

THE NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday 17th February 1983

The Committee met at 32 Smith Square, Westminster on Thursday 17th February 1983 at 2.15 p.m. under the chairmanship of Sir Russell Sanderson and the names of the 118 present are recorded.

1. Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman paid tribute to the memory of Sir Dan Mason, O.B.E., a National Union Vice-President who died in December and who was Chairman in 1966 and also Chairman of the South Eastern Area and of the Superannuation Fund Management Committee; and also Mr. Michael Roberts, M.P., Under-Secretary for Wales, who had died suddenly the previous week. Members stood in remembrance.

The Chairman congratulated the President on his elevation to the peerage as Lord Ingrow, and the following past and present members of the Executive Committee who had received awards in the New Year's Honours: Sir Donald Walters (National Union Chairman), Sir Douglas Brown (Yorkshire Area Chairman), Mrs. J. I. D. Chalmers, C.B.E. (Scotland), Mr. William Harding, C.B.E. (Northern Area), Mr. J. Patrick G. Lawrence, C.B.E. (West Midlands), Mr. Roy Niles, C.B.E., T.D. (Western), Col. Chris Peterson, C.B.E. (Wales), Mrs. Nora Spensley, C.B.E. (Eastern), Mrs. Angela Clarke, O.B.E. (Wessex), Mrs. Pamela Dunbar, O.B.E. (West Midlands), Mrs. Margaret Fry, O.B.E. (Western), Mr. Bill Stuttford, O.B.E. (C.P.C. and Eastern), Mrs. Mary Tomlinson, O.B.E. (North Western), Mr. Gordon Waterman, O.B.E. (A.C.C.) and Mr. Tony Bayman, M.B.E. (National Society). He also mentioned Mr. John Lacy, C.B.E., South Eastern Area Central Office Agent, and Miss Jennie McBride, O.B.E., who had been the Deputy Director in Scotland.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Christopher Prout, M.E.P. as the new Chief Whip of the European Democratic Group and said that their thanks had been expressed to the retiring Chief Whip, Mr. John de Courcy Ling, M.E.P. for his co-operation.

The Prime Minister had accepted our invitation to speak at the N.U.E.C. Annual Dinner on 8th June subject to parliamentary and Government commitments.

He expressed the gratitude of the Committee to Sir Douglas Brown who would be retiring as Yorkshire Area Chairman before the next meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies from 23 members were noted and recorded.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 1982, having been circulated with the agenda, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Business arising from the Minutes

No points were raised from the Minutes.

5. Officers of the National Union

The Chairman reported on the selection of National Union Officers as per the Secretary's letter issued at the meeting and it was agreed to recommend the following to the Central Council for election:

President: Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Q.C., M.P.  
Chairman: Mr. Peter Lane, J.P.  
Vice-Chairmen: Dame Pamela Hunter, D.B.E.  
Sir Basil Feldman  
Mr. J. Patrick G. Lawrence, C.B.E.

The Chairman congratulated those concerned and thanked the unsuccessful candidate, Mr. David W. Mitchell, for standing.

On behalf of the Committee, he paid tribute to the retiring President, Lord Ingrow, for his great service to the National Union over a long period including five years as Chairman of the Executive Committee, and to the retiring Chairman, Sir Donald Walters, who made such an excellent job of the Conference chairmanship. Lord Ingrow responded.

6. Discussion on the Green Paper "Democracy in Trade Unions"

Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, M.P., Secretary of State for Employment, was invited to lead this discussion and he gave details of the proposals contained in his Green Paper. In the ensuing discussion he dealt with several points raised including ballots and pickets, the election of trade union officers, public service strikes, discontent within the N.U.R. and shared jobs. On being thanked by the Chairman, Mr. Tebbit expressed his thanks to the National Union and particularly to the C.T.U. for their help and support.

7. Organisational plans for run-up to the General Election

Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, M.P., Chairman of the Party Organisation, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Paymaster General, was invited to speak on these plans. He referred to the upheaval of parliamentary redistribution, the selection of parliamentary candidates, the training of new Agents, the concentration of efforts on 100 critical seats, new technology employed in the Press Department in order to cover local press and radio, the increasing circulation of Newsline, the new team in the Research Department servicing the various policy groups, direct mailing projects, publicity and the Election Manifesto. Mr. Parkinson dealt with three questions including one about survey canvassing in critical seats before the Election, and was thanked by the Chairman.

