

THE NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday 18th November 1982

The Committee met at 32 Smith Square, Westminster on Thursday 18th November 1982 at 2.15 p.m. under the chairmanship of Sir Russell Sanderson and the names of the 110 members present are recorded.

1. Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Les Lawrence, as the new Chairman of N.A.C.E., and Mr. Joe French, as the new Chairman of the National Society of Conservative Agents.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies from 31 members were noted and recorded.

3. Discussion on the economy

Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Q.C., M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer, was welcomed by the Chairman and invited to lead this discussion. Sir Geoffrey outlined the successes of Government financial policy. The Chancellor said that Britain had almost the lowest public sector borrowing requirement of any industrialised country, and our problems should be seen against the world setting. He warned that there would be problems ahead with unemployment but the Government must not divert from its central strategy. Socialist propositions should be exposed as cruel deception. In the ensuing discussion, the Chancellor answered five questions on world trade, National Insurance Surcharge, the value of the pound, mortgage rates and retirement age. The Chairman warmly thanked Sir Geoffrey.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 1982, having been circulated with the agenda, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5. Business arising from the Minutes

Mr. Donald Walters reported on the position in regard to the new F.C.S. constitution. Their Rules were subject to the jurisdiction of the N.U.E.C. and he requested a mandate for his proposed stance at the F.C.S. Council meeting on 18th December. This was accorded by the Committee nem.con.

6. Report from the General Purposes Committee

The Chairman reported on relevant matters considered at the General Purposes Committee meeting on the previous day. This included the N.A.C. reports, the C.B.F. report, a report on the Agents' Superannuation Fund and the National Agricultural and Countryside Forum. Arrangements for the Central Council Meeting in Kensington Town Hall on Saturday 26th March 1983 were agreed. It would start at 9.15 a.m. with the formal business followed by the Party Chairman's speech and two debates, then the financial appeal and the Prime Minister would speak at 12.00 noon. The afternoon session would be from 2.15 to 5.15 p.m. with three debates. Area Chairmen were asked to promote motions due in by 10th February. Handbooks and tickets would be issued on 10th March only to those who had applied in response to the preliminary notice on 20th January. No hotel accommodation would be arranged centrally. The Officers were authorised to prepare the agenda on 16th February. Nomination papers for the election of National Union Officers would be issued on 4th January for return

by 19th January, followed by a postal ballot between 31st January and 14th February. The Committee had approved the Officers' recommendation that Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Q.C., M.P. should be nominated as President for the ensuing year. The report and the nomination of Sir Geoffrey Howe as President were approved.

7. Review of the 1982 Party Conference at Brighton

The Secretary gave a detailed report on the Conference and referred to the statistics which had been circulated with the agenda and are lodged with these Minutes. It was generally agreed that the Conference had been most successful with 165 speakers from the floor and a record collection of £10,177 which with registration fees, advertising in the handbook and £9,000 from the commercial displays should produce a profit of over £11,000 in the National Union budget. He paid tribute to Mr. Donald Walters' splendid chairmanship and expressed thanks to Mr. John Lacy and the stewards and to Mr. Harvey Thomas and other Central Office staff who had helped.

The Chairman congratulated Mr. Walters on the excellent way in which he handled the Conference, particularly the question and answer session. He also paid tribute to the three Vice-Chairmen, the Secretary and Mrs. Anna Smith. Mr. Walters expressed his appreciation of the help given by Sir Russell Sanderson, Mr. Alan Smith and the three Vice-Chairmen. He asked Area Chairmen to encourage Constituencies to submit more reasoned and sharper motions.

Various observations were made by members concerning the completion of speakers' slips, tiered seating, sale of handbooks, the introduction of speakers from the floor, the ballot for motions and votes cast, S.P.F. Charter Group poll, and the extra Police required. Sir Russell Sanderson thanked Sir John Taylor, O.B.E., T.D., J.P., D.L. for his excellent chairmanship of the final session. It was agreed that the Conference registration fee would be raised to £2.00 for both representatives and observers, as recommended by the G.P. Committee.

8. Consideration of resolutions received from Area, Constituency and other organisations

The Committee approved action taken on the 23 resolutions submitted since the last meeting and circulated with the agenda (copy lodged herewith), replies having been received to 15 of these. Resolution no. 10 had been dealt with at the Executive Committee meeting on 10th June. Cllr. Donald Moore, C.B.E. spoke about the demonstration at Greenham Common.

