



Reference Biography Service

BIO Book

THE RT HON DAVID STEEL, MP

Mr David Steel is Leader of the Liberal Party and Member of Parliament for Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles.

David Martin Scott Steel was born in 1938 (his father, the Very Rev Dr David Steel, was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland from 1974-75), and spent four of his years at school in Nairobi and has travelled extensively in Africa. He was also educated at George Watson's College, Edinburgh, and at the University of Edinburgh where he read Law. He was President of the University Liberal Club and of the Students' Representative Council. In 1960 he was a member of the first delegation of Scottish students to visit the Soviet Union; the following year, in his capacity of President of the Students' Representative Council, he visited centres in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Berlin and also visited Yugoslavia.

Before entering Parliament Mr Steel was a journalist and broadcaster and a television reporter for BBC Scotland. After being Assistant Secretary of the Scottish Liberal Party Mr Steel was elected to Parliament for his present constituency at a by-election in March 1965, and became the youngest Member in the 1964-66 House of Commons. He sponsored a Private Member's Bill to reform the law on abortion, a Bill which became law in 1967, and the same year was a member of the British Parliamentary Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. He has been a member of the Foreign Secretary's UN Advisory Committee since 1968. From 1970-75 he was Liberal Chief Whip in the House of Commons, and from January-July 1976 spokesman on Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. He was elected Leader of the Liberal Party in July 1976 and created a Privy Counsellor in December the same year.

In 1973 Mr Steel undertook a lecture tour of the United States for the British Information Services. He is also a regular broadcaster on political matters on radio and television; a former President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement of Great Britain; and a former Chairman of the Scottish Advisory Council of Shelter (the National Campaign for the Homeless).

His publications include *Boost for the Borders* (1964); *Out of Control* (1968) and *No Entry* (1969). He has also contributed articles to *The Times*, *The Guardian* and other newspapers and to political weeklies.

Mr Steel is married (his wife is a solicitor) and has two sons and a daughter. His recreations include motoring, trout fishing and riding.

Photograph No ZZZ186558 issued by COI Photographs Division

January 1977

