

LCC

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

235TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Monday, 5th March 1979, in the
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Present Parliamentary and political situation.
2. Any other business.

Conservative Research Department,
24 Old Queen Street, London, SW1

CFP/ASD
28.2.79

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 235th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Monday, 5th March 1979, 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,
Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour,
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Neave,
Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stevas,
Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott,
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor,
Mr. Carlisle, Mr. Biffen.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Fowler,
Lord Denham, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Patten, Mr. Wolfson, Mr. Ridley
Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Gleeson

Apologies: Lord Carrington

1. Referendum Results

Mrs. Thatcher congratulated all those concerned in producing the remarkably good results in the Scotland and Wales referendums and in the by-elections at Knutsford and Clitheroe.

2. Supply Day

There was a discussion on the subject for the Supply Day on 8th March, and it was agreed that we should debate the workings of the Employment Protection Act. The debate would be on the adjournment, and we would seek also to discuss the attitudes of the National Graphical Association and SLADE. There would be a 3 line whip for 7.00 p.m. Other subjects suggested for early debate were energy, broadcasting and the future of the IBA, and, when certain developments had become clearer, foreign affairs.

3. Our Reactions to the Referendum Results

There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) We should adopt a cautious approach as we relied, for the time being, on those Labour MP's and their supporters who had played such an important role in the 'No' campaign, to secure repeal of the Acts. As the first priority was to secure repeal, we should not refer to any intention to table Motions of no confidence for the time being.

(ii) In commenting on the results we should continue to draw attention to the fact that the 'yes' campaigners had insisted that an abstention was tantamount to a 'no' vote.

(iii) We should constantly press the Government to repeal the Acts in the very near future.

(iv) We should carefully avoid making any further commitments and should adopt great caution when being interviewed in the media or when commenting to the press.

(v) If the Prime Minister called for all-Party talks we should indicate the difficulties in holding such talks in what was, in effect, a dying Parliament.

(vi) A statement would be issued to the press on the following lines: "In view of the results of the referendums the Shadow Cabinet considers that the Government should lay the necessary Orders to repeal the Scotland and Wales Acts without delay".

(vii) Mr. Edwards would discuss with Sir Geoffrey Howe the Party's attitude to the voting of a block grant for Wales.

4. Manifesto

Mrs. Thatcher reported that the Leader's Steering Committee had discussed the first draft of the Manifesto. Members of the LCC were invited to study their own sections of the Manifesto. It was agreed that the Research Department would discuss with Mr. Fowler a form of words for insertion in the draft indicating our intention to denationalise the National Freight Corporation and change the licencing system for rural transport. It was also agreed that references to the future of BNOC and to civil service dispersal were desirable and that any other proposals which would enlarge freedom at minimal cost might be inserted in the draft.

5. Other Business

Mr. Fowler reported that the Government had accepted the rulings of the European Court on the introduction of the tachograph into Britain. It was agreed that we should maintain a low profile on this issue.

It was also agreed that Mr. Atkins would inquire when we might expect the Boyle Report, dealing with Members' salaries and other matters, to be published.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.