

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

104TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday 24th March 1976, in the

Leader's Room at the House of Commons

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 103rd Meeting
2. Future Business
3. Forthcoming Events
4. Alliance of Centre-Right Parties in Europe -  
paper by Douglas Hurd, LCC/76/106
5. Any Other Business

- Reggie. Michael.

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CFP/GSB  
16.3.76

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 103rd meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Wednesday, 24th March 1976, in the  
Leader's Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph  
Lord Carrington, Lord Hailsham  
Mr. Maudling, Sir Geoffrey Howe  
Mr. Prior (item 2), Mr. Pym  
Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin  
Mr. St. John-Stevas, Mr. Heseltine  
Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude  
Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards  
Mr. Neave, Mrs. Oppenheim  
Mr. Biffen

Mr. Atkins

In attendance: Mr. Hurd, Col. Joyner  
Mr. Nicholson

Apologies: Mr. Peyton, Lord Thorneycroft

1. Proposed Business for the Week 29th March - 5th April

On Monday, 29th March, there would be a debate on the  
Green Paper on Direct Elections to the European Assembly  
(Cmd. No. 6399) (Mr. Maudling, Mr. Hurd) followed by the  
Remaining Stages of the Rating (Caravan Sites) Bill (Mr. Roberts,  
Mr. Morris).

On Tuesday, 30th March Mr. Gow would seek leave to  
introduce his Parliamentary Commissioner (Amendment) Bill  
under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Supply  
Day with subject to be decided and the Remaining Stages of  
the Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths Inquiry (Scotland) Bill  
(Mr. Rifkind) and of the Damages (Scotland) Bill (Mr. Rifkind).

On Wednesday, 31st March Mr. Loyden would seek leave to  
introduce his Electricity Supply Bill under the 10 Minute  
Rule. This would be followed by a Debate on the Statement  
on the Defence Estimates (Mr. Gilmour) and a Prayer on the  
Fiduciary Note Issue Order (Mr. Lawson).

On Thursday, 1st April there would be a Debate on the  
Statement on the Defence Estimates followed by a Motion on  
the Industries Development (Northern Ireland) Order (Mr. Neave).

On Friday, 2nd April there would be Private Members'  
Motions, the Motions being those of Mr. Michael Neubert on  
British Industry, Dr. Edmund Marshall on Local Government in  
England and Mr. Tony Durant on Tax thresholds for widows,  
low-paid workers, etc.

On Monday, 5th April there would be a Supply Day with  
subject to be decided.

## 2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion on various points and it was agreed that:

i) We would use our Supply Day on 30th March as a second day for debating Direct Elections to the European Assembly. Sir Peter Kirk would be the third speaker in that debate, speaking from the Front Bench, and a decision on whether Mr. Whitlaw should speak, and if so when, or whether we should have no wind-up speaker on Monday, 29th March would be made later.

ii) Members of the Shadow Cabinet would not vote in any division on Mr. Gow's Parliamentary Commissioner (Amendment) Bill.

iii) We would not vote on the Scottish business later on 30th March.

iv) A decision would be made at the next meeting on what subject to take for the Supply Day on 5th April. Among the subjects which we might debate were Juvenile Crime and the Children and Young Persons Act, Fisheries (half day) and Home Ownership in Scotland (half day).

## 3. Alliance of Centre/Right Parties in Europe

Mr. Hurd introduced his paper (LCC/76/106). There was a discussion after which the paper was agreed together with the following points:

i) It was important that the Independent Republicans (the supporters of President Giscard d'Estaing) should ally with the Centre/Right groups and not with the European Liberals.

ii) When we had a clearer view of future cooperation, we should try to attract to the Centre/Right group and away from the European Liberal block those "Liberal" Parties (like the Dutch Liberals) who were similar to us in their outlook.

iii) We should emphasise that we did not agree with the use of the word "union" for describing cooperation between like-minded parties, and preferred the word "alliance". We should oppose any question of British Conservative members of the European Parliament being mandated to support policies there which the Shadow Cabinet had not agreed.

iv) In dealing with the "confessional" (i.e. Christian Democrat) Parties we should stress our record on and concern for social welfare, and the distinction in outlook between us and the Scandinavian Conservatives.

v) The European Affairs Committee should have a further discussion of this subject in the light of the debate on direct elections.

## 4. Foreign Affairs

Mr. Maudling reported on the meeting at the Soviet Embassy between himself and certain of his colleagues and Mr. Gromyko, and on the situation in Rhodesia following the latest statement by Mr. Callaghan and Mr. Smith's response.

There was a discussion and it was agreed that:

i) In view of Mr. Smith's attitude there was little we could do or say at present. We should, however, examine the possibility of suggesting an initiative which would show our concern about this question such as setting up a Commonwealth Sub-committee which might visit Salisbury.

ii) A further discussion was required on our legal responsibilities with regard to white and Asian Rhodesians, who might wish to come to Britain, and a paper would be prepared.

5. Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill

Mr. Heseltine reported on certain difficulties which might arise as a result of our hitherto successful tactics in the Standing Committee on this Bill. There was a discussion and it was agreed that:

i) We should try to keep the Bill in Committee until after Easter: one method of doing so would be to table a number of reasonable new clauses.

ii) If, as feared, problems arose in the interim with regard to specific companies in either industry we should emphasise that nationalisation was no solution. If necessary we could suggest that the Government could use its powers under the Industry Act 1972 to assist them.

iii) We should constantly make it clear that any problem or disruption in these two industries was the result not of our delaying tactics but of the Government's policy of nationalisation, which had been so destructive of industrial confidence.

iv) We were in favour of de-nationalising these industries if they were nationalised and if it were at all possible.

The meeting closed at 6.12 p.m.