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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

178TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 9th November 1977 in the  
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 176th Meeting.
2. Future business  
(with particular reference to devolution  
and direct elections).
3. Forthcoming events.
4. Any other business.

Conservative Research Department,  
24 Old Queen Street, London, S.W.1.

CFF/MMM  
8.11.77

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 178th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Wednesday, 9th November 1977, in the Leader's  
Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph,  
Lord Carrington, Lord Hallsham,  
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Pym (for last item),  
Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton,  
Mr. Davies, Mr. Neave, Mr. Heseltine,  
Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Maude,  
Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott, Mrs. Oppenheim,  
Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Butler,  
Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley,  
Mr. Hooson, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Lord Thorneycroft, Mr. Prior.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 14th-21st November

On Monday, 14th November, there would be the Second Reading of the Scotland Bill (Mr. Pym, Mr. Taylor). This would be followed by a Motion on an EEC Document on Excise Duty on Cigarettes (R414/76).

On Tuesday, 15th November, there would be the Second Reading of the Wales Bill (Mr. Edwards, Mr. Brittan). This would be followed by a Motion on an EEC Document on Seed and Plant Marketing (R/1170/77) (Mr. Jopling).

On Wednesday, 16th November, there would be consideration of Timetable Motions on the Scotland and Wales Bills.

On Thursday, 17th November, there would be proceedings on the Finance Bill and remaining stages of the Pensioners Payment Bill. This would be followed by a Motion on EEC Documents R/3265/76 and R/1961/77 on Bird Conservation.

On Friday, 18th November, there would be the Second Reading of the Participation Agreements Bill (Mr. King, Mr. Gray). This would be followed by a Motion on EEC Documents R/669/77 and R/1868/77 on Railways.

(It later emerged that the business for Monday, 21st November, was to consist of a Supply Day, not the Second Reading of the European Assembly Elections Bill).

## 2. Matters Arising on Business

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

(i) Sir Geoffrey Howe and his team would cover the business on Thursday, 10th November, arising from Mr. Healey's financial statement of 2nd November.

(ii) We would not vote on the Rhodesian Sanctions Order on 11th November.

(iii) We would protest vigorously at the proposal to provide only one day's Second Reading debate for each of the Scotland and Wales Bills, and to impose a guillotine on the third day.

(iv) We would move a reasoned amendment to the Second Reading of the Scotland Bill on 14th November indicating that this Bill would not improve the government of Scotland, and proposing a constitutional conference, and we would then vote against the Bill on a 3 line whip.

(v) We would vote against the Second Reading of the Wales Bill on a 3 line whip.

(vi) The Business Committee would be told of our decisions on these two Bills.

(vii) Mr. Pym, Mr. Maude and Mr. Brittan would deal with the timetable motions on the Scotland and Wales Bills on 16th November. We would vote against both motions on a 3 line whip.

(viii) We were reluctant to agree to take all stages of the Finance Bill and the Pensioners Payment Bill in one day, on 17th November.

## 3. Forthcoming Events

(i) Members of the LCC were requested to be ready with appropriate statements and speeches over the weekend in relation to topical events.

(ii) With regard to the threatened firemen's strike we would urge the Government to protect the public, and we would not refer to the possibility that the IRA might exploit the strike of fire fighting services.

(iii) Sir Geoffrey Howe, Sir Keith Joseph and Mr. Prior were invited to develop the position we should adopt towards the various pay claims and alleged 'special cases'.

## 4. Publicity

There was a discussion on how we might 'puncture' the euphoria created by the recent superficial improvement in the country's financial prospects and fuelled by Government propaganda. It was agreed that a group headed by Mr. Nott and Mr. Atkins and including Mr. Tebbitt, Mr. Lawson and Dr. Rhodes Boyson, should consider how this might best be achieved, and should report to Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Maude.

It was also agreed that Mr. King should table an early day motion, urging the Prime Minister to dismiss Mr. Wedgwood Benn in view of the latter's mishandling of the power workers' dispute and his failure to urge the miners to vote for the National Coal Board's productivity deal since it was clearly in their best long-term interests.

5. Other Business

Mr. Davies reported on his recent visit to Rhodesia. It was agreed that, in the light of Mr. Davies' report, it would be unthinkable to insist on the Rhodesians dismantling their security forces and police.

The meeting closed at 6.00 p.m.