

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 92nd Meeting held at
5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 14th January 1976,
in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw (items 5 & 6)
Sir Keith Joseph, Mr. Maudling
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Gilmour
Mr. Prior (items 5 & 6)
Mr. Peyton, Mr. St. John-Stevas
Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Raison,
Mr. Maude, Mr. Buchanan-Smith (item 6)
Mr. Edwards (items 5 & 6)
Mr. Neave, Mr. Younger (items 5 & 6)
Mr. Fowler, Mrs. Oppenheim
Mr. Jopling

Mr. Atkins

In attendance: Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Patten
Mr. Ridley, Mr. Wolfers
Mr. Nicholson

Apologies: Lord Hailsham, Lord Carrington
Mr. Jenkin, Lord Thorneycroft

1. Proposed Business for the Week 19-26th January

On Monday 19th January there would be the conclusion of the debate on Devolution (Sir David Renton, Mr. Whitelaw), followed by a Motion relating to the Import Duties (General) (No. 5) Order (Mr. Jay's Prayer).

On Tuesday 20th January there would be the Second Reading of the Post Office (Banking Services) Bill (Mr. King, Mr. Stanley) with a two line whip at 10.00 p.m., and this would be followed by the formal Committee Stage of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill and a Motion on the Restrictive Trade Practices (Services) Order (Mrs. Oppenheim).

On Wednesday 21st January there would be Motions on Suggested Amendments to the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill (Mr. Prior, Mr. Hayhoe).

On Thursday 22nd January there would be a Supply Day, with the subject to be decided. This would be followed by an Opposition Prayer on Income Tax (Sub-Contractors in the Construction Industry) Regulations (Mr. Ridley).

On Friday 23rd January there would be Private Members' Motions, the motions being those of Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Wigglesworth and Mr. Stanley.

On Monday 26th January there would be another Supply Day, with the subject to be decided, followed by a Motion on the London Councillors Order.

2. Subjects for the Supply Days

There was a short discussion.

It was agreed that:

- i) The Supply Day on 21st January should be devoted to debating reports from the Public Accounts Committee.
- ii) The White Paper on Mental Health and the subject of releases from mental hospitals should be debated in the near future.
- iii) Mr. Payton and Mr. Atkins should produce further suggestions for subjects for the second Supply Day, and a decision would be reached at the next meeting, on Wednesday 21st January.
- iv) There should be a future discussion on the subject of our approach to Supply Days, perhaps selecting subjects according to a predetermined strategy.

3. Other matters arising on Business

Mr. Fowler reported on the likely Government reaction to Mr. Kilroy-Silk's motion on treating tobacco as a medicine (see item 1 - LCC (76) 90, Minutes of the 90th Meeting).

It was agreed that:

- i) We should oppose the principle of intervention and control, and ask the Government why a voluntary basis of control, accepted by part of the tobacco industry, was unacceptable to them, but we should not vote against the motion as we would of course still be able to vote against any order the Government produced.
 - ii) We should attempt to get speakers for this debate to cover the Industry, Sport and Arts aspects.
4. Foreign Affairs

Mr. Maudling reported on the foreign affairs situation, and indicated the themes on which to attack the Government.

It was agreed that these themes should be:

- a) the Government's failure to condemn the Russian build-up of forces and the Russian failure to respond to the spirit of the Helsinki agreement;
- b) Mr. Callaghan's clumsy and unsuccessful attempts to defend British interests in the EEC;
- c) the Government's dual standards - protesting at the execution of Spanish terrorists while saying little or nothing about the persecution of individuals and minorities in the Soviet bloc;
- d) the Government's failure to take the initiative in calling in a mediator on the Iceland fisheries dispute.

5. The Devolution Debate

There was a discussion on the phrasing of the amendment on which we would vote on Monday 19th January.

It was agreed that Mr. Whitelaw, Mr. Buchanan-Smith and other interested colleagues should prepare an amendment that same evening, which, while re-affirming our commitment to a Scottish Assembly, would reject the Government's proposals as confusing, leading to conflict, and endangering the unity of the United Kingdom.

6. One-day Shadow Cabinet meeting

It was agreed that there would be a whole day meeting of the IOC on Friday 13th February, starting at 10.00 a.m. in the Leader's Room, to discuss various fundamental issues of economic and political strategy.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.