

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 213th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 5th July 1978, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

- Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)
- Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Hallsham, Lord Thornycroft, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton, 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. Rossi, Mr. Nicholas Ridley, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Wolfson, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson.
- Apologies: Lord Carrington, Mr. Davies.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 10th-17th July

On Monday, 10th July, there would be the Private Members' Motions of Mr. T. Walker, Mr. G. Robinson and Mr. A. Nelson, the first being on Aerospace Production Policy. These would be followed by a debate on EEC Document R/1577/78 on 1979 Preliminary Draft Budget (Mr. Shaw, Mr. Tapsell) and by Proceedings on the Adoption (Scotland) Bill, the National Health Services Bill and the Interpretation Bill.

On Tuesday, 11th July, Mr. D. Wigley would seek leave to introduce his Coroners (Amendment) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the first day of the Finance Bill Report (Sir Geoffrey Howe and team).

On Wednesday, 12th July, Mr. N. Winterton would seek leave to introduce his Student Unions' (Voluntary Membership) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the second day of the Finance Bill Report (Sir Geoffrey Howe and team).

On Thursday, 13th July, there would be the remaining stages of the Finance Bill (Sir Geoffrey Howe and team).

On Friday, 14th July, there would be Private Members' Bills

On Monday, 17th July, there would be Lords Amendments to the Scotland Bill (Mr. Pym and team).

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion and the following was agreed:

- (1) Mr. Pattie and Mr. Tebbit would speak in the debate on Aerospace Production Policy on 10th July. We should not make any commitments in that debate.

(ii) There would be no vote on the Preliminary Draft EEC Budget on 10th July.

(iii) There would be a running 2 line whip for the Report Stage of the Finance Bill on 11th, 12th and 13th July.

(iv) We should seek to deter Conservative MPs from speaking against Mr. Winterton's 10 Minute Rule Bill on student unions on 12th July. It was noted that the Federation of Conservative Students were opposed to the Bill.

3. The Sale of Council Houses, LCC(78)182

Mr. Heseltine introduced his paper, Mrs. Thatcher having pointed out that we were committed to legislate on this subject in the first year of office. There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) We should seek to find a way of ensuring that those who became owner occupiers as a result of our scheme should not bear a disproportionate burden of costs arising from repairs and maintenance, for example, to lifts in blocks of flats. We could perhaps provide that owner occupiers should not pay more than tenants pay. It was noted that this was likely to be a particular problem in Scotland, where it was hoped that individual flats in blocks might be sold. Elsewhere it was understood that flats would only usually be desired for owner occupation if the whole block was designated for sale.

(ii) It was necessary to protect the interests of the existing residents in certain seaside and rural areas, but in doing so we should not give local authorities an excuse not to proceed with sales.

(iii) We should need to arrive at answers to a number of specifically Scottish points raised by Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor would write to Mr. Heseltine about this and a Scottish spokesman would examine the scheme.

(iv) It was desirable to avoid an increase in council house waiting lists from those aspiring to become owner occupiers by using the scheme. Therefore the discounts would only be available to tenants of more than five years standing.

(v) The scheme should apply to New Town houses and we should investigate the legal position relating to the sale of properties owned by housing associations.

(vi) The proposal relating to the housing revenue account in (v) on page 3 was agreed. It was desirable to obtain some reductions in public spending through the sale of council houses.

(vii) We should seek to find out from the Treasury what the technical accounting position was over the subject raised in the first paragraph of (iii) on page 3.

4. Future Business

It was agreed that there should be a full meeting of the Leader's Consultative Committee the following Monday, 10th July at 5.00 o'clock. As the Manifesto was being redrafted, instead of discussing it we should discuss remaining points arising on the Sale of Council Houses paper and the Report of Mr. Ridley's Group on Nationalised Industries.

The Meeting closed at 6.10 p.m.