

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD AT 7 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH MAY 1979, IN THE CHIEF WHIP'S ROOM AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

SUBJECT; "The Great and the Good"

PRESENT: Chief Whip (Mr Jopling)
Minister of State, Civil Service Department, (Mr Channon)
Sir Anthony Royle, MP,
Mr Charkham, (CSD)
Mr Alan Howarth (PA to Lord Thorneycroft)
Mr Murdo MacLean
Miss Felicity Yonge

Sir Anthony Royle described the work done by Miss SAunders-Davies under his supervision during the last four years in compiling a register of "The Great and the Good" who would be acceptable to the Conservative Party for appointments to public bodies (Quangos). The scope of the register was similar to that kept by Mr Charkham, although a more amateur effort. Both had about 3,000 names on them, and/doubt there was a considerable amount of overlapping. It was envisaged that Ministers in making appointments would seek advice from three sources: their own departments, the CSD Unit and Miss Saunders-Davies's list, and then come to their own decisions. Any names taken from Miss Saunders-Davies's list must be cleared for security etc. in the normal way. He emphasised that the Prime Minister wanted the Party list kept separately from the CSD list. Although it was agreed that Miss Saunders-Davies should remain avoluntary worker with all her expenses paid by Conservative Central Office, prior to the General Election it had been decided that 12 Downing Street would be the best place for her to operate from, and Sir Anthony believed that should would be ineff ective an ywhere else. At No 12 she would have good access to the Chief Whip whose role would be to ensure that whenever appropriate, Ministers should include names from the Register for consideration in making appointments. It was in the nature of an experiment, but this was how he saw it working.

It was agreed that the correct channel for consulting the register was through the Minister's PPS, and that officials should not be involved.

It was agreed that the proposed role for the Chief Whip was unobjectinnable and appropriate to his office of Patronage Secretary.

It was agreed that it was of the first importance that Miss S-aunders-Davies's activities must be above reproach. Full consideration to the propriety of her working from 12 Downing Street, and Mr Charkham was asked to seek an interview with Sir Ian Bancroft as soon as possible to obtain his view. The matter should then be discussed with the Prime Minister.