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Dennis Committee
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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

195TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 8th March 1978, in the
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

P.E.S.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 191st and 192nd Meetings.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events. *Tom King - definitely*
4. Post-Ilford Situation.
5. Any other business. *6*

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 195th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Wednesday, 8th March 1978, in the Leader's
Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (In the Chair)
Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph,
Lord Hailsham, Lord Thorneycroft
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior,
Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour,
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Neave,
Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stevas
Mr. Maude, Mr. Nott, Mrs. Oppenheim,
Mr. Edwards, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Atkins

In Attendance: Lord Strathcona, Lord Denham,
Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Butler,
Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Lord Carrington, Mr. Davies.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 13th-23rd March

On Monday, 13th March, there would be a debate on the Defence White Paper. This would be followed by Proceedings on the Commonwealth Development Corporation Bill, the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill and on the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Bill, and by a Prayer on the Fiduciary Note Issue (Extension of Period) Order (Mr. Lawson).

On Tuesday, 14th March, Mr. Allaun would seek leave to introduce his Mortgages Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a debate on the Defence White Paper and by a Motion on the Industrial Training Levy (Engineering) Order.

On Wednesday, 15th March, Mr. G. Janner would seek leave to introduce his Representation of the People (Deposits and Nominations) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Second Reading of the Trustee Savings Banks Bill (Mr. Tapsell) and by the Remaining Stages of the Employment Subsidies Bill (Mr. Hayhoe) and of the Local Government (Scotland) Bill. This would be followed by a Motion on the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1976.

On Thursday 16th March, there would be a debate on the White Paper on the Government's Expenditure Plans from 1978-79 to 1981-82 (Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Lawson). This would be followed by a Motion on EEC Documents COM (77) 620 and R/2355/77 on Economic and Monetary Unity and National Economic Policies.

On Friday, 17th March, there would be the Private Member's Motions of Mr. P. Bottomley (on Family Policy, Politics and Society), Mr. Litterick and Mr. Cormack.

On Monday, 20th March, there would be Proceedings on the Consolidated Fund Bill.

On Tuesday, 21st March, there would be a Motion on EEC Documents R/3200 and R/3200/77 Add. 1 on Agriculture Price Proposals and Documents R/27/78 on Milk. This would be followed by a Motion on EEC Documents R/3197/77 and R/3197 Add. 1, R/3270/77 and R/402/78 on Mediterranean Agriculture and the Wine Sector.

On Wednesday, 22nd March, there would be a debate on the Windscale Inquiry Report (Mr. Heseltine, Mr. King). This would be followed by a Motion on EEC Document S/2077/77 on Cyprus.

On Thursday, 23rd March, the House would adjourn for the Easter Recess.

2. Matters Arising On Business

There was a discussion and the following was agreed:

(i) There would not be a foreign affairs speaker in the debate on the Defence White Paper; the defence team would handle the debate, and no decision about an amendment would be made until we had seen the Government's motion.

(ii) Sir Michael Havers would speak on the motion on the Prevention of Terrorism on Wednesday, 15th March. There would be a running two-line whip for that evening.

(iii) As Mr. Jenkin would not be present, Mrs. Chalker would be invited to speak in the debate on Mr. Bottomley's Private Member's Motion on family policy on 17th March.

(iv) Mr. Jopling would speak in the debate on the motion on the EEC documents on agriculture on 21st March.

(v) If, as expected, Mr. Benn did not speak in the debate on the Windscale Inquiry Report on 22nd March, we should draw attention to this fact and seek to embarrass the Government. If there was a vote at the end of that debate we should prepare to vote in strength in support of the Report.

3. Ilford North By-Election

There was a short discussion and it was noted that complacency after the Gallup poll the previous day and heavy rain were among the factors which had prevented us gaining an even greater swing. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to thank, through the Business Committee, those MPs who had come in such numbers to help with the campaign.

4. Forthcoming Events

There was a discussion of a number of matters:

(i) Mr. King reported on the Liberal manoeuvres over Mr. Benn's Electricity Bill. It was agreed we should not help Mr. Benn out of his difficulties; we should also avoid being saddled with the responsibility for killing the Bill.

(ii) Mr. Whitelaw reported on the progress of the Report of the Select Committee on Immigration. It was agreed that we would continue to indicate that we would need to see the Select Committee's conclusions before publishing our own proposals.

(iv) It was agreed that if there were a Supply Day in the week after Easter we should offer it to the minor parties.

(v) It was agreed that we needed to make a reasonable comment on Lord Pearson's Report on compensation for injury which was expected imminently. Mr. Jenkin would liaise with Mrs. Oppenheim, Sir Michael Havers or Mr. Ian Percival and with Mr. Hurd so far as European practice was concerned.

(vi) It was noted that Lord Justice Edmund Davies' committee was not expected to report until after the Police Federation Conference in May which the Home Secretary was not expected to attend. It was agreed that we should concentrate our attack on police strengths in particular. We should obtain from backbenchers good cases of undermanning of police stations in different parts of the country.

(viii) There was a brief discussion on the Home Secretary's attempt to deport the Ku Klux Klan leader who had come to Britain to recruit support. It was agreed that there was no case for us saying whether the decision to exclude or deport him was correct, and should point out that the Home Secretary of the day should know far more than the Opposition knew about the circumstances and background and he should therefore make his decision in the light of evidence and stick to it. We should simply attack Mr. Rees' incompetence and pusillanimity.

The meeting closed at 6.10 p.m.