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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

237TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 21st March 1979, in
the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

ACENDA

1. Future Business.
2. Forthcoming Events.
3. Any other business.

Conservative Research Department,
24 Old Queen Street, London, SW1.

CFP/MMM
19.3.79

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 237th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 14th March 1979, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph,
Lord Hailsham, Lord Thorneycroft,
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior,
Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour,
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Neave,
Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stevas,
Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott,
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King,
Mr. Taylor, Mr. Carlisle, Mr. Biffen,

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Fowler,
Lord Strathcona, Mr. Butler,
Mr. Stanley, Mr. Wolfson, Mr. Patten,
Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Browne-Clayton.

Apologies: Lord Carrington.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 19th-26th March

On Monday, 19th March, there would be a motion to take note of the Government's public expenditure plans, 1979-80 to 1982-83, Cmd. 7439. This would be followed by consideration of Lords Amendments to the Social Security Bill (Mr. Jenkin, Mrs. Chalker).

On Tuesday, 20th March, Mr. R. Whitney would seek leave to introduce his Trade Unions (Secret Ballots) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by Proceedings on the Administration of Justice (Emergency Provisions) (Scotland) Bill and a Motion on EEC Documents R/2712/78, R/2311/78 and R/2163/78 on the Steel Industry and Energy Policies.

On Wednesday, 21st March, Mr. J. Home Robertson would seek leave to introduce his Agricultural Tied Housing Reform (Scotland) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a debate on the Report of the Shackleton Committee, Cmd. 7324 and a Motion on the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1976 (Continuance) Order. This would be followed by a Motion on the Temporary Short-time Working Compensation Scheme.

On Thursday, 22nd March, there would be the Second Reading of the Road Traffic (Seat Belts) Bill (Mr. Fowler) followed by a Prayer relating to the Firearms (Variation of Fees) (Northern Ireland) Order (Mr. Farr).

On Friday, 23rd March, there would be the Private Members' Bills of Mr. Rooker, Mr. Silvester and Mr. Finsberg.

On Monday, 26th March, there would be a debate on a Motion on the Statement on Defence Estimates (Cmdn. 7474) which would be concluded on Tuesday, 27th March.

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) We should continue the 3-line whip on Monday, 19th March in case the Government did not accept certain desirable Lords' amendments to the Social Security Bill.

(ii) Mr. Fairbairn would speak on the proceedings on the Administration of Justice (Emergency Provisions) (Scotland) Bill on 20th March.

(iii) Mr. Lemont and Mr. King would speak in the debates on the EEC documents on the Steel Industry and Energy Policies on 20th March.

(iv) Mr. David Howell would speak in the debate on the Shackleton Committee Report and on the Motion on the Prevention of Terrorism on 21st March. We should be prepared to vote with the Government against any revolts by their backbenchers in these debates.

(v) We should find out more about the Motion on the Temporary Short-Time Working Compensation Scheme on 21st March. We would prepare for a 2-line whip in case it was necessary to vote against the scheme.

3. Cruelty to Animals

In the context of a discussion of Mr. Rooker's Private Members' Motion on 23rd March, which was expected to be on the subject of cruelty to animals, Mr. Whitelaw reported that he had indicated to the RSPCA that we would make a positive statement on the matter before the election. It was agreed that Mr. Mills would speak in the debate on 23rd March and Mr. Whitelaw, in the light of his discussions, would suggest a line he might take.

4. Devaluation of the Green Pound

Mr. Peyton introduced a discussion on the devaluation of the Green Pound. It was agreed that he should arrange for the next meeting of the Backbench Committee on Agriculture to discuss the matter, and a short paper would be prepared following this discussion. The LCC would consider the matter further at its next meeting.

5. The Bingham Report

Mr. St. John Stevas reported that the Government had put forward further proposals for a Committee to investigate the alleged evasion of Rhodesian Sanctions, and were enquiring whether we would support this. There was a discussion and it was agreed that we would continue to oppose the proposal that a Committee should have access to Cabinet papers; we would take appropriate decisions over whether to take part in such a Committee if and when the House of Commons were required to vote to set one up.

6. Other Business

(a) Mrs. Oppenheim reported on a request for us to plead against the recent Price Commission Order on the Daily Telegraph.

(b) Colleagues were asked to let Sir Geoffrey Howe know if they had received enquiries or information about the effect of the Civil Service computer strikes. It was agreed that if there was sufficient concern we might have a Half Supply Day on the subject.

The meeting ended at 6.06 p.m.