

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 149th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.,
Wednesday, 2nd February 1977, in the Leader's
Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

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

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Lord Ferrers, Sir Michael Havers,
Mr. Rossi, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Hooson,
Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Lord Carrington, Mr. Heseltine.

1. Mrs. Thatcher welcomed Lord Ferrers, one of the Deputy Leaders of the Opposition in the House of Lords, who was to attend the Shadow Cabinet while Lord Carrington was visiting Southern Africa.

2. Future Business for the Week 7th-14th February

On Monday, 7th February, there would be Private Members' Motions: Mr. Hugh Dykes' on Direct Elections to the European Parliament (Mr. Davies), Mr. Kenneth Warren's on the British Aerospace Industry and Mr. Tim Sainsbury's on "The Continuing Need for Energy Conservation". These would be followed by the Second Reading of the Reduction of Redundancy Rebates Bill (Mr. Hayhoe, Mr. Madel) and by the EEC Document on Taxation System for Commercial Vehicles (R/1435/68) (Mr. Fowler).

On Tuesday, 8th February, Mr. Bruce George would seek leave to introduce his Registration of Private Security Firms Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by further proceedings on the Scotland and Wales Bill (Mr. Pym and team).

On Wednesday, 9th February, Mr. Michael Marshall would seek leave to introduce his Parliamentary Commissioner (Amendment) (No.2) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by further proceedings on the Scotland and Wales Bill (Mr. Pym and team).

On Thursday, 10th February, there would be a Supply Day with subjects to be decided. This would be followed by proceedings on the Rent (Agriculture) Amendment Bill (Mr. Rossi).

On Friday, 11th February, there would be the Second Readings of the following Private Members' Bills: Mr. D. Hunt's Passenger Vehicles (Educational and Other Purposes) Bill, Mr. F. Evans' Rent Charges Bill, Mr. R. MacFarquhar's Firearms Act 1968 (Amendment) (No.2) Bill and Mr. J. Hannam's Social Security (Amendment) Bill.

On Monday, 14th February, there would be the Second Reading of the Nuclear Industry (Finance) Bill and of the Job Release Bill.

3. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion of certain points and it was agreed that:

(i) We should vote against the Second Reading of the Reduction of Redundancy Rebates Bill on a reasoned amendment;

(ii) There would be a one line whip for the two days' debate on the Scotland and Wales Bill;

(iii) There would be a one line whip for the Second Reading of the Nuclear Industry (Finance) Bill.

4. Subjects for Supply Days

Mrs. Thatcher reported that following the Speaker's decision to grant a Standing Order No. 9 for the following day for a debate on the kidnapping of a number of children from Rhodesia, it would only be possible to have a half day's debate on supply the following day and it was agreed that this should be on the unemployment situation in the North West. Mr. Silvester would open and Mr. Hayhoe would sum up. If the S.O.9 debate did not take place we would debate this subject earlier in the day which would enable Mr. Prior to open with Mr. Silvester summing up.

For the Supply Day on 10th February it was agreed to debate the Child Benefits Scheme, which had originally been down for debate on 3rd February, for half the day, and the Government's use of the 714 Certificate for the Self-Employed for the second half. We would vote on both these subjects on the adjournment on a 3 line whip.

Other subjects suggested for early debate were the threat of nationalisation of insurance companies, educational standards, and the operation of the Rent Acts.

5. House of Lords Business

Lord Ferrers reported on the likely outcome following the referral of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill to the Examiners on the grounds of alleged hybridity. There was a discussion on the procedure that would be followed, if the Examiners decided the Bill was hybrid, and what course we should adopt. The following points were agreed:

(i) Lord Ferrers would seek to discover whether the Government was willing to offer a compromise on the Bill similar to the compromise offered in the last Session, viz. that they would cut out the shiprepairing parts of the Bill provided we let the rest of the Bill pass.

(ii) If such an offer were made, we should accept it, but we should not formally make such an offer ourselves.

(iii) Sir Michael Havers would examine the procedure that would operate if the Bill were declared hybrid.

(iv) The subject would be further discussed at the next meeting. If a decision were required before then a small group would meet.

6. The Bullock Report

Mr. Nott had circulated a note, and there was a brief discussion. It was agreed that Mr. Nott's note would be formally circulated as an LCC paper and would be further discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.12 p.m.