

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

184TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 11th January 1978, in
the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 183rd Meeting.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events.
4. "More Wealth for All": A Conservative Green Paper on the Taxation of Capital, LCC(77)166 - previously circulated.
5. Tactics in the House.
6. Any other business.

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 184th Meeting held at 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 11th January 1978, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Sir Keith Joseph,
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Pym,
Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Davies,
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton,
Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Maude,
Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott,
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King,
Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Howell,
Mr. Lawson, Mr. Fowler,
Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley,
Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Cropper.

Apologies: Mr. Whitelaw, Mr. Prior.

1. Security

Mrs. Thatcher referred to certain leaks in the press after the previous meeting and emphasised the importance of maintaining the secrecy of all the Shadow Cabinet's deliberations.

2. Proposed Business for the Week 16th-23rd January

On Monday, 16th January, there would be the Second Reading of the Civil Aviation Bill (Mr. Parkinson, Mr. Tebbit) and of the Shipbuilding (Redundancy Payments) Bill (Mr. Lamont).

On Tuesday, 17th January, Mr. R. Hodgson would seek leave to introduce his Motorway Noise (Insulation) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the 9th day of the Committee Stage of the Scotland Bill (Mr. Pym, Mr. Brittan and team).

On Wednesday, 18th January, Mr. N. Ridley would seek leave to introduce his Picketing (Registration and Control) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the 10th day of the Committee Stage of the Scotland Bill (Mr. Pym, Mr. Brittan and team) and by a Motion on EEC Documents R/2962 and R/2963 on Jurisdiction and Judgements Convention (Mr. Percival).

On Thursday, 19th January, there would be the Second Reading of the Transport Bill (Mr. Fowler). This would be followed by the remaining stages of the Participation Agreements Bill (Mr. Gray).

On Friday, 20th January, there would be the Private Members' Motions of Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Cockroft and Mr. Pattie.

On Monday, 23rd January, there would be a supply day.

3. Matters Arising on the Remainder of this Week's Business

A number of subjects were discussed and it was agreed that:

(i) We should vote against the Scottish Nationalist amendment to the European Assembly Elections Bill to insert an amendment providing for the alternative vote.

(ii) We should vote in strength to support the Ulster Unionist amendment to give Northern Ireland the same system of election, i.e. first past the post, as existed in the rest of the U.K.

(iii) We would not support the Ulster Unionist amendment to cut the number of Northern Ireland seats in the European Assembly from 3 to 2.

(iv) It was noted that a vote was not expected on Mr. Rifkind's Private Member's Motion on the crisis in the universities; we should show sympathy but not support his Motion.

(v) With regard to other amendments to reintroduce the principle of proportional representation into the European Assembly Elections Bill, we were most concerned that the Bill should progress as fast as possible.

4. Matters Arising on Proposed Business for the Week 16th-23rd January

There was a discussion of certain matters and it was agreed that:

(i) We should oppose Mr. Fletcher's Private Member's Bill, the Employment Protection Bill which, it was understood, was designed to amend the law as it had operated over the role of ACAS in the Grunwick dispute. We should also oppose the Second Reading of Mr. Mikardo's Employment Protection Bill which was expected the following week. It was noted that members had been warned that these Bills were unacceptable and it was agreed that there should be a strong private whip, rather than an official whip. Spokesmen would examine carefully every engagement on the days in question and Central Office was prepared to accept cancellations.

(ii) There would be a 2 line whip on a reasoned amendment to the Second Reading of the Transport Bill.

5. Subject for the Supply Day

It was noted that the Government were believed to be prepared to move the Supply Day from Monday 23rd to Thursday, 19th January and it was agreed that the latter would be preferable and that we should press for it. It was also agreed that we should debate, on that day, agriculture on a motion to devalue the green pound by 7½%. It was noted that Mr. Peyton and Mr. Edwards had committed us to this course and that all the minor Parties were likely to support it. Our motion would set out our case in detail, referring in particular to the threat to the future of the livestock industry. We should also take pains to explain how our policy would be in the long-term interest of consumers in urban areas. There would be a 3 line whip and a vigorous attempt to defeat the Government. Mr. Atkins would liaise with the Liberals over the wording of the Motion.

6. British Steel

There was a discussion on the demand in the Select Committee Report for certain papers relating to the state of the Steel industry. It was agreed that we should support these proposals in principle and seek an early debate, if necessary on a future supply day (see last item).

7. Other Subjects for Supply Days

It was agreed that it was desirable to debate the Government sanctions to enforce their pay policy and the Soviet involvement in Africa on early supply days.

8. "More Wealth for All", LCC(77)166

There was a discussion of this paper, and it was agreed that:

(i) It was desirable to relate our proposals to the needs and prospects of the average earner and average family and this might require that the paper be shorter.

(ii) Our proposals also had implications for medium-sized family companies as well as small businesses.

(iii) We should consider the abolition of stamp duty on house sales.

(iv) We should omit certain figures, such as those on page 13 relating to the position of people on very high incomes.

(v) We should cut out the reference to redistribution of wealth on page 5. We should cut the reference on page 4 to the existence of private individuals of substance being essential to the free society.

(vi) If the paper were published there should be a summary at the end incorporating our positive proposals.

9. Future Meetings

There would be a meeting of the Shadow Cabinet at 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 16th January.

The meeting closed at 6.10 p.m.