

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

227TH MEETING

Wednesday, 13th December 1978, in the Leader's
Room at the House of Commons (see attached note)

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 226th Meeting.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events.
4. Any other business.



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Mary - Chris Patten's Secretary phoned to say that Mrs Oppenheim want to raise under 'Any Other Business' in Shadow, the Weights and Measures Bill.

12.12.78.

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W.N.

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The meeting of the Leader's Consultative Committee on Wednesday, 13th December, will begin five minutes after the opening speeches from the Front Benches in the debate on pay sanctions have finished.

CHRIS PATTEN

Conservative Research Department,
24 Old Queen Street, London, SW1.

CFP/MMM
11.12.78

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 227th Meeting held at 5.45 p.m. on Wednesday, 13th December 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, Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Pym, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Neave, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stovas, Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Carlisle, Mr. Biffen.
- Mr. Atkins.
- In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Wolfson, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson.
- Apologies: Mr. Prior, Mr. Nott.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 15th-19th January

On Monday, 15th January, there would be a Supply Day which would be devoted to a debate on a Motion to take note of the 11th Report from the Expenditure Committee, Session 1976/77 and the 12th Report Session 1977/78 on the Civil Service and related Government Observations.

On Tuesday, 16th January, Mr. N. Ridley would seek leave to introduce his Ghost Workers (Abolition) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Committee and Remaining Stages of the House of Commons (Redistribution of Seats) Bill (Mr. Neave).

On Wednesday, 17th January, Mr. Durant would seek leave to introduce his Water Industry (Consumer Council) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Second Reading of the Industry Bill (Sir Keith Joseph, Mr. Lamont) and by a motion on the Housing Support Grant (Scotland) Order.

On Thursday, 18th January, there would be a Supply Day.

On Friday, 19th January, there would be the Private Members' Bills of Mr. Freud, Mr. N. Edwards, Mr. Grocott and Mr. H. Jenkins.

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a short discussion and it was agreed that we would decide subsequently on the subject for the Supply Day on 18th January. It was noted that there would be a debate on the Reports of the Select Committee on Procedure, probably on 22nd January.

3. The Pay Sanctions Debate

Mr. Atkins reported on how the various minor parties were expected to vote, and it was noted that the Government was likely to be defeated if a small number of Labour MPs abstained, as was expected. There was a discussion and it was agreed that if the Government were defeated Sir Geoffrey Howe would use the formula appropriate to such occasions, and, while pointing out that the House had repudiated the Government's policy on this important issue, would ask for a statement as to the Government's intentions. We would thereafter press the Government to withdraw pay sanctions and black-listing. We would not table a motion of no confidence unless the leaders of the three largest minor parties (Messrs. Steel, Stewart and Molyneaux) were prepared to add their names to it. Another reason we might give to the Lobby for not tabling a motion of no confidence might be that the vote at the end of the debate on the Address had been in the nature of a vote of confidence.

4. The Bingham Report

Mrs. Thatcher reported on her recent discussion with the Prime Minister. It was noted that the Government was likely to proceed on the lines of their earlier proposal despite her warnings that this would be entirely against the public interest. It was agreed that in our reply to the statement the Government were expected to make before the end of the week, we should indicate our misgivings and especially our opposition to the release of Cabinet papers.

5. Other Business

There was a short discussion on a number of items. Mrs. Oppenheim reported that the Government proposed to amend the Weights and Measures Bill so as to make available an element of free choice, and it was agreed that we should not therefore vote against the Bill.

Mrs. Thatcher reported that Lord Rawlinson and his committee had prepared a report on the subjects of the Official Secrets Act, Defamation and Contempt of Court. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Leader's Consultative Committee would discuss whether to publish this report. It would meanwhile be circulated.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.