

CONFIDENTIAL

COPY NO. 1.

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

85TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday 26th November, 1975  
in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 83rd and the 84th Meetings
2. Future Business
3. Devolution - paper by Mr. Rifkind, LCC/75/89,  
to follow
4. Any other business

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CFP/GSB  
21.11.75

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 85th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Wednesday, 26th November 1975, in the  
Leader's Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)  
Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph  
Mr. Maudling, Sir Geoffrey Howe  
Lord Carrington, Mr. Jenkin  
Mr. Peyton, Mr. St. John-Stevas  
Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Raison  
Mr. Maude, Mr. Buchanan-Smith  
Mr. Edwards, Mr. Neave  
Mr. Younger, Mr. Fowler  
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Jopling  
Lord Thorneycroft  
Mr. Atkins

Apologies: Lord Hailsham, Mr. Gilmour  
Mr. Prior

In attendance: Mr. Rifkind, Mr. Butler  
Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson

1. Proposed Business for the Week 1st-8th December

On Monday, 1st December, there would be the Second Reading of the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (Mr. Jopling) followed by a motion on the White Fish and Herring Subsidies (United Kingdom) (No.3) Scheme (Mr. Buchanan-Smith).

On Tuesday, 2nd December, there would be the Second Reading of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill (Mr. Heseltine, Sir Keith Joseph). This would be followed by the remaining stages of the OECD Support Fund Bill (Mr. David Howell) and the Moneylenders (Crown Agents) Bill (Mr. Griffiths).

On Wednesday, 3rd December, there would be a Supply Day, with a Debate on Developments in the European Communities (Mr. Maudling, Mr. Scott-Hopkins). This would be followed by the remaining stages of the Northern Ireland (Loans) Bill (Mr. David Howell) and motions on the Northern Ireland Orders relating to Rates, Bann Reservoir, Insurance Companies, Firearms and Education (Mr. Biggs-Davison).

On Thursday, 4th December, there would be a debate on the Report of the Committee on House of Commons Administration (HC No. 624) (Mr. Peyton). This would be followed by the Second Reading of the Civil List Bill (Mrs. Thatcher, Sir Geoffrey Howe).

On Friday, 5th December, there would be the Second Reading of the Police Bill (Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Alison).

...../ On Monday

On Monday, 8th December, there would be a Supply Day, with subject to be decided.

2. Matters Arising on Business

After a short discussion it was agreed to have a three line whip for the Second Reading of the Civil List Bill on 4th December. It was also agreed that colleagues and the Research Department would send suggestions for subjects for the Supply Day on 8th December to Mr. Atkins in time for the next meeting on 3rd December.

3. Devolution

Mr. Whitelaw reported on the expected contents of the Government's White Paper on Devolution, and Mr. Rifkind introduced his Policy Paper on Devolution from the Scottish Devolution Policy Group (LCC/75/89). There was a discussion. The general arguments and proposals in Mr. Rifkind's paper were approved, but it was agreed that we should not reproduce the detailed points of that paper in reacting to the Government's proposals: it was designed to provide clear background guidance for our general comments on the proposals. It was agreed that these general considerations were:

(a) We were interested in devolution as a means of dispersing Government power, not as a mechanism for making the break up of the UK a real possibility.

(b) We should attack the clumsy and apparently unworkable aspects of the White Paper, drawing attention to the clear dangers of increasing bureaucracy, increasing burdens on taxpayers, and more tardy and inefficient administration.

(c) We should especially attack any weakening of central Government control over public expenditure which would result from the Government proposals.

(d) We should try to avoid making a number of firm long term, detailed commitments on the subject, as it was thought that the Government proposals were unlikely in their present form to survive a prolonged period of debate, during which public opinion might change considerably.

4. Other Business

The Scottish and Welsh Nationalists had requested that we should offer them one of the Opposition Supply Days, in addition to the one which, on recent precedent, we were likely to offer to the Liberals. After a short discussion it was agreed that we should make two of the Supply Days available to the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists, the Liberals and the Ulster Unionists, for them to share as they wished.

With a Government statement on the future of the Chrysler Motor Company in prospect, it was agreed that we should support the Government if they took a firm line against a complete "bail-out" of the company. We should of course condemn any attempts by the Government to introduce irrelevant political arguments, such as blaming the free enterprise system or the operations of multi-national companies.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.