

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 104th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Wednesday, 31st March 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 (items 3,4,5,6)
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior
Mr. Pym, Mr. Jenkin
Mr. St. John-Stevas, Mr. Heseltine
Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude
Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards
Mr. Neave, Mrs. Oppenheim
Mr. Biffen, Lord Thorncroft

Mr. Atkins

In attendance: Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley
Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley
Mr. Nicholson

Apologies: Lord Hailsham, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Peyton

1. Proposed Business for 5th - 14th April

On Monday, 5th April there would be a Supply Day with subject to be decided. This would be followed by a debate on EEC Documents R/3113/73 and R/1150/75 on Lead Pollution (Mr. Sainsbury, Mr. Dykes).

On Tuesday, 6th April Mr. Roger Stott would seek leave to introduce his Social Security (Amendment) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would deliver his Budget Statement and this would be followed by the Budget Debate (1st Day) (Mrs. Thatcher). At 7 p.m. there would be Opposed Private Business, the British Railways Bill (Mr. Fowler) followed by Prayers on Pensions (Mr. K. Clarke).

On Wednesday, 7th April Mrs. Joyce Butler would introduce her Osteopaths Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Budget Debate (2nd Day) (Sir Geoffrey Howe) and by a Prayer on the Medicines (Fees) Regulations (Mrs. Chalker).

On Thursday, 8th April there would be the third day of the Budget Debate.

On Friday, 9th April there would be Private Members' Motions. The Motions would be that of Mr. John Stonehouse on the Condition of England and those of Mr. Tony Durant and Mr. Frederick Willey.

On Monday, 12th April there would be the Conclusion of the Budget Debate. This would be followed by a Debate on EEC Documents R/451/76 and R/452/76 on Proteins (Mr. Pym, Mr. Scott-Hopkins).

On Tuesday, 13th April there would be a Supply Day. A Debate on the 11th Report from the Expenditure Committee, Session 1974-75 on The Children and Young Persons Act 1969 (HC 534) and any Special Reports thereon would take place.

On Wednesday, 14th April there would be the Easter Adjournment Debates and the House would rise for the Easter Recess.

2. Matters Arising on Business

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

i) There would be a provisional three line whip for the close of the Budget Debate on 12th April in case we wished to vote against any of the Budget resolutions.

ii) We should check whether the Government was going to accept our motion on the EEO Documents on Proteins and whip accordingly

3. Subject for the Supply Day

There was a discussion and it was agreed that:

i) We should debate the state of the fishing industry and would vote on the adjournment.

ii) We should point out that the fishing industry was in such difficulties that a small short term cash injection might be necessary to ensure future supplies of fish and we should point out that the small sum which might be required could, for example, be found by dropping the Dock Work Regulation Bill.

4. Publicity

Mrs. Thatcher reported that the Executive of the 1922 Committee had made certain suggestions with regard to improving publicity for policy and other statements by members of the Shadow Cabinet. There was a discussion and it was agreed that:

i) Each Shadow Minister should consider selecting a particular member of his team or an officer of his backbench committee who could be responsible for liaison with the media.

ii) For the benefit of those backbenchers who did not attend the various backbench committees, the MP referred to in the previous paragraph might from time to time draw attention to important speeches, other policy statements or general political initiatives made by his Shadow minister at the beginning of each weekly meeting of the 1922 Committee, pointing out, where relevant, that copies of such statements were to be found in the Whips' Office.

iii) Members of the Shadow Cabinet and the member of their team assigned to liaise with the media could with advantage visit the Press Department in Central Office and discuss publicity with the staff there.

5. Foreign Affairs

Mr. Maudling reported on Britain's relations with her EEC partners and drew attention to the problems caused by the fact that our rate of inflation was still well above those of the other members.

6. Future Business of the LCC

It was agreed that:

i) The Shadow Cabinet would begin consideration of the reports from the various Policy Groups after Easter in order to prepare a mid-term policy document in time for the Party Conference. This might mean that the Shadow Cabinet would have to meet on Mondays as well as Wednesdays.

ii) We should arrange a convenient time for a full day meeting during the summer for discussion of policy reports.

The meeting closed at 6.09 p.m.

Section



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

1. Wks. goes.
2. Press Conferences - arrangements with
3. P.P.'s.
R.M.
M. French.
A.R.
S. Milligan.
4. Policy Committee - ok
Peter Thorne
Wks. { Good Policy
will send it }
5. Administration. Chair of Command