

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE 23RD MEETING HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER 2003

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

Mr Jim Barron - Secretary
Ms Geraldine Alexander - Secretariat
Mr Ekpe Attah – Secretariat
Ms Beth Watson - Secretariat

Minutes of the twenty-second meeting of the Commission

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2003 were agreed.

Chairman's Update

2. The Chairman informed the Commission that he and Mrs Huston had met the Lord Chancellor on 5th December. The Chairman had told Lord Falconer that the Commission did not feel it would be appropriate to respond formally to the Government's Consultation Paper on Lords reform.
3. Number 10 had not yet asked the Commission to vet the nominees for the forthcoming working peers list.

Vetting

4. The Commission considered the paper on vetting. It agreed that, when advising on the propriety of a party-political nominee who had donated money to the nominating party, it would need to be convinced that the person would still have been nominated if he or she had not made a donation.
5. The Commission also agreed that:
 - a certificate from the Chief Whip of the relevant party confirming that a significant donation was not related to the nomination would not – on its own – be sufficient to satisfy the Commission;
 - it would need a detailed account - preferably as part of the citation from the party leader – of the individual's record of service that had led to their nomination;

- on receipt of a citation it would consider, in light of the citation's contents, whether it needed to go back to the party for more information;
- for the avoidance of any misunderstanding over its role in the appointment of working peers, the Commission should be prepared to communicate clearly what its remit was in relation to the vetting of party-political nominations for suitability.

Discussion of names

6. The Commission reaffirmed that it would seek to announce its recommendations at the same time as the working peers were announced.
7. The Commission considered the nominees on its short list. It agreed to:
 - remove five nominees from the short list: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. It was agreed that all of these nominees would be very serious candidates for future lists;
 - keep 7 nominees on the short list: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
8. It was also agreed that the Chairman would ring [REDACTED] to discuss the issue of time commitment, and that two more Commission members [Lord Dholakia and Dame Deirdre Hine] would meet [REDACTED] on 17th December.
9. The Commission considered how many people it should recommend. It was agreed that the Chairman would ring members individually to discuss this, and that, if necessary, the Commission should meet again in January to finalise its recommendations.

Commission Secretariat
December 2003