

SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST ASSOCIATION



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The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

Dear Prime Minister,

At this difficult time may I send you my very warmest support and good wishes?

It would be foolish of me to deny, however, that there is considerable anxiety among our supporters in Scotland. For a few there is disillusion but for many it is an anxiety which shadows an overwhelming belief that what you are fighting for is right and is vitally necessary.

Yet those same people are fearful when they see unemployment rise, worried when they contemplate the 20 pence rise in fuel tax and angry when they observe the levels of public sector spending. In a way, what they feel, and their sense of confusion, is epitomised in the reaction I have had from many in Scotland - they curse the Chancellor roundly for the 20 pence fuel increase and at the same time encourage you to stand firm.

The mid-term period is always a difficult one for Party morale and the more so when successive governments have lulled us into an unearned and ill-deserved sense of security and well-being. As a result, some of our people inevitably challenge the nature and validity of the reality which we now ask the Nation to face up to. This is not so much a crumbling of morale but rather a sense of insecurity born of unfamiliarity. Essentially they need reassurance and/

and certainly in the Party meetings I have addressed in Scotland they agree wholeheartedly that to change from our present strategy to one of the paliatives so often suggested to you would avail us nothing. Indeed, it would be like halting a course of antibiotics before the infection was cured thus ensuring that the infection would flare up again in even more virulent and stubborn form.

It has taken me too long to come to the main point of this letter which is to express my great concern and dismay at the well-fed and fostered documentation of dissenting views and attitudes within the Cabinet. Nothing causes more uncertainty, doubt and disaffection among our members (and, I suspect, among the public at large) than to read or hear that some members of the Cabinet disapprove of some of the things the Government is doing.

Of course it would be unhealthy if there were no genuine debate on the issues discussed in the Cabinet but any such divergences of opinion should not be a matter of public knowledge, public debate and public derision.

You may recall that I raised a related point at Lord Thorneycroft's dinner party at our Bournemouth Central Council. My concerns expressed then have grown rather than diminished and I can only hope that those who indulge in this damaging consort with the media will come to realise that they make the work of all those who seek to serve the best interests of the Party intensely and unnecessarily difficult in these challenging times.

With my very warmest good wishes
to you and to Mr Thatcher.

Yours sincerely,
Alistair

DR ALISTAIR SMITH
President