WAR CABINET PAPERS (379–437 inclusive).

April 1st, 1918, to June 28th, 1918, with Subject Index.
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April 1st, 1918, to June 28th, 1918, with Subject Index.
WAR CABINET, 379.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, April 1, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:
The PRIME MINISTER (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. the VISCOUNT MILNER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.
The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. the EARL OF DERBY, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.


The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. O. SMUTS, K.C.


Admiral SIR R. E. WEMYSS, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff.

Mr. GRAEME THOMSON, C.B., Director of Transports and Shipping.

Lieutenant-Colonel SIR M. P. A. HANKS, K.C.B., Secretary.

Captain E. ABRAHAM, Assistant Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. ROW, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
The S.S. "Celtic.

1. The First Sea Lord reported that the Steamship "Celtic" had been torpedoed, and that the latest reports indicated that the vessel was still afloat. No troops were on board.

Russia: Murmansk.

2. The First Sea Lord drew the attention of the War Cabinet to a telegram from the Rear-Admiral at Murmansk, which asked that the British Government should give to the People's Commissaries at Moscow a categorical undertaking that the British Government had no intention of annexing or occupying the Murman region, provided that the political status of the region remained unchanged. The reason why the Rear-Admiral at Murmansk asked for this declaration was stated to be that the Russians concerned are suspicious of the intentions of the Allied Governments in this respect, and such suspicions make co-operation extremely difficult.

Royal Marines from the Navy.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 377, Minute 5, the First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that the Board of Admiralty had considered the question of releasing Royal Marines, for service on the Western front, from H.M. ships, and were addressing a memorandum on the subject to the War Cabinet.

The Western Front:

4. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that he had received a telegram from the Director of Military Operations, who was in France, which indicated that, except just south of the River Luce, where the enemy was making progress, the situation on our front was quiet. Hard fighting was taking place on the French front between Moreuil and Lassigny.

Palestine.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that on the 31st of March the 181st Infantry Brigade, the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade, and the Imperial Camel Corps, attacked Amman, where the enemy held strong positions covering the station. Five miles of track and culverts had been destroyed, and a bridge blown up. As the capture of Amman station would involve considerable loss, and as the objects of the raid had been achieved by the destruction of the railway, which will prevent traffic for a considerable period, the raiding force was withdrawing to Es Salt. During the operations east of the Jordan, 766 prisoners and some field guns, &c., had been captured.

The Italian Front.

6. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that information had been received from Lord Cavan to the effect that there was a hostile concentration between the Piave and the Astico. General Wilson stated that British troops were in the sector where an attack by such a concentration might be expected.

2, Whitelhall Gardens, S.W.,
April 1, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 380.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, April 2, 1918, at 5.30 p.m.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

The Right Hon. A. Bona Law, M.P.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.


Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff.

Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord.


Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the only news from the Western front was to the effect that the two French divisions which had been with the Vth Army in front of Amiens were now no longer under General Rawlinson. The French line now covered both banks of the Luce up to Hangard, and our front had been correspondingly shortened.
2. With reference to War Cabinet 574, Minute 9, the War Cabinet discussed the question of the co-ordination of the Higher Command, with special reference to the Prime Minister’s proposed visit to France.

It was pointed out that co-ordination between General Foch and the French Higher Command was no less important than between him and the British Higher Command, and that the former might be the more difficult to secure having regard to the experience in General Nivelle’s attack a year ago. It was felt that the Prime Minister should do his utmost to secure that, during the present crisis, both the British and French Commanders-in-chief should conform to the instructions of General Foch.

It was stated that a very serious misunderstanding was rumoured to have arisen, at a most critical stage of the battle, as to the responsibility for the defence of the sector immediately south of the Somme and nearest to Amiens.

In this connection the Chief of the Imperial General Staff pointed out that any misunderstanding which may have arisen was probably unavoidable, and due to a complete breakdown of telephonic communications consequent on the sudden retreat and the change of various Headquarters. The responsibility was now clearly defined and understood.

The question was discussed as to whether, in order to secure complete co-ordination in the French command, it might not be desirable to extend General Foch’s powers, so as to give him the right of issuing directions or orders, instead of being limited to co-ordination.

In regard to this, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff pointed out that General Foch himself probably did not require any powers in extension of those already accorded to him. The view was expressed that it would be inadvisable to extend in the letter an arrangement which was reported to be working well, so far as the British army was concerned, and had been well received by public opinion in the country.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The decisions must be left to the discretion of the Prime Minister, after he had had an opportunity to discuss the whole question with Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig.

3. The War Cabinet approved a telegram (No. 1887) from the Prime Minister to Lord Reading urging upon the latter to make himself responsible for a number of practical measures for expediting the transport of United States troops.

4. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to the desirability of making known as widely as possible the revelations of Prince Lichnowsky and also of Dr. Muhlon.

The War Cabinet decided that—

Copies of the papers in question should be distributed as widely as possible by the Ministry of Propaganda, both in this country and abroad.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 370, Minutes 13 and 19, the First Sea Lord reported that he had received a telegram from the French attaché in Roumania, which said that the Kieff Government had forbidden the formation of Naval Volunteer Corps, had suppressed the election of officers, and had given orders for the demobilisation of the Black Sea fleet. The telegram also
stated that these measures were preparatory to handing over the fleet to the Germans, and that certain forts in Sebastopol had been seized by armed bands of German prisoners who had been set free in the country. Sir Rosslyn Wemyss was of opinion that too much reliance could not be placed on this information, but, even if it were correct, sufficient forces were available to counter any such movement. At the same time, he was of opinion that it would be very desirable that the Allied Naval Council should hold its next meeting at the same time and place as the next meeting of the Supreme War Council, so that the views of the Allied Naval Council could be represented, in order that any necessary concerted action by the Allied fleets could be taken.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 3, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 381.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Wednesday, April 3, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.
Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. the Earl of Derbys, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.
Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Dally Jones, C.M.G., Acting Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

I. THE Director of Military Operations reported that local fighting only had taken place on the Western front, and that a local operation north of the Somme had given the British troops possession of Ayette. On the rest of the front all was quiet. On Monday afternoon, General Maurice stated, General Foch had described the situation on the whole battle-front to him, and had said that north of the Somme and along the Oise the whole line had been stabilised, and that between Lassigny and the Somme his immediate object was to check the enemy and stabilise that part of the battle-front. It might now be said that complete stabilisation had been achieved.

With regard to the relative number of troops now on the battle-front, General Maurice stated that there were in line 59 German divisions, which had all been engaged, and that, while it was difficult, under present circumstances, to obtain accurate information, it was believed that there were 36 German divisions immediately in reserve, of which 12 were fresh divisions. With regard to the Allied troops,
there were 30 French and British divisions in the line and 22 divisions in reserve. Of the 30 divisions in the line, 18 were fresh divisions; and of the 22 in reserve, 11 were fresh and 11 were tired divisions.

With regard to the French dispositions, 14 divisions were in line on the battle-front, while 11 were in reserve, of which 8 were fresh. En route for the battle-zone, General Maurice said that there were 19 French divisions, which included 2 from Italy, and that by the 7th April the French would have 44 divisions on the battle-front, and the British divisions would number 27, or possibly 28.

With regard to the quiet fronts of the line, the French had 53 divisions, with 5 in reserve, and the British 16 divisions with 18 in reserve. Of these 18 divisions, there was one fresh division, 7 belonged to the Vth Army, which might take several months to re-organise, and 10 were tired divisions, which would be of little assistance for some considerable time.

It was pointed out that, taking all these numbers into consideration, the Germans would have available, by the 7th April, 95 divisions, whilst the Allied troops would have on the battle-front only 72.

General Maurice expressed the opinion that it could not be considered certain that all the German divisions would be available for an attack in the future, and that the inequality of numbers was not so great as appeared on paper; it was probable that a certain number of the German divisions in reserve were only waiting to be withdrawn.

In reply to a question as to the possibility of future attacks, General Maurice said that Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig was anticipating that an attack would be made in the vicinity of Arras, as it had been ascertained that the Germans had not withdrawn their reserves from this portion of the line. General Maurice was of opinion that the reason why an attack would not be concentrated on the southern portion of the battle-front was that there was very considerable congestion in rear of the German lines, and that grave difficulty had been experienced in bringing up heavy artillery, mainly owing to the fact that the IIIrd Army, during its retirement, had carried out very successful demolitions of the lines of communication, more particularly in creating large craters on the Arras-Bapaume road, which were being kept continuously under shell-fire. The enemy would therefore only maintain a certain number of divisions on the southern battle-front, and he would be able to attack the Arras front with troops he would not employ south of the Somme.

Questioned as to why the French army was not taking advantage of their present situation for a counter-offensive on the south-eastern line of the battle-front, General Maurice pointed out that the French troops were brought up in a great hurry in the middle of a severe battle; that they consequently had to travel very light, and without a large amount of their artillery; and that they had been put into the line with the main object of consolidating it. The object which General Foch had in view was, not to make any counter-offensive until the line had been stabilised, which had now been done.

2. The Director of Military Operations was questioned as to the present strength of the Turkish army. General Maurice stated that it was divided into two groups, one of which was in the Caucasus and one in Palestine, with about four weak Turkish divisions on the Tigris. On the Euphrates there had never been more than one division, which had practically ceased to exist.
3. With regard to our present position in Palestine, it was pointed out that, according to the latest information, the British troops had advanced to Amman, where the railway line had been cut; that a retirement had been made on Es Salt; and that the troops were moving back to the Jordan.

The opinion was expressed that it would be very unfortunate if the British troops withdrew west of the Jordan, as, in that case, an impression would be spread among the Arabs that the British forces had been compelled to withdraw, and that the British movement towards Amman had been ineffectual.

The Director of Military Operations pointed out that General Allenby had always said that he did not intend to do more than to make a raid on Amman, but that, in order that the situation in this area might be clearly ascertained, a telegram had been despatched the previous day asking for the necessary information.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Director of Military Operations to report the answer of the General Officer Commanding in Chief, Egypt, as soon as it was received.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 3, 1918.
The Western Front:

Aerial Operations, March 21–April 2 inclusive.

1. GENERAL TRENCHARD stated the following figures as to the Royal Air Force work during the recent battle. He said that 319 tons of bombs had been dropped between the 19th March and the 1st April; over 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition had been fired on ground targets; 244 enemy aeroplanes had been destroyed and 122 driven down out of control; 366 machines and 283 pilots had been sent from England to the Expeditionary Force since the 21st March, making a total of 689 for the month. In addition to this, two new squadrons had been sent out: 437 British machines had been wrecked on our side of the line, and 113 of our machines were missing. General Trenchard explained that the large number of machines wrecked was owing to the amount of low flying taking place, also that such low flying machines got badly shot about. He estimated that roughly 300 out of these 437 machines could be repaired. He added that the casualties had been heavy, primarily
due to machine-gun fire from the ground; 210 pilots had been killed, wounded, or missing, and 105 observers killed, wounded, or missing. General Trenchard stated that, except in the case of one squadron, and that only for one day, all the squadrons in France during the battle had been up to strength both in pilots and in machines. As regards the enemy aircraft on the battle-front, General Trenchard stated that it was estimated that there were 666 German machines on the 18th March and 888 on the 2nd April. This latter estimate was made on the assumption that the enemy’s units were maintained at full strength, but, from information received, it was known that in many cases the enemy had not been able to maintain the full authorised establishment by replacing casualties. General Trenchard stated that the majority of the Royal Air Force equipment was removed from the aerodromes which had to be evacuated, and that temporary aerodromes had been erected in sufficient numbers to enable all the squadrons to operate. General Trenchard added that there was a feeling at the Front that we had attained definite supremacy in the air on the battle-front, and that our men were doing far more work in the air than was being carried out by the Germans.

The War Cabinet informed General Trenchard that they considered his statement a very gratifying one, which was entirely borne out by what the Prime Minister had heard at the Front in this respect.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 320, Minute 10, it was brought to the notice of the War Cabinet that certain cases had arisen in which the Director-General of Lands felt that he was unable to give his approval to the acquisition of arable land for Naval and Military purposes.

The War Cabinet requested—

General Smuts to decide, on their behalf, in any such cases that might arise.

3. The Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that a seaplane had bombed an enemy submarine north of Dunkirk with apparently successful results, wreckage afterwards appearing on the surface.

4. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that the Germans were making an attack on the French in the vicinity of Montdidier.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that General Allenby was falling back to the west of the Jordan, but was holding the bridgeheads over the same.

6. With reference to the recent operations on the Euphrates (see War Cabinet 378, Minute 4), the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that over 5,000 prisoners had been taken.

Further, the Prime Minister added that when he had seen General Pershing on the previous day, the latter had stated that he
had not received any information up to the present from America as to the latest arrangements that had been arrived at between the two Governments, although he was quite willing to co-operate in the fullest possible manner.

The War Cabinet decided that——

The War Office should prepare a telegram urging the American Government to concentrate all their efforts in sending across American infantry and machine-gun units, and transmit such telegram as soon as possible to the Foreign Office for despatch.

8. The Secretary of State for War informed the War Cabinet that he was calling for a full report on the recent reverse sustained by the Vth Army in France. The heads of the inquiry had already been drawn up.

9. The War Cabinet had before them a document embodying the agreement reached at Beauvais on the 3rd April, 1918 (Paper I.C.—55) (Appendix).

The War Cabinet ratified this agreement.

10. The Secretary of State for War raised the question of the withdrawal of released soldiers and Army Reserve Munition Workers from civil life.

He asked for the approval of the War Cabinet in regard to——

(a.) Munition firms, other than those already circularised, employing released soldiers and Army Reserve Munition Workers, being approached to send men in certain specified occupations, in which dilution or substitution was possible, to be medically boarded and categorised;

(b.) Bringing Admiralty firms in line with firms under the Ministry of Munitions.*

The War Cabinet gave their approval on both these points.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W., April 5, 1918.

* Note by the First Lord of the Admiralty.—The First Lord of the Admiralty asks that he may reserve his assent pending his consideration of the effect of the decision on Admiralty output. No representative of the Admiralty was summoned for the discussion of this subject, nor was it mentioned on the Agenda.
APPENDIX.

I.O.-55.

CO-ORDINATION OF ALLIED OPERATIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

AGREEMENT REACHED AT BEAUVAIS, APRIL 3, 1918.

French Text.

LE Général Foch est chargé par les Gouvernements britannique, français et américain de coordonner l'action des armées alliées sur le front occidental. Il lui est conféré à cet effet tous les pouvoirs nécessaires en vue d'une réalisation effective. Dans ce but, les Gouvernements britannique, français et américain confient au Général Foch la direction stratégique des opérations militaires. Les commandants en chef des armées britannique, française et américaine exercent dans sa plénitude la conduite tactique de leur armée. Chaque commandant en chef aura le droit d'en appeler à son Gouvernement si, dans son opinion, son armée se trouve mise en danger par toute instruction reçue du Général Foch.

Signed by the following:—

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE. M. CLEMENCEAU. General PERSHING.
Field-Marshal Sir D. HAIG. General FOCH. General BLISS.
General Sir H. WILSON. General PETAIN.

English Text.

General Foch is charged by the British, French, and American Governments with the co-ordination of the action of the Allied armies on the Western front. To this end all powers necessary to secure effective realisation are conferred on him. The British, French, and American Governments for this purpose entrust to General Foch the strategic direction of military operations. The Commanders-in-Chief of the British, French, and American armies have full control of the tactical employment of their forces. Each Commander-in-Chief will have the right of appeal to his Government if, in his opinion, the safety of his army is compromised by any order received from General Foch.

Signed by the following:—

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE. M. CLEMENCEAU. General PERSHING.
Field-Marshal Sir D. HAIG. General FOCH. General BLISS.
General Sir H. WILSON. General PETAIN.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, April 5, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:

The PRIME MINISTER (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. the VISCOUNT MILNER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.C.

The following were also present:—

The Right Hon. A. J. BALFOUR, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to end).

The Right Hon. the EARL OF DERRY, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 1 to 16).


Lieutenant-General Sir C. F. N. MACREADY, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., Adjutant-General to the Forces (for Minutes 8 to 16).

The Right Hon. W. S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minutes 8 to end).

The Right Hon. Sir A. C. GEDDES, K.C.B., M.P., Minister of National Service (for Minutes 8 to end).

Sir J. SEYMOUR LLOYD, K.B.E., C.M.G., Ministry of National Service (for Minutes 8 to 16).

Mr. A. C. T. BEECH, M.P., Ministry of National Service (for Minutes 8 to 16).

The Right Hon. W. HAYES FISHER, M.P., President Local Government Board (for Minutes 8 to 16).

Sir HORACE C. MONRO, K.C.B., Permanent Secretary, Local Government Board (for Minutes 8 to 16).

Mr. I. G. GIBSON, Local Government Board (for Minutes 8 to 16).

Rear-Admiral G. P. W. HOPE, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 6).

Vice-Admiral Sir H. L. HEATH, K.C.B., M.V.O., Second Sea Lord (for Minutes 8 to 11).

The Right Hon. T. J. MACNAMARA, LL.D., M.P., Financial Secretary, Admiralty (for Minutes 8 to 11).

The Right Hon. Sir G. CAVE, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minutes 8 to end).

The Right Hon. H. E. DUCKE, K.C., M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland (for Minutes 8 to end).

Sir J. M. Dodds, K.C.B., Under-Secretary for Scotland (for Minutes 8 to 16).

Mr. P. J. Rose, Scottish Office (for Minutes 8 to 16).

The Right Hon. Sir A. STANLEY, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (for Minutes 8 to 16).

The Right Hon. G. H. ROBERTS, M.P., Minister of Labour (for Minutes 8 to 16).

The Right Hon. C. ADDISON, L.L.D., M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction (for Minutes 8 to end).

Mr. W. M. GRAHAM HARRISON, Treasury (for Minutes 8 to 16).

Professor W. G. S. ADAMS (for Minutes 16, 17 to-end).

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.

Mr. THOMAS JONES, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. WILSON, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. BUNNOS, Assistant Secretary.
The Western Front:  
German Attack.

1. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the Germans yesterday morning made a heavy attack between Albert and Moreuil, the weight of the attack being to the south of the Somme. The enemy had driven us from Hamel and the Bois de Vaire, and our line immediately south of the Somme ran approximately west of Hamel, west of Bois de Vaire, east of Villers-Bretonneux, to Hangard, where we joined the French. Reports indicated that the French had given ground between Moreuil and Mailly Raineval. It was stated that the Amiens-Paris railway was the enemy’s objective. 20 German divisions had been employed in the attack, of which 0 were fresh. A total of between 87 and 92 German divisions had so far, been identified. The enemy was carrying out the process of thinning his line, so that he had now 20 fresh divisions in reserve. The roulement had not yet started. In the recent attack the Germans had employed 12 divisions against 4½ French divisions, although the French had ample divisions in this region, which would, no doubt, be employed in the most suitable manner, the probable nature of which was indicated by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. On the British front 8 German divisions had been engaged.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there was an enemy concentration between Albert and Bucquoy, and heavy artillery fire was going on in this neighbourhood; 7 fresh German divisions had been located north of Arras.

Loss of H.M.S. “Bittern.”

2. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that an old destroyer, His Majesty’s ship “Bittern,” was sunk on the previous night, 24 miles from Berry Head, as the result of a collision with the steamship “Kenilworth.” No trace of the vessel had been found, and no boats or survivors had so far been picked up.

Sinking of Russian Warships.

3. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated, in answer to a question, that no confirmation had been received by the Admiralty of the report in the press that the Russians had sunk some of their warships in the Baltic.

Co-ordination of Allied Operations on the Western Front.

4. With reference to War Cabinet, 382, Minute 9, the War Cabinet had before them a telegram (Paper G.T.—4135) from M. Clemenceau, dated the 3rd April, 1918, in which he suggested that the Beauvais Agreement should be extended in order to allow the Allied forces in Italy to come under General Foch’s command. The War Cabinet decided that—

The Prime Minister should reply to M. Clemenceau in the sense that, for the present, we thought it inadvisable to burden General Foch with the additional responsibilities of the Italian front, and that the matter should be left for the present to the Supreme War Council at Versailles.

Anti-Recruiting Strikes.

5. Mr. Barnes drew the attention of the War Cabinet to a memorandum (Paper G.T.—4112) circulated by Sir Auckland Geddes, in which he proposed to enlist in the army the strikers of military age in any anti-recruiting strikes that might occur. Mr. Barnes was of the opinion that the responsibility for such action was too great to be left in the hands of one man, especially as the labour situation at the moment was extraordinarily good, and any hasty action in dealing with anti-recruiting strikes might result in disturbing the labour peace which at present exists.
The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to telegram No. 1406, dated the 4th April, 1918, from Lord Reading, in which he stated that only ships enough to carry 21,000 United States troops during the month of April had been notified to the Shipping Department in the United States, instead of ships enough to carry 60,000 troops, as agreed to by us.

It was pointed out, however, that the matter had been adjusted by the Director of Transports, and that arrangements had already been made for the transportation of the agreed number of American troops to Europe during the month of April.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to communicate with the Director of Transports and obtain from him the information necessary to reply to Lord Reading, and to reassure the latter on the point raised in his telegram.

With reference to War Cabinet 303, Minute 16, the attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to statements in the press on the subject of the erection of a great National War Museum. It was pointed out that the report of Lord Crawford’s Committee had not yet been discussed by the War Cabinet.

With reference to War Cabinet 377, Minute 11, the War Cabinet had under consideration the draft of a Bill to make further provision with respect to service in His Majesty’s forces during the present war (Paper G.T.-4124 (Appendix, attached)), together with the report of the Committee (Paper G.-291), and memoranda by Dr. Addison (Paper G.T.-4118) and Mr. Duke (Paper G.T.-4133).

The Age Limit. With reference to the age limit, it was suggested that the limit of age provided for in section 1 (1), sub-section (a), might give rise to considerable opposition in the House of Commons.

The Minister of National Service regarded this provision as very essential, pointing out that there were certain classes of men whom it would probably be necessary to call up up to the age of 55. These classes included members of the medical profession and skilled personnel, such as mechanics. He pointed out also that he ought to have the power to call up large numbers of men, even if only temporarily, to meet any great and immediate national emergency. He agreed that men between the ages of 50 and 55 would rarely, if ever, be used for fighting purposes, but, at the same time, it was necessary for him to have the power to complete labour units, especially as indentured labour might not be re-engaged.

A suggestion was put forward that men of the ages between 50 and 55 should be called up according to classes.

Sir Auckland Geddes did not consider that this was either advisable or practicable. He stated that sub-clause (b) would give to the Ministry of National Service the power of distribution of doctors, and that they would be able to allocate them to the districts where their services were most urgently required. Under this scheme the interests of public health would be watched over by the President of the Local Government Board, and the interests of individuals by the National Health Insurance Commissioners.

The general opinion was expressed that, at the present moment, this clause would be well received in the House of Commons.

The War Cabinet approved clause 1, sub-section (1), (a) and (b).
10. The Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet a letter he had received from the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which the Archbishop stated that he could assure the War Cabinet that the clergy were ready to answer to any call which might be made upon them.

Sir George Cave said he had seen the Archbishop, and received a similar personal assurance.

The Secretary of State for War was of opinion that sub-clause (2), which applied to ministers of religious denominations, should be so altered as to render them liable to perform any prescribed work of a non-combatant character.

The proposal was agreed to.

The War Cabinet decided—

To omit the words following “service” in line 10, page 2.

11. The Home Secretary stated that sub-section (3) had been inserted in clause 1 to enable a man to be transferred to the Navy if required.

The Second Sea Lord stated that the opinion of the Admiralty was that any method of conscripting the Naval Forces would be most inadvisable.

The War Cabinet decided that—

Sub-section (3) of clause 1 should be deleted.

12. With reference to the proposal in section 5 (1) that males from 17 to 18 years of age shall be required to perform service in the Volunteer Force, it was pointed out that it had been ascertained that there was great objection to this proposal, and that the value of such military service gained by service in the Volunteer Force would not be equal to the loss which would be incurred in the industrial life of the country. It was suggested that it might be useful to organise a voluntary movement among lads below 18 years of age for joining the Volunteers.

The War Cabinet decided that—

This clause should be deleted from the Draft Bill.

13. Sir Auckland Geddes laid before the War Cabinet the following alternative to clause 2, as printed in the Draft Bill:

(1.) His Majesty may by Proclamation, declaring that a national emergency has arisen, direct that any certificates of exemption from military service granted or renewed to any class or body of men specified in the Proclamation, or to men of any class or description so specified, shall as from a date specified in the Proclamation, or if no date is so specified as from the date on which the Proclamation is made, cease to have effect, and all certificates to which the Proclamation applies shall cease to have effect accordingly.

(2.) While any such Proclamation remains in force, no application shall be entertained for the grant or renewal of any certificate to which the Proclamation applies or for the grant or renewal of any certificate to which the Proclamation would have applied if the certificate had been in existence at the date when the Proclamation took effect.

(3.) In this section the expression “certificates of exemption from military service” means any certificates granted or
renewed under the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, or this Act, and any certificates of exemption granted or renewed to men who have voluntarily attested, notwithstanding that such certificates have no statutory force.

He pointed out that the power which would be used in the first instance would be that which had been given to the Ministry of National Service under the Military Service Act, 1918, by which means it would be possible to call up younger men first. He stated that he would be satisfied with the power given him under section 2 of the Draft Bill. To illustrate the need of such powers, he instanced the case of the miners, who had been de-certified, and who ought to have been reporting this week, but who were now lodging applications with the Tribunals for exemption.

The War Cabinet agreed to the insertion in the Bill of the alternative clause as set out above.

Section 3.

14. Sir Auckland Geddes brought forward the following new sub-section to be added to clause 3:

It is hereby declared that if any question arises in any legal proceedings under the Reserve Forces Acts, 1882 to 1907, or any orders or regulations made thereunder, whether any certificate of exemption has been withdrawn either under the Military Service Act, 1918, or this Act, the Court may require the holder of the certificate to give evidence on the question, and, if satisfactory evidence is not given to the contrary, the certificate shall be deemed to have been so withdrawn.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The new sub-section should be added to clause 3, as set out above.

Power to call up Men for Medical Examination.

15. Sir Auckland Geddes proposed that the following sub-clause, with reference to the power to call up men for medical examination, should be added at the end of section 3 of the Draft Bill:

The Director-General of National Service may at any time require any person who, by virtue of the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, or this Act, is deemed to have been transferred to the reserve, or who, having voluntarily enlisted, has been so transferred, notwithstanding that he is the holder of a certificate of exemption from military service, or that he is a person in respect of whom an application for such certificate has been made, to present himself for medical examination or re-examination.

The War Cabinet decided—

To add at the end of section 3 the sub-clause quoted above.

Application of the Bill (Compulsory Military Service) to Ireland.

The Constitution of Tribunals in Great Britain and Ireland.

[1365—383]
the inevitable result. Mr. Duke was, however, of opinion that the alternative for clause 4, which gave power by Order in Council to apply the Act to Ireland, could be made operative, provided that sub-section (2) of this clause remained as part of the Bill. He pointed out that, by means of this sub-clause, it would be possible to enlist at once some thousands of volunteers who had some military knowledge, and who had arms and leaders, and that, once this opposition was removed, the party which would be most strongly antagonistic to compulsory service in Ireland would disappear. He stated that at the present time the Government was unable to prevent the activities of these volunteers.

Considerable discussion took place as to the form of Tribunals which it would be most advisable to set up in Ireland, and it was generally agreed, first, that the system of Tribunals now in operation in Great Britain was inapplicable to Ireland, and, second, that it would be impossible to establish for Ireland a different system of Tribunals from that which existed in Great Britain.

Sir Auckland Geddes expressed the opinion that the great danger of making any change in England with regard to the constitution of Tribunals was that it would involve a break in the flow of men to the Colours, and that if the present system were maintained there would be at least the advantage of no break, but a continually rising curve in the number of men enlisted. He himself had originally desired the abolition of the Tribunals, and had only agreed to their retention for the above reason.

The opinion was very strongly expressed that the system of Tribunals in England had proved very unsatisfactory, and that it had been largely due to the Tribunals as they exist at present that the flow of men to the Colours was very considerably delayed.

The Prime Minister suggested that it would be advisable if the Committee could meet again that afternoon, in order to come to some agreement as to a common system of Tribunals which should be set up for Great Britain and for Ireland, observing that, in his opinion, it was essential that the same rules as regards the constitution of Tribunals must apply in both countries. He pointed out that the question of the Army and the Navy was a matter entirely for the Imperial Parliament, and would not be within the jurisdiction of any Home Rule Parliament which might be brought into existence.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The alternative for clause 4, as set out in the Draft Bill, applying to Ireland the Bill to make further provision in respect to service in His Majesty's Forces, should be incorporated into the Bill, subject to the setting up of Tribunals on similar lines for Great Britain and Ireland; the latter question to be discussed that afternoon by the Committee appointed by War Cabinet 377, Minute 11, and a Report laid before the War Cabinet on the following morning.

17. In connection with the application of the amendment of the Military Service Acts to Ireland, the War Cabinet had under consideration the question of the introduction in the House of Commons of a Home Rule Bill for Ireland.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the War Cabinet was bound to the Irish Convention by the letter written by him to Sir Horace Plunkett (G.T.-4139). He urged that, in view of the pledges which had been given on the subject of Home Rule, a Bill granting self-government to Ireland must be introduced at the same time as the amended Military Service Bill, for, if this were not done, it would be stated, and rightly so, that the pledges given on this subject had not been redeemed. He further pointed out that he himself, many of those who at the present time supported the
Government in the House of Commons, and the whole of the Labour Party, could not countenance the introduction of a Bill for compulsory military service in Ireland without at the same time submitting to the House of Commons a Home Rule Bill. He was also of opinion that the United States of America would view with the greatest disfavour a proposal to apply conscription to Ireland without Home Rule.

It was generally agreed that it was essential that both measures should be submitted to Parliament at the same time, but Mr. Bonar Law expressed the opinion that, if there were not substantial agreement in the Report which was to be presented by the Irish Convention, the War Cabinet would be faced with the grave difficulty arising out of the pledge given by the Prime Minister to Ulster that Ulster should not be coerced.

The Prime Minister stated that he had been considering this matter very carefully, and his inclination was to inform Parliament that the Government would undertake to carry through a Bill which would represent substantial agreement by the Irish Convention, or, if substantial agreement had not been arrived at, a measure on the lines of the letter which he had written to Sir Horace Plunkett, with the approval of the War Cabinet, for submission to the Convention.

The question arose as to whether considerable delay would not ensue in the application of the Military Service Act to Ireland if it were intended to carry through Parliament a measure of Home Rule before compulsory service could be applied. The opinion was expressed that such a measure could not be passed in all its stages through both Houses of Parliament in much less than five or six weeks, and doubt was expressed as to whether so great a delay was compatible with military necessities.

In view of the possibility that a measure of Home Rule, proposed by the Government, but not based on the substantial agreement of the Irish Convention, might be opposed by all sections of Irishmen in the House of Commons, the question was discussed as to whether the Military Service Act could then be applied to Ireland. It was agreed that, in this event, the Government would still ask for the approval of Parliament for the application of the Act to Ireland.

Mr. Barnes dissented, and stated that he would be no party to the application of conscription to Ireland unless Home Rule were passed.

The War Cabinet deferred the further consideration of this question until the following day.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 5, 1918.
APPENDIX.

G.T.-4124.

SERVICE IN HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES BILL.

ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES.

Clause.
1. Extension of obligation to military service.
2. Power by proclamation to withdraw certificates of exemption.
3. Provisions as to applications for certificates and as to tribunals.
5. Obligation of young men to serve in Volunteers.
6. Amendment of 7 and 8 Geo. 5. c. 26.
7. Short title, interpretation, and repeal.

SCHEDULES.

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SCHEDULES.
for the time being in force, whereby it is provided that any released or exchanged prisoners of war shall not serve in His Majesty’s Forces during the present war.

(5) All the provisions of the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, as amended by this Act, shall, so far as applicable, extend to men to whom this section applies in the same manner as to men to whom section one of the Military Service Act, 1916 (Session 2), applied.

2. In the case of imminent national danger or greater emergency it shall be lawful for His Majesty by proclamation to declare that any certificates of exemption from military service granted or renewed to any class or body of men specified in the proclamation, or to men of any class or description so specified shall, as from the date specified in the proclamation, cease to have effect, and that while the proclamation remains in force no application shall be entertained for the grant or renewal of any certificates to which the proclamation applies, or for the grant of any certificates to which the proclamation would have applied if they had been operative at the date when the proclamation was made.

In this section the expression “certificates of exemption from military service” means any certificates granted or renewed under the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, as amended by this Act, and any certificates of exemption granted or renewed to men who have voluntarily attested, notwithstanding that such certificates have no statutory force.

3. The power of His Majesty under paragraph five of the Second Schedule to the Military Service Act, 1916, by Order in Council to make regulations shall include power, notwithstanding anything in the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, to make regulations for any of the following purposes:

(a) For determining the grounds on which and the tribunals to which applications for the grant or renewal of certificates of exemption or any particular class of such applications may be made:

(b) For determining the powers of tribunals and the rights of appeal:

(c) For establishing special tribunals for dealing with particular classes of cases:

(d) For authorising the appointment of additional members or the removal of members of tribunals, and for altering the areas for which tribunals may act, and for the constitution of tribunals in any such altered areas:

(e) For providing for any other matters for which it may be necessary to make provision in order to secure the expeditious disposal of applications by tribunals.

4. If any person with a view to preventing or postponing—

(a) The calling up of himself or any other person for any form of naval or military service or for any medical examination as to his fitness thereof; or

(b) The operation of any notice duly given for the purpose;

or otherwise in connection with any proceedings before any tribunal established under the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, as amended by this Act, makes or connives at the making of any statement, whether oral or in writing, which is false or misleading in any material particular, he shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months with or without hard labour.

4. His Majesty may by Order in Council extend this Act to Ireland, and this Act if so extended shall, subject to such modifications and adaptations as may be made by the Order for the purpose of making it applicable to Ireland, have effect accordingly.

(2) If any male British subject in Ireland who has attained the age of eighteen years takes part in any manner, at any time after the passing of this Act, in any military exercises, movements, or drill promoted by or conducted in connection with any organisation or body formed for or having as one of its objects the practice of such exercises, movements, or drill, he shall as from the prescribed day be deemed to have
been duly enlisted in His Majesty's regular forces for general service with the colours or in the reserve and to have been forthwith transferred to the reserve, and the provisions of this Act shall subject to such necessary modifications and adaptations as may be prescribed apply to him in like manner as if he had been a man to whom subsection 1 of section one of this Act applies.

5.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, every male British subject for the time being in the United Kingdom [Great Britain] who has attained the age of 17 years but has not attained the age of 18 years, shall be liable to perform such service in the Volunteer Force as may be prescribed.

(2) Nothing in this section shall apply to any man who is for the time being within the exceptions specified in the First Schedule to this Act.

6. In the Military Service (Convention with Allied States) Act, 1917, for references to the Military Service Act, 1916, and to the Military Service Acts, 1916 and 1917, there shall be substituted references to the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, and this Act, and that Act shall apply accordingly.

7.—(1) This Act may be cited as the Military Service (No. 2) Act, 1918, and shall be construed as one with the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918.

(2) In this Act the expression “prescribed” means “prescribed” by Order in Council.

(3) The enactments specified in the Second Schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent mentioned in the third column of that schedule:

Provided that, without prejudice to the general application of section thirty-eight of the Interpretation Act, 1889, with regard to the effect of repeals, the repeal of the said Acts shall not affect any obligation whatsoever incurred by any man to whom section one of the Military Service Act, 1916, or section one of the Military Service Act, 1916 (Session 2), applied.

Schedules.

First Schedule.

EXCEPTIONS.

1. Men ordinarily resident in His Majesty's Dominions abroad.
2. Members of His Majesty's regular or reserve forces, or of the forces raised by the Governments of His Majesty's Dominions, and members of the Territorial Force who are liable for foreign service.
3. Men serving in the Navy, the Royal Marines, or the Air Force.
4. Men who hold a certificate of exemption under the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, as amended by this Act, for the time being in force, other than a certificate of exemption from combatant service only.

Second Schedule.

ENACTMENTS REPEALED.

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WAR CABINET. 384.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Saturday, April 6, 1918, at 11 A.M.

Present:

The PRIME MINISTER (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. the VISCOUNT MILNER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

The following were also present:—


The Right Hon. the EARL OF DERBY, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.


The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.C.

Rear-Admiral G. P. W. HOPE, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 7).

The Right Hon. SIR A. C. GEDDES, K.C.B., M.P., Minister of National Service (for Minutes 8 to 10).

The Right Hon. SIR GEORGE CAVE, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. WILSON, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Mr. THOMAS JONES, Assistant Secretary.
1. ATTENTION was called to the statement in the German communiqué that a large number of prisoners had been captured on the Western front during the last day or two. It was pointed out that the War Cabinet had received no information on this subject, and that they were entitled to know the facts, whether the news was good or bad, and also whether the prisoners were British or French.

The Secretary of State for War stated that the number of missing which had been reported up to the present date was only 36,000. He realised that reports as to the numbers missing must necessarily be delayed in order to secure as exact information as possible.

Lord Derby undertook that the War Office should communicate with Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig and with the British Liaison Officers with the French Army on this subject.

2. In connection with the above discussion, attention was drawn to the incompleteness of the information which was received by the War Cabinet from official sources, as compared with the relatively full information given in the German communiqués and by the press. The fault appeared to lie rather with the Higher Command in France than with the War Office. It was pointed out that this lack of information greatly increased the difficulties which Ministers experienced in dealing with questions of this description in Parliament.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 367, Minute 3, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that two more German divisions had been moved to the Western front from Russia, making a total of 196 divisions present on this front. General Wilson also stated that four or five Landwehr divisions had been identified on the Western front.

4. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff indicated certain redistributions of Allied troops between the Western and Italian fronts which were under consideration.

The Prime Minister stated that the Italian Ambassador had visited him in order to urge that Italian divisions should take part in the present battle.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff should telegraph to General Foch in the sense that it would be advisable, if he approved, that some Italian divisions should co-operate with the Allied forces during the present fighting on the Western front.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that four Jäger battalions had been moved from Macedonia and had been located in Alsace, and that one German infantry regiment had moved from Macedonia to Palestine and had been identified at Amman. General Wilson pointed out that this movement would result in leaving only eight German battalions in Macedonia. With reference to the moral of the Greek troops in Macedonia, General Wilson said that he had received a good report of the Greek divisions, and had asked General Milne to furnish him with a further report on this question.
Submarines.

6. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that the periscope of a submarine was sighted by H.M.S. "Oberon" on the 4th April in the vicinity of Portland Bill. Four depth charges were dropped, and oil appeared on the surface.

H.M.S. "Edgar."

7. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that he had received a report to the effect that H.M.S. "Edgar" was torpedoed when forty miles off Malta. He said that this cruiser was fitted with a "blister," which was perforated and the hull damaged, but that the ship proceeded to Malta under her own steam, and had arrived there safely.

Amendment of the Military Service Acts;
The Constitution of Tribunals in Great Britain and Ireland.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 383, Minute 16, the War Cabinet had under consideration a Revised Draft of the Bill to make further provision with respect to military service during the present war.

The Home Secretary explained that the Bill, as now drafted, gave power to remodel existing tribunals without disturbing the whole system of tribunals as it existed to-day. All the machinery of the tribunals would still remain, but, with the power of nomination given under the Bill, the constitution of tribunals could be so adapted as to establish similar tribunals both for Great Britain and Ireland.

9. Questioned as to the number of men it was proposed to raise under the Bill, the Minister of National Service said that he had been in consultation with the Adjutant-General, and that 300,000 men were required by the end of June, not inclusive of the requirements of the Navy and the Royal Air Force.

It was pointed out that it was very desirable that the Government should be in a position to state to Parliament how many extra men, above the 420,000 already agreed upon for this year, would be enlisted under the provisions of the Bill.

Sir Auckland Geddes said that the answer to this question must necessarily depend on the authorisation which he received from the War Cabinet.

The Age-Limit.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 383, Minute 9, a further discussion arose on the question of the age-limit being raised to fifty-five, and it was stated that there would be considerable opposition to this proposal in the House of Commons, and that it was a matter for consideration—if it were not proposed at present—to call up men of the ages of from fifty to fifty-five, with the exception of members of the medical profession—whether sufficient military value would be gained to justify this proposal.

The Prime Minister said that he would consult his colleagues on the question, but pointed out that the main object of this Bill was to get in readiness an army for next year, and that it was most essential, in view of the certainty that the Germans would, during the autumn, use all their reserves available, that we should maintain our reserves at full strength.

The War Cabinet agreed to the Revised Draft of the Bill.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 6, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 385.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Saturday, April 6, 1918, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade.
The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions.
The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction.

Sir Edwin Cornwall, M.P., C.I.E., Chairman National Health Insurance Joint Committee.

The Right Hon. Lord Rothermere, Secretary of State for the Air Force.
The Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, LL.D., M.P., President, Board of Education.
The Right Hon. Sir A. Stanley, M.P., President, Board of Trade.
The Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Labour.

Captain the Hon. F. E. Guest, D.S.O., M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury.

Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

[1865—385] B
The Prime Minister said: I thought before assembling Parliament it would be well to summon the Ministers in charge of Departments, and who in peace time would ordinarily form the Cabinet, to hear what the War Cabinet means to submit to Parliament, and to have the views of our colleagues on these proposals before we come to final conclusions upon them.

Ministers know generally what has happened in France. There is a good deal which is not yet known as to the cause of the disaster in the initial stages of the great battle. Roughly speaking what happened was this: the Germans attacked the British army on a front of 50 miles—the biggest attack yet made. They attacked with gigantic forces, drawn, not only from their lines on the West, but from reserves accumulated from Russia and Italy. When the battle began the numbers of both sides were approximately equal with a slight superiority of the Allies over the whole line, a superior rifle strength of, perhaps, 100,000 on the whole front. With the Allies in this estimate are included some 48,000 Americans; the Belgians and Portuguese. If we leave these out then the British and French were approximately equal to the Germans. In guns we had a slight superiority. During the past two years the German forces were roughly in the proportion of 2 to our 3. At the point of the actual attack, the Germans were in overwhelming superiority. Probably when they attacked the Vth Army, they were between 2 and 3 to our 1. The offensive has always an advantage, and that is why in the initial stage of a battle the defending army is driven back.

When we were at Versailles in January last, we were advised that an attack would be made on us south of Arras with German forces of 95 divisions. This was a remarkable forecast, and the proposal made was to form a reserve of 30 divisions to counter the blow. There was a good deal of division of opinion as to where the blow would come.

The French and British Generals had come to the conclusion that there might be a three-fold attack, viz., at Cambrai, Champagne, and Verdun, and had made dispositions accordingly. There was nothing in the German preparations against this theory. Our reserves having been kept by us in readiness for this three-fold attack, there was considerable delay in bringing up the French reserves; in fact, after the attack General Péétain still believed that the Germans intended a big attack in Champagne, and he therefore kept back reserves there which ought to have been brought up. These reserves are now up, but there is a great difference between 3 days and a fortnight. By this delay the Germans gained enormously, and they gained also from the fact that there was not complete unity of command. Field-Marshal Haig was convinced that the full force of the attack was falling on him. General Péétain was not—hence the great bulge in our line.

General Foch had agreed with Sir Henry Wilson that the attack would be made at this point with 95 divisions. The forecast was justified. When the attack came the Germans were favoured by the weather. It was dry under foot and misty overhead, with the result that the Germans were in overwhelming numbers within 50 yards of our trenches before our men knew they were there at all. The Germans got in between our lines. There was great confusion. I cannot tell you what happened, nor can General Wilson tell me nor Field-Marshal Haig. I went over to France to find out, and came back knowing little more than when I went. It is, perhaps, almost inevitable: no one General can overlook a whole army. The telephone lines were cut, and there was widespread chaos. A great many things require explanation, e.g., whether the bridges over the Somme were destroyed, whether and why the Germans were allowed to cross the Somme without opposition. We should have held the line of the Somme for some time before reinforcements came up. It was unfortunate that General Gough was in command of the Vth Army, in spite of the representations of Sir William Robertson and Sir Henry Wilson. The Government have since taken the responsibility of recalling him. I think Ministers ought to know these things.

Ultimately Lord Milner went over to Compiegne, and subsequently to a Conference at Doullens on the 26th March to represent the War Cabinet. Up to that hour General Péétain still believed an attack would take place in Champagne. He changed his mind sometime between Monday and Tuesday (25th and 26th March), but between the previous Thursday and Tuesday there had been the loss of vital time. It was decided at the Conference, with the full consent of the Generals, that General Foch should be appointed to co-ordinate the efforts of both armies. The fact that we were two armies and not one meant that on a vital part of the line—Somme to Moreuil—it was not clear for days who was in command of it. That shows what lack of unity has meant to us. A good deal of this is, perhaps, inevitable when two armies are fighting.
together. No doubt the Germans and Austrians suffered from a lack of unity on the
Eastern front, and the Russians took full advantage of it. I hope, at least, that the
evil has been cured on our front. The 9th Army has practically disappeared. There
are only some remnants of it still in the line.

Mr. Churchill: There is a lot of salvage being rescued.

The Prime Minister: As an army it has disappeared. Out of 13 divisions only
2 are in the line, the others are being refitted. That severe loss is one reason for the
great demand for man-power which we must put forward. It is very difficult to know
the extent of our losses. According to Field-Marshal Haig, they have been 130,000,
including casualties of all kinds. That figure is quite incompatible with the German
story. I understood, when in France, that between 80,000 and 90,000 had passed
through our casualty clearing stations; that would leave only between 30,000 and
40,000 to be accounted for, and that would include the dead and the wounded in the
hands of the Germans. Such figures are quite incompatible with the German claim
of 90,000 prisoners, unless the French had lost 60,000, which they have not. Either
the Germans are inventing these losses or we have not yet heard the full toll of our
casualties. We are, at any rate, confronted with a serious man-power problem. The
experience of the last two or three years shows that our casualties are between 70,000
and 80,000 a month. It looks as if we should have to make up in two or three weeks
losses, which under previous conditions would have allowed us two or three months.

We are sending to France all the men we possibly can to repair the broken divi­sions. When the battle began there were between 80,000 and 90,000 men on leave in
this country. We had to send them back together with fresh drafts. Under normal
conditions, before this battle, we sent across the Channel every day some 6,000 or
7,000 men; since the battle we have sent up to as many as 32,000 on a single day. Up
to the 4th April we had carried 190,000.

Mr. Herbert Fisher: Have any of our transport been attacked by submarines?

The Prime Minister: Not a single transport has been lost; the work of the navy
has been splendid. Ministers will remember we gave a pledge that only in a grave
emergency would we send overseas boys under 19. We feel the emergency has arisen,
and have decided to send boys of 18½ to France.

There has been considerable delay in recruiting miners and engineers, and in
spite of the Local Government Board's faith in tribunals, appeals mean delay and
the first thing the 50,000 miners released for military service have done is to put
in applications to tribunals. To meet the drain on the pool we have to do two things.
(1) To call up more men—they cannot possibly mature before August and September,
the best perhaps will be ready in August, and we have to get through until August.
I believe the Germans mean to fight this battle right through to victory or defeat.
It is going to be a battle not of weeks but of months. The nation with the largest
number of reserves to throw in when the other is exhausted is likely to be victorious
unless there is some unforeseen military disaster. We have to bridge the chasm
between now and August. The drain on our reservoir of men will be beyond any­
thing ever anticipated. (2) We must draw on America. I do not know to what
extent the facts ought to be told to the House of Commons. The Americans had
undertaken to have 17½ divisions in France by March; she had in fact 4 divisions
with 2 displacement divisions for draft. When the battle began she had one division
in the line. An American division is 13,000 as against 10,000 British (including
the pioneer battalion). The failure of the Americans to come up to time had a
serious effect on the plans of the Allies. These plans, it is true, were based not on
the complete fulfilment of the American promise, but we did think that the Americans
would have had from 10 to 12 divisions ready at the crucial time. The first thing
we did was to appeal to General Pershing and Mr. Baker to put 4 divisions into the
line. They are now in—one of them in the fighting line. I am told they have
fought well. There is no prospect of further divisions being ready for this battle.
The Americans have called up a million men. We appealed to President Wilson,
through Lord Reading, to send us 300,000 infantry, and offered to provide half
the transport if they were sent at the rate of 120,000 a month. We told the President
that this decisive battle might be over without the American Army being in it. We
have heard from Lord Reading that President Wilson has agreed to send over
120,000 men per month in April, May, June, and July, making 480,000 in all. This
means that he will call up another half a million men. A good many of these have
been trained for months, and may be put into the line in a fortnight after their
arrival. It is the fashion of professional soldiers to look down on colonial soldiers and territorials and on these Americans, but I am convinced that these citizen soldiers from the States will do well.

(At this stage Lord Derby read the communique of the press which had just been received from General Headquarters.)

Sir A. Stanley: Do you think these American soldiers will really arrive?

The Prime Minister: I think so. I have asked Lord Reading to step outside his ambassadorial functions and to satisfy himself that every possible step is being taken to fulfil the President's pledge. I believe the American public is now thoroughly awake to the situation, and the American press is asking questions. We are sending one of our best transport experts from the Ministry of Shipping to New York and also an officer from the Adjutant-General's Department.

We can only have these Americans on the understanding that they are lent to us. They cannot be permanently incorporated into our army. General Pershing can take them out and form American divisions. We cannot therefore bank on them, and when General Pershing takes them out we shall have to fill the gaps. The American drafts will be exhausted by August because the fighting will be heavy and continuous. We ought, therefore, to be ready to put our men in then so as to hold on until the winter or until the Germans say they have had enough. I decline to contemplate the other contingency.

Sir Maurice Hankey reminds me that we have lost heavily in guns—950 guns.

Mr. Churchill: Only 60 of them heavy.

The Prime Minister: But we have lost many medium guns and many howitzers.

The Ministry of Munitions went into this matter at once and reported that not merely could we replace the lost guns, but we could replace them twice over, and as to ammunition we had a very adequate supply.

Mr. Churchill: One very good firm has doubled its output since the battle began.

The Prime Minister: We must raise hundreds of thousands of men more than we contemplated, because we cannot take any risks in this matter. I know it is a very serious thing to do, because we have already gone to very great lengths. It is clear that certain industries must not be touched. Shipbuilding must on no account be interfered with—it must remain in the foremost position among protected industries, for without more ships neither we nor our Allies can carry on the war.

Sir George Cave has presided over a Committee which has framed a series of man-power proposals, and the Bill embodying these will be circulated to Ministers immediately copies are received from the printer.