9. Agents' salary scales for 1983

Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, M.P. said that there had been problems in recruiting new Agents and a working party had been set up to look at the whole question of Agents' salaries. A good calibre of entrants must be attracted by better salaries. The new scales which had been circulated (copy lodged herewith) would allow for negotiation between employer and employee and would take account of age and experience. Mr. Parkinson answered seven questions. Mr. Joe French thanked the Agents' Employment Advisory Committee and Mr. Parkinson for the considerable improvement, but voiced concern about so many Associations not employing Agents. The new scales were approved with one dissentient, the last clause of paragraph 2 - 3b being deleted.

10. Reports on Parliamentary By-Elections

Mrs. Alma Hill, C.B.E. reported on numerous factors against us at Northfield including the lack of sufficient Mutual Aid. Mr. Ian McLeod, J.P. said that the Conservative policies were not understood in Peckham and the timing of Ministerial announcements had been unfortunate. He thanked the neighbouring Areas for Mutual Aid.

11. Area Chairmen's Reports

Mr. Douglas Brown said that Redistribution in his Area was a major problem, 35 Constituencies facing major changes. Associations had been urged to select local government candidates early for the elections in May. The Area had run a rigorous Impact 80s campaign but some Constituencies were failing to respond. Industry in Yorkshire was suffering particularly and output had fallen although new technology was being incorporated.

In replying to these reports, Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, M.P. explained the timing of the by-elections, and said that all Government Ministers had been reminded of the possible effects of ill-timed announcements. He stressed the importance of Mutual Aid particularly in the run-up to the General Election. He said that the new Constituencies should be in operation by next April and work on reforming the domestic rating system was going ahead as a matter of urgency.

12. Parliamentary Redistribution

Mr. A. S. Garner, Director of Organisation and Community Affairs Department, was invited to give a progress report. Mr. Garner said that the Labour Party was taking action to try to delay the implementation of the Boundary Commission's proposals. It was hoped that the steering committees would have done most of the preparation so that new Constituencies could come into being smoothly, as the possibility of a General Election would make a tight timetable. Three papers had been produced to give guidance on legal and tax aspects. 71 Constituencies had selected candidates and a further 58 were in the process of doing so. A paper had been drawn up to help constituencies with speeding up the selection procedure. Mr. Garner answered questions and it was resolved that the next meeting should decide a date by which new Associations should be formed.

13. Dispute within the Sunderland Association

The Chairman gave the recommendations and draft conclusions of the National Union Officers following the hearing on 15th September (copy herewith) and they were approved unanimously.

14. Conservative Agents' Superannuation Fund

The Chairman explained the position arising from the retirement of Lord Aldington, Sir Derek Greenaway and Mr. Jim Wooding as Trustees of the Superannuation Fund. After various soundings, Rt. Hon. Lord Carr of Hadley had been approached to take over the chairmanship from Lord Aldington with Rt. Hon. Lord Barber, T.D. as another Trustee. Both had given their consent. The Chairman moved the appointment as Trustees of Lord Carr, Lord Barber, Sir John Taylor, O.B.E., T.D., J.P., D.L. and Mr. Tony Bayman, the latter having been nominated by the National Society as a replacement for Mr. Wooding. This was seconded by Mr. Gyde Horrocks and carried. The Chairman also proposed that the maximum age for Trustees should be 75 and the maximum length of service for Trustees should be 15 years. The Chairman moved the appointment of Mr. Peter Lane, J.P. as a representative of the employing Associations to the Management Committee of the Superannuation Fund to replace Sir John Taylor. These propositions were approved and grateful thanks were expressed to the retiring Trustees.

15. Proposed alteration to National Union Rule XII(3)(c)

The Committee considered a recommendation to alter National Union Rule XII(3)(c) by deleting the word "Association" in lines 2 and 5 so that the Rule applied equally to E.C.C. officers. The Secretary reported that the Rules had been thus interpreted by several Areas and Areas agreed with this proposition. However, it was opposed by Mr. Peter Murphy and Mr. Hugh Simmonds. It was resolved to refer the matter to the Standing Review Committee.

16. Alteration to the C.W.N.C. Rules

Mrs. Joan Seccombe, J.P. moved the approval of the alterations to rules of the C.W.N.C., as circulated with the agenda and lodged herewith. This was seconded by Mr. Brian Edwards, C.B.E. and carried.

17. Business for the next meeting on Thursday 17th February 1983

It was agreed that Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, M.P., Secretary of State for Employment, should be invited to speak at the next meeting and also Sir Oulton Wade, J.P. Mr. John Peake asked for marginal seats and Mutual Aid to be placed on the agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.50 p.m.