

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

133RD MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 13th October 1976, in
the Leader's Room at the House of Commons

REVISED AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 132nd meeting.
- ✓ 2. Future Business.
- ✓ 3. Forthcoming Events.
4. Economic situation.
- ✓ 5. British Transport Locks (Felixstowe) Bill.
6. Government Advisers.
- ✓ 7. Publication through CFC of selected Policy Group reports.
- ✓ 6. Any other business. ✓ Start money. - No. *Mr Dept 10*

Please note that Mrs. Thatcher's new office is where the Serjeant at Arms' office used to be, passed the Prime Minister's office.

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

CFF/MMM
12.10.76

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 133rd Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 13th October 1976, 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,
Mr. Maudling, Sir Geoffrey Howe,
Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Mr. Gilmour,
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton,
Mr. St. John-Stavas, Mr. Heseltine,
Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude,
Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards,
Mr. Neave, Mrs. Oppenheim,
Mr. Biffen, Lord Thorncroft.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Mr. Higgins, Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Patten, Mr. Nicholson.

1. Mr. Whitelaw, on behalf of his colleagues, congratulated the Leader of the Party on her speeches at the Party Conference and in the Economic Debate, and wished her a happy birthday.

2. Proposed Business for the Week 18th-25th October

On Monday, 18th October, there would be the Second Reading of the Weights and Measures (No. 2) Bill (Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Lamont). This would be followed by Consideration of the Methodist Church Bill, proceedings on the Trinidad and Tobago Republic Bill, and on the Resale Prices Bill (Mr. Awdry).

On Tuesday, 19th October, Mr. Anthony Steen would seek leave to introduce his National Service Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Remaining Stages of the Companies (No. 2) Bill (Mr. Higgins) and by Lords Amendments to the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (Mr. Pym, Mr. Jopling).

On Wednesday, 20th October, Mr. Thorne would seek leave to introduce his Employment Protection Act (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a debate on Southern Rhodesia (Mr. Maudling) and by a Motion on the Southern Rhodesia Act 1965 (Continuation Order).

On Thursday, 21st October, there would be the Remaining Stages of the Energy Bill (Mr. Biffen) and Opposed Private Business: consideration of the Cromarty Petroleum Order Confirmation Order.

On Friday, 22nd October, there would be a debate on Agriculture (Mr. Pym).

On Monday, 25th October, there would be a debate on Transport Policy (Mr. Fowler).

There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) Rhodesia. We should not vote on the renewal of the sanctions order. We should press the Government to urge that guerilla activity should cease in order to create an atmosphere in which the success of the Geneva conference on the future of Rhodesia might be more likely. We should also press the Government for the clearest possible undertaking that sanctions would be lifted once an interim government was established.

(ii) We should not speak or vote against the Employment Protection Act (Amendment) (No.2) Bill on 20th October as there was no likelihood of this Bill proceeding further.

(iii) We should not vote on the Cromarty Petroleum Confirmation Order as it was understood that there were differing views in the Conservative Party in Scotland on the matter.

(iv) With regard to the Maplin Development Authority (Dissolution) Bill which was to be debated the following night (14th October), we should not give any indication that we considered that the Maplin development might be revived in the future.

4. Forthcoming Events

Pending the reorganisation of the Publicity Department in Central Office, Members were requested to contact newspapers themselves when they wished to make an important speech or statement, or ask the respective Research Department officer to do so.

5. House of Lords Business

Lord Carrington explained the situation that was developing regarding Government business in the House of Lords and the views of the Conservative peers. There was a discussion and the following points were agreed:

(i) We should fight the present contentious legislation as long as possible and should endeavour to deny the Government time in which to obtain all their Bills before November 17th when the Government proposed that the new session should commence.

(ii) The Conservative peers should endeavour to obtain Liberal, cross-bench and even Labour support for as many of their amendments to these Bills as possible.

(iii) While it was understood that the situation might change at short notice, the Shadow Cabinet agreed on the stands that the Lords should take on particular bills.

6. GPC Publications

It was agreed that great care should be taken about publishing any policy group reports. The respective Shadow spokesman and Mr. Maude should examine each proposal and none should be published before the Shadow Cabinet had had time to consider it.

7. The 'Short' Money

Mrs. Thatcher reported that Mr. Foot was proposing to increase the total funds allocated for the Parliamentary activities of Opposition Parties (known as the 'Short' money) by 10% to keep pace with inflation. There was a discussion and it was agreed that we should refuse this increase.

8. Members' Pay

Members of the Shadow Cabinet were asked to ensure that they did not inadvertently accept the recent increase in Members' pay if they were not eligible according to the terms of the Government's original statement on 12th July.

9. The Economic Situation

Sir Geoffrey Howe reported in a recent discussion in the Finance Committee. It was agreed that our alternative economic policy should be spelt out vigorously during the period that the IMF was considering on what terms it would accede to the Government's request for a £2300 million loan.

The meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.