8. An extra "Million for Maggie" - the Party's finances

Sir Oulton Wade, J.P., joint Party Treasurer, spoke about the target of £5m this year and gave details of Central Office expenditure. It was anticipated that £10-15m would be needed for the run-up, the Election itself and its aftermath. They were anxious to obtain the £350,000 outstanding on Constituency quotas this year and were appealing for an extra £1m from Constituencies for the election year and he hoped that members of this Committee would stimulate others in their financial efforts. A discussion ensued on new money raising activities and the opportunity created by the formation of new Constituency Associations.

9. Central Council Meeting, London, 26th March 1983

The Chairman reported on the agenda which had been circulated to members as decided at the Officers' meeting on 15th February (copy herewith), and he stressed the need to have a full house at Kensington Town Hall particularly in view of the powerful team of Cabinet Ministers who would be speaking. Tickets for additional representatives would be available up to 10th March.

10. Report from the General Purposes Committee

The Chairman reported on relevant matters considered at the General Purposes Committee meeting on 16th February. In addition to reports from N.A.C.s and on Party finances, the Conference Agenda Sub-Committee had been appointed, the last date for receipt of motions for the Conference would be 19th July and the Committee had approved recommendations from the Officers in regard to the listing and numbering of past Conferences whereby the next Conference would be the one hundredth. Consideration had been given to resolutions numbers 7 and 20 before the Executive Committee but no recommendations were made apart from the need for more explanation of Conference procedures. The Secretary had reported on arrangements for future Conferences and it had been decided to recommend that the 1987 Conference should be at Blackpool from 6th to 9th October and the 1988 Conference should return to Brighton from 11th to 14th October. These recommendations were approved by the Executive Committee. It was also proposed to make a National Union visit to the European Parliament on 26th/28th October this year, primarily for Executive Committee members who had not previously visited the Parliament.

11. Consideration of resolutions received from Area, Constituency and other organisations

Approval was given to the action taken on 21 resolutions received since the last meeting and circulated with the agenda (copy lodged herewith), replies having been received to 14 of these. The Chairman gave the General Purposes Committee's views on resolutions numbers 7 and 20. In regard to resolution number 2 Mr. Geoffrey Campbell, M.B.E. gave details of C.T.U. expenditure. On number 20, Mr. Ian McLeod, J.P. said that the unanimity referred to its transmission to the N.U.E.C. rather than the Central Council and not to the resolution itself over which there had been some difference of opinion within the Greater London Area Executive Committee. Speaking in support of the resolution, Miss Martine Kushner detailed various proposals in regard to the Party Conference and she was asked to put these in writing. Mr. Peter Murphy stressed that there was considerable disquiet about some of the Conference proceedings such as taking the vote on debates after the reply speakers. This was also mentioned by Mr. Richard Bull. Mr. Hugh Simmonds spoke of the need for gradual change and the possibility of taking amendments for which substantial support was evident. The Chairman said these suggestions would be considered.

12. Parliamentary Redistribution

The Chairman asked Mr. A. S. Garner, Director of Organisation and Community Affairs to report on latest developments in regard to parliamentary redistribution. Mr. Garner referred to detailed guidance given to Constituencies and he thanked Areas and Constituencies for their admirable co-operation in surmounting the problems of this considerable upheaval. The Chairman read a draft letter to Constituencies (copy lodged herewith) giving 31st March 1983 as the operative date for changing representation, etc. within the National Union, but stating that if parliamentary approval was delayed beyond mid-March then the effective date should be a fortnight after the date of such approval. This timing and the terms of the letter were approved.

13. Alteration of the Constitution of the Federation of Conservative Students

Mr. Brian Monteith, F.C.S. Chairman, moved approval of the new constitution which had been circulated with the notice (copy herewith) and thanked Sir Donald Walters and his Committee for all their help in drawing up this constitution. This was seconded by Mr. Michael Taylor and approved. Sir Donald gave a brief report.

