

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE 54th MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2009

Present: Lord Jay (Chairman)
Baroness Campbell
Lord Dholakia
Prof Dame Joan Higgins
Lord Hurd
Dr John Low

Kate Campbell (secretariat)
Pam Cooke (secretariat)
Richard Jarvis (secretariat)
Maggie O'Boyle (secretariat)

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Baroness Dean

Minutes

2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2009 were agreed.

Chairman's update

3. The Chairman reported on the meetings he had attended since the last Commission meeting. These were:
 - Labour Front Bench meeting and Labour Back Bench Group meeting - the Chairman and Baroness Dean had attended to explain the role of the Commission. The Chairman said that he would be happy to attend similar meetings with the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives.
 - Lunch with Jack Straw MP, during which the Chairman and the Chancellor had discussed potential forthcoming legislation.
 - Meeting with [REDACTED] (a recently unsuccessful nominee) to discuss his ideas about how the Commission could better reach communities in parts of the UK where the work of the House of Lords is not widely known about. The Chairman had agreed to speak to the Lords Speaker about how this might link with her outreach programme
 - Meeting with Baroness D'Souza and Lord Bassam to discuss how the introduction of new peers post-appointment could be improved.
4. [REDACTED]
5. The Chairman had received a letter from the Committee on Standards in Public Life asking for evidence for its inquiry into MP's expenses. It was agreed that this was not an issue on which it would be appropriate for the Commission to comment, and the Secretariat would reply as such on the Chairman's behalf.

Interviewed nominees

6. The Chairman set out the recommendations made by the four sub-committees that had met since the last Commission meeting. In summary, there were two nominees judged to be excellent, four that were good, and four that the sub-committees had judged to be possible candidates or unlikely to be appointed.
7. It was agreed that the Commission would recommend two names for appointment. Subject to vetting, a list would be forwarded to the Prime Minister early June.
8. The Commission discussed the ten nominees in detail. The outcome of the discussion was as follows:

Recommended for appointment (subject to vetting)

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

For further consideration by a sub-committee

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Unsuccessful

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

9. It was agreed that the Secretariat should arrange for the unsuccessful nominees to be informed in writing of the Commission's decision. (The Chairman has subsequently agreed with the Secretariat that he will write himself to the unsuccessful candidates who have been interviewed under this Commission).
10. The Commission also discussed the importance of nominees remaining abreast of their expertise. How a nominee would achieve this would be a good question to ask during any interview.

Handling outstanding nominations

11. The Commission reviewed the names on the "longlist" whose nominations had been outstanding for more than three years. It was agreed that the following nominations should be retained for further consideration by a sub-committee:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

12. It was agreed that the following nominations, when reviewed alongside those nominations on the "shortlist", were unlikely to be appointed and should therefore be rejected.

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

13. It was agreed that the remaining names on the "longlist" should be reviewed by a sub-committee with a view to making recommendations to the next full Commission meeting in July. Sub-committees would also meet in the interim to look at new nominations received since March.

Research

14. Richard Jarvis updated the Commission on progress with the research. A paper setting out what it was anticipated the research would cover was being reviewed by the Constitution Unit, UCL. It was noted that due to the lack of existing datasets the research would not include details of the ethnic background or religious belief of members of the House of Lords. However it was expected that information already collected by UCL, together with open source data, could be used to build a better picture of the experience and expertise of members of the House of Lords.

15. It was also agreed that to be of use the research needed to remain current and it was important therefore that the dataset could be updated by the Secretariat.

16. The Commission acknowledged that there would be limits to what the research would be able to cover, but was keen for it to be progressed as quickly as possible. It was agreed that Meg Russell, UCL, should be invited to attend the next Commission meeting in July.

Report from the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC)

17. The Commission noted the recommendations in the PASC Report that related to its role and remit. It was agreed that the Commission would carry out diligently whatever it was asked to do by the Government, but that it would not seek to take on the responsibilities proposed in the PASC Report.

Possible legislation

18. The current position on possible legislation was noted by the Commission. It was agreed that the Commission would discuss the issue further once it was known what was included in the Bill. It was also agreed that the Chairman would consult

the members of the Commission on what he would say were he to speak in the House during the passage of the Bill.

Communications

19. The press officer noted the positive response to the Chairman's interview on Radio 4's Today programme about the changes to the criteria.
20. The announcement of the proposed appointments was also discussed. It was agreed that as previously a press notice should be issued. In addition, the Chairman should write to the party leaders and the Convenor of the Crossbenches.

Freedom of Information

21. The secretariat provided an update on two recent cases.

Any other business

22. The Commission discussed a short paper tabled at the meeting about nominations received from people who had had a long-term involvement in politics. It was agreed that whilst involvement in politics was not a bar to submitting a nomination, the nominee would need to demonstrate not only current and future independence, but also a significant record of achievement outside of politics.

Commission Secretariat
8th May 2009