

CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

129TH MEETING

5.00 p.m. Wednesday, 28th July 1976, in the Leader's
Room at the House of Commons.

REVISED AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 117th, 120nd and 123rd Meetings.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events.
4. Direct Elections - paper by Lord Thorneycroft to be circulated at meeting.
5. Report of the Price Code Alternatives Policy Group, (LCG/76/139) - previously circulated.
6. Any other business.

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 129th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 28th July 1976, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Carrington, Mr. Maudling, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Mr. Peyton, Mr. St. John-Stevas, Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Neave, Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Biffen, Lord Thorneycroft.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Peter Kirk, Mr. Burd, Mr. Higgins, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Butler, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Lord Hailsham, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Heseltine.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 2nd - 6th August

On Monday, 2nd August, there would be a Debate on Public Expenditure (Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Heseltine). This would be followed by a Motion on Broadcasting (Mr. Cooke).

On Tuesday, 3rd August, Mr. Ian Gow would seek leave to introduce his National Bus Company (Denationalisation) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Supply Day on a subject to be decided and by Opposed Private Business: the Cromarty Petroleum Order Confirmation Bill (Mr. Gray) and a Motion on Financial Assistance to British Leyland.

On Wednesday, 4th August, Mr. C. Price would seek leave to introduce his Films Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Second Reading of the Drought Bill (Mr. Speed, Mr. Jones) and by Proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill.

On Thursday, 5th August, there would be the Remaining Stages of the Drought Bill (Mr. Speed, Mr. Jones) and a Motion on the EEC document on Sheepmeat Regime.

On Friday, 6th August, there would be Adjournment Motions.

2. Matters arising from Business

There was a discussion. The following points were agreed:

(i) With regard to the debate on Monday, 2nd August, on Public Expenditure, we would make clear at Business Questions that we wished to table a reasoned amendment, so as to challenge the Government to put down a motion. Our reasoned amendment would simply criticise the Government's raising of extra revenue by means of a pay roll tax, but we might criticise some of the details of the spending cuts in speeches while welcoming the cuts in principle and pressing the need for further ones.

...../ (ii)

(ii) We should debate the short term problems of local government finance on the Supply Day on 3rd August.

(Following the Government's later refusal to allow a debate in their own time on public spending, it was decided to devote our Supply Day to that subject, and a motion was tabled to halve the Chancellor of the Exchequer's salary.)

(iii) We would seek to dissuade Our Privy Councillors from taking up all the available time for speeches in the debate on public spending so as to enable other backbenchers to speak.

(iv) We would ask the Government to postpone the debate on the Commission Document on the Sheepment Regime, proposed for 5th August.

3. House of Lords Business

There was a short discussion and it was agreed that we would give attention to methods by which the Lords, who would be sitting during the Labour Party Conference, might attract useful publicity.

4. The Recess

Members were invited to submit their names for a duty rota designed to ensure that we were able to react instantly to events during the recess. Members were invited to assist in creating favourable publicity for the Party by means of speeches, articles, statements and, where appropriate, photographs.

5. Direct Elections (LCC/76/141)

Lord Thorneycroft and Mr. Hurd introduced a discussion on direct elections to the European Parliament after which it was agreed:

(i) We would argue against reducing the allocation of 67 seats out of the total UK quota of 81 to England as this would weaken our argument for a more proportional distribution of seats in the Westminster Parliament as between England and Scotland and Wales. There might be a special case for giving N. Ireland 3 seats instead of 2.

(ii) While Mr. Hurd would seek to persuade the Select Committee to accept our views as in (i) above, the Conservatives on the Committee would not produce a minority report if the majority of the Committee decided to increase the number of seats for the other parts of the U.K.

The meeting closed at 6.00 p.m.