I come now to a highly controversial question which has caused great perplexity to the Cabinet—the question whether conscription should be extended to Ireland. No doubt if you do extend it there will be trouble, perhaps bloodshed. We may have the same experience as Sir Robert Borden in Quebec, but that is not conclusive. I will state the considerations which have weighed with me in coming to a decision.

Even if Home Rule were carried to-morrow, the army and navy would be under the control of the Imperial Parliament. The claim has never been put forward by any Irish Party that the army and navy and the defence of the Realm are local matters. In the second place, I do not believe it possible in this country to tear industry about, to break up single businesses, to take fathers of 45 and upwards from their homes to fight the battles of a Catholic nationality on the Continent without deep resentment at the spectacle of sturdy young Catholics in Ireland spending their time in increasing the difficulties of this country by drilling and by compelling us to keep troops in Ireland. I do not know any grounds of justice or equity on which conscription could not be applied to Ireland... I cannot think of any Liberal doctrine and I do not think there is any Unionist doctrine which would justify the application of conscription to this country and not to Ireland. We have shown indulgence to Ireland, perhaps wise and reasonable indulgence, in the hope that Ireland would become reconciled to her Imperial associations. We have now decided that we cannot apply these drastic, far-reaching, and devastating proposals to England, Scotland, and Wales without applying conscription to Ireland, where there is not even a rationing system. We cannot go to the House of Commons and ask our
people to make sacrifices, sacrifices which the Irish in America are making, and leave the Irish at home out. I think we ought to accord to Ireland the same rights as Irishmen are enjoying in America. Whether it is right or wrong during the war to touch Home Rule is another question. The late and the present Government took the other view, and I think they were right. No one thought when the pledge not to touch Home Rule was given that the war would last four years. We set up a Convention. The Convention have agreed to a Report by a majority of 44 to 29. It is a remarkable result. Catholic Bishops and Ulstermen and Sinn-Feniers are together in the minority, while moderate Nationalists and Southern Unionists are together in a majority with Anglican Bishops. It is a very moderate Report. The Sinn-Fein demand is for the control of Customs, otherwise they would have agreed with the majority, and so would the Catholic Bishops.

Mr. Churchill: But they would have found some other grievance then.

The Prime Minister: We agreed that we could not concede the control of Customs, because if later on a federal system were set up for the United Kingdom we could not have separate Customs barriers between the four countries. The whole tendency of the age is against the multiplication of Customs barriers. This I pointed out to the Bishop of Raphoe, when he urged that no self-respecting nation could hold up its head without the control of Customs. I quoted the example of Bavaria, which has an army and a king, but no Customs, and so with Saxony and Württemberg.

Lord Robert Cecil: And Luxemburg.

The Prime Minister: I cannot help thinking that the Ulster position at the Convention was this; they would not commit themselves definitely to anything, because their experience has been that, when they have assented to anything, it has always been made the basis for fresh and bigger demand upon them. If I am right in my diagnosis, I think it means that, subject to the safeguards laid down in the letter of the War Cabinet to Sir Horace Plunkett, they will be prepared to accept the Convention Report. In that letter the question of Customs is postponed until after the war, and the Imperial Parliament of that day would be asked to adjudicate upon it in the light of the circumstances then obtaining. I do not believe that the Imperial Parliament will concede separate Customs. The Irish Nationalist Party has accepted a method of election which secures a strong minority in the Irish Parliament, chosen largely on a property basis, and I think the Nationalists have agreed to this because they fear to hand over the government of their country to the wilder elements in Ireland.

Our proposal is to bring in a Conscription Bill, which will include Ireland, but which will provide for the application of conscription to Ireland by Order in Council. We propose to bring in simultaneously our Home Rule Bill, put it through Parliament, and then immediately apply the Military Service Act. American troops are coming in. We shall then have to draw on British drafts in the first instance. If you do not introduce conscription until the Home Rule Bill is through, then the Irish will resist Home Rule. We must not give them that incentive to reject Home Rule. It will take time to put conscription into force in Ireland. We have not the machinery; we shall have to improvise a register, with the aid of the police. There is no reason why the preparation of the necessary machinery should be delayed. (In reply to Lord Robert Cecil.) We will not undertake to postpone the application of conscription until the Home Rule Bill is through.

Lord Curzon: We must stand or fall by both.

Mr. Bonar Law: How would you justify to the House of Commons delaying conscription? You can say, as the Prime Minister has just said, that time is required for machinery, but it must be made plain that the two Bills are not contingent.

Lord Robert Cecil: You will have to say the postponement is in connection with Home Rule.

The Prime Minister: I would say it will take time, and that time we mean to use to put through the Home Rule Bill.

Lord Robert Cecil: You will have to indicate that both will have to be worked together.
Lord Milner: It is our intention to proceed with conscription even if the Home Rule Bill is generally opposed.

Dr. Addison: We can say, “You are getting the right of self-government, you must do your share to defend your liberties.”

Mr. Bonar Law: Suppose we start with trying to force both Bills through, and then find that Members of all kinds are opposed to the Home Rule Bill, how can you possibly carry it through?

The Prime Minister: It is not necessary to decide that to-day. Why should we on Tuesday anticipate that the Irish will refuse Home Rule, when we have just had the Report of the Convention? It is absurd to decide what we can do before the crisis arises.

Mr. Churchill: The two measures should be regarded as independent, and be simultaneously introduced. I do not see the advantage of delaying the application of the Military Service Act to Ireland. The dual policy should be loyally followed. I would press forward on the two roads. There is a great deal to be said against any delay in action once conscription is announced.

Mr. Barnes: You have in the Bill a clause which would deal with the Sinn Feiners who are now drilling. That can be applied at once. I cannot assent to apply conscription willy-nilly without any guarantee of Home Rule. I shall have to reserve the right to reconsider the position later.

Lord Robert Cecil: I do not know what the Cabinet’s scheme of Home Rule is. Many of my Unionist colleagues are in the same position. I am anxious to get conscription through in Ireland, and am prepared to pay a high price to obtain men in this emergency.

The Prime Minister: I can only say, in a general way, that our scheme will proceed on the lines of the Cabinet letter, with safeguards for Ulster in the shape of an Ulster Committee.

(The Secretary was instructed to circulate to Ministers a copy of the Cabinet’s letter to Sir Horace Plunkett.)

Mr. Bonar Law: You do not ask your colleagues to commit themselves to-day to the form of the Home Rule Bill.

The Prime Minister: That would be hardly fair.

Mr. Herbert Fisher: Has not the Government given a pledge to proceed if there was substantial agreement at the Convention?

The Prime Minister: I do not think you can say that 44 to 29 is substantial agreement. We are now going on the other line: that, failing substantial agreement, the Government will produce a Bill, and in that Bill we must make provision for Ulster.

Mr. Bonar Law: It is absurd to ask Ministers to commit themselves now.

Mr. Churchill: That is a hard saying. The enforcing of conscription on Ireland is a rupturing of political associations, and involves a complete new orientation of antagonisms, and therefore it is folly not to see how grave that decision is. I could not agree to that unless our Unionist friends come with us on the other measure, which profoundly affects opinion here, in Ireland, and in the United States. It is hard that we should commit ourselves to conscription unless we can count on cordial agreement among our Unionist colleagues that they will go forward in support of Home Rule with equal energy.

Dr. Addison expressed concurrence with what Mr. Churchill had said.

The Prime Minister: That is the policy of the Government. The Cabinet have agreed to a definite plan.

Mr. Bonar Law: But the letter gives no definite plan.

The Prime Minister: Unless we follow the lines of the Cabinet letter and the Cabinet agreement, then I cannot put forward conscription for Ireland on Tuesday.

Mr. Bonar Law: It depends upon the form in which the principles of the letter are put in the Bill.
Lord Curzon: We have accepted the broad principles of the letter, and our colleagues are entitled to see the letter.

Mr. Bonar Law: It must depend upon whether the Bill carries out the principles of the letter.

The Prime Minister: That is a different matter.

Lord Milner: I am prepared to accept such a Home Rule Bill as conforms generally to the proposals put forward in the Prime Minister's letter to the Convention. It is very hard for us to support such a Bill if Ulster opposes it, but I am prepared to do that and to put forward every effort in support of the Home Rule Bill, but I am not prepared to abandon conscription even if we completely fail with the Home Rule Bill.

Mr. Barnes: Why not put both in one basket? I am voting for conscription because I am thereby hoping to get Home Rule. If not, I shall have to reconsider my position.

Lord Robert Cecil: If I vote for Home Rule it is because I hope thereby to get conscription.

Mr. Barnes: If we fail, we can go to the country.

The Prime Minister: We could not do that. The Government can go if we fail.

Lord Derby: We must stake our existence on passing both Bills.

Mr. Herbert Fisher: Are you definitely satisfied that there is a military advantage in applying conscription to Ireland? I feel absolutely with you as to the bad effect on English public opinion of continuing to exempt Ireland; but we should look at it as a cold military proposition. English public opinion is sound. Our artisans will do their duty. You have to decide whether it is worth your while to enforce conscription in Ireland and thereby perhaps obtain disaffected elements for your army.

Lord Derby: They will be distributed through the army.

The Prime Minister: That is the one consideration that chiefly worried me. Is it worth while, in a military sense? You will get 50,000, at any rate, at a minimum, who will fight. These five divisions will be made up of excellent material, of young men up to 25, at a time when we are taking old men.

Mr. Churchill: I have not met one soldier in France who does not think we shall get good fighting material from Ireland. I think the decision of the War Cabinet is a battlefield decision, but a wise one.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W. 1.
April 6, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 386.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, April 8, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M G.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.


Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord.


Captain E. Abraham, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burges, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front: Transfer of German Divisions.

1. With reference to War Cabinet 384, Minute 3, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that two more German divisions had arrived from Russia, making a total of 197 or 198, in all, on the Western front.

The Italian Front.

2. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that one additional Austrian division had been identified on the Italian front between the Asiago Plateau and the Piave. This division had also come from Russia.

Co-operation of the United States of America.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 382, Minute 7, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that General Hutchinson had just returned from an interview with General Pershing, and reported that the latter's attitude towards the incorporation of American
battalions in British divisions was unsatisfactory. It appeared that General Pershing was only willing to include the infantry of six American divisions with the British. After this contribution, General Pershing desired to proceed with his divisional formations.

It was pointed out, however, that no hint had been received from America that President Wilson meant to go back on the decision already arrived at with regard to the inclusion of American infantry in British divisions.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs undertook, after he had obtained the necessary information from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, to send a telegram to Lord Reading acquainting him with General Pershing's attitude, but at the same time informing him that no action was necessary if he was satisfied that American infantry and machine-gunners were being transported to Europe on the lines agreed upon.

4. The Secretary of State for War reported that a heavy bombardment had begun from the south of La Bassée Canal to the north of Armentières.

In answer to a question as to whether there was any evidence of concentration on this part of the line, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that there were thirty-five or forty German divisions in reserve at a considerable distance behind the line, but that it was impossible to tell in which direction they would be used.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff proposed that a senior British officer should be attached to General Foch's staff, and stated that he was in communication with General Foch on the subject.

6. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that a "P" boat had attacked an enemy submarine 12 miles south-west from Dungeness, and had either damaged or destroyed her.

7. The Deputy First Sea Lord read out a telegram which had been received from H.M.S. "Suffolk," which stated that three Japanese office employees were shot by robbers on the 4th April at Vladivostock. A member of the Siberian Government had asked the American Admiral if he would protect the Government if established at Vladivostock. The latter had refused. A further telegram from the same source, dated the 5th April, stated that the Japanese Admiral had landed an armed force on the morning of the 5th April to protect the Japanese, and that H.M.S. "Suffolk" had co-operated and was also landing a force. The Admiralty had telegraphed approving the action taken by H.M.S. "Suffolk."

8. The Deputy First Sea Lord read a telegram, received from the Naval Attaché at Petrograd, dated the 5th instant, which stated that a German force consisting of one Dreadnought, two cruisers, and many torpedo-boat-destroyers, had appeared off Hango on 3rd April, and had proceeded to land troops at Rossaro. The Russians had retired after blowing up four submarines and removing all rolling-stock. The Red Staff had informed the Naval Attaché that they could not withstand an organised force, but that they had sent large reinforcements to Ekness. The telegram further stated that the ice-breaker "Irmak," returning from Kronstadt, was driven back by gunfire from the ice-breaker "Parmo." This left the fleet without
an ice-breaker capable of taking large ships to Kronstadt. The telegram added that the destruction of British submarines commenced on 3rd April, but so far the Russian sailors had refused to destroy their ships owing to the amount of valuable loot on board. The Naval Attaché proposed to remain at his post until the fate of the ships in Helsingfors was decided.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 378, Minute 10, General Smuts drew attention to a notice which had appeared in the press with regard to a meeting of Ambassadors at Vologda, at which a resolution was passed against Allied intervention in Siberia, and a statement was made by the Japanese Ambassador to the effect that the actions of the Japanese Admiral at Vladivostock were taken without the responsibility of the Japanese Government.

10. The Secretary of State for War informed the War Cabinet that he had received a communication from the Adjutant-General drawing attention to a statement which had appeared in the "Times" of the 6th instant to the effect that lads under 19 years of age would not be used for service in the front line. The Adjutant-General hoped that no pledge of any kind would be given to this effect.

It was pointed out that the Government was quite free in this matter, as no pledge had been given beyond the promise that no lads under 19 would be used in the front line except in a case of national emergency. That emergency had now arisen.

11. The Secretary of State for War also informed the War Cabinet of a further communication he had received from the Adjutant-General with regard to the question of recruiting in Ireland, in which the Adjutant-General strongly urged that, if anything was to be done in that direction, the whole matter should be left in the hands of the Ministry of National Service and the War Office, and that questions relating thereto in Parliament should be answered by the Director-General of National Service, and by no other. He deprecated the interference of the Irish Executive in a matter of this kind.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 8, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 387.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, April 9, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.


The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Sutherland, KG, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:—


The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.


Major-General Sir F. B. Maurice, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence.

The Western Front: 1. THE Director of Military Operations informed the War Cabinet that the enemy, after a heavy bombardment on a front of 15,000 yards between La Bassee and Armentieres, had made an attack with four divisions. By the latest information it appeared that the enemy had only entered our front line at Fauquissart and La Cordonnerie Farm.

General Maurice stated that it appeared probable that the attack was of the nature of a demonstration only, as the front on which the attack was made was large for the force employed and was a very intricate one and strongly entrenched.
General Maurice explained on a map the new lines of defence that had been and were being made in rear of the British front. He stated that, from information received, the fighting on the Western front on the 7th instant was of a very severe nature, and it appeared that the Germans made a very determined attempt to get through, but were repulsed with very heavy losses. Since the attack, the Australian divisions had taken over the whole of that portion of the front and had captured Bouzencourt.

2. The Director of Military Operations informed the War Cabinet that information had been received from General Guillaumat to the effect that a peace propaganda was being carried out to a great extent amongst the Serbian officers on the Macedonian front, and that General Guillaumat took a serious view of such action.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 386, Minute 3, General Whigham informed the War Cabinet that he had just returned from France, where he had seen General Pershing in connection with the transport of American troops to France and their employment in British and French divisions. This was the meeting at which General Hutchinson had been present. General Pershing had stated that he had seen it mentioned that 120,000 men per month, composed of infantry and machine-gun units, were to be transported during the next four months to Europe, with a view to their incorporation, but that he did not know the basis on which these figures had been arrived at. Although Mr. Baker, who was present at the meeting, confirmed the views General Whigham had expressed, General Pershing had reverted to his original scheme of bringing the men across in divisions, and stated that he required guns and equipment for such divisions. Furthermore, General Pershing did not appear to visualise that any troops incorporated in British and French divisions would long remain there. He was further in favour of all replacement troops being at his disposal and not that of the Allies. As regards the agreement arrived at on the 27th March by the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council, to the effect that for the present only infantry and machine-gun units should be despatched from America, General Pershing had stated that he looked upon that agreement as only a temporary one, and subject to alteration. In reply to a question as to what number of troops the British might expect to receive, General Pershing had agreed that we should receive the 60,000 during April which come through England, after which he would reconsider the question. General Whigham said that he had gathered that General Bliss was in favour of carrying out the agreement, and that Mr. Baker, who had sailed for America the previous day, also agreed to the necessity for the maximum suitable American reinforcements being utilised in accordance with the Versailles Agreement. Summing up the attitude of General Pershing, General Whigham added that he had created in his mind the impression that General Pershing wanted to make a United States army instead of helping us during the critical summer months. Difficulties had also arisen as regards the training of the American Higher Command, but General Whigham had made suggestions which seemed acceptable to General Pershing, and had added that if, in original British divisions, American troops ultimately predominated, American commanders might be placed in command, and British guns and gunners placed at their disposal. Mr. Baker had been very helpful throughout the Conference.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informed the War Cabinet that he had seen General Hutchinson on this matter, and had despatched a telegram to Lord Reading setting out the situation.
as had been explained by General Whigham, and requesting Lord Reading to bring to the notice of the authorities at Washington the apparent difference of opinion between General Pershing, on the one side, and what we conceive to be the President’s policy, on the other. A paraphrase of the telegram appears in the Appendix.

 Vladivostock.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 386, Minute 7, the Deputy First Sea Lord reported that a telegram had been received from the Captain of H.M.S. “Suffolk,” dated the 8th April, saying that no armed force had been landed from the U.S.S. “Brooklyn,” and that Washington had not supported the view put forward by the American Admiral as to the use of force, if necessary, in the event of any attempt being made to send Allied stores away from Vladivostock. The telegram further stated that the Japanese Government had expressed themselves as ready to support the Japanese Admiral in the event of Bolshevist opposition. It further appeared that the Japanese Admiral had proposed to his Government the desirability of disarming the Red Guard, and encouraging the local authorities to form a strong militia for the purpose of adequately policing the town. The Captain of the “Suffolk” was of opinion, however, that the disarming of the Red Guard was impracticable without occupation, as it could not be carried out except by military intervention, and had added that it was essential to contemplate the possibility of active opposition by the Bolshevists by the arrival of reinforcements from Siberia, in which case a new situation would be created. It appeared that no disturbances had taken place at Vladivostock since the parties had landed.

Mr. Balfour stated that in this matter there were divergent views between the United States of America and ourselves, and that the former had not supported us. Our present action had been entirely of a local nature for the protection of British subjects in Vladivostock, and that the Japanese had only landed 200 men, and ourselves 50.

Lord Derby added that we had a battalion at Hong-Kong earmarked for Vladivostock in case its services were required there.

The Glycerine Position.

5. The War Cabinet had under consideration Paper G.T.-4032, by the Ministry of Munitions, on the Glycerine Position in 1918, and also a note by the Food Controller (Paper G.T.-4114).

Lord Curzon stated that he was agreeable, if so desired, to settle this matter on behalf of the War Cabinet, and the War Cabinet requested him to be good enough to do so.

Tobacco Stocks.

6. Lord Curzon further stated that he was willing to go into the question of the present position of tobacco stocks in this country (Paper G.T.-3988), and the question as to whether any restrictions should be placed on the consumption of the Naval and Military Forces at home and abroad, and the civil population in this country. The War Cabinet authorised—

Organisation of Government Offices.

7. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Paper G.T.-4142) as to enquiries into the organisation and staffing of Government Offices, which indicated that, in order to enable the Committee which had been appointed to consider this matter to make further progress, it was essential that they should be authorised to make investigations in the Depart-
Extra Accommodation for the Foreign Office.

The War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by Mr. Long (Paper G.T.-3890), a memorandum by Lord Robert Cecil (Paper G.T.-3941), and a memorandum by Lord Islington (Paper G.T.-3980) in connection with the provision of extra accommodation for the Foreign Office. It was mentioned that possibly an extension of the Foreign Office might be made by erecting temporary buildings on the Parade Ground in the vicinity of the Foreign Office.

The War Cabinet directed—

The Secretary to write to Lord Robert Cecil suggesting that he should state his requirements to the First Commissioner of Works and ask for any suggestions the latter might make to provide the requisite accommodation required by the Foreign Office.

Trade Relations of the United Kingdom within the Empire.

With reference to the First and Second Reports on Raw Materials (Paper G.T.-4015 and 4015A) by the Committee on Trade Relations of the United Kingdom within the Empire, the War Cabinet decided that—

Subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, copies of these reports should be sent to the several Dominions as soon as possible by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Development and Supply of Tanks.

With reference to a memorandum by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Paper G.T.-3966) relative to the development and supply of tanks, General Maurice stated that the whole question hinged on the supply of men, and that quite apart from the men required for manning additional tanks, there was a minimum of man-power required for holding the trenches, and we were not at present getting that minimum; consequently, there were no men available for tanks.

It was mentioned that 45,000 men would be required for the new tank programme, and that South Africa, Canada, and New Zealand had expressed their willingness to assist in providing a certain amount of man-power to meet this number, but that probably no more than 2,000 would be obtained from these sources.

The War Cabinet felt that the question of the increased tank programme depended on the result of the Man-Power Bill which was to be introduced into Parliament that day, and decided that—

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff should again raise this question of the increased tank programme when the man-power situation was clearer.

The Food Situation.

As regards the food situation, Lord Milner informed the War Cabinet that he was going into the matter, and that the present position as regards supplies was much better than had been anticipated some few months ago. The consideration of the re-organisation of the Ministry of Food had not yet, however, reached such a stage that it could be brought before the War Cabinet.

Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 9, 1918.

* The items marked with an asterisk were only discussed very briefly and without the presence of the heads of Departments concerned.
A CONVERSATION took place in Paris on the 7th instant between General Hutchinson and General Pershing and Mr. Baker, the gist of which has somewhat alarmed us.

According to General Pershing, it has never been promised that United States infantry and machine-gun units should be transported during four months at the rate of 120,000 a month for incorporation in British and French divisions. All that he recognises is an agreement to transport during the month of April, in British vessels, 60,000 United States infantry and machine-gun units appertaining to the six divisions, these to be incorporated on arrival in British divisions. You will remember that, before the German offensive had begun or Mr. Lloyd George had appealed to President Wilson, this proposal was, in substance, agreed to.

It became apparent during the conversation that the view held by General Pershing is that these six American divisions should be only a very short time with British troops and then incorporated in the American army now in construction. His opinion apparently is that the infantry units from these six divisions should, on their withdrawal from the British divisions, be replaced by a similar number of men transported from the United States.

From the account of the interview, it is obvious that the views held by General Pershing are entirely opposed to those which, we understand, have been accepted by President Wilson. General Pershing will admit of no promise that during the next four months 480,000 American infantry and machine-gun units should be incorporated in British or French divisions and does not attempt to hide the fact that he disapproves of this policy; and herein lies the chief point of disagreement.

A less important point of difference is that the British Government does not approve of the policy of withdrawing American troops in British and French divisions until October or November, when the season, for active operation purposes, will be at an end.

Although loth to trouble President Wilson with any criticisms of his officers, the matter must be cleared up, as it is obvious that the widely-differing view held by General Pershing, on the one hand, and the President, on the other, is a fundamental one and bears on the result of this present battle, and, possibly, on the issue of the war.

The means by which our views can best and most expeditiously be impressed on the United States Government I leave entirely to your discretion, knowing that you fully realise the great importance of the matter.

General Bliss and Mr. Baker are, I believe, broadly speaking, of the same opinion as ourselves, and the latter, who attended the meeting between Generals Hutchinson and Pershing, is leaving France to-day for America.
WAR CABINET, 388.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, April 10, 1918, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The following were also present:


Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.


Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front: German Attack.

1. The Director of Military Operations stated that the attack made by the Germans on the previous day had, in the light of further information, turned out to be more important than had been at first thought, and that they had attacked with probably 8 divisions, and certainly with 5 which had actually been identified. The Portuguese put up a fight at the beginning, and then collapsed, with the result that a dangerous salient had been created between Armentières and La Bassée. It was certain that a number of guns had been lost, and that both Portuguese and British prisoners had been taken. At one time the enemy reached Givenchy, but had been driven out by our counter-attack, in which we took 750 prisoners. On the whole, the flanks had held well, and our line of defence was now the River Lys.
General Maurice continued that another attack had taken place this morning further north, to the east of Armentières and Messines, and that the enemy had got into our front system everywhere between the Lys and the Douve. Our reserves had been moved up, but an awkward salient existed for Bethune, which was very important, and also for Armentières. The whole of the attack that started to-day was carried out against the 11nd Army, under General Plumer, while nearly the whole of yesterday’s attack was against the 1st Army, under General Horne. Against the 11nd Army, the Germans had 8 fresh divisions in reserve.

At a later stage the War Cabinet were informed by General Maurice that the enemy who had obtained a footing on Messines Hill had been driven back. The enemy holds Ploegsteert Wood, but we hold Hill 63, which dominates the wood and Armentières. The situation is generally better, but we may have to evacuate Armentières. General Maurice stated that he was of opinion that we were approaching another crisis. The Germans were now entrenching hard between Noyon and Montdidier, and whilst holding us there, having drawn all our reserves down south, were throwing into the battle up north all their fresh troops against ours, who were tired and contained a number of young and inexperienced drafts. The weather was very much against us, being foggy, which rendered it impossible for us to take full advantage of our heavy gun and machine-gun defences.

General Maurice stated that Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, General Foch, and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff had had a conference at Montreuil, and that they had reached arrangements which the latter considered sufficiently satisfactory. He was leaving for Paris to interview M. Clemenceau.

The War Cabinet were not satisfied with the statement of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that the arrangements arrived at at Montreuil were “sufficiently satisfactory,” and it was suggested that it would be desirable that the Prime Minister should telegraph to the President of the Council urging that French reserves should be sent up to assist us, but it was felt that, before any action of this nature was taken, it was advisable to hear from General Wilson as to the result of his conference with M. Clemenceau to-day, which the Director of Military Operations undertook to communicate to the Prime Minister.

The War Cabinet were further of opinion that it was essential that a member of the Cabinet should, during this crisis, be on the spot in France, and they therefore asked—

Lord Milner to hold himself in readiness to proceed to France at an early date.

Transfer of German Divisions.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 386, Minute 1, the Director of Military Operations reported that a further German division, brought from Russia, had been identified on the Western front, making 199 in all. The highest estimate of the total number of German divisions that could be concentrated against us on the Western front was 220, although other estimates put the number at 205.

Comparison of Allied and Enemy Forces.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 371, Minute 2, in reply to questions, the Director of Military Operations gave some particulars as to the relative strengths of the Allied and enemy armies at the present time on the Western front. Reckoned-in divisions,
the enemy had 199 divisions compared with our 167. Assuming the enemy casualties to be about 200,000, they would now have 1,370,000 infantry. The 6 or 7 divisions which had been brought across from Russia since the beginning of the battle might be regarded as compensating for their casualties.

On the Allied side, the French had brought in 2 divisions, and we had brought in 1, but 5 of ours, and the Portuguese division, had been knocked out, which reduced the Allied rifle strength to 1,450,000.

The Director of Military Operations was of opinion that the enemy, in anticipation of this offensive, had prepared drafts to replace all casualties. They had 400,000 drafts available before the offensive started. In addition, it was possible for them to draw on their divisions in the East to the extent of 100,000 drafts. Moreover, the Germans had taken all their troops that were serving in Macedonia and in Italy, which proved conclusively that they were concentrating every ounce of strength on the present battle. Against this, the French had 250,000 in depots, and we had 200,000, including the men returning from leave. We had sent to France, since the 21st March, 1918, 110,000 infantry and 20,000 to 30,000 others, over and above the men returning from leave.

It was mentioned that, as regards the thinning of the divisions on the Russian front, this might be counter-balanced by 100,000 United States troops due to arrive shortly in France.

4. The Director of Military Operations stated that the General Staff were considering the advisability of withdrawing troops from Salonica, and would report to the War Cabinet on the matter later.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 384, Minute 1, Lord Derby reported that the estimated number of casualties, based on the roll-call, was 150,000, but the casualties which were definitely known to have been incurred from the 21st March to the 6th April were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>9,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>3,658</td>
<td>46,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing (including prisoners)</td>
<td>2,524</td>
<td>49,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,192</td>
<td>105,174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In connection with the wounded he wished to instance the remarkable returns from one hospital which had dealt with 5,000 cases, in which there had been only 8 deaths, 4 of which were from gas gangrene, and not one from tetanus. He added that the wounded were being evacuated to England as rapidly as was possible.

6. The Prime Minister read a telegram (Paper G.T.-4189) received from Mr. Duke, which indicated that de Valera was urging the Sinn Fein County Executive that it would be better for their policy if conscription came, when they could undertake systematic and violent opposition to its enforcement. He was advocating a policy of the stoppage of all transport work, and the shooting of the recruiting authorities, whether belonging to the Army or to the Royal Irish Constabulary.
It was pointed out that it would be desirable to make it clear to the dock labourers that if they went on strike their exemptions would be automatically cancelled, and that they would be absorbed into the Army.

The Secretary was directed to send a copy of the telegram to the Field-Marshal Commanding Home Defence, for communication to the military authorities in Ireland for such action as might be necessary.

Mr. Barnes and Lord Derby undertook to make enquiries as regards the situation at the various docks.

7. The War Cabinet had under consideration an Admiralty memorandum as to the form in which the losses and output of merchant tonnage should in future be published, and approved the proposals as set out in Paper G.T. 4174.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 10, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 389.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Thursday, April 11, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.C.

The following were also present:—


The Right Hon. LORD ROBERT CECIL, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade (for Minutes 12 and 13).

The Right Hon. SIR GEORGE CAVE, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minutes 8, 11, and 12).

The Right Hon. SIR A. STANLEY, M.P., President, Board of Trade (for Minutes 8, 11, and 12).

The Right Hon. SIR A. C. GEEDDES, K.C.B., M.P., Minister of National Service (for Minutes 8, 11, and 12).

Major P. LLOYD GREENE, M.C., Secretary, Ministry of National Service (for Minutes 8, 11, and 12).

The Right Hon. LORD ISLINGTON, G.C.M.G., Mr. E. F. WINTOUR, C.B., C.M.G., Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Food (for Minutes 14 and 15).

Mr. STANLEY LEATHES, Civil Service Commission (for Minutes 8, 11, and 12).

The following were also present:—

The Right Hon. EARL OF DERBY, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.

Major-General SIR F. B. MAURICE, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Operations (for Minutes 1 to 6).


Rear-Admiral G. P. W. HOPE, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 6).

The Right Hon. SIR J. MACLAY, Bart., Shipping Controller (for Minutes 8, 11, and 12).

The Right Hon. C. ADDISON, M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction (for Minute 11 and 12).

Mr. U. F. WENTEY, C.B., C.M.G., Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Food (for Minutes 11 and 12).

Mr. J. R. CLYNES, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Food (for Minutes 11 and 12).

The Right Hon. SIR A. MOND, Bart., M.P., First Commissioner of Works (for Minutes 14 and 15).

Lieutenant-Colonel SIR M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. WILSON, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Mr. THOMAS JONES, Assistant Secretary.

Captain CLEMENT JONES, Assistant Secretary.

Captain E. ABRAHAM, Assistant Secretary.
The Western Front: German Attack.

1. The Director of Military Operations reported that the Germans had attacked south of Armentières yesterday with 9 divisions. Three more of their divisions had actually been identified north of Armentières, and probably there were 5. Of the 12 divisions actually identified, 11 were fresh, and it might be assumed that all the reserves the enemy had on that front at the beginning of the battle had now been absorbed.

South of the Oise, on the French front, 3 more German divisions had been identified, making a total of 104 divisions actually known to have taken part in the battle, although the figure was probably higher.

Yesterday the enemy had attacked to the north of Messines, near Wytschaete, but they had been repulsed and checked. They had succeeded in getting into Messines, but had been unable to get out of it, and fighting was continuing to the western end of the village. The Germans had failed to take Hill 63, and they had made no material progress west of Ploegsteert. Last night we had withdrawn from Armentières. This place has been deluged with gas, first by the enemy, and now by us, until it is probably uninhabitable. South of Armentières, the Germans had taken Steenwerck, but it was hoped that we should retake it. Fighting was in progress at Estaires. South of Estaires the enemy had crossed the Lawe and entered Lestrem, on the way to Bethune. The enemy had developed a distinct flank, probably preliminary to an attack further south, towards Bethune. The enemy has good railway centres at Lille and Douai, and it was reasonable to suppose that he might abandon the southern attack on Arras in order to press us in the north.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 388, Minute 5, the Secretary of State for War reported the following casualties from the 21st March to the 7th April, 1918, excluding sick:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>10,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>3,934</td>
<td>50,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2,632</td>
<td>54,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,652</td>
<td>115,868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Palestine.

3. The Director of Military Operations reported that the Turks, with German assistance, had attacked our troops on the left centre of our line, north-west of Jerusalem. The front on which they had attacked was not wide, and their gain in ground was not material. It was expected that we should counter-attack.

In all probability the object of the Turks was either a reconnaissance to discover whether we were moving our troops away, or else an attempt to prevent us from moving them.

With regard to the German forces in that theatre, there were three German detachments called Pasha Divisions.

H.M.S. "Magic."

4. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that H.M.S. "Magic" had been mined or torpedoed at the entrance of Lough Swilly at 11.12 A.M. on the 10th April. She was reported to have reached harbour with her bows blown off, and 23 missing.

German Submarines off Monrovia.

5. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that a German submarine had appeared off Monrovia, and had compelled the Government to close down the wireless station and cable station under the threat of bombardment. Both stations are French.
6. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs asked whether the War Cabinet considered it desirable to send a complimentary telegram to the Portuguese Government, congratulating them upon the valour of their troops during the recent fighting.

The War Cabinet were of opinion that it would be well to await the arrival of Sir Henry Wilson, who was returning from France the same afternoon, and if he confirmed the reports as to the good fighting qualities which the Portuguese were said to have shown—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should send a congratulatory telegram to the Portuguese Government.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 387, Minute 6, the War Cabinet took note of Lord Curzon’s decision (Paper G.T.-4198) that the importation of tobacco, on the present level of 6,000 tons a month, should be maintained.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 352, Minute 9, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Ministry of Shipping, on the imperative necessity for increasing the strength of the Transport Workers’ Battalions (Paper G.T.-4188). In this memorandum it was pointed out that, although the War Cabinet had decided on the 22nd February—when the number of men in the battalions was 10,260—to increase the strength of the Transport Workers’ Battalions by 5,000 men, on the 5th April—six weeks after the date of the decision—the total strength of the battalions had diminished to 10,145. At the present moment there was an unsatisfied demand for 1,000 men for Liverpool, 1,300 men for Manchester, and 100 men for Millwall Docks.

Sir Joseph Maclay said that it had been decided that the fullest possible use was to be made of North-American liners for trooping purposes. In order to carry out this policy, the slower ships had been taken out of Liverpool, and the port had been cleared as far as possible for the big rush of American troops who were expected to arrive at the end of this month. Unless the Transport Workers’ Battalions were increased it would not be possible to handle the arriving ships without delay. It was hoped with additional labour to hurry up despatch and effect a saving of five days per voyage, owing to quicker turn-round, and this saving in tonnage would be equal to about 25,000 extra American troops per month.

Sir Auckland Geddes said that, while he was in agreement with the policy of increasing the Transport Workers’ Battalions, he thought it would be a waste of good material to use the recruits, who were now coming in at the rate of about 3,300 to 3,400 per day, for work on the docks. These recruits were mostly “A” men drawn from the miners and munition workers, and were wanted for the fighting units. He suggested, however, that men from the Agricultural Companies who were engaged upon work other than agriculture, should be taken for the Transport Workers’ Battalions.

The War Cabinet were impressed with the importance of getting these men for the docks in order to speed up the work and thereby increase the flow of American troops, and they therefore decided that—

The Secretary of State for War, the Minister of National Service, and the Minister of Shipping, should confer with a view to increasing the strength of the Transport Workers’ Battalions, and if they failed to come to a satisfactory conclusion the matter should be referred to Mr. Barnes.
9. With reference to War Cabinet 388, Minute 6, Mr. Barnes informed the War Cabinet that he had serious apprehensions with regard to the situation of affairs with reference to the proposal to apply the Military Service Act to Ireland. He had always understood that the policy of the War Cabinet was, firstly, to stand or fall by the two Bills, namely, the Military Service Bill and the proposed Home Rule Bill; and, secondly, that military service was only to be applied to Ireland after an interval during which a measure of Home Rule could be passed. On that understanding he had agreed to the course to be pursued by the Government, and he was very disappointed with the speech delivered by the Home Secretary in the House of Commons yesterday, a speech in favour of compulsory military service, pure and simple, and one which left out any mention of the subject of Home Rule. Mr. Barnes maintained that not only was this, in his opinion, not carrying out the intention of the War Cabinet, but that, in the absence of some definite steps being taken with regard to the question of Home Rule, it would be necessary for him to reconsider his position. Mr. Barnes suggested that it might be possible, in view of the present situation, for something to be done to obtain some agreement between the parties concerned, and that it was most essential that the representatives of Irish opinion should be informed that their present antagonistic attitude with regard to conscription was likely to prove most injurious to the prospects of the passage of any Home Rule Bill.

The Prime Minister suggested that too much importance should not be attached to the fact that, while the Military Service Bill was being debated in the House of Commons, there were few references to any proposed Home Rule Bill. Such references would naturally be out of order. In introducing the Military Service Bill the Prime Minister stated that he had made clear the position of the Government on this question, and that, while it was out of order for Ministers to repeat these statements during the passage of the Bill, yet he fully agreed that, if the Government were challenged on the subject by the Irish Party, it would be necessary for those challenges to be replied to. Mr. Lloyd George further informed the War Cabinet that he had that morning been in consultation with the Unionist Ministers of the Government, who were fully agreed that, in view of Labour, Liberal and American opinion, a very serious position would arise if the attention of the Government were centred only on the one Bill.

Mr. Barnes regretted that he had not had an opportunity of listening to the Prime Minister's speech in the House of Commons, and stated that, in his opinion, it was vital that, before the application of the Military Service Act to Ireland, the Home Rule Bill should have been put before the House of Commons. In his opinion there were two great dangers ahead: one, the danger of grave opposition, and the other, the danger that, if any attempt were made to enforce compulsory military service in Ireland in view of the strong feeling evinced by the Nationalists on this subject, the temper of the House of Commons would make the passage of any Home Rule Bill impossible. Mr. Barnes further pointed out that Lord Curzon had agreed that the Government was bound to both Bills, to which Lord Curzon agreed, with a proviso that it would be impossible to pass the Home Rule Bill in the face of the united opposition of all sections of the Irish Party.

Mr. Barnes stated that his colleagues agreed to that proviso, but that he himself could not forget the evidence which had been given before the War Cabinet, by responsible men, to the effect that conscription without Home Rule was out of the question. It was generally agreed that the Home Rule Bill should be prepared immediately, in order that, if possible, such a Bill should be laid before the House of Commons before the Military Service
Bill had passed its Third Reading. The opinion was also generally expressed that, while it would be of little use for the War Cabinet to approach the Nationalist Party with a view to the voluntary enlistment of sufficient men to meet the critical situation, yet representations by the Labour Party to the leaders of the Nationalist Party, who might be invited to forward proposals for the consideration of the War Cabinet, might be most valuable.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Prime Minister should be asked to appoint a Committee to draw up, as soon as possible, the details of a Home Rule Bill to be presented to the House of Commons.

10. The War Cabinet had before them the draft of a Bill to improve the existing organisation for affording information and advice to those who wish to emigrate from the British Isles, and to provide for the establishment and powers of a Central Emigration Authority, and for the supervision and control of passage-brokers’ and passage-brokers’ agents and Emigration Societies (Paper G.T.-4061 A), together with a covering memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Paper G.T.-4061).

The War Cabinet decided—

To ask the Minister of Reconstruction for his observations on the Bill.

11. The War Cabinet had under consideration memoranda dealing with the desirability of recalling civil servants from the colours, by the Minister of Reconstruction (Papers G.T.-2650 and 3872), and by the Food Controller (Paper G.T.-3937).

Dr. Addison said that he was finding it exceedingly difficult to obtain the services of highly expert men capable of taking charge of very important administrative work. His proposal was that a small number of civil servants, of approved qualifications and experience, now serving with the colours, should be recalled to civil life. The number he had in mind was not more than 20 or 30 men, none of whom should be in Grade 1, Class “A,” or under 30 years of age. He believed that one such good man would set free a number of juniors. There was at present considerable wastage and overlapping, which could be eliminated by the appointment of a quite small number of the ablest type of civil servants.

Mr. Clynes supported the representations of Dr. Addison, and urged the pressing needs of the Ministry of Food. That Ministry now employed about 4,000 persons, mainly on clerical duties. Of this number about 360 held responsible posts, and only some 66 of these were civil servants. He further emphasised the importance of retaining an adequate number of men to ensure the smooth working of the rationing system. The great food distributing houses had been denuded of their most capable men, and, as a result, were unable to do their work efficiently.

Mr. Wintour said that the Ministry of Food already employed large numbers of business men, but, in order to secure smooth working with other Departments and the most efficient use of the business men, a nucleus of civil servants was indispensable.

Sir Auckland Geddes said that there were at present 4,321 men under 31 years of age in the Civil Service, and there was certain to be considerable public criticism on account of the retention of these men. In his own Department, which employed some 20,000 persons, there were only 6 civil servants.

Lord Derby believed that men of the highly expert type which Dr. Addison wished to recall were almost certainly holding responsible posts in the army, and could, therefore, not be spared, especially at this juncture.
Lord Curzon suggested that there were three classes of civil servants upon which Departments could draw. There were retired civil servants from the home service, many of whom had great administrative experience; there were the retired civil servants from India; and, lastly, the younger civil servants from India who are on leave in this country. The last were young men of capacity and of energy. He recommended that the Departments should put themselves in touch with the India Office, in order to secure the services of such men.

The War Cabinet commended Lord Curzon's suggestion to the consideration of the Ministry of Food and other Government Departments.

12. The War Cabinet had before them a copy of a Minute from Lord Robert Cecil to Mr. Balfour, on the position of men of military age in Government offices (Paper G.T.-4088).

Lord Robert Cecil said that there was a small number of men of military age in the Foreign Office who wished to join the army, but who were not allowed to do so by the Department. It was extremely difficult for the Head of a Department to decide who was and who was not indispensable, and he therefore recommended the setting up of a Department Tribunal. This tribunal might be composed of some person like the Chief Clerk of the Office concerned, a representative of the Ministry of National Service, and an independent chairman.

Sir Auckland Geddes explained that there was already in existence machinery similar to that suggested by Lord Robert Cecil. It had been set up by the Ministry of National Service, and it had already dealt with the Ministry of Food, the Ministry of Munitions, and some other Departments. It had not dealt with men in khaki, but only with civilians.

The attention of the War Cabinet was called to the number of men of military age, in khaki, attached to some of the Government Departments at home, in the United States, and in Canada, and to the desirability of an investigation being made with a view to using as many as possible of such men in France.

Sir Joseph Maclay said that he was sure that good effects would result if men in khaki, employed in Offices, were made to wear civilian clothes.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Minister of National Service should extend his Departmental Tribunal machinery to all Government Departments, with any necessary adjustments.

(b.) The War Office, the Admiralty, and the Air Force should make a return to the War Cabinet of men in uniform engaged in non-combatant services at home and on foreign missions, who were physically sound.

13. The War Cabinet had before them a Minute by Lord Islington (Paper G.T.-4190) on the subject of passports for Indian Home Rule Delegates.

The case was briefly stated by the Acting-Secretary of State for India. The Government of India had granted passports to ten delegates in all. Five had started in March, and were now in the Mediterranean. The remaining five, including Mr. Tilak, were held up at Colombo, pending further directions from the Home Government. The passports had been originally granted by the Government of India when the India Office were in consultation with the Home Office and War Office, and therefore had no time to send...
instructions to the Government of India before the delegates left. On the 2nd April, however, the India Office had been informed that the War Cabinet had endorsed a memorandum by the General Staff recommending that “neither Tilak’s party nor any similar party should be allowed to leave India, and that those who had already left should, if possible, be stopped and sent back.” This decision created an embarrassing situation for the Government of India.

It was pointed out that the decision referred to was not a War Cabinet decision, but a decision on a point of urgency arrived at on behalf of the War Cabinet, by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in consultation with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, on the 2nd April, when there had been no Cabinet Meeting until the evening.

Various alternative solutions of the dilemma were discussed. Attention was drawn to the dual purpose of Mr. Tilak’s journey. He had received a passport to proceed to England as a delegate of the Home Rule party. He was also engaged in a libel action against Sir Valentine Chirol. This action was said to be ready for trial. Were he prevented from coming to England, he would represent his stoppage as a political manoeuvre of his opponent in the lawsuit.

It was agreed that, whatever decision the Cabinet took, trouble was bound to ensue. The question for determination was whether it was better to risk trouble in India or trouble at home. In this respect it was argued that Mr. Tilak could not cause more trouble in India than he had already caused; his presence in England, a fortiori in Ireland, would be mischievous in intention as well as in result. As a British subject, he could not be deported or interned; and, as other natives of India were allowed to attend meetings and address them, it would not be easy to deny him similar freedom. There remained no other remedy than prosecution, should he, as seemed most probable, deliberately court it. Further, it was pointed out that the Secretary of State for India had been for some months receiving deputations all over the peninsula, and hearing the views of every section of opinion in the country. There was, therefore, no political justification for the visit to England at this time of deputies from an extremist minority.

It was decided that—

The India Office should inform the Government of India that Mr. Tilak and his companions were not to proceed on their journey.

As to the five delegates already on route, the Cabinet were informed that orders had been sent to Gibraltar and Malta to stop them. The Cabinet approved of this action, and decided that—

The return of these delegates to India should be arranged.

14. With reference to War Cabinet 383, Minute 7, the War Cabinet had before them a report by Lord Crawford’s Committee (Paper G. T. 202) on the proposed Imperial War Museum.

Lord Crawford stated that the matter required careful and prolonged examination, and expressed the view that the present moment was, perhaps, not an opportune one. The First Commissioner of Works agreed with this view.

The War Cabinet adopted Lord Crawford’s suggestion to postpone consideration of the subject, and meanwhile authorised Sir Alfred Mond to continue collecting material.
15. Sir Alfred Mond drew attention to a statement in the press, incorrect in all details, to the effect that the Museum was to cost 1,000,000£, to be raised by public subscription, and that it would be situated in Hyde Park. He had been pressed to contradict this, and had, when approached by press representatives, said that the account referred to was incorrect, and that the scheme was being dealt with by a committee which would in due course report to the Cabinet.

It was pointed out that it was still alleged in the press that the Government had authorised the expenditure in principle, and that this was incorrect, and, if repeated, ought to be denied.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 11, 1918.
The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.


The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade.


Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.

Captain E. Abraham, Assistant Secretary.

Transport Workers' Battalions.

1. With reference to War Cabinet 389, Minute 8, the Secretary of State for War reported that arrangements had been made for the increase of the Transport Workers' battalions by 5,000 men, who would be with the battalions by Wednesday, the 17th instant.

The Western Front: German Attack.

2. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that 17 German divisions had been employed in the Hazebrouck battle against 10 British divisions and 1 Portuguese division; 5 of the 17 had now been withdrawn, which brought the number of "used" German divisions to 109.
3. With reference to War Cabinet 389, Minute 6, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that some of the Portuguese battalions were said to have fought well. In view, however, of the pressure being put by the Portuguese Government for the transport of further troops to France, it was thought advisable that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should not send the suggested telegram of congratulation.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 388, Minute 4, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that he had received a telegram from General Foch with regard to the suggestion that two divisions should be withdrawn from Salonica.

It was pointed out that this question was never referred to the Versailles Council for their views, but the War Cabinet merely requested the Director of Military Operations to consider the matter.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that he had already sent a reply to General Foch, saying that there was no question of withdrawing divisions from Salonica.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that, owing to the loss of anti-aircraft guns in France, the Master-General of the Ordnance had requested that any further guns produced at home might be sent to France. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said there was no question of taking away anti-aircraft guns already in position in this country, but all he asked was that the production for the moment should be diverted to France.

The War Cabinet decided that—

Subject to the consent of the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, Home Forces, the output of anti-aircraft guns should for the present be sent entirely to France.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 389, Minute 2, the Secretary of State for War reported the following casualties from the 21st March to 8th April, 1918, excluding sick:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>1,102</td>
<td>10,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>4,077</td>
<td>54,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2,673</td>
<td>59,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,852</td>
<td>124,531</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. With regard to the German losses, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff considered that the enemy had lost heavily in certain places, particularly where he had been foiled. General Wilson had the other day talked to General Cox, the Director of Military Intelligence in France, on the subject, who considered that the minimum estimate of German losses was 250,000 up to Monday, 8th April.

8. Mr. Bonar Law raised the question as to whether the House of Commons should be asked to pass a resolution of thanks to President Wilson for the way in which he had come to the assistance of the Allies in sending American troops to France.

The War Cabinet decided that—

This was not advisable at present, in view of the rather guarded attitude towards this matter recently displayed by President Wilson and the very full statements made by the Prime Minister and Lord Curzon in Parliament.
9. With reference to War Cabinet 383, Minute 10, the question was raised as to the desirability of extending the Man-Power Bill to ministers of religion. It was stated that strong opinion existed against enforcing this Clause in Ireland, and the question arose whether, if abandoned for Ireland, it should be left out in England also.

Mention was made of the precedent of France, but it was pointed out that France, as a State, was definitely non-religious, although including great numbers of religious people. It was stated that the general feeling in the House of Commons was probably that, if the Government insisted, they would pass this clause, but many strong supporters of the war would be much distressed.

The War Cabinet decided that—

This decision should be left in the hands of Sir George Cave and Sir Auckland Geddes, after hearing the views of the House.

10. The question was raised as to whether the Man-Power Bill would apply to Members of Parliament.

It was pointed out that the exemption of one member of Parliament had come up before a Tribunal some time ago, and the Tribunal had decided that being a Member of the House of Commons constituted work of national importance.

It was also stated that Mr. Beck, in the House of Commons yesterday, replied that Members of Parliament would be exempt from the new Bill.

The War Cabinet decided—

To adhere to their previous decision (War Cabinet 48, Minute 11).

11. With reference to War Cabinet 389, Minute 12 (I), the Secretary of State for War asked the approval of the War Cabinet to a proposal that commissioned officers employed in Government occupations should be taken out of uniform and be made to wear civilian clothes, in order to prevent the abuse of uniform for the purpose of evading active service.

It was pointed out that many valuable men now engaged in non-combatant work would refuse to remain in their appointments if ordered to wear mufti.

After the application of the proposal to several officers known to the War Cabinet had been discussed, the Secretary said that his own case was perhaps a case in point. He had been ordered to wear uniform at an early stage in the war, but, unless the War Cabinet, as the body controlling all the British resources engaged in the war, was regarded as a military body, the work he was performing might perhaps be deemed to be civilian work.

