

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 172nd Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Monday, 25th July 1977, 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,
Lord Thorneycroft, Sir Geoffrey Howe,
Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour,
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Davies, Mr. Neave,
Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stevas,
Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott,
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Mitchell,
Mr. Howell, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Hooson,
Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Hutt, Mr. Hopkinson.

Apologies: Mr. Peyton.

1. Televising of the Shadow Cabinet

There was a discussion of this subject and it was agreed to permit ten minutes or so of the LCC meeting on 27th July to be televised for the forthcoming programme on the Conservative Party. It was also agreed that three or four members of the LCC would report on business or events in their areas of responsibility during that time, and that the Committee should meet at 4.45 p.m. for a brief discussion before the cameras were allowed in.

2. Select Committee Report on the Conduct of Members

There was a discussion on the issues raised by this Report.

3. Transport Policy, LCC(77)158

There was a discussion of this paper summarising the draft of the proposed CPC pamphlet "The Right Track" which was introduced by Norman Fowler. It was agreed, subject to the following points:

(i) The paper would need to refer to the transport situation in Scotland, in particular to Scotland's dependence on coastal shipping lines for communications with the islands and the greater dependence on public transport as a result of a relatively lower level of car ownership. Certain relevant figures would be inserted into the draft.

(ii) It was not desirable to give particular figures or a particular date for reduction in British Rail's staff. We should simply refer to British Rail's stated policy and add that this had met with considerable success and that we hoped they would carry on with their present proposals for improving productivity.

(iii) We should indicate our intention to investigate how organisational changes in the National Freight Corporation and National Carriers could improve their efficiency. We should not specify how private capital should be introduced into the NFC.

(iv) We should not raise expectations on the subject of providing compensation for blight as a result of road construction.

(v) We should concentrate attention on the first two priorities on page 20: with regard to road maintenance we should refer to the need for more efficiency and economy.

(vi) Mr. Fowler was asked to find out more about duplication of computer systems at Scotland Yard and Swansea.

(vii) We should refer to the position of the blind who were not regarded as being disabled and did not obtain special facilities for the parking of vehicles in which they were travelling.

(viii) There was a need for a stronger concluding paragraph.

(ix) We would add an appendix showing what the Labour Party said they would do in 1974 and contrast this with the proposals in their White Paper.

It was agreed to publish the paper after revision and Sir Keith Joseph, Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Taylor were invited to assist Mr. Fowler in this task. Mr. Maude and Mr. Fowler would give particular attention to any proposals involving public spending. It was important that the proposals in the document should not be regarded as adding to public expenditure.

The meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.