

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

57TH MEETING

5.00-5.45 p.m., Monday, 12th June 1978, in  
the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Assessment of policy position  
and future programme.
2. Any other business.

*Nicholas...*

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

CFP/MMM  
8.6.78

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE57TH MEETING

Minutes of the 57th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 12th June 1978, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Carrington, Lord Thorneycroft, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Davies, Mr. Maude.

Mr. Atkins,

In attendance: Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Wolfson, Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley, Miss Bulloch.

1. Censure Debate on 14th June

There was a discussion on the terms of the motion to be tabled. Mr. Atkins said that the Liberals were likely to abstain on a motion of confidence, but there was a possibility that they and the Scottish Nationalists might vote with us on a motion censuring Mr. Healey alone. The press reports that we were likely to propose that the Chancellor's salary should be cut had been based merely on assumption and not on briefing.

It was agreed that we should table a motion to halve the Chancellor's salary.

2. Assessment of Policy Position and Future Programme

(a) Policy position. The policy proposals that had still to be discussed, either by the Leader's Consultative Committee or the Steering Committee, were reviewed. The policy group report on nationalised industries had been discussed at an ad hoc committee, but had still to be considered by the LSC. Proposals on rates had been discussed by the Steering Committee. A paper on regional policy was in preparation: it had still to be decided whether special measures could be proposed for Scotland.

Sir Geoffrey Howe said that he had held an all-day meeting the previous day on taxation and social security proposals. They had reached useful conclusions on taxation of short-term benefits, and on pensioner credits. Mrs. Thatcher said that we should draw up a definitive statement on tax credits leaving the option to introduce them open, but avoiding entering into a commitment to do so. We should then be careful to speak with one voice on the subject.

Mrs. Thatcher said that we should make no reference to a constitutional conference now or in the Manifesto: any constitutional proposals should be brought forward when we were in government.

/... Mr. Davies

Mr. Davies said that there were several EEC issues to be decided: fisheries, the CAP, trade and monetary policy.

(b) Future Programme. Mr. Pym said that some 20-24 issues on the Scottish Devolution Bill would be brought back to the Commons, embodied in about a hundred amendments. They would probably be debated about the third week in July. The Government were unlikely to get the Bill through before the end of the session unless they introduced a guillotine motion. We had still to decide what our next move should be. An October election would make it necessary to change the plans for a referendum.

Mr. Whitelaw said that it was not now possible to have a debate on immigration, but he intended to make a statement making clear our intention to stand firm on our proposals.

It was important that we should avoid giving grounds for allegations that the Party was disunited in its attitude to proposals for a referendum on capital punishment. We should say that a policy group was at present considering the whole subject of referenda. Mr. Whitelaw would draft a statement to be considered by the LCC the following week, making clear that we believe capital punishment was an issue on which individual members should reach their own decisions: it was not an appropriate subject for a referendum, which would, in any case, only be advisory.

Mrs. Thatcher said that she would welcome a debate on protection, because the issue was very likely to arise at the Bonn summit meeting.

Sir Ian Gilmour said that he had written to Mr. Mulley about the case of Air Vice Marshal Williamson.

### 3. Other Business

Sir Keith Joseph reported that senior front bench colleagues invited to the Prime Minister's dinner for the NEB had all refused the invitation. It was agreed that any junior spokesmen invited should also refuse.

The meeting closed at 5.55 p.m.