

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 112th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 26th May 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-Stevens, Mr. Raison,
Mr. Heseltine, Mrs. Oppenheim,
Mr. Biffen, Lord Thorneycroft.

Mr. Atkins.

In attendance: Mr. King, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Douglas, Mr. Ridley,
Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Gilbert.

1. The future of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill

Mrs. Thatcher reported on the course of events which had resulted in the Speaker's ruling that the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill was *prima facie* a hybrid Bill and therefore subject to a time consuming special Parliamentary procedure, and Mr. Foot's proposal to set aside the Standing Order on hybridity to allow the measure to continue its passage without delay.

There was a discussion and it was agreed that:

(i) We should on the following day move an Amendment to the Government's Motion urging the House to endorse the Speaker's ruling and the consequences which resulted from it with regard to a *prima facie* hybrid Bill.

(ii) We should not put down a Motion of Censure on Mr. Foot as this was likely to rally Labour Party support behind him.

(iii) Mr. Peyton would open the debate, and Mr. Heseltine would sum up. We would however concentrate on the principle of the Government's threat to the constitution rather than the specific arguments over the aircraft and shipbuilding nationalisation.

(vi) We should in the debate attempt to gain maximum support throughout the House for our Amendment, and it was understood that all pairs would be cancelled. While we would not consult with the leaders of other Parties with regard to the drafting of our amendment to the Government's Motion we should welcome their support for that Amendment.

2. Proposed Business for the week 7th-14th June

On Monday, 7th June, there would be the Remaining Stages of the Education (Scotland) Bill, and of the Police Bill. If the Government were defeated on the procedure for consideration of the

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Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill, there would be a Supply Day on the R.A.F. Estimates instead.

On Tuesday, 8th June, and Wednesday, 9th June, there would be progress on the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill. If the Government were defeated the following night, there would be the Remaining Stages of the Education (Scotland) Bill and the Police Bill on Tuesday, 8th June, and the Remaining Stages of the Education Bill on Wednesday, 9th June.

On Thursday, 10th June, there would be the Remaining Stages of the Education Bill. If the Government were defeated the following night, there would be a half Supply Day followed at 7.00 p.m. by Opposed Private Business.

On Friday, 11th June, there would be the Remaining Stages of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Bill (Lords) and Motions on Northern Ireland Orders on Animals and Birth and Death Registration.

3. Matters arising on Business

There was a discussion and it was agreed that we should table numbers of Amendments to the Education Bill in order to oblige the Government to provide a second day for its Remaining Stages.

4. Secondary Education in Tameside

Mr. St. John-Stevan reported on his visit to Tameside to reassure the Conservative Councillors there. It was noted that the Councillors had agreed to drop their insistence on the 11+ as a means of selection for secondary schools, and to substitute alternative tests, but even so there might be obstruction from the teachers' unions. There was a discussion and it was agreed that:

(i) We should continue to give the Councillors our full support.

(ii) We should investigate the structure of the Education Committee and discover how many members of it were co-opted rather than elected.

5. Immigration

Mr. Whitelaw and Lord Thorneycroft reported on reactions in the House and in the Party outside to the immigration debate. There was a discussion and it was agreed that Mr. Whitelaw would make a speech after the weekend pressing the Government to provide a new assessment of the facts on immigration in the light of the Hawley Report and other developments. The speech would refer to various of our proposals, such as the need to prepare a register of dependents, and should generally seek to gain credit for the Conservative Party if the Government were obliged to tighten up on immigration procedures. Various members of the Shadow Cabinet would be invited to discuss the draft of the speech with Mr. Whitelaw.

6. Future Meetings.

Mrs. Thatcher reminded colleagues that there was a half-day meeting of the Shadow Cabinet on Monday, 7th June.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.