

LEADERS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 125th Meeting held at 10.00 a.m.
on Friday, 1st July in the Assembly Room at
Central Office

- Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)
- Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph,
Lord Carrington, Lord Hallsham,
Mr. Maudling, Sir Geoffrey Howe,
Mr. Pym, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin,
Mr. Peyton, Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude,
Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Neave,
Mr. Biffen, Lord Thorneycroft,
Mr. Atkins
- In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Higgins,
Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten,
Mr. Douglas, Mr. Nicholson,
Mr. Hopkinson, Mr. Portillo,
Mr. Thompson.
- Apologies: Mr. Prior, Mr. St. John Stevas,
Mr. Heseltine, Mrs. Oppenheim.

Race Relations and Immigration (LCC/76/126)

Mr. Whitelaw in introducing the paper outlined the two principal pledges made by previous Conservative Governments which set the limits of present policy: the pledge to holders of UK passports made at the time of the independence of certain East African countries and the pledge about their dependants made to those who had immigrated under the arrangements that prevailed before the 1971 Act. After a wide ranging discussion the paper was agreed subject to the following points:

- (i) We could not repeat the reception of a mass influx such as followed the expulsion of the Ugandan Asians in 1972. We would press the Government to negotiate with India, Pakistan and Bangladesh some arrangements for dealing with such contingencies in the future.
- (ii) We remained committed to permit the entry of the remaining UK passport holders, provided the total, repeatedly given by the Government, of 40,000 remained the case. If it were to appear that a significantly larger number of this category were entitled to entry, we should reconsider our position.
- (iii) We should probe the Government for more information as to the rights of entry of UK citizens who do not possess passports. We should also probe regarding the rights of entry in the future of descendants, not yet born, of existing passport holders.
- (iv) We would wish our proposal for a register of dependants, which was currently being examined, to be settled one way or the other by the time of the Party conference. The registering of dependants

would not necessarily guarantee or confirm their right of entry. We wished to arrive at a conclusion as to the total likely to enter, and in the light of this total would decide about the rate of entry to be permitted.

Energy (LCC/76/125)

Mr. Biffen introduced the interim report and there was a discussion. The paper was agreed subject to the point that within the terms of Mrs. Thatcher's commitment to denationalise the BNOC, we accepted that there was a role for such an agency provided that, like the administrative apparatus we proposed to replace the NEB, it sought to sell off as many of its assets as possible, facilitate the introduction of private capital into the industry and operate on a non-political basis.

Agriculture (LCC/76/126)

Mr. Pym introduced a paper and there was a discussion, in which the proposals were agreed, subject to the following:

- (i) The proposal to set up Uplands Management Units in Section 3 raised the problem of extra bureaucracy and should be discussed further in conjunction with Mr. Raison's Local Government Group. In these discussions, we would examine further ways of abolishing or streamlining unnecessary planning or administrative machinery.
- (ii) We should investigate what agricultural produce we imported from other countries which we might otherwise be able to produce in Britain.
- (iii) We should press the Government to declare their position regarding the possibility of renegotiation of the CAP in the context of multi-national trade negotiations. We should consider having a Supply Day on the whole subject of International Trade negotiations and would otherwise use Question Time for this purpose. We should find out what agricultural produce the US might wish to export to the Community.
- (iv) We were committed to set up an enquiry into the workings of the legislation on agricultural holdings when we reached Government.
- (v) We should seek to move towards 3-year averaging of profits for tax purposes as in C(1) on Page 4, but this proposal would be discussed with the Tax Group.

Police (LCC/76/136)

Mr. Whitelaw introduced this paper, which was agreed after a short discussion subject to the following points:

- (1) We should certainly commit ourselves to maintain the improved trend of recruitment up to the existing

establishment figures. But the establishment figures themselves need to be looked at more closely and perhaps 25,000 new police in England and Wales might be needed to raise the police force up to realistic re-assessed full establishment strength. The raising of establishment levels needed further study.

- (ii) The Group would raise with Mr. Norman Fowler the question of continued prosecutions of breaches of the 50 mph speed limit, which it was thought, simply aggravated relations between the public and police.
- (iii) It was desirable to increase the number of special constables and by increasing police establishments we would seek to overcome the opposition of the Police Federation.

Urban Deprivation (LCC/76/127)

Mr. Whitelaw introduced the paper. After discussion it was agreed to remit these proposals for further discussion between Mr. Whitelaw and the Policy Group.

Bill of Rights (LCC/76/131)

Sir Michael Havers introduced the paper. There was a discussion after which it was agreed:

- (i) We should not commit ourselves to the proposal to bring forward a Bill of Rights, in view of our fear that it would do little to protect the individual from a Socialist Government determined to evade it and that it might raise certain other difficulties.
- (ii) We should await with interest the outcome of appeals to the European Commission on Human Rights on cases arising out of dismissals resulting from the closed shop.
- (iii) Public debate and internal discussion on the subject should continue, and the Policy Group might publish a CPC pamphlet which would not commit the Party but which would put the case for a Bill of Rights covering fields such as education, health and the closed shop. The discussion and the pamphlet would examine the use and abuse of administrative law.
- (iv) There was also a case for a Private Member's Bill on the subject, in order to challenge Labour members to argue and vote against the idea.

International Trade Policy (LCC/76/129)

Mr. Higgins introduced the report and there was a discussion. The proposals were generally agreed. It was

stressed there was no intention to cut the spending on export credits unilaterally contrary to the impression given in Paragraph 2.

See also item (iii) on Agriculture.

Company Law (LCC/76/130)

Mr. Higgins introduced this paper and there was a discussion which included references to the line being taken by the Conservative Members of the European Parliament and liaison with that group. The following points were agreed:

- (i) We should not support the mandatory introduction of two-tier boards for British companies and we should seek to ensure that our European MP's endorsed this line. In this respect we should review arrangements for liaison between those MP's and backbench committee, and the whole question of liaison needed to be discussed again by the Shadow Cabinet.
- (ii) We do not wish to spell out details regarding the powers of company boards, and in particular we were opposed to legislation requiring the appointment of non-executive chairmen of companies.

The meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.

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

DJN/RME
30.7.76