

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 46th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 24th January 1977, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

- Present: Mrs. Thatcher (In the Chair)
- Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Carrington, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Maude, Lord Thorneycroft.
- Mr. Atkins.
- In Attendance: Mr. Biffen, Mr. Nott, Ms. Stanley, Mr. Butler, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Nicholson.
- Apologies: Mr. Pym, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Davies.

The Bullock Report

Mr. Prior introduced a discussion on what were believed would be the recommendations of the majority and minority of the Bullock Committee on industrial democracy. He referred to the paper "Industrial Democracy", LSC(77)56, which had been prepared by the Research Department. The following points were agreed:

(i) We were anxious so far as possible to keep the law out of this area, possibly making such changes as were necessary to permit experiment, but not compelling companies to appoint worker directors etc.

(ii) We should note that union leader's reactions to the Bullock Report would be varied.

(iii) We should take note that management morale had already declined steeply as a result of taxation and the other economic measures of this Government, and this decline would only be accelerated if it were feared that Bullock would be implemented.

(iv) Any experimentation with schemes for employee participation should develop naturally from existing structures and practices and to this end we should quote examples of where schemes are seen to work well. It was right to give people additional responsibilities if they were willing and able to take them.

(v) As there would be claims that the Bullock proposals were the same as the West German scheme, and attempts to identify industrial democracy with economic success, we should point out that there were important differences between Bullock and the German system, and equally important differences between German and British law relating to trade unions. The Research Department would prepare a note for Mrs. Thatcher showing the most important differences.

(vi) We should not, in attacking the Bullock proposals, attack trade union leaders personally.

(vii) It was important to adopt the right tone of voice in reacting to Bullock.

The meeting closed at 6.25 p.m.