

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 40th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Monday, 8th 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, Mr. Maudling
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Pym (item 3)
Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Peyton
Mr. Maude, Mrs. Oppenheim
Mr. Atkins
In attendance: Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten
Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson
Apologies: Mr. Prior, Lord Thorneycroft

1. Southern Africa

Mr. Maudling reported on the situation in Southern Africa and there was a discussion. It was agreed that:

- i) We should condemn any provision of British aid to Mozambique which might be used to assist aggression.
- ii) We wished to see the state of war existing between Mozambique and Rhodesia referred to the Security Council.
- iii) We should press the Government to do everything possible to assist a settlement in Rhodesia between Mr. Smith and Mr. Nkomo.
- iv) We should at present avoid answering hypothetical questions about arms supplies and what we would do if white or Asian refugees from Rhodesia sought to come to this country. We should, however, investigate our obligations in international law towards the white and Asian population of Rhodesia and consider how we should eventually respond to this question.

2. Metrication

Mrs. Oppenheim introduced her paper (LSC (76) 48) to which was attached her earlier paper on metrication (LCC/75/85). There was a discussion and it was agreed that:

- i) We would regret that there had never been a vote on the floor of the House on the subject while pointing out that we had allowed two debates in Government, and that the present Government had had plenty of time to hold a debate on a planned timetable for metrication, of safeguards, and on a cut-off date, but had not hitherto taken the opportunity.
- ii) We should vote against the Government's Bill on a reasoned amendment. There would be a further discussion on the precise terms of the amendment in the backbench Prices and Consumer Affairs Committee and at Wednesday's Shadow Cabinet meeting.

3. Agriculture and the CAP

Mr. Pym introduced his paper (LSO (76) 46) on New York Dressed Poultry and also referred to the problem of the surplus of skimmed milk powder which had developed under the CAP. There was a discussion. Mr. Pym's paper on New York Dressed Poultry was agreed. It was also agreed to vote against the Government's motion to take note of two proposed EEC directives relating to the skimmed surplus on a three line whip on the evening of Wednesday, 10th March, and that we would ask for time for a debate on agricultural affairs.

The meeting closed at 6.13 p.m.