

Prime Minister ①

Policy Unit have raised an additional point. No decision has been taken on whether to introduce a general English Bill or a Liverpool-only Bill. If the latter looks preferable, Mr Younger needs to be ready with an Edinburgh-only Bill. Agree?

AT 1/8

PRIME MINISTER

1 August 1985

I do not like the prospect of a general bill. It would give the wrong signals.

Need a general bill.

MISC 109: EDINBURGH

George Younger wants to nurse Edinburgh into solvency by giving them a 'marginal' amount of extra spending power.

It is not clear what 'marginal' means: in Scotland, the bills are usually rather larger than they at first appear.

In England, Patrick Jenkin has waged an extremely successful campaign by giving nothing away. Why shouldn't George Younger do the same in Scotland?

We are also extremely sceptical about a general UK Commissioners Bill. All Commissioners Bills are bad; a general Bill for England is worse yet; and a general UK Bill is the worst of all. There is no need to have such a Bill: if Patrick Jenkin can produce a Liverpool-only draft, George Younger can surely produce an Edinburgh-only version.

Commissioners should not be needed in Edinburgh anyway: all the signs are that, if George Younger's nerves don't fail, the council will give way before a crisis occurs.

We recommend that you should:

- ask George Younger to give nothing away; and
- remind him that general Commissioners legislation is to be avoided at all costs.

Oliver Letwin

OLIVER LETWIN