

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION
Minutes of the ~~Sixth~~ Meeting: 23 November 2000

Seventh

Present:

Lord Stevenson (Chair)
Baroness Dean
Lord Dholakia
Lord Hurd
Mrs Felicity Huston
Mrs Angela Sarkis

Mrs Geraldine Alexander (Secretariat)
Mr Jim Barron (Secretariat)
Mrs Mary Grafton (Secretariat)
Ms Julie Murnane (Cabinet Office)

Introduction:

Apologies were received from Dame Deirdre Hine, Jonathan Tross and Judith Simpson.

Minutes of the Fifth Meeting held on 30 October

2. The minutes of the fifth meeting were agreed.

Progress Report following Commission Launch on 13 September

3. By 17 November, over 3,000 nominations had been received. At least 50% had arrived on 15-16 November. The Commission noted an initial breakdown of the nominations and that more accurate figures would be available in the next week or so once the database had been checked for duplicates.

4. The Commission noted that a further advice had been sought from legal advisers about _____ and that a paper would be provided for the next meeting.

Sifting Arrangements

5. The Commission noted the outline timetable. From 27 November, sift teams would begin the work of assessing all nominations, following eligibility checks by the Secretariat. Full training would be provided to the sift teams and each team member would sign a statement of confidentiality. Nominations would be assessed in the following categories:

- Those to be rejected at the first sift stage ("rejects")
- Those where the sift team were doubtful or unable to make a firm assessment ("the greys")
- Those to be included in the next sift ("the go forwards").

6. From 4 December, Commissioners would make arrangements to undertake random checks of the rejects and to assess the "greys". The Chairman would look at all the nominations by the time the Commission has passed its recommendations to the Prime Minister.

7. The Commission discussed the assessment criteria, including whether the existing published criteria should be developed further to support the second sift to produce the long short-list. Lord Stevenson would consider this further and seek the views of Commissioners. *Secretary's note: It was subsequently decided that published criteria should not be developed further. The Commission would have to reach judgements on merit against them.*

Voting Arrangements

8. The Commission reconsidered the paper and agreed that votes would be decided by a majority.

Media Briefing

9. The Commission considered arrangements for a press briefing/press release on the number and breakdown of nominations received by 17 November. A draft press release would be circulated to Commission members. This would be factual and place emphasis on the Commission's fair and consistent assessment process and the confidentiality of individual nominations. *Secretary's note: As it took longer than expected to provide final figures, it was subsequently decided that the Commission would place this information on the website and alert selected journalists rather than issue a press release or hold a press briefing.*

Handling Complaints

10. The Chairman would reconsider the paper on handling complaints about the assessment process.

Any Other Business

11. The Chairman had met with Labour peers. They had agreed that more support should be provided for those peers operating outside the party system. The Chairman would discuss this with Lord Craig, the Convenor of the cross-bench peers, at a meeting on 24 November.

12. Lord Hurd was meeting the Association of Conservative Peers on 14 December.

November 2000