than 4 constituencies despite the electoral and geographical size of one of the proposed constituencies (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber, which also includes Badenoch and Strathspey, with a 1978 electorate of almost 62,000).

(ii) The removal of ED41A, in the former burgh of Inverness, from the present Inverness seat and its inclusion with 2 other EDs in Inverness District in the proposed Ross, Cromarty and Skye constituency.

Lothian Region:

The inclusion in the proposed Edinburgh West constituency, as recommended by the Assistant Commissioner following a second local inquiry, of ED26 (Moat/Stenhouse) instead of in Edinburgh Central.

Strathclyde Region:

(i) The allocation of 11 seats to Glasgow, as recommended by the Assistant Commissioner, instead of 10 as originally proposed, and the boundaries of some of the proposed 11 seats, especially Hillhead.

(ii) The inclusion of Larkhall (in Hamilton District) in the proposed Clydesdale constituency instead of Hamilton constituency.

(iii) The inclusion of South Lenzie in the proposed Monklands West constituency (which includes parts of Airdrie and Coatbridge) instead of in Strathkelvin and Bearsden constituency with the rest of Lenzie.

(iv) The name "Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley" instead of "South Ayrshire".

Tayside Region:

Continued division of Dundee into Dundee East and Dundee West instead of into Dundee North and Dundee South.

Tayside and Grampian:

The allocation of only 11 seats to Tayside and Grampian, taken together, instead of 12 including one that would straddle regional boundaries.