

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

143RD MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 15th December 1976, in  
the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Future Business.
2. Forthcoming Events.
3. Rhodesia - a paper by Mr. Lavies  
(LCC/76/150) - attached.
4. Any other business.

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REVISED AGENDA

1. Future Business.
2. Forthcoming Events.
3. Rhodesia - a paper by Mr. Davies  
(LOC/76/150) circulated with original  
Agenda.
4. Devolution - papers by Mr. Pym were  
circulated for last week's meeting.
5. Any Other Business.

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

CFF/SRG  
14.12.76

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 143rd Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Wednesday, 15th December, 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,  
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior,  
Mr. Pym, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin,  
Mr. Peyton, Mr. Davies,  
Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Heseltine,  
Mr. Maude, Mr. Neave, Mr. Biffen,  
Mr. King, Mr. Nott, Mr. Taylor,  
Lord Thorneycroft.

Mr. Atkins

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Stanley,  
Mr. Butler, Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley,  
Mr. Nicholson

Apologies: Mr. Edwards, Mrs. Oppenheim

1. Proposed Business for the Week 20th-23rd December

On Monday, 20th December, there would be Private Members' Motions: Mr. Ian Stewart's on Government Burdens on Industry and Commerce; Mr. S. Ross's on Management of United Kingdom Food Resources, and Mr. M. Hamilton's on Continuing threat of Biological Warfare. This would be followed by Proceedings on the Consolidated Fund Bill.

On Tuesday, 21st December, there would be a Debate on the economic situation (Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Nott).

On Wednesday, 22nd December, there would be Motions on the Rate Support Grant Orders (Mr. Heseltine) which would be followed by a Motion on the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) Order.

On Thursday, 23rd December, there would be the Christmas Adjournment Debates and the House would then rise for the Christmas Recess.

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion of certain points arising:

(i) We should not vote against the Rate Support Grant Orders on 22nd December.

(ii) With regard to the debate on the economic situation Mr. Atkins was invited to go to the Business Committee and discover whether they were keen to vote. Mr. Atkins later reported on the views of the Business Committee and in the light of his report it was agreed that we should seek to have the debate on the adjournment and not vote.

- (iii) We were not willing to debate the Social Security Re-ratings Order at the end of Business on Wednesday, 22nd December, and we should press for a full debate on this Order.

3. Scotland and Wales Bill

There was a discussion on how we should react to the amendment calling for referenda in Scotland and Wales which had been signed by a large number of Labour Members and a steadily increasing number of our own backbenchers. It was agreed that we should not press the Speaker to select the amendment, but if it was selected we should vote for it unless the Government gave a more favourable response to the case for referenda than they had previously.

4. Rhodesia

Mr. Davies introduced his paper on Rhodesia (LCC/76/150) and reported on his discussions with Dr. Kissinger. The line set out in Mr. Davies's paper was agreed.

5. Other Business

It was noted that the Bullock Report would be published on 19th January and that there would be a minority report. Mr. Price would submit a paper after the Christmas Recess.

There was a short discussion on the outcome of the miners' ballot, which was likely to reject the Coal Board's offer on retirement age and give the NUM executive authority to resort to industrial action. It was agreed that we should take a sympathetic attitude to the principle of earlier retirement for face workers but argue that there was no reason for extending this principle to everyone else employed by the NCB, for example, clerical workers.

6. Future Meetings

It was agreed that there should be a meeting next week on 22nd December.

The meeting closed at 6.35 p.m.