14. Alteration of the Rules of the Wessex Area

Approval of these alterations, which had been circulated and are lodged herewith, was moved by Mr. Simon Coombs, Wessex Area Chairman, who explained that the purpose was to streamline structure and meetings. This was seconded by Mrs. Joyce Billings and agreed.

15. Business for the next meeting

It was suggested that Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, M.P. should be invited to speak at the next meeting on Thursday 28th April and Dr. Alistair Smith, C.B.E. should be asked to report on the German elections which he would be visiting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.20 p.m.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST ASSOCIATIONS

Executive Committee Meeting - 17th February 1983

(Resolutions received from  
Constituency, Area and other organisations)

1. Trade Agreements

"This Council, recognising the very severe unemployment problem in the West Midlands; re-affirming its belief in the principle of free but fair trade; and alarmed that many jobs are threatened by trade agreements with countries who are not members of the European Community which were signed before the world-wide economic recession, calls upon the Secretary of State for Industry, in conjunction with the Secretary of State for Trade, to ensure that both new and traditional industries of the West Midlands are not unfairly prejudiced against by such agreements."

Carried unanimously by the West Midlands Area Council half-yearly meeting on 6th November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Patrick Jenkin, M.P.  
Rt. Hon. Lord Cockfield

2. Central Office Literature

"This Committee is appalled that no literature has been produced by Central Office during the last two years to support C.T.U. members in the Constituencies, e.g. the recent 'Day of Action'."

Carried by the North Western Area Finance and General Purposes Committee on 13th November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, M.P.

3. Standing Charges

"Chichester Conservative Association urges the Government to phase out standing charges on all consumer services as a matter of policy; but in the short term, in recognising the plight of pensioners, to abolish the standing charges on their gas and electricity bills forthwith."

Carried unanimously by the Chichester Association Council on 12th November when 57 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, M.P.

4. Increase in Rates

"This Council urges H.M. Government to introduce legislation to restrict any increase in rates to that of the rate of inflation or less."

Submitted by the South Shields Conservative Association and carried by the Northern Area Council half-yearly meeting on 27th November when 200 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

5. Industry in the North East

"While appreciating the need not to subsidise obsolescence or excessive over-capacity, this meeting feels that the Government should do more to ensure the maintenance of the skills for which the North East is justly famous."

Submitted by the North East Area Conservative Trade Unionists, and carried by the Northern Area Council half-yearly meeting on 27th November when 200 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Patrick Jenkin, M.P.

6. Public Protests

"This meeting of the Shoreham Conservative Executive considers that, when arranging for public protests - such as the 'C.N.D.' march on Hyde Park, more consideration be given to the rights of the general public in obtaining transit by public rights of way across the Metropolis."

Carried unanimously by the Shoreham Executive Committee on 26th November when 38 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, C.H., M.C., M.P.

7. Party Conference

"That this Association believes that the present structure and organisation of the Party Conference works against the interest of Party members in that it tends to restrict those members who may hold differing views on Party policy from expressing themselves during the course of debate."

Carried by 22 votes to 3 by the Harrow West Divisional Executive Committee on 7th December.

Forwarded to: General Purposes Committee

8. Metropolitan Counties

"This meeting believes that the Metropolitan Counties would be better governed if the councils were disbanded and most of their powers, functions and responsibilities transferred to central government of the local councils. This would reduce the burden on ratepayers, streamline administration, speed decision-making and increase local accountability. The meeting therefore calls upon the Conservative Party to include a commitment to abolition of the Metropolitan Counties in its manifesto for the next General Election."

Carried by 25 votes to 3 by the Harrow West Divisional Executive Committee on 7th December.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

9. Immigration

"This Executive Committee considers that the Government proposal to re-open a further channel of immigration, in direct contradiction to an implemented manifesto undertaking, must seriously undermine public confidence in its immigration policies. This Executive Committee calls upon (a) the Government and Parliament not to relax the immigration rules pertaining to

the entry of the husbands and fiances of immigrant women, and (b) the Prime Minister to replace the Ministers responsible for immigration and nationality at the Home Office."

Carried by 15 votes to 6 by the Harrow West Divisional Executive Committee on 7th December.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, C.H., M.C., M.P.  
Copy to: Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.

