

Devolution

Ancian

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19th January 1977

Thank you for your letter and for the draft response you sent me from the Scottish Daily Express. I know you have seen Francis Pym, and I have spoken to him because of the question concerning what powers the Assembly would have.

The great question is how far do we stick to the Douglas-Home proposals or do we depart from them? As you know, Francis, together with Scottish colleagues, is working on this very urgently, and we are trying to reconcile the varying viewpoints.

I have stuck strictly to the Douglas-Home proposals in the firm belief that if introduced they would be workable and acceptable. My feelings are that if we go much further than that there will be virtually no stopping power before a quasi-federal structure is established, and if we were contemplating that system, then a number of questions arise to which we have not yet addressed our minds.

The really important thing now is that we agree upon the powers of the Assembly and that we all stick to that agreement. For this reason I thought it wise to delay the reply to you. I am sure you will constantly be in touch with Francis and with Teddy Taylor. *Can you explain to the Express that I would*

I understand that last weekend's Candidates' Conference went very well and that things are now settling down.

For your own personal information you might be interested to know that recently we did an analysis of the letters that I have received about devolution, and to my surprise 60% of them were in favour of the line taken by the Shadow Cabinet on the Scotland and Wales Bill. I mention this because I personally dealt only with those who were critical of our action, and until the count was made I received a rather false impression.

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There are of course always varying interpretations of statistics, and while I feel we should not draw too many conclusions from these, I firmly believe that the fact should be made known to those like yourself who are closely involved in this issue.

Thank you for everything that you are doing in Edinburgh. I know how much time you are devoting to Party activities throughout Scotland, and hope that it will not be too long before your efforts are given a chance of bearing electoral fruit.

Michael Ancram Esq
Vice Chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party.