



Current Events in our Politics: A Primer

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A lot has happened over the past week. A government has formed, inter-partisan politics has become a hot topic, and we now all await what the “Celtic Labour” coalition will pledge as its key priorities. Our nation is very evidently eager to see how their newly-elected leadership will work to fix the issues of our time, and as we all await the King’s Speech, I wish to provide my constituents and my fellow countrymen at large with as much information as I can.

Firstly, let us start with the elephant in the room: What happened to the Liberal Democrats earlier this week? Put simply, our membership rejected two coalition deals, and it caused some brief internal tumult. A handful of our members regretfully departed the party in protest of this decision. As someone who voted for both proposals, I was indeed disappointed in my fellow Liberal Democrats’ decision to reject the agreements outright. I believed that the frameworks we provided were workable (albeit certainly not ideal), and that it would be better to promote our vision from within the governing coalition rather than from opposition. However, the concerns expressed by the dissenting majority were not unfounded in the slightest.

The agreement with the broader left (Labour, Green, SDLP & Alliance, respectively), while largely agreeable in substance, had no blueprint for prioritisation. The sheer number of stated aims within the document were not all achievable within a single Parliamentary term, and when members repeatedly inquired about this issue, concrete answers were not provided. I personally advocated for managing that problem during the King’s Speech drafting process, but I cannot blame those who did not feel comfortable entering an agreement without having resolved that concern in advance.

As for the proposed agreement with the Conservative Party, a number of very different factors created discomfort. While the deal was much leaner than its broad-left counterpart, it also included a number of policies for which members found unsavoury. I distinctly remember a handful of policies pertaining to benefit means testing being strongly reviled by membership. The Liberal Democrats are strong advocates for fostering a robust and well-administered benefits structure, and even the prospect of creating difficulty for administrative entities was a bridge too far for some. I personally believed that these things were manageable so long as we did our due diligence (a feat I am certain any government including the Liberal Democrats would accomplish), but I will not fault my fellow party members if they disagreed with my assessment. Additionally, given Reform’s recalcitrance during negotiations, the coalition would not have had a majority, and would have struggled mightily to pass a King’s Speech. In fairness, many

members (myself included) were hesitant to govern with Reform at all given their extreme policy redlines (even in a Confidence & Supply arrangement in which they would not hold cabinet positions), and I likely would've refused to vote for the deal had Reform not publicly exited negotiations prior to our voting process.

As a final note on the inner workings of this subject, I would like to take the time to address a handful of ill-advised quips from the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. PM Inadorable's statement to the press included a remark that painted the Liberal Democrats' backbench as having "abstain[ed]" from their jobs and "bring[ing] about chaos" through their rejection of the aforementioned coalition proposal. I must fervently disagree with this rhetoric both as a Liberal Democrat backbencher and as a Briton. While I was supportive of the deal, I am but one Member of Parliament. Each member was elected at least partly for their constituency's trust in their judgement. It would be deeply irresponsible for any member to vote in favour of an agreement that they do not believe would properly advance their community's interests. Despite my disagreement with the overall choice of the party, I am a steadfast supporter of independent decision-making, and I commend those who made their choice out of true care for those that elected them rather than out of self-interest or petty partisanship. If every elected official did the same, our country would be a much stabler and stronger place. As for DPM model-ben's statement referring to my party as a "shell of their former status" and implying that those of us who remained members were not "true" Liberal Democrats, I couldn't disagree more. The two Members of Parliament who left us for Alliance were and still are friends of mine, and I will not disparage them for the decision they've made. However, their defections do not make them "true Liberal Democrats" nor does our choice to retain membership within the Liberal Democrats diminish our party or values in any way. On the contrary, our commitment to our ideals is strong enough to trump any desire to jump ship at a difficult juncture. I would strongly advise both Inadorable and model-ben to focus on the issues in which we can cooperate going forward. I believe our country would be best served if we work together whenever possible as opposed to engaging in unnecessary bickering.

Ultimately, neither of these proposals panned out, and we are now a part of the opposition. What does that mean for us? It means that we have an obligation to our constituents to fight for the values in which we were elected. That entails cooperating with the government or other opposition parties wherever possible to deliver on our promises to Britons, and holding the government to account if it does not adhere to proper ethics and propriety. I can say with confidence that the Liberal Democrats remain willing and able to do just that. We remain completely committed to advancing a vision to benefit every person in the United Kingdom. We will continue to fight for fairness throughout every aspect of the relationship between the British people and their government, and no amount of adversity will prevent us from accomplishing that.

Our country's new government has many challenges ahead of it. We have a cost-of-living crisis to solve, several international issues to confront, and a variety of critical institutions to maintain. I remain optimistic that the Celtic Labour coalition will act in good faith to deliver positive solutions for the United Kingdom. If they fail to do this, I wholeheartedly pledge that I will work tirelessly to ensure they face accountability. I have no doubt that the Liberal Democrats will be right by my side in that effort.