

Ullca
Steering

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LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE
64TH MEETING

3.00 p.m., Monday, 5th March 1979, in the
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Consideration of the attached draft Manifesto. (*in safe*)
2. Any other business.

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

CFP/ASD
28.2.79

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 64th Meeting held at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 5th March 1979, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph,
Lord Thorneycroft, Sir Geoffrey Howe,
Mr. Prior, Sir Ian Gilmour,
Mr. Peyton, Mr. St. John Stevas,
Mr. Maude.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Lord Carrington, Mr. Pym.

Discussion of the Manifesto Drafts

The following points were agreed:

(i) We should use copy 'B' as our working document, but it was noted that there were a number of valuable phrases in copy 'A' which should be used where possible.

(ii) We should consider transferring the section entitled "Sound Money" on cutting Government spending from Section 2 to Section 3.

(iii) There should be somewhat more emphasis on the resources and advantages this country possessed: a greater note of hope should be struck.

(iv) The theme of increasing production and increasing the total amount of the nation's resources should be emphasised.

(v) The conclusion needed to be strengthened.

(vi) There should be a reference to agriculture and food production in Section 3 (not in the section on the EEC) and a brief reference to farming in the uplands. Provided we specified our commitment to devalue the green pound there need be no reference to MCAs.

(vii) A reference to the prevention of cruelty to animals should be inserted.

(viii) All references to devolved assemblies in Scotland and Wales should be omitted. We could not draft a final form of words on this matter at present.

(ix) The argument in the opening paragraphs in "The Right Approach" about the restoration of balance in our society and in our economy should be inserted, possibly with part or all of the de Tocqueville quotation on p.12.

(x) Sir Keith Joseph would suggest an appropriate form of words on higher education.

(xi) Our proposal to seek to demonopolise parts of the nationalised industries would not be included in the Manifesto but might be referred to in a speech.

(xii) The proposals for a property-owning democracy on page 16 should be cross-referenced with our desire to expand home ownership.

(xiii) We should emphasise more our concern to help the elderly and the disabled and should point out how they had suffered from the ravages of inflation.

(xiv) Mr. Jenkin would be invited to consider the passage on pages 15-16 on tax and social security benefits, and inform which of the various "short term" benefits were taxable at present.

(xv) In relation to our proposal to continue linking pensions to the price index, we might consider developing in speeches the argument for a new means of assessing the RPI.

(xvi) On page 12 we should consider omitting the word "unreliable" in the first full paragraph.

(xvii) The reference to "scope for total increases in pay" on page 13 should be revised.

(xviii) At the top of page 14 we should decide what to say of the new Comparability Commission in the light of its operations over the next few weeks.

(xix) Our proposals encouraging individual trade unionists to play a greater part in the affairs of their unions (on page 10) and individual employees to play a greater part in the affairs of their companies (on page 17) should be linked together. We should avoid any specific commitments on the subject of employee democracy but welcome what is being done at present and express a wish that other companies should follow this lead.

(xx) There should be short references indicating our intention to continue to support the arts and protect the national heritage.

(xxi) On page 18 we should amend the expression "big changes" to read "sudden, sharp changes" or words to this effect.

(xxii) On page 19 we should indicate that we were opposed to "general" import controls and insert a reference to the multifibre regime for textiles. More should be said about price controls and competition policy, and certain points in version 'A' might be used.

(xxiii) With reference to the proposals for reform of House of Commons procedure on page 20, we should change "we are broadly in agreement with the proposals" to "in general we sympathise with the approach of".

(xxiv) On page 26 we should consider inserting a reference to our desire to watch with interest the experiments with vouchers in Kent.

(xxv) We should examine whether the "fair rent" system had been introduced in all localities.

It was also agreed that all members of the LCC would be invited to comment on their specific sections. A redraft of the Manifesto would be produced in the light of these comments and the above points, and this would be discussed by the full LCC in due course.

The meeting closed at 4.50 p.m.