



NOTE OF LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH 1983

Those present: Prime Minister

Lord President of the Council

Secretary of State for Scotland

Secretary of State for Employment

Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Chairman of the Party

Minister of State, Treasury (Mr Wakeham)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Employment
(Mr Morrison)

Chief Press Secretary, No 10

Marketing Director, Central Office

Director of Press and Public Relations, Central Office

Director, Conservative Research Department

Mr Birch, Privy Council Office

1. The Committee considered a draft paper on the presentation of Government policy on training and special employment measures. In discussion, the following points were made:

- (a) the paper should have an introductory passage entitled "A Strategy for Jobs" which would provide a theme and context within which to set the factual account of the training and other measures. This should outline five main aspects of the Government's approach to employment policy:
 - (i) policies to produce a healthy economy;
 - (ii) training schemes for the skills of tomorrow, starting with schools courses in technology and microcomputers, and including the Department of Industry - sponsored Computer Centres;
 - (iii) what the Government was doing to encourage sunrise industries, including £180 million of grants at 33¹/₃%;

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- (iv) measures to encourage small businesses;
- (v) budget measures to help jobs.

The conclusion of the paper should also stress the role of training in the strategy for jobs;

- (b) training was important in order to create the capacity to take early and full advantage of the recovery in economic activity;
- (c) new technology did not displace jobs, as long as it was not all imported; on the contrary, the production of advanced technological products should be a vital source of new jobs in the future;
- (d) it was important to stress that the Government's measures were aimed at creating new and genuine jobs and not simply at an artificial reduction of the unemployment figures;
- (e) the paper should draw attention to the complementary strategies of, on the one hand, training young people in the skills required to produce and operate the new technologies and, on the other, encouraging projects to develop those technologies;
- (f) the conclusions of the paper should be redrafted to keep the Government's options open on the institutional aspects of sponsorship of training and employment schemes, and to soften its party political content.

2. The Committee agreed that the paper, amended in the light of their discussion, should be distributed to Ministers.

3. The Committee then considered draft papers on the presentation of Agriculture and Fisheries policy. In discussion, the following points were made:

- (a) there were three main areas for positive presentation of agricultural policy: the benefits to consumers; the benefits to farmers; the improvement in our return from EC membership;
- (b) the dramatic decrease in the rate of food price inflation, down again to a year on year rate of 1.4% in the previous month, should be brought to the public's attention as forcefully as possible;
- (c) it would be important to draw farmers' attention to the contrast between the Government's farm support and the opposition's plans in the run up to a general election, possibly by means of a letter from the Minister of Agriculture;
- (d) it was worth highlighting that, during the Government's term of office so far, the UK had gone from having 7% of EC agricultural turnover and only 5% of CAP receipts to 7.8% of turnover and 11% of receipts.

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- (e) the animal welfare lobby was electorally important and volatile and would need sensitive handling;
 - (f) agricultural policy ought also to be projected coherently with the wider, related but distinct subject of a Policy for the countryside, on which further work was needed (see paragraph 6. below);
 - (g) it would be prudent to try to delay any major proposals on fisheries structures until shortly before an election in order to try to avoid unrealistic outbidding by the opposition parties.
4. The Committee agreed that the papers, amended in the light of discussion, should be circulated to Ministers.
5. The Committee discussed the Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary's diary of events. It was noted that the TUC March for Jobs would be reaching London on 5 June. The approaching season of trade union conferences would create a need for counterbalancing Ministerial coverage in the media. Further evidence of economic recovery should be highlighted as much as possible.
6. In discussion of its future work, the Committee agreed that it had already identified a need to commission a paper on a policy for the countryside. The Lord President would produce a keynote paper on the Government's philosophy, record and policy towards the rural areas. This could be supplemented by a more detailed paper covering the responsibilities of the Secretaries of State for the Environment, Scotland, Transport and others concerned. The Committee also agreed to Commission a paper on transport policy. These would be discussed at the Committee's next meeting on Wednesday 4 May 1982.
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Distribution: Those present
Chief Secretary, Treasury
Parliamentary Private Secretary, No 10

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LIAISON COMMITTEE

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee are attached. The next meeting has been arranged for 10.00 am on Wednesday, 4 May 1983, at No 10, Downing Street. An agenda for that meeting will be circulated shortly.

Sébastien Birch

12 April 1983

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