

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 157th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 30th March 1977, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher. (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Lord Carrington,
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior,
Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour,
Mr. Peyton, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Davies,
Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Haseltine,
Mr. Maude, Mr. Neave, Mr. Edwards,
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King, Mr. Nott,
Mr. Taylor, Lord Thorneycroft.

Mr. Atkins.

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

Apologies: Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Hailsham.

1. Future Business for the week 4th-7th April

On Monday, 4th April, there would be the conclusion of the Budget debate (Mr. Howell, Mr. Nott). This would be followed by Commission Documents on Social Legislation on Road Transport (R/542/76) (Mr. Fowler).

On Tuesday, 5th April, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams would seek leave to introduce his National Insurance (Householders' Allowances) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Supply Debate and by opposed private business: GLC (General Powers) Bill (Mr. Finsberg).

On Wednesday, 6th April, Mrs. J. Knight would seek leave to introduce her Pre-Release Hostels for Prisoners Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Motion for the Easter Adjournment (Mr. Pym) and by a Debate on the White Paper on Sport and Recreation (Cmd. No. 6200), on a Motion to "take note" (Mr. Monro).

On Thursday, 7th April, there would be the Easter Adjournment debates.

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion of certain points and the following was agreed:

We should vote against the resolution to increase the price of petrol on a 3 line whip, arguing that we were opposing the size of the increase and the fact that it would hit people in rural areas and people dependent on motor transport to get to work, rather than opposing the principle (which we approved) of shifting the burden of taxation from direct to indirect. We might also say that the proposed increase in petrol tax would pay for the cost of nationalising the aircraft and shipbuilding industries.

3. Subjects for Supply Days

There was a discussion and the following was agreed:

(i) We would debate the proposed closure of certain Scottish teacher training colleges for half a day on 5th April. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Fletcher would be our speakers and there would be a 2-line whip.

(ii) We would debate housing on a supply day after Easter and before the local elections on 5th May. It would also be helpful to have a half day on the construction industry.

It was noted that Mr. Pym and Mr. Atkins had set up a group to decide what subjects we wished to debate on supply days between the Easter and the Summer recesses, so as to seek to avoid prolonged discussion on this matter at the regular weekly meetings.

4. Foreign Affairs

Mr. Davies reported on his visit to Washington and his discussions with members of the American administration and his impressions of American foreign policy. Lord Carrington reported on his visit to Southern Africa. It was agreed that we should seek to make Conservative policies better known to members of President Carter's administration, and in particular to encourage Americans to question the argument that the West's access to the trade and raw materials of Southern Africa would not be jeopardised if Marxist regimes obtained control in those countries.

5. Other Business

There would be a meeting of the LCC the following Tuesday, 5th April, at 4.30 p.m. to discuss the White Paper on direct elections to the European Parliament on which, it was understood, there was likely to be a two-day debate when Parliament resumed after the Easter recess. It was also agreed that there would be a discussion on the Government's stage 3 proposals when Mrs. Thatcher had returned from China.

The meeting closed at 6.10 p.m.