

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE 31ST MEETING HELD ON 18TH OCTOBER 2005

Present: Lord Stevenson (Chairman)
Mrs Angela Sarkis
Lord Dholakia
Mrs Felicity Huston
Baroness Dean

Mr Jim Barron - Secretariat
Ms Geraldine Alexander - Secretariat
Miss Louise Blundell – Secretariat

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Lord Hurd.

Minutes of the thirtieth meeting of the Commission

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2005 were agreed.

Chairman's update

3. The Chairman reported that the Ethnic Minority Sub-committee had met on 17 October. It had agreed to send copies of the annual report to a selection of representative bodies, with the aim of increasing interest among minority ethnic groups. It was also proposed that opportunities to publicise the work of the Commission in the ethnic minority press would be sought. One possibility was to try to encourage articles featuring either Lord Dholakia or Mrs Sarkis discussing the nomination process.
4. The Chairman had arranged a meeting with [REDACTED] to discuss his ability to attend the Lords, if appointed. A member of the Secretariat was to accompany Lord Stevenson.
5. It had been confirmed that the Cabinet Office would begin the recruitment process for the four independent seats on the Commission before Christmas. As all the independent members had served two consecutive terms, they would need to apply in open competition if they wished to remain for a further term. The matter of the reappointment of party-political members was one for the party leaders to decide.
6. The Commission was advised about on the progress of the judicial review application. The complainant's renewed application for a judicial review had been

dismissed. The complainant had decided, however, to apply for permission to appeal to the Court of Appeal, and the Commission awaited the Court's decision.

Vetting

7. The Commission had received a list of 29 names of party-political nominees from the Prime Minister. It was noted that Lord Stevenson was acquainted with one of the Labour nominees, [REDACTED], and it was agreed he would take no part in the consideration of his nomination. Similarly, [REDACTED] was known to Baroness Dean and it was agreed that she would not take part in the consideration of his nomination. It was agreed that the list would be examined in detail at a scrutiny meeting once the departments had completed their checks.
8. The Commission agreed that the citations provided by the Labour Party would benefit from having more detail. This matter would be raised informally with Number 10 in the first instance.
9. It was agreed that in the future the Commission would decline to scrutinise individuals who were not currently resident in the UK for tax purposes or who had given an assurance that they would shortly be resident.. It was noted that none of the names on the current list were resident outside of the UK.

Next List

10. The Commission agreed that it would seek to recommend between five and seven individuals. These would be announced at the same time as the party-political names.
11. It was agreed that the Commission would select its recommendations from a short-list of seven names. The individuals were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The list would be subject to both the views of Lord Hurd and further checks on some of the nominees. Lord Stevenson would circulate a note confirming the final list once the checks were complete.

Annual report

12. The Commission considered the draft annual report and made some suggestions for amendments. An amended copy would be circulated to members in due course.

Declarations of interest

13. The Commission noted that it had been subject to a freedom of information request regarding possible conflicts of interest between the five individuals appointed in July 2005 and Commission members.

14. The Commission agreed that it would continue its practice of recording in the minutes of its meetings those occasions when a Commission member withdrew from the decision on a nominee.

Commission Secretariat
October 2005