

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

154TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 9th March 1977, in the  
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 152nd and 153rd Meetings.
2. Future business.
3. Forthcoming events.
4. The Ulster Unionists - a paper by Mr. Neave, LCC(77)157 - attached.
5. Any other business.

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 9th March 1977, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Lord Hailsham,  
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior,  
Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Peyton,  
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Davies,  
Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Heseltine,  
Mr. Maude, Mr. Neave, Mr. Edwards,  
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King, Mr. Nott,  
Mr. Taylor, Lord Thorncroft.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Lord Strathcona, Sir Michael Havers,  
Mr. Stanley, Mr. Butler, Mr. Patten,  
Mr. Hooson, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Carrington.

1. Future Business for the Week 14th-21st March

On Monday, 14th March, there would be a debate on the Fifth Report from the Expenditure Committee in Session 1974-75 on Redevelopment of the London Docklands (Mr. Finsberg), and on the Eighth Report in Session 1975-76 on Public Expenditure on Chrysler (UK) Limited (Sir Keith Joseph). This would be followed by the Second Reading of the Representation of the People Bill (Mr. Alison).

On Tuesday, 15th March, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams would seek leave to introduce his Housing (Shorthold Tenancies) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the consideration of Lords Amendments to the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill (Sir Keith Joseph, Mr. Lamont), by a debate on the First Report in Session 1976-77 of the House of Commons (Services) Committee on Printing of Hansard (Mr. Cooke), and by a Motion on EEC Document R/960/76 on Safety at Work Information (Mr. Madel).

On Wednesday, 16th March, Mr. Cornack would seek leave to introduce his Skyline Protection Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Motion on EEC Documents R/360/77, R/2469/76 and R/2673/76 on Community Agriculture Proposals (Mr. Peyton, Mr. Jopling), and by the Remaining Stages of the Water Charges Equalisation Bill (Mr. Arthur Jones, Mr. Roberts) and of the Nuclear Industry (Finance) Bill (Mr. Gray).

On Thursday, 17th March, there would be a debate on the White Paper on the Government's Expenditure Plans (Cmd. 6721) (Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. David Howell). This would be followed by the Remaining Stages of the Representation of the People Bill (Mr. Alison).

On Friday, 18th March, there would be Private Members' Motions: Prisons (Mr. Patrick Mayhew), Protection of Citizen and Property (Mr. Le Marchant) and Crimes of Violence (Mr. P. Brooke).

## 2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion of the Debate on the White Paper on the Government's Expenditure Plans, and it was agreed that:

(i) We should table an amendment to the Government's motion condemning the fact that the burden of the spending cuts was falling on capital expenditure generally and on the construction industry in particular. This would not be tabled before Tuesday, 15th March, by which time we should know the form of the Government's motion, and it was left to Sir Geoffrey Howe and his colleagues to make any detailed adjustments that seemed desirable. We would vote for our amendment on a three-line whip.

(ii) There would be a two-line whip for the Second Reading of the Redundancy Rebates (No.2) Bill on 21st March.

(iii) There would be a one-line whip on 15th March for consideration of Lords' Amendments to the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill, but members of the Shadow Cabinet and Frontbench Spokesmen were asked to be present to support the Lords' Amendments that had been agreed with the Government. In respect of this Bill, it was noted that an unofficial committee had been formed from the various unions in the shipbuilding industry to resist "any and every" redundancy.

## 3. Forthcoming Events

There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) The LCC would normally decide which were to be the key-note speeches of the following week.

(ii) Mr. Neave's speech on The Media and Northern Ireland was designated as the following weekend's key-note speech, and it was noted that Mr. Heseltine was speaking on the following day, when the TUC Women's Conference was taking place, and that Mrs. Oppenheim would issue a statement on the proposed increase in gas prices.

## 4. The Ulster Unionists

Mr. Neave introduced his paper (LCC/77/157). There was a discussion and the conclusions in paragraph 5 were agreed. The following points were also agreed:

(i) We should draw attention to the fact that unemployment in Northern Ireland was at a disastrous level, and we should seek to blame the Government for their contribution to this situation and draw attention to our policies for remedying it.

(ii) The burden of direct taxation and the future of grammar schools and educational standards were also issues in Northern Ireland which we could, with value, draw attention to.

## 5. Revolution

Mrs. Thatcher reported that Mr. Pym, Mr. Atkins and herself had had a discussion with the Prime Minister on 8th March. The Prime Minister made no proposals, and no particular reaction was made to our proposal for a Select Committee of both Houses to examine the subject. It was noted that nothing had been published about this discussion except the fact that it had taken place, and that talks would continue between Mr. Pym and Mr. Foot on an ad hoc basis.

6. Other Business

There was a discussion of the situation regarding the payment of gratuities to those serving with the Fleet Air Arm. It was noted that Sir Ian Gilmour had written to Mr. Mulley, and it was agreed that we should campaign vigorously against any attempt by the Government to deny their full rights to those involved.

Mr. Whitelaw reported on the situation regarding the Police pay dispute, and it was agreed that we could do little more at this stage.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.