

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE 20TH MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2003

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

Mr Jim Barron - Secretariat
Ms Geraldine Alexander - Secretariat
Mr Ekpe Attah - Secretariat

Minutes of the nineteenth meeting of the Commission

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2003 were agreed.

The Way Forward (Chairman's update)

2. It was noted that the Prime Minister's announcement in July, regarding the Commission's reappointment and continued work programme had attracted little media coverage.
3. Number 10 had indicated that it would like to recommend more working peers soon, although it had not yet decided how many it would be seeking. This would need to be clarified. Number 10 had been reminded that the Commission would need to be given adequate time to vet the nominations from the political parties. The Commission agreed that it should aim to have a list of possible appointees as soon as practicable, in anticipation of any request from Number 10 for recommendations.
4. The Department for Constitutional Affairs was expected to announce its consultation on the future of House of Lords Reform on 18 September. A DCA minister would contact the Chairman in advance of the announcement to brief him on the consultation's content. The Commission agreed that the Chairman would seek to have the DCA reaffirm that the Commission would be continuing with its work in the interim period before any future reform was implemented.

Prioritising interviewees

5. The Commission considered the paper on prioritising interviewees. It was agreed that the 22 "holdover" nominees from the first round who had already been interviewed would be considered alongside all the other nominees.
6. The Commission agreed to prioritise interviews to ensure it interviewed the nominees that it was most likely to recommend before it made its next set of recommendations. The Commission would form a sub-committee to rank nominees in three categories, depending on how likely it was to recommend them.

The sub-committee's rankings would be circulated to the full Commission and it would then meet to approve the rankings.

Skills audit

7. The Commission considered the paper on a proposed methodology for a skills audit of the House of Lords. The Commission agreed that the work should be taken forward, and that the results would be used as the basis for discussion rather than as a tool for arriving at recommendations. When considering nominees, it was agreed that their personal qualities were more significant than a particular set of skills and experiences.
8. The Secretariat was invited to consider the feasibility of collating information on which peers had recently spoken in the House on particular subjects.

**Commission Secretariat
September 2003**