

Buchanan-Smith
Devolution
BUCHANAN-SMITH

(F)

5 April 1977

Thank you for your letter of March 31st.
It seems to be very realistic.

Our commitment to the principle of a directly elected assembly for Scotland, as outlined in the Shadow Cabinet statement of December 8th, and on numerous other occasions, stands. I have not retracted it and I do not intend to do so.

However, I do not believe it would be sensible to put forward detailed proposals at this stage because the situation is changing all the time. Exactly what we say in an election campaign must depend upon the circumstances at the time of that election; the progress of the all party talks; and the proposals, if any, the Government has advanced in the meantime.

For the moment, I agree with you that we should keep our options open. There are dangers in suggesting a detailed policy prematurely. We are committed now to an all-party convention, without preconditions, to see whether or not it is possible to reach any degree of accord on the issues raised by the call for devolution. I am sure that would be the best way forward.

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