

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 141st Meeting held at 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 1st December 1976, in the Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Hailsham, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior, Mr. Pym, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Davies, Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Maude, Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Neave, Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Biffen, Mr. King, Mr. Edwards, Lord Trenchcroft.

Mr. Atkins

In attendance: Sir Michael Havers, Mr. Brittan, Mr. Fairgrieve, Mr. Butler, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Patten, Mr. Hooson, Mr. Nicolson, Mr. Wynn.

Apologies: Lord Carrington, Mr. Jenkin.

1. Proposed Business for the Week 6th-13th December

On Monday, 6th December, there would be the Second Reading of the National Insurance Surcharge Bill (Mr. Nott, Mr. Howell). This would be followed by a Motion on an EEC Document on Water.

On Tuesday, 7th December, there would be the formal Committee Stage of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill (Mr. Biffen, Mr. Lamont). This would be followed by Motions on Suggested amendments to the Bill, and Third Reading.

On Wednesday, 8th December, there would be the Remaining Stages of the National Insurance Surcharge Bill (Mr. Howell, Mr. Mitchell).

On Thursday, 9th December, there would be a Supply Lay: Debate to take note of the 1st-6th Reports in Session 1975-76 of the Committee of Public Accounts and the related Treasury Minute (Mr. Nott). This would be followed by Motions on Northern Ireland Orders on Appropriation (no. 3) and on Supplementary Benefits (Amendment) (Mr. Neave, Mr. Biggs-Davison).

On Friday, 10th December, there would be Remaining Stages of the Fishery Limits Bill (Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Hurd).

On Monday, 13th December, there would be the Second Reading of the Scotland and Wales Bill.

2. Matters Arising on Business

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

(i) In the debate on the Second Reading of the National Insurance Surcharge Bill on Monday, 6th December, we should emphasise the effect of the Bill on small-businesses and should vote against it on a 3 line whip. We should seek to introduce our new MP for Cambridge on that day in order that he might be able to take part in the vote.

(ii) We should select for debate during the further stages of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill on 7th December, those amendments that would maximise support; such as on ship repairing and representation of non-unionists in consultative machinery. There would be a 3 line whip.

(iii) We should seek to have the Remaining Stages of the National Insurance Surcharge Bill postponed from Wednesday, 8th December, and should in any case protest vigorously at the short period ensuing after Second Reading. There should be running 3 line whip on the Remaining Stages.

(iv) We should investigate what procedure would ensue in the Lords on the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Bill with regard to the problem of hybridity, and that if the Bill were delayed following the operation of the normal Lords procedure on hybridity, we should seek to protect ourselves from being blamed for any consequences for those industries arising out of the delay.

3. Scotland and Wales Bill

There was a discussion on the Government's Bill for setting up assemblies in Scotland and Wales, which was published the previous day, and on how the Party should vote at the end of the Second Reading debate. It was agreed that a further meeting should be held later that evening.

The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.