

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 212th Meeting held at 5.00 pm.
on Wednesday, 30th June 1978, in the Leader's
Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph,
Lord Carrington, Lord Hailsham,
Lord Thorneycroft, Sir Geoffrey Howe,
Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour,
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Davies,
Mr. Neave, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Maude,
Mr. Edwards, Mrs. Oppenheim,
Mr. King, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Lord Denham,
Mr. Parkinson (for item 2),
Mr. Alison (for item 7), Mr. Butler,
Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten, Mr. Wolfson,
Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Hutt.

Apologies: Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Nott.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 3rd-10th July

On Monday, 3rd July, there would be a Supply Day. This would be followed by Proceedings on the Representation of the People Bill and by the remaining stages of the Theft Bill (Mr. Percival).

On Tuesday, 4th July, Mr. J. Farr would seek leave to introduce his House of Commons (Televising of Proceedings) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Supply Day and by a time-table motion relating to Lords Amendments to the Scotland Bill.

On Wednesday, 5th July, Mr. R. Bennett would seek leave to introduce his British Vineyards Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Report Stage of the Finance Bill (Sir Geoffrey Howe and team).

On Thursday, 6th July, there would be Lords Amendments to the Scotland Bill.

On Friday, 7th July, there would be Government Business: Motions on the Appropriation (No.2) (Northern Ireland) Order, and on the Northern Ireland (Financial Provisions) Order (Mr. Neave, Mr. Biggs-Davison).

On Monday, 10th July, there would be the Private Members' Motions of Mr. T. Walker, Mr. G. Robinson and Mr. A. Nelson. These would be followed by a debate on the 1979 Community Budget.

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) We should object strongly to only three days being provided for debates on Lords Amendments to the Scotland Bill.

(ii) There would be a 3 line whip for the first day of the Report Stage of the Finance Bill on 4th July. We would vote against the Government's amendments to raise employees' National Insurance contributions. There would be a further meeting of a small group of colleagues to decide what exactly would need to be said if we defeated the Government on this issue.

(iii) There would be a running 3 line whip of 6th July on Lords Amendments to the Scotland Bill.

3. Subject for the Supply Days

There was a discussion and the following was agreed:

(i) We should debate employee relations in the National Health Service on the half Supply Day on 3rd July. Mr. Jenkin and Dr. Vaughan would speak and there would be no vote. The second half of that day would, as agreed at the previous meeting, be taken by the Ulster Unionists and it was noted that they might wish to debate education.

(ii) We would debate the general subject of the desirability of creating more real wealth and permanent jobs on the Supply Day on 5th July. Sir Keith Joseph and Mr. Prior would speak and we would vote for a Motion, to be drafted by them, on a 3 line whip.

4. Policy Groups

It was agreed that all policy groups and sub-committees would be wound up as soon as possible. Members would indicate to Sir Keith Joseph which ones had been wound up and which ones, if any, needed to continue. Members were urged to take extra precautions with policy group documents. It was also agreed that detailed minutes should not be taken of highly confidential discussions: the chairman of the group should receive a note of the meeting. It was desirable to avoid giving detailed statistics in minutes or reports.

Members were requested to let Mrs. Thatcher's office know of any imminent publication in any area, whether with or without a disclaimer by a Shadow spokesman.

5. Rhodesia

Mr. Davies and Mr. Atkins reported on the state of opinion in the Party and likely developments at Westminster and in Rhodesia. There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) Mr. Davies would visit Rhodesia, Zambia and any other countries as appropriate as soon as possible. The announcement would be made that evening.

(ii) We should decide on the desirability of a further debate on Rhodesia in the light of Mr. Davies's report on his return. It was noted that an emergency SO9 debate was only likely to be granted if there was a pressing and specific incident to discuss.

6. Youth Employment, LCC(78)179

Mr. Prior introduced the paper. There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) The proposal on the Employment Protection Act in paragraph 1a was agreed: we should not, however, firmly commit ourselves to the figure of 25 on the number of employees in firms to be affected by the dismissal provisions in paragraph 1a.

(ii) We should not refer to the proposals on insulation.

(iii) We should also avoid referring to the proposal on the National Social Service Corporation: this could be very expensive.

(iv) Paragraph 4 on the armed forces and police was agreed. We should refer to the desirability of expanding young soldier battalions. It was noted that by next year the total number of jobs lost in the forces and in supporting industries through defence cuts would be considerably higher than 180,000

(v) Paragraph 5 on careers guidance was agreed. It was noted that many schools did not provide enough careers guidance by people qualified to speak about conditions in industry.

(vi) Paragraphs 6 and 7 were agreed. It was noted that there were examples of skill centres taking trainees from the Middle East and elsewhere as there were not enough Britons coming forward for training.

(vii) Paragraph 8 was agreed, but we should not emphasise this or be specific about our intended restrictions.

(viii) In the debate the following Tuesday, Mr. Prior would refer as appropriate to the proposals in this paper: our main emphasis, however, would be on the desire for a complete change of direction and on the provisions of our "enterprise package".

7. Rates

Mrs. Thatcher reported on the Leader's Steering Committee meeting the previous Monday, the main conclusion of which was that we remained committed to seeking to abolish domestic rates but had still to arrive at a decision as to how precisely this should be done and what priority it should have. It was agreed that there should be a further discussion on this subject.

8. EEC Foreign Ministers Meeting

Mr. Davies reported on his recent meetings with EEC Foreign Ministers. It was noted that his remarks on the Community's relations with Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific and the ASEAN countries had received a sympathetic hearing.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.