

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 89th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Wednesday, 17th December 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  
Mr. Gilmour, Lord Carrington  
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton  
Mr. St. John-Stevas, Mr. Heseltine  
Mr. Maude, Mr. Buchanan-Smith  
Mr. Edwards, Mr. Neave  
Mr. Younger, Mr. Fowler  
Mr. Jopling, Lord Thorneycroft

Mr. Atkins

Apologies: Lord Hailsham, Mr. Prior  
Mr. Raison, Mrs. Oppenheim

In attendance: Mr. Rossi, Mr. Higgins  
Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Butler  
Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley  
Mr. Nicholson

1. Proposed Business for the Week 12-19th January

On Monday, 12th January there would be a debate on the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention (Mr. Neave, Mr. Biggs-Davison). This would be followed by a motion on the Unsolicited Goods and Services (Northern Ireland) Order.

On Tuesday, 13th January there would be a debate on "Our Changing Democracy, Devolution to Scotland and Wales" (Cmd 6384).

On Wednesday, 14th January the debate on Devolution would be continued.

On Thursday, 15th January there would be an Opposition Supply Day, devoted to the third day of the debate on Devolution. This would be followed by a Prayer on the Income Tax (Sub-Contractors in the Construction Industry) Order.

On Friday, 16th January there would be Private Members' Motions - those of Mr. Kilroy-Silk, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Neubert.

On Monday, 19th January there would be the fourth and final day of the debate on Devolution.

2. Matters Arising on Business

It was understood that neither the Prime Minister nor the Law Officers were proposing to take part in the debate on Devolution. We should make strong representations about this. It was agreed, *pro tempore*, that Mrs. Thatcher and Sir Michael Havers would speak on 13th January, Mr. Buchanan-Smith and Mr. Rifkind would speak on 14th January, which would be devoted

to the Scottish aspect of devolution; Mr. Edwards and Mr. Roberts would speak on 15th January, which would be devoted to the Welsh aspect of devolution; and Sir David Renton and Mr. Whitelaw would speak on 19th January.

It was agreed that the LCC would meet on 6th January to discuss what our approach should be in the debate on the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention, and to decide on an amendment at the end of the Devolution debate.

It was agreed to vote on a three line whip at 10.00 p.m. and 11.30 p.m. that same night, 17th December. There was a short discussion about Mr. Heseltine's costings of the Government's Chrysler plans.

3. The Economic Prospects and the Party's political position  
(LCC/75/94)

Sir Geoffrey Howe introduced his paper, drawing attention to his proposals on page 5. There was a discussion. It was agreed to discuss the matter further at a Monday meeting of the Shadow Cabinet. Meanwhile it was agreed that we should consider how best to put our case on social security benefit to strikers' families. We also needed to develop and communicate our answer to the frequently asked question, "how would the Conservatives deal with militant unions?".

4. GLC Elections

Mrs. Thatcher reported on her discussion with Mr. Graham Page, who would not be opposed if the Party resisted the Government's attempt to postpone the GLC elections to 1977. It was agreed that we should oppose this; Mr. Atkins would talk to Mr. Geoffrey Rippon, who was Secretary of State for the Environment when the original postponement was proposed.

5. Parliamentary Tactics - Paper by Patrick Jenkin (LCC/75/92)

Mr. Jenkin introduced his paper in which it was suggested that the Party would find it difficult to become more effective in Parliament until it decided whether to upgrade the status and briefing for our representation on Select Committees and draw more attention to their proceedings, or downgrade Select Committee work and seek to restore the limelight to proceedings on the floor of the House. There was a discussion. It was agreed that the subject should be discussed again at a Monday meeting of the Shadow Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.