

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 167th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Wednesday, 29th June 1977, in the Leader's
Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Lord Carrington,
Lord Hailsham, Sir Geoffrey Howe,
Mr. Pym, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton,
Mr. Davies, Mr. Neave, Mr. Heseltine,
Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Maude,
Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott, Mr. King,
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Taylor,
Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Mrs. Percival, Mrs. Fowler,
Mrs. Baker (for the last item),
Mrs. Butler, Mr. Patten, Mrs. Hooson,
Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Thorneycroft,
Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Prior,
Sir Michael Haverá.

1. Proposed Business for the Week, 4th-11th July

On Monday, 4th July, there would be a Supply Day debate on a subject chosen by the Nationalist Parties. This would be followed by the Remaining Stages of the Passenger Vehicles (Experimental Areas) Bill (Mr. Fowler).

On Tuesday, 5th July, Mr. J. More would seek leave to introduce his Heritage Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Motion on the Army, Air Force and Naval Discipline Acts (Continuation) Order, and by the Remaining Stages of the Merchant Shipping (Safety Convention) Bill (Mr. I. Lloyd) and of the Torts (Interference with Goods) Bill (Mr. N. Mischampbell).

On Wednesday, 6th July, Mr. C. Freud would seek leave to introduce his Public Health Act 1936 (Amendment) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the first day of debate on the Second Reading of the European Assembly Elections Bill.

On Thursday, 7th July, there would be the final day of debate on the Second Reading of the European Assembly Elections Bill. This would be followed by Motions on Ministers' and Members' Pay and Secretarial Allowance (Mr. Pym).

On Friday, 8th July, there would be the Remaining Stages of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Bill (Mr. Rossi).

On Monday, 11th July, there would be Private Members' Motions, the first being that of Mr. Charles Morrison. This would be followed by Opposed Private Business.

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion with regard to the Supply Debate on 4th July on a subject chosen by the Nationalist Parties: a Motion to reduce the salary of the Prime Minister. It was agreed that Mr. Taylor would speak from the front bench in this debate and we would vote on a three line whip.

With regard to the S.O.S debate on the withdrawal of the Post Office Service to Grunwick Ltd. the following day, it was agreed that Sir Michael Havers would speak and would emphasise the need for the Government to stand firm in support of the Post Office in warning its employees of the consequences of their withdrawing the postal service to Grunwick. There would be no whip, and it was noted that we might wish to return to the subject in the House if the Government's attitude was unsatisfactory.

3. European Assembly Elections Bill

It was agreed that Mr. Whitelaw, Mr. Davies, Mr. Hurd and either Mr. Rippon, if he wished, or Mr. Alison, would speak in the debate.

There was a discussion on the tactics we should adopt in dealing with this Bill, especially with regard to fears that the Government would not make the appropriate arrangements in time to enable the elections to be held in 1978 on a first-past-the-post system, if Parliament in due course voted in favour of such a system. The following points were agreed:

(i) We should seek to discover what the powers of the present Boundary Commission were and what machinery was necessary to draw up boundaries to enable the European Assembly elections to be held on a first-past-the-post system.

(ii) We should seek to discover from the Prime Minister whether he was prepared to set up the necessary machinery to ensure that the House had a genuine choice between the two systems of election, and we should investigate further the possibility of tabling an addendum for the Second Reading instructing the Government to set up the necessary machinery.

(iii) We were committed to vote for the principle of direct elections to the European Assembly.

4. Other Business

Mr. Baker gave a resumé of his discussion paper, "Maybe It's because We Are Londoners...", which was to be published the following day. The Shadow Cabinet congratulated him and his colleagues on their work and it was noted that this was a discussion document, produced for the forthcoming "London Looks Forward" conference and that the Party was not necessarily committed to all its proposals.

The meeting closed at 6.12 p.m.