Lord Derby stated that the Secretary's case was different from those whom he proposed to prohibit from wearing uniform, as he was a Regular officer, and Lord Derby did not propose to make officers who held commissions in the Regulars or the Territorial Force wear mufti. He maintained that officers coming under these two categories were entitled to wear uniform.

The War Cabinet decided that—

Lord Derby's suggestion should be held over, pending the reports of the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Royal Air Force, of the number of men in uniform engaged in non-combatant services at home and on foreign missions, who were physically sound.
12. The First Sea Lord reported that the “P. 69” had attacked and probably sunk an enemy submarine south of the Ower Light vessel on the 10th instant.

13. With reference to War Cabinet 387, Minute 4, the First Sea Lord stated that a message had been received from H.M.S. “Suffolk,” that a Russian named Gorsky, with five others, had arrived at Vladivostock from Moscow with orders from the Lenin Government to spread Bolshevist propaganda among the crews of H.M.S. “Suffolk” and C.S.S. “Brooklyn.”

14. The First Sea Lord reported that H.M.S. “King Alfred” had been torpedoed on the 11th instant 30 miles from Malin Head, but that the vessel had managed to reach Belfast Lough, badly damaged.

15. With reference to War Cabinet 379, Minute 1, the First Sea Lord said that the steamship “Celtic” had been brought into harbour.

16. The First Sea Lord reported that a collision had occurred in the Adriatic between some French and Italian destroyers, with the result that an Italian destroyer had been sunk.

17. The War Cabinet had before them the following documents:

- Memorandum by General Knox, with covering note by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Paper G.T.-4156).
- Joint Note No. 20 to the Supreme War Council by its Military Representatives.
- Memorandum by General Pooie on British Occupation of Murmansk, with covering note by Lord Robert Cecil (Paper G.T.-4200).
- Minutes of Joint Meeting of the Military Representatives, Supreme War Council, and the Allied Naval Council, held at Versailles the 23rd March, 1918 (Paper G.T.-4137.)

At the suggestion of the First Lord of the Admiralty, the question of Murmansk was dealt with first. He stated that the Admiralty proposed to send another small cruiser there, and that an American cruiser was about to sail. What further action should be taken was a question to be decided in principle by the War Cabinet.

Lord Robert Cecil explained that the Finns apparently coveted the port and the adjoining coast, and that there was a threat of movement by the pro-German White Guards against the Murman railway. This movement created the emergency against which provision must be made. Should troops under German influence seize Kem, this would have disagreeable results for us in the White Sea.

In this connection a telegram from the Senior Naval Officer, Murmansk, was read. It gave an account of the defensive measures at present possible with the available forces at Murmansk, but indicated that a continuance of the thaw then prevailing would interrupt the Finnish operations. So far, the only definite information he had was of skirmishes between Finnish Red and White Guards west of Kandalaksha. The port of Murmansk, it was pointed out, was, if it could be assumed that Odessa was lost to Great Russia, the last ice-free port in her territory, giving access to the
open sea. If we attempted to save it from the White Guards, we could reasonably expect the goodwill of the Local as well as of the Central Soviets. In this respect our action should not be liable to the construction put on Japanese interference at Vladivostock, and the case could be treated in isolation from the general military policy to be adopted in the East. Sudden action, however, was to be deprecated, and Lord Robert Cecil undertook to send beforehand a full explanation of any action that might be decided on to Mr. Lockhart. As a military measure the defence of the approaches to Murmansk offered no great difficulties, and General Poole's memorandum (Paper G.T.-1200) indicated all that was required. He recommended an immediate landing, however, and this was more than could at present be consented to.

The War Cabinet decided that—

All preparations should be made by the Admiralty for the action recommended in the memorandum, so that the Senior Naval Officer at Murmansk should be able to cope with the emergency when it arose, and that, in the meantime, every effort should be made by the Foreign Office to obtain in anticipation the consent of the Bolshevik Government.

Archangel.

18. Attention was drawn to Joint Note 20, of the Military Representatives at Versailles on the subject of a military expedition to Archangel. Its conclusion was that the minimum requisite force was not available.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff pointed out that this was part of the general military problem in the East, which he urged must be regarded as a whole on the lines of his note (Paper G.T.-4156). The main necessity was to get the Japanese to move. This, Lord Robert Cecil observed, could not be done without American consent, which did not appear to be forthcoming, save on one condition, i.e., that intervention should be invited by the Russians themselves. As de facto the Government of Russia was Bolshevik, all that we could do at present was to urge M. Trotzki by every means in our power to see the problem as we saw it, and to help us to its solution. Though there might not be a great hope of success, no other course was open to us.

Attention was drawn to the unsatisfactory state of the Allied representation in Russia. The question of a British High Commissioner to co-ordinate the activities of the various Consulates and Missions was stated to be under consideration in the Foreign Office.

It was further agreed that a full review of the whole case had not as yet been placed before the American or the Russian Governments.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, should draft for their consideration a despatch to President Wilson, grouping all the isolated propositions and presenting a general scheme of policy for dealing with the Eastern situation, with a view to its subsequent presentation to M. Trotzki through Mr. Lockhart.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 12, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 391.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, April 15, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.
Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.
Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 7).
The Right Hon. Sir J. Maclay, Bart., Shipping Controller (for Minute 9).
The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade (for Minute 10).
Major-General Sir W. H. Birkbeck K.C.B., C.M.G., Director of Remounts (for Minute 9).

Captain E. Abraham, Assistant Secretary.
Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.

1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that Neuve-Eglise had been retaken by the Germans. Three more divisions had been put into the Lys battle by the enemy, making a total of twenty-four German divisions, and this increase in strength might be taken as an indication of a continuance of the struggle in that quarter. Three additional German divisions had also arrived near Montdidier.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 388, Minute 2, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that three more German divisions had arrived from Russia, making a total of 204 enemy divisions in all.
3. With regard to the disposition of the enemy divisions, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that twenty-four had been engaged in the Lys fighting, and ninety-eight on the Somme. Some of these divisions had been in action more than once, so there had been an equivalent of 186 in action against the British and the French, of which 150 had been against the British. The German plan therefore appeared to be to knock out the British divisions.

4. With regard to French assistance in the matter of moving up reserves to help the British, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there had been no inactivity on the part of the French; the failure of the French to come up in larger numbers was due, in his opinion, to the failure of the Allies at the outset of the battle to have a General Reserve on the Western front. Now the French were massing, but the enemy had already massed. The French were moving up as fast as the roads would allow, but there were only four roads available. Our concentration was much impeded by the fact that Amiens was under fire, which, although not preventing a few through trains, rendered impossible the proper working of the yards. With regard to new railway developments west of Amiens, a good report had been received from the Transportation Committee at Versailles.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 7, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs reported that information had been received from Madrid to the effect that the German and pro-German elements in that city were far from jubilant about the results so far achieved on the Western front. They admitted very heavy German losses, talking openly of 500,000 as the figure, and admitting privately to 600,000. Neither the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs nor the War Cabinet, however, attached credence to such numbers.

6. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that General Belin had succeeded General Weygand as Military Representative to the French Section of the Supreme War Council at Versailles. At the beginning of the war General Belin had served as General Joffre’s Chief of Staff.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 384, Minute 4, the Secretary of State for War reported that he had seen the Marquis Imperiali in regard to the movement of Italian divisions. Two picked Italian divisions were leaving for the Western front immediately after the four French divisions.

In this connection the Prime Minister read a telegram from Signor Orlando, expressing his desire to give help.

In view of the Prime Minister’s recent telegram to Italy, however, it was not considered necessary to send any further message on the subject.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 382, Minute 10, the Secretary of State for War again raised the question of the withdrawal of released soldiers and army reserve munition workers from munition firms and Admiralty firms.

In view of the fact that the First Lord of the Admiralty was not present, the War Cabinet withheld a decision on the subject, and asked—

Lord Derby to bring the matter up again when the First Lord was present.
9. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Lord Derby (Paper G.T.-4195) in regard to the shipment of remounts from America. In the memorandum it was pointed out that it had become necessary to resume the shipment of horses and mules from America at the rate of 8,000 monthly, commencing in May. These shipments had been stopped during the last two months, but, owing to the heavy losses which had occurred during the recent battle, the stocks of animals in the remount depots were very low, were insufficient for prospective needs, and required replenishing.

The Quarter-Master-General said that the number of animals in France had decreased from 458,000 to 400,000. As fully three months must elapse between the time horses sail from America and become fit for issue in France, it was necessary to make immediate arrangements.

The Prime Minister suggested that it might be possible, by some readjustment of the supply of horses in France behind the lines, to manage for the present without extra horses. General Whigham was at the moment investigating conditions behind the lines, and this question of the supply of horses might form part of that enquiry.

In view of the shortage of shipping and the desirability of using what shipping was available for American troops rather than for horses, the War Cabinet requested:

The Quarter-Master-General to have the need for additional horses examined by officers of his Department now in France. In the event of it being found that it was absolutely necessary to import more horses from America, the Quarter-Master-General should then see the Minister of Shipping on the subject again.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 18, a draft telegram to Lord Reading, prepared by Lord Robert Cecil (G.T.-4356), was considered.

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that Mr. Balfour had sent instructions to Mr. Lockhart to put certain definite proposals to M. Trotzki. In view of this, it might perhaps be unnecessary to forward a lengthy statement of the case to America. It was also questionable whether the passage referring to India was well adapted to appeal to American opinion.

The War Cabinet decided that the draft, as it stood, presented the case in the right way. It was, however, suggested that, in the last sentence, the desirability of the inclusion of American representative elements should be specially stressed. This, and such other alterations as might be necessary to adapt the message to present circumstances, were left to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who was authorised to despatch it to Lord Reading.

In this connection, telegram No. 89 from Mr. Lockhart, and telegram No. 351 from Tokyo, were referred to as encouraging.

11. Attention was drawn to a letter from Mr. Duke (Paper G.T.-4218) concerning the critical situation he anticipated in Ireland. After some discussion, it was decided that—

The Secretary should ask Mr. Duke to formulate definite proposals for the consideration of the War Cabinet.
12. The Prime Minister communicated to the War Cabinet a telegram just received from M. Clemenceau, expressing the French Premier's assent to conferring on General Foch the designation of "General-in-Chief of the Allied Armies in France."

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff was instructed to inform Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform the American, Belgian, and Portuguese Governments.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 15, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 392.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, April 16, 1918, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 2 to end).
The Right Hon. the Earl of Derry, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 2 to 10).
Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 10).
Brigadier-General P. P. de B. Radcliffe, D.S.O., Representing Director of Military Operations (for Minutes 1 to 10).
Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 10).
The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minute 9).
The Right Hon. W. Long, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (for Minutes 11 to end).
The Right Hon. Sir G. Cave, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minutes 11 to end).
The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction (for Minutes 11 to end).

Captain L. F. Burgis, Assistant Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
The Western Front: German Attack.

1. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that the Germans had launched very severe attacks at 6 o’clock the previous evening, on the front Wulveighem–Neuve–Eglise–Bailleul–Meteren, and had succeeded in capturing Bailleul and the Ravelberg Ridge. General Macdonogh stated that the enemy were now drawing close to the line of hills, and that, if further progress were made, we might probably have to retire from the northern portion of the front. He stated that the 28th French Division was arriving in the vicinity of Locre, and that the 133rd Division was at Fletre, in close support to our present front in that neighbourhood. There were also three French cavalry divisions in this portion of the battle area. Questioned as to whether any further reinforcements were coming, General Macdonogh replied that General Foch was of opinion that the present attack was not a genuine one, and that the real attack in the near future would take place to the south of Arras, between Miramont and the Ancre, where there was a concentration of trench mortars and the enemy were getting on with the railway communications and repairing more bridges over the rivers in that area.

Disposition of Enemy Divisions.

2. As regards the enemy offensive in the Lys area, the Director of Military Intelligence stated that the Germans had employed 25 divisions in their attack, whereas we had only been able to use 19 in the same area. Among the German divisions, 3 new divisions had been identified, namely, the 117th, the Alpine Corps (which had come from Italy), and the 11th Bavarian Division. General Macdonogh stated that the enemy had employed, in addition to the 26 divisions previously mentioned, 98 divisions on the Somme front, and that there were at present 57 German divisions in the front line in the Somme area, the length of the line being approximately 97 miles. They had 11 divisions in reserve on the whole front, of which 13 or 14 were on the British front. The total number of enemy divisions on the Western front was 204. Out of the 204 divisions, 124 had been engaged, of which 53 had twice been in action during the present offensive, and 10 thrice, making a total of 187 divisions engaged at various times. General Macdonogh added that we now had definite evidence that Austrian artillery was being employed on the Western front. General Badcliffe stated that the positions on the hills were very strong, and that the enemy would probably endeavour to turn the same. The advance made by the Germans yesterday might be said to have one advantage to us, inasmuch as it shortened our line by one mile.

Russia.

3. The Director of Military Intelligence indicated on a map the advance that the Germans had made in Russia, and pointed out that they were drawing near the Donetz coal basin, and were 17 miles east of Kharkof. The Germans now had in Russia 37 divisions.

The Cattegat.

4. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that a naval force had carried out a reconnaissance into the Cattegat and were now returning. He added that, from reports in the German Press, fighting had taken place, but, except for the fact that a wireless signal had been received that we had taken 111 prisoners, probably from enemy destroyers and trawlers, no further particulars were at present forthcoming.

Ireland.

5. The First Sea Lord reported that a German agent had landed from a submarine on the West Coast of Ireland and had been captured. After interrogation by the naval authorities, he had been
Withdrawal of Released Soldiers from Civil Life.

The Glycerine Position.

Anti-Submarine Coastal Patrols by Aeroplanes.

Poison Gas: Reply to the Geneva Red Cross Committee.

Casualties.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 384, Minute 8, Lord Derby stated that (the First Lord being present) he thought this was a matter which could be arranged between the First Lord and himself without troubling the War Cabinet on the subject.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 387, Minute 5, the War Cabinet had under consideration a note by Lord Curzon (Paper G.T.-4204) on the glycerine position, and took note of the action which Lord Curzon had taken in regard to the Ministry of Munitions making representations to the Treasury, urging that the necessary facilities might be given for the erection of fat-splitting plants in Ceylon and other suitable places.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 391, Minute 15, the War Cabinet had before them an Admiralty Memorandum (Paper G.T.-4213) on Anti-Submarine Coastal Patrols by Aeroplanes, and took note of the same.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 363, Minute 7, the War Cabinet had under consideration Papers G.T.-4077 and G.T.-4220, relative to the reply to the Geneva Red Cross Committee with regard to the use of asphyxiating gases, more particularly that portion which gave the proposed answer of the Allied Governments, as drawn up by the Military Representatives at Versailles, such representatives comprising French, Belgian, British, Italian, American, and Portuguese officials. Special reference was made to the clause which pointed out that, in dealing with the German Empire and its subordinates, no guarantee given by them would be likely to be kept, and that the possibility existed of the Germans being prepared to give a guarantee, with the result that we might cease our efforts in gas production only to find that the guarantee was broken and that we were again placed at a disadvantage in this respect. It was felt that, in asking for any guarantees in this matter, it should be clearly stated that such must be of an effective and unquestionable character.

Subject to this addition, the War Cabinet—

Approved the proposed answer as prepared by the Military Representatives at Versailles,

and requested—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform the Allied Governments and the British Minister at Berne accordingly.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 6, the Secretary of State for War reported the following casualties from the 21st March to 13th April, 1918, excluding sick:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>12,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>4,682</td>
<td>67,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2,817</td>
<td>68,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,709</td>
<td>148,445</td>
</tr>
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</table>
11. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 9, the Home Secretary asked for the instructions of the War Cabinet as to the statement which he should make on Clause 1 of the Man-Power Bill, in regard to any declaration by Order in Council. He stated that an amendment was to be proposed providing that a regulation or Order in Council should be laid on the Table, and that if within twenty-one days an address were presented to His Majesty by either House of Parliament against the enforcement of the Order it would then be annulled from the date of such address.

It was pointed out, on the one hand, that this procedure might lay the Government open to an accusation of weakness, as well as to the accusation that it was not the intention of the Government to carry the proposed legislation into effect. On the other hand, it was generally agreed that the House of Commons resented in all quarters giving the Government power to create machinery for the purpose of carrying into effect legislation over which the House had no control, and that it would obviously be difficult to resist any demand made by the House for such control.

Questioned as to whether this procedure would make any difference with regard to the feelings of Irishmen in respect of the application of the Act to Ireland, the Chief Secretary expressed the opinion that the Irish population would not consider any substantial concession had been made.

It was generally agreed, however, that the Parliamentary situation would be eased by this procedure. The War Cabinet agreed that—

The Home Secretary, when dealing with Section 1 of the Bill on the Report stage in the House of Commons, should state that an Order in Council under this Bill should be laid on the Table, and that if within fourteen days an address were presented by either House against the Order it should thenceforth be annulled, but that this provision should not extend to regulations.

12. With reference to War Cabinet 391, Minute 11, a general discussion took place on the application of the Military Service Bill to Ireland.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland read to the War Cabinet various reports which he had received on the position of affairs in Ireland. In a letter, the Head of the Royal Irish Constabulary stated that the situation was very grave; that the people of Ireland were united against conscription; that it had been reported to him that there were movements in force which implied that assistance could be expected from German sources. General Byrne had further stated that, in his opinion, the number of troops in Ireland was wholly inadequate, and that any attempt to enforce conscription without an adequate force must inevitably lead to failure. Another letter, from the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Police, said that both the Commissioner and General Byrne took a far more serious view of the situation than that which was taken by the military authorities. The Chief Commissioner had stated that he understood there were only 15,000 troops in Ireland, which number was quite inadequate; that all sections, and even some Unionists, were joined together in opposition to conscription; that, even given adequate military support, it would be almost impossible to enforce conscription, but that with only 15,000 troops it was out of the question. The letter further stated that, in the opinion of the writer, the introduction of no measure of Home Rule would assist. Mr. Duke also produced General Byrne's Weekly Report, giving particulars of meetings held in all parts of Ireland; of the formation of hospitals; of the enrolment of nurses; and of the seizure of arms in various districts. Mr. Duke further referred to the police reports from a number of counties, which fully bore out General Byrne's Report. Mr. Duke was of opinion that the Nationalist Members of Parliament intended
to abandon all Parliamentary action after the Third Reading of the Bill, and to go back to Ireland and make common cause with the Sinn Feiners. A meeting called by the Lord Mayor of Dublin had been postponed until after the Third Reading of the Bill, and at this meeting it was proposed to make preparations for the establishment of a revolutionary Provisional Government. There had also been a meeting on Sunday last at Belfast, held at the Custom House steps, at which the audience was composed of all sections, including Ulstermen, when the strongest possible protests were made against the enforcement of the Bill on Ireland.

The Prime Minister stated that the Government had come to a decision that it would stand or fall by the Bill, not only by putting it on the Statute Book, but also by enforcing it, and that the Government was definitely pledged to introduce and to enact a Home Rule Bill for Ireland. He further pointed out that, without doubt, the Military Service Bill would become an Act of Parliament by Thursday.

Questioned as to the views of the authorities in Ireland, Field-Marshal Lord French agreed that there were all too few troops in Ireland at the present time. He was, however, emphatic in his opinion that, if it were intended to carry conscription into effect with the number of troops available, the action which should be taken must be of an extremely drastic character. The strength of troops in Ireland at the present time consisted of 23 training battalions and 1 mobile division of cyclists numbering 5,000 men, whilst a brigade of cyclists, to the strength of 1,000, was being sent from Scotland. An additional force of several thousand cyclists was also available in England for immediate despatch in case of necessity.

It was pointed out that it was most undesirable that untrained men, who had just left civil employment, should be used to repress rebellions. The suggestion was made that some of the British Volunteers might be mobilised for the protection of railway bridges and other vulnerable points. In this connection General Smuts said that, in the case of the South African rebellion, large numbers of armed men had been found necessary for similar services.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies said that he was convinced that, if any rising were met promptly, it would be put down with much greater ease, and far less bloodshed, than if strong measures were not taken at the beginning. He was not in agreement with the belief, which apparently existed in the South of Ireland, that help could be expected from German sources, pointing out that the same assistance was expected during the Easter rebellion of 1910, and that it was incredible that such assistance could be given now.

The Prime Minister referred to the fact that President Lincoln had to face an exactly similar situation, but Mr. Duke pointed out that in the case of President Lincoln the population were supporting the President, while in this case the whole population of Ireland was united in opposition.

It was generally agreed that preliminary dispositions should be made at once in order to protect important strategical and tactical points, and to guard railways and bridges.

The War Cabinet requested Field-Marshal Lord French—

(a) To proceed to Ireland as soon as possible, to consult with the Commander-in-Chief and General Byrne as regards all necessary military arrangements to meet any contingency;

(b) To lay before the War Cabinet at the earliest opportunity a plan of the military steps which he proposed to take, if it were necessary to employ the assistance of the military, in order to enforce the Military Service Act on
Ireland. This plan should include a statement of his requirements (if any) for reinforcements, and suggestions as to whence these could best be obtained.

13. The War Cabinet proceeded to consider the statement which should be made in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister on the subject of the proposed Home Rule Bill for Ireland.

Attention was drawn to two telegrams, one from Lord Reading and one from Mr. Montgomery, with reference to American opinion on the subject of Home Rule and the proposed application of the Military Service Act to Ireland, both addressed to Colonel Murray.

The Prime Minister pointed out that to-day was the last opportunity which would offer for making any declaration on this question.

The opinion was expressed that it might be advisable that any statement on this subject should not be made in conjunction with the Military Service Bill, but should be postponed until the following day; but, while it was agreed that the two proposals could not be linked together, and that even the Nationalists Members of Parliament understood that there was no question of a bargain, it was considered advisable that a statement on this subject should be made on the Third Reading of the Bill. With reference to the form that the statement should take, and the opinion of Lord Reading, stated in his telegram, namely, that it would be necessary for the Government to declare its intention not only to stake its existence on the passing of a Home Rule Bill, but also of its intention to put such an Act into operation at once, the Prime Minister said that, not only was this the policy of the Government, but also that he had been in consultation with the representatives of the Labour Party, who were agreed that a declaration should be made on such lines. Mr. Lloyd George had enquired of the Labour representatives as to the attitude which they would take if all sections of the Irish were united in opposition to a Home Rule Bill, and he had been informed that it was their opinion that in that case the Government would be absolved from further obligations. It was, however, the general Liberal and Labour opinion in the country that the Government had no right to enforce the Military Service Act on Ireland unless a measure of Home Rule was not only presented to the House of Commons, but also was supported in every possible way by the full powers of the Government.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the real difficulty which occurred to him was that there was no agreed Home Rule Bill, and that it could not be said that the Irish Convention had come to substantial agreement on certain most important points.

In the general discussion which followed, the opinion was expressed that, as Sir Edward Carson had assented, when a member of the War Cabinet, not only to the formation, but also to the composition, of the Convention, and that as the Convention had made very valuable suggestions, there was a probability that the Ulstermen would be prepared favourably to consider a Bill based on the report of the Convention.

With reference to the Committee presided over by Mr. Long, which was now drawing up the draft of a Home Rule Bill, Mr. Long stated that his difficulty was that the Committee consisted of so many members, all holding important duties, that it was not possible to meet as often as he would wish.

The opinion was generally assented to that if Mr. Long would draw up the Bill himself and consult his Committee on certain points of difference only, a decision as to the draft Bill to be presented to the War Cabinet would be arrived at more expeditiously. The view was expressed that all the Ulster members would
dissent from any Bill framed on the Majority Report of the Convention; but, on the other hand, in view of the letters which had appeared in the press, and speeches made in the House of Commons, it was evident to the War Cabinet that a large number of Unionist Members of Parliament were agreed that it was their duty to support the Government in passing a measure of Home Rule, provided that some substantial agreement could be found between the various sections of the Irish party.

General agreement amongst the members present was expressed on the following points:—

(a.) That it should be left to the discretion of Mr. Long to use his own initiative as to the most expeditious method of drafting a Home Rule Bill for the consideration of the War Cabinet.

(b.) That the proposals in the Bill should be such as could be recommended to and would be considered fair by both British and American opinion.

(c.) That the Bill should, as far as possible, be based on the Report of the Irish Convention as a framework, but subject to such modifications as should be deemed necessary in order to make it a fair and reasonable proposal as between all the parties concerned.

2. Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
   April 16, 1918.
SECRET.

WAR CABINET, 393.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, April 17, 1918, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 20).
The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.
Major-General Sir F. B. Maurice, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Operations (for Minutes 1 to 20).
Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 20).

Brigadier-General P. P. de B. Radcliffe, C.B., D.S.O., War Office (for Minutes 1 to 20).
Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 20).
The Right Hon. Sir Joseph Maclay, Bart., Shipping Controller (for Minute 22).
Mr. U. F. Wintour, C.B., C.M.G., Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Food (for Minute 22).
Sir E. Wyldborne Smith, Commission internationale de Ravitaillement (for Minute 22).

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.
The Western Front.

1. THE Director of Military Operations reported that the latest news, which he had just received by telephone, was better. A French division, in co-operation with Australians, had carried out a successful counter-attack from Meteren, and had driven the enemy half way to Bailleul. It was understood that Wytschaete had been recaptured, although the situation there was not quite clear. With regard to French assistance, the Director of Military Operations said that Sir Douglas Haig and Sir Herbert Plumer were both of opinion that, in order to make our position safe in that area, it would be necessary to obtain the assistance of four French divisions. Of these three divisions had already been allocated to assist our troops, and the question of the fourth was under consideration. The Director of Military Operations said that General Foch had no doubt that Kemmel and the ground in front must be held. He had thought, however, that General Plumer could hold the position with the troops which he already had. That was the point at which there was difference of opinion, but it seemed that General Foch was now coming round to the view that it was necessary to send French reinforcements.

With regard to the general situation, General Foch viewed the battle-front as one whole; he regarded our army as bearing the brunt to good purpose, namely, in order to keep the Allied reserves, which he did not wish to fritter away, intact. General Foch's object was to stabilise the battle with the least expenditure of reserves, although, of course, a point might come when the strain on our troops would be so great that it could not be withstood, and then there could be no stabilisation.

Casualties.

2. The Director of Military Operations reported that he had heard from the Adjutant-General in France that our casualties from 21st March to 15th April, inclusive, amounted to 221,000, of all ranks.

German Casualties.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 391, Minute 5, the Director of Military Intelligence said that, while he was very loth to give a figure, he believed that the German losses were in excess of ours. They might even be over 300,000. Before the fighting, the Germans had 400,000 men in depots, in addition to another 100,000 men obtainable from Russia. The Director of Military Intelligence thought it improbable that, if 100,000 men came from Russia in the form of drafts, as many as twenty additional organised divisions could also be brought.

Withdrawal from Passchendaele.

4. The Director of Military Operations reported the withdrawal of our troops from Passchendaele, according to plans previously arranged. The withdrawal had begun on Sunday night, 14th April, and had been completed on Monday night, 15th April. It appeared that the Germans had not at first been aware of the withdrawal, for they had bombarded the position after we had vacated it, and we had replied by counter-fire, to preserve the camouflage. It was stated that we were still holding the Pilken Ridge, and had, therefore, not given up the whole of the gains secured in that neighbourhood last autumn.

Co-operation of the United States of America.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 8, the Prime Minister reported that the Shipping Controller had informed him that during this month British ships would probably bring over from 60,000 to 70,000 American troops. He estimated that during May 100,000 men would be conveyed in British ships, and during June 200,000.
In reply to a question as to whether the Americans could provide the men to fill the tonnage allocated, Lord Derby said that the American infantry awaiting shipment amounted to about 450,000.

Re-forming British Divisions.

6. The Secretary of State for War reported that a proposal had been made that the cadres of British divisions which had suffered in the battle should be brought back to England, and that American reinforcements should be mixed in with them, and, after training, sent back to France.

The Director of Military Operations said that another suggestion had been to send to Italy the divisions that had been shattered, after they had been brought up to strength by the incorporation of United States troops, at the same time replacing them in France by our divisions from Italy.

The War Cabinet decided that—

This question should be raised again after the return of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Gossip by King's Messenger.

7. Attention was drawn to the fact that a Member of Parliament, a King's Messenger, had been spreading gossip of a depressing character in the Lobby of the House of Commons, in regard to the conditions in France.

The Secretary of State for War was asked to see the officer concerned.

French Troops in Flanders.

8. The Director of Military Intelligence said that he had received a request from General Headquarters, France, that no mention should be made of French troops in Flanders. At the same time it was pointed out that the enemy, from their recent experience at Wytschaete and Meteren, must know that French troops were operating in that neighbourhood.

Disposition of Enemy Divisions.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 392, Minute 2, the Director of Military Intelligence said that the enemy had moved two more divisions north of La Bassée Canal; both of these had come from Alsace. There were now 28 divisions north of La Bassée, and 96 on the Somme, making a total of 124. There were 22 fresh German divisions on the whole of the Western battle-front. As to a roulement, after deducting Landwehr, and troops of little value, there were 34 fresh divisions, making a total of 56 available for further operations.

The Director of Military Operations undertook to give the Prime Minister our figure of fresh troops available for further operations, which compared with the above-mentioned figure of 56 German divisions.

10. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that there were 132 German divisions at the front, of which 72 were in the actual battle line. They also had 51 tired divisions re-fitting behind the line.

General Foch's Confidence.

11. The Director of Military Operations reported that General Foch remained confident. General Foch had asked him to convey a
message, that if he had to choose between playing his own hand or that of Ludendorff, if he had to go to Berlin he would prefer Ludendorff's hand, but as his mission was to check Ludendorff he preferred his own.

Transfer of German Divisions. 12. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that German divisions were still coming from Russia. One more dismounted cavalry division had been identified, holding part of the line in the Vosges, making four in all. One more infantry division had arrived on the Western front, making a total of 205 in all.

The Director of Military Intelligence undertook to give the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the total number of German divisions that had been moved from Russia to the Western front since the Brest-Litovsk Conference. He estimated that the figure was at least fifty.

Austrians on the Western Front. 13. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that there might possibly be 100 Austro-Hungarian batteries, or, say, 350 guns, on the Western front. The feeling appeared to be growing in Austria, in view of the success of the Germans, that Austro-Hungarian troops might now with advantage be employed on the Western front. There was a block of eight divisions in West Austria, to the east of the Bavarian frontier, which might possibly be so employed. These eight divisions had been part of the force in Galicia and on the Roumanian frontier. They were all good divisions. One of them was half German, another a mixture of Magyars and Germans, another was Polish with some Czechs in it, and two others were half Polish.

Palestine. 14. The Director of Military Operations reported that General Allenby was in touch with Faisal, and that successful attacks had been made on the Hedjaz Railway north and south of Maan, and, further south, nearer Medina, inflicting losses on the enemy. North of Medina 7 miles of railway had been torn up.

East Africa. 15. The Director of Military Operations reported a small check in East Africa. General Northey's force had engaged a strong enemy force 25 miles south-west of Nanungu on the 11th April. Unexpected strength was shown by the enemy, and we had been pressed back by superior numbers to Mahua on the 12th April. The affair, however, was not of great importance.

The Cattegat. 16. With reference to War Cabinet 392, Minute 4, the First Sea Lord reported that our ships had returned from their sweep into the Cattegat, that they had sustained no casualties, and had sunk twelve enemy trawlers.

Murmansk. 17. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 17, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum (Paper G.T.-4246) by the First Sea Lord, as to the situation at Murmansk and Finnish intentions with regard to the acquisition of the Murman coast.

Sir Eric Geddes expressed the view that the Senior Naval Officer at Murmansk should be given information as to the line of policy of the Allies with regard to Murmansk, so as to be guided accordingly in any action he might be called upon to take, and he recommended that he should be authorised to give the assurances specified in his telegram No. 264 of the 15th instant.

Mr. Balfour concurred.
The First Lord stated that, until the thaw had finished, it was not anticipated that any military operations other than guerilla warfare would be possible in the vicinity of the Kola Inlet, and advocated the sending of an expert military officer to Murmansk to report, in conjunction with the Senior Naval Officer, on the situation in the event of it being possible to send at a later date a military force to co-operate with the Allied naval forces at present there.

Reference was made to a recent telegram (No. 91 of the 12th April) from Mr. Lockhart, which indicated that M. Trotzki was now in favour of our co-operation.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in consultation with the First Lord, should send a telegram to Mr. Lockhart agreeing on broad lines to the requests of the Senior Naval Officer at Murmansk, similar instructions being sent to the latter by the Admiralty;

(b.) The Secretary of State for War should send a suitable military officer to Murmansk at the first opportunity for the purpose of rendering a report on the situation generally, and with special reference to the possibility of holding the Kola Inlet and the force necessary for the purpose, such report being rendered in due course to the War Cabinet.

18. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 18, the First Lord informed the War Cabinet that an armed icebreaker and two supply ships had been sent to Archangel, with a view to the barter of the stores they carried and generally to get on good terms with the inhabitants of that district, who were at present indifferent to political affairs and only wished to be fed and left to pursue peaceful avocations.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs pointed out that the position at Archangel differed from that at Murmansk, inasmuch as the former was involved in the general situation as to Russia and intervention by the Allies as a whole via Siberia. Pending, however, a settlement of that question, it was felt that it might be possible to persuade M. Trotzki to agree to the Czech-Slovak force that was now at Kursk being employed in the Archangel or Murmansk district, with a view to preventing encroachments in Russia by forces of the Central Powers or Finland; and it was pointed out that such approval on the part of M. Trotzki would go some way to establish his honesty of purpose with regard to the Allies.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew the attention of the War Cabinet to his telegram No. 55 of the 13th April, 1918, to Mr. Lockhart, which set out the policy of His Majesty’s Government with regard to Russia.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for War to furnish particulars of the Czech-Slovak force to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to enable the latter to send a telegram to Mr. Lockhart directing him to urge M. Trotzki to authorise the employment of the force in the vicinity of Archangel and Murmansk for the protection of Russian as well as Allied interests.

19. With reference to War Cabinet 380, Minute 5, Sir Eric Geddes stated that an application had been received from the Russian Government, through the British naval attaché, for assistance from us in the re-organisation of the Russian Black Sea Fleet.
Siberia.

Prisoners of War: Their Employment in the Firing Zone.

20. The question was raised as to whether Mr. Lockhart was aware of the fact that we had given instructions that General Semeneff was—for the time being, at all events—to cease his activities in Eastern Siberia.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs undertook to enquire into this matter and to inform Mr. Lockhart as requisite, if such had not already been done.

Greek Mobilisation.

21. With reference to War Cabinet 127, Minute 5, the attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to a question to be asked in the House of Commons as to the steps the Government proposed to take with reference to the atrocities committed by the Germans on British prisoners of war, and whether instant and severe reprisals on German prisoners in our hands would not tend to mitigate the privations of our men.

Lord Derby stated that, on account of the troublesome attitude of the German prisoners in France, it was undesirable, in the present situation, to employ them in the vicinity of the battle-front, and consequently they were being evacuated to England.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for War to arrange for the question in the House of Commons to be postponed for a few days, and, in the meantime, to ascertain, as fully as possible, the facts as to the treatment of our prisoners by the Germans in the vicinity of our front, and to render a report on the subject for the consideration of the War Cabinet.

Officers' Resettlement.

22. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Major-General Callwell (Paper G.T.-4241).

General Callwell said that the Greek mobilisation was held up mainly for want of clothing and food.

The Prime Minister pointed out that it was very desirable to get some of our troops from Salonica, and this could not be done until the Greeks were mobilised. It was, therefore, most important that the question of sending supplies should be settled immediately.

The War Cabinet requested—

General Smuts to settle the question, in conjunction with the Departments concerned.

23. The War Cabinet had under consideration a Report by a Sub-Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, relative to the establishment of an Appointments Board to deal with the resettlement of officers of the Army on demobilisation. Doubt was expressed as to whether the present was a suitable time for acquainting the public as to the steps that were being taken as regards demobilisation, and it was felt that, when an announcement of this nature was made, it should also cover the arrangements that were proposed for the resettlement of the rank and file as well as the officers.

The War Cabinet requested—

General Smuts to go into the question with Lord Derby and Dr. Addison, and to report to the War Cabinet in due course.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
April 17, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 394.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Thursday, April 18, 1918, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. | Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:—


The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.V.O., C.B., Secretary of State for War.


Rear-Admiral G. F. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 7).


Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front:

Disposition of Allied and Enemy Divisions

I. WITH reference to War Cabinet 393, Minute 9, the War Cabinet had before them a comparison, by the General Staff, of the British and French reserves, on the one hand and the German reserves on the other (Paper G.T.-4257).

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who had only just returned from France, and had only just seen the General Staff’s Paper, said he preferred to put the comparison as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>German</th>
<th>British and French</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fighting on the front</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>53 (35 British and 18 French).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn battered divisions</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for roullement</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>66 (6 only of which are British and 60 French).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The situation was not unfavourable from the Allied point of view, provided the reserves were well handled, but the difficulty of this was accentuated by the fact that the bulk of the reserves were French.
French Troops in Flanders.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 393, Minute 8, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the French yesterday had two divisions engaged on the Lys front, and to-day possibly three, and two more were coming up, making in all five infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions from French reserves. The three cavalry divisions might be regarded as equal to one infantry division.

Enemy Attack near Bethune.

3. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the enemy had begun a heavy bombardment this morning against our 1st Army, between Locon and Bethune. He also stated that the French had retaken two woods on the left bank of the River Avre, below Amiens, from which the enemy had been firing into the army under General Rawlinson.

Transport Position in France.

4. The Secretary reported that a telegram had been received from Lord Milner, stating that General Nash and General Travers Clarke would arrive this evening to report on the transport position in France.

Submarines.

5. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that an enemy submarine had been sunk by two drifters off Rathlin Island.

British Division from Egypt.

6. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that a British division from Egypt had arrived safely at Marseilles.

Sinking of Italian Submarines.

7. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that our submarine "H. 1" had sunk an Italian submarine, "H. 5," in the Adriatic Patrol on the evening of the 16th April. Two Italian officers and three men were saved. Enquiries will be held, but it appears that the Italian boat was considerably out of position and on surface before dark.

Prices of Sulphate of Ammonia and Superphosphate.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries on the subject of the prices of sulphate of ammonia and superphosphate.

The War Cabinet decided that--

Mr. Austen Chamberlain should be asked to examine this question, with full powers to settle it on their behalf.

American Shipbuilding.

9. The War Cabinet took note of a memorandum by the Admiralty pointing out the indifferent progress made with merchant ship construction in the United States (Paper G.T.-4252).

In regard to the suggestion that a telegram should be sent in no uncertain terms to Lord Reading, asking him to bring the matter of the extreme urgency of shipbuilding before the President personally, the War Cabinet felt that it would be advisable to concentrate all efforts with President Wilson on one urgent question at a time. They therefore decided--

To postpone action in this matter until effect had been given to the urgent representations already made to President Wilson in regard to the shipment of troops from the United States.

They requested--

The First Lord to raise the question again shortly.
10. The War Cabinet had before them a minute from Mr. Austen Chamberlain covering a letter from Professor Attolico (Paper G.T.-4247) on the subject of the requirements of the Allied Governments. The War Cabinet decided that—

Mr. Chamberlain should have authority to arrange a Conference on the subject between the Departments concerned, consulting Lord Robert Cecil and Sir Joseph Maclay as necessary.

11. The Prime Minister said that this was Lord Derby’s last appearance at the War Cabinet as Secretary of State for War, as he had accepted an important mission on behalf of the War Cabinet in Paris. He hoped, however, that the War Cabinet would often see him in his new role. He pointed out that the British Government had long been represented in Paris by one of our most distinguished and able diplomats, who had unquestionably rendered the highest services. At the present time, however, there was not very much diplomacy required in Paris. Recent experience had shown that what was needed was some representative who was in active touch with the views of the British Government on the innumerable questions, mainly of a military character, that were arising from day to day between the two countries. This was proved by the fact that two members of the War Cabinet had had to visit France within the last fortnight, and that Lord Milner, who was now in Paris, while on his way home had been summoned thither by a special message from the French President of the Council. No doubt some of the questions that had occupied the two members of the War Cabinet referred to would in any case have required their presence in France. Nevertheless, many of the questions were such as could be dealt with by one, such as Lord Derby, who had long taken a part in the counsels of the War Cabinet and, consequently, had a knowledge of their views which no diplomatist could possibly possess. The reasons which had prompted the despatch of a special political mission to the United States of America, under Lord Reading, were overwhelmingly stronger in the case of France. He and Mr. Balfour, after very full discussion, had come to the conclusion that Lord Derby should be asked to accept this appointment, and, notwithstanding the inconvenience entailed, Lord Derby had patriotically accepted the post. Lord Derby would be Head of the War Mission, with the same powers as had been accorded to Lord Reading, namely, not to confine his activities to diplomatic matters, but with full powers to discuss with the French Government, on behalf of the War Cabinet, matters relating to the War. Lord Derby, while recognising that he would have no authority over the Military Council at Versailles, asked that he might be authorised to keep in the closest touch with the Military Representatives, and the Prime Minister, on behalf of the War Cabinet, expressed the hope that he would keep in as close touch as possible. Lord Derby was also authorised to place himself in touch with General Pershing, on behalf of the War Cabinet.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff asked the War Cabinet to consider the possibility of postponing Lord Derby taking up his appointment for a few days, in order that he might visit Italy with a view to inducing the Italian Government to send more divisions to the Western front.

While recognising the importance of obtaining further Italian assistance, the War Cabinet decided that—

It would be inadvisable for Lord Derby to postpone taking up his appointment at the present critical juncture.
The War Cabinet authorised—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he should think fit, to send a message on their behalf to Lord Bertie, expressing their high appreciation of the valuable services he had rendered while Ambassador at Paris.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 18, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 395.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, April 19, 1918, at 3.30 p.m.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 10).

General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 10).


The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minute 12).


Major P. Lloyd George, M.C., Secretary, Ministry of National Service (for Minute 12).

SIR H. Llewellyn Smith, K.C.B., Secretary, Board of Trade (for Minute 12).

SIR STEPHENSON KENT, K.C.B., Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 12).

Major-General Sir P. A. M. Nash, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director-General of Transportation (for Minute 1).
1. WITH reference to War Cabinet 394, Minute 4, the Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that on the previous evening he had held a meeting with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the Quartermaster-General, Sir Sam Fay, General Travers Clarke, General Nash, and Sir Joseph Maclay, to go into the question of coal for France, and he wished the War Cabinet to confirm certain decisions he had arrived at with regard to that and other matters connected with it (Paper G.T.-4273). The Prime Minister explained that 600,000 tons of coal per month from the Bruay mines were normally sent to parts of France south of the Somme, and that the transport of this coal greatly hampered the movement of British and French troops over the railways. The Prime Minister pointed out that, if the British Government could supply the greater part of this coal, and so close down the Bruay mines, the railway system in this part of France would be relieved from a great strain, and the transport of troops made correspondingly easier. He stated that the possibility always existed of these mines having to be closed down owing to German bombardment.

General Nash, whose remarks are elaborated in greater detail in a memorandum which he handed in (Paper G.T.-4282), then explained to the War Cabinet what would be the result of such a decision. He stated that, as the result of investigation, it had been ascertained that the Minister of Shipping was able to provide the necessary tonnage, and that the Coal Controller could provide immediately 300,000 tons of coal per month, and that within the next month he could increase this amount to 400,000 tons. This 400,000 tons of coal could be provided without the miners’ comb-out being affected, but any amount required above this would affect the comb-out. Should it become necessary to supply the French with 700,000 tons a month, which the mines could do by June of this year, the first comb-out of 50,000 miners would not be affected, but in the comb-out next May of a further 50,000 the Coal Controller would have to retain half the number of men that were being called up, and he would also have to insist that no voluntary enlistment should be allowed. It was found in practice that when a man was called up by ballot it often happened that one or two of his friends would voluntarily enlist.

The War Cabinet agreed that it was important that the total number of men obtained from the mines, whether by compulsory or voluntary enlistment, should not exceed the agreed quota.

The War Cabinet thereupon ratified the following decisions given on the previous evening by the Prime Minister on behalf of the War Cabinet:

(a.) It was of vital military importance to stop the transport of coal from the Bruay mines to the South of France, and that the only safe assumption on which to base our plans was that no coal would be forthcoming from the Bruay area. The Coal Controller and the Shipping Controller, in concert, should do their utmost to supply and transport the minimum amount of coal required by the French south of the Somme.

(b.) Subject to Lord Milner not having already arranged the matter, the War Cabinet would approach the French Government with a view to releasing the southern lines of railway by placing the necessary foodstuffs for civilian purposes in the area north of the Somme by sea.

(c.) The supply of all troops operating north of the line Etaples—St. Pol should be undertaken by the British Army.
On the understanding that the Minister of Shipping and the Coal Controller were agreeable, and with such technical assistance as the Minister of Shipping and the Coal Controller considered desirable, the War Cabinet requested—

General Nash to negotiate the following arrangements with the French Government:

(a.) At once to press the French to shut down absolutely the coal traffic from the Pas-de-Calais mines.

(b.) To come to an agreement with the French regarding the quantity of coal to be exported from the United Kingdom to France in the event of the Pas-de-Calais mines being put out of action. This agreement to take into account the better quality of the coal to be supplied from the United Kingdom.

(c.) To come to an agreement with the French as to whether the full quantity required can be discharged at French ports, and, if so, at what ports, and how much at each.

The War Cabinet also decided that—

The Minister of Shipping should ascertain definitely for what quantity of coal shipping from the United States to France could be found after the first fortnight.

The Western Front

2. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that yesterday had been a good day for us. The enemy had attacked near Givenchy with certainly six, and perhaps seven, divisions. He had made absolutely no impression on our front, and we had defeated the attack with three divisions only. Near Kemmel the enemy had attacked with one or two divisions, and had also failed to make an impression. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that the German divisions that took part in the attack yesterday were not poor in quality; on the contrary, two of the divisions were considered to be on a level with some of the best the Germans had in France. He stated that the Germans had 21 divisions in reserve between Arras and Lille, and had a further 33 divisions which they could use in a roulement. As against these, the British possessed yesterday 6 divisions, and the French 60, counting the roulement. General Wilson added that the Germans had lost 2,000 prisoners in the fighting yesterday evening.

Message from His Majesty the King to the Troops

3. A suggestion was made that the present would be an appropriate time for the King to send a message of encouragement to the troops in France. Such a message might refer to the number of German divisions which had been engaged in the fighting, and the splendid resistance of our troops in beating off attacks in which they had been outnumbered by about three to one. Mention should also be made of the assistance rendered by the French. The opinion was expressed, however, that perhaps the time had not yet arrived for such a message to be sent, and that it might be as well to await further developments of the battle in France.

In the meantime the War Cabinet decided that—

In the first instance the Chief of the Imperial General Staff should draft a telegram for the consideration of the Prime Minister.
4. Attention was drawn to the small number of men which could be used for fighting purposes which were now included in the troops coming over from the United States of America. It was stated that since the new arrangement had been made with President Wilson 23,000 United States troops had arrived in this country, and there were a further 20,000 on the sea. Out of this total of 43,000 only 12,000 would be available for use as battalions in the British Army.

The suggestion was made that either General Foch or General Bliss should make representations to President Wilson on the subject. It was pointed out, however, that General Bliss had already done his utmost in the matter, and thought that if he took further action it might result in more harm than good.

Attention was also drawn to the fact that the United States Government were only raising 150,000 recruits a month, whereas it had been stated that they had 10,000,000 men available between the ages of 20 and 30. If recruiting proceeded at this slow rate of progress the United States army in France next year would not be of such a size as to give the Allies a decisive superiority of force.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that Generals Bridges and Hutchinson had been instructed, whilst in America, to draw the attention of the United States Authorities to this point.

5. A proposal was made that a march of United States troops through London would have an excellent effect both in this country and in the United States, and on the troops themselves.

The War Cabinet agreed to this suggestion, and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff undertook to make the necessary arrangements.

6. The First Sea Lord reported that the Chinese cruiser "Hai Yung" had arrived at Vladivostock on the 17th April. A message from H.M.S. "Suffolk" had been received to the effect that the Allied Consuls had sent a joint note to the local authorities and the press, explaining that the landing was purely a police measure and not hostile to any section of the population, and that the landing party would be withdrawn as soon as satisfactory measures for safeguarding Allied property existed.

7. The First Sea Lord reported that an enemy submarine had been sunk in the minefield off Dover on the previous evening.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 393, Minute 18, the War Cabinet had under consideration the situation at Archangel, as set out in a Memorandum by the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty (Paper G.T.-4259).

Mr. Balfour drew attention to his telegram No. 87, of the 18th instant, to Mr. Lockhart, relative to the removal of stores from Archangel to Vologda, and stated that since that telegram had been despatched he had received information, through the Russian Supply Committee, to the effect that, instead of stores being removed, the contrary was the case, and articles such as flax, &c., were being sent towards Archangel; consequently, until accurate information was received, a true grasp of the situation prevailing there was not possible.

As regards the points raised by the Admiralty, the War Cabinet approved—

(a) The despatch of a cruiser to Archangel to protect Allied interests.
(b.) That the captain should not be authorised to prevent by force the railing away of the Allied stores from Archangel.

(c.) That the captain should, however, in other respects, be given wide discretionary powers to deal with any situation that may suddenly arise, without previous reference to the Admiralty if time does not admit.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 386, Minute 9, the Prime Minister drew the attention of the War Cabinet to a telegram, No. 94, of the 13th April, 1918, from Mr. Lockhart, which indicated that M. Trotzki wishes the Allied Governments to submit to him, at the earliest opportunity, a full and proper statement of help which they could furnish to enable Russia to carry on the war against Germany, and of the guarantees the Allies are prepared to give in this direction. M. Trotzki had added that, if the conditions are friendly, he considers the conclusion of the agreement both necessary and desirable. This request, coming from M. Trotzki, indicated a change in his views, and, taken in conjunction with other requests, such as that of assistance in reorganising the Black Sea Fleet (War Cabinet 393, Minute 19), pointed to his desire for Allied support. The Prime Minister expressed the view that our past appeals to the United States were capable of the construction that we wished to impose our assistance on the Bolshevks, but we now had an opportunity to make a new appeal to President Wilson, based on M. Trotzki's invitation. The Prime Minister stated that he had had a draft prepared summarising the suggestions that had been made in the past with regard to the nature of Allied intervention, and he suggested that this draft, giving definite proposals, should be brought up to date by including in it any further points that might be mentioned in Mr. Lockhart's telegram No. 94, and, after consideration by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, despatched to President Wilson (see telegram No. 2303, of the 19th April, to Lord Reading). If the latter agrees to our proposals and guarantees, they should be forwarded to M. Trotzki for his consideration.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated that, in his opinion, if the approval of the President was obtained, it would be necessary to consult the Japanese to see if they would carry out their share of the proposals as to intervention. He mentioned, however, that, with a view to saving time, it would not be necessary to wait for the reply from the Italian and French Governments, as he was sure that they would heartily welcome any form of Allied intervention which aimed at an advance against Germany and German influence in Western Siberia.

