

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

188TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 1st February 1978, in
the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 186th and 187th Meetings.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events.
4. Any other business.

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 188th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 1st February 1978, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Thorneycroft, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Davies, Mr. Neave, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott, Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Hayhoe, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Lord Carrington, Lord Hailsham, Mr. Pym, Mr. Prior.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 6th-13th February

On Monday, 6th February, there would be Private Members' Motions, the first one being that of Rear Admiral Morgan Giles on Soviet aims in Africa. This would be followed by a resumed debate on the Motion on House of Commons (Sound Broadcasting) (Mr. Cooke) and by a Motion on the Third Report of the Committee of Privileges in Session 1976/77 (Sir Michael Havers).

On Tuesday, 7th February, Mr. Tim Smith would seek leave to introduce his Sale of Council Houses Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Supply Day, and by the Remaining Stages of the Shipbuilding (Redundancy Payments) Bill (Mr. Lamont, Mr. Grylls).

On Wednesday, 8th February, Mr. Goodhew would seek leave to introduce his Overseas Aid Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the 2nd day of the Committee Stage of the European Assembly Elections Bill (Mr. Whitelaw and team).

On Thursday, 9th February, there would be the Second Reading of the Inner Urban Areas Bill (Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Eyre).

On Friday, 10th February, there would be the Private Members Bills of Mr. C. Townsend (Protection of Children Bill), Mr. W. Churchill, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, Mr. J. Cockcroft and Mr. G. Pattie.

On Monday, 13th February, there would be a Supply Day.

2. Matters Arising on Business

It was agreed that we would seek to give substantial support to Mr. Tim Smith's 10 Minute Rule Bill on 7th February.

It was understood that the Government were not likely to oppose Mr. Townsend's Protection of Childrer Bill.

3. Subjects for the Supply Days

After a discussion, it was agreed that we should debate the Government's industrial strategy on the Supply Day on 7th February. There would be a Motion, and Sir Keith Joseph would open with Mr. Lamont closing. This debate would not include discussion of the state of the steel industry which it was desirable to debate when the Select Committee's Report had been published. The subjects for the Supply Day on Monday, 13th February, would be decided the following week; among suggestions were the Government's policy of black listing firms that were alleged to have broken the so-called 10% pay limit, and armed forces pay, perhaps to be debated if servicemen were used to circumvent the oil tanker drivers' industrial action. It was further agreed that if the latter debate were to take place, we should aim to be in a position to say something positive about how we would try to deal with servicemen's pay ourselves. (The subject for 7th February was later changed).

4. Immigration

There was a discussion. The following points were agreed:

(i) It would be desirable to have a debate on the subject when we had finalised the details of our policy, perhaps on a Supply Day and preferably when the Select Committee's Report had been published.

(ii) We should meanwhile hold to the proposals laid down by Mr. Whitelaw in his speech to the 1976 Party Conference.

(iii) We might, in addition, draw attention particularly to the Prime Minister's contradictory statements about "loopholes" and to his provision of misleading statistics at Question Time the previous day.

5. Other Business

Mrs. Thatcher reported that a sub-committee had been set up to propose activities, other than speeches, for the Summer Recess to attract the attention of the media: Mr. Prior had already suggested a seminar on unemployment after publication of the August figures (which would include large numbers of unemployed school leavers).

Mr. Peyton reported on the latest developments regarding the devaluation of the Green Pound, and it was agreed that, as far as possible, we should seek to blame Mr. Silkin's previous handling of the issue rather than the EEC, for the difficulties the Government had encountered in their attempt to implement the Motion carried by the House of Commons on 23rd January.

6. Future Meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting of the LCC on Wednesday, 8th February, should discuss Mrs. Oppenheim's paper on prices and competition policy and that law and order would be discussed at the meeting on February 15th.

The meeting closed at 6.05 p.m.