



10 DOWNING STREET

13th May 1980

Private and Confidential

Bill Dalziel was kind enough to drive Derek Howe and me from Edinburgh to Perth on Friday and back again to Edinburgh on the Saturday.

We were discussing the affairs of our Party in Scotland.

He said that it was not his policy to find Candidates for enemy-held constituencies at this stage.

He said that it was reasonable to expect that if an Association did adopt a Candidate now, that Candidate would have the approval of the current Chairman of the Association, but that the Chairman could well change once or twice between now and the Election, and that then the new Chairman might not work happily with the Candidate, and there would be great in-fighting within the Association. He went on to say that he did not believe in continuous campaigning for new members of our Party in large constituencies and that Elections in Scotland were decided in the three weeks of the campaign.

It may be that things are very different in Scotland, but this attitude by the Deputy Chairman, in charge of Candidates, runs so counter to my own philosophy and experience, that I thought that I ought to write to you.

In the first place, I do not believe that Elections are won in three weeks. They are often won or lost in the years before polling day, and one essential ingredient for success is that the Candidate should have had as long a period as possible to publicise himself through the local newspapers and become known to the committed Conservatives and the floating voters.

The Candidate should become a real leader in the Association, and one of his prime tasks is to lead a team

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of Party activists which can recruit new members for our Party throughout the year. It seems to be a most defeatist attitude to say that the early choice and adoption of a Prospective Candidate will give the opportunity for some members of the Association to become disillusioned with him.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Lord Thorneycroft.

Ian Gow MP
Parliamentary Private Secretary

Michael Ancram Esq MP

13th May 1980

It really was extremely good of you to have taken the trouble to meet Derek Howe and me at the airport on Friday and to have driven us back on Saturday. Thank you so very much.1

From our point of view, we travelled in much greater comfort than would otherwise have been the case and we valued, greatly the opportunity of talking to you about the progress of our Party in Scotland.

With renewed thanks ~~and~~ your kindness.

Ian Gow MP
Parliamentary Private Secretary

Bill Dalziel Esq TD DL JP