It was suggested that, since telegrams take five days to reach Russia, it would be advisable to send Mr. Lockhart a copy of the telegram to President Wilson, in order that, in the event of the President's support being obtained, no time might be lost in making representations to M. Trotzki. Mr. Balfour stated that this would be done automatically.

The War Cabinet approved the proposal of the Prime Minister.

10. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave a full explanation of his Budget proposals, including details of taxation.

After some discussion, these were approved by the War Cabinet.
11. With reference to War Cabinet 398, Minute 22, the War Cabinet took note of the decisions arrived at by General Smuts with regard to the Mobilisation of Greece (Paper G.T.-4255) (Appendix).

12. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of National Service, covering a draft of a Proclamation which it was proposed to issue under the Military Service (No. 2) Act, 1918 (Paper G.T.-4264), a revised draft of the Proclamation (Paper G.T.-4264A), and a Memorandum on Man-Power and Munitions, by Mr. Churchill (Paper G.T.-4270).

The general object of the Proclamation was to withdraw Certificates of Exemption from men who have attained, or will attain, the ages of 19, 20, 21, 22, or 23, during the present year, and who are, or are found to be, Grade I or Grade II, subject to certain exceptions. It was proposed, concurrently with the Proclamation, to issue an Order cancelling all Protection Certificates granted to men of Grade I employed in munitions under the schedule of protected occupations, with certain exceptions. The temporary postponement of the recruiting of port labour from the ports of Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Bristol, was to be continued. Railways were not mentioned in the exceptions, as it was proposed to continue the arrangement for dealing with them administratively.

Sir Auckland Geddes explained that the proposal was to ensure a "clean cut" by age through every walk of life except in those occupations where the "clean cut" had already taken place. The most serious effect of the present Proclamation would be upon agriculture, where 16,000 in Grade I would be called up. The effect on munition workers would be slight. The remainder of the men would be obtained from the Civil Service, the Post Office, and, in diminishing numbers, from the smaller occupations all over the country. Applications for exemption or postponement, within the limits laid down in the Proclamation, would be heard by tribunals locally. It must be understood that the issue of the present Proclamation was but the first application of the power, granted by Clause 3 of the new Act, to cancel exemption in the case of a national emergency. He was aiming, for example, at the moment, for 16,000 men from agriculture, but eventually it was hoped to obtain up to at least 25,000 from that industry.

Sir Arthur Lee objected that neither the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries nor the Food Production Department had been given an opportunity of discussing these proposals with the Minister of National Service before their submission to the War Cabinet. The proposals as set forth were calculated to produce the maximum of friction and injury to agriculture. If the Board of Agriculture were asked by the War Cabinet to produce a certain number of men, they would do their best to furnish them by means of the machinery that was already in operation.

Mr. Prothero questioned whether it was worth while to call up 63,000 men engaged in agriculture before the tribunals in order to obtain 16,000 soldiers. The amount of friction and loss of time involved by that process would be enormous, and it would have a very damaging effect on the country districts. His Department would be prepared to do its utmost to find the required men, and, if it failed, the Ministry of National Service could then step in. His Department, working through the War Agricultural Committees, had the necessary experience which would enable them to obtain the men with least damage to the manning of the farms, and they would not need to waste the time of 47,000 agriculturists at the tribunals. He failed to see why agriculture could not be dealt with administratively, after the manner of the railways. The County Committees would deeply resent being superseded by tribunals composed of residents drawn from urban areas.
unfamiliar with the needs of the farming community. Further, he hoped the Minister of National Service would make his demands upon the farmers as definite as possible, as they had to make their plans a long period in advance. He impressed upon the War Cabinet that the present proposals, if carried out, were bound seriously to affect food production, as the Department was at present short of 30,000 men required for carrying out its programme.

Sir Auckland Geddes wished to emphasise most strongly that the principle which the Proclamation sought to enforce was not applicable to agriculture only, but affected the whole of the recruiting effort of the next few months. In order to secure the proper psychological effect on the country, and to obtain the large number of men required, it was necessary for the Government to use the drastic powers now available in order to sweep in the young men who had hitherto been protected. It was similarly necessary to produce the right atmosphere in the tribunals, in order that exemption might be granted only in very exceptional circumstances.

Mr. Churchill said that, under the Proclamation, it was hoped to obtain 3,200 men from munitions. He wished to remind the Cabinet that there had been a very great acceleration in the rate at which men were being released from munitions during the last few months. From the 1st January to the 12th April, 49,000 had gone, and in the last five weeks the weekly rate had grown from 3,600 to nearly 9,000. He was not opposed to the policy of the "clean cut," but he objected to it being applied suddenly, and, unless time were allowed for dilution and substitution, serious embarrassment would be caused. He was prepared to accept the revised Draft Order proposed by Sir Auckland Geddes, provided that the necessary exemptions were allowed, and he was willing that such exemptions should be reviewed by a committee composed of a representative of each of the three Departments concerned, namely, the Ministry of Munitions, the Ministry of National Service, and the War Office.

Sir Alan Anderson stated that the number of 12,500 expected from Admiralty A firms was the absolute maximum which could be given up. This number had already been agreed to with the War Cabinet (War Cabinet 379, Minute 9). Of that number, 2,500 had already been surrendered, and the difficulty had been not in releasing men so much as in obtaining substitutes for them. He considered it very important that men engaged in, and familiar with, the industry should decide who could be spared.

Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith stated that the Board of Trade were, on the whole, content with the proposed procedure, but they would have been glad if the railwaymen could have been mentioned in the Proclamation, with the coal miners, but a footnote or an announcement in the press would suffice. With regard to port labour, Swansea and Ardrossan should be mentioned in addition to those named in the covering note (Paper G.T.44284).

Sir Joseph Maclay said it was essential to postpone calling up port labour from all ports of the Kingdom. On other points he was satisfied with the proposed arrangements.

Mr. Illingworth said he was prepared to accept the scheme of Sir Auckland Geddes. Orders had been issued to release all fit postal employees, except those in Ireland, under 25 for the army, with a very few exceptions, and he had intimated to leading representatives of the business community that they must be prepared to put up with some inconvenience in the Postal Service in consequence.

The Secretary reported that the Ministry of Food were satisfied with the arrangements which they had concluded with the Ministry of National Service for safeguarding the food-distributing industries.
Sir James Dodds said that in Scotland also the effect of the present proposals on the food production programme might be serious. The Board of Agriculture for Scotland and the Regional Director of National Service worked in close co-operation in obtaining recruits from the land, and he hoped that that method would be allowed to continue.

Mr. Hayes Fisher called attention to the widespread complaint which reached the Local Government Board, to the effect that some farmers' sons and other agricultural workers were being unfairly shielded by the War Agricultural Committees.

In reply, Mr. Prothero pointed out that the War Executive Committees could only shield the farmers' sons who had been exempted by the tribunals in the twelve months before the Committee received their powers.

The Prime Minister said that the War Cabinet had fully realised that their man-power programme could not be enforced without considerable industrial dislocation. They had to make a "clean cut" in industries which were already suffering from a scarcity of workmen. The men must be got for the army, and got as speedily as possible. He was surprised to find that the tribunals in Sir Auckland Geddes' scheme were allowed to function at all where the "clean cut" was operative. He understood that this was proposed in order to meet, more particularly, certain cases of a very exceptional character—the young men on the land—but that the Board of Agriculture objected to the use of local tribunals. He suggested that the situation might be met as follows: the "clean cut" to be enforced without an appeal to the local tribunals; the War Agricultural Committees to examine cases where a farmer maintains that the "clean cut" would destroy his business; these cases should then be negotiated by the Ministry of National Service and the Board of Agriculture, and, in the event of the final decision supporting the appeal, the man would be released from the army.

The War Cabinet decided—

To approve the proposals of the Minister of National Service, and the issue of the revised Proclamation, subject to the following modifications:

(a.) The War Agricultural Committees to sift exceptional cases, and to refer only suitable cases to the County Appeal Tribunal without use of the local tribunal. The Scottish Board of Agriculture to arrange to use the Appeal Tribunals in similar vital cases.

(b.) The War Cabinet considered that it was essential that all Certificates of Protection granted to Grade I men of the ages specified in the Proclamation and employed in munitions industries, should be withdrawn as nearly as possible concurrently with the recruitment of men called up under the Proclamation. They accordingly ordered the Admiralty, the Ministry of Munitions, the War Office, Contracts Department, that, with the exception of men in an occupation for which an age limit of 19 is fixed in the schedule of occupations, no Grade I man to be retained after the following dates:

(a.) Men born in 1898 and 1899 after the 17th May.

(b.) Men born in 1895, 1896, or 1897 after the 17th June.

The Cabinet further instructed the Departments that every effort must be made to expedite the release of such men for service before the dates specified, and that arrangements must be made for
a prompt medical examination of all men within the above ages, so as to ensure that the examination of men born in 1893 and 1899 should be completed at least 7 days before the 17th May, and the examinations of men born in 1895, 1896, and 1897, at least 14 days before the 17th June.

(c.) A discretionary power to remain with the Labour Department of the Ministry of Munitions, and the Shipyard Labour Department of the Admiralty, as to the retention in Munition or Admiralty work of men of the ages affected by the proposed War Cabinet Order, the discretionary power to be subject to the review of a committee composed of representatives, in the former case of the Ministry of National Service, the War Office, and the Ministry of Munitions; and, in the latter, representatives of the Ministry of National Service, the War Office, and the Admiralty.

(d.) The question of allowing professional advocates to appear before tribunals to be settled by the Minister of National Service and the President of the Local Government Board.

(e.) The total number to be called up from Admiralty A firms to be approximately 12,500 men.

(f.) A reference to be made to the case of the railwaymen by means of a footnote to the Proclamation, or by a press announcement.

(g.) The temporary postponement of the recruiting of port labour to apply to all the ports of the United Kingdom.

Ireland:

13. The War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the Home Secretary, on the subject of the internment of Sinn Fein leaders (Paper G.T.-4287).

Sir George Cave pointed out that the War Cabinet had decided that the Military authorities in Ireland should be allowed to deport to England certain persons who were engaged in seditious practices in Ireland, under the Defence of the Realm Regulation No. 14 (War Cabinet 384, Minute 8), but that this Order only gave power to remove such persons to England, and that it would be practically impossible to control them while at large. His present proposal was to give power to intern such persons either in Ireland or in Great Britain, but to do so it was necessary that Section 14B of the Defence of the Realm Regulations should be amended. Under this Section, persons arrested could be interned if "hostile associations" could be proved, as in the case of the Easter Rebellion of 1916 in Dublin, but at the present moment it was doubtful whether connection with the enemy could be proved in the case of most of the Sinn Fein leaders. Sir George Cave pointed out that this alteration would only apply in areas where trial by jury had been suspended.

Mr. Barnes expressed the opinion that the present moment was an unfortunate one in which to take this action. There was apparently no active hostility in Ireland, and he feared that the publication of this amendment to the Defence of the Realm Regulations would inflame public opinion in Ireland, as it would be evident that the alterations proposed were intended to apply to Ireland only. In view of the fact that, according to the reports which he had seen in the press, the Sinn Feiners and Nationalists were now advising their people not to break the law, he strongly expressed the opinion that this action would be most inadvisable.

The Prime Minister said that, according to his information, the opinion of the people in Ireland was already as inflamed as it
was possible to be. He proceeded to read a personal letter which he had just received from Field-Marshal Lord French, which dealt with the plans which Lord French, in co-operation with the Head of the Royal Irish Constabulary, was making in view of the necessity of enforcing conscription with the assistance of the military, should such necessity arise for dealing with any strikes or rebellions outbreaks. Mr. Lloyd George said that Lord French desired to stay in Ireland for another ten days, if it were convenient, and that, in the circumstances, he had informed him that it was advisable that he should do so. Mr. Lloyd George also read letters from Mr. Long and the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, which dealt with the present situation. Sir Bryan Mahon had stated that he was certain that armed resistance was intended if it was decided to enforce Military Service Act in Ireland, and that, while events were moving rapidly, he did not consider that any alteration was necessary in the number of troops which he had formerly stated he would require. Taking into consideration all the present circumstances, the Prime Minister was strongly of opinion that the amendment as suggested should be adopted, a view which was supported by Mr. Duke.

The War Cabinet decided that—

Regulation 14B should be amended as follows:

(a.) In the first paragraph after the words “in such place” there shall be inserted the words “in the British Islands.”

(b.) In the fourth paragraph after the words “deportation of aliens” there shall be inserted the words “or any committee specially appointed by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this regulation.”

(c.) After the fourth paragraph (ending with the words “high judicial office”) the following paragraph shall be inserted:

“In any area in respect of which the operation of section one of the Defence of the Realm (Amendment) Act, 1915, is for the time being suspended, this regulation shall apply in relation to any person who is suspected of acting or having acted or of being about to act in a manner prejudicial to the public safety or the defence of the realm, as it applies in relation to persons of hostile origin or association.”

(d.) In the fifth paragraph after the word “Scotland” where it firstly occurs there shall be inserted the words “and Ireland,” and after the word “Scotland” where it secondly occurs there shall be inserted the words “and the Chief Secretary respectively.”

(Mr. Barnes wished his dissent from this decision to be placed on record.)

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
April 20, 1918.
APPENDIX.

MOBILISATION OF GREECE.

Note by General Smuts.

BY Minute 16 of War Cabinet 393 I was requested to settle the question of the provision of supplies for the mobilisation of the Greek Army, as specified in Paper G.T.-4241 by General Callwell.

After hearing the Departments concerned I made the following ruling:

(1.) It is very essential that three Greek divisions be mobilised as soon as possible, in addition to the four already in the war zone, especially in view of the importance of reducing the number of British divisions at Salonika and replacing them by Greek troops.

(2.) The supplies specified under items (a), (b), and (c) of the above Paper should be furnished by the War Office, so far as resources are available, for the requirements of seven divisions of the Greek Army, with adequate depots and reserves; if any further mobilisation took place before the autumn special sanction should be obtained for further supplies. These supplies should only be provided for the Greek divisions in the war zone, and as regards meat the Greek troops should be fed from our supplies at Salonika; our resources in meat, bacon, &c., being proportionately increased to enable us to meet the Greek requirements.

Owing to shortage of refrigerated tonnage, meat will probably have to be in the form of tinned meat or bacon.

(3.) The extra tonnage for the above purpose should be provided by the Shipping Controller.

(4.) As regards sugar and coffee, these commodities should be obtained by the Greek Government in Egypt or from Asia, through the French.

(5.) The War Office should communicate these decisions to the French and Greek Governments through the usual channels.

I do not anticipate that these arrangements will involve much extra strain upon shipping, because, as the Greek Army becomes mobilised and draws upon stocks at Salonika, our troops will begin to be withdrawn from that theatre of war.

(Initialled)  J. C. S.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W. 1,
April 17, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 396.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, April 22, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.  
The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.  
The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.C.

The Right Hon. A. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

The following were also present:


Admiral Sir R. E. WEMYSS, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.

Captain E. ABRAHAM, Assistant Secretary.

Captain CLEMENT JONES, Assistant Secretary.

Naval Engagement in the Heligoland Bight.

1. THE First Sea Lord reported that British light forces operating in the Heligoland Bight on Saturday the 20th April had been in touch with enemy light forces, who had retired behind their minefields. One enemy destroyer had been hit, and one of our destroyers had been hit, but we had received no casualties. All our ships had returned.

Submarines.

2. The First Sea Lord reported that information had been received from Gibraltar to the effect that an enemy submarine had been sunk on the 21st April about 15 miles S.S.E. from Gibraltar. This was the first report of the sinking of an enemy submarine in that locality.

The Western Front:

3. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that yesterday had been a quiet day on the Western front.

Ypres.

4. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that three enemy divisions were being moved up to Ypres. One division was already in position there, and two others were on their way.
Attention was drawn to the risk of the Ypres position being turned by a heavy attack on the Belgians, who might, in spite of their recent successful action against German Landwehr, be overwhelmed, as the Portuguese were, by a more formidable attack by first line German troops, supported by heavy artillery concentration.

Lord Curzon pointed out in this connection that the King of the Belgians was Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army, and, by reason of his position, was not under the command of General Foch. It was, therefore, most desirable that the closest possible liaison should be established between General Foch and the King of the Belgians.

As a telegram on the subject had already been sent from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to General Foch, in the name of the War Cabinet, it was decided that—

No further action need be taken.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 3, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that, from the Foreign Office point of view, it was undesirable that the Portuguese Government should have their ardour chilled by our refusal to have further Portuguese contingents sent to France. From information received, it appeared that the recent Portuguese reverse on the Western front had resulted in greatly increased military enthusiasm in Portugal.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 395, Minute 2, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that about 130 German divisions had been used on the Western front, and, as some of these divisions had been in action more than once, there had therefore been an equivalent of 208 divisions used against the British and French. Of these, 151 had encountered British troops, and 57 had engaged the French. Thus it might be said that we had had three German divisions attacking us for every one that had attacked the French. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that this point had been brought to the attention of General Foch.

7. The War Cabinet had before them a telegram from Lord Reading, dated the 18th April, 1918, and another dated the 21st April, 1918, in regard to American military co-operation.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the matter in question was to be discussed with General Pershing the same afternoon.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The matter should be postponed until after General Wilson’s interview with General Pershing.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 395, Minute 5, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that arrangements were being made for a march of American troops through London.
9. Attention was called to the following table of figures, giving a comparison of Allied and enemy strength on the Western front, contained in the current Weekly Summary by the General Staff:—

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<tr>
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<th>Man-Power</th>
<th>Artillery</th>
<th>Rifle</th>
<th>Artillery</th>
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<td>Field &amp;</td>
<td>Field &amp;</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
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<td>Strength</td>
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<td>Strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>477</td>
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<td>3,850</td>
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<td>397</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>694</td>
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<tr>
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<td>193</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>1,254,000</td>
<td>18,070</td>
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The Prime Minister said that he had obtained for his speech in the House of Commons on the 20th March the following figures:—

Allies... 1,418,000 bayonets
Enemy... 1,402,000
or an Allied superiority of... 16,000

As regards cavalry—
Allies... 84,000 sabres
Enemy... 38,000
or an Allied superiority of... 46,000

As regards machine guns—
Allies... 100,000 machine guns
Enemy... 64,000
or an Allied superiority of... 36,000

Yet, in spite of these superiorities, the General Staff Paper showed—

German rifle strength... 1,617,000
Allied rifle strength... 1,284,000
or, in other words, a German superiority of... 333,000

The discrepancy was difficult to account for. While the British were 6 divisions down, and the Portuguese 2 divisions down, the Germans were shown as being 18 up. From all the information received by the Cabinet, however, the German divisions appeared to be only 14 up. If the enemy were 14 divisions up and the Allies were 8 divisions down, the result was only about 200,000 rifles in favour of the enemy. It must further be remembered that, since then, the Allied forces had been increased by 2 British divisions from Italy, 1 division from Palestine, and 4 French divisions from Italy, making a total of 7 Allied divisions, for which no credit appeared to be shown. In any case, the Weekly Summary appeared to be utterly inconsistent with the figures provided for the Prime Minister’s speech.

The Secretary of State for War and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff undertook to look into the matter.

Inundations on the Western Front.

10. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that General Foch had asked for two brigades of Royal Marines to hold the points of passage across the inundations, which are being rapidly extended.
The First Sea Lord notified the War Cabinet that the Admiralty could not see their way to provide the two brigades for which General Foch asked.

11. The War Cabinet had under consideration a draft telegram to Mr. Lockhart (Appendix I (B)), prepared by the Foreign Office, in reply to Mr. Lockhart's telegram No. 96 of the 15th April, 1918 (Appendix I (A)).

The War Cabinet approved the draft subject to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs considering whether an alteration should be made in item 4, in order to secure that it did not imply that we were undertaking to recover the whole of the territory Russia had lost.

12. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Mr. Balfour (Paper G.T.-4253) proposing to raise the status of His Majesty's representatives in Brazil, the Argentine, and Chile from that of Minister to Ambassador, and to receive Ambassadors from those three countries.

The War Cabinet approved this proposal.

13. The War Cabinet had under consideration a letter from Lord Bryce to the Prime Minister, dated the 19th April, 1918, with reference to the Report of the Conference, of which Lord Bryce was Chairman, in regard to the Reform of the Second Chamber.

The War Cabinet approved the publication of the Report, and the Prime Minister undertook to send a letter to Lord Bryce thanking him for his services in this connection.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 22, 1918.
APPENDIX I (A).

Mr. Lockhart to Mr. Balfour.—(Received April 20.)

(No. 96.)

Moscow, April 15, 1918.

FOLLOWING from Captain Garstin:—

In view of Trotsky's request for a definite statement of terms on which Allied intervention might be invited by Government of Soviets, Allied military representatives met yesterday to formulate their opinions on this subject.

We decided that following measures would be desirable:

1. Renewal of alliance with Russia.
2. Guarantee not to interfere with Russian internal affairs.
3. Loyal collaboration with Government of Soviets.
4. Guarantee of integrity of Russian territory.
5. Allies shall declare that operating forces will cross Siberia solely in order to reach war zone.
6. Troops shall be Allied and not only Japanese.
7. Russia shall be helped on Murman and Archangel railways.
8. Co-operation shall be given to Armenia against Turks if desirable.

APPENDIX I (B).

Draft Telegram to Mr. Lockhart (Moscow).

FOREIGN Office.

YOUR telegram No. 96.

I think suggestions of military representatives may well serve as a basis for discussion.

As far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, 2, 4, and 6 can be accepted as they stand. We have always considered Russia as our Ally, and word "re-affirmation" should therefore be substituted for "renewal" in 1.

As 3 stands at present, it might in certain conceivable circumstances conflict with 2. I therefore prefer "Loyal co-operation with Russian authorities against common enemy."

In order to give requisite military latitude, 5 should be amended as follows: "Allies shall declare that operating forces will cross Siberia solely for the purpose of carrying out military operations against the enemy."

If by help on Murman and Archangel railways aid given by ships and by marines landed from them is meant, 7 can remain unchanged; but employment of troops must necessarily be subject to military exigencies, as must also acceptance of 8. We are, however, most anxious to help in both cases.

(Repeated to Tokio, Paris, Rome, and Washington.)
WAR CABINET, 397.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, April 23, 1918, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. A. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, K.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.


Brigadier-General P. P. de B. Radcliffe, C.B., D.S.O., Representing the Director of Military Operations (for Minutes 1 to 5).


Sir Frederick Liddell, K.C.B., Treasury (for Minutes 6 and 7).

The following were also present:


Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 5).

The Right Hon. W. Long, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (for Minutes 6 to 9).


The Right Hon. Sir George Cave, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minutes 6 and 7).

The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction (for Minutes 6 and 7).


Professor W. G. S. Adams (for Minutes 6 and 7).


Captain L. F. Burns, Assistant Secretary.

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
1. The Director of Military Operations reported that there was no change in the situation on the Western front. The tendency of the information received was towards an attack against the IIIrd and IVth Armies, somewhere between Arras and Amiens. There was also an enemy concentration in the Ypres region, as had been reported on the previous day (War Cabinet 396, Minute 4).

2. The First Sea Lord reported that a naval raid had been carried out against Zeebrugge and Ostend on the previous night, with the object of blocking those harbours, which were used by the enemy as destroyer and submarine bases. The attack had been prepared for a long time, and on one occasion the ships to be engaged had actually set sail. The operation, however, required an exceptional combination of weather conditions, light, wind, and tide, and it had to be abandoned. The operation included arrangements for the obsolete cruiser "Vindictive" and two Liverpool ferry-boats, the "Iris" and the "Daffodil," full of troops, to go alongside the Mole, with a boarding-party, with the object of destroying everything found there. The "Vindictive" had been alongside the Mole for one hour, and had actually returned. Five obsolete cruisers were used as block-ships, filled with concrete, and were sunk by design. At Zeebrugge, two of these block-ships were sunk in their proper place. At Ostend, it was understood that the block-ships had not been sunk in the intended place because they had grounded before they reached there. Two old submarines, full of explosives, had been used to make a gap in the pile-work at the root of the mole. The Vice-Admiral, Dover, had reported that the operation was completed. He had come into Dover, and all his destroyers and light forces, together with many motor-boats that had been used for smoke-screen purposes, were safely back. A barrage of fog had been put out, with the most successful results, which had enabled the operations to be carried out. The whole exploit had taken place in the dark, without lights. No aerial bombardment, by way of assistance, had been possible, owing to rain and mist.

With regard to casualties, the First Sea Lord reported that, out of the block-ships, 1 officer and 60 men had not yet been accounted for. No news had been received of the block-ship "Thetis." It was supposed that our casualties amounted to about 400.

The Prime Minister said that this naval raid had been a very fine performance; it was a well-conceived plan, carried out with great nerve and precision, and every credit must be given to Admiral Iveyes and the officers and men who had taken part in the operation.

With reference to publishing the news, the First Lord said that, in order to forestall the Germans, who would probably say that they had sunk five British cruisers, he had sent a notice to the press, for insertion in the early editions of the evening papers, instead of making an announcement in the House of Commons, to the effect that the five cruisers had been sunk by design.

As regards sending their congratulations to the Vice-Admiral, Dover, the War Cabinet decided:

To wait until the following day, by which time fuller reports will have been received.

3. The Prime Minister, on behalf of the War Cabinet, congratulated the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the success of his speech in the House of Commons on the previous day, and the favourable reception accorded to his Budget proposals.
4. With reference to War Cabinet No. 396, Minute 7, the Secretary of State for War reported that a long discussion on the subject of American military co-operation had been held with General Pershing and his Chief of Staff. The old points had been raised, but final conclusions had not been reached, and a further meeting was to take place that afternoon at 4 o'clock.

The Director of Military Operations reported that there were at present in France 11,700 American troops (infantry and machine-guns) for attachment to the British armies. Under General Pershing in France there were 389,000 troops of all kinds. Of these, however, there were only about 100,000 fighting men, of which it might be said that 60,000 were infantry.

With reference to a memorandum by Secretary Baker, the terms of which had been communicated in Lord Reading's telegram, dated the 21st April, 1918, the attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to a subsequent telegram from Lord Beading, dated the 22nd April, saying: "I very earnestly hope that you will not ask me to raise any objection to memorandum of which I sent you yesterday." A further message had been received from Lord Reading on the 22nd April, to the effect that Colonel House strongly advised that the "document should be accepted, not only without raising any objection, but also without having any in mind."

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that, on diplomatic grounds, it was most desirable that the memorandum in question should be accepted.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should telegraph to Lord Reading, authorising him to accept the memorandum, and adding that the details of the matter were now being discussed by the War Office with General Pershing, in London.

5. The War Cabinet had before them Joint Note No. 23, by the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council, in regard to the utilisation of Belgian railway resources. This paper showed that there were 200 Belgian main line locomotives, with crews, in workable condition, which were not performing any useful purpose at the moment, and 5,847 skilled railway men in the Belgian army (not in railway units). The Military Representatives strongly recommended that the 200 locomotives, with their crews, should be obtained from the Belgian Government and placed at the disposal of the Allies, and that the release from the Belgian army of the approximately 6,000 skilled railwaymen should be obtained.

The War Cabinet were of opinion that pressure should be put upon the Belgian Government to carry out the recommendations of the Military Representatives contained in Joint Note 23, and decided that—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should make representations to the Belgian Government in accordance with the recommendations contained in Joint Note 23, and at the same time should ask the French Government to make similar representations. As regards replacement of Belgian railway material, it was decided to follow precedent in the matter.*

* The Secretary is in communication with Sir Sam Fay on the subject, and will notify the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in due course.
6. With reference to War Cabinet 392, Minute 12, the War Cabinet had before them a Report by Field-Marshal Lord French, in regard to the situation of affairs in Ireland, and the dispositions which had been made by him, in co-operation with the head of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Chief Commissioner for Dublin, in view of the possibility of opposition to the enforcement of the Act in Ireland (Paper No. 29/B/12).

The Prime Minister stated that, from information which he had received from Field-Marshal Lord French, it appeared that, while the situation was undoubtedly menacing, Lord French was of opinion that, although the application of the Act to Ireland would not be easy, yet he still felt certain, as he had previously informed the War Cabinet, that he would be able to enforce it. On the other hand, Sir Bryan Mahon, in spite of the statement which he had previously made to the War Cabinet, was not so sanguine as to expect results.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland said that he had received a report in connection with the consultation which had been held in Dublin between Colonel MacLean, representing the War Office, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, General Byrne and the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Police, which stated that it was proposed to call up for service all men under 23 years of age, and that seventy-three military tribunals were to be established in Ireland. Mr. Duke had not himself seen the scheme, but his information, received from the police, was to the effect that it could not be successfully put into operation. Mr. Duke also read further report from the Under Secretary for Ireland, which stated, that the Under-Secretary understood that the proposed scheme was to be put into operation without any delay. In view of the fact that proposals such as these must percolate throughout the country and hasten preparations to resist conscription, Mr. Duke expressed the opinion that the setting up of the machinery to apply the Act to Ireland would precipitate the day when, owing to opposition, it would be necessary to put troops in control of the Island. Both the Head of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Chief Commissioner for Dublin expressed grave fears that the Bishops would induce the young Roman Catholic policemen to withdraw from giving any assistance in enforcing the Act, and that to replace these policemen by police from England would be useless. Mr. Duke further stated that a manifesto had been issued yesterday, signed by seventeen King’s Counsel, including a number of Public Prosecutors, and by two Sergeants of Law, approving the declaration of the Catholic hierarchy to oppose conscription. The Department of Agriculture in Ireland had also been receiving notices from their Inspectors to the effect that the farmers would stop tillage and threaten to plough up crops already sown. Mr. Duke also reported that he had received information that the civilian coast-watchers on the southern and western coasts had withdrawn from their duties, as a protest against conscription.

Mr. Barnes expressed the opinion that it was inadvisable to publish the details of the machinery which was to be set up, in view of the fact that such publication would necessarily stop any voluntary recruiting, and would probably inflame the people.

General Shaw stated that he had received information from Ireland that at 12 midnight last night a general strike of all labour had taken place, which, it was anticipated, would terminate at 12 midnight to-night. All trains had ceased to run, except those on the Great Northern Railway. Mails for all parts of Ireland, except those served by that Railway, would not be delivered; but, so far as he had been able to ascertain, only one troop train had been held up. No reports of any disturbances had been received.

With reference to the steps taken in connection with the setting up of machinery to apply the Act, the Adjutant-General stated that he had been in consultation with the Minister of National Service...
on the subject, and had drawn up a plan, which they proposed to lay before the War Cabinet, a draft of which he hoped to have ready for submission to the Secretary of State for War to-morrow morning. No steps had been taken by him or Sir Auckland Geddes in this matter, except to send over Colonel MacLean to Ireland with a draft of the proposals, marked "Secret," to Sir Bryan Mahon, and nothing could possibly be done with regard to recruiting under the Act in Ireland for another three weeks. General Macready was of opinion that the difficulties which would be encountered would probably be passive rather than active, pointing out that in this country no less than 633 men had adopted that attitude. If such action were taken by the Irish in order to avoid the Act, General Macready gave it as his opinion that these men should be treated as soldiers and tried by general court-martial as such. He explained that we had never exercised in Great Britain the full power of Military Law with regard to Conscientious Objectors.

It was pointed out that the Government were only making preparations to carry out a declared policy, that the Act could not be put into operation without an Order in Council. The opinion was also expressed, in view of the reports which had been sent to the Department of Agriculture in Ireland, that whereas a supply of oats and livestock undoubtedly came from Ireland, yet Great Britain shipped there large quantities of tea, wheat, and coal, and that the balance of tonnage was in favour of Great Britain.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The President of the Board of Trade and the Minister of Shipping should investigate the amount of foodstuffs imported from and exported to Ireland, and lay a report on this question before the War Cabinet.

(b.) In view of the statement made to the War Cabinet by Mr. Duke, the First Lord of the Admiralty should report to the War Cabinet in regard to the reliability attached by the Admiralty to their coast-watchers in Ireland.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 392, Minute 13, the War Cabinet had before them a letter addressed by Mr. Long to the Prime Minister, dated the 18th April, 1918 (Paper G.T.-3310).

Mr. Long stated that there was considerable and increasing evidence to show that, if a beginning could be made with the establishment of a Federal system for the United Kingdom, it would be much easier to pass the Government of Ireland Amendment Bill through the House of Commons. He was receiving many representations daily in favour of a Federal solution from Liberals and from Unionists. The Nationalists wanted the control of Customs and Excise. The people of Ulster were not prepared to negotiate at all, and they held that they had been unfairly treated on the Convention. An encouraging feature, however, emerged from the reports of the Convention, which showed that barriers had been broken down over a variety of questions which, in former days, would have divided Irishmen on the old party lines. He did not believe that it would be possible to pass a Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons unless it could be shown that it was not inconsistent with Federalism. He thought, further, that, having regard to the immense burden of post-war legislation which would rest upon Parliament, some Federal plan was inevitable. Such a solution would greatly help to make Home Rule tolerable to Unionists, to the Ulster people, and more acceptable even to the Nationalists. It would be very difficult for Irishmen to oppose measures which it was intended to make applicable to each of the four parts of the United Kingdom. Some members of the House of Lords would regard the Federal proposal as a very serious step. It was also prophesied that the Irish Nationalist members would not attend Parliament while the Bill
was under discussion. He doubted that. A resolution could be moved from one side of the House and seconded from the other in support of the Federal principle, and of the appointment of a Committee to consider its application to England, Scotland, and Wales; while in the preamble to the Home Rule Bill, and also in some of its clauses, there could be references to the Government’s intention to set up national legislatures, not only in Ireland, but in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Prime Minister suggested that the Cabinet could lay it down as a principle that the Irish Bill must be compatible with a Federal scheme, and provision could be made for setting up a Commission on the lines of the Speaker’s Conference. He had always found that the Ulster representatives objected to being treated differently from the United Kingdom, but if a scheme were projected in which Ireland would appear as much an integral part of the United Kingdom as England, Scotland, and Wales, that would go a long way to placate Ulster. As regards Wales, there were several problems which Welshmen would like to handle themselves, and for dealing with which the Imperial Parliament never found adequate time. Had Wales enjoyed Home Rule, he believed greater progress would have been made, especially with education. He was assured by representative Scotsmen that the same feeling of the present Parliament being congested prevailed, and there was a growing desire that Scottish affairs should be managed by Scotsmen. He would not, however, make the passage of the Home Rule Bill dependent on the acceptance of a general scheme of Federalism.

Mr. Chamberlain thought it essential to obtain a decision from Parliament in favour of the Federal principle, because otherwise it would be impossible to obtain sufficient Unionist support for the Irish Bill; secondly, because of the congestion of business after the war, and the strain which would be thrown on the Imperial Parliament; and, thirdly, because Federalism provided a solution for problems like Customs, which were otherwise extraordinarily difficult. He therefore wished it to appear plainly on the face of the Irish Bill that it was the first instalment of a Federal scheme for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Barnes urged that, as already decided by the Cabinet, the Convention’s Majority Report should form the basis of the Bill. It had obtained a certain measure of agreement. The Nationalists now feared that the Government were cunningly devising a new scheme which they would be forced to reject, and that the Government was doing this so as to put the Nationalists in the wrong in the eyes of their countrymen and of the world at large. He wanted to be assured that the Federal proposals were not inconsistent with a Bill based on the Convention Report. If the Government travelled outside that Report, it would give rise to suspicion and fresh controversy. The decision of the Convention to postpone the consideration of Customs and Excise was not inconsistent with a Federal Bill.

Mr. Long agreed that a Federal Bill and the Convention Report were not inconsistent, but a number of important issues would have to be dealt with in the Bill, which had not been faced by the Convention. It was true that the majority had excluded Customs and Excise for the present, but he understood that this conclusion had been obtained by a very narrow margin of votes, perhaps for the purpose of keeping the Convention together, rather than on merits, and that the majority really would have preferred to retain control of Excise.

The Prime Minister reminded the Cabinet that, in their letter of 25th February, 1918, addressed to the Convention, a suggestion had been made that, “at the end of the war a Royal Commission should be established to re-examine impartially and thoroughly the financial relations of Great Britain and Ireland, to report on the contribution of Ireland to Imperial expenditure, and to submit proposals as to
the best means of adjusting the economic and fiscal relations of the
two countries."

General Smuts said that in the Cabinet's letter to the Convention it
had been suggested that, during the period of the war, and for a
period of two years thereafter, the control of Customs and Excise
should be reserved to the United Kingdom Parliament. This
suggestion was accepted by the Convention by a small majority.
He urged that the Cabinet should follow in the Bill the policy
indicated in their own letter, otherwise they would be charged with
a breach of faith, and they would force the Nationalists to reject
any other treatment of the problem less favourable to their point of
view. He himself could not conceive of the Imperial Parliament
surrendering the control of Customs when a general Federal scheme
was adopted. He believed the Government was absolutely safe in
postponing the question, as suggested by the Majority Report.

Mr. Chamberlain said that he had suggested to the Committee
a clause withholding Customs and Excise for the present, but
agreeing to the extension of their control to Ireland if and whenever
such control was granted to the National Parliaments of England,
Scotland, and Wales.

Mr. Balfour agreed with Mr. Barnes that the Irish Bill must be
a Convention Bill, that is, it should embody the recommendations
agreed to by a majority of the Convention, and should, therefore,
exclude Customs and Excise for seven years, when the matter
should come up for reconsideration. He had been against
dealing with Home Rule at all during the war, but had come
to the conclusion that it had to be dealt with now as a war
measure. For that reason a great deal was to be gained by
adhering clearly to the Convention Report. Further, the
Bill had to be looked at as a war measure, in the fate of
which the self-governing dominions and the United States were
profoundly concerned, inasmuch as they were all united with us in
the prosecution of the war. So far he was prepared to go, but he
was most reluctant to be committed beyond that position and to
acceptance of a Federal system. It might be the case that there
was a growing body of opinion in favour of Federalism, but he
thought the question had received a very imperfect consideration.
The Federal solution had been found admirable in great countries
as an integrating force binding widely scattered regions into a
unity, but in a small country like ours there were neither historical
nor geographical reasons for introducing the Federal plan. England
formed by far the largest fraction of this kingdom, and he thought
that an English Parliament and a Federal Parliament in London
would be quite unworkable. With regard to the congestion of
business at the centre, the Federal solution would postpone recon­
struction problems indefinitely, because the country, immediately
after the war, would be plunged into acute controversy on constit­
tutional issues in the attempt to evolve a Federal scheme applicable
to the different parts of the Kingdom. He was prepared to support
a war scheme, but he hoped he would not be committed to a Federal
scheme all round.

Dr. Addison thought there was very little in the recommenda­
tions of the Convention ultimately inconsistent with a Federal
scheme, and he would not object to some provisional words being
inserted in the Irish Bill, such as "in the event of the adoption of
a Federal scheme." He was most anxious to avoid any delay in
introducing the Home Rule Bill. He favoured the adoption of a
Convention Report on the question of Customs and Excise; would
make the Irish Bill as consistent as possible with Federalism; and
would provide for the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry on
a Federal scheme for England, Scotland, and Wales. He urged
that nothing should be done to kindle a big controversy on
Federalism in general at this stage.

Mr. Long was certain that the adoption of Federalism was the
only chance of appeasing Ulster. If anything, opinion in Ulster
had hardened during the last few weeks. They were not satisfied
by the promised safeguard of an Ulster Committee or fuller representation. They felt betrayed by the Southern Unionists, and were holding out threats of a strike in the shipyards if a Home Rule Bill were forced through.

Lord Curzon said that the Cabinet were being asked to agree to a novel constitutional procedure. He agreed with Mr. Balfour that it would be extraordinarily difficult to adjust the spheres and duties of an Imperial Parliament and an English Parliament. The Cabinet were apparently being asked to pledge themselves to Federalism chiefly in order to extricate themselves out of their present Irish difficulties. He would prefer that the Bill should proceed on the basis already agreed upon, namely, the Convention Report and the Prime Minister's letter to the Convention. He was prepared to go further, and to omit from the Bill all that was inconsistent with Federalism, and to add what would help the passage of the Bill. He did not think it necessary to bring Federalism into the preamble, and was not opposed to a Commission of Enquiry; but the prompt passage of the Irish Bill was, in his opinion, of supreme importance at this juncture.

Mr. Bonar Law suggested that, in the light of the views that had been expressed, it would be better for the Cabinet to have before them a draft of the Bill, with a preamble on the lines indicated by Mr. Long. On the question of Federalism he was in general agreement with Mr. Balfour, but the Cabinet had now to consider how most effectively to placate Ulster. The objection to Federalism was the difficulty of securing under it a real Imperial Parliament.

Mr. Long agreed to produce a draft Bill as requested, but warned the Cabinet that he might be unable to support the Bill in the shape in which it finally emerged.

The Prime Minister agreed with the demand for promptitude in dealing with the Irish situation. It would be impossible to proceed with conscription until Home Rule had been dealt with. The Irish situation to-day raised the biggest constitutional issue on which Parliament had been divided for 50 or 40 years: the real supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. The Irish Nationalists at the present moment were challenging the right of the Imperial Parliament to impose upon them an Act which they dislike. That was a challenge to the unity of the Kingdom. Whether the Cabinet had been right in raising the issue at this time was questionable, but now the issue had been raised it had to be boldly faced. It was important, therefore, to make the situation as favourable as possible for the Cabinet to engage upon such a conflict. The Cabinet should be in a position to say: These domestic issues we hand over to you, but conscription we mean to enforce.” It was a big issue, and it was the one which had divided the Northern and the Southern States. Until Home Rule was carried through Parliament, the Government would not be in a good strategical position for enforcing the Military Service Act in Ireland. Once the conflict was over, he believed Irishmen would settle down.

Mr. Balfour expressed full concurrence in this view.

Mr. Herbert Fisher said that he had discussed the Irish situation with Lord Southborough, who took a not unhopeful view. According to Lord Southborough, the Nationalist Party in the Convention had been prepared to make very generous concessions to Ulster, if only Ulster would come in and co-operate. If a Bill could be produced embodying the majority proposals of the Convention, Lord Southborough believed that the Nationalists would consent to any guarantees asked for by Ulster, provided Ulster came into the Irish Parliament.

The War Cabinet decided—

To adjourn the discussion until they had an opportunity of considering the draft Bill, now in course of preparation by Mr. Long's Committee.

The Western Front: Extension of the British Line.

8. The War Cabinet took note of the Proclamation, prepared by the Minister of National Service, for calling up men born in the years 1874-75 (Paper G.T.-4305).

9. The Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that his attention had been drawn to articles in certain newspapers suggesting that the recent reverse of the Vth Army was due to the Government having forced Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig to extend his line unduly. A question on these lines had been put by Mr. George Lambert in the House of Commons for that afternoon. He had accordingly instructed the Secretary of the War Cabinet to furnish him with the Proceedings of the War Cabinet and of the International Conference on this subject. He had very carefully studied these Proceedings, and it was quite clear that the question had invariably been left for decision between the Commanders-in-Chief of the British and French Armies; that no pressure had been put on Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig to comply with the French demands; and that, whenever the subject had been discussed with representatives of the French Government, the British representatives had invariably put the views of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief with the utmost force. He felt that the time was approaching when it might be necessary to make a full statement in the House of Commons on the subject.

After a short discussion, in the course of which attention was drawn to the undesirability of discussing the question at any length in the absence of the Secretary of State for War, who had had to leave the Meeting earlier, the War Cabinet agreed that—

Mr. Lambert's question did not afford a convenient opportunity for a full statement, and that a reply should be given in the sense that there was not the smallest justification for the suggestion that this portion of the line was taken over contrary to the judgment of Sir William Robertson and Sir Douglas Haig; the arrangements in the matter were made entirely by the British and French military authorities.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 23, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 398.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on
Wednesday, April 24, 1918, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.T.E.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:—


The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 1 to 4).

General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 4).


The Right Hon. W. H. Long, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (for Minutes 1 to 11).

The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minutes 13 and 14).

Sir Stephenon Kent, K.C.B., Ministry of Munitions (for Minutes 13 and 14).

Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 7).

The Right Hon. T. J. Macnamara, LL.D., M.P., Financial Secretary, Admiralty (for Minute 17).

The Right Hon. Sir J. Maclay, Bart., Shipping Controller (for Minute 11).

The Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Labour (for Minutes 13 to 18).

Sir D. J. Shackleton, K.C.B., Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour (for Minutes 13 to 18).


Major P. Lloyd Greame, M.C., Secretary, Ministry of National Service (for Minutes 13 to 15).


Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that the Germans had brought to their front one fresh division, in the vicinity of Robecq.

A question was asked as to when the next offensive on the part of the Germans was likely to take place, and reference was made to a speech which had recently been made by General von Stein, in the Reichstag, which indicated that no large offensive was probable in the immediate future.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff inclined to the same view.

General Wilson stated that at the present moment there were only seventeen fresh German divisions, two of which were composed of Landwehr troops, and were consequently of small fighting value. This represented on the Western front the smallest number of fresh divisions since the offensive began.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 397, Minute 4, the Secretary for War reported that the result of the conversations at the War Office with General Pershing was that an agreement had been reached as to the programme for the next six weeks.

The Prime Minister said that it had transpired from a conversation with Captain Guest, who had seen and spoken to American troops embarking from this country for France, that men had been sent forward from the United States without any method, with the result that men with six months' training were to be found side by side with raw recruits. General Pershing had confirmed this information, and had expressed surprise at the occurrence, which he supposed was due to the haste with which the orders to push forward troops had been carried out. He had said that it was necessary to sift and re-organise these troops before they could be employed.

3. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the Germans had three divisions, two of which were in the line and one was in the reserve, opposite the Belgian front.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that General Foch had sent one French division to support the Belgians, and that the move would be completed by to-morrow night. Instructions had also been given to General Plumer and to the Belgians that, in case of attack, the reserves of the two countries were to be co-ordinated. General Wilson added that this meant that by to-morrow night the French would have six infantry and three cavalry divisions in the north of Flanders.

4. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that he had been in communication with the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief in France in regard to General Trenchard; that Sir Douglas Haig had offered to give General Trenchard immediately the command of a brigade; and that, if such a command was carried out satisfactorily, he hoped to give him the command of a division at a later date.

This gave rise to a short discussion on the subject of the forthcoming debate in Parliament relative to the recent change in the post of Chief of the Staff at the Air Ministry, and the suggestion was made that it would be more suitable if, in view of General Trenchard's unrivalled experience in the air, he were given a command in the Air Service.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he understood from General Trenchard that, in his view, in the highest interests of the Air Service, he ought not to take up an air command.
It was also stated that General Trenchard had declined to accept a post as Chief of the Air Staff on Sir Douglas Haig's Staff. It was suggested, however, that it was desirable that an Inspector-General of the Air Service might be appointed, with a view to co-ordinating the work of the outlying and home air stations, and for the inspection of equipment and aeroplanes, and that it would be more desirable to utilise General Trenchard's experience in this way than in the field.

General regret was expressed that Lord Rothermere was indisposed, and that the question could not be discussed with him, but, in view of the urgency of the matter, the War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Prime Minister, Mr. Bonar Law, and General Smuts should, on behalf of the War Cabinet, discuss the question at once with the Under-Secretary for Air.

(b.) The Secretary should send to each member of the War Cabinet a copy of the correspondence between Lord Rothermere and General Trenchard on the subject of the latter's resignation.

Wheat for Italy.

Mr. Chamberlain said that Signor Orlando had sent the Italian Ambassador direct to Sir John Beale, asking for more wheat for Italy. The situation was that the arrivals of wheat in each of the Allied countries were short of the programme in approximately the same proportion, but that the difference between the French and ourselves on the one hand, and Italy on the other, was that we had begun the year with several weeks' supply in reserve, and that the French had now been obliged to admit that they also had had several, though not quite as many, weeks' stock in reserve. The Italians, on the other hand, had no reserve and had actually impinged on the new harvest before the new cereal year had commenced. Sir John Beale was of opinion that they had just enough if no exceptional losses of wheat in transit, such as had sometimes taken place, occurred, but that if such exceptional losses did take place they might be very short. Looking at the question purely on the merits, he would be inclined to take this risk. Having regard to the policy which the Cabinet had hitherto pursued of being rather more generous to Italy, and to the fact that our position was so satisfactory that we could afford to spare the wheat, he would be prepared to release 50,000 tons of wheat to Italy, as a reserve in order to relieve the Italian Government from anxiety and to cover any possible sinking of wheat ships. He considered that this would be in harmony with the policy previously pursued towards Italy by His Majesty's Government. Mr. Chamberlain also drew attention to Joint Note No. 22, by the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council, which indicated that the transport of troops, in the case of an offensive in Italy, would have to be carried out between France and Italy with the greatest possible rapidity, and, consequently, there would be a temporary suspension of all trains carrying coal and supplies for the armies and war factories in Italy. This went to prove that Italy ought not to be left in any danger of being found short of breadstuffs at a critical moment. On the other hand, shipping losses in the Mediterranean were very heavy, and the Minister of Shipping objected to the diversion of more shipping in that direction than was absolutely essential. Mr. Chamberlain stated that he would be prepared to recommend a compromise, namely, that 25,000 tons of wheat should be diverted to Italy.

The War Cabinet authorised—

Mr. Chamberlain to arrange the matter, after consultation as requisite with the Minister of Shipping and the Wheat Commission.
6. The Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that seven attacks on enemy submarines had been carried out during the past twenty-four hours, some of which promised to render good results.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 397, Minute 2, the Deputy First Sea Lord gave the following summary of the reports that had been received up to date regarding the operations carried out on the night of April 22/23 at Ostend and Zeebrugge. It was intended that an aerial bombardment should have taken place prior to the main operations, but such was impossible, owing to the state of the weather. The “Vindictive” was received with heavy fire, and suffered many casualties before getting alongside the mole. The “Thetis” was also received with heavy fire, and sank just outside the harbour. The “Intrepid” and “Iphigenia” passed round the latter and were sunk in such positions that it is believed that the Bruges Canal is blocked. The majority of the crews were most gallantly taken off by motor-launch No. 282. Our storming and demolition parties which landed on the mole suffered heavy losses from the fire of the German destroyers alongside the mole, but they nevertheless inflicted considerable damage, and their work enabled the block-ships to attain their position. The destroyer “North Star” and the coastal motor-boats came inside the harbour and fired five torpedoes at the German destroyers alongside the wall. The “North Star” was afterwards sunk. The smoke screen, which was made to assist the operations, acted effectively until the wind changed, after the engagement had lasted an hour, which enabled the land batteries to pick up the ships, and consequently casualties resulted. The submarine “C.3” was blown up in the correct position in the pile-work at the neck of the mole, and a large gap has been observed in the viaduct. The other submarine failed to attain her correct position, and returned into harbour.

