

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

206TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 17th May 1978, in the
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

ACENDA

1. Minutes of the 204th Meeting.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events.
4. Any other business.

Conservative Research Department,
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CFP/MH4
16.5.78

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 206th Meeting held at 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 17th May 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. Peyton, Mr. Jenkin, 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, Lord Denham, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Lord Carrington, Mr. Davies.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 22nd-26th May

On Monday, 22nd May, there would be a Supply Day debate on the Pay of the Armed Forces on a Motion to reduce the Salary of the Secretary of State (Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Churchill). This would be followed by a motion on Financial Assistance for Industry (Increase of Limit) Order.

On Tuesday, 23rd May, Mr. P. Viggers, would seek leave to introduce his Service Widows (Pensions) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the remaining stages of the Home Purchase Assistance and Housing Corporation Guarantee Bill (Mr. Rossi, Mr. Sainsbury).

On Wednesday, 24th May, Mr. J. Farr would seek leave to introduce his House of Commons (Televising of Proceedings) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Spring Bank Holiday Adjournment Motion (Mr. Pym). If time allowed, this would be followed by a Motion on EEC Document R/3245/77 on Liner Conferences (Mr. Nott). There would then be consideration of the GLC General Powers Bill and a Motion on the European Communities (Definition of Treaties) (No.4) Order (Mr. Hurd).

On Thursday, 25th May, there would be a Supply Day debate on the Army, on a Motion for the Adjournment (Mr. Goodhart, Mr. Walder). This would be followed by the Motion on the Army, Air Force and Naval Discipline Acts (Continuation) Order.

On Friday, 26th May, there would be Adjournment debates.

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion of certain points and the following was agreed:

(i) In the debate on the pay of the armed forces Sir Ian Gilmour would indicate that we should restore comparability next year, i.e. over two years rather than over three as the Government were proposing. We should take care that our statements on this subject did not prejudice our position over the pay of the police and firemen.

(ii) We would vote against the Motion on the Financial Assistance for Industry (Increase of Limit) Order on a 2 line whip.

(iii) We would not vote on the GLC General Powers Bill on 24th May.

3. Subjects for Supply Days

Mrs. Thatcher reported that twelve Supply Days remained between now and the end of the Session of which two had to be devoted to other purposes. We had not yet decided which days, if any, to give to the minor parties. There was a discussion and it was agreed that it would be desirable to debate the following subjects, depending on when circumstances seemed most appropriate: Education; Fisheries (half day in the near future); Trade; Shipping (half day); Jobs - how best to create genuine jobs; Education in Northern Ireland (half day); the Official Secrets Act; Family Affairs; City Centres (perhaps linked with a Party Political Broadcast in time for the Manchester Moss Side by-election); and Council house sales.

It was also agreed that we should press, at business questions, for a two-day debate on Foreign Affairs, drawing attention to the worsening international situation following recent events in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Afghanistan and Zaire. We would give one of our Supply Days if the Government would also give a day.

4. Other Parliamentary Business

It was agreed that it would not be appropriate to debate examples of public sector waste on a Supply Day, but the work being done by the Research Department might be used in questions and adjournment debates.

5. Members' Pay

Mrs. Thatcher reported on the joint proposal from the Executive of the 1922 Committee and the executive of the Parliamentary Labour Party. There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) It was important that any all-party agreement on Members' pay should also extend to Ministerial salaries.

(ii) Such an agreement should be published before the election.

(iii) There would be further discussion of the detailed proposals through the usual channels.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.