

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

**HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Ninth Meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001**

**Present:**

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

Mrs Mary Grafton (Secretariat)  
Mr Jim Barron (Secretariat)  
Mrs Geraldine Alexander (Secretariat)  
Mr Tim Hunt (Press Officer)

**Apologies**

1. There were no apologies for absence.

**Minutes of the meetings held on 18 December and 9 January**

2. This item was put back to the next meeting.

**Declarations of interests: Nominees interviewed by the Commission**

3. The Commission members checked that their declarations of interest for all interviewees were correctly recorded by the Secretariat.

**Consideration of nominees interviewed by the Commission**

4. In the light of the Chairman's memorandum of 15<sup>th</sup> February, the Commission considered these nominees listed in Annex A and Annex B. No decisions would be made on individual nominees; discussion centred on general principles such as expertise and regional representation.
5. Although no final decisions were taken, it was agreed that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] should transfer to Annex B. [REDACTED] should be invited to meet a further panel of the Commission. It was also agreed that [REDACTED] should be invited for interview. (Lord Hurd declared that he was a close personal friend of [REDACTED] and took no part in the discussion.)

6. It was noted that there were a number of nominees from the voluntary sector but no one with a background in, for example, the armed forces and the countryside. The Commission agreed that further thought should be given to addressing this, and also encouraging regional nominations for the next round.

#### **Membership of Political Parties**

7. It had become apparent during the interviews that a number of the serious nominees were members of a Political Party, albeit quiet ones. Eight of the nominees in Annex A were non-active members of either the Liberal Democrats or the Labour Party. The Commission's nomination form, which was based on the political activity questionnaire issued to all applicants for public appointments did not provide for a declaration of party membership, as this was considered to be a private and personal matter. While the Commission did not see membership of a political party as a bar to recommendation, it recognised that the perception of the appointment of a number of Labour Party supporters might be seen as cronyism particularly in the run up to a General Election. Public perceptions were important to the Commission's credibility. A number of approaches were discussed without reaching a conclusion, including developing a public line on the matter and, perhaps, discussion with representatives of the main political parties. There was a need to make clear that nominees were recommended on merit.

#### **Tenure of Appointment**

8. This had been discussed by the Royal Commission, and had been raised by some nominees during interview. The Commission might consider raising it as an issue, but would need to consider its approach carefully.

#### **Number of recommendations**

9. The Chairman should request confirmation of the number of recommendations to be invited from the Prime Minister, in time for the next Commission meeting.

#### **Letting people know the outcome**

10. The Commission had stated its intention to inform all nominees of the outcome of their nomination as soon as possible. It was recognised that this might take various forms: the majority of nominees would receive a straight rejection; other nominations might be taken forward to future rounds; individual letters would need to be written to those who had been interviewed.
11. The Commission agreed that the Secretariat should begin the process of writing letters to the straight rejects, but these letters would not be sent until the final list has been agreed. Overall, a timetable needed to be drawn up showing the steps that needed to be taken before any announcement and when the letters should issue.
12. The Commission would also need to review the nominees in Bands A, B and C to identify further nominees who fall into the straight rejection category.

13. The Commission discussed the retention of nominees in Bands A, B and C on the database. It was important to make clear that these nominees would not be regarded as "first reserves" for future rounds to avoid undue expectations. In each round those carried forward would be assessed with new nominees who met the Commission's criteria. It would be helpful to develop a written statement that clarified the Commission's position.

**Any other business**

14. The Commission requested legal advice on issues including

and other

Geraldine Alexander  
Commission Secretariat

20 February 2001