As regards Ostend, the wind had changed after the flares had been placed, and the flares were extinguished by enemy gunfire; consequently, the “Sirius” and “Brilliant” were unable to find their correct position. Later observation, however, indicates that there is a sunken object lying between the pier, blocking about two-thirds of the fairway of the harbour, and that another vessel is ashore ½ mile to the east of Ostend. About 500 men were landed on the mole at Zeebrugge, and our total casualties are about 400, from the whole force engaged. In addition to the “North Star,” two motor-launches and one coastal motor-boat are missing.

8. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that on Monday night, the 22nd April, five Austrian destroyers were engaged by two of our destroyers in the vicinity of the Otranto barrage, and that the enemy destroyers retreated to Durazzo, our destroyers being supported in the chase by five British and one French destroyer on the Otranto patrol line. As regards damage, the fore magazine of one of our destroyers (the “Hornet”) blew up, 5 ranks and ratings being killed and 15 wounded. The other destroyer was fit for service, and had 2 killed and 4 wounded. As the attack took place in the dark it was not possible to say what damage the Austrian destroyers sustained.

9. The question was asked as to whether there was any truth in the rumour that de Valera had been discovered to be in communication with the enemy. No information to this effect had reached any member of the War Cabinet, and there was no reference to it in a private letter from Lord French on the situation which the Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet. From this letter it was seen that preparations in Ireland are for passive rather than active resistance.
to the Military Service Act. Lord French drew attention, *inter alia*,
to the necessity of stopping speeches and actions inciting active
opposition.

The question was postponed for a more formal discussion.

10. Attention was called to the entire absence of any organised
system of propaganda in Ireland. It was pointed out that the
United Kingdom had been excluded from the sphere of activities of
the Minister of Propaganda, and that Ireland was not a suitable
field of action for the War Aims Committee. A suggestion was
made, however, that suitable cinema performances might be useful,
and it was stated that an American Mission had gone there, and
that they might be able to create in the minds of Irishmen an
interest in the war.

11. The War Cabinet had under consideration a Report by the
Secretary of State for the Colonies (Paper G.T.-4287), in which it
was stated that the Canadian Government complained of the diversion
of shipping from Canadian to United States ports without prior
consultation with them.

Mr. Long drew particular attention to the following extract
from a telegram from the Governor-General of Canada, dated the
17th April, 1918: “The Canadian Government hope that they may
have an explicit assurance that, in respect of matters so vitally
concerning this country, His Majesty's Government will not proceed
upon the principle of deciding first and consulting the Canadian
Government afterwards.” Mr. Long stated that he must press for
the acceptance of the principle of consultation, as urged by the
Canadian Government, and said that feeling on the subject
was very strong in Canada, where they were making special efforts to obtain
recruits and generally to assist in the prosecution of the war,
and consequently keenly felt any omission to consult them in matters of
shipping, which affected the vital interests of the Dominion.

The Minister of Shipping stated that he considered it would be
a mistake to give a definite assurance that in all cases the Canadian
Government would be consulted as to the transfer of shipping, as it
was impossible to do under war conditions what it was usual and
necessary to do under conditions of peace, and that the move which
caused the present trouble was necessitated by the urgency of
carrying American troops to France at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Bonar Law recalled that when he had been Secretary of
State for the Colonies a difficulty had arisen with the Canadian
Government about the requisitioning of shipping, and that he had
given a definite undertaking that such would not be carried out in
future without the Dominion Government being consulted.

The War Cabinet decided that—

It was impossible to lay down a condition that the British
Government must obtain the prior consent of the Dominion
Governments with regard to the diversion of shipping, but
requested the Minister of Shipping, if any similar cases
arose in the future, to inform the Secretary of State for the
Colonies, in order that he could communicate our intentions
to the Dominion Governments concerned, with the

12. With reference to War Cabinet 367, Minute 21, the War
Cabinet had under consideration a Report of the War Pensions
Warrant Committee (Paper G.-205).

Mr. Barnes pointed out that the two main changes were an
increase in the amount payable to children, which would incur an
additional expenditure of about 30,000,000l., and the addition to
alternative pension of the widows of those who have been well-to-do,
which meant an extra 8,000,000l. or 9,000,000l. All the other
alterations, as set out in the Report, were of a trifling nature, and were necessary as the result of experience gained in the working of the old Pensions Warrant. He added that the Treasury had agreed to the proposals contained in the new Warrant.

The War Cabinet approved the Warrant as set out in Paper G-205.

Man-Power: Mobility of Munitions Labour

13. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Mr. Churchill, covering a minute by Sir Stephenson Kent (Paper G.T.-4306), dealing with the question of a wide extension of enrolment under the War Munitions Volunteer scheme.

Mr. Churchill stated that, in order to secure the release of the largest possible number of men for the army and to maintain the greatest possible output of munitions, it was indispensable that there should be a greater control of the residuum of labour left behind in the workshops. It was necessary to bring great pressure to bear on everyone to enrol as a War Munitions Volunteer. Those who refused, and were not available to be moved about as required, should be made to understand that they stood a greater chance of being recruited for the army. This proposal had been put to the Trade Union Advisory Committee, and they were whole-heartedly in favour of steps being taken to increase the mobility of the men remaining available for the munitions industry. He did not ask the Trade Union officials to commit themselves to an approval of what might be called "industrial conscription"; he contented himself with the general resolution set forth in the memorandum before the Cabinet. The Advisory Committee were in favour of prompt action being taken. Mr. Churchill added that the removal of absolute protection from trades and groups of workmen had resulted in very striking improvement in output and in methods of production. The proposals which he now was putting forward included the power to regulate and restrict employers in the use of labour of important types of which there was a shortage, and of controlling the engagement of labour by firms who are using labour uneconomically.

Mr. Roberts said that he was in favour of the proposals, provided only moral pressure was used to secure enrolment. If there were any open threat of compulsion there was sure to be trouble. He thought the present moment propitious, and, if action were taken promptly, the proposals might be accepted without much opposition.

Mr. Chamberlain suggested that the public announcement, as drafted in the memorandum, was rather in the nature of a threat to the men who did not enrol. It would be better so to word it as to provide a special encouragement to the man who does enrol, and has shown himself willing to place himself at the disposal of the State.

The War Cabinet decided—

To approve the proposals of the Minister of Munitions, subject to the modification in phrasing suggested by Mr. Chamberlain.

Shipyard Labour.

14. In the course of the discussion on the previous question, attention was called to the lack of coordination in the use of labour engaged in munitions and shipyards, and more particularly to the slow rate of progress with dilution in Admiralty yards.

The Secretary was requested to place the subject on the Agenda of the War Cabinet of Friday next, the 26th April.

Man-Power: Recruiting in Ireland.

15. The War Cabinet had before them a draft Order in Council prepared by the Minister of National Service, postponing indefinitely the transfer by the Army Council to the Minister of National Service of the power to recruit in Ireland (Paper G.T.-4318).

Sir Auckland Geddes explained that, under an Order in Council,
Order of the British Empire Medal.

Naval Prize Bill.

dated the 23rd October, 1917, the powers of recruiting, then vested in the Army Council, were transferred to the Ministry of National Service. The Order contained a provision that the Minister might postpone its operation as regards any particular area in the United Kingdom up to the 1st May, 1918. Under this provision, the transfer of recruiting in Ireland had remained under the control of the Army Council. In view of the present circumstances in Ireland, he proposed that no change should be made. If the Order in Council were not issued, recruiting would pass automatically to the Minister of National Service.

Mr. Duke concurred in the proposal of Sir Auckland Geddes. The War Cabinet decided—

To submit the draft Order in Council to His Majesty.

13. With reference to War Cabinet 273, Minute 20, the War Cabinet had before them the Report of the Sub-Committee dealing with the distribution of the British Empire Medal, with a covering note from Sir George Cave (Paper G.T.-1208).

Sir George Cave explained that the Cabinet's proposal to distribute the medal in the proportion of one to every hundred workers, the recipient to be nominated by the workpeople, had not been found to be acceptable, the reason being given that, where all had worked well, such a distinction would be invidious. The list of awards made at the New Year was limited to persons who had performed acts of great courage and self-sacrifice in different kinds of war service. That list had been very well received, and the Sub-Committee now suggested that the difficulties of distributing the medal on the basis originally proposed should be met by—

(a.) Limiting the British Empire Medal to acts of courage or self-sacrifice, or specially distinguished service.
(b.) Issuing at the end of the war a general medal to all persons who had rendered war service for a certain length of time and are not otherwise disqualified.

Sir George Cave pointed out that it was not necessary to come to a decision on the second of the proposals at present.

The War Cabinet decided—

To approve the first proposal.

17. The War Cabinet had before them the draft of a Bill to amend the law relating to naval prize of war (Paper G.T.-4312).

Dr. Macnamara explained that before the present war prize-money was given to the actual captors. The unfairness of this procedure had led to a discussion by the Admiralty in 1911, and, as a result, it had been agreed to recommend that prize-money should be pooled for the whole of the fleet and distributed under suitable regulations, so that all could share in it, whether captors or otherwise. The present Bill had been drafted to give effect to this proposal. In reply to a question, Dr. Macnamara said that a summary of the proposals had been circulated to the dominions, and that, after discussion had taken place and certain amendments had been made, no objection had been raised to them by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The War Cabinet authorised—

The Board of Admiralty to proceed with the Bill.

18. The attention of the War Cabinet was called to a dispute, arising from an application for an increase of wages, between the National Transport Workers' Federation and the Port of London Authority. The workmen were willing to proceed to arbitration, but Lord Devonport, acting on behalf of the Port and Harbour Authority and Transport Workers' Federation.
authorities of the Kingdom, was not only opposed to arbitration, but unwilling to comply with the Arbitration Award if it went against the Port Authorities. The Ministry of Labour wished to proclaim a strike, so that the issue should be decided under the Munitions of War Acts. The men were in the right legally, as they were free to demand an increase in wages so long as they were prepared to accept arbitration upon it.

The War Cabinet decided—

To authorise the Ministry of Labour to advise His Majesty to issue the proposed proclamation.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 24, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 399.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Thursday, April 25, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:
The PRIME MINISTER (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.
The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.C.
The Right Hon. A. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. the VISCOUNT MILNER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.
General Sir H. H. WILSON, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 8).

Sir SAM FAY, Director-General of Movements and Railways (for Minutes 9 to 11).

Admiral Sir R. E. WEMYSS, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 8).
The Right Hon. SIR J. MACLAY, Bart., Shipping Controller (for Minutes 9 to 11).
The Right Hon. LORD ISLINGTON, G.C.M.G., D.S.O., Acting Secretary of State for India (for Minutes 14 and 15).
SIR T. W. HOLDENNESS, G.C.B., K.C.S.I., Under-Secretary for India (for Minutes 14 and 15).

Lieutenant-Colonel SIR M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.
Captain CLEMENT JONES, Assistant Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. ROW, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Captain E. ABRAHAM, Assistant Secretary.
The Western Front.
1. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that fighting was taking place in the vicinity of Villers-Bretonneux, and, although the situation was not quite clear, it appeared that we were getting round to the north and south of the village. The enemy attack in this vicinity was made yesterday with 5 divisions, of which 3, or possibly 4, were employed against us, and 2, or possibly 3, against the French. As regards the French, it appeared that they were holding Hangard village, but they had lost the cemetery at the north. Communication by telephone was bad this morning, but, as far as could be gathered, an attack had been started by the enemy against the position Kemmel–Wytschaete, which, it was understood, was now being defended by the French.

The Belgian Front.
2. With reference to War Cabinet 398, Minute 3, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that the situation as regards the Belgian army was that the Belgians have 9 divisions in the line and 3 in reserve, as well as 1 cavalry division. The French also had 1 division on that front and another was arriving there. A conference had taken place between General Gillain and General Plumer for the purpose of discussing all measures relative to the employment of reserves in defended lines. Further inundations were taking place, and General Foch was satisfied as to the situation.

Mutiny of Portuguese Troops.
3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informed the War Cabinet that he had received information that 800 Portuguese troops now in England had mutinied, and that he had applied to the Portuguese Government for authority to arrest such as refused to obey orders.

   The War Cabinet authorised—
   The Secretary of State for War, as soon as the Portuguese Government gave permission to do so, to take the necessary steps to arrest the mutineers.

Portuguese Reinforcements.
4. With reference to War Cabinet 396, Minute 5, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs mentioned that he had not yet received the instructions of the Cabinet as to the reply that he was to make to the Portuguese Government with regard to their desire to send further reinforcements to France.

   The Chief of the Imperial General Staff pointed out that, although the Portuguese troops might be considered fair, the officers were inefficient, and that, from a military point of view, it was not advisable to ask our men to lie alongside them in the line.

   The question was raised as to whether it would be possible to incorporate Portuguese troops in our battalions or brigades, in the same manner as was being adopted with regard to American troops; but it was pointed out that the American troops were coming in under their own officers, and that, unless British officers replaced the Portuguese officers, this course as regards the Portuguese would be undesirable.

   The War Cabinet requested—
   The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to take the necessary diplomatic action with a view to preventing any further Portuguese reinforcements being sent.
5. The First Sea Lord reported the particulars of an attack on an enemy submarine by an airship, which had had successful results, and mentioned that the explosion which destroyed the submarine blew the airship up to a height of 2,000 feet above her original position.

The First Sea Lord reported that another enemy submarine had been successfully attacked, and that four prisoners had been captured from her.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 395, Minute 8, the First Sea Lord stated that the damage to H.M.S. "Hornet" was not so great as had been originally reported, and that the vessel was now ready for sea.

7. In continuation of War Cabinet 398, Minute 7, the First Sea Lord stated that the official reports had not yet been received, but that information was available that the majority of the casualties had been sustained whilst the vessels were going alongside the mole; that two companies of Royal Marines out of three had been successfully landed and had done a great deal of damage; and that the sum result was that Zeebrugge had been successfully blocked, but that Ostend had not been. He hoped to get the full official reports to-day or to-morrow, and would furnish further information to the press at the earliest possible moment.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 398, Minute 14, the War Cabinet were informed that the Minister of National Service would be absent from London on duty on Friday next, and therefore directed—

The Secretary to place on the Agenda for Tuesday next, the 30th April, the questions of co-ordination in the use of labour engaged in munitions and shipyards and dilution in Admiralty yards.

9. With reference to Joint Note No. 22, by the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council, relative to transport between France and Italy, the War Council requested—

The Secretary of State for War to go into the matter with the Departments concerned, and to report in due course as to what action could be taken to carry out the recommendations contained in Joint Note No. 22 by the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council.

10. The War Cabinet had under consideration Joint Note No. 24, by the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council, relative to the shipment of rolling-stock from the United States.

The Minister of Shipping informed the War Cabinet that Mr. Raymond, with two American military officers, had recently arrived from the United States in order to go into the question, and that they were shortly proceeding to France to enquire on the spot into the congestion which prevailed as regards the Western ports, so far as it affected American reinforcements.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Minister of Shipping to draw the attention of the American Mission to Joint Note No. 24.
11. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to War Cabinet 394, Minute 3, in which the question of impressing upon the American Government the inadequacy of their shipbuilding output was raised.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs pointed out that the United States Government were fully aware that they had failed in carrying out their shipbuilding programme as originally announced, and that the President was quite aware of the fact that ships were the key to the situation. Mr. Balfour advocated sending the facts of the case to Lord Reading, leaving to his discretion what enquiries he should make or what pressure he should put upon the United States authorities in the matter.

Some particulars in regard to this subject, from the First Lord of the Admiralty (Paper G.T.-4252), in the details of which the Minister of Shipping generally concurred, were handed to Mr. Balfour, who undertook to telegraph them to Lord Reading.

The War Cabinet authorised—

Further action being left to Lord Reading's discretion.

12. With reference to War Cabinet 394, Minute 8, the War Cabinet took note of the decision of Mr. Chamberlain, as set out in Paper G.T.-4275, in which it was stated that the maximum prices for fertilisers from the 1st June, 1918, to 31st May, 1919, should be maintained at the level of the current year, 1917-18, and that the difference in cost should be borne by the State. They also noted that Mr. Chamberlain had ruled that, in the event of further rises in cost of acid or bags during the year 1918 or 1919, the increased cost should fall upon public funds, unless the increase was of such a serious character as to require a reconsideration of the question.

13. With reference to War Cabinet 398, Minute 5, Mr. Chamberlain reported that arrangements had been made with the Minister of Shipping and the Wheat Commission for from 20,000 to 25,000 tons of wheat to be diverted to Italy, the Italian Government being informed as soon as the actual amount had been fixed.

14. With reference to War Cabinet 203, Minute 1, the War Cabinet had before them correspondence between the India Office and the Government of India on the subject of commissions for natives of India (Paper G.T.-4328). The latest of these documents was a telegram, dated the 22nd April, 1918, from the Viceroy, asking for sanction to a series of proposals.

Lord Islington explained that a decision was asked for at such short notice because, in pursuance of the Prime Minister's appeal to India, the Viceroy was addressing a conference representing "all India" at Delhi on the 27th, and would be greatly fortified by being able to announce a generous concession of commissions to Indian soldiers. The Viceroy's proposals were as follows:

(a.) Permanent commissions.

(i) That an announcement of the grant of ten permanent King's commissions yearly, through Sandhurst, might be made;

(ii) That an announcement of the grant of King's commissions to a maximum of twenty selected Indian officers specially distinguished in the war might be made.
(b.) Temporary commissions.

That temporary King’s commissions should be granted during the war, on the same conditions as apply to British candidates for temporary commissions in the Indian Army, to the maximum number of 200, on nomination by loyal Governments and General Officers Commanding, and approval by the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy.

(c.) Honorary commissions.

That an announcement might be made of the grant of honorary King’s commissions to old and distinguished Indian officers still on the Active List, up to an establishment of one per infantry battalion and other arms in proportion, this established number to be filled up gradually.

Lord Islington stated that at a conference between the India Office and the War Office on the previous day, agreement had been reached on (a) (i).

As to (a) (ii), the War Office desired to add a proviso that each selection should be subject to the recommendation of the three senior British officers of the regiment to which the candidate belonged and to which he was to be posted as a commissioned officer, and that his acceptance by the three officers mentioned as a second lieutenant in their own regiment should be a condition of his appointment.

As to (c), there was also agreement. The new feature in this proposal was that hitherto honorary King’s commissions had only been granted to risaldars and subadars on their retirement. They were now to be offered honorary commissions while still on the active list.

As to (b), the military authorities were unable to concede what the Viceroy proposed. They suggested the following alternative:—

That the Government of India should be authorised to grant a certain number of cadetships in the already existing officer cadre known as “The Native Land Forces,” a cadre which, while it bestows British rank, does not confer any command over British troops. (It was from this cadre that the nine British commissions were given in August 1917.) Thus, after training, those considered suitable should be gazetted second lieutenants in the same cadre, and that the best of these might ultimately become eligible for the King’s commission.

These Commissions in Native Land Forces did not confer seniority over any British officer or soldier, as would be the case with officers holding King’s commissions. It was further proposed that the same proviso as stipulated in (a) (ii) should apply to the conversion of such of these officers as might have qualified for it into holders of permanent King’s commissions.

In the discussion that followed there was general concurrence in respect to proposals (a) and (c). On the subject of the temporary commissions, it was pointed out that the Viceroy’s proposals were dangerous, inasmuch as they might tend to create, after the war, another discontented class. Two hundred was a large number, and, possibly, should the Cabinet adopt the War Office alternative proposal, the Viceroy would not desire to adhere to it. A strong argument against the Viceroy’s proposal for temporary commissions was that it would discourage British recruitment of officers for the Indian Army. The alternative, which offered temporary rank without command over British troops, was a mitigation of this result, though it did not overcome the difficulty, previously experienced in respect of the Imperial Cadet Corps, of finding suitable employment.
for the nominees, and might not dispel the danger of producing in the end a group of disappointed public servants. The alternative, however, was more acceptable.

Lord Curzon expressed the hope that the twenty officers to be selected under (a) (ii) should not be chosen exclusively, as the majority of their nine predecessors had been, from officers who had served in France. Service in all theatres of war should count.

Lord Islington agreed to bring this point to the notice of the Government of India.

Lord Islington was further requested to telegraph privately to the Viceroy and ask him to give the War Cabinet more time in future to form decisions on matters of such importance.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The India Office should telegraph to the Viceroy their assent to the following proposals:

(a.) (i.) That an announcement of the grant of ten permanent King's commissions yearly, through Sandhurst, might be made;

(ii.) That an announcement of the grant of King's commissions, and the rank of Second-Lieutenant, to a maximum number of twenty selected Indian officers specially distinguished in the war, might be made, subject to the proviso that the three senior British officers of the regiment concerned recommended the candidate and accepted him as a Second-Lieutenant in their own regiment;

(b.) That the Government of India should be authorised to grant a certain number of cadetships, within a maximum of 200, in the already existing Officer Cadre known as "The Native Land Forces," a cadre which, while it bestows British rank, does not confer any command over British troops; that, after training, those considered suitable should be gazetted Second-Lieutenants in the same cadre, and that the best of these might ultimately become eligible for the King's commission, subject to the recommendation of the three senior British officers of the regiment, and the condition that the latter were prepared to accept the nominee as a Second-Lieutenant in their own regiment;

(c.) That an announcement might be made of the grant of Honorary King's commissions to old and distinguished Indian officers still on the active list, up to an establishment of one per infantry battalion and other arms in proportion; this establishment number to be filled up gradually.

15. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked that time should be given for the Treasury to examine the proposals for the shipment of sovereigns to India, contained in Paper G.T.-4327, which the War Cabinet were asked to consider.

It was decided that—

The question should be considered by the India Office and the Treasury, and, only failing agreement between them, be referred again for discussion by the War Cabinet. In case of agreement, the conclusions would be held to have Cabinet sanction, and should be communicated to the Secretary.
16. The Prime Minister read a letter from Lord Rothermere asking for acceptance of his resignation of the post of Secretary of State for the Air, on the grounds of ill-health, from which he had suffered for some time. The War Cabinet much regretted that the state of Lord Rothermere's health appeared to render impossible any course other than acceptance of his resignation, and the Prime Minister undertook to write a letter in this sense to Lord Rothermere, thanking him for the services he had rendered in amalgamating the Royal Air Service and the Royal Naval Air Service into the Royal Air Force.

17. With reference to War Cabinet 398, Minute 4, there was a short discussion in regard to the forthcoming debates in Parliament on the subject of General Trenchard's resignation from the post of Chief of the Staff of the Air Ministry. Lord Curzon pointed out that, as at present contemplated, the House of Lords would meet specially on Monday in order to hold a debate on the question at the same time as the debate in the House of Commons.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer undertook to inform Lord Curzon if there should be any alteration in regard to the debate in the House of Commons.

Lord Curzon undertook to ascertain from Lord Rothermere whether he personally was desirous of a debate in the House of Lords, in order that his case might be stated.

18. With reference to War Cabinet 395, Minute 12, the attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to a memorandum by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Paper G.T.-4308) on the subject of the demand it was proposed to make on agriculture for military man-power.

The War Cabinet agreed that—

In the first instance, the question should be discussed, on the initiative of Lord Milner, between Lord Milner, Sir Auckland Geddes and Mr. Prothero, and that, if they were unable to reach an agreement, the question should be brought before the War Cabinet.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 25, 1918.
WARR CABINET, 400.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, April 26, 1918, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:


Major-General Sir A. L. Lynden-Bell, K.C.M.G., C.B., Acting Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minute 13).


Brigadier-General P. P. de B. Radcliffe, C.B., D.S.O., Director of Military Operations (for Minutes 7-12).

The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minute 19).

Sir Stephenson Kent, K.C.B., Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 15).

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.


Brigadier-General P. P. de B. Radcliffe, C.B., D.S.O., Director of Military Operations (for Minutes 7-12).

The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minute 19).

Sir Stephenson Kent, K.C.B., Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 15).

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:

Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1-12).

The Right Hon. Lord Islington, G.C.M.G., D.S.O., Acting Secretary of State for India (for Minute 13).

Sir Thomas W. Holderness, G.C.B., K.C.S.I., Under-Secretary of State for India (for Minute 13).

The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction (for Minute 16).


Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
The Adriatic: British Aeroplane Attack.

1. THE First Sea Lord reported that, on the 23rd April, five British aeroplanes left Otranto to attack Durazzo. The machines attacked merchant-ships and a seaplane base, dropping two 230-lb. bombs and 16 100-lb. bombs, with apparently successful results. All the machines returned safely.

Seaplanes.

2. The First Sea Lord stated that, in an aerial fight with seven enemy seaplanes off the North Hinder position yesterday, one of our seaplanes, which was manned by two United States officers, was lost.

Submarines.

3. The First Sea Lord reported that His Majesty's ship "Jessamine" dropped six depth charges on a submarine off Carnsore Point yesterday, and picked up one prisoner, who stated that the submarine was the "U 104."

Admiral Wemyss stated that a report had been received from Gibraltar to the effect that His Majesty's ship "Chrysanthemum," when 42 miles off Cape Spartei, sighted a submarine on the 24th April, and dropped depth charges. Wreckage was seen, and it was considered that the submarine was sunk.

The First Sea Lord also reported that information had been received from Cape Town that the steamship "Headcliffe" had been attacked by a submarine on the 6th April off Cape Verde. A gunnery action of some length took place, in which the submarine fired 120 rounds, and the ship sixty-one rounds. The ship was not hit, but, as the action was discontinued for no apparent reason, it is believed that the submarine was.

Loss of H.M.S. "Cowslip."

4. The First Sea Lord stated that H.M.S. "Cowslip" had been torpedoed 10 miles from Cape Spartei yesterday morning, and that the ship had been sunk. The survivors had been taken on board the U.S.S. "Severn."

Naval Raid on Zeebrugge and Ostend.

5. In continuation of War Cabinet 399, Minute 7, the First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that the photographs taken over Zeebrugge were much masked by clouds, and indistinct, but that the following facts had been ascertained: The "Iphigenia," bows to east and stern to west, is lying at about an angle of 60° to the transverse of the Canal; her stern is just at the line of the shore at high-water mark. The "Intrepid," bows to the east and stern to the west, is lying at an angle of about 45° to the transverse of the Canal. The line of the shore at high-water-mark cuts her amidships. There are indications of the "Thetis" 100 yards north of the western escalade. This cannot be clearly determined in the photograph. The steel pile viaduct to the mole is breached for 100 to 120 feet clear of the breakwater. A temporary bridge has been placed across the gap. Apparently only three or four barges of the boom defence remain.

Murmansk.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 393, Minute 17, the First Sea Lord said that he had received a report from the Rear-Admiral at Murmansk which stated that the declaration made at the opening meeting was well received, and that similar declarations were made by the French and American representatives. The Rear-Admiral was of opinion that Allied assistance in Siberia would probably be welcomed, although isolated Japanese help would be resisted. He deprecated the squandering of Allied resources in Siberia when they might be used to more effect in the northern provinces of European Russia.
The Western Front.

7. The Director of Military Operations reported that the situation in the northern area of the Western front was not satisfactory. Apparently the main attack had been made on the French, on Kemmel Hill, and it was thought that the Germans now held the Hill. He stated that we have troops north of Kemmel village, but there was no definite information as to where the French line west of Kemmel Hill now ran. The attack on the Hill was made from the south and east, after a heavy gas attack. General Radcliffe expressed the opinion that General Foch would make every effort to regain this position, for, unless this were done, it would be both difficult and costly to maintain our present line east of Ypres. He explained the position on a map, pointing out that Kemmel Hill was an isolated position commanding very extensive views over the country to the north-east and north. The ground sloped away gradually to the low-lying marshy ground in the Ypres basin. General Radcliffe said that, if a retirement did take place, it was not intended to uncover the flank of the inundated country to the north, for, if this were done, the Belgian army would have difficulty in maintaining their present position.

With regard to the position in the southern area of operations, General Radcliffe said that this was satisfactory; Villers-Bretonneux had been recaptured and a number of prisoners taken. There had been heavy fighting, and the operation had probably been costly on both sides, but the capture of between 400 and 500 German prisoners was reported.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 390, Minute 4, the possibility of obtaining reinforcements from Salonica was discussed, and it was pointed out that the Chief of the Imperial General Staff had telegraphed to General Milne suggesting that the British divisions in Salonica might be reduced to nine battalions, as had been done in France. If this action were taken, twelve battalions would be available to reinforce the Western front. A strong protest, however, to this proposed course of action had been received from M. Clemenceau.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 393, Minute 13, attention was called to a statement in the press to the effect that the Austrians proposed to send an army, commanded by an Austrian Archduke, to the Western front.

The Prime Minister said that he had spoken to the Director of Military Intelligence on this question, who was of opinion that the army referred to was one of eight divisions, the whereabouts of which, as he had previously reported, were unknown.

The opinion was expressed that, if it were ascertained that this movement was taking place, it would be advisable for some Italian divisions also to be moved to the Western front.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for War to call the attention of the Supreme War Council at Versailles to the information given in the Austrian press.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 396, Minute 11, the War Cabinet had before them a note by General Smuts on the Russian situation (Paper G.T.-4322). General Smuts said that he had just seen a telegram from Mr. Lockhart which raised a similar question to that which he was putting forward, pointing out that it was quite clear that, before any action could be taken in Russia, some common plan must be agreed upon between the Allies.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs pointed out that the French, the Italians, and the British had always been in favour of intervention in Siberia, but that the Americans had not yet come to
a definite decision on the question. The difficulty was that it was impossible to approach the Japanese with any definite proposals until an answer from America had been received, and the difficulties might be accentuated by the fact that the Japanese Foreign Minister, who had just been appointed, was supposed to have pro-German sympathies.

General Smuts considered that it would be advisable that a definite plan of action should be thought out and submitted for the consideration of the American Government. He was of opinion that Mr. Lockhart's proposal of an Allied Mission to Siberia should be supported, but that, if the intervention of an Allied army in Russia were agreed upon, the Russians on their side must put all the railways at the disposal of the force, and understand that the intention was, not to occupy Siberia, but to carry on active operations against the enemy in Russia.

Mr. Balfour called attention to a visit which he had received from the American Ambassador yesterday, when Mr. Pego told him of the visit to Russia of an officer of the American Secret Service Department, who had been sent by the American Government. This officer had obtained possession of many secret documents, which he had brought back to England. These documents had been photographed, and the originals had now gone to America. From the photographs which had been taken, there was apparently ample proof that M. Trotzki had, even up to February last, been in league with the Germans, and had been obeying instructions which the German Government had sent him.

The opinion was expressed that this did not necessarily mean that M. Trotzki was not prepared to co-operate with the Allies. From all the evidence which had come to hand recently, it could be assumed that he was prepared now to quarrel with the Germans, and it was pointed out that the Red Guards with British and French forces were now all working harmoniously at Murmansk.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should telegraph to Lord Reading asking him to urge the American Government to reply as soon as possible to the former telegram (No. 2303), dated the 19th April, on this subject.

11. The attention of the War Cabinet was called to an Admiralty memorandum on the subject of the future of the Russian fleets ('Paper G.T.-4344'). In this memorandum the First Lord of the Admiralty had stated that, with regard to the destruction of the Baltic Fleet and to the destruction or removal to Novorossisk of the Black Sea Fleet, it would seem that the only course was to bring as much pressure as possible to bear upon M. Trotzki through Mr. Lockhart, although, of course, it was realised that the chances of M. Trotzki being induced to take definite action with regard to the safeguarding of the Russian ships now in the Black Sea and the destruction of Russian ships in the Baltic to avoid capture by the Germans were not very great.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The First Lord of the Admiralty should prepare material for a telegram on this subject to be sent by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Mr. Lockhart.

12. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs called attention to a conversation which Sir Leverton Harris had had yesterday morning with M. van Vollenhoven, the delegate from the Netherlands Government, who had been conducting the shipping and general agreement negotiations in this country. M. van Vollenhoven
had stated that he had been recalled to Holland, and gave as his reason for this sudden recall that the German Government were incensed against Holland because they believed that Holland could have prevented the Allies requisitioning her tonnage. The German Government apparently were adopting the attitude that they had the right to the same advantages from Holland on land as the Allies had obtained by the requisitioning of Dutch shipping, and that, as Dutch shipping was to be used for the transport of Allied troops and war material, the Dutch railways and other means of communication must also be used for the same purposes for the Germans. M. van Vollenhoven had stated that the Netherlands Government would reply to the Germans as they had done to the Allies—that they would not agree to the carriage of articles for military use, and that they would not accede to the German demands regarding sand and gravel except on the conditions that they must be allowed to take steps to assure themselves that the sand and gravel will not be used for military purposes. In the meantime, the Dutch would refuse to enter into any negotiations with either side. M. van Vollenhoven had further stated that the strong feeling which showed itself in Holland following upon our requisitioning of Dutch shipping had very largely died down, and that now there was a very strong and bitter feeling against Germany in favour of refusing her demands. Holland, he had further stated, knew perfectly well that her interests lay with the Allies, and that a German victory in the war would mean the end of the independence of Holland. M. van Vollenhoven had said that the situation was serious. Mr. Balfour was of opinion that Germany would shrink from pressing matters to extremities, but that we must be prepared for some act on the part of Germany which would drive Holland into the war.

Attention was drawn to telegram No. 1622, in which the British Ambassador at The Hague called attention to the new condition which the Germans had demanded, namely, the free passage of German and Austrian ships at Antwerp down the Scheldt and to the agreement of the Netherlands Government to transit over the Limburg railways goods of a purely non-military character.

Mr. Balfour said that the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs hoped that some arrangement might be arrived at, but thought that Germany was really seeking some pretext for a quarrel. The transit of sand and gravel appeared to be the most difficult question. Mr. Balfour expressed the opinion that it would not be possible to object to the proposal to use the Limburg railways for the transit of civilian stores, but it was pointed out that, when the British Government asked leave to transit coal to Italy purely for civilian purposes, the Swiss Government would not agree (telegram No. 513A).

The First Lord of the Admiralty pointed out that a very dangerous situation would arise if the Scheldt became available to German warships, as it would become a very formidable base for submarine operations.

General Smuts said that plans had been prepared to deal with this situation, and that, if the War Office had their report on this question ready, it would be advisable that a meeting of the Northern Neutrals Committee should take place that afternoon in order to discuss any steps which it might be necessary to take.

The Director of Military Operations said that the War Office report would be sent over that morning.

The War Cabinet requested—

General Smuts to reassemble the Northern Neutrals Committee to meet that afternoon and to report to the Prime Minister the necessary steps which should be taken in the event of the entry of Holland into the war.
Indian Reforms:  Grant of King's Commissions to Indians.

13. In continuation of War Cabinet 399, Minute 14, Lord Islington informed the War Cabinet that he had received a private telegram (Paper G.T.—4342) from the Viceroy of India, stating that the recommendations of the Government of India, as set out in his telegram dated the 22nd April, 1914, were put forward by the Commander-in-Chief himself with a full sense of responsibility, and that their rejection would greatly hamper the efforts of the Government of India. Lord Islington explained that this telegram arrived subsequent to the decision of the War Cabinet of the previous day, but that the Viceroy in sending it was not aware of the decision, which had not as yet been communicated to him. The Viceroy's telegram also stated that if the Government of India was not empowered to give temporary King's commissions on the scale recommended, they would have to press for a larger number of permanent King's commissions for Indians, but that the latter concession would involve difficulties when establishments were reduced at the end of the war. Lord Islington stated that, in the opinion of the military advisers of the India Office (Appendix)—an opinion which had the entire concurrence of the military members of the Army Council—the granting at once of a large number of temporary King's commissions to Indians would deter British officers from joining the Indian Army. Also, it was very doubtful whether, from a military point of view, the measure was necessary, as Indian officers with commissions in the native land forces possessed the same powers and performed the same duties in the Indian Army during the war as British officers of the Indian Army. At the same time he felt that the strongly expressed opinion of the Viceroy, and the fact that the proposal came from, and was deemed essential by, the Commander-in-Chief, should not be lightly disregarded.

The opinion was expressed that the question turned on whether the greater military efficiency likely to result from such a measure would be commensurate with the obvious disadvantages it involved. If the granting of these commissions would be followed by the recruitment of a large number of Indians of fighting stocks who could be used for setting free our white forces in India, Egypt, and Salonica, then the matter was worth consideration. There was always the risk, however, that recruitment might be pushed beyond the point at which good material was available, and in that case there would be little or no advantage in stimulating further efforts. Lord Curzon warned the War Cabinet against a hasty and insufficiently considered decision on a question which had exercised the minds of the British and Indian Governments for the last 25 years. He urged that the scheme for granting King's commissions to Indians was essentially one that should be proceeded with cautiously and step by step. Only a year ago we had been asked to grant nine such commissions, and now the number had risen to 200. He doubted whether the political advantage of this measure would be as great as the Government of India anticipated. The future of the British army in India must be considered, and he (Lord Curzon) strongly urged that the Commander-in-Chief in India should state on what grounds he justified the change from the view he expressed a year ago.

Mr. Chamberlain agreed with Lord Curzon, and said that he thought the War Cabinet's decision of yesterday should be communicated to the Government of India, and that they should be given the opportunity of re-stating their case if they so desired. When doing this, however, the Government of India should state fully what military results they expected from their proposals.

General Smuts stated the Government of India evidently regarded this matter as vital. It should be remembered that the course of the campaigns in Mesopotamia and Palestine might be influenced by the granting of these 200 commissions. Probably this larger question of policy had induced the Commander-in-Chief, India, to change his views. In General Smuts' opinion, the result
of the campaign in Mesopotamia and Palestine was of more importance than any disadvantages that might ensue from the granting of 200 commissions.

The Prime Minister said that it would be a serious thing for the War Cabinet to go against the advice of one so experienced in Indian affairs as Lord Curzon, and against the military opinion of General Cox and the Military Members of the Army Council. On the other hand, it would be equally serious for the War Cabinet to over-rule the advice given by the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, India. There was no doubt of the need of more men, and he (the Prime Minister) was in full sympathy with the idea of enlisting native forces in order to release white troops. The Prime Minister had been impressed by the view expressed by the Maharajah of Bikanir. The Maharajah had thought we missed a great opportunity at the beginning of the War for recruiting native forces, and that our refusal to recognise the officer class at that time had somewhat chilled the military enthusiasm of Indians. The Prime Minister wished to be assured that the opinion expressed by the Commander-in-Chief, India, was a military opinion, and what his view was of the effect of the proposals on the British Army in India. We must guard against ruining the prospects of the latter in order to gain a purely temporary advantage.

The War Cabinet were of opinion that, having regard to the unanimous opinion of their Military Advisers in this country, and the views of experienced Indian Administrators who are members of the War Cabinet, they could not reverse the deliberate decision reached on the previous day—without further information. They therefore decided—

1. To adhere to the decision recorded in the Minutes of the previous day (War Cabinet 399, Minute 14).

2. That Lord Islington should communicate this decision to the Indian Government and should accompany it with a full exposition of the reasons on which it was based. The telegram giving these reasons should be concerted between the India Office and the Adjutant-General, on behalf of the Army Council, and the telegram should be seen by the General Staff. Before final despatch it should be shown to the Prime Minister. It should be made clear to the Viceroy that the decision would not preclude the Government of India from asking the War Cabinet to re-examine the question if, after receiving the reasons on which the War Cabinet had based their decision, they should wish to raise it again; but that any request for such re-examination should be accompanied by a full statement of the reasons which led the Commander-in-Chief to reverse the opinion he had expressed a year ago. It was particularly important that the Commander-in-Chief in India should deal with the military aspects of the question and should express his views on the following points:

(i.) The extent of the immediate military advantage, in the form of a real accession of fighting strength, that would be derived if his proposals were accepted.

(ii.) Whether he considered that his proposals would militate against the efficiency of the Indian Army in the future by deterring a suitable class of British officer from entering.

3. In reply to the Viceroy's private telegram of the 25th April, Lord Islington should explain to the Viceroy that the decision of the War Cabinet now being communicated to him was taken at a second sitting at which the Viceroy's telegram stating that the proposal was put forward by the Commander-in-Chief in India with a full sense of responsibility was considered.
14. The War Cabinet had under consideration the report of a Sub-Committee of the War Cabinet (Paper P. 13) dealing with the question of arms traffic after the war, together with a letter, dated the 21st December, 1917, from the Government of India (Paper G.T.-4043) giving their criticisms and suggestions on the report of the Sub-Committee.

The War Cabinet remitted the question to Lord Curzon, and requested him to consult with the Departments concerned and to give a decision on behalf of the War Cabinet.

15. The Minister of Munitions stated that the Ministry was carrying out recruiting based on dilution, but that a certain amount of voluntary recruiting, which was actuated sometimes by the highest motives, but often by a desire to join the technical units in the field, was also taking place. If such were allowed to continue without a check being placed upon it, this would disorganise certain of the departments of the Ministry of Munitions which depended on highly-skilled labour for their maximum production, and he wished, if possible, that voluntary recruiting should be prohibited.

The War Cabinet requested—

Mr. Churchill to raise this question with the Minister of National Service.

16. With reference to War Cabinet 253, Minute 18, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the Minister of Reconstruction (Paper G.T.-4276) with regard to the proposal for a Ship Canal connecting the Firth of Forth with the Clyde.

Dr. Addison stated that he had considered the matter with all the Departments concerned, and that the Admiralty held the view that such a canal by the Loch Lomond route would prove of great value in any future operations of war. Dr. Addison further mentioned that, as regards the commercial value of the canal, it was generally agreed that neither by the Loch Lomond route nor by the direct route would the canal prove a paying proposition. In order that the Government, after the war, might be in a position to consider fully the question of this canal, he recommended—

“(a.) The considerations advanced by the Admiralty are of a weighty nature, and I therefore recommend that an independent detailed survey, with the necessary geological surveys, be made for a canal capable of accommodating warships by the Loch Lomond route, with an extension for merchant ships to Dumbarton, the cost of this survey being roughly estimated at 25,000£. The Admiralty and Board of Trade should be associated in arranging for the survey.

“(b.) A public enquiry should be held:—

“(i.) To ascertain and report upon the commercial possibilities of the Loch Lomond route, with the commercial extension, and of a low-level canal by the direct route.

(ii.) To advise whether the commercial possibilities of the direct route thus ascertained are such as to justify a similar survey being undertaken in respect of this route at an additional cost estimated at 25,000£.

“(c.) If the public enquiry reports in the affirmative on (b) (ii) above, the survey suggested in (a) should be extended to the direct route.

“The Board of Trade and the Scottish Office should be responsible for arranging the public enquiry suggested.”
The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that he had received many complaints that money was being spent which did not directly affect the prosecution of the war, and that as, in his opinion, the canal was not likely to be a commercial proposition, it would be difficult to justify the expenditure of even 25,000l. at the present moment in connection with an undertaking which would not pay after the war when so much money would be required for other more profitable and necessary undertakings.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The recommendations of the Minister of Reconstruction could not be proceeded with at the present time, but might be considered later, in conjunction with the proposals of the Minister of Reconstruction for the re-organisation of the whole Canal System of the United Kingdom.

Liquor Control

17. With reference to War Cabinet 157, Minute 16, the Secretary drew attention to War Cabinet Paper G.201, containing the Reports of the Liquor Trade Finance Committees for England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, together with a comparison of the Reports prepared in the Home Office. The Secretary stated that he had been informed that the Reports were to be published as a Parliamentary Paper.

The War Cabinet authorised—

The Secretary to defer bringing the Reports up for discussion at the War Cabinet until after publication, and until the trend of public opinion had shown itself.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 26, 1918.
APPENDIX.

India Office Memorandum on the Proposal of the Government of India to grant at once a large number of Temporary King's Commissions to Indians.

1. It is the unanimous opinion of military officers at the War Office and India Office that such a measure as is anticipated above cannot fail to have a very harmful effect upon the recruitment of British officers for the Indian army. The measures already taken in this direction have rendered parents and guardians and young men themselves suspicious, and it is submitted that such a sudden and large measure as the above would more than confirm their ideas on the subject. The Indian army in the past has been able to obtain the best class of young officer. It is most important that this advantage shall not be surrendered.

2. From a military point of view the measure does not seem necessary, as Indian officers with commissions in the Native Indian Land Forces possess the same powers and functions, and can perform the same duties in the Indian army during the war as British officers of the Indian army.

3. Attention should be drawn to the last four lines of paragraph 40, despatch No. 57 of the 3rd August, from the Government of India on the subject of King's commissions. This despatch made proposals which do not go nearly as far as the present, and the last four lines run as follows:

"Some may regard these proposals as conceding too much, others as not going far enough. The Commander-in-Chief is of opinion, however, that they mark the extreme limit to which we can with safety proceed; in this opinion we entirely concur."

Can it be said that a call by the Prime Minister for further effort on the part of India has so completely altered the situation as to entirely cancel this solemn warning given by the Commander-in-Chief and the Government of India nine months ago?

4. The measure appears to be a purely political one, and is only justifiable as such if it can be certain that it will, especially under present circumstances, do the army no harm; but, as aforesaid, military opinion at the War Office and at the India Office does not agree that this would be the case.

The political effect of the proposal will be to secure the temporary service of the noisy group of agitators who do not belong to the fighting classes of India, but to a race that never has furnished, and is never likely to furnish, us with soldiers, a race which has during the last six months failed miserably to respond to the opening given them in the Defence Force of their own country and which has no real influence on the fighting man-power of the Indian Empire. Is it not somewhat to the point that the War Cabinet have in the last few days found it necessary to prohibit the visit of a party representing these very people to the British Isles?

5. The whole scheme for the grant of King's commissions to Indians is essentially one that should be proceeded with cautiously and step by step. The educational machinery for each step should be previously prepared, or risk of disaster is very great. Many former despatches and notes on the subject by great experts, including Lords Roberts and Curzon, bring this out very strongly. Yet it is demanded that this big bound forward should be taken at the shortest notice, before any of the machinery necessary for the deliberately constructed scheme is in existence—a veritable leap in the dark.
SECRET.

WAR CABINET, 401.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, April 30, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.
General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 8).
Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.
The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Submarines.

I. THE First Sea Lord reported a successful attack by an armed trawler on an enemy submarine in the vicinity of Swansea on the 27th April. He also stated that a telegram from Brindisi reported that on the 26th April the Italian torpedo-boat "Ardea" claimed the probable sinking of a submarine. Admiral Wemyss also stated that news had been received of the sinking of another submarine, resulting in the capture of three officers and thirty-two men.

The First Sea Lord said that during April there had been a considerable increase in the toll of enemy submarines. This success had been due to our better resources, and to the fact that the weather had been more in our favour. A total of eleven or more submarines had been sunk in the month of April alone.
2. The War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty (Paper G.T.-4333) on the subject of the redistribution of Allied naval forces in the Mediterranean.

The First Sea Lord said that, at the third meeting of the Allied Naval Council, held in Paris on the 26/27th April, the Italian representatives had not been in accord with the British and French representatives in regard to the transfer from Taranto to Corfu of Italian dreadnoughts, and that therefore the conclusions of the Allied Naval Council had not been unanimous.

The Prime Minister said that there would be an opportunity to raise this question at the forthcoming Meeting of the Supreme War Council. It would be necessary to ask Signor Orlando to over-rule his Naval Advisers, and therefore it would be very desirable that the First Sea Lord should make arrangements to be present at the Meeting.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 398, Minute 1, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the Germans still had 15 fresh divisions in reserve, and 25 other fresh divisions which could be used in rotation. These 40 divisions had never been in the line. In addition, 50 more divisions were refitting. The latest figures with regard to the French position were not available, but it was probable that they had at least as many. During the fighting on the previous day between Bailleul and Boesinghe the Germans had employed 13 divisions.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 396, Minute 6, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that 137 German divisions had been engaged once; 71 a second time; 14 a third time; and 1 a fourth time, making the equivalent of a total of 223 divisions. Of these, 131 had been used against us, 37 against the French, 55 against both. This meant that we had had a total of about 160 divisions against us as compared with 60 against the French.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that yesterday had been a very good day for the Allies. The French had re-taken Loore, and had re-established themselves on the top of the high ground there. General Wilson also reported that Scherpenberg was still in our possession, and that the line now ran half-way between Scherpenberg and Kemmel. Round Ypres, our line now ran along the Canal, with outposts beyond. Asked as to whether Ypres was tenable, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he did not think Ypres would remain tenable if the enemy took Scherpenberg. He was doubtful now if we should re-take Kemmel; to re-capture it would involve a big operation, and he did not know whether General Foch intended to attempt it. In any case, the possession of Kemmel by the enemy enabled him to enfilade Ypres. The actual decision as to withdrawal from Ypres was a matter for General Foch.

After some discussion as to the comparative loss of men by either attempting to re-capture Kemmel or remaining at Ypres, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he would talk the matter over with General Foch.

6. The Secretary of State for War reported that information had been received that the German General Headquarters, having recognised that it was impossible to break through further South, were now making a powerful effort to obtain the Channel ports, with the object, inter alia, of using Calais as a submarine base.
In this connection the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the Germans were sending eighteen trainloads of pontoons for the purpose of coping with the inundations.

7. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff drew attention to information from General Headquarters to the effect that scurrilous and unfair allusions to the conduct of British troops were being made in letters written by Australians serving on the Western front. In view of the impossibility of stopping these letters being posted, it was considered advisable that action should be taken immediately with the Australian Government to deal with this question, but at the same time it was considered that more definite information was desirable as to the nature of the statements contained in these letters.

The question arose as to what steps were taken in order that the Dominion press should receive information of the fighting of British troops, and it was agreed that it would be desirable for fuller information on this subject to be made available for publication in the Dominions.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Secretary of State for the Colonies should telegraph to the Governor-General of Australia requesting him to take appropriate action in Australia.

(b.) The Chief of the Imperial General Staff should obtain more definite information as to the nature of the statements made in these letters for the information of the War Cabinet and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and such action as the latter may consider desirable.

(c.) The Minister of Information should be requested to send to the Dominions the necessary information with regard to the fighting performances of British troops for publication in the Dominion press.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 398, Minute 2, Mr. Chamberlain called attention to telegram No. B 5, from the British Military Representative at Washington, in regard to the supply of food and material for American troops in France. He stated that the Shipping Controller had expressed his anxiety on this question, and enquired if a general undertaking had been given that all American troops should be supplied from British sources.

The Secretary of State for War pointed out that the only British obligation was to feed and supply those American troops who were fighting under command of Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig.

