

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

87TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday 10th December, 1975

in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons

AGENDA

1. Minutes of 86th Meeting - to follow
2. Future Business
3. Forthcoming Events
4. Metrication - LCC/75/90, a note by
Sir Geoffrey Howe - attached
5. Any other business

Conservative Research Department
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CFP/GSB
5.12.75

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 87th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Wednesday, 10th 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. Prior, Mr. Jenkin
Mr. Payton, Mr. St. John-Stevas
Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Raison
Mr. Maude, Mr. Buchanan-Smith
Mr. Edwards, Mr. Neave
Mr. Younger, Mr. Fowler
Mrs. Dyppeheim, Lord Thornercroft

Mr. Atkins

Apologies: Lord Hailsham, Mr. Jopling

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

1. Proposed Business for the Week 15-19th December

On Monday, 15th December there would be a debate on the Rate Support Grant Orders for England and Wales (Mr. Raison, Mr. Speed) and for Scotland (Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards). This would be followed by a motion to approve the First Report from the Committee of Privileges, paragraph 9, relating to the exclusion from the precincts of Mr. Knight and Mr. Schreiber (Mr. Payton).

On Tuesday, 16th December there would be a Supply Day when the House would be asked to pass outstanding votes. There would be a debate on a motion to take note of the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Reports in the 1974-5 Session of the Select Committee on Public Accounts, and the relevant Treasury Minutes (Mr. Nott). This would be followed by a debate on Chrysler (UK) Ltd. (Mr. Heseltine).

On Wednesday, 17th December there would be a debate on on Employment and Measures for Saving Jobs (Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior). This would be followed by Motions on the Hill Livestock (Compensatory Allowances) Regulations (speakers to be nominated) and on the Winter Keep (Scotland) (Revocation) (Mr. Hicks, Sir John Gilmour) and on the Weights and Measures Act 1963 (Biscuits and Shortbread) Order (Mr. Lamont).

On Thursday, 18th December there would be a motion for the Christmas Adjournment and Proceedings on the Consolidated Fund Bill.

On Friday, 19th December Christmas Adjournment Debates would be continued. The House would rise for the Christmas Adjournment until Monday, 12th January.

2. Matters Arising on Business

It was agreed that we should vigorously press for publication of the CPRS Report on the Motor Vehicle Industry in time for the Chrysler debate. Further attacks on the Government's approach to Chrysler might be made in the debates on the Adjournment on Thursday, 18th December.

It was agreed that Mr. Whitelaw and Mr. Buchanan-Smith would discuss how to handle the four day debate on Devolution which was to take place in the week beginning 12th January and report their views to the LCC.

3. Metrication: paper by Sir Geoffrey Howe (LCC/75/90)

Sir Geoffrey Howe introduced his paper, stating that he hoped we could agree not to vote against the legislation foreshadowed, but to press for much greater openness and clarity about the Government's intentions and for reassurances on certain specific points. It was agreed that a decision was not yet urgent and that we would have to find a compromise formula to which all members of the LCC - and as many members of the Parliamentary Party as possible - could subscribe.

4. Lords' Business

It was agreed that we would have to decide which amendments to the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill we wished to press for in the Lords: whether simply to seek to retain the Houghton/Goodman amendments on the press, or to make more extensive amendments. Mr. Prior and Mr. Hayhoe were examining this subject.

5. Other Business

(a) Reacting to Events

It was agreed that we should seek to improve the process whereby any important developments reported in the media were monitored and the relevant Shadow spokesman alerted, possible via the desk officer at the Research Department, so that, if desirable, a speedy reaction might be made. It was also agreed that Mr. Maude would present a paper, after discussing the subject with Lord Thorneycroft and Mr. Johnson-Smith, and officials in Central Office and the Research Department.

(b) GLC Elections

Mr. Bailson raised the question of how we should react to a Government order to postpone the GLC elections to 1977 rather than holding them in 1976. Although when in Government we had intended the elections to be in 1977, so as to establish a four-year cycle for GLC elections, there was a strong feeling among the Conservative London MPs, GLC councillors and constituencies that we should oppose any Government attempt to delay the elections. It was agreed, however, that no decision could be finalised until Mrs. Thatcher had discussed the matter with Mr. Graham Page and further soundings of opinion had taken place.

6. Christmas Recess

Colleagues were asked to give to Mr. Atkins dates during the Christmas Recess on which they might be available in London for commenting on events.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.