

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

135TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 3rd November 1976, in
the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 135th meeting.
2. Future business.
3. Forthcoming events.
4. ~~Direct labour.~~
5. ~~Cambridge by-election date.~~
6. Any other business.

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 136th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.
on Wednesday, 3rd November, 1976 in the
Leader's Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Margaret Thatcher (in the Chair)

Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Carrington,
Mr. Maudling, Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym,
Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton,
Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Heseltine,
Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude,
Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards,
Mr. Neave, Mrs. Oppenheim,
Mr. Biffen

Mr. Atkins

In Attendance: Mr. Speed, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Patten, Mr. Hooson, Mr. Nicholson

Apologies: Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Geoffrey Howe,
Lord Hailsham, Lord Thorneycroft

1. Proposed Business for the Week 8th - 15th November, 1976

On Monday, 8th November there would be Three Time-table Motions: on Lords Amendments to the Rent (Agriculture) Bill and the Education Bill (Mr. Peyton); on Lords Amendments to the Health Services Bill and the Dock Work Regulation Bill (Mr. Jenkin) and on the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill (Mr. Heseltine); and a debate on the Green Paper on a Proposed New Highway Code (Mr. Fowler and Mr. Fry).

On Tuesday, 9th November Mr. Anthony Steen would seek leave to introduce his Urban Aid (Affirmative Action) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by Lords Amendments to the Education Bill (Mr. St. John Stevas and team).

On Wednesday, 10th November Mr. Clement Freud would seek leave to introduce his Shops (Sunday Trading) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by Lords Amendments to the Dock Work Regulation Bill (Mr. Prior and team).

On Thursday, 11th November there would be Lords Amendments to the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill.

On Friday, 12th November there would be the Remaining Stages of the Supplementary Benefit Bill (Lords) (Mr. Awdry). This would be followed by exempted business for 1½ hours on the Commission Documents on Lawyers (R/2133/75 and R/676/76) (Sir Michael Havers) and exempted business for 1½ hours on the Commission Documents on Road Worthiness Tests (R/1795/72 and R/1614/74, and by a motion on an amendment to Standing Order No.73A to allow Commission Documents to be considered for 2½ hours when debated in a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments.

On Monday, 15th November there would be a motion on the Endowments and Glebe Church Measure.

2. Matters Arising on Business

There was a discussion of certain points and the following was agreed:-

(i) We should seek to preserve our right to vote - if we so wished - on each of the Lords Amendments which the Government would recommend the Commons to reject.

(ii) On the Standing Order No.9 debate on the following day (4th November) on the industrial dispute in the Post Office, Mr. Prior was invited to consult with Sir Michael Havers on the legal aspect of the dispute. We should criticise the Government for their inaction and reiterate that it was the duty of the Post Office and its sponsoring Minister to ensure delivery of mail, and we should vote on the matter unless the Government were able to give satisfactory assurances.

3. Foreign Affairs

Mr. Maudling reported on the results of the American Election and his contacts with certain of Mr. Carter's advisers. It was noted that Mrs. Thatcher had sent a telegram of congratulations to Mr. Carter.

4. House of Lords

Lord Carrington was invited to communicate to his front bench colleagues in the Lords the Shadow Cabinet's deep appreciation of their work in ensuring the rejection of the British Transport Docks (Felixstowe) Bill and in making extensive amendments to the controversial Government Bills which they were currently considering.

5. Direct Labour

Sir Keith Joseph raised the question of certain representations made by the Federation of Civil Engineers on the subject of the activities of Local Government direct labour departments. There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) Mr. Speed with the assistance of the Research Department would prepare a list of previous statements made by our spokesmen in the Commons and the Lords on this question.

(ii) We should investigate evidence of the use of direct labour departments in the fields of electricity and gas supply (if necessary by approaching nationalised chairmen direct) and Mr. Biffen was invited to consider whether a speech or statement on this question would be appropriate.

6. The Next Stage of Policy Work

The paper on this subject by Sir Keith Joseph and Mr. Maude (LSC (76) 54) should be circulated to the Shadow Cabinet in time for the next meeting.

7. Cambridge By-Election

There was a short discussion and it was agreed that a final decision would be made in the light of the results of the three by-elections the following day and the votes on the Government's guillotine motions on the following Monday.

8. Rhodesia

It was agreed there should be a discussion of this subject as soon as the course of the negotiations at Geneva became more clear.

The meeting closed at 6.07 p.m.

Conservative Research Department,
24 Old Queen Street, London S.W.1.

DJN/RME
15.11.76