It was agreed that the telegram as worded was not sufficiently explicit, and might lead to misunderstandings.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to send a telegram to Lord Reading, making it clear that the troops under command of Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig would be fed and supplied from British sources, but that all other American troops in France should be supplied from American sources.

With reference to War Cabinet 341, Minute 11, the War Cabinet had under consideration a telegraphic report of Joint Note No. 25 by the Military Representatives at Versailles (Paper G.T. 4379) on the subject of the transportation from Russia of Czech troops.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs called attention to telegram No. 114 from Mr. Lockhart, which stated that these troops
were being sent to Murmansk, while the Secretary of State for War stated that he had just received a later telegram which stated that 6,000 of these troops had already arrived at Vladivostock, and that the remainder were on the way. Lord Milner also stated that, according to French military information, there were altogether 47,000 of these troops available, forming two good divisions, who were anxious to come and fight in France. They had been collected in the neighbourhood of Omsk, and it was not then decided whether they should go to Murmansk or Vladivostock; but, in view of the fact that they were now apparently arriving at the latter port, the question arose as to how their transport could be arranged in order that they might be brought to France.

It was pointed out that the original arrangement with M. Trotzki was that these troops should be used to defend the Russian ports, and that a very different situation arose if it was intended to make use of Czech troops to fight in France against the Germans.

A suggestion was put forward that it would be advisable that these troops should be used for an Allied enterprise from Siberia, but the opinion was expressed that the desire of these men as to where they wished to fight must be taken into consideration.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) This question should be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Supreme War Council.

(b.) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for War should prepare a memorandum for the information of the members of the War Cabinet attending the Supreme War Council, after collating the telegrams which had been received on this subject.

Mr. Chamberlain drew the attention of the War Cabinet to telegram No. 558 from Paris, in which it was stated that, according to newspaper reports, the French Cabinet had decided to denounce all commercial conventions containing a most-favoured-nation clause, or tariff agreements, as well as arrangements relating to maritime commerce, and any others likely to interfere with the conclusion of any new commercial, maritime, or customs system. Mr. Chamberlain asked whether any corresponding action was contemplated by the British Government.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies said that the question had been considered by the Committee on the Trade Relations of the United Kingdom within the Empire, and their recommendations had been approved by the War Cabinet and had received the concurrence of the Dominion Governments. He was under the impression that the necessary action was about to be taken.

Mr. Walter Long undertook to enquire how the matter stood.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
April 30, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 402.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, May 1, 1918, at 11:30 a.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:
Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 10).
Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 11).
The Right Hon. Sir A. Stanley, M.P., President, Board of Trade (for Minutes 12 to 14).
The Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Labour (for Minutes 13 and 14).

Mr. W. C. Bridgeman, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour (for Minute 14).
The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.P., Minister of Reconstruction (for Minute 14).
Sir A. D. Hall, K.C.B., Permanent Secretary, Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (for Minute 12).
Sir J. F. Beale, K.B.E., Secretary, Wheat Commission (for Minute 12).
Mr. F. G. Kellaway, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 13).

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Dally Jones, C.M.G., Acting Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
The Western Front.

1. THE Director of Military Intelligence reported that the situation was unchanged, and that no attacks had taken place this morning. There had been considerable activity on the Meteren-Ypres front, and the French had slightly improved their position at Krabbenhof Farm, north-east of Locre.

Questioned as to the number of German divisions which were taking part in the operations against the British forces in the neighbourhood of Ypres, General Macdonogh stated that, in the actual attack on the front from the Ypres-Comines Canal to St. Jans Cappel, the Germans had employed eight divisions or a total of roughly 100,000 men.

General Macdonogh said that on the French front the Germans had made an attack on Mont Renaud, near Noyon, where they had gained a little ground. He understood that the French were going to counter-attack, but no report had yet been received of the result.

General Macdonogh said that, of the German divisions engaged in the northern operations, three more divisions had been put in north of La Bassee, which gave a total of forty-three divisions engaged in this area, of which thirty-five were fresh and eight had already been in action.

In the southern area, two fresh German divisions had been identified at Villers-Bretonneux, one of which was a Jager division from Italy, and the other the 100th Division, which had come from Romania. This made up a total of 104 divisions in this area. The Germans had now 16 fresh divisions in reserve, and 23 good divisions which were available for roulement, making a total of 39. In addition to these, there were still 6 good, and 7 fair divisions on the Eastern front, which were likely to be brought to the West, and might even now be on their way.

Questioned as to the part of the line on which the next big attack of the Germans was likely to be made, the Director of Military Intelligence expressed the opinion that the Germans would probably attack in the neighbourhood of Villers-Bretonneux, as this was the most dangerous point in the Allied line, being a very short distance from Amiens. It was quite probable that this attack would be on a big front, which might reach from Albert to Montdidier, but it was impossible to say anything definitely on this subject. All expert military opinion pointed to the fact that a German attack on a large scale, down the Somme Valley with the object of separating the Allied forces, was more dangerous than a similar attack in the neighbourhood of Ypres.

Mesopotamia.

2. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that General Marshall had now opposed to him on the Kerkuk-Suleimanieh front about 4,000 Turkish rifles. General Marshall's force included one cavalry brigade and one British division, and he also had a small force as far as Hamadan.

Attention was called to the danger threatened to Persia by the Turkish movement to Azerbaijan, and to the good effect which was likely to ensue from General Marshall's movement into the hills.

The Director of Military Intelligence said that this was the object which the Chief of the Imperial General Staff had in view in advocating the movement, and that, if General Marshall occupied Kerkuk, the 6th Turkish Division, which had started from Erbil, might have to be diverted from the Azerbaijan direction. He pointed out that Kerkuk was an important supply centre, and that its occupation would probably cut off a large portion of the Turkish supplies.

Censorship of Letters from Australian Troops in France.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 401, Minute 7, the Director of Military Intelligence read to the War Cabinet extracts from letters written by Australians in France on the subject of the conduct of British troops during the recent retirement. General
Enquiry concerning Recent Battle: The Vth Army.

Macdonough also brought to the notice of the Cabinet the steps which had been taken by the War Office to circulate articles to the Colonies on the subject of the doings of British troops, for publication in the colonial press. He stated that the process of providing information for the Colonies had been in operation for the past two years, and that the War Office had received most satisfactory reports of the results.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Director of Military Intelligence should see the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and consult with him what steps could be taken to prevent the publication of letters written by Australian troops in France containing reflections on the conduct of British troops.

(b.) The Director of Military Intelligence should see the Minister of Information with regard to collaboration with him on the subject of providing information for the colonial press as to the doings of British troops.

Enquiry concerning Recent Battle: The Vth Army.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 382, Minute 8, attention was called to the fact that a statement had been made in Parliament that an enquiry was being held with regard to the attack of the Germans on the 21st March and the retirement of the Vth Army. It was pointed out that it was very desirable that the War Cabinet should be made acquainted with the steps which were being taken with regard to this enquiry.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Director of Military Intelligence should ascertain and report to the War Cabinet on the following day.

The Mesopotamia Commission.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 198, Minute 11, attention was called to the fact that no report had been made by the War Office as to the enquiry on the conduct of officers mentioned in the report of the Mesopotamia Commission.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Director of Military Intelligence to make a report on this subject.

Submarines.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 401, Minute 1, the Deputy First Sea Lord reported that the German submarine U.B. 85 was sunk by gunfire by H.M. drifter “Coreopsis II” on the morning of the 30th April. The crew of 3 officers and 32 men surrendered to the drifter whose total crew consisted of 10 men, and had been landed at Larne.

Admiral Hope reported that a submarine had been sunk off Hartland Point on the 28th April. Two trawlers had located an obstruction in this position, and a further report would follow.

The Deputy First Sea Lord added that a report had also been received that on the 30th April, off Trevose Head, an enemy submarine was struck by gunfire, and then submerged. Eleven depth charges were dropped, and oil and bubbles were seen to come to the surface.

Bombing Raid on Ostend.

7. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that a bombing raid had been carried out the previous day, from Dover, on Ostend. Eleven 230-lb. bombs were dropped close to the electric-power house, but, owing to cloud and fog, the result could not be observed.
8. With reference to War Cabinet 400, Minute 11, the Deputy First Sea Lord said that the Naval Attache at Petrograd had reported that it had been suggested to Admiral Alfata that ammunition at Sebastopol and Kerch should be placed in Allied ships ready for destruction. In reply to offers of assistance, Admiral Alfata had stated that no Mission, of whatever nationality, was of any use at present, as, under existing conditions, the future of the Black Sea fleet must be left to run its natural course. Admiral Hope said that he had received a report from Mudros to the effect that Admiral Sablin, appointed by M. Trotzki, announced on 30th April that he was in command of the Black Sea fleet, and that the fleet and the fort of Sebastopol were now under the Ukraine flag. Admiral Sablin had proposed to hold a conference with General von Koch, the commander of the German troops in the Crimea.

The opinion was expressed that this news was serious, not only from a naval point of view, but also from the point of view that it had a sinister significance as to the attitude of the Bolsheviks. It was possible, however, that M. Trotzki might have been betrayed by Admiral Sablin in hoisting the Ukraine flag.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should communicate to Mr. Lockhart the above information.

(b.) The Admiralty should forward this information to the First Sea Lord, in order that he might bring the facts to the notice of the Supreme War Council.

Vladivostock.

9. Rear-Admiral Hope informed the War Cabinet that a telegram had been received from H.M.S. "Suffolk" at Vladivostock, to the effect that order in the town continued satisfactory, owing to the protection afforded by the landing party. The prospects of forming an efficient police force were small on account of lack of funds and division of authority. The Red Guards organised by the Soviet were largely composed of criminals, and those placed in Government offices had in several instances absconded with the cash. Bolshevik tyranny continued to arouse general resentment. According to reliable information, the movement in favour of an autonomous Siberia, headed by so-called Siberian Government elected in Tomsk, was making marked progress among the population, especially in country districts. Their representatives were in Peking soliciting the support of Allied Governments.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to communicate this information also to Mr. Lockhart.

Employment of Czech Troops.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 401, Minute 9, the Deputy First Sea Lord reported that the Captain of H.M.S. "Suffolk" had telegraphed to the effect that 4,000 Czech troops had arrived at Vladivostock, and were awaiting transport to France, and that he understood that 50,000 of these troops altogether were coming to Vladivostock.

The Director of Military Intelligence said that this information confirmed news which he had received the previous day from French sources, that about 6,000 Czech troops had arrived at Vladivostock and that a similar number were expected to arrive every two days until the full number of 50,000 had been made up. These troops were at Vladivostock because they refused to fight in Russia, and were awaiting transport to elsewhere. It was presumed that the whole of the 1st Czech Corps, which, according to the latest information last week, were then in European Russia, had now moved east of Omsk, and were therefore in Siberia. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that these troops, the equivalent of a
Corps, asserted that they had been so badly treated in Russia that they refused to fight there, but that a second Czech Corps was in the process of formation in the neighbourhood of Omsk, in which already some 20,000 men had been enrolled, and that it was probable that arrangements could be made for this Corps to remain in Russia and be stationed, as was originally proposed, on the Murmansk and Archangel railways.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Admiralty should telegraph to the Captain of H.M.S. "Suffolk," requesting him to keep the Admiralty fully informed of the arrivals of Czech troops at Vladivostock.

Attention was called to telegram No. 1872, from Lord Reading, on the subject of a proposed Mission to America, headed by Sir Lynden Macassey, which was due to leave on the following day.

In view of the opinion expressed by Lord Reading that it was inadvisable for this Mission to be sent, the War Cabinet decided that—

The Admiralty should immediately issue instructions to delay the starting of the members composing the Mission, until there had been an opportunity of consulting the Prime Minister on the subject.

With reference to War Cabinet 297, Minute 18, the War Cabinet had under consideration a question asked in the House of Commons by Mr. G. Lambert on the subject of the continuation of horse-racing, and the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this question should be brought forward for the consideration of the War Cabinet at an early date (House of Commons Debates, Vol. 105, No. 31, Cols. 396/9).

Sir John Beale, who represented the Food Controller, said that the quantities of grain involved were not very large, and only approximated to an amount of 5,000 tons a year. It would be necessary in the immediate future, however, in view of the shortage of oats, to import oats for feeding-stuffs for pigs and transport horses. It was, in his opinion, a psychological question as to whether it was advisable to continue using oats for race-horses.

Sir Daniel Hall, who represented the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, said that he agreed that this was a psychological question, and that his Department was continuously met with arguments from farmers that it was not necessary to restrict them in their purchases of oats for feeding-stuffs if it was still possible to allow good oats for race-horses. It was explained to the farmers that the amount of oats used for this purpose was less than 1 per cent. of the quantity available between the 1st January and next August, and less than ½ per cent. of the total concentrated cattle foods; but there was undoubtedly a considerable amount of feeling amongst the farmers on this question.

The President of the Board of Trade said that the Railway Executive Committee had been raising objections to race-meetings.

It was pointed out that while, from the point of view of Departments concerned, objections to horse-racing could naturally be put forward, the question of the stoppage of horse-racing raised many other matters which demanded careful consideration.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The President of the Board of Trade, the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Food Controller, and the War Office, should prepare a joint note on the question of the advisability of the continuance of horse-racing, for the consideration of the War Cabinet.
13. The War Cabinet had before them memoranda by the President of the Board of Trade, outlining certain proposals for the reduction of travel on the railways, and notifying the War Cabinet of the results of wage negotiations which had recently taken place between the Railway Executive Committee, the National Union of Railwaymen, and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (Papers G.T.-4355 and 4392).

Sir Albert Stanley explained that drastic steps for the regulation and restriction of travel had become imperative. On certain lines trains were regularly overcrowded; it was no longer possible in some districts, like the South Coast and the Thames Valley, to carry all the passengers who desired to ride. The congestion was due, on the one hand, to the exodus from London on account of air-raids and to the withdrawal of a considerable number of trains. The train service was now about half what it was in pre-war days. This reduction had become necessary because the withdrawal of coastal shipping entailed the use of locomotives for the corresponding increase of goods traffic, because of the difficulty of finding material with which to repair locomotives, partly also in the interests of coal economy, and partly, but in a less degree, as the result of the calling up of men for the army. He proposed, if the War Cabinet approved, to give the Railway Executive Committee considerable powers to deal with the situation, district by district, as required locally, beginning with London. The proposals dealt principally with the restrictions of the issue of season tickets under certain conditions, and were set forth in the memorandum. They were the result of much consultation with the railway authorities, and, while considerable hardship would undoubtedly be caused to the general public, there was no alternative, inasmuch as the railways could not carry all who wished to travel. It was not proposed to touch workmen’s fares, but there would have to be a diminution in the number of Government warrants issued. Negotiations on the latter point were proceeding with the Departments concerned.

In reply to a question, Sir Albert Stanley stated that the rolling-stock was steadily deteriorating, and that there were at present more than 4,000 locomotives idle and waiting for repairs. This was a matter of material rather than of labour. There was not enough steel to go round. The Ministry of Munitions were doing what they could to help, but they were, of course, confronted with the competing claims for steel for ships, for tanks, and other urgent war uses. He agreed that a point might soon be reached at which it would be necessary to give locomotives precedence over war material.

The War Cabinet decided—

To approve the proposals of the President of the Board of Trade as set forth in his memorandum (Paper G.T.-4392), and requested him to submit to the War Cabinet a report on the present condition of the railways’ rolling-stock in this country.

14. The War Cabinet had before them a draft of a Bill to amend the Trade Boards Act, 1909, together with a covering memorandum by the Minister of Labour (Paper G.T.-4332).

Mr. Roberts explained that most of the principal changes embodied in the Bill were based on the recommendations of the Sub-Committee of the Reconstruction Committee on the Employment of Women. The Bill gave power to the Minister of Labour to set up Trade Boards by special orders instead of by means of a Provisional Order Bill. It allowed the Minister to set up a Trade Board in any industry, having regard to the rate of wages, and not only in those industries where wages could be shown to be “exceptionally low.” He had been in touch with employers who had had experience of the working of the Trade Boards Act, 1909,
and they were all in favour of the proposed extension, as also were
the Trade Unions.

Mr. Roberts said it was very desirable to extend the Boards, in
view of difficult wage problems in connection with the employment
of women which would arise during the period of demobilisation.
Mr. Bridgeman added, it was important that the extension should
take place, in view of the developments recommended by the
Whitley report.

The War Cabinet authorised—

The Minister of Labour to proceed with the introduction of the
Bill.

15. With reference to War Cabinet 397, Minute 8, the War
Cabinet took note of the proclamation prepared by the Minister of
National Service for calling up men born in the years 1872 and
1873 (Paper G.T.-4404).

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 1, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 403.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Thursday, May 2, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. J. B. Hope, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:—

Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 9).

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Dally Jones, C.M.G., Acting Secretary.

Mr. T. Jones, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front. 1. THE Director of Military Intelligence reported that a heavy bombardment by the enemy was proceeding that morning at Villers-Bretonneux, and in the Marris sector, east of Hazebrouck. There had also been some activity during the night on the Arras-Lens front, but no infantry attack had developed. The French had counter-attacked at Mont Renard, near Noyon, and had regained the whole of the ground reported yesterday to have been lost to the enemy.

The Italian Front. 2. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that one more Austro-Hungarian division had arrived on the Italian front, making forty-nine Austro-Hungarian divisions in all on that front.

Italian Offensive. 3. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to a telegram from Lord Cavan (D. 317), dated 1st May, 1918, dealing with the probability of an Italian offensive. The French military authorities were in favour of such an offensive being undertaken, as also was
Lord Cavan, who presumed the final decision would rest with the Versailles Conference.

The War Cabinet considered that, in view of the casualties involved should the offensive take place, it was desirable that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for War should have Lord Cavan’s telegram before them.

It was ascertained that the telegram had been repeated to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to Abbeville that morning.

Palestine.

4. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that a telegram had been received from General Allenby (E.A.1133), dated the 30th April, 1918, describing the operations which he was undertaking with the object of clearing the country between the Jordan and the line Madaba and Es Salt–Jisr-ed-Dumie. Up to 12 noon on the 30th April, 14 officers and 248 other ranks had been captured. The Arabs claimed to have captured 550 prisoners during recent operations in the Maan area.

Mesopotamia.

5. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that General Marshall was continuing his advance, and was only 25 miles south of Kerkuk. Over 1,800 prisoners had been brought in and 12 field guns; the battle-field was being cleared; and the raid against Sinjabis had proved successful, subordinate chiefs coming in in large numbers.

East Africa.

6. The Director of Military Intelligence explained, with the aid of a map, the present position of the operations in East Africa. The enemy had now some 250 Germans and 2,000 black troops, in two groups. They were not likely to join, as they would wish to cover as large an area of supply as possible. Such ammunition as they possessed had been obtained from the Portuguese. British columns were advancing from the coast and from Lake Nyassa, with the object of rounding up the enemy. We had 700 men moving from Mozambique, and 3,000 from Port Amelia, in addition to two companies drawn from the Second Cape Corps and the King’s African Rifles.

The Mesopotamia Commission.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 402, Minute 5, the Director of Military Intelligence reported the action which had been taken as the result of the enquiries of the Mesopotamia Commission.

Enquiry concerning the Recent Battle: The 5th Army.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 402, Minute 4, the Director of Military Intelligence stated that a communication had been addressed by the Army Council to Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig on the 6th April, 1918, with reference to the retirement of the 5th Army, but, owing doubtless to the present activities, no answer had yet been received. General Macdonogh referred to the answer which had been given in the House of Commons on the 1st May to Colonel Talbot by the Under-Secretary of State for War to the effect that the Government were not prepared, in the present circumstances on the Western front, to put pressure on Sir Douglas Haig to hasten the enquiry. General Macdonogh added that General Gough was at present on half pay.

Co-operation of the United States of America.

9. The Director of Military Intelligence quoted from a return, compiled yesterday, the numbers of American infantry troops in France ready for attachment to British troops and en route from the United States.
Submarines.

10. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that, on the 30th April, the special service vessel "Starmount" had encountered a submarine near Notip Head. The "Starmount" was torpedoed, and she fired two torpedoes, which missed. The submarine was damaged by gunfire, and disappeared.

Admiral Hope reported that the steamship "Tropic" had been in collision with, and had sunk, a French submarine on the night of the 28th April, outside Havre. A part of the crew of the submarine was saved.

Admiral Hope also reported that the collier transport "Ramsay" had encountered a disguised submarine 300 miles west of Cape Blanco. The "Ramsay" scored eight direct hits, and by this time the submarine was a mass of flames and smoke. The enemy only fired one shot. The collier turned to ram the submarine, but she submerged, and the collier felt her hull scrape over the submarine. Some wreckage was seen, and the water was covered with oil patches.

Naval Losses.

11. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that the mine-sweeping sloop "Blackmore Vale" had been mined in the North Sea. Five officers and forty-six men had survived out of a complement of about seventy.

Naval Raid on Zeebrugge and Ostend.

12. With reference to War Cabinet 400, Minute 5, the Deputy First Sea Lord reported that there had been some activity round the two beached cruisers off Ostend; there were three destroyers alongside Zeebrugge mole, but no temporary bridge had been observed over the breach in the mole. There was also some activity around the block-ships in the Canal d'Accès.

Economic Offensive: Government Economic Policy.

13. With reference to War Cabinet 362, Minute 10, the War Cabinet had before them a note by the Secretary (Paper G.T.-4368) recounting the action which had been taken by the Cabinet up to the present on certain Reports which had been received from the Economic Offensive Committee (Papers G.-175, 190, 196).

At the request of the War Cabinet—

Mr. Chamberlain undertook to examine the Reports and to consider what action is possible, with a view to the preparation of a suitable statement in the House of Commons of the Government's economic policy.

(Initialled) A. B. L.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 2, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 404.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, May 3, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:
Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 10).

Lieutenant-Colonel W. DALLY JONES, C.M.G., Acting Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.

1. THE Director of Military Intelligence reported that local fighting had taken place, to the advantage of the British forces, last night, in the neighbourhood of Villers-Bretonneux. Successful raids had been carried out south of Arras and east of St.-Venant, in the course of which 10 prisoners and 5 machine guns were captured by our troops. Artillery had been active on both sides during the night, between Givenchy and the Forêt de Nieppe, in the neighbourhood of Loore, and south of Ypres.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 402, Minute 1, the Director of Military Intelligence stated that two fresh German divisions had been identified in the line at Montdidier, which made a total of 106 German divisions now engaged in the southern area of operations. North of the 1st Béezée Canal, the 3rd German Guard Division, which
had previously been in the Somme area, was now in the Ypres-
Comines battlefield. This made a total of 141 divisions engaged,
and there were 15 fresh divisions in reserve, and 23 good divisions
available for roulement. The rest of the front was reported to be
lightly held, and information had been received that German artillery
had been withdrawn from the Vosges area.

Questioned as to the remainder of the front on which fighting
had not taken place for a considerable period, General Macdonogh
explained the position on a map, and said that in Alsace, on the
21st March, there were five German divisions in reserve, four of
which had been withdrawn, and there was now only one—the 21st
Landwehr Division—there. In Lorraine there were three German
divisions in reserve before the present battle started, which had all
been moved. He pointed out that the French reserves in these areas
had also been moved, and, when asked as to whether there was not
a possibility of some active operations being undertaken in this area
by the French troops, General Macdonogh expressed the opinion
that this was not possible.

Austrians on the
Western Front.

3. With reference to the eight Austrian divisions mentioned in
War Cabinet 400, Minute 9, the Director of Military Intelligence said
that there was no definite information as to the exact position of
these divisions, but that, as far as had been ascertained, they were
still in Western Austria.

Co-operation of the
United States of
America.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 403, Minute 9, in reply to
a question as to the number of American troops now in the line, or
which would shortly be ready to take part in active operations,
General Macdonogh said that the first division of Americans was
operating with the French in the Montdidier area, and four other
divisions were in the line on the eastern part of the French front.
It was expected that Americans would be operating with the
British troops by the end of May.

It was pointed out that exaggerated reports were appearing in
the Press as to the number of men and aeroplanes which were
being sent from America, and the opinion was expressed that it
would be advisable to stop the publication of these reports.
General Macdonogh said that, as these reports all originated in
America, it would be very difficult to stop them appearing in the
Press of this country.

Italian Offensive.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 403, Minute 3, the Director
of Military Intelligence reported that he had received a telegram
from General Delmét-Rodelhne to the effect that General Badoglio
thinks that a decision will be taken, probably within the next five
or six days, as to an offensive on the Italian front. The telegram
further stated that orders had meanwhile been given for the 11th
Italian Division to be placed at once under Lord Cavan’s orders,
for tactical and instructional purposes. It was generally agreed
that the co-operation of British troops in the proposed operations
would increase the moral of the Italian forces, and that these
operations would be of valuable assistance in anticipating any
action which the Austrians might have in contemplation.

Palestine.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 403, Minute 4, the Director
of Military Intelligence reported that the operations east of the
Jordan were continued on the 1st May. The 60th Division had
resumed the attack on El Hand, making some progress. An Australian
mounted division had entered Es Salt at 4 A.M., capturing 350
prisoners, including 33 Germans. Two brigades had been left to
hold Es Salt, while two brigades moved south-west to attack the Shurret Nimrin position from the east and north-east. A force of the enemy, estimated at 4,000 infantry, succeeded during the night of the 30th April and the 1st May, in crossing the Jordan from west to east, at Jisr Damie, and attacked the brigade which was protecting the British left flank. This brigade was forced back. During the retreat, three batteries of horse artillery supporting the brigade became entangled in the broken foothills of the mountains, and only three guns were able to retire, the remaining nine being abandoned, the detachments and most of the horses being, however, brought back. Reinforcements had been sent up, and the new line is now held by six regiments, supported by two additional batteries of artillery.

General Macdonogh further reported that the enemy had carried out local attacks at Abu Felah, Mezrah, Berukin, and Haram Ridge, during the night of 30th April-1st May. These attacks were repulsed. General Macdonogh said that operations were still being carried out by the Arabs in the Hejaz, who had torn up more of the railway and had destroyed the telegraph lines.

Attention was drawn to the good work of Major Lawrence in this connection.

Mesopotamia.

7. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that since 27th April, the total captures by the IIInd Corps in Mesopotamia included 1,850 prisoners, 5 mountain guns, 12 field guns, 25 machine-guns, and a quantity of transport, munitions, rations, and other booty. General Macdonogh said that General Marshall had reported that he was making arrangements to capture Kerkuk, but that the underlying difficulty was one of maintenance, and that to maintain the line of communications entailed placing the whole of the IIInd Corps on reduced rations whilst operations lasted. General Marshall had further said that he could only maintain troops permanently at Kerkuk by supplying them from Tekrit, and had pointed out that, as the summer was now commencing, the climatic conditions, due both to rain and heat, were a constant difficulty, in view of the lack of shelter and water. General Marshall recommended that the limit of his forward posts in the IIInd Corps area should be Tuz Khurmatli, as Kerkuk was so difficult of access, and said that he could maintain a mobile column at Khurmatli, which he felt sure would be able to deny to the Turks the use of the Kerkuk-Suleimanieh road for wheeled traffic. He proposed, as he was at present unable to send troops to Suleimanieh, to send a lightly equipped mobile force, accompanied by Kurd levies, to the rich agricultural district of Halabja, with a view to blocking that route into Persia, and to occupy Suleimanieh when opportunity offered. General Macdonogh said that, from information that he had received, he did not consider that General Marshall’s reports as regards Kerkuk were quite correct; he had been informed that the summer climate of Kerkuk was much better than that of Baghdad.

Persia.

8. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that there was an unconfirmed report from Tabriz, dated 25th April, to the effect that the Jelus had had a fight at Ushru with Turkish troops, and had captured 500 of them. The report stated that the Turkish troops consisted of the Shivekan frontier company, the 1st Battalion of the 22nd Regiment, the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Regiment, with eight machine-guns and four guns. The Turks had sunk their guns in the Gadyr River. The Jelus were reported to be short of cartridges and money.
With reference to War Cabinet 384, Minute 5, and War Cabinet 387, Minute 2, attention was called to a telegram, dated the 30th April, from General Guillaumat, in which he had reported to the Supreme War Council in Paris that the assistance which had up to now been received from the Greeks was insignificant, and that if things did not go well on the Western front all Greece, and probably Serbia, would turn against the Allies.

It was pointed out that this was an entirely new situation, and if it were true that there was any likelihood of the Serbians turning round and opposing the Allied forces, the situation at Salonica would become very dangerous. General Macdonogh said that the reports which had been received lately from General Guillaumat as to the moral and the loyalty of the Serbians had been very bad.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to telegraph to Lord Granville, calling his attention to this telegram from General Guillaumat.

10. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that the VIIth Fish Hydrophone Division on the previous afternoon had chased an enemy submarine from 7 miles south-west of Portland Bill to a position 2 miles west of Blocknor Point. Almost immediately after stopping, the armed cruiser “Westphall” struck a submerged object with sufficient force to throw the fires out of the furnace. The division dropped twenty-five depth charges over and round this spot, and buoyed the position, which was being watched by trawlers and motor-launches. No oil or wreckage had yet been seen, but a periscope was sighted from shore shortly before an explosion took place ahead of the trawlers.

11. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that fifteen machines had made a special mission low-bombing patrol from Dover, and that 12—112-lb. and 8—20-lb. bombs had been dropped on or near the mole at Zeebrugge. One machine had failed to return. Two further bombing patrols had been made, and 12—230-lb. bombs had been dropped on Zeebrugge lock-gates. One hit was observed in the middle of the lock, and there were several very close to it. Two torpedo-boats were observed at Zeebrugge on a northern course, and there were also four or five ships seen alongside the mole.

12. The War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by Lord Milner, covering an agreement (Paper G.T.—4388), a telegram from Lord Reading dated 30th April, 1918 (Paper G.T.—4411), and a memorandum by the Ministry of Shipping (Paper G.T.—4408) with reference to the despatch of American troops.

It was pointed out that the original proposal was to tranship to France during the next three months some 480,000 American infantry and machine-guns, but that now the Secretary of State for War had come to an agreement with General Pershing to bring over, in the first place, the infantry, machine-guns, and signallers of six divisions, which would amount to about 72,000 troops, and then that no further infantry should be sent until the rest of the personnel of these six divisions had been shipped to France. The result of this would be that these six divisions would then be completed and would form part of the American Army in France. This alteration of the original arrangements had interfered very considerably with the arrangements which had been made not only by Sir Joseph Maclay in regard to the utilisation of British shipping, but also with the preparatory work which had been done by Lord Reading, at the urgent request of the Prime Minister.
In view of the fact that full information would not be available until the return of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for War from France, the War Cabinet decided—

To defer further discussion on this question.

Proposed British Mission to Japan.

13. With reference to War Cabinet 366, Minute 10, and War Cabinet 377, Minute 12, the War Cabinet had under consideration correspondence which had passed between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Lord Beaverbrook, with notes by members of the War Cabinet, on the subject of the proposed Mission to Japan (Paper G.T.—4412).

It was pointed out that, at the discussion on this question on the 18th March, Lord Derby had desired that a Military Mission only should be sent to Japan, in order to present a baton to the Mikado, but that the War Cabinet had generally agreed that it would be advisable for a Civil Commission to be sent, in order to remove from the minds of the Japanese the impression that we were doing badly in the war and to raise our prestige in Japan. No definite understanding had been arrived at that any distinguished statesman should be approached to head the Civil Mission, although in the course of conversation some names had been suggested.

Attention was called to War Cabinet 377, Minute 12, when it was decided that the composition of the Mission should be left in the hands of the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Lord Beaverbrook, but it was agreed that this decision did not authorise Lord Beaverbrook to offer the position of Head of the Mission to anyone.

The War Cabinet decided that—

On reconsideration, it was inadvisable that a Civil Mission should be sent to Japan.

Shipments of Sovereigns to India.

14. With reference to War Cabinet 399, Minute 15, the War Cabinet had under consideration memoranda by Lord Islington (Papers G.T.—4327 and 4383) with reference to the shipment of sovereigns to India.

Sir T. W. Holderness said that the Government of India was anxious to increase its metallic resources. At the present time the Government of India had 2,500,000 in sovereigns, and anticipate to have between now and the end of July 5,000,000 more in sovereigns from Australia and 15-rupee pieces; but only some 5,000,000 sterling in rupees. Silver was being obtained from America, but there were considerable delays. It was hoped that a first consignment of about 2,000,000 sterling would reach India by the end of May, and that by the end of June a further large consignment would arrive. He pointed out, however, that this silver must be coined, and that the Government of India was anxious about their position during May, June, and July, as to meeting payments for necessary War purchases, for which it was anticipated that they would require from 10,000,000 to 15,000,000 sterling. If 5,000,000 sovereigns could be sent to India between now and the end of June, the ability of the Government of India to finance these purchases for the British Government would be much more assured.

Sir T. W. Holderness said that the Colonial Office had been asked to arrange with the Australian Government for the shipment of 1,500,000 sovereigns at a time, against bullion which would be shipped from India to Australia. Between now and the end of July about 2,500,000 sovereigns might, in this way, be obtained. Questioned as to the method in which the 5,000,000 sovereigns required could be transported, Sir T. W. Holderness said that the only practical way was across the Continent to Taranto, and thence by despatch-boat across the Mediterranean to Egypt.
Sir R. Chalmers pointed out that the difficulties were:

(a.) That the immediate convertibility could not be assured to-day by the despatch now of 5,000,000 sovereigns.
(b.) That it would be very difficult to ship the gold to India.
(c.) That the gold was not available unless it were taken from the gold reserve at the Bank of England, or the reserve held against Treasury notes.

He was of opinion that the immediate requirement of India was silver, and that the silver would arrive in India as quickly as sovereigns could possibly arrive from England. He added that there was no gold in England that was free.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was of opinion that it would be most inadvisable to send any more sovereigns from England unless there was real danger in India, as there was no gold available the transmission of which would not show depletion of our balance.

The War Cabinet recognised the difficulties of India, and that the failure to send sovereigns might affect the power of India to provide supplies for this country and the Allies. But it appeared so unlikely that the despatch of 5,000,000 sterling could be effected in time, and, if effected, would be sufficient in amount to prevent inconvertibility, that it was not justifiable to incur the certain risks of transport, and the certain disadvantages of withdrawing the gold from London for such a problematical advantage, to India.

The War Cabinet decided that:

(a.) It would not be right to ship gold from the United Kingdom to India at present;
(b.) In view of the possibility that currency difficulties might render impossible in due course purchases in India up to the full requirements of the various Imperial Departments, the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Wheat Supplies, the Secretary of State for War, the Minister of Munitions, and the Food Controller should investigate as to the reduction which each of their Departments could make in its requirements if reduction became necessary.

Norwegian Pyrites.

15. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Ministry of Munitions (Paper G.T.—424) with reference to the purchase of pyrites from Norway. The memorandum asked for authority to purchase 200,000 tons of pyrites at terms which had been reached with the Norwegian Government, and which, in the opinion of the negotiators sent to Norway by the Ministry of Munitions, and of Sir M. Findlay, were the best that could be secured. The memorandum stated that, at the present moment, nine-tenths of our pyrites supply came from Spain, and it was most desirable to have a second source of supply.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that, whilst realising the importance of coming to an agreement with Norway, the price asked by them was higher than that which we paid for pyrites in Spain, and the result of paying a higher price in Norway would be to force up the Spanish price. He appreciated the fact that the Norwegian Government had intimated that the offer was only open until the 4th May, and that, if it was refused, Germany might be willing to pay a higher price and store the pyrites until delivery could be made. It was possible, however, that this was only bluff. Also, according to Lord Reading's telegram No. 1950, dated the 1st May, an American-Norwegian agreement had been signed which, it was understood, contained a clause to the effect that the export of pyrites to enemy countries would entail a cessation of the import of wheat from America.
Sir Worthington Evans said that, if this was an ordinary business transaction, he would certainly advise holding out to see whether the Norwegian Government would reduce their terms; but he felt that, as the pyrites was so urgently needed for war purposes, we should close with the offer, and not run the risk of losing this source of supply. He suggested that Sir M. Findlay should be authorised to conclude the best agreement possible with the Norwegian Government.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The price asked by the Norwegian Government for the 250,000 tons of pyrites was not a fair one, and the Ministry of Munitions should make further endeavours to conclude an agreement at a lower figure.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 3, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 405.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, May 6, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.
The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade (for Minutes 15 to 18).
Rear-Admiral G. F. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 6).
The Right Hon. Sir R. Chalmers, G.C.B., Permanent Secretary to the Treasury (for Minute 15).

Captain E. Abraham, Assistant Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Palestine.

1. The attention of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff was drawn to the withdrawal of our troops, for the second time, from El Salt, after taking the offensive east of the Jordan.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff undertook to ascertain full particulars and to report to the War Cabinet.

Submarines.

2. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported as follows:

(a.) On the 1st May, His Majesty's tug "Driver" had been missed by a torpedo, and later had heard and felt a violent double explosion, which possibly indicated that a submarine had been destroyed.
On the 5th May the coastal motor-boat "20" reported having torpedoed a submarine off Ostend.

(c.) The steamship "Green Island" reported having rammed and bumped over an object believed to have been a submarine off Bengore Head.

H.M.S. "Rhododendron" 3. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that H.M.S. "Rhododendron" had been torpedoed by a submarine on the 5th May north-east of the Orkneys. There were 73 survivors. Trawlers were trying to tow the ship, whose stern had been blown off.

Port Ballantrae Shelled by Submarine. 4. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that a report had been received from the coastguard, port Ballantrae, to the effect that a submarine had fired eleven shells at the town, all of which had exploded in the fields.

Murmansk. 5. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that fairly authentic news had been received by the Rear-Admiral at Murmansk that a party of armed Finns were advancing on Pechanga, in Russian territory, along the Norwegian frontier from Chalmozero. H.M.S. "Cochrane" had been sent to Pechanga, with a small party of Red Guards, under orders to operate in the immediate vicinity of Pechanga for the protection of the town, and to disperse or capture any armed Finns encountered. The Rear-Admiral at Murmansk was acting in concert with the local authorities.

Employment of Czech Troops. 6. With reference to War Cabinet 402, Minute 10, the Deputy First Sea Lord stated that a report had been received from H.M.S. "Suffolk" that 3,000 more Czech troops had arrived at Vladivostock, making 7,000 in all.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The next step was to do our best to carry out the decision of the Supreme War Council (Paper I.C.-60 (S.W.C.) (9) (a)), the War Office to take the initiative in the matter with the Minister of Shipping.

That the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should approach M. Trotzki, through Mr. Lockhart, with a view to the concentration at Murmansk and Archangel of those Czech troops not belonging to the Army Corps which have left Omsk, for Vladivostock (Paper I.C.-60 (S.W.C.) (9) (c)).

The Secretary said that he had arranged with the Director of Military Operations to forward a draft telegram to the Foreign Office.

The Ukraine. 7. The War Cabinet took note of the reports which had been received that the Germans were experiencing great difficulty in obtaining provisions from the Ukraine, the Bolshevist Government having apparently either destroyed the hoards of the peasants, or caused them to be removed.

Meeting of the Supreme War Council. 8. With reference to War Cabinet 366, Minute 11, the Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that the following resolutions had been agreed to at the Meeting of the Supreme War Council, held at Abbeville on the 1st and 2nd May, 1918:—

(b.) In view of the fact that the Allied Forces at Salonica are being reinforced by the addition of Greek divisions, the
Supreme War Council are of opinion that it ought to be possible, without endangering the position in the Salonica theatre, to transfer some battalions to the Western front, where every man is urgently needed.

(b.) They are agreed, however, that no transfer should take place without consultation with the General Officer Commanding the Allied Army in the Salonica theatre, who is responsible for the protection of the Allied interests in that region.

(c.) The Supreme War Council agree that a French and a British General Officer should be despatched forthwith to Salonica, where, in association with the General Officer Commanding the Italian forces at Salonica, they are to confer with General Guillaumat on this question, in order, if possible, to arrange with him for the immediate withdrawal of Allied battalions. The Supreme War Council particularly commend to the attention of these Officers the suggestion in General Guillaumat's despatch of the 30th April, that Indian battalions should be substituted for British battalions to be withdrawn to the Western front.

(d.) The Supreme War Council are agreed that, in view of the appointment of General Foch as General-in-Chief of the Allied Armies on the Western front, the Executive War Board, set up at the Meeting of the Supreme War Council held on 2nd February, should be dissolved.

(e.) The Supreme War Council, having considered the documents presented to them as the result of the Third Meeting of the Allied Naval Council held in Paris on the 26th and 27th April, 1918, take note that, in principle, there is a general agreement that the transfer to Corfu of Italian dreadnoughts would be desirable, in order to set free French battleships for an increase of the Allied naval forces in the Aegean. In view of the great importance of taking steps to meet the new situation created in the Eastern Mediterranean by the threatened seizure of the Russian Black Sea Fleet by the enemy, the Supreme War Council urge the Italian Government to give their consent to the proposals of the Allied Naval Council, and to carry them out with the least possible delay.

(f.) General Foch is Commander-in-Chief of the Italian troops on the French front, just as he is of the other Allied troops.

(g.) The powers of co-ordination conferred on General Foch by the agreement of Doullens are extended to the Italian front.

(h.) If circumstances bring about the presence on the Italian front of Allied armies fighting together in the same conditions as in France, Signor Orlando would accept that there should be a General-in-Chief of the Allied armies on the Western front, and that this General-in-Chief should be General Foch.

It is understood—

First: That the Western front extends from the North Sea to the Adriatic.

Second: That, in conformity with the Beauvais Agreement, the General in command of one of
the Allied armies can always refer to his Government if he considers that the orders received from the General-in-Chief constitute a danger to his army.

The Transportation of Czech Troops from Russia.

(i.) The Supreme War Council approve Note 25 of the Military Representatives, and agree on the following action:—

(a.) The British Government undertake to do their best to arrange the transportation of those Czech troops who are at Vladivostock or on their way to that port.

(b.) The French Government undertake the responsibility of these troops until they are embarked.

(c.) The British Government undertake to approach M. Trotzki with a view to the concentration at Murmansk and Archangel of those Czech troops not belonging to the army corps which have left Omsk for Vladivostock.

The Co-operation of the American Army.

(j.) It is the opinion of the Supreme War Council that, in order to carry the war to a successful conclusion, an American army should be formed as early as possible under its own commander and under its own flag.

In order to meet the present emergency, it is agreed that American troops should be brought to France as rapidly as Allied transportation facilities will permit, and that, as far as consistent with the necessity of building up an American army, preference be given to infantry and machine-gun units for training and service with French and British armies, with the understanding that such infantry and machine-gun units are to be withdrawn and united with its own artillery and auxiliary troops into divisions and corps at the discretion of the American Commander-in-Chief after consultation with the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies in France.

It is also agreed that, during the month of May, preference should be given to the transportation of infantry and machine-gun units of six divisions, and that any excess tonnage shall be devoted to bringing over such other troops as may be determined by the American Commander-in-Chief.

It is further agreed that this programme shall be continued during the month of June, upon condition that the British Government shall furnish transportation for a minimum of 150,000 men in May and 150,000 men in June, with the understanding that the first six divisions of infantry shall go to the British for training and service, and that troops sent over in June shall be allocated for training and service as the American Commander-in-Chief may determine.

It is also further agreed that, if the British Government shall transport an excess of 150,000 in June, such excess shall be infantry and machine-gun units, and that early in June there shall be a new review of the situation to determine further action.

The Utilisation of Belgian Railway Resources.

The Supreme War Council approve Joint Note No. 23 of the Permanent Military Representatives, on the subject of the utilisation of Belgian railway resources.

The Shipment of Kelling-stock from the United States of America.

(k.) The Supreme War Council approve Joint Note No. 24 of the Permanent Military Representatives, on the subject
9. With reference to War Cabinet 404, Minute 4, the Prime Minister communicated to the War Cabinet the agreement reached by the Supreme War Council at Abbeville, as set forth above (Minute 8 (10)), in regard to the co-operation of United States troops. This agreement, he said, extended the agreement reached between Lord Milner and General Pershing. The cause of all the trouble, the Prime Minister said, was that President Wilson had put us in a difficulty by leaving to us the necessity of bargaining with General Pershing. The latter had refused to treat the men shipped in April, but arriving in May, as part of the April contingent. After a very prolonged discussion General Pershing had been persuaded to extend the agreement he had reached with Lord Milner for the transport of 120,000 infantry and machine-gunners in May. He had only agreed to this, however, on the understanding that the British Government would provide shipping for 150,000 men. Consequently, as a result of this arrangement, the whole of the American shipping and British tonnage for 30,000 infantry would be devoted in June to carrying out General Pershing's divisional programme. During the Conference the War Cabinet had heard from the Shipping Controller that he believed he could bring 200,000 infantry in June. The Prime Minister had then asked General Pershing whether, in the event of our finding it possible to ship an additional 50,000 men, he would agree that these should consist of infantry and machine-guns, and General Pershing had assented. Thus, as the result of the agreement, we had ensured transport of the following infantry and machine-gunners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>170,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>290,000</td>
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There was some discussion as to whether the six divisions referred to in Lord Milner's agreement with General Pershing would in fact amount to as many as 120,000 men.

Lord Milner said that every one of the 120,000 men would be valuable troops. The American division amounted in all to 27,865 men, and the portions of it to be attached to the British were the following: divisional headquarters, 2 infantry brigades, a divisional machine-gun battalion, a regiment of engineers, a field signal battalion, an engineer train, headquarters train and military police. The divisional headquarters number 238. The infantry brigades, consisting almost entirely of combatant troops, made up 16,830, the divisional machine-gun battalion 393, the regiment of engineers 1,697, the field signal battalion 488; and this, together with the engineer train 34, headquarters train and military police 374, made up a total of 20,104. The remaining portions of each division, chiefly artillerymen, were to go direct to General Pershing.

10. The Prime Minister informed his colleagues of a discussion that had been held at a conference between the British and French Governments and their Military Representatives at Abbeville during the recent session of the Supreme War Council in regard to the recent Franco-German agreement for the exchange of prisoners of war. M. Clemenceau, the Prime Minister said, had told him that the societies and persons interested in prisoners of war in France had acquired considerable political importance, and that the Government had been forced to enter into this agreement. Mr. Lloyd George had then informed M. Clemenceau that there had also been a good deal of pressure put on the British Government. He himself had then seen the Members of Parliament who were mainly interested...
in the question, and had pointed out to them that any general exchange of prisoners would involve a great increase to the man-power of Germany, and a consequential prolongation of the war. Unless, therefore, we were prepared to trust Germany to keep her word in the matter, the results might be very serious. When they were asked as to whether they were prepared to trust so much to German good faith, the Members of Parliament consulted at once admitted that they were not, and the question had been dropped. M. Clemenceau had been visibly influenced by these arguments, and had ended by saying that "You can leave it to me." He had also volunteered to send a copy of the agreement to Lord Milner, with a view to consultation.

11. Lord Curzon read to the War Cabinet a letter he had received from the King of the Belgians, in which he intimated a willingness to pay his long-deferred visit to England whenever the military situation became clearer and the fighting settled down. King Albert also mentioned that he would be glad to visit the Grand Fleet.

The War Cabinet were generally agreed that it would be advantageous to obtain closer touch with the King of the Belgians, who was actually Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army in the field.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in reply to a question as to when the military situation was likely to become clearer, said that the only safe assumption was that the Germans would continue attacking all through the summer. He suggested that the best plan would be to allow the King of the Belgians to select the moment he judged most favourable for his visit.

Lord Curzon was authorised by the War Cabinet to consult His Majesty the King on the question, and, subject to his approval, to invite King Albert to visit this country at the first favourable opportunity.

12. The Secretary of State for War informed the War Cabinet that the British casualties since the 21st March were still below 300,000.

13. The Secretary of State for War drew the attention of the War Cabinet to the following question in Parliament, which had been put down for the 1st May:

"Soldiers' Leave.

"Mr. Watt asked whether the soldiers who have been three years in Gallipoli, Egypt, and Palestine, as, for example, the 1/6 Highland Light Infantry, who have been moved to France, will be given first leave when circumstances permit, in view of the facts that they have been so long abroad and that they were promised early leave on the evacuation of Gallipoli."

It was pointed out that this question of itself gave valuable information to the enemy, since it recorded the transfer of a unit from Palestine to the Western front, which would give the clue to the enemy that a division had been transferred. It was generally agreed that it was very wrong that the privileges of Members of Parliament should be so used, even though innocently, as to give information to the enemy.

Mr. Bonar Law explained that if the Clerks at the Table of the House of Commons considered a question dangerous, they were instructed to draw the attention of the War Office to the matter. It was evident that they had not realised the significance of this question.
The Secretary of State for War undertook to discuss the matter with Mr. Macpherson, in order that the Clerks at the Table of the House of Commons might be warned that any information of the movements of units between the different theatres of war was dangerous.

Ireland.

14. At Mr. Chamberlain’s suggestion, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs undertook to notify to the British representative at the Vatican any cases that might come to light of the improper interference of the Irish priesthood in secular affairs, and more particularly the recent promise of absolution to persons engaged in resistance to the Military Service Act.

Norwegian Pyrites.

15. With reference to War Cabinet 404, Minute 15, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Lord Robert Cecil (Paper G.T.-443G) in which he pointed out that the subject had been discussed at the Cabinet on the 3rd May, in the absence of any representative of the Foreign Office or of the Ministry of Blockade. He therefore asked for a reconsideration of the matter. Three aspects of the case were examined, namely:

(a.) The question of price.
(b.) The post helium problem.
(c.) The recently signed Norwegian Agreement.

As to price, Lord Robert Cecil said that we had been repeatedly assured by Sir M. Findlay, who was not likely to be mistaken on such a point, that it only exceeded the cost of production by a small additional profit. A telegram (No. 1399) of the 3rd May, received from Sir M. Findlay since the meeting of the Cabinet on that day, showed that the enemy agents were offering double the price in question for storage till after the war.

With regard to the argument previously cited (War Cabinet 404, Minute 15), that the result of paying the Norwegian price would force up the Spanish price, Lord Milner said he did not think that the Rio Tinto Company would raise their price, because Sir C. Fielding fully realised that the company was dependent on the British Government, and had received special facilities in regard to coal freights (War Cabinet 351, Minute 11).

Sir L. Worthington Evans and Dr. Addison concurred in Lord Milner’s view.

As to the Economic Offensive aspect of the case, Lord Robert Cecil said he did not think that the importance of this had been sufficiently realised at the previous meeting. It was certain that the Germans would be badly in need of sulphuric acid after the war.

Dr. Addison, in support of this argument, said that, after wool and cotton, there would hardly be any commodity that it would be more desirable to control than pyrites. It was one of the most essential materials which the Germans would require for sulphuric acid for the manufacture of superphosphates for fertilising their starved land.