10. Work Sharing

"This Council welcomes the acceptance by the Government of the principle of work sharing and urges wider application of this as one of the measures to relieve chronic unemployment."

Submitted by Teesside Stockton Conservative Association and carried by 13 votes to 5 by the Northern Area Executive Committee on 10th January when 27 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, M.P.

11. Aids to Small Businesses

"That this Council asks Her Majesty's Government to rationalise the many aids to small businesses."

Submitted by the Teesside Middlesbrough Conservative Association and carried unanimously by the Northern Area Executive Committee on 10th January when 27 members were present.

Forwarded to: Mr. John MacGregor, O.B.E., M.P.

12. European Economic Community

"That this conference fully endorses the Government's policy that membership of the European Economic Community is vital towards industrial growth and reduction of unemployment in the United Kingdom."

Submitted by the Morpeth Conservative Association and carried by 26 votes to 1 by the Northern Area Executive Committee on 10th January when 27 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, C.B.E., M.P.

13. Publicising the European Message

"That this Executive urges the Conservative Party and the European Democratic Group to consider further means of publicising the European message."

Carried nem con by the Western Area Executive Committee on 13th November when 31 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, M.P.  
Sir Henry Plumb, D.L., M.E.P.

Copy to: Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, C.B.E., M.P.

14. "Buy British" Campaign

"Whilst we wish to fully support and encourage the country's 'Buy British' campaign, this Association urges Her Majesty's Government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the country of origin of contents be specified on all packaging, and that consideration be given to the use of an easily identifiable logo, such as the Union Jack, on all British made goods."

Passed by the Normanton Executive Committee.

Forwarded to: Dr. Gerard Vaughan, M.P.

15. Local Government Finances

"The Government's continued financial pressures on already frugal Councils is liable to have a serious detrimental effect on Conservative voting in forthcoming elections. It is recommended that as an immediate relief the salaries of teachers, police and allied services become a Government responsibility with the justifiable equalisation of these costs on all taxpayers."

Passed by the Harwich Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Forwarded to: Lord Bellwin

16. Enterprise Allowance

"This N.A.C. calls upon H.M. Government to extend the enterprise allowance nationally as soon as possible."

Carried nem con by the Young Conservative National Advisory Committee.

Forwarded to: Mr. John MacGregor, M.P.

17. Loan Guarantee System

"This N.A.C. supports the various experiments by the Government, such as the loan guarantee system. It suggests that the next experiment should be to create a 'free port'."

Carried by 26 votes to 13 with 6 abstentions by the Young Conservative National Advisory Committee.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

18. Arms Shipments to Argentina

"This N.A.C. wishes to express concern over the resumption of arms shipments to Argentina. In particular, we feel that H.M. Government should not have allowed Rolls Royce engines to be delivered to West Germany, to be fitted into ships which will be supplied to Argentina. Furthermore, we regret the French Government's decision to honour its contract to supply Exocets and Super Etandard Aircraft before hostilities have been formally ended."

Carried overwhelmingly by the Young Conservative National Advisory Committee.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Francis Pym, M.C., M.P.



19. Ballykelly Bombing

"This Y.C.N.A.C. extends its deepest sympathies to the families and men of the Cheshire Regiment and those civilians mindlessly slaughtered or wounded in the Ballykelly bombing."

Carried unanimously by the Young Conservative National Advisory Committee.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. James Prior, M.P.

20. Party Conference

"This Committee is concerned at the continuing poor publicity received by the Party Conference in so far as it is deemed to be too 'stage managed'. It requests the Executive Committee of the National Union to put forward such rule amendments as will eradicate this complaint."

Carried unanimously by the Greater London Area Executive Committee on 18th January.

Forwarded to: General Purposes Committee

21. Assisted Area status

"This Council welcomes the Government's current review of Regional Policy and calls for Birmingham and its environs to be given Assisted Area status in order to benefit from a fairer share of aid coming from the E.E.C. so helping to halt the present devastation of its industry and improve prospects in this once prosperous region."

Carried unanimously by the Birmingham South European Constituency Council on 18th January.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Patrick Jenkin, M.P.