

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE 25TH MEETING HELD ON 18TH MARCH 2004

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

Mr Jim Barron - Secretary
Ms Geraldine Alexander - Secretariat
Mr Ekpe Attah – Secretariat
Miss Jo Tobie - Secretariat

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Angela Sarkis.

Minutes of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Commission

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2004 were agreed.

Commission's recommendations

3. The Commission had not received formal confirmation on the number of recommendations it was being invited to make by the Prime Minister, although his Chief of Staff had indicated that it was very likely that the Prime Minister would agree to the Commission's proposed numbers. The Chairman was told that if the Commission was not informed otherwise in the immediate future, it should be assumed that the number had been agreed.
4. The Commission reconfirmed that the announcement of its recommendations should coincide with the announcement of the new party-political peers.

Vetting

5. The Commission considered the outcome of the vetting enquiries. The Commission reconfirmed its policy that in the vetting of party-political nominees who were significant donors, the Commission's obligation was to satisfy itself that an individual could have been a credible nominee regardless of the donation. However, it was noted that this was not the same as satisfying itself that that nominee would have been nominated.

6. Those nominees who had given significant donations to the political parties were considered individually. It was noted that the Inland Revenue had still to report on two nominees. It was agreed that:
 - From the information currently available, all but one of the nominees could be seen to be credible nominees.
 - Dependent upon the information provided by the Revenue, a group of three Commissioners, including the Chairman, should arrange to meet [REDACTED] to discuss his residency status.
 - The Chairman would meet with the Liberal Democrat Chief Whip to discuss one of their nominees.
 - The Chairman would write to [REDACTED] informing him of the inaccuracies in the Whip's Certificate and inviting him to amend it.
 - The Conservative Party would be invited to make a stronger case for the nomination of one of their nominees.

7. The Commission agreed that the guidelines for determining how the political parties nominated working peers were too ambiguous and needed more definition. Following this round of nominations, the Commission would seek to agree a new set of guidelines with No.10.

Holdovers

8. It was agreed that once the current list of peers was announced, the Commission would consider the holdovers with a view to dramatically reducing the numbers. A list of all the holdovers, together with citations, would be circulated to all members.

PM's exceptions

9. The Commission noted the Chairman's letter to the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff regarding the exceptions. A reply had not been received, although it was agreed that it was not necessary to obtain one.

Commission Secretariat
March 2004