

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 94th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Wednesday 28th January 1976 in the Leader's  
Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)  
Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph  
Lord Hailsham, Mr. Maudling  
Mr. Prior, Mr. Gilmour  
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton  
Mr. St. John-Stevan, Mr. Heseltine  
Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude  
Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards  
Mr. Neave, Mrs. Oppenheim  
Mr. Biffen, Lord Thorneycroft  
Mr. Atkins

In attendance: Lord St. Aldwyn (items 1 and 2)  
Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley  
Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley  
Mr. Nicholson

Apologies: Lord Carrington, Sir Geoffrey Howe  
Mr. Fym

1. Proposed Business for the Week 2nd-9th February

On Monday 2nd February there would be a debate on  
Procedure on a Motion for the Adjournment (Mr. Peyton,  
Sir Derek Walker-Smith) and this would be followed by  
Prayers on NHS Charges (Dentists) (Dr. Vaughan).

On Tuesday 3rd February there would be no Questions, and  
at 2.30 p.m. there would be Proceedings relating to the Chair:  
the retiring Speaker's statement, the Motion of thanks, and  
the election of a new Speaker.

On Wednesday 4th February Mr. Ian Gow would seek leave  
to introduce his Post Office (Amendment) Bill under the 10  
Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Second Reading  
of the Education Bill (Mr. St. John-Stevan) and a Motion on  
the London Councillors Order (Mr. Finsberg, Mr. Rossi).

On Thursday 5th February there would be a Supply Day,  
and this would be followed by a Motion on the Community Land  
(Excepted Development) Regulations (Mr. Rossi).

On Friday 6th February there would be Private Members'  
Bills, the first two being Mr. Ray Carter's Congenital  
Disabilities (Civil Liability) Bill (Mr. Percival) and  
Mr. Cranley Onslow's Representation of the People (Armed  
Forces) Bill.

On Monday 9th February there would be Private Members'  
Motions, the Motions being those of Mr. Newsen, Mr. Carter  
and Mr. Sedgemore. This would be followed by the Second  
Reading of the Water Charges Bill (Mr. Speed, Mr. A. Jones)

iii) If the present discussions with Iceland broke down, we should urge the Government to invite Dr. Luns to mediate.

5. Direct Elections to the European Parliament

Mr. Maudling introduced the paper LSC/76/39 and referred to the points of agreement emerging from the discussion in the Leader's Steering Committee on Monday 26th January. There was a discussion.

It was agreed that:

i) No final decision could be reached until the Shadow Cabinet had received advice from the Conservative Backbench Constitutional and European Affairs Committees, which were meeting the following day, 29th January. The subject would be put on the agenda for the LCC meeting on Wednesday 11th February. Meanwhile it was best to let the Government show their hand on the detailed arrangements for these elections.

ii) The need for effective links between Conservative members of the European Parliament and Conservative members at Westminster should be emphasised.

iii) Lord Thornercroft and Sir Anthony Royle were intending to hold a meeting the following week to discuss the implications of direct elections for the Party Organisation; the Research Department would undertake detailed statistical work on the various electoral options under their guidance.

iv) MPs who were opposed to Proportional Representation should be encouraged to attend the Constitutional Committee to put in that forum the case against PR in any elections.

6. All-day LCC meeting on February 13th

It was agreed that:

In the morning the Shadow Cabinet would discuss the Party's policy towards the Trade Unions; Mr. Prior would prepare a short note. This would be followed by a discussion on the economic situation, with a presentation by Mr. Ridley and an intended paper on policy implications by Sir Geoffrey Howe. In the afternoon there would be a discussion on political strategy; the Research Department would prepare a background note.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.