

DEVOLUTION STUDY GROUP

(A Paper by Mr. Whitelaw)

1. The Devolution White Paper is expected about the middle of November. My colleagues from Wales and Scotland and I will no doubt have to appear on TV and answer questions about the Conservative attitude. Although there are many detailed and difficult questions which will arise during the course of the legislation, what we need at the present moment is clear guidance as to our initial reaction.
2. There are three possible positions that we could adopt:
 - (i) We could oppose the whole idea of an Assembly for Scotland. We have ruled this out unanimously because successive Leaders of the Party have committed us to a Scottish Assembly, and because the proposal has been included in our Election Manifestos and approved by Conferences of the Scottish Conservative Party.
 - (ii) We could base our case on a Scottish Assembly, directly elected, with legislative powers on the Douglas-Home model, but with no executive powers, these being retained by the Secretary of State and the other Scottish Ministers. It should here be noted, for consideration at a later stage, that there is considerable pressure in the Scottish Conservative Party for this direct election to be carried out by a system of proportional representation.
 - (iii) We could accept what we suspect is likely to be the Government's proposal, a directly elected legislative Assembly with considerable executive powers.
3. It has to be accepted that if 2(iii) is chosen, the questions of the position of the Secretary of State and of the number of Scottish Members at Westminster are bound to arise.
4. Our position on Wales, namely against an elected Assembly, but for increased powers for the Secretary of State, a new Select Committee of Welsh MPs, and a strengthened Welsh Council, remains unchanged.
5. I should like my colleagues to hear the views - sometimes conflicting - of those of us who are on the Devolution Study Group. We are prepared to speak to our various points of view, but feel that it is essential at this time to have guidance as to our immediate reaction to the White Paper.

W.W.

Reason For UK - No Revolution for England.

100/25787

Mandate, Revolution in Scottish Members

Toppling Coming back would help Nats.

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There are three possible positions that we could adopt:

(i) We could oppose the whole idea of an Assembly for Scotland. We have tried this out unanimously because executive leaders of the Party have committed us to a Scottish Assembly, and because the proposal has been included in our Election Manifesto and approved by Conference of the Scottish Conservative Party.

(ii) We could base our case on a Scottish Assembly directly elected, with legislative powers on the Douglas-Home model, but with no executive powers, these being retained by the Secretary of State and the other Scottish Ministers. It should here be noted, for consideration at a later stage, that there is considerable pressure in the Scottish Conservative Party for this direct election to be carried out by a system of proportional representation.

(iii) We could accept what we suspect is likely to be the Government's proposal, a directly elected legislative Assembly with considerable executive powers.

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