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LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

43RD MEETING

5.00 p.m., Monday, 25th October 1976, in the
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. The Next Stage of Policy Work
- a paper by Sir Keith Joseph
and Mr. Maude (LSC (76) 54).

2. Any other business. — *Lords.*

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CFP/MM
21.10.76

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 43rd Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Monday, 25th October, 1976, in the Leader's
Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)
Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph,
Lord Carrington, Mr. Prior,
Mr. Pym, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Peyton,
Mr. Maude
Mr. Atkins

In attendance: Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten,
Mr. Douglas, Mr. Ridley

Apologies: Lord Thorneycroft, Mr. Maudling,
Sir Geoffrey Howe

1. The Next Stage of Policy Work

The Committee had before it a paper by Sir Keith Joseph and Mr. Maude, LSC(76)54. Mrs. Thatcher emphasised the need to limit the number of policy groups - for one thing so as not to put an undue strain on the resources for servicing the groups.

*As per - hand
with hand
note*
Existing Publication Commitments. Much of the work on the three specific areas had already been done. What was now required was that draft publications should be produced and submitted to the Shadow Cabinet.

Economic Policy. It was agreed that work under this head should continue very much as before but involving even more closely other colleagues, particularly those responsible for areas of public spending.

Education. It was agreed that there should be one group, of which several members of the Shadow Cabinet should be members, which would deal with the three questions listed in the paper. Mrs. Thatcher emphasised that finding adequate answers to these three questions would involve a considerable amount of work. High powered advisers from outside Parliament would also be required for this task.

Industrial Relations. What was required here was that the considerable amount of material already produced for Mr. Prior should be drawn together and produced as a coherent whole for submission to the Shadow Cabinet. One small high powered group should be sufficient for this purpose.

Social Security. One group was required for this. The two main priorities for its work were to suggest practical means of moving over to the tax credit approach and to deal with the general question of providing adequate incentives to work.

Rates. The proposals of the paper were agreed.

Industrial Policy and Nationalisation. The proposals of the paper were agreed.

Town and Country Planning and the Environment. The proposals of the paper were agreed. Sir Keith Joseph emphasised the importance of dealing with the environmental questions.

British Nationality. Mr. Whitelaw said that there were in effect two somewhat different subjects which would have to be dealt with. The first was the question to which the paper referred of the law of British nationality with its implications for our immigration policy. The second was that he understood that the Committee of which Mr. Carlisle and Lord Franks were members were reporting major problems about the 1971 Act and particularly the concept of patrials to which the party would have to react. He suggested and the committee agreed that this was not so much a topic for a conventional policy group, but one on which he should seek legal advice and on the basis of this submit a paper to the Shadow Cabinet.

Law and Order. Mr. Whitelaw suggested that the points raised in the paper, including the question of sentencing policy and punishment, might best be dealt with by groups from the Society of Conservative Lawyers. This approach had worked well with recent work on the Childrens and Young Persons Act. There was also the question of the right of assembly in connection with strikes. When his consultations with lawyers had been completed Mr. Whitelaw would submit a paper to the Shadow Cabinet.

Control of the Executive. Mr. Francis Pym and Mr. John Peyton offered to produce a paper on this subject for the Shadow Cabinet.

It was agreed that the paper by Sir Keith Joseph and Mr. Maude should be circulated to all members of the Shadow Cabinet.

2. Select Committee

It was understood that the Government were about to propose a Select Committee of the House of Commons to discuss recent allegations concerning members of Parliament. A discussion took place during the course of which other possible ways of dealing with the issue such as a Court of Enquiry under the 1921 Act, a Committee of Privy Councillors, etc., were mentioned. It was agreed that the membership and chairmanship of any Select Committee was crucially important.

3. Direct Labour

Mr. Prior reported on probable moves in this area by the Labour Government. It was agreed that Mr. Prior would discuss the issue with Mr. Raison and that it should also be discussed at a future meeting of the Shadow Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 6.11 p.m.