

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 168th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 6th July 1977, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Carrington, Lord Hailsham, Lord Thorneycroft, Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Davies, Mr. Neave, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Atkins.

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

Apologies: Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mrs. Oppenheim.

1. Proposed Business for the Week, 11th-18th July

On Monday, 11th July, there would be the Private Members' Motions of Mr. Charles Morrison, Mr. M. Noble and Mr. R. Bell. These would be followed by Opposed Private Business and by a Motion on EEC Documents R/80/75, R/2026/76, R/2027/76 and R/2203/76 on Pesticides, Plant Protection and Packaging and Labelling.

On Tuesday, 12th July, Mr. Rhodes James would seek leave to introduce his Guardianship (Amendment) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Supply Day debate and by the Remaining Stages of the Local Authorities Works (Scotland) Bill (Mr. Taylor, Mr. Fletcher). This would be followed by Proceedings on the Rent Bill (Mr. Awdry) and by Proceedings on the Protection from Eviction Bill.

On Wednesday, 13th July, Mr. P. Viggers would seek leave to introduce his Inflation (Information) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Remaining Stages of the Criminal Law Bill (Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Percival).

On Thursday, 14th July, there would be progress on the Report Stage of the Finance Bill (Sir Geoffrey Howe and team).

On Friday, 15th July, there would be Private Members' Bills.

On Monday, 18th July, there would be a Supply Day debate. This would be followed by either a Motion on EEC Documents on the Community Budget or by the Finance Bill Report.

2. Matters Arising on Business

It was agreed that Mr. Brittan would speak from the Front Bench on the debate on Mr. Morrison's Private Member's Motion on 11th July.

3. Subjects for the Supply Day

There was a discussion and it was agreed that we would debate Crime Prevention on the Supply Day on the 12th July. Mr. Whitelaw and Mr. Taylor would be our speakers, and we would not vote unless the Business Committee particularly urged us to do so. We would make reference to the rifle of law and Labour attacks on the Judges in the course of the debate.

4. Criminal Law Bill

There was a discussion on whether we should table amendments on picketing during the remaining stages of this Bill. It was agreed not to do so but Mr. Whitelaw would refer to the picketing issue and the state of the law on picketing in the debate on Crime Prevention on 12th July. Mr. Prior would agree a form of words on this with Mr. Whitelaw. It was also agreed that we should make efforts in the Commons to restore the Lords amendments on the subject of terms of imprisonment for young offenders, which at the moment did not provide for such offenders receiving sentences anywhere between six months and three years.

5. Backbench committees and Policy

It was agreed that all backbench committees should have an opportunity of discussing policy developments in their areas before the House rose for the Summer Recess.

6. The Ulster Unionists

There was a discussion on Mr. Molyneaux's recent statement that, in certain circumstances, the Ulster Unionists would support the Government. It was agreed that we should not react openly to this statement.

7. European Assembly Elections Bill

There was a discussion and it was agreed that we should decide how to proceed with regard to the system of elections to the European Assembly when the Bill had completed its Second Reading. It was also agreed that we would not provide pairs for the vote on the Second Reading the following evening.