

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

111th MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday 19th May 1976, in the
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 110th meeting.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events.
4. Any other business.

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GFP/MEM
11.5.76

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 111th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 19th May 1976, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Carrington, Mr Maudling, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Payton, Mr. St. John-Stevas, Mr. Raison, Mr Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Neave, Mrs Oppenheim, Mr. Biffen, Lord Thorneycroft.

In attendance: Mr. King (items 1 and 2), Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Lord Hailsham, Mr. Fym, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Maude.

1. Proposed Business for the week 24th-28th May

On Monday, 24th May, there would be Private Members' Motions until 7.00 p.m.: Mr. Aitken's on Immigration and Emigration and those of Lord James Douglas-Hamilton and Mr. Hugh Jenkins. These would be followed by Opposed Private Business: the Third Reading of the British Transport Docks (Felixstowe) Bill (Mr. Fowler); consideration of the British Railways Bill (Mr. Percival); all stages of the Seychelles Bill (Mr. Tugendhat); Motions on the Road Traffic (Drivers' Ages and Hours of Work) (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (S.I. No. 581), the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, and the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (Mr. Neave and Mr. Biggs-Davison); and a Motion on the New Towns (Limit on Borrowing) Order 1976 (Mr. Morris).

On Tuesday, 25th May, Mr. Ian Gow would seek leave to introduce his Control of Government Borrowing Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the first day of the Report stage of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill (Mr. Heseltine and team).

On Wednesday 26th May, Mr. Anthony Steen would seek leave to introduce his Tuberculosis (Health and Chest Clinics) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the second day of the Report stage of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill.

On Thursday, 27th May there would be the completion of the Report stage and the Third Reading of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill.

On Friday, 28th May, there would be the Whitsun Adjournment Debates and the House would then rise for the Whitsun Recess.

2. Matters Arising on Business

a) Immigration and Emigration

There was a discussion on how we should approach this Debate in view of expressions of concern from sections of the

Party. It was agreed that:

- i) While we would not vote, Mr. Whitelaw in his speech would call on the Government to state their policy, would argue against the statements by Mr. Alex Lyon that the influx of passport holders should be speeded up, and would criticise the record of the present Government.
- ii) Mr. Whitelaw would re-examine the various arguments relating to our commitments to give British passport holders the right of entry into Britain.
- iii) We were committed to the equal treatment of all immigrants at present legally in Britain.

b) British Transport Docks (Felixstowe) Bill

It was agreed that we should indicate our wish to sell off the Felixstowe docks, if they were nationalised, on our return to power provided it was possible to do so at a reasonable price. Mr. Heseltine's form of words on our intention to denationalise, if possible, the aircraft and shipbuilding industries was recommended as a useful model.

c) Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill

We would seek to vote in strength on May 27th in order to deny the Bill a Third Reading, but we would not build up this prospect in the press.

3. The Government/TUC Pay Deal

Sir Geoffrey Howe introduced the Research Department's paper, LCC/76/110, which set out the various options facing us in our reaction to the Government's pay deal with the TUC and the arguments for and against our taking various courses of action. There was a discussion after which it was agreed to conclude discussion of the paper at the next meeting. It was also agreed that, if asked to comment on a speech being made that evening by Mr Peter Walker, apparently criticising some aspects of his own speech at the Carlton Club, Sir Geoffrey Howe would indicate that his speech had been made with the full support of the Shadow Cabinet.

4. Other business

a) Speaker's Conference

Mrs Thatcher reported that the Prime Minister had indicated that the Government did not welcome our wish to consider the Parliamentary under-representation of England. It was agreed that we should continue to press for the consideration of this matter.

b) Publicity over the Spring Bank Holiday

It was noted that we had obtained relatively little publicity over the Easter holiday and it was agreed that it was desirable to obtain significantly more over the Spring Bank Holiday. This matter would be discussed at the next meeting.

c) Education in Tameside

Mr St. John-Stewas reported on the situation regarding the action being taken by the new Conservative majority on Tameside Council to introduce a system of selection for entry to secondary schools. There was a discussion and it was agreed that:

- i) We should support the Conservative councillors in Tameside in carrying out the policy on which they were elected, viz. that they would not implement the Labour-proposed comprehensive system there.

- ii) We should however seek to discourage them from reintroducing the 11 plus and would indicate the various alternative means of selection.
- iii) Mr David Howell would be asked to attend a meeting on Friday morning to advise over how the Council's wish to renegotiate Tameside teachers' contracts related to the Government's pay policy.
- iv) The Shadow Cabinet fully endorsed the action taken and proposed by Mr St. John-Stevas.
- d) The Layfield Report

There was a short discussion and it was agreed that we would need to study this report carefully, though with a degree of scepticism, and produce our comments after the Recess.

The meeting closed at 6.12 p.m.