

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

223RD MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 15th November 1978, in  
the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 222nd Meeting.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events.
4. Economic Monetary System, a paper  
by Sir Geoffrey Howe, LCC(78)189 -  
to be circulated.
5. Any other business.

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 223rd Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 15th November 1978, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

- Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)
- Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Carrington, Lord Hailsham, Lord Thorneycroft, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior, Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Pym, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Neave, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott, Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Carlisle.
- Mr. Atkins.
- In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Jopling, Lord Denham, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten, Mr. Wolfson, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson, Miss Bulloch.
- Apologies: Mr. Peyton, Mr. Biffen.

1. Mrs. Thatcher reported on the appointment of Mr. Carlisle and Mr. Biffen to the Shadow Cabinet, and on certain consequential moves. She also reported that she was not appointing anyone to fill the vacant defence and Northern Ireland Front Bench posts: the elected officers of the Defence and Northern Ireland Backbench Committees would deal with such business as was appropriate.
2. Proposed Business for the Week 20th-27th November

On Monday, 20th November, there would be the Second Reading of the Companies Bill (Mr. Nott, Mr. Parkinson).

On Tuesday, 21st November, there would be the Second Reading of the Social Security Bill (Mr. Jenkin, Mrs. Chalker).

On Wednesday, 22nd November, there would be Motions on the Referendum Orders for Scotland and Wales. These would be followed by Motions on the Health and Personal Social Services and the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Orders (Mr. Neave).

On Thursday, 23rd November, there would be the Second Reading of the Weights and Measures Bill (Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Shaw). This would be followed by a Prayer on the Children and Young Persons Act 1969 (Transitional Modifications of Part 1) Order (Mr. Sims).

On Friday, 24th November, there would be the Private Members' Motions of Mr. F. Willey, Mr. Patrick Cormack and Sir George Young.

On Monday, 27th November, there would be the Second Reading of the Banking Bill (Mr. Tapsell, Mr. Stewart).

### 3. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) There would be a one line whip throughout the week.

(ii) We should prefer the referendums orders for Scotland and Wales to be taken separately and we should probe what the Government would do if there were a majority in favour of a Scotland Assembly which fell short of the required 40 per cent of the electorate.

(iii) We should protest vigorously at the proposal to take the Second Reading of the Weights and Measures Bill on Thursday, 23rd November and try to get this changed. (Mr. Atkins made consultations through the usual channels and later reported that the Government had agreed to take the Second Reading of the Banking Bill on 23rd November, while the Second Reading of the Weights and Measures Bill would be on 27th November).

(iv) We would give further consideration on voting on the Second Reading of the Weights and Measures Bill at the next meeting, and there would be a paper dealing with a number of detailed points, in particular what we were committed to by treaty.

### 4. Discussion on the European Monetary System

Sir Geoffrey Howe introduced a paper by the Research Department (LCC(78)188), and reported on the discussions in the Finance and Foreign Affairs Committees. There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) We should cautiously welcome the EMS proposals on the broad lines set out in Sir Geoffrey Howe's covering note and should emphasise that we were in favour of more co-operation on monetary matters between the European countries. We believed that the disciplines and the assistance arising out of such co-operation would benefit the UK as they would the other EEC member countries. Since we had not taken part in the recent negotiations it was difficult for us to pronounce on the details of the proposals. However, we were inclined to prefer the "basket" system to the "grid" system. The attitude expressed in the third point of Sir Geoffrey Howe's introductory note should therefore be modified to make it clear that we were not endorsing all the specific characteristics of the EMS as currently proposed, or as it might emerge.

(ii) In the belief that the Government would not be able to agree to enter the EMS we should point out that this was because of the powerful resistance to any further co-operation with our European partners which was offered by the anti-EEC/ left-wing sections of the Labour Party. We should also regret that it was Britain's present economic weakness which created difficulties for us with regard to the EMS.

(iii) We should examine further the prospect of the Irish Republic joining the EMS, and the political and economic consequences that might flow from this.

The meeting closed at 6.10 p.m.