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LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

228TH MEETING

Wednesday, 17th January 1979, in the Leader's  
Room at the House of Commons

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 227th Meeting.
2. Future Business.
3. Forthcoming Events.
4. Report of the Rawlinson Committee,  
LCC/78/191 - attached.
5. Report of Mr. Edwards's Committee on the  
Referendum (Old Queen Street Paper No. 16,  
dated 12th September 1978) - previously  
circulated.
6. Any other business.

Conservative Research Department,  
24 Old Queen Street, London, SW1.

CFP/MM  
5.1.79

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 228th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 17th January 1979, 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, Lord Thornycroft, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior, Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Pym, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Maude, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Nott, Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Carlisle, Mr. Biffen.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Fowler, Lord Denham, Mr. Butler, Mr. Patten, Mr. Wolfson, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson.

Apologies: Mr. Neave.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 22nd-29th January

On Monday, 22nd January, there would be a Motion to appoint the Joint Committee on the Special Commission on Oil Sanctions (Mr. St. John Stevas).

On Tuesday Mr. A. Hamilton would seek leave to introduce his Lead in Petrol (Prohibition) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the remaining stages of the Social Security Bill (Mr. Jenkin, Mrs. Chalker).

On Wednesday, 24th January, Mr. M. McGuire would seek leave to introduce his National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) (Amendment) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the completion of the remaining stages of the Public Lending Right Bill (Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Cooke).

On Thursday, 25th January, there would be a Supply Day. This would be followed by a Motion on EEC Documents R/1135/78, R/1221/78, R/1292/78 on the Steel Industry.

On Friday, 26th January, there would be the Private Members' Bills of Mr. Rossi, Mr. White and Mr. Jones.

On Monday, 29th January, there would be the Second Reading of the Weights and Measures Bill (Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Shaw).

It was noted that if the Government decided to introduce a State of Emergency, the business at the beginning of the week was likely to be changed.

## 2. Matters Arising on Business

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

(i) There would be a 2 line whip in support of our new clause on the earnings rule during the remaining stages of the Social Security Bill on 23rd January.

(ii) We should devote the Supply Day on 25th January to a motion deploring the fact that the value of the pound had now fallen to below 50p compared to February 1974. Mrs. Oppenheim and Mr. Nott would speak and there would be a three line whip.

(iii) On the Second Reading of the Industry Bill on the following day, 18th January, we should seek to draft a reasoned amendment, on which we would vote on a three line whip, indicating the fact that we foresaw a role for the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies but that we declined to give a Second Reading to a Bill that would increase spending on the NEB by such vast amounts. If the table office prevented the inclusion of a reference to the SDA and WDA in such an amendment Sir Keith Joseph would make these points in his speech. We would, in any event, vote against the Second Reading of the Bill. It was agreed that Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Roberts would be invited to speak from the backbenches on the Scottish and Welsh aspects of the Bill.

(iv) Mr. Percival would speak in the debate on Friday, 19th January, on Mr. Freud's Private Member's Bill, the Official Information Bill. He would indicate that while we did not support legislation in this form, we were not satisfied with the present operation of the Official Secrets Act and would prefer a system of guidelines operating in the various Government Departments. We should not whip on this Bill but seek to talk the debate out. If the Bill was given a Second Reading, we should make preparations to man the Standing Committee with MPs with legal qualifications.

(v) It was noted that the Government were prepared to amend the Weights and Measures Bill in Committee to suit our various requirements and it was therefore agreed that we should not seek to delay the passage of this Bill.

## 3. Debate on the Appointment of the Joint Committee on the Special Commission on Oil Sanctions

There was a discussion on the line wh should take in this debate on 22nd January. The following points were agreed:

(i) We should have a free vote at the end of the debate, but it was noted that a large number of members of the Shadow Cabinet wished to vote against the appointment of such a committee with such terms of reference. We would tell the lobby of this decision.

(ii) Mr. St. John Stevas, who would speak in the debate, would indicate that we believed that such an enquiry would be seriously detrimental to the national interest, and also indicate the various other difficulties involved in establishing it.

(iii) We should seek to discover whether the enquiry would definitely have access to Cabinet papers (a course which we opposed) and when the Director of Public Prosecutions was likely to report on whether any of those involved in the evasion of oil sanctions would be prosecuted.

4. Other Business

There was a short discussion on the measures being taken by the Whips' office to keep up the pressure on Ministers by open letters, Private Notice Questions and S.O.9 applications.

It was agreed that we should support the Government if they declared a state of emergency. Mr. Whitelaw would open and Mr. Fowler would close in any debate on a state of emergency during the following week.

5. Future Meetings

There would be a meeting of the Steering Committee on Monday, January 22nd, for a further discussion on the industrial situation. There would be a meeting of the full Shadow Cabinet on Monday, 29th January to discuss the referendum and the Rawlinson Report.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.