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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

82ND MEETING

4.45 p.m., Wednesday 12th November, 1975

in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 81st Meeting - to follow.
2. Future Business.
3. Devolution - paper by Mr. Whitelaw, LCC/75/87 - attached.
4. Any other business.

Conservative Research Department,  
24 Old Queen Street, LONDON, S.W.1.

CFP/SMN  
6.11.75

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 82nd Meeting held at 4.45 p.m.  
on Wednesday 12th November 1975, in the  
Leader's Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (In the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph  
Lord Hailsham, Mr. Maudling  
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Gilmour  
Lord Carrington, Mr. Prior  
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton  
Mr. St. John-Stevas  
Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Raison  
Mr. Maude, Mr. Buchanan-Smith  
Mr. Neave, Mr. Younger  
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Jopling  
Lord Thorneycroft

Mr. Atkins

In Attendance: Mr. Wyn Roberts, Mr. Montgomery  
Mr. Butler, Mr. Patten  
Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson

Apologies: Mr. Edwards, Mr. Fowler

1. Minutes of the 81st Meeting

It was agreed to add at the end of sub-para (b) on page 2, on the cost of metrication: "However, it was not possible to give any alternative estimate nor was it established that the cost would be less".

It was agreed that the minutes should normally simply record decisions reached and not attempt to outline the course of discussion.

2. Proposed Business of the week 19-24th November

The House would attend in the House of Lords to hear the Queen's Speech on the morning of Wednesday 19th November, and the Debate on the Address would begin at 2.30 p.m. that afternoon and would finish on Tuesday 25th November.

3. Devolution

Mr. Whitelaw introduced his paper (LCC/75/85) on various alternative ways in which the Party might respond to the proposals in the Government's White Paper on Devolution. There was a wide-ranging discussion.

It was agreed that in formulating our policy on Devolution, we should regard the need to preserve the integrity of the UK as paramount. We should seek to campaign in the coming months

to encourage support for this; any Devolution Bill was likely to remain before Parliament for longer than one session. It was also agreed that we should resist any pressures to bring the issue of devolution in Northern Ireland into the discussion on the White Paper: this should only be dealt with on the basis of the Convention's report.

It was agreed that, in our approach to the issue we should also emphasise our desire to secure more efficient government for all parts of the UK, and that the removal of certain types of Scottish business from Westminster to Edinburgh would help both Scotland and the work of the UK Parliament.

It was agreed to continue the discussion at a further meeting of the Leader's Consultative Committee on Wednesday 19th November, when Mr. Malcolm Rifkind MP would be invited to attend.

4. Other Business

It was agreed that members of the LCC should not commit themselves to policies involving expenditure without the subject in question having been fully discussed by the LCC. It was also agreed that members would attempt to discourage Conservative MPs from writing to Ministers asking for extra expenditure in their constituencies.

Members of the LCC were asked to convey to the Research Department any significant examples of Government or local government waste that they encountered. The Research Department would collect these and other examples.

It was agreed that the LCC would discuss the question of free transport for school children living at a distance from their schools. A paper was being prepared by the Research Department.

On the suggestion that there should be a Parliamentary Select Committee on legislation to enable Parliament to control the amount of legislation coming before it and possibly agree a timetable for the consideration of such legislation, it was agreed that Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Peyton and Mr. Atkins should examine the question further. We might devote half a Supply Day to the subject of excessive legislation, but we first needed to substantiate our case.

The meeting closed at 6.24 p.m.

Proposed Addenda to the Minutes of the 81st Meeting of the  
Leader's Consultative Committee, Wednesday 5th November  
1975.

Page 2 at the end of (b) insert: however, it was not possible  
to give any alternative estimates nor was it established that  
the cost would be less.

Page 2 at the end of (d) insert the following paragraph:  
The majority of those opinions expressed, were in favour of  
the general approach advocated in Mrs. Oppenheim's Paper.