

3 Dec

CONFIDENTIAL

COPY NO. .1.

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

86TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Wednesday 3rd December, 1975

in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 85th Meeting - attached
2. Future Business
3. Forthcoming Events
4. Subjects for Supply Day debates
5. Houghton Committee - draft suggested evidence attached
6. Any other business

NHS

Conservative Research Department  
24 Old Queen Street, London SW1

CFP/GSB  
28.11.75

CONFIDENTIAL

COPY NO. 1...

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

I enclose a draft of evidence from the Party Organisation to the Houghton Committee on Aid to Political Parties. This will be discussed under item five at the meeting of the Leader's Consultative Committee on Wednesday 3rd December.

CHRIS PATTEN

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

CFP/SMW  
1.12.75

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 86th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Wednesday, 3rd December 1975, in the  
Leader's Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair,  
Items 1, 2 and part of 3)  
Mr. Whitelaw (in the Chair,  
part of Item 3 and Item 4)

Sir Keith Joseph, Mr. Maudling  
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Gilmour  
Lord Carrington, Mr. Prior  
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton  
Mr. St. John-Stevan, Mr. Heseltine  
Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude  
Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards  
Mr. Neave, Mr. Fowler  
Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Jopling  
Lord Thorneycroft

Mr. Atkins

Apologies: Lord Hailsham, Mr. Younger

In attendance: Dr. Vaughan, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Butler  
Mr. Patten, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson

1. Proposed Business for the Week 8-15th December

On Monday, 8th December there would be a Supply Day, with  
subject to be decided. This would be followed by a Motion  
on the European Communities (Definition of Treaties) (No. 3)  
and (No. 4) Orders, (Mr. Dykes).

On Tuesday, 9th December there would be the Second Reading  
of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill,  
followed by a Procedural Motion (Mr. Prior, Mr. Hayhoe).  
There would be a three line whip.

On Wednesday, 10th December there would be the Second  
Reading of the Dock Work Regulation Bill (Mr. Prior, Mr. Hayhoe).  
There would be a three line whip. This would be followed by  
the Remaining Stages of the OECD Support Fund Bill (Mr. D. Howell)  
and the Remaining Stages of the Moneylanders (Crown Agents)  
Bill (Mr. Griffiths), and then by a Prayer on Road Traffic  
(Speed Limits) (Mr. Fox).

On Thursday, 11th December there would be Private Members  
Motions until 7.00 p.m. The first for debate would be  
Mr. Lawrence's motion on Penalty for Terrorist Offences and  
this might be followed by Mr. Newen's on Unemployment and  
Mr. Tomlinson's on Problems of School Transport. This would  
be followed at 7.00 p.m. by the Remaining Stages of the Civil  
List Bill (Mr. D. Howell or Mr. Nott) and by motions on the  
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Order and (Various  
Emergency Provisions) (Continuance) Order (Mr. Neave).

On Friday, 12th December there would be more Private Members Motions. The first would be Mr. Fletcher's motion on Investment of Pension and Insurance Funds in Industry. The second would be one by Mr. Willey and third Mr. Ovenden's motion of the Working of Crown Proceedings Act 1947.

On Monday, 15th December there would be the Second Reading of the Armed Forces Bill, followed by a motion on the Army, Air Force and Naval Discipline Acts (Continuation) Order 1975 (Mr. Younger, Mr. Onslow).

2. Matters Arising on Business

It was agreed to protest at having to take the Second Reading of the Dock Work Regulation Bill so soon after its publication. With regard to Mr. Lawrence's motion on the Penalty for Terrorist Offences on Thursday, 11th December, it was agreed that the question of capital punishment for terrorists remained a matter of personal judgement for each member of the Shadow Cabinet and each MP. It was also agreed that Mr. Gilmour would intervene briefly in the debate from the Front Bench.

After a short discussion it was agreed to devote the Supply Day on 8th December to attacking the Government's mishandling of North Sea Oil, on a motion for the adjournment of the House. Mr. Jenkin and Mr. Gray would speak and the details of any references to Scotland would be settled later by Mrs. Thatcher, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Buchanan-Smith and Mr. Atkins.

3. Draft Statement on Public Financing of Political Parties

Two drafts had been circulated, a shorter and a longer one. Lord Thorneycroft explained why he preferred the shorter as leaving us less open to criticism by our supporters for indications that we might, in certain circumstances, favour public financing of political parties.

There was a discussion. It was agreed that Lord Thorneycroft and Mr. Maude, in consultation with their colleagues in the Party organisation, should produce a re-drafted paper, incorporating more of the argument and factual material of the longer paper, while avoiding giving any impression that we were in favour of accepting state aid. It was agreed that Lord Thorneycroft and Mr. Maude (and other Party officers in attendance) would be able to develop any desirable arguments further when giving oral evidence to the Houghton Committee and replying to their questions. It was also agreed that Mr. Prior would be consulted over the passage referring to the trade union political levy and its relation to Labour Party finance and Conference voting, and that the re-drafted paper would be shown to Mrs. Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey Howe. It would be circulated to the rest of the Shadow Cabinet as soon as practicable. It would be emphasised that the paper represented the views of the party organisation and did not bind either the Shadow Cabinet or the Parliamentary party.

4. National Health Service

Mr. Fowler and Dr. Vaughan reported on the present state of the two disputes in the National Health Service. There was a short discussion, after which it was agreed that while urging the doctors to cease their action, we should lay much of the blame for the situation on Mrs. Castle, and urge the Government to refer the pay beds issue to the Royal Commission on the National Health Service, and arrange for an independent audit of the junior doctors' claim. Mr. Whitelaw would discuss with Mrs. Thatcher whether she should make a statement on the NHS issue.

The meeting closed at 7.00 p.m.