

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

52ND MEETING

Minutes of the 52nd Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Monday, 6th February 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 Thorneycroft,
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior,
Sir Ian Cilmour, Mr. Peyton,
Mr. Davies, Mr. Maude.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Lord Home, Lord Denham, Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Butler, Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley,
Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Fallon.

Apologies: Mr. Pym.

Mrs. Thatcher said that the purpose of this meeting was not to discuss the contents of the paper but to arrive at a decision about publishing it. She thanked Lord Home for all the work done by him and his colleagues.

Lord Home introduced the paper, reiterating that the Committee had been opposed to a wholly elected Second Chamber and was proposing to give the life peers the option of retiring over two to three years.

There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) The Party was united in a desire to see an effective Second Chamber. Such a Chamber was a significant means of preventing the slide towards a situation similar to that which existed in Eastern Europe.

(ii) We should publish the Report subject to changing the introduction so that it took the form of a letter from Lord Home to Mrs. Thatcher. This would be amended so that it did not totally rule out continuance of the status quo as the Committee preferred the status quo to single chamber government. It would go on to indicate that on balance the majority of the Committee preferred the solution set out in the Report, but were well aware that wider discussion would bring forward a number of factors meriting further consideration.

(iii) The Report would be printed in a form of its own, not as a CPC document, and would simply be entitled "The House of Lords".

(iv) The publication of the Report might be accompanied by a press conference on a Friday in Central Office in two to three weeks time depending on the programme of forthcoming events.

(v) Lord Home would be in contact with Mr. Maude regarding the draft introductory letter and arrangements for publication.

The meeting closed at 6.00 p.m.

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DJM/TEH:
20.2.78