As regards the Norwegian Agreement, it was pointed out that the Cabinet had reached their conclusion on the 3rd May in the belief that the Germans could not buy and store the Norwegian pyrites. Now, however, it was stated that the Germans could do so, because the Norwegian-American Agreement only dealt with the export of pyrites. This fact greatly altered the case.

In these circumstances the War Cabinet decided that—

Their decision recorded in War Cabinet 404, Minute 15, should be rescinded, and that the purchase of the Norwegian
Greek Mobilisation.

16. With reference to War Cabinet 395, Minute 11, the attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to a series of rulings given by General Smuts on the subject of Greek mobilisation (Paper G.T.-4362).

The War Cabinet noted and approved the rulings set forth in that document.

Proposed Mission to the United States of America.

17. With reference to War Cabinet 402, Minute 11, recording the War Cabinet’s decision to delay the departure of Sir Lynden Macassey’s mission to the United States pending a ruling by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George concurred in the decision, and expressed the opinion that, for the present it was undesirable that the mission should proceed.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was requested to inform Lord Reading of this decision.

Visit of a Distinguished Dutchman to England.

18. The War Cabinet had a short discussion on the subject of the visit of M. Colign, a distinguished Dutchman, who, at one time, had been Minister of War in Holland. The War Cabinet were informed that M. Colign had visited England with the assent of, and possibly at the invitation of, the Ministry of Information. Some of the newspapers, however, had got the idea that he was a pro-German and was connected with the “German Peace Offensive.”

Lord Robert Cecil stated that, in giving an interview to some American journalists, he had been questioned about the peace offensive and had made some remarks as to its probability. These remarks had been interpreted, in some quarters, as being directed against M. Colign, although, as a matter of fact, he was not at the time aware that M. Colign was in this country.

General Smuts said it had been suggested to him by the Ministry of Information, as well as by the Dutch Minister, that he should have a talk with an eminent Dutchman on a visit to this country, who had turned out to be M. Colign. They had had a talk together, and he had found M. Colign took a very sane view of the whole situation, and had not shown the smallest taint of pro-Germanism, neither had he given the smallest hint of having been entrusted with any sort of peace offer. He understood that M. Colign was a very important person in a petroleum combine, and had big business connections with this country.

It was not quite clear to the War Cabinet whether M. Colign had visited this country primarily for business reasons, or by direct invitation of the Ministry of Information, but the War Cabinet decided that—

As a general rule, the Foreign Office should be notified whenever important public men were invited by a Government Department to visit this country.

It was generally agreed that—

The information given in regard to M. Colign would enable the Foreign Office to dispose, without difficulty, of Mr. Snowden’s question in the House of Commons that afternoon, which suggested that a distinguished neutral had come to this country with offers of peace.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 6, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 406.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, May 7, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The following were also present:—
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.

Captain L. F. Burges, Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. Attention was called to telegram No. 1433 from Christiania, which stated that the German Military Attachés to neutral countries had received orders to be sent to the Western front on the 11th instant. It was pointed out that these directions probably indicated the date of the next offensive, as a similar course had been taken before the start of the German offensive on the 21st March.

Submarines.

2. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that the drifter "Smilax," when 14 miles west of St. David's Head, had heard, by means of the hydrophone, a submarine, which ultimately showed a periscope 100 yards from the ship. Two depth charges were dropped, and, after the second, the submarine was apparently brought to the surface and appeared to roll over. A third depth charge was then dropped, and a violent explosion occurred, after which oil and air bubbles came to the surface.
3. With reference to War Cabinet 368, Minute 16, attention was called to the fact that the decisions of the War Cabinet calling on the Chief Secretary for Ireland to render weekly reports as to the condition of affairs in Ireland had not been strictly adhered to. Reference was made to two important telegrams—one from the Foreign Office to the Vatican (No. 44), and one from the Foreign Office to Lord Reading (No. 2571)—on the subject of Ireland, the import of which had not previously been known to the War Cabinet.

Lord Curzon pointed out that questions about Ireland were apt to be raised in the House of Lords on subjects as to which he was not fully informed, and suggested that it was very advisable that the Secretary for Ireland, particularly at the present juncture, should render, for the information of the War Cabinet, a full weekly report of the position.

The Prime Minister said that he had, in conversation with Field-Marshal Lord French, learned from him that he was prepared to take every step possible to put a stop to any German intrigues, and also that he had expressed the opinion that it would be advisable to appoint General Byrne, the Head of the Royal Irish Constabulary, as Under-Secretary for Ireland.

It was generally agreed that, if possible, Lord French should attend the War Cabinet on the following morning, before proceeding to Ireland to take up his duties, in order to lay before the Cabinet the steps which he proposed to take in Ireland.

Attention was also called to a memorandum written by the Attorney-General for Ireland on the subject of the present state of that island.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The memorandum by the Attorney-General for Ireland should be circulated forthwith.

(b.) The Viceroy of Ireland should be asked to forward a weekly report as to the state of Ireland, through the Chief Secretary, for the information of the War Cabinet.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 397, Minute 7, Lord Curzon called attention to the fact that he, with Mr. Barnes and General Smuts, were appointed by the War Cabinet members of the Committee to draw up the Home Rule Bill, but that, after one sitting of this Committee, he had not been summoned to attend any further meetings.

It was pointed out that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was the Chairman of the Committee, had received instructions from the War Cabinet (War Cabinet 392, Minute 13), to draw up the draft of the Bill himself, and to call the Committee together when he considered it desirable.

Mr. Chamberlain said that, as he understood the position, Mr. Long had asked one or two colleagues to help him to make the draft. This Sub-Committee had met again that morning. A new draft Bill was being printed, and would be circulated to the full Committee. It was intended to summon the Committee to meet on Thursday afternoon next, to consider the Bill apart from finance, as the finance clauses of the Bill could not be settled until the Chancellor of the Exchequer was prepared to discuss the finance of the scheme with the Committee. In answer to questions, Mr. Chamberlain stated that the Ministers engaged in drafting the Bill were Mr. Walter Long, Sir George Cave, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, and himself. Some changes had been made in the former draft, which had been circulated to members of the Committee. He deprecated any discussion of the Bill in the Cabinet till it had been before the full Committee.

The Prime Minister said that he had received on the previous
day a remarkable deputation from the Trades Unionists of Belfast, to whom he had pointed out that it was impossible to enforce conscription in Ireland without some reasonable measure of Home Rule. He had also shown them how the supremacy of Parliament had been challenged by the action of the Catholic hierarchy, and how important it was that they should render him every assistance in their power in order to defeat this challenge which had been thrown down. Mr. Lloyd George had asked the deputation to put forward some practical suggestions as to the Bill, which the members of the deputation had promised to do, and to come and discuss such suggestions with him.

5. The War Cabinet had under consideration the following letter, which had appeared in the press that morning, from Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice, who had until quite recently held the position of Director of Military Operations at the War Office:

"Sir,

My attention has been called to answers given in the House of Commons on the 23rd April by Mr. Bonar Law to questions put by Mr. G. Lambert, Colonel Burn, and Mr. Pringle as to the extension of the British front in France (Hansard, Vol. 105, No. 34, p. 815). These answers contain certain misstatements which in sum give a totally misleading impression of what occurred. This is not the place to enter into a discussion as to all the facts, but Hansard's report of the incident concludes:

"Mr. Pringle,—Was this matter entered into at the Versailles War Council at any time?"

"Mr. Bonar Law,—This particular matter was not dealt with at all by the Versailles War Council."

"I was at Versailles when the question was decided by the Supreme War Council, to whom it had been referred. This is the latest of a series of misstatements which have been made recently in the House of Commons by the present Government. On the 9th April the Prime Minister said:

"What was the position at the beginning of the battle? Notwithstanding the heavy casualties in 1917, the army in France was considerably stronger on the 1st January, 1918, than on the 1st January, 1917."


"That statement implies that Sir Douglas Haig's fighting strength on the eve of the great battle which began on the 21st March had not been diminished. That is not correct.

"Again, in the same speech the Prime Minister said:

"In Mesopotamia there is only one white division at all, in Egypt and in Palestine there are only three white divisions, the rest are Indians or mixed with a very small proportion of British troops in those divisions—I am referring to the infantry divisions."

"This is not correct.

"Now, Sir, this letter is not the result of a military conspiracy. It has been seen by no soldier. I am by descent and conviction as sincere a democrat as the Prime Minister, and the last thing I want is to see the Government of our country in the hands of soldiers. My reasons for taking the very grave step of writing this letter are that the statements quoted above
are known to a large number of soldiers to be incorrect, and this knowledge is breeding such distrust of the Government as can only end in impairing the splendid moral of our troops at a time when everything possible should be done to raise it.

"I have therefore decided, fully realising the consequence to myself, that my duty as a citizen must override my duty as a soldier, and I ask you to publish this letter in the hope that Parliament may see fit to order an investigation into the statements I have made.

"I am, " Yours faithfully, "F. MAURICE, Major-General.

"20, Kensington Park Gardens, May 6."

The Prime Minister pointed out that General Maurice directly challenged three statements which had been made in the House of Commons: one made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and two by himself.

The first of these statements challenged was one made by Mr. Bonar Law on 23rd April, to the effect that the question of the extension of the line, carried out before the battle commenced on 21st March, was not dealt with at all by the Supreme War Council.

It was pointed out that the extension of the line to Barisis had been arranged, before the meeting of the Supreme War Council, between Field-Marshal Haig and General Pétain, and in this connection the following extract, from a statement made by Sir Douglas Haig at the Supreme War Council meeting on 2nd February was read:—

"Lastly, during the recent battle in Flanders, he had, at General Pétain's request, agreed to, and had now extended the front first to the Oise and afterwards to Barisis . . . . " etc. (I.C.-42).

The extension of the line, discussed at the Supreme War Council, had been a further extension recommended by the Permanent Military Representatives, and this further extension had never been carried out, and had not been alluded to in Parliament on the occasion of Mr. Bonar Law's statement. The statement challenged by General Maurice had referred solely to the accomplished extension of Barisis, and had been perfectly correct.

With regard to the second statement, namely, that the army in France was considerably stronger on 1st January, 1918, than on 1st January, 1917, which was stated by General Maurice to be incorrect, Mr. Lloyd George said the actual figures were quoted by him from an official War Office document, and were that on the 1st January, 1917, the total ration strength of the British armies in France was 1,594,000; whilst on the 1st January, 1918, the total ration strength was 1,970,000, which showed a total increase of 376,000 men. It might be argued that there had been during this period a large increase in the number of labour units, but the total strength of such labour units on the 1st January, 1918, was 142,000, whilst approximately the strength of these units on the 1st January, 1917, was probably 42,000. Consequently, even taking all the labour units out of consideration, the total ration strength of the British army in France at the beginning of 1918 was 276,000 stronger than it was in the beginning of 1917. Labour units, however, might fairly be included in the strength of the army, and at present we were greatly in need of further labour to increase our defensive strength.

With regard to the third statement of General Maurice, in which the Prime Minister had been challenged as regards the correctness of his assertion that there was only one white division in Mesopotamia, and in Palestine only three white divisions, Mr. Lloyd George pointed out that he believed that he was entirely correct in
stating there was only one white division in Mesopotamia, and that his statement as regards the three white divisions in Egypt had been made on the authority of the report of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff when the War Cabinet was considering the possibility of bringing reinforcements from Palestine to meet the emergency on the Western front (War Cabinet 371, Minute 5).

It was pointed out that General Maurice had been present when this statement was made.

Mr. Lloyd George said that when the Chief of the Imperial General Staff had stated that there were only three British divisions in Egypt, he had asked further questions of General Wilson, and had been told that the other divisions in Egypt were mixed divisions.

Considerable discussion ensued as to the meaning of the charges which General Maurice brought forward in saying that the Prime Minister was incorrect with regard to the number of the British forces in France on the 1st January, 1918, and with regard to his statement that what the Prime Minister said implied that Sir Douglas Haig's fighting strength on the eve of the great battle which began on the 21st March had not been diminished.

Lord Milner was of opinion that General Maurice meant that between the 1st January, 1918, and the beginning of the battle, a considerable reduction had taken place in the number of the battalions employed, all British divisions having been reduced from 12 to 9 battalions in strength, and that, consequently, the actual front line had been weakened to that extent.

It was pointed out that, if this was General Maurice's contention, he had only taken into account rifle strength, and had paid no regard to the very large increase in artillery, flying corps, tanks, trench mortars, and machine-guns, which had undoubtedly been increased at the expense of the infantry, and should certainly have been included in the fighting strength of the army.

Mr. Lloyd George said that one of the most serious considerations was that General Maurice had attended the War Cabinet for the two days following the date of his speech in the House of Commons (9th April), and had never said a word either at the Cabinet or to him privately, challenging the accuracy of the figures which he had given. If General Maurice had considered it was not his duty to do so in the Cabinet, it was at any rate his duty to make representations to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff on this matter.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he had heard nothing from General Maurice until the 30th April, after he had left the post of Director of Military Operations, when he received a letter from him on this subject.

The Prime Minister also pointed out that while General Maurice might have some answer to the charge, if it could be shown that the reduction of the men in the infantry battalions had not been compensated for by addition to the other fighting units, yet this was a matter the responsibility for which did not rest upon the War Cabinet, but on the military authorities, on whom lay the duty of the distribution of our fighting men.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that this was not an isolated attack on the Government. In the "Morning Post" nearly every day articles had appeared with reference to the strength of our forces in France, more particularly with reference to the reduction in the number of battalions.

Mr. Lloyd George informed the War Cabinet that he had received a question which would be put by private notice that afternoon by Mr. Asquith. A general discussion ensued as to the reply which should be made and the action which the Government should take in this matter.

Mr. Bonar Law said that he held very strong views on this question. The veracity of himself and the Prime Minister had been
challenged. He could not agree that this matter could be met only by making statements in the House of Commons, but that, in his opinion, it was essential that a Judicial Enquiry should be held, as this letter reflected on his personal honour.

With reference to the position of General Maurice, the Adjutant-General said that this officer had contravened the Army Act and the Official Secrets Act, both of which were military offences, which could be dealt with under the Army Act without any enquiry being made as to the truth or otherwise of the statements. It would be possible to hold a Court of Enquiry, and if civilians were involved this Court could be held under the Barrett Act; but any Court of Inquiry must necessarily involve obtaining evidence from the French dealing with matters of much secrecy and confidential nature, and Sir Nevil Macready agreed with General Smuts that it would be practically impossible to make public a report of any such proceedings.

It would be possible to deal with General Maurice from a purely disciplinary point of view, either by putting him on half-pay or retired pay, or by trying him by court martial, and Lord Milner very strongly urged that whatever course was taken the question of disciplinary action should be kept quite distinct from any other action which the Government might contemplate.

The Adjutant-General stated that he had already written to General Maurice, asking him in the usual Service manner for his reasons for having written the letter contrary to regulations.

With regard to the course proposed by Mr. Bonar Law as to a Judicial Enquiry being held, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs expressed himself very strongly against any such proposal. He said he was of opinion that the proper course to pursue was for a statement to be made in the House of Commons to the effect that the Ministers adhered to the statements which they had made, bringing forward, if necessary, sufficient facts to prove them, or, if this was not considered sufficient, to hold a Secret Session, when the whole subject could be debated.

Mr. Bonar Law said that he would be unable to pursue that course, as the charges made against the two Ministers were that they had made misstatements, and if their defence was only to be made in the House of Commons, when General Maurice, who had made the charges, could not be present, it would be considered that an ex parte statement only had been made.

It was generally agreed that, whatever course was followed, it would be absolutely necessary to limit the scope of the enquiry to the charges of inaccuracy made in General Maurice's letter, and that it would be most inadvisable to open the door to an enquiry into the many other questions which had been so constantly raised in the press of late.

Strong objections were taken to any proposal that this question should go before a Committee of the House of Commons, which was not in any way a judicial tribunal, and equally strong objections were taken to holding a Court of Enquiry under the Army Act, at which two Ministers of the Crown would have to attend if the statements challenged by General Maurice were to be fully examined before such a Court.

The War Cabinet decided—

1. That the Army Council should deal with the military offences which had been committed by Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice.

2. That the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in replying to the question which was to be put by Mr. Asquith in the House of Commons that afternoon, should state that General Maurice's letter raised two questions: one involving military discipline, and the other the veracity of Ministerial statements. The first question would be
dealt with by the Army Council in the ordinary way, and, with regard to the second, the Government proposed to ask two of His Majesty's Judges to act as a Court of Honour to enquire into the charge of misstatements alleged to have been made by Ministers.

3. That the Court of Honour, composed as above, should assemble at the earliest possible date and be asked to render a report, if possible, within a week.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W., 1,
May 7, 1918.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Wednesday, May 8, 1918, at 12.30 P.M.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.
The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. The Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.
General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 7).


Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 4).


The Right Hon. Edward Shortt, K.C., Chief Secretary for Ireland (for Minutes 5 and 6.)

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that there was nothing of importance to report relative to the Western front.

The Goeben.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 360, Minute 14, the Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that an air reconnaissance, carried out on the 6th May, indicated that the "Goeben" was not in the Golden Horn, Stemma Bay, or the Bosphorus, and that it was probable that she had proceeded to Odessa.

Naval Raid on Zeebrugge and Ostend.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 403, Minute 12, the Deputy First Sea Lord stated that, from photographs taken on the previous afternoon, there was no apparent change in the lock gates at
Zeebrugge; that the three sunken ships were in the same position; that silt sand was prominent around the sunken ships outside the harbour, and that the Canal was still unavailable for use.

4. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that the second British division from Egypt had safely arrived at Marseilles.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 406, Minute 3, the War Cabinet had a discussion on the situation in Ireland with Field-Marshal Lord French, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the Chief Secretary, prior to the departure of the former to assume the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

With reference to Sinn Fein intrigues with the enemy, Lord French indicated that he proposed to issue, as soon as possible, a proclamation on this subject, and to follow it up by the arrest of those against whom evidence of intriguing was produced. He outlined the procedure he intended to take with regard to such persons as were arrested, which the War Cabinet approved. He further mentioned that the details necessary to carry out this action were being considered in conjunction with the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Home Office, and would be settled with those Departments prior to his departure for Ireland.

It was agreed that—

(a.) The first point to which the Lord-Lieutenant should devote his attention was Sinn Fein intrigues with the enemy;
(b.) The Lord-Lieutenant should be prepared to deal promptly with seditious speeches.

It was pointed out, however, that to hold a meeting to organise resistance to a prospective law was not treason.
(c.) The Lord-Lieutenant should have a free hand to take such administrative action as he thinks fit on all questions of detail, only referring to the War Cabinet on questions of policy.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 406, Minute 3, the War Cabinet authorised—

The Lord-Lieutenant to send his Weekly Reports as to the state of Ireland direct to the War Cabinet, sending, at the same time, a copy to the Chief Secretary and to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

7. Attention was drawn to a question which was to be asked in the House of Commons as to whether Field-Marshal Lord French was still in command of the Home forces.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that he was communicating on the subject with the Secretary of State for War prior to giving a reply in the House of Commons.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 406, Minute 5, the Prime Minister described how, in Parliament on the previous day, the Opposition had not fallen in very readily with the suggestion of a Judicial Enquiry, and had put down a motion for a Select Committee. In his view, a Select Committee would be perfectly useless. It would be constituted on Party lines, there would merely be a Party wrangle, and no judicial investigation. This raised the question as to whether it would not be better to-morrow to state the
facts. He understood that this was the general view of the Government’s supporters in the House of Commons. There was a good deal to be said for it. Even if a Judicial Enquiry were set up, the controversy would not be closed. There was an undoubted desire in all parts of the House of Commons to know the facts. General Maurice, the Prime Minister continued, had made three accusations of false statements by the Leader of the House and himself. He had examined the matter in some detail, and the least satisfactory of the three issues raised, from the Government’s point of view, related to the divisions in Palestine. There now seemed some doubt as to whether, on 9th April, when he made his statement, there had not been five British divisions instead of three, as he had stated. The point was not quite clear yet, and was being investigated by the War Office. He believed that one of the divisions had started to leave on 4th April for France, and that another division had been under orders. There had also been in progress a process of the gradual incorporation of Indian divisions in the British divisions. To-day this had been carried so far that he was informed there was only one wholly British division in Palestine. How far this process of dilution had been carried on 9th April, he had not yet been able to ascertain. Whether the facts he had stated had been correct or not, however, they had been made in good faith, and, as he had pointed out on the previous day, the War Cabinet had been informed by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff on 23rd March, that there were three British divisions in Egypt; General Maurice had been present; a draft of the Minute had been sent him for correction and he had never returned it. Consequently, if he (the Prime Minister) had made a mistake, it had been made on good authority and in good faith.

Lord Milner said it was a terrible thing to have to announce publicly, so that it would reach the Germans, what our policy was in regard to the divisions in Palestine. This information would be very valuable to them.

The Prime Minister pointed out that this was the danger of statements and accusations made by persons with knowledge of secret matters.

In regard to General Maurice’s second accusation, relating to the comparison of the strength of the army on the 1st January, 1918, and the 1st January, 1917, the Prime Minister stated that he had used the figures in the War Office official statistical abstract. General Maurice’s contention, however, had not been that the statement was inaccurate, but that it implied that Sir Douglas Haig’s fighting strength on the eve of the great battle which began on the 21st March, had not been diminished. The Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that on the 18th April, Sir Godfrey Baring had put a question to Mr. Macpherson as to whether the fighting strength on the 1st January, 1918, was or was not greater than on the 1st January, 1917, and Mr. Macpherson had replied that the fighting strength was greater on the 1st January, 1918. Mr. Macpherson’s reply had been based on figures supplied by the Director of Military Operations’ Department, in fact by General Maurice’s own Department. The figures had been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Year</th>
<th>Combatant Strength</th>
<th>Ration Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 1917</td>
<td>1,298,000</td>
<td>1,530,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 1918</td>
<td>1,298,000</td>
<td>1,530,000</td>
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Of course he could not give the actual figures in Parliament, but this material enabled him effectually to dispose of General Maurice’s second contention.

In reply to a question as to why he had quoted the figures for 1st January instead of 1st March, 1918, the Prime Minister said it had been merely to give the same date in succeeding years. As a matter of fact, the figures for March were more favourable than for
January, since the fighting strength had increased by 34,000, and the labour strength had been somewhat reduced, owing to the comb­
out of labour battalions.
In regard to General Maurice's first point, namely, as to whether the extension of the line as carried out was ever discussed at Versailles, the Prime Minister draw attention to the following statement in General Maurice's letter:

"I was at Versailles when the question was decided by the Supreme War Council, to whom it had been referred."

The implication was that General Maurice had been present at the discussion, and several of those present had stated that they had understood it in this sense. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister said, General Maurice was in the building, but the record showed that he was not in the room when the discussion took place. The extension of the line discussed at Versailles dealt with the French demand that the British line should be extended to Berry-au-Bac, and the recommendation of the Military Representatives that it should extend to the River Ailette, but not with the extension to Barisis, which had already been settled between Field-Marshal Haig and General Pétain. In fact, in the course of the Conference Field-Marshal Haig had informed the Supreme War Council—

"That during the recent battle in Flanders he had, at General Pétain's request, agreed to and had now extended the front, first to the Oise and afterwards to Barisis."

The questions and answers in Parliament on 23rd April had all referred to the Barisis extension; and not to the further extension discussed by the Supreme War Council, which, in fact, had never been carried out.

The main point on which the Prime Minister wished to consult his colleagues was as to whether he should limit his speech on the following day to answer General Maurice's specific accusations, or whether he should extend it so as to cover the whole history of the extension of the British line.

In favour of the first proposal, it was pointed out that there were great advantages in limiting the statement, in order that fewer persons might become involved; the statement on wider grounds could not be made without involving Field-Marshal Haig and General Robertson.

Mr. Balfour said that Mr. Asquith would speak first, and he undoubtedly would cover the wide field, so that the Prime Minister should be prepared in that sense.

Mr. Bonar Law pointed out that the first paragraph of General Maurice's letter really raised the wider issue. The full summary of the circumstances, which had been circulated by the Secretary, appeared to him to dispose of any suggestion that the Government had acted improperly in the matter.

In the course of the discussion it was generally agreed that the Government had in fact a complete answer to their critics, but that the statement of the Parliamentary answer was difficult, owing to the obligation not to give information to the enemy.

General Smuts laid great stress on this aspect of the question. In replying to General Maurice's second charge, it was, he said, essential not to give figures. Even to give the difference between the numbers in January 1918 and the numbers in January 1917 would assist the enemy. It was also most objectionable to give particulars of the numbers of British divisions in Palestine and Mesopotamia, or to mention the process of diluting them with Indian battalions.

Lord Curzon suggested that on these points a reply might be made that the Prime Minister would have been, quite willing to submit his evidence to an Enquiry by Judges if that course had commended itself to the House of Commons, but that, as this had
been rejected, he could not take the responsibility of stating openly in Parliament information which would be of value to the enemy.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies urged that nothing should be said which would seem to impugn the actions of Field-Marshal Sir D. Haig, General Robertson, or other soldiers, as this would only prolong and embitter the controversy.

Great stress was laid on the importance of making the statement in a form which would give satisfaction to Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. It must be made quite clear that Field-Marshal Haig had not wished to take over any additional portion of the line. Undoubtedly Field-Marshal Haig had felt that he was under an obligation to take over some of the line, owing to the decision of the Boulogne Conference on the 25th September, 1917, and to the urgent pressure of the French Government and French military authorities, and he had very properly been influenced in his decision by the opinions thus expressed. While this was not denied, it was pointed out that it was clear, in the Secretary's summary, that after the 25th September the War Cabinet had at no time put any pressure whatsoever upon Field-Marshal Haig in the matter; that they had resisted all attempts on the part of the French Government to induce them to put such pressure; and that the amount of and precise time for the extension had always been left entirely to Field-Marshal Haig and General Pétain.

Attention was also drawn to the interpretation that General Robertson had placed on the Boulogne Conference, namely, that the matter could not be regarded as decided, and that Field-Marshal Haig had admitted that this presented the conclusion arrived at on the 25th September in a different light from the official record.

The Prime Minister invited Lord Milner and Mr. Chamberlain to meet him in the afternoon to consider more in detail the character of the statement which he should make in the House of Commons. He hoped by that time to have prepared a rough draft.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 8, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 408.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Friday, May 10, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:

The PRIME MINISTER (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDLINGTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. the VISCOUNT MILNER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 1 to 10 and 13).
The Right Hon. E. SHORTT, K.C., M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland (for Minutes 1 to 11).
The Right Hon. R. MUNRO, K.C., M.P., Secretary for Scotland (for Minute 13).

Admiral Sir R. E. WEMYSS, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 10).
Rear-Admiral G. P. W. HOPK, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 10).
The Right Hon. W. LONG, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.
Professor W. G. S. ADAMS (for Minute 11).

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel LESLIE WILSON, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
Captain CLEMENT JONES, Assistant Secretary.
Mr. THOMAS JONES, Assistant Secretary.
Captain L. F. BURGIS, Assistant Secretary.
1. With reference to War Cabinet 404, Minute 2, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that one more fresh German division had arrived north of Hinges. On the Lys front 40 fresh divisions, and 9 Somme divisions had been engaged, making a total of 49.

A suggestion was made that the Allied reserves had been drawn to the northern and southern wings of that part of the front where a big German attack was anticipated, and that in the centre, just north of the Somme, the reserves had been reduced.

The Chief of the Imperial Staff said that this point was being carefully watched by General Foch.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 401, Minute 4, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that 148 German divisions had been engaged once, 79 a second time, 20 a third time, and 1 a fourth time, making the equivalent of a total of 248 divisions engaged.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 393, Minute 3, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the Director of Military Intelligence was always unwilling to give figure of enemy casualties. The Germans now publish nothing. The only safe estimate, therefore, that could be made was that punishments were even.

4. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there were signs of a coming attack between Arras and Albert; there were a certain number of new trenches which looked as though they might be assembly trenches; there were more dumps; more hospitals had been erected; and more batteries had been located. It was reasonable to suppose that the anticipated attack would be made as soon as the German divisions were refitted and retrained. It might begin any day next week, and therefore the indications mentioned above fitted in with other information already received. It was not unlikely that the attack would be made on a wide front, with, perhaps, 50 German divisions (30 in front and 20 behind). Such an attack might be on a front of about 30 miles, or 50 kilometres. If the enemy could bring enough weight to bear at one of the points where success had already been achieved, such as at Amiens or the group of hills in the north, it would pay him to do so, but it would be difficult, because in those places the line had been pushed into "noises" with exposed flanks and congested roads. It was more likely that the Germans would choose a "flat face" for their attack, where all their weight could be brought to bear. Such a "flat face" could be found between Arras and Albert.

Sir Eric Geddes pointed out that, from the transportation point of view, Doullens, being the junction immediately north of Amiens, was a very important point and very valuable.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff concurred in this, and pointed out that an advance of a few miles would put Doullens under the enemy guns. The enemy were now about 15 miles from Doullens.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff further reported that Arras was being heavily shelled.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff drew attention to a telegram from Sir C. Marling, dated the 7th May, 1918 (No. 389), which reported that General Dunsterville proposed sending a party of twelve British officers and twelve other ranks by direct route, with packed transport, from Hamadan to Tabriz. They would proceed to Urumia, in order to assist our friends there in organising resistance against the Turks. Sir C. Marling had replied to General...
Dunsterville that he most earnestly deprecated the despatch of the party to Tabriz, because he thought that its effect would be provocative and would give the Turks a pretext to massacre Christians indiscriminately, on the ground that we were organising them to attack Mohammedans.

Lord Curzon and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs suggested that this question should be referred to the Eastern Committee.

The Secretary of State for War asked that immediate action might be taken, and pointed out that this was a case in which military and political matters were very closely connected, as General Dunsterville was serving under General Marshall.

While recognising the importance of fixing the limits of the political and military importance of General Dunsterville's operations, the War Cabinet decided that—

In view of the close connection of this question with the many facets of Eastern policy with which they were not intimately acquainted, the question should be examined, in the first instance, by the Eastern Committee the same afternoon.

The War Cabinet had before them a note by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, covering a memorandum by the General Staff (Paper G.T. 4482) in regard to the Mexican situation. The Chief of Imperial General Staff, in his note, pointed out that the Foreign Office telegram to Lord Reading on the 7th May, 1918 (No. 2788) did not, in his opinion, sufficiently emphasise the military aspect of the situation in Mexico, nor the need for immediate action, and he considered that a further telegram should be sent in which stress might be laid on these points.

The War Cabinet decided that—

This question should be settled by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for War.

1. The First Sea Lord reported that the transport "Queen Alexandra" had collided with a German submarine off Cherbourg; the submarine was sunk, and the "Queen Alexandra" had been able to undertake her voyage.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 370, Minute 17, the First Sea Lord reported a message from H.M.S. "Suffolk," to the effect that the Red Army were demanding the right to remove such Allied munitions from Vladivostock as were paid for by the late Russian Government. The Commanding Officer had replied by pointing out the undesirability of the surrender of any munitions to Bolsheviks.

9. The First Sea Lord reported that bombing raids had been carried out and bombs dropped on Bruges and Zeebrugge. Hits with 230-lb. bombs had been claimed on a cargo ship. An enemy machine was driven down in flames. One of our pilots was wounded. All our machines returned safely.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 397, Minute 2, the First Sea Lord reported that, on the previous night, the operation to close the ports of Ostend and Zeebrugge had been successfully completed at Ostend. The operations had been carried out in much the same manner as on the 22nd April. The "Vindictive" and the "Sappho" had been prepared as block ships, but, owing to engine trouble, the
"Sappho" had been left behind and was unable to take part in the operations. The "Vindictive" had got in and had been sunk between the wooden piers and across the entrance to Ostend Harbour. Information was still scanty, but it was believed that she was sunk, not right across the mouth, but at an angle of 30°. Our losses were slight. One motor-launch had been lost and one cruiser motor-boat had been sunk by orders of the Vice-Admiral, in order to save her from falling into the hands of the enemy. One Commander, one Lieutenant, and one Sub-Lieutenant were reported killed, while two or three officers and twelve men were reported missing.

The Prime Minister said that this was another admirable operation, and that the Admiralty and all concerned were to be congratulated; in particular, he thought that the time had come, now that this last success at Ostend completed the operations begun on 22nd April, for the message of congratulation to Admiral Keyes, which had been deferred (War Cabinet 397, Minute 2), to be sent.

The War Cabinet decided that—

A telegram of congratulation, in the name of the War Cabinet, should be sent by the First Lord of the Admiralty to Vice-Admiral Sir Roger Keyes.

11. The Prime Minister stated that he considered it highly desirable, in view of the vast amount of work in connection with the War that required the constant attention of the members of the War Cabinet, that the Secretary of State for the Colonies should be requested to act on their behalf with regard to Irish affairs in general, only bringing before the War Cabinet such questions—as may be referred to him by the Lord-Lieutenant through the Chief Secretary for Ireland—as Mr. Long thought that body should consider before action is taken.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies stated that he could not accept the responsibility, proposed to be cast upon him, of acting for the War Cabinet, unless it was clearly understood that the most drastic steps should be taken to stamp out pro-German intrigues.

The War Cabinet approved the proposal of the Prime Minister, and accepted the condition made by Mr. Long.

12. With reference to War Cabinet 339, Minute 3, the War Cabinet had under consideration a Note by Lord Curzon on the Proportional Representation Scheme (Paper G.T.-4476). Lord Curzon pointed out that there was considerable difficulty over this scheme. In the House of Lords there had been a large majority in favour of proportional representation, which proposal had been several times rejected in the House of Commons. On the last day when the proposal was discussed in the House of Lords, Lord Curzon said that the House asked for assurances about this scheme before it was prepared to give its consent and pass the Representation of the People Bill, and that he was called on several times to answer questions from those who were in favour of proportional representation. The five answers which he gave were practically on the same lines as those given by the Home Secretary in the House of Commons. Both he and Sir George Cave promised that, if the House of Lords would pass the Bill, a Committee should
be set up which would draw up an experimental scheme, and that, when the Report of this Committee was issued, the opinion of the House of Commons would be taken on the scheme as a whole. If the House of Commons decided in favour of the scheme, then the Government promised to put a Minister in charge of the Bill, and would take the same responsibility for the Bill as it had in the case of the Representation of the People Act.

Lord Curzon said that it might be argued, from certain words that he had used in the House of Lords, that the Government would take a decision irrespective of the opinion of the House of Commons, but the general sense of his various statements was clear and in accord with what the Home Secretary had said in the House of Commons. He was of opinion that it was very important that the War Cabinet should come to a definite decision in order to meet the various questions that might arise.

Mr. Bonar Law said that the real position was that arrangements had been made to have the whole proposal examined in the same manner as the Report of the Speaker’s Conference. This first stage of the proceedings, as regards these proposals, was to be left entirely open to the free vote of the House. If the House of Commons decided in favour, then the Government had promised to take charge of the proposals, and Sir George Cave said that an arrangement had been come to for the scheme to be introduced on Monday by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher (but not in his capacity as a member of the Government), who was in favour of the proposals, and that he understood that an amendment was to be moved by Mr. Burdett-Coutts.

It was generally agreed to the statement of Lord Curzon in the House of Lords on the 6th February, as follows:—

"The Government will submit the Report to the House of Commons as a whole. The House of Commons must have the right to determine whether the Report as a whole shall or shall not be adopted as the basis of discussion . . . . and, if the House of Commons thought it right and proper to express their assent to the scheme as a whole, I think we might fairly assume that it was a good and reasonable scheme, which it was generally desired should pursue its further stages towards the Statute Book. In that case the Government would undertake to put a Minister in charge of the measure, and he would use his best efforts to secure the passage of a good and reasonable measure into law."

expressed the extent of the Government’s pledges on this question.

The War Cabinet decided that—

In the debate which was to take place in the House of Commons on this scheme on Monday next the Government would stand neutral. Individual Ministers would speak and vote as they pleased, and the House should be left to give a free vote on this question.

Emigration Bill.

14. The War Cabinet had under consideration the draft of the Emigration Bill (Paper G.T.–4061 A), and a memorandum on the subject of the Bill from the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Paper G.T.–4061).

The War Cabinet approved the draft of the Bill.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S W.,
May 10, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 409.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Saturday, May 11, 1918, at 11 A.M.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.
The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.
General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 5).

Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 5).
Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 5).
Major-General F. C. Poole, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (for Minutes 1 to 5).

Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Acting Secretary.
1. WITH reference to War Cabinet 408, Minute 1, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that one more division had arrived from Russia, making 207 divisions, and a division had come up from Champagne to the Sommes.

2. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there were signs of small German concentrations opposite the Belgian army, and that a number of pontoons were arriving with 6-pounder guns mounted in their bows.

The War Cabinet requested the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to ascertain what steps were being taken by General Foch to meet the German concentration on the Belgian front.

3. The First Sea Lord reported that news had been received that on the 8th May, off May Island, an airship, screening a convoy, had dropped bombs on and destroyed a submarine, presumably British, for among the wreckage that came up was a kit-bag belonging to a British seaman. An investigation was being made.

A report had been received that H.M. Submarine "E. 34" had torpedoed and sunk an enemy submarine 20 miles east of Orfordness. One survivor, the captain, had been picked up.

The First Sea Lord added that the campaign against enemy submarines was being vigorously prosecuted, that the Irish Sea at present appeared to be clear, and that unconfirmed reports of successful attacks in the North Sea had been received.

4. The First Sea Lord stated that a report had been received from the naval attaché at Petrograd to the effect that German cavalry and motor-cars had arrived at Helsingfors from Hangö on the 12th April, simultaneously with "Wiesbaden," "Posen," and trawlers; the latter entered the South Harbour and shelled houses held by the Red Guard, at short range. The trawler division, organised under the Russian commercial flag to sweep mines, had been seized by the White Guards. The Germans and White Guards talked openly of taking Petrograd.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 408, Minute 10, the First Sea Lord reported that the operation to close the port of Ostend, in the light of the further reports which had come to hand, had been a remarkable feat of navigation. After the fabricated fog had been created, a natural fog had come down, and the "Vindictive" had to steam several times east and west before finding the pier, and indeed, had almost struck the pier. Her crew got away in motor-boats. The "Vindictive" was inside the channel, but probably only about two-thirds of the channel was blocked. This was sufficient to cause serious inconvenience to the enemy. H.M.S. "Warwick," which had been mined, had been towed safely into Dover. Our losses had been 4 officers and 14 men killed and missing. Full reports would be issued to the press.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 359, Minute 8, the War Cabinet took note of the agreement reported by General Smuts as having been arrived at with regard to home propaganda between the Ministry of Information and the National War Aims Committee, viz., that the Ministry of Information should undertake home propaganda by means of cinema films and pictorial methods, the cost to be defrayed from their own vote (G.T.-4444).
7. With reference to War Cabinet 399, Minute 18, and Memorandum by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries dated the 22nd April, 1918 (G.T.-4308), the War Cabinet took note of the following agreement which had been reached between representatives of the War Office, the Ministry of National Service, and the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, at a Conference held at the War Office on the 8th May, 1918:

The Board of Agriculture will release for Military Service between the 1st May and the 30th June, 30,000 Grade I men between the ages of 19 and 31.

The Board will allocate a quota to each County Agricultural Committee. The numbers of Grade I men posted under the Proclamation will be counted towards the quotas of the respective areas.

The War Office and the Ministry of National Service will endeavour to allocate as many German prisoners as possible and War Agricultural Volunteers to replace men withdrawn.

No further men beyond the 30,000 whole time employed in agriculture will be withdrawn unless developments in the military situation should make a further demand imperative for national safety.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 11, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 410

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Monday, May 13, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. Sir R. Chalmers, G.C.B., Permanent Secretary, Treasury (for Minute 15).

German Tanks.

1. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff showed the War Cabinet a sketch of a German tank, with technical descriptions. He said that recent experience had shown that German tanks ran away from our big tanks, but ran after our little ones. The chief defect of the German tanks appeared to be that they were unable to cross a ditch more than 8 feet 6 inches in width.

Technical Devices; Illustrations in Newspapers.

2. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to the large number of illustrations of British technical devices appearing in the illustrated press. The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary should enquire, on behalf of the War Cabinet, as to the organisation for censoring illustrated papers, and to report to the War Cabinet.
3. With reference to War Cabinet 409, Minute 2, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that General Foch was satisfied with regard to the position in front of the Belgian army. The ground was marshy, and inundations had been extended. Some anxiety had been felt as to the point of junction between the British and Belgian armies, but as to this also General Foch was reported as being satisfied.

4. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there was no change in the general situation. In accordance with arrangements concluded with General Foch for facilitating the provision of French reserves, the IXth Corps had begun to take over the command of the sectors astride the Aisne River at Berry-au-Bac.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that one United States brigade was now in the line, south of Montdidier, under French command.

6. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that a gas attack had been made by the British on a large scale, but without infantry attack, between the Hohenzollern Redoubt and La Bassee, under favourable conditions of wind. 3,000 cylinders of gas had been released.

7. The Prime Minister asked the Chief of the Imperial General Staff what were the present arrangements for the communication of information to the press in the United States. He called attention to one of General Maurice's interviews, in which references to the French had been made, which were likely to be resented by our Allies.

The Secretary of State for War undertook to caution the officer charged with this duty, to be on his guard against saying anything that would give umbrage to our Allies.

In this connection the Chief of the Imperial General Staff pointed out that the French newspapers had dealt rather hardly with our army, and that Lord Milner had felt obliged to write on the subject to M. Clemenceau, who had replied with a friendly letter. General Wilson stated that the tone of the French press had now improved.

8. Attention was called to accounts, which had reached members of the War Cabinet from private sources, in regard to—

(a.) The alleged lack of control and direction of our troops in the recent retreats in the Vth and Ist Armies' areas, which was stated to have resulted in the abandonment of prepared positions owing to lack of some person in authority to indicate them to the retiring troops.

(b.) The alleged failure of our military engineers to effect demolitions of roads, bridges, culverts, &c., in the retreat, and generally the alleged inadequate management of labour in entrenchment and other military engineering. It was suggested that, notwithstanding the excellent fighting qualities of our troops, which were superior to those of the enemy, our armies had sustained severe setbacks.

In this connection the Secretary drew attention to an undertaking given by the Prime Minister, at a Conference at Abbeville on
the 3rd May, 1918, in reply to a request by General Foch, to enquire into the possibility of obtaining more labour.

The Secretary of State for War said that all the above matters were under consideration, including the organisation of existing labour at the front, which was, perhaps, more important than the importation of fresh labour.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that in the more recent operations, as in the earlier stages of the war, the French had intervened to prevent important demolitions from being effected; they had even gone so far as to take out the charges which we had put into bridges. This, he said, would be dealt with in the report that Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig was furnishing.

The Secretary of State for War deprecated a proposal for a further enquiry to be ordered by the War Cabinet. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff had already done much to remedy defects, and he would prefer to send someone to examine on the spot the preparations which we were making. The matter depended, however, mainly on the quality and experience of the officers commanding the various units, and every effort was being made to improve this situation.

Submarines.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 409, Minute 3, the Deputy First Sea Lord stated that a message had been received from the Commander-in-Chief, Grand Fleet, to the effect that the bombing of one of our submarines by an airship, reported on the 11th instant, appeared to have been carried out against the wreck of the “K. 17,” which had been sunk on the 31st January last by collision (War Cabinet 336, Minute 5).

The Deputy First Sea Lord reported the sinking of two enemy submarines:—

(a.) The steamship “Olympic,” bringing 6,000 troops from America to this country, had sighted a submarine ahead. The officer of the watch had put the helm over, and had succeeded in cutting the submarine in two. Four officers and twenty-seven men had been rescued from the submarine. The submarine in question was the “U. 193.”

(b.) H.M.S. “Loyal” had arrived at Devonport with three prisoners from “U.B. 72,” which had been sunk by the submarine “D. 4” on the 12th instant, 25 miles S.S.W. from Portland Bill.

Seaplane Attack on Submarine Base at Cattaro.

10. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that seven Italian seaplanes had carried out a successful attack on the submarine base at Cattaro on the 12th instant. All the machines had returned safely. Propaganda pamphlets had been dropped. On the 11th May six British machines had carried out a bombing attack on Cattaro. Two direct hits were observed on the floating dock and arsenal. The attack on submarines and destroyers was also apparently good. One enemy machine was driven down into the sea. One British machine had been obliged to land 8 miles from Tuzla.

Russia:

The Baltic Fleet.

11. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that our Naval Attaché at Petrograd stated that the Russian Naval General Staff had received a telegram from Moscow saying that the Commissary of Naval and Military Affairs, in discussing the steps to be taken regarding the Baltic Fleet, had agreed that all arrangements should be made. The telegram terminated by saying that similar incidents to those connected with the Black Sea Fleet must not be repeated. In a subsequent telegram the Naval Attaché at Petrograd reported
that he placed no confidence in this order, and that he was proceeding
with the arrangements that had already been proposed by him.
He added that everything pointed to German occupation inside the
next two weeks, but that the present very acute position of the
supply question in Petrograd might retard the operation. German
prisoners in Petrograd had all had new uniforms served out.

12. The Deputy First Sea Lord said that the Rear-Admiral at
Murmansk reported that a French Colonel Donop had arrived there
from Moscow, with orders to go to Archangel to superintend the
arrival there of Czechs and Serbians.

13. With reference to War Cabinet 409 A, the War Cabinet
noted and approved General Smuts' Report (Paper G.T.—4518)
(Appendix).

In connection with the decision that General Poole should
proceed to Russia to take charge of British military interests there,
the discussion arose as to the impending appointment of a diplomatist
to co-ordinate the activities of various British missions and consuls
scattered through the country.

It was agreed between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
and the Secretary of State for War that General Poole
should have the right of direct communication with the
War Office, but that he should be under the general
authority of the coordinating diplomatic official. Pending
the appointment of an officer for this purpose, General
Poole should be in communication with Mr. Lockhart, and
should be careful not to intervene in diplomatic affairs
without previously consulting him.

The names and qualifications of various distinguished persons
who might be eligible for the diplomatic post in question were
discussed.

It was generally agreed that, for the moment, military questions
were of greater urgency than any other in Russia, but that ultimately
commercial considerations would be of great importance, and on
this subject Mr. Balfour said he had arranged to see Sir Arthur
Steel-Maitland.

The question of the actual appointment to the function of
co-ordinating our diplomatic action in Russia was left in
abeyance for the time being—pending consideration by the
Foreign Office.

14. The Prime Minister drew attention to Lord Reading's
telegram No. 2118, dated the 11th May, 1918, and other recent
telegrams, on the subject of American reinforcements. He pro-
posed to communicate the gist of this telegram to M. Clemenceau,
and to suggest that the next meeting of the Supreme War Council
should be in the first week in June, when a final decision on this
subject could be reached.

The Secretary of State for War stated that 59,000 American
troops had arrived or were on their way to join the British forces on
the Western front.

After some discussion of the difficulties connected with this
subject, the War Cabinet agreed that—

The Prime Minister should send to M. Clemenceau for his
personal information and for communication to General
Pech only, a summary of Lord Reading's latest telegrams,
accompanied by a suggestion that the Supreme War
Pay and Separation Allowances of Italian Soldiers.

15. With reference to War Cabinet 361, Minute 7, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for War, dealing with the desirability of countering pacifist propaganda in Italy by doing something to improve the miserably inadequate pay and separation allowances of the Italian army.

Lord Milner said that the matter had been before the Cabinet on more than one previous occasion, and if anything was to be done it should be done at once, before the strain of a big enemy offensive comes on the Italians. The project had been strongly supported by Signor Bissolati, who believed that the announcement of a generous offer of assistance by the British Government would have an excellent moral effect on the Italian army, as well as on the people of Italy generally. The money involved was about 1,000,000/. per month.

The Secretary corrected the statement in Lord Milner's memorandum with reference to a discussion between the Foreign Secretary and Baron Sonnino, and drew attention to a note by Mr. Balfour (Paper G.T.-3930), according to which Signor Orlando was more or less satisfied with the position, and did not think it necessary for anything further to be done.

Mr. Barnes informed the Cabinet that a serious position had arisen in connection with the building trades of Liverpool. The rate current in that district prior to the war was 10½d. or 11d., which has now been forced up to 1s. 2d. per hour. The men were now claiming a further increase to 1s. 6d. per hour, in addition to the 12½ per cent. A meeting of the Liverpool Building Trades Conciliation Board had recently taken place, at which, owing to the fact that two of the employers had voted on the side of the men, the rate of 1s. 6d. had now been established, and had been accepted by the employers. Mr. Barnes said that a further conference between the Government officials concerned and the Liverpool Building Trades Conciliation Board would take place on Wednesday next.

Mr. Barnes stated that he understood that the Ministry of Labour...
had consulted with representatives of all the Departments concerned, and it was proposed to appoint a Committee with a view to ensuring that no future general increase of wages in the building trades should be granted without the consent of that Committee.

The War Cabinet took note of the above action.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 13, 1918.
INTERVENTION IN RUSSIA.

(Note by General Smuts with reference to War Cabinet 409 A.)

THE War Cabinet this morning appointed Lord Milner and myself, together with the First Sea Lord and the C.I.G.S., as a Committee to consider the question of the steps which could immediately be taken to organise military resistance to the enemy in Russia while the correspondence with America and Japan in reference to intervention was proceeding. We met this afternoon and arrived at the following conclusions:-

1. A great deal of confusion and cross-correspondence was at present arising from the absence of any definition and apportionment of military responsibility in Russia among the Allies. It seemed to us, therefore, advisable to divide the responsibility for certain localities among the Allies as hereunder stated. It seemed also anomalous that, while great efforts were being made to secure the intervention of Japan in Russia, the Czecho-Slovak troops should be removed from that country to the Western front. The Shipping Controller reported that any transport of Czecho-Slovak troops would simply divert tonnage from the transport of equivalent numbers of American troops, and it appeared inadvisable to ask for Japanese tonnage for the purpose at the very time when we were pressing Japan to undertake intervention in Russia, which would absorb all her tonnage. We therefore came to the conclusion that the Czecho-Slovak troops now at Vladivostock or on their way to it should be taken charge of there and be organised into efficient units by the French Government, to whom the above difficulties in the way of their transport to France should be pointed out, and who should be asked that, pending their eventual transport to France, they might be used to stiffen the Japanese as part of an Allied force of intervention in Russia. Similarly the rest of the Czecho-Slovak force in Russia should be collected at Murmansk and Archangel, preferably the latter, and should be taken charge of there and organised by the British Government, and pending their transport across the sea should be used to hold those places and to take part in any Allied intervention in Russia. The Secretary of State for War undertook to send a telegram in the above sense to M. Clemenceau, who had addressed a question to him about the transport of the Czecho-Slovaks from Vladivostock in execution of the Supreme War Council resolution on the subject. It was felt that the collection and organisation of large bodies of troops at the above ports would in itself be a warning to Germany against the removal of further divisions to the Western front.

2. It was decided that General Poole should proceed as soon as possible to Russia as our military representative in order to take charge of military affairs so far as the British Government was concerned, and to advise the War Office as to all steps to be taken in regard to our intervention in Russia. Meantime his London Office would collect the necessary officers and N.C.O.'s, more or less on the lines of the Dunsterville mission, to assist him in the task of organising the Czecho-Slovaks and other forces of intervention from Archangel and Murmansk. The First Sea Lord undertook to send some 200 marines for the defence of Archangel, and the War office to send such munitions and supplies as General Poole might deem necessary for the purpose of his mission. General Poole was to consider, while holding and safeguarding the positions at Murmansk and Archangel, how far he could work up from Archangel towards Vologda with the forces at his disposal.

3. It was not considered advisable at the present juncture to move either American or other Allied troops from the West to Russia, though the matter should be reconsidered at a later stage of the present enemy offensive on the Western front.

4. After the discussion this morning at the War Cabinet, at which the Prime Minister pointed out how difficult and indeed impossible it was for M. Trotsky to invite Allied intervention in Russia, however much he might desire it, before an Allied force was on the spot to protect him against the enemy, it was felt by the Committee that an undue weight had been placed, in our recent correspondence, on the desirability of an invitation from the Bolshevik Government. It was therefore decided to recommend to the Foreign Office that the difficulties against such an invitation should be pointed out to the American and Japanese Governments, and that they should be pressed to be satisfied with the very strong expressions which had already fallen from M. Trotsky and the Bolshevik Foreign Minister without waiting for a formal invitation which the Bolshevik Government could not be expected to make in their present helpless situation.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W., May 11, 1918.  
(Signed) J. C. SMUTS.
WAR CABINET, 411.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, May 14, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the EARL CURzon OF Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:—

The Right Hon. A. J. BALFOUR, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 18).

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 1 to 23).

General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 15).


Major-General F. H. Sykes, C.M.G., Chief of the Air Staff (for Minutes 19 to 22).

Major-General E. B. Ashmore, C.M.G., M.V.O., Home Forces (for Minutes 19 to 22).


The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minutes 19 to 22).


The Right Hon. R. Munro, K.C., M.P., Secretary for Scotland (for Minute 24).

The Right Hon. T. J. Macnamara, LL.D., M.P., Financial Secretary, Admiralty (for Minute 26).


Mr. Stanley Baldwin, M.P., Joint Financial Secretary, Treasury (for Minute 26).


Captain E. Abraham, Assistant Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
1. The Prime Minister explained to the War Cabinet that a certain number of questions arose almost daily, in connection with the military situation, enquiry into which, when made before the Cabinet as a whole, took up a large proportion of their time. This might be obviated if he carried out such enquiries as might be necessary at the War Office and reported the facts, when necessary, at a later hour to the Cabinet as a body. He therefore suggested that the regular meetings of the Cabinet should, in future, commence at 12 noon.

It was further proposed that one day a week, such day being selected by the Secretary so as to ensure as far as possible the attendance of the Heads of Departments concerned, should be set aside for the disposal of Departmental matters not immediately affecting the conduct of the war. On such occasions the Cabinet would meet without the Prime Minister being present when they assembled.

The War Cabinet approved these two suggestions.

2. In connection with expediting the work of the War Cabinet, the question of the supply and regulation of labour to shipyards, as referred to in Papers G.T.-4341, 4375, 4406, and 4499, was brought to the notice of the War Cabinet. It was pointed out that the Admiralty and the Ministry of Munitions were represented on the War Priorities Committee, and that the supply and regulation of labour for shipyards was a matter which primarily concerned those two Departments.

The War Cabinet requested—

General Smuts to arrange for the War Priorities Committee to meet at an early date, in order to consider the matter in its several bearings, the Minister of Labour being asked to be present.

And authorised—

General Smuts to make a decision on behalf of the War Cabinet in the matter.

3. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to the desirability of confining the attendance at War Cabinet meetings to the Ministers concerned in the subject under discussion. It was pointed out, however, that, while this was highly desirable with a view to expediting the work, cases might arise when highly technical matters were involved, and it would then be necessary for Ministers to bring with them the expert advisers belonging to their Departments. It was generally agreed that the present tendency was for too many experts to attend the meetings of the War Cabinet.

4. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that air reconnaissances had shown that there had been a certain increase in the number of dumps about and north of the Somme.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 410, Minute 6, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that we had released, on the previous night, 5,000 cylinders of gas, and used gas from 1,500 projectors, between Lens and La Bassée. He added that there were no means of ascertaining the effect of such offensives on our part, but that it was hoped, judging from our own experience in such matters, that the casualties suffered by the enemy in such attacks were very considerable.
Salonica.

6. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that the Bulgarians had withdrawn nine battalions from the Dobrudja and were transferring them to the Monastir front. This made a total of 250 battalions on the Salonica front, of which only five were now composed of German troops. He mentioned that this, in itself, did not necessarily mean that they intended to carry out an offensive against us on that front.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 405, Minute 8 (c), the Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that Lieutenant-General Sir C. L. Woollcombe was leaving for Salonica on the following day in order to confer with General Guillaumat.

German Attack Anticipated.

8. The Prime Minister stated that he had received information that Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig anticipated that the next attack would be made by the Germans with a force of approximately eighty divisions.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff mentioned that he had received a telegram from the French General Headquarters on this subject, from which it appeared that, although our General Headquarters anticipated an attack by from seventy to eighty divisions, General Foch did not agree. General Wilson's own view was that he did not think the Germans could to-day muster eighty good divisions for an attack, although their refitted divisions were now coming along rapidly.

Casualties on the Western Front.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 405, Minute 12, the Secretary of State for War informed the War Cabinet that our losses between the 21st March and the 9th May were 310,000, of whom 130,000 were missing. Of the latter number, 90,000, at the utmost, might be considered prisoners. The French losses during the same period might be put at about 90,000, making a total of 400,000 in all.

Moral of Troops.

10. In continuation of War Cabinet 410, Minute 7, the attention of the War Cabinet was called to certain criticisms of the British troops, which were being made in France. It was also pointed out that in the British Army there was, at times, a similar criticism of the French Army.

The War Cabinet were strongly of opinion that it was imperative that further criticisms of this nature should be stopped, as they tended to sap the moral of the Armies.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The question should be discussed personally with M. Clemenceau at the next convenient opportunity, with a view to the necessary action being taken forthwith to check such mutual criticism.

United States Army.

11. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to a telegram (No. 2139, dated 13th May, 1918) from Lord Reading, in which he stated that a very difficult situation had arisen in the United States owing to the publication in the American press, from a Canadian source, of what purported to be an expression of the views of the British Government relative to the formation of the American Army for use on the Western front.

Upon investigation, it appeared that the War Office, like other Departments, prepared a Weekly Summary as to the general situation, for the guidance of the Ministry of Information, and
that from these summaries the Ministry of Information composed a communication which was widely distributed.

In the particular case in question a subordinate official of the Ministry of Information had misapprehended the War Office note, and his résumé of it had been 'grossly inaccurate and misleading, since he had applied to conditions of to-day a sentence which, in the original document, referred to the totally different conditions of a year or more ago, when America entered the war.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Minister of Information should take the necessary action in relation to the official responsible for this blunder, and such further action as was necessary to prevent the recurrence of similar mistakes;

(b.) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should send a telegram to Lord Reading in the sense that the telegram sent to Ottawa did not emanate from the War Cabinet and did not represent their views, and authorising Lord Reading to repudiate it in the strongest terms. At the same time, Lord Reading should be informed confidentially that the mistake arose owing to a blunder on the part of a subordinate in the Ministry of Information, who omitted a vital passage in a War Office appreciation which referred to the situation which existed twelve months ago;

(c.) The Secretary of State for the Colonies should send an explanatory telegram to the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, giving similar information to that sent to Lord Reading.

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Vladivostock: 12. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that information had been received from H.M.S. "Suffolk" that the total number of Czech troops now at Vladivostock was 10,000.

The Adriatic. 13. The Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that two Italian motor-boats attacked an enemy transport which was entering the port of Durazzo on the night of the 12th-13th May, that the transport was torpedoed and sunk, and that it was believed that one escorting torpedo-boat was hit by a torpedo.

Strike on a Transport. 14. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that the British steamer "Kursk" had left America for a French port, manned by seventy-three ratings of H.M.S. "Devonshire," assisted by United States troops on board, the reason being that the crew had refused duty and were demanding a 50 per cent. increase of wages. He added that the crew were under arrest with a view to trial under the Defence of the Realm Regulations on the arrival of the vessel in England.

Bombing Raid. 15. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that Bruges docks had been bombed on the previous night, and that bombs were seen to fall on the quays of the east and west basin. All the machines returned safely.

War Cabinet: 16. The War Cabinet decided that—

No Meetings of the War Cabinet, other than those that might be called for by an emergency, should take place on Saturday, the 18th May; Monday, the 20th May; and Tuesday, the 21st May.
17. With reference to War Cabinet 360, Minute 17, the War Cabinet, in view of Lord Milner's appointment as Secretary of State for War, requested—

Lord Curzon to take Lord Milner's place in the enquiries remitted jointly to Lord Milner and Mr. Barnes.

18. The War Cabinet appointed the following Committee to prepare the Agenda for the Imperial War Cabinet—

Lord Curzon (in the Chair),
General Smuts,
Mr. Long,
Mr. Montagu,
Lieutenant-Colonel L. S. Amery (Secretary).

19. With reference to War Cabinet 355, Minute 11, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by Lord Milner (Paper G.T.-4188) and a report by Major-General Ashmore on the Air Defences of London.

The late immunity of London from visitations by hostile aircraft was commented on. The Chief of the Air Staff said that this might be attributed to generally unfavourable weather, to the great expenditure of aerial effort on the Western front, and possibly to a feeling on the part of the enemy that long-distance raids were not worth the cost; to these reasons might be added the fire at Friedrichshafen, which was believed to have destroyed a number of twin-engine bombing machines.

The Secretary of State for the Air said there was evidence of great losses of aircraft by the enemy, to replace which squadrons specially designed for raiding England were being used for local operations on the front in France. From the 21st March to the 12th May 570 enemy aeroplanes had been destroyed and 239 driven down out of control in the battle zone. The average number of machines put out of action had risen, since the start of the battle, from no more than 50 a week to 116.

The Chief of the Air Staff added that for the needs of the present battle all German aviation units had been withdrawn from the Italian theatre, and a number of reconnaissance units brought from the Eastern front. The number of flights identified in the battle zone had doubled since the beginning of the battle; units had been drawn from the quieter parts of the front; 75 per cent. of the enemy formations on the Western front were employed in the battle, and, according to prisoners, there was difficulty in keeping up establishments.

General Ashmore, with the aid of a map, described in considerable detail the existing scheme of defence for London. He expressed the view that the measures adopted rendered a successful attack on the capital by day very unlikely.

An account was given by the Secretary of State for the Air and the Minister of Munitions, of the various devices in use, or in course of development, for locating hostile aircraft by night. For nocturnal defence our resources were steadily improving. Though the full establishment postulated as necessary to repel an attack in great force had not been reached, the position was nevertheless satisfactory. Sir William Weir said that the requirements of the defence were being fulfilled gradually, and that he hoped the programme would be completed by the end of September.

The Minister of Munitions expressed some doubt of the urgency of certain items in the list of requirements stated in General Ashmore's memorandum, and the Secretary of State for the Air pointed out that some scheme of priority would have to be established in respect to claims for the output of material.
Poison Bombs.

The War Cabinet approved the general arrangements for the defence of London, and invited the Departments concerned to confer, on the initiation of the Secretary of State for the Air, concerning the completion of the programme, with reference to the relative urgency of these requirements and those of other Services, and to report to the Cabinet.

20. The possibility that the enemy might drop poison bombs on London was referred to, and General Thuillier expressed the opinion that, although this may be done for the purpose of terrorisation, there was no evidence that lethal bombs of this kind would be more destructive than high-explosive bombs. Experiments were being made. It seemed at present, however, that an equal weight of explosives would produce greater results. There appeared no special necessity for defensive measures, which in any case were not easy to devise, against this contingency.

It was suggested that General Thuillier should confer with the authorities in charge of the Fire Brigade.

General Trenchard's Appointment.

21. In connection with bombing, it was mentioned that General Trenchard had been appointed to an independent command of the bombing squadrons in France.

Weekly Report from Air Ministry.

22. The Secretary of State for the Air stated that arrangements were being made to furnish the War Cabinet with a weekly report on aerial matters.

Prisoners of War: Reprisals.

23. With reference to War Cabinet 393, Minute 21, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by Lord Milner on the subject of reprisals in the case of prisoners of war (Paper G.T.-4464).

Lord Milner said that, while the memorandum suggested forms which reprisals might take, all protests against brutalities to which our men were subjected having proved useless, yet, personally, he was averse from any hasty action being taken. Reprisals had been taken in isolated cases when the Germans had harshly treated British prisoners for offences such as dropping leaflets, &c, and in these cases the results had been successful.

It was pointed out that, under the present circumstances, it would be unadvisable to employ prisoners of war on the Western front within the 30-kilometre limit.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The War Office should be left to exercise their discretion in the matter.

Representation of the People Act.

24. The War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the President of the Local Government Board (Paper G.T.-4509) with reference to the life of Parliament and the preparation of a new register under the terms of the Representation of the People Act, 1918.

The President of the Local Government Board said that the franchise under the Act was very complicated; that the electors in England had found difficulty in correctly completing the pink forms, and that it was necessary for a house-to-house canvass to be held. If the time given for the preparation of the new register were not extended, Mr. Hayes Fisher was of opinion that, while, under the Act, millions had been enfranchised, hundreds of thousands of names would be omitted from the register. He pointed out that it was intended by the War Office and the Admiralty to send postcards to all
soldiers and sailors serving at home and abroad, which, when filled up, would considerably assist the overseers in the compilation of the register; but, up to the present, owing to the operations which were taking place in France, none of these postcards had yet been despatched, either to the Home forces or to the forces abroad, by the War Office. One of the chief difficulties was that it was only possible to canvass properly in the evening, and that some local authorities had not been able to obtain the services of competent canvassers for this duty. In his opinion, the register, if it were to be completed by the 1st October, would be a very imperfect one. The date for the publication of the lists was the 15th June, which meant that there was only one more month in which canvassers could be used to collect and correct the forms, which had been issued.

The Secretary for Scotland said that not only had there been no difficulty in Scotland, but that the assessors had intimated to him that they did not desire to have the date altered. It was true that the qualification for the Local Government vote was different in Scotland, but the qualification for the Parliamentary vote was the same. With regard to sailors and soldiers, Mr. Munro expressed the opinion that it would be of great assistance if the postcards sent out by the Admiralty and War Office could be returned filled up before the completion of the register.

Mr. Hayes Fisher pointed out that the problem for Scotland, with seventy seats, was much easier than that for England and Wales, with some 500 seats.

Sir Walter Jerred said that the War Office had not sent out the postcards to the troops serving at home, and that the Local Government Board had impressed upon that Department the necessity for the despatch of these cards. Yesterday he had been informed that they would now be sent out to all the Home Forces and to the troops serving in France. One of the principal difficulties lay in printing, and he was afraid that the lists would not be ready by the 15th June and that they would be very inaccurate.

Mr. Munro pointed out with regard to the printing that he had had the same difficulty in Scotland, where the local printers had put forward estimates for the printing so high that he could not accept them. He had therefore authorised the typewriting of lists.

Mr. Bonar Law said that, on political grounds, he would prefer an incomplete register to any postponement of the date on which the register should be ready. He pointed out that the fact that no election was possible owing to the lack of a register made the political position of the Government more difficult every day.

The Prime Minister, in agreeing with Mr. Bonar Law, said that when an election was not possible owing to the lack of a proper register, not only was the Government at the mercy of the different factions, but that it was embarrassed and hampered in its action when it was not in a position to say that it would appeal to the country for a decision.

Lord Curzon pointed out that, at any rate, a new Bill would have to be introduced for the prolongation of Parliament, which, under the terms of the last Act, came to an end on the 31st July next.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The President of the Local Government Board should convene a conference between the Secretary for Scotland and representatives of the War Office to discuss the best methods of expediting the preparation of the register; and that, if unable to agree that it was possible for the register to be completed on the date laid down in the Order in Council, the President of the Local Government Board should lay a report of the Conference before the War Cabinet.
25. The War Cabinet had a short discussion as to the attitude to be adopted in the House of Commons towards the question of the Emperor Karl's letter, which is to be raised on the motion for the adjournment.

As the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had left the meeting, no final decision was taken, but the general view was expressed that the best course would be to adhere to our previous attitude, and to decline to discuss the question in detail, but to draw attention to the published results of the Secret Enquiry by the French Foreign Affairs Commission.

26. With reference to War Cabinet 364, Minute 13, the War Cabinet had under consideration the Fifth and Supplementary Report of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Pay Committee, presided over by Sir Edward Carson, with reference to the equalisation of Navy and Army Separation Allowances (Paper G.-207).

The War Cabinet approved the Report, and desired to place on record their appreciation of the services of Sir Edward Carson as chairman of the Committee.

27. With reference to War Cabinet 407, Minute 5, Mr. Walter Long informed the War Cabinet that he had been in telephonic communication with the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland on the subject of the steps which Lord French proposed to take in order to deal with the present situation in Ireland.

In view of the absence from the Cabinet of General Smuts and Mr. Barnes (who had already left the Meeting), the War Cabinet decided—

To defer discussion on this question until the following day.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 14, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 412.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, May 15, 1918, at 11 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair (for Minutes 13 to 18)).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair (for Minutes 1 to 12)).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 9 to 18).

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 13 and 14).

Lieutenant-General Sir J. S. Cowans, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., M.V.O., Quarter-Master-General to the Forces (for Minutes 1 and 2).

Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 9 to 12).


The Right Hon. Sir G. Cave, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minutes 4 and 5).

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction (for Minutes 3 to 5).

The Right Hon. Sir A. Stanley, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (for Minute 1).

The Right Hon. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., M.P., President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (for Minutes 1 to 3).

The Right Hon. W. Hayes Fisher, M.P., President of the Local Government Board (for Minute 3).

The Right Hon. R. Munro, K.C., M.P., Secretary for Scotland (for Minute 3).

Sir J. F. Beale, K.B.E., Secretary, Wheat Commission (for Minute 1).


Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
Horse Racing.

1. WITH reference to War Cabinet 403, Minute 12, the War Cabinet had before them the report on horse-racing by the President of the Board of Trade, with memoranda from the Army Council and the Ministry of Food (Paper G.T.-4518).

The War Cabinet decided—

To ask Lord Curzon, together with Mr. Prothero and Sir Albert Stanley, to meet representatives of the Jockey Club; and, subject to any representations made on behalf of the Jockey Club which Lord Curzon considered would modify them, the War Cabinet approved the recommendations set forth in the report of the President of the Board of Trade, namely: That no flat racing should be allowed, except at Newmarket, after the 1st June; that race meetings under the rules of the National Hunt Committee should not be allowed during the ensuing winter season; that no extra trains should be run to Newmarket for the conveyance of racegoers, or tickets sold to Newmarket beyond the capacity of the ordinary trains.

Proposed Issue of Horseflesh to Enemy Prisoners of War.

2. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for War dealing with a suggestion to substitute horseflesh for beef and mutton in the rations issued to enemy prisoners of war in this country (Paper G.T.-4515).

The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to the difficulty of obtaining adequate meat supplies during the next few months, and to the desirability of using horseflesh for sausage, unless there were statutory objections.

The War Cabinet were of opinion that there was no serious objection to the issue of horseflesh to enemy prisoners of war, and decided—

To leave the matter to the Secretary of State for War to take what course he thought fit.

Provision of Land for Settlement and other Purposes.

3. The War Cabinet had before them the following documents with regard to the provision of land for soldiers on demobilisation:

Memorandum by Mr. Prothero (Paper G.T.-2225).
Memorandum by the Minister of Reconstruction (Paper G.T.-4479).
Memorandum by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Paper G.T.-4481).
Joint Memorandum by the above (Paper G.T.-4494).
Note by the Minister of Reconstruction covering resolutions of Advisory Council, Section IV (Paper G.T.-4485).

Mr. Prothero explained that in his memorandum dated the 2nd October, 1917 (Paper G.T.-2225), he had not proposed to resort to compulsory acquisition of land except in the case of certain glebe lands. He had proposed to begin by appointing a commissioner, who would privately approach the larger landowners of the country and ask each of them to have a survey made of his estate, and to report what portions, large or small, he would be prepared to cut off and dispose of to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries for land settlement. Similar negotiations might be opened up with representatives of colleges and hospitals. He had also suggested in the same memorandum that (if necessary with the aid of legislation) the Board should be empowered to enter into agreements with landowners for the extinction of existing tithe-rent charge upon their land by exchange for a proportionate amount of land. Since writing the memorandum referred to, as the result of further consideration, he had agreed that, for certain limited purposes, it
might be desirable to have compulsory powers; and the proposals on which he and the Minister of Reconstruction were agreed had been set forth in their joint memorandum (Paper G.T.-4494), where, \textit{inter alia}, the sanction of the Cabinet was asked to proposals—

(a.) To acquire compulsorily any land needed for land settlement, demonstration and experiment, afforestation and reclamation, and the development of rural industries.

(b.) To acquire by voluntary agreement adjoining land needed in connection with, though not directly for, the specified purposes.

The compulsory powers, it was suggested, should be limited for the purpose of—

(i.) Carrying out schemes of land settlement and the development of rural industries.

(ii.) Promoting and extending forestry.

(iii.) Reclaiming waste land.

(iv.) Providing for housing accommodation connected with any of the foregoing objects.

Dr. Addison stated that an objection to the policy originally suggested by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries was that it singled out glebe lands for special treatment, and that this might lead to much undesirable controversy. He felt that it was better not to single out one form of land. It should be borne in mind that the taking of compulsory powers did not exclude negotiations on a voluntary basis. On the other hand, experience showed that it would not be easy to obtain the large amount of land which might be required without resort to compulsion. He laid special stress on the limitations on compulsory action set forth in section 9 of the joint memorandum (Paper G.T.-4491).

Lord Curzon thought that the proposals before the Cabinet were of a serious character, and stated that it was essential, if the Bill embodying them were not to come to grief in the House of Lords, that any objections to them by the landed interest should be carefully weighed in advance.

Mr. Chamberlain suggested that the policy under consideration required careful and detailed examination, and he thought that could best be given by a Cabinet Committee.

The Secretary for Scotland stated that he had not had an opportunity of discussing the proposals with the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, and was not therefore able to offer a considered opinion upon them.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The matter, including the proposals contained in Paper G.T.-4479 on the acquisition of land for small holdings, should be referred to the following Committee:—

Sir George Cave (Chairman),
Mr. Prothero,
Mr. Munro,
Dr. Addison,
Mr. Hayes Fisher,
Mr. Walter Long, and
A Representative of the Treasury,

the Chairman to have power to add further members to the Committee, and, if Mr. Long should be unable to serve, to arrange for a representative of the landed interest in Mr. Long's place.
to the Press Bureau. The question arose as to whether it should be issued without some sort of explanation on the part of the Government.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Press Bureau should issue a confidential note to the press explaining that a blunder had been made, that it had now been set right, and that it was not desirable that there should be any public comment on the matter.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 324, Minute 14, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Reconstruction (Paper G.T.-3050), and a memorandum by the Minister of Reconstruction covering a report of Sir George Cave’s Conference on the subject of Parliamentary Procedure (Paper G.T.-4432).

Sir George Cave said that he had presided over a conference to consider what steps should be taken to deal at short notice with emergency measures, which, in the absence of legislation to the contrary, would lapse either on the termination of the war or at various periods thereafter. The Conference was of opinion that the best method of procedure would be the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons to consider and report as to the steps to be taken. This course would have the advantage of preparing the ground, and of anticipating discussion in the House.

If a Bill were introduced without such preliminary preparation there would be certain to be a large number of amendments. It might be possible to have a Bill which would leave it to be settled by Order in Council as to what was meant by “end of the war,” and to extend or shorten the period as might be required in each case.

Dr. Addison said that there were a large number of Acts and Regulations in which the phrase “end of the war,” or variations of it, occurred, and it was necessary to come to some clear understanding for extending or shortening the period of operation of such statutes and any regulations made thereunder.

Mr. Chamberlain suggested that it might be preferable to have a Joint Committee of the two Houses rather than a Select Committee of the House of Commons. He thought that a Joint Committee could be set up by resolution, and that a Bill would not be necessary.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) Provided no Act of Parliament were required, a Joint Committee of both Houses should be set up, to consider and report as to the steps to be taken to deal with emergency war measures; but if an Act were required, then a Select Committee of the House of Commons alone should be set up. The necessary action should be initiated by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs.

(b.) The Departments concerned should furnish to the Minister of Reconstruction as soon as possible information as to legislation which they may desire to be prolonged.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 308, Minute 15, the War Cabinet took note of a memorandum by the Conciliation and Arbitration Board in relation to claims for 12½ per cent bonus, and they approved the steps taken by Mr. Barnes in the matter.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 308, Minute 17, the War Cabinet had before them the Interim Report of Sir Walter Phillimore’s Committee on the League of Nations (Paper G.T.-4454).

Lord Curzon stated that the House of Lords debate on the subject had been adjourned in response to a request from Lord Parmoor, who thought that it was not appropriate to discuss
the matter while the German offensive was proceeding, and similar representations had been made by the Lord Chancellor. Lord Curzon agreed that it was rather academic to discuss the matter at present, but thought that it was not improbable that a question would be put in connection with the Report of the Foreign Office Committee. No public reference had yet been made to the existence of the Committee. He was in favour of delaying discussion of the subject, especially as it might come before the Imperial War Cabinet.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) Subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, copies of the Report should be sent confidentially to President Wilson and the Dominion Premiers, it being made clear that the Report did not set forth the policy of the Government but was the result of the deliberations of an expert Committee.

(b.) The subject of the League of Nations should be considered at the forthcoming Session of the Imperial War Cabinet.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 398, Minute 10, calling attention to the entire absence of an organised system of propaganda in Ireland, the War Cabinet had before them a note by the Secretary (Paper G.T.-4540), which raised the question whether the Ministry of Information should extend its propaganda activities to Ireland.

The War Cabinet referred the question to Mr. Long for decision, in consultation with the Minister of Information and the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

3. The First Sea Lord informed the Cabinet that—

(a.) The British submarine “E.35” reported having torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic, West of Gibraltar, on 11th May, a German submarine cruiser.

(b.) The transport “Nidd” rammed a submarine just off the Royal Sovereign Lightship, after which the submarine appeared on the surface in a sinking condition.

10. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that four British de Haviland machines had carried out a bombing attack on Durazzo on 13th May, bombs being dropped on a seaplane and on headquarters. In the afternoon of the same day six Italian seaplanes also bombed Durazzo. All machines had returned.

11. With reference to War Cabinet 407, Minute 3, the First Sea Lord stated that, as the result of an air reconnaissance, four destroyers were seen alongside the mole at Zeebrugge, and that a dredger was between the block ships. Two large submarines were alongside the North Quay, Darse I.

12. With reference to War Cabinet 409, Minute 5, as regards the “Vindictive,” the First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that the Germans had opened the sluice-gates, thus setting free a large body of water, and in consequence the position of the “Vindictive” had somewhat shifted. As far as was known, no submarines had, since the “Vindictive” was sunk, used Ostend.
American Reinforcements.

13. With reference to War Cabinet 410, Minute 14, the Prime Minister stated that, as a result of his visit to the War Office that morning, he had learned that there was no doubt that American troops were coming over in considerable numbers at the present time, and that 40,000 were now in France and 20,000 to 30,000 on the high seas. As regards these numbers it would be necessary, however, to consult Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig as to when they would be ready to be placed in the firing line. General Hutchinson, who had just returned from the United States, had expressed himself confident that the supply would be kept up until next July, when there might be a slackening as regards the number of men to be transported. As regards the personnel, General Hutchinson had formed the opinion that, although the younger officers were not at present very good, the men were excellent. He was further of opinion that there was a want of higher organisation in the United States as regards military matters.

The Prime Minister drew attention to the delay that was taking place as regards the supply of artillery, and instanced the case of the time that had been wasted owing to the Americans being determined to adopt guns of their own instead of availing themselves of either French or British guns. He added that the original idea of the Americans with regard to the creation of their army was only to call up 50,000 men a month. They had since increased that number to 250,000, and were aware of the fact that they could still further increase it to 450,000; but the organisation of their resources was such that they were not in a position to clothe and give rifles to the larger number and, consequently, were not prepared to encourage public criticism by making a greater effort. The Prime Minister was of opinion that it was highly desirable that we should get together criticisms of their methods, in so far as they could be improved upon in furthering the prosecution of the war, so that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs could send the same to Colonel House for such action as he thought best.

This led to the expression of the opinion that Colonel House would be of far greater assistance here to the Allied cause than he would be in America, it being pointed out that Lord Reading had acquired so much influence in the States that the presence of Colonel House could be far better spared from that country now than in the past.

It was pointed out that it was highly desirable that, if possible, Colonel House should be present at the next meeting of the Supreme War Council, which would be held during the first week in June.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to go into the question of American representation in Europe, and to take such action as regards Colonel House as they might think desirable.

14. The War Cabinet approved the following arrangements for co-ordinating all British Missions in France:

(a.) All British Missions in France are to be notified by the respective Government Departments in England under which they serve that Lord Derby will act as Head of all British Missions in the same way as Lord Reading does in Washington.

(b.) Lord Derby will have no executive authority in regard to such Missions, but is to be kept fully informed of any matters which require adjustment with the French Government.

(c.) All communications are to pass, as heretofore, direct between the Missions and the Departments at home with which they are connected.
(d.) In the event of any member of a Mission requiring to see one of the principal members of the French Government, i.e., any Minister superior to an Under-Secretary, on any matter other than that relating to purely departmental routine, he is to notify to Lord Derby his intention of doing so, the object for which the interview is sought, and the result of the interview. In cases where the intervention of one of the principal members of the French Government is concerned, the Head of the Mission should consult with Lord Derby as to whether it is desirable that he should attend the interview on behalf of His Majesty's Government.

(e.) In the event of visits by French Ministers to London, the Department concerned should notify Lord Derby, through the Foreign Office, giving the name of the Minister and the object of his visit. The reason for this is that in many cases several Departments may be concerned, and it would be possible for Lord Derby to assemble the Heads of the respective Missions together, and to draw up a joint memorandum of information on the subject which would be useful to the British Ministers concerned when seeing the French Ministers.

(f.) Lord Derby has arranged to hold a weekly meeting of the Heads of the principal British Missions now in Paris. Although the British Military Representative and his Staff at Versailles do not come under this scheme, General Sackville-West is authorised either to be present or to send a representative to the weekly meetings.

Food Production in 1919.

15. With reference to memoranda by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Paper G.T.-4409), and a memorandum by the Food Controller (Paper G.T.-4499), relative to the possibilities of food production in 1919, the War Cabinet directed—

The Secretary to place this matter on the Agenda for Wednesday, the 22nd May, for their consideration.

Austria:
Emperor Karl's Letter.

16. With reference to War Cabinet 411, Minute 25, a discussion arose with regard to the debate which was to take place in the House of Commons on the following day, on the adjournment, upon the questions which were to be raised on the subject of the Emperor Karl's letter.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he would reply to the debate, but that he could only deal with the question on broad lines.

The Prime Minister said that he was quite willing to take part in the debate, if it were necessary, but that he could only say that information was given to him in the strictest secrecy, that he had accepted these conditions, and that it would be impossible for him to divulge the information until he had been absolved from his promise of secrecy.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should reply to the debate.

The Prime Minister agreed to be in the House of Commons so as to be available to take part, if necessary.
17. With reference to War Cabinet 408A, Minute 1, attention was drawn to a question which was to be asked in the House of Commons that afternoon by Mr. Herbert Samuel as to whether any change was contemplated in the status of the Chief Secretary and the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, or in his functions in the Government of Ireland.

A general discussion ensued, in which it was pointed out that Lord French and Mr. Shortt were occupying similar positions to those occupied by Lord Spencer and Mr. Trevelyan, who, while holding respectively the positions of Viceroy and Chief Secretary, both had seats in the Cabinet.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Chancellor of the Exchequer should reply to Mr. Herbert Samuel to the effect that there was no change in the status of the Chief Secretary, but that the condition of affairs in Ireland entailed additional responsibilities on the Viceroy.

18. With reference to War Cabinet 408A, Minute 1, the Secretary of State for the Colonies informed the War Cabinet that he had been in telephonic communication with Field-Marshal Lord French, who was anxious to know if the War Cabinet would approve of the Proclamation referred to in War Cabinet 408A, Minute 2, being issued as it was originally drafted. This proposal would rescind the decision of the War Cabinet that the Proclamation should be issued in two parts, the first dealing with crime and the second with voluntary recruiting. Mr. Long said that he had asked Lord French if he had considered the desirability of a simultaneous publication of the two Proclamations, and Lord French had informed him that the legal advisers of the Irish Government were strongly averse to such a course. Lord French had been unable over the telephone to give reasons for this advice, but had said that he attached great importance to it, that the Irish Government considered the situation very dangerous, and that he must ask the War Cabinet to support the Irish Government. Mr. Long pointed out that the late Irish Government held the opinion that the War Cabinet had not sufficiently supported them in their efforts to preserve order in Ireland, and that even the Attorney-General for Ireland had lately told him that he had always done his best, but that he had invariably been impeded from England.

Mr. Long had pointed out that this was quite incorrect. He reminded the War Cabinet of their promises and asked them to give the new Government of Ireland their support and to trust them.

The Prime Minister confirmed Mr. Long’s view that the statement as to the non-support of the late Irish Government was wholly incorrect, and that to his knowledge the Cabinet had never overruled any proposals to this end made by the late Chief Secretary.

Lord Curzon expressed an opinion in favour of the Proclamation being issued as originally drafted. Not only did he consider it desirable that this should be done in order to support the Lord-Lieutenant as Head of the Irish Government, but also from his knowledge of the facts of the situation which had been laid before the War Cabinet.

A discussion ensued as to the policy of the Government with regard to the enforcement of the Military Service Act on Ireland and the proposals for Home Rule. It was pointed out that if the Government decided to appeal to the Irish to provide sufficient recruits by voluntary methods, it would be undesirable to proceed at present with the introduction into the House of Commons of a Home Rule Bill.

In this connection Mr. Long said that he had had a long talk with General Sir Bryan Mahon, who was a strict Roman Catholic, and that General Mahon had informed him that he was certain there
would be a considerable flow of Irishmen to the Colours from South Ireland if the War Office were prepared to keep Irishmen in Irish units. Mr. Long said that Sir B. Mahon had informed him that the War Office were not prepared to do this, but that he (Mr. Long) hoped that he would be able, in conjunction with the Adjutant-General, to work out a plan for the enlistment of men in Ireland which would be satisfactory to them. Mr. Long also said that many Irishmen had told him that, if a large number of volunteers were obtained from Ireland, the relatives of those who had gone would be advocates of conscription.

Mr. Chamberlain said that there was strong reason to appeal for voluntary recruits at the present time, as the Government had precluded itself by its pledges from putting conscription into force for the present, and that therefore the present time should be used to the best advantage. He did not agree that the time used in this way meant the abandonment of the Government's policy.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for the Colonies should inform the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland that the War Cabinet had rescinded the decision arrived at in War Cabinet 408 A, Minute 2, and that approval was given for the issue of the original Proclamation dealing with the present situation in Ireland as read in draft by Mr. Long on the previous occasion when this question was discussed.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 15, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 413.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, May 17, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 10 to 13).
The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade (for Minutes 11 to 13).
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.
General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 9).

Rear-Admiral S. R. Fremantle, C.B., M.V.O., Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 9).
The Right Hon. E. G. Puchman, M.P., Civil Lord of the Admiralty (for Minute 10).
The Right Hon. W. Hays Fisher, M.P., President of the Local Government Board (for Minute 10).
Sir J. M. Pudds, K.C.B., Under Secretary for Scotland (for Minute 10).

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
Captain L. F. Burgis, Assistant Secretary.
1. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that one German division had been removed from opposite the Belgian forces to a position further south, and that there was also a report of a small roulement by two other German divisions.

General Wilson said that information had been received of intensive training of German divisions in the same areas in which training had previously taken place before the attack on the 21st March.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 409, Minute 1, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there were now available for a fresh attack 17 German divisions which had been out of the line for a month, 13 fresh divisions which had never been used, and 18 other fresh divisions, making a total of 48 fresh or refreshed German divisions. The total number of enemy divisions on the Western front was now 208.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 408, Minute 1, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, questioned as to the number of French and British divisions now in reserve on the Western front, said that in the battle area there were about twenty-three divisions, but, of course, there were a number of divisions further south which were available for roulement.

4. The Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff said that he had received a report from Kirkeness which stated that, on the evening of the 14th May, an encounter took place between a British force and the Finnish White Guards, somewhere between Petchenga and Tullenva, which resulted in a loss for the Finns of 50 killed and about 100 wounded, whilst our casualties were very slight. The report further stated that the Finns were now in full flight southward, and that the British were reported to be as far south as Salmijarzb. Admiral Fremantle said that the troops engaged in this encounter were Royal Marines, and that reports had been received at the Admiralty that one captain of Marines and one private had been wounded. It was very important to protect Petchenga. There was already a large cruiser there, which could, if necessary, land 300 men, and the Admiralty were sending a reinforcement, which would leave England on Monday morning next, consisting of 350 Royal Marines, which included one company of infantry and some artillery.

The Prime Minister pointed out that it was very important that this information should be sent to Mr. Lockhart.

The Secretary undertook to communicate with the Foreign Office on the subject.

Admiral Fremantle said that the Admiralty would telegraph to Admiral Kemp, instructing him to send more detailed information upon the subject of this encounter.

5. The Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff reported that the Commodore of the Adriatic British Squadron had been obliged to postpone the docking of H.M.S. "Weymouth," as the ship had 211 cases of influenza on board. There was apparently an epidemic of influenza not only in this squadron, but also at several naval bases. Admiral Fremantle stated, however, that the attack only lasted about six days.
Bombing Raids. 6. The Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff reported that Bruges and Ostend Docks were bombed on the night of 15th-16th May. On Bruges Dock 5 550-lb. bombs and 40 112-lb. bombs were dropped. A direct hit was made on a ship alongside the South Quay of Bruges Docks, causing a large fire and clouds of smoke. At Zeebrugge, three destroyers were observed alongside the mole, and eight barges at the entrance of the Zeebrugge-Bruges Canal. 12 230-lb. bombs were dropped, in order to impede salvage operations.

The Naval Raid on Zeebrugge. 7. With reference to War Cabinet 412, Minute 11, the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff said that he did not think that any submarines had yet passed down the canal from Bruges to Zeebrugge and that aircraft still reported congestion of submarines and destroyers at Bruges.

The Naval Raid on Ostend. 8. With reference to War Cabinet 412, Minute 12, the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff reported that at Ostend the Germans had had some success in clearing the channel, having let water through with a rush, and slewed the “Vindictive” round, so that the obstruction she now afforded was only that of her own breadth.

Austrian Dreadnought Torpedoed. 9. Questioned as to whether any information had been received at the Admiralty with reference to the report of the torpedoing of an Austrian Dreadnought at Pola on the 14th May by the Italians, the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff said that the only information received at the Admiralty was from the Naval Attache at Rome, repeating the report which had been published by the Italians. Admiral Fremantle said that the First Sea Lord had already sent a congratulatory message to the Italian Chief of the Naval Staff.

Life of Parliament and Preparation of New Register. 10. With reference to War Cabinet 411, Minute 24, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the President of the Local Government Board with reference to the Life of Parliament and the Preparation of the New Register (Paper G.T.-4549).

The President of the Local Government Board said that his memorandum raised the question of the post-cards which were to be sent out by the War Office to serving soldiers. Mr. Hayes Fisher said that he had relied upon the War Office to send out between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 post-cards, and that he had hoped that they would have gone out six weeks ago, but that they had not yet gone. He understood that the Adjutant-General had now given leave for them to be sent. Mr. Hayes Fisher pointed out that these post-cards, when returned, would be of the greatest assistance to Registration Officers, and that if they were not returned within a month he was afraid that the Register, as regards soldiers, would be very incomplete. Under the circumstances he proposed that the date of the publication of the Lists of Voters, which was fixed by Order in Council made under the Representation of the People Act for 15th June, should be postponed by Order in Council until 29th June. The Cabinet need not at present contemplate the alteration of the date of the publication of the Register, which was 1st October. At the end of July, it would be perfectly possible to review the whole circumstances and prospects, and then, if occasion demanded, alter the date for the bringing of the Register into force from 1st October to either 1st November or 1st December. To make the lists as complete as possible, Mr. Hayes Fisher said that he had come to the conclusion that it was necessary to use local canvassers for this work in the evenings, but that these canvassers must receive adequate remuneration, and he was therefore asking the Cabinet to authorise the necessary expenditure. He would point
out, at the same time, that this expenditure would continue only for about six weeks.

The Prime Minister suggested that if it were found that many soldiers, owing to the non-return of sufficient information which could be obtained from the post-cards, had been left off the list, the possibility of the issue of a supplementary or emergency list for soldiers might be contemplated at a later date.

Mr. Hayes Fisher said that this would be difficult, and that he hoped to keep to the dates as fixed by the Order in Council issued under the Act; but, at the same time, it was possible, and, in his opinion, would be desirable if it were found that the situation demanded it.

The Prime Minister said that the most important question was how the soldiers were to be able to vote. He called attention to the manner in which the Canadian elections had been carried out at the front, when the voters were asked to register their vote either for a Coalition Government candidate or for the Opposition, which was split up into various groups. Mr. Lloyd George suggested that it would be desirable if the President of the Local Government Board would prepare a memorandum on the opportunities and methods for sailors and soldiers recording their votes, keeping in mind the method employed at the Canadian Elections.

Mr. Hayes Fisher said that another question which must be settled soon was the issue of the Order in Council settling the proxy areas for voting. He pointed out that the House of Commons, whilst strongly protesting against proxy voting in France, had agreed that it was the only form of voting possible for troops in distant theatres of operations.

Lord Curzon said that the life of Parliament ended on the 31st July, according to the terms of the last Bill passed for the prolongation of the life of Parliament, and that, while the House would undoubtedly be willing to pass another Bill to prolong Parliament, yet it was necessary to see that the new Register was ready by the date to which the life of Parliament was extended by any new Bill.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Secretary of State for War should despatch the registration post-cards to the troops serving at home and abroad as soon as possible.

(b.) The President of the Local Government Board should have authority for the expenditure of the necessary money for the remuneration of local canvassers.

(c.) Authority should be given to the President of the Local Government Board to issue an Order in Council altering the date for the publication of the new Register from the 15th to the 29th June.

(d.) The President of the Local Government Board should prepare a memorandum on the electoral position of sailors and soldiers, under the Representation of the People Act, for the consideration of the War Cabinet.

Economic Offensive Committee.

11. The War Cabinet had before them a note by the Secretary (Paper G.T. 4556), in which he stated that Mr. Austen Chamberlain had requested that the War Cabinet should authorise Mr. Barnes and himself to reorganise the Economic Offensive Committee as a Committee of Economic Defence and Development, in accordance with the proposal made in Sir Edward Carson's Report (Paper G.-190).

Mr. Chamberlain explained that he was not asking the Cabinet to approve of any new departure in policy with regard to the Economic Offensive Committee; all he desired was to reorganise the Committee on the lines suggested by Sir Edward Carson, in order that the Committee might present a wider and less aggressive
front. He stated that he was going into the question as to whether a statement could be made on the Government's economic offensive policy. He had, in fact, prepared a sketch of such a statement.

Mr. Bonar Law said that he was afraid that both the Board of Trade and Mr. Long had interpreted his recent statement in the House on this subject as meaning that the Government had definitely decided to denounce commercial treaties. This was not the intention, and he hoped that Mr. Chamberlain would be able to set this matter right without the necessity of any special explanation in Parliament.

The War Cabinet approved Mr. Chamberlain's proposal, and suggested that he should communicate with—

Mr. Long,
Lord Robert Cecil,
Dr. Addison,
Sir A. Steel-Maitland, and
Sir Albert Stanley,

with a view to their co-operation.

12. The War Cabinet discussed at some length the question of using Czecho-Slovak troops, now at Vladivostock, as a nucleus of a force on which to base Allied intervention.

Lord Milner explained that General Poole was leaving that day with a Military Mission for Archangel and Murmansk with a view to organising such Czecho-Slovak forces as might be sent to North Russia, as well as any others that might volunteer for the defence of that district.

The Prime Minister stated that, if we were unable to obtain the assent of the United States of America and Japan to intervention, the question arose as to whether we should not proceed without them. In his opinion, the matter should be reviewed from a military point of view. The Germans were withdrawing troops from the Russian front, our Army was bearing the brunt, and no material American contribution had yet arrived to assist us. He therefore was of opinion that we had every justification for not allowing the Americans and the Japanese to block any attempts on our part to nullify these German withdrawals. If the Czecho-Slovak force possessed such good fighting qualities as had been reported, and if it was properly officered, there was the possibility, subject to military considerations, that they could be used in Siberia. The force, of course, could not be used alone, and it would be necessary to add Allied contingents. These contingents, however, including railwaymen from Canada, need not be of great numerical strength.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he thought the Japanese would not consent to an enterprise into Siberia being undertaken without their taking a leading part. He thought that if we proposed to act without them, it would force their hand and they would immediately wish to join; and, once the Japanese joined the Expedition, he did not think American co-operation would be long withheld.

Lord Curzon stated that, on the previous evening, he had seen the Japanese Ambassador, who had told him that public opinion in Japan was very much divided on this question, and in any case it was necessary to obtain the consent of the United States of America, in view of the financial and material considerations involved.

Mr. Balfour suggested that a telegram should be sent to Lord Reading on the subject, saying that we had a large force of 70,000 Czecho-Slovaks who would fight well if properly officered, and asking whether the United States Government saw any objection to these troops being used against the Germans, with the assistance of the Japanese.

Lord Milner said that he doubted whether the scheme would work. In the first place, the French were very keen that the Czecho-Slovak force should be transported to France, and he had
had a telegram from M. Clemenceau on the subject that morning. In the second place, all our information tended to show that the Czecho-Slovaks themselves were unwilling to be involved in the internal strife of Russia. Their desire was to fight Germans, and not Bolsheviks.

Mr. Bonar Law pointed out, in this connection, that if the Czecho-Slovak force formed part of the Allied force, thus making it clear to them that they were not fighting the Russians but the Germans, it was likely that they would not object to co-operate on Russian soil.

It was pointed out that it was difficult to find the necessary tonnage to bring the Czecho-Slovak troops to France. We had told the French that we could not get sufficient ships at the moment for this purpose, and had suggested that it would be better to use these troops in an Allied Expedition into Siberia. The remainder of the Czecho-Slovak force, which had not yet arrived at Vladivostock, which, it now appeared, amounted approximately to 50,000 out of a total of 70,000, might go to Archangel, and such numbers as were not required for the protection of that port and of Murmansk, could be shipped to France.

Lord Milner said that M. Clemenceau had demurred to this suggestion, as only very reduced numbers could be shipped from Archangel.

Lord Robert Cecil said that he was much impressed by the Prime Minister's suggestion. He thought that once we had taken definite steps in regard to intervention in Siberia, the rest of the Allies would soon conform. The French Government had always been pressing for intervention in Siberia, and he thought that if they realised we meant business they would consent to the Czecho-Slovaks being used for the purpose.

Lord Milner pointed out that as the Czecho-Slovak force was entirely the creation of the French, it was imperative that we should obtain their co-operation before employing such force, and added that, as far as American feeling was concerned, and its effect on reinforcements for the Western front, he would prefer to have 10,000 Americans in Siberia than in France.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The General Staff should ascertain whether anything effective could be done in Siberia without the co-operation of the United States of America, using as a nucleus the Czecho-Slovak force, reinforced, perhaps, with Canadian railway elements, British troops from Hong Kong, and a French contingent, and with or without Japanese co-operation.

(b.) Lord Robert Cecil should see M. Benish, and ascertain definitely whether the Czecho-Slovaks were willing to be used for this purpose, if it was explained to them that the object of the expedition was to fight Germans.

(c.) If, after the above action has been taken, there was any promise of a scheme being put into operation, the Foreign Office should take such diplomatic action as might be expedient with the United States of America, Japan, and France.

British Representative in Russia.

13. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated that he had appointed Mr. Lindley as British representative in Russia, and that, as regards his relations with General Poole, the latter had been given authority to report direct to the War Office, sending a copy of such reports in each case to Mr. Lindley for his information.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 17, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 414.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, May 22, 1918, at 6.30 P.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, Major-General C. H. Harington, C.B., D.S.O., Deputy-Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence.

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, Major-General C. H. Harington, C.B., D.S.O., Deputy-Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence.


Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. THE Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff said there was nothing to report as regards the Western front, save that the French success in the vicinity of Kemmel was very helpful. Questioned as to whether there was any indication of an attack by the Germans in that vicinity, he stated that the present view was that no attack was likely either on that portion of the front or elsewhere on the Western front in the immediate future.

The Director of Military Intelligence stated that he sent an officer yesterday to General Headquarters, and he had reported that though there was activity all along the battle front, there were no signs of an immediate attack on any particular section of the British front, and that the anticipated attack on the part of the Germans in the vicinity of La Bassée Canal had apparently been abandoned for the moment. The view was held at General Headquarters that the next main attack would probably take place from north of the Somme up to the vicinity of Arras. His own view was that the Germans would be well advised to put off their offensive for, say, another fortnight. At the present moment they had 19 divisions available for renewal, 12 fresh divisions in reserve, and 23 divisions which had been a month or more out of the line,
making a total of 54 available. In addition to these 23 there were 48 more German divisions resting, and if they waited until some of these 48 divisions had been refreshed, they would have available rather more divisions for an offensive than they had on the 21st March. As against these, the British had 16 divisions in reserve on the Western front, and the French had 38; the Americans had 2; and the Italians had 1 in reserve, making a total of 57 divisions. Further, the French had 41 divisions in quiet parts of the line, some of which would be available for roulement. As regards the sum total of divisions on the Western front, but not including the Belgians, the French and British had 155 divisions, the United States 5, and the Italians 2 divisions—a total of 162 against 208 German divisions.

In reply to a question as to whether the situation was better now than on the 21st March, Lord Milner stated that our dispositions were better than they were on that date, but that our total strength was less, namely, about 4 to the Germans' 5, and consequently our potential reserves were reduced.

General Harington confirmed this view, and pointed out that a number of our divisions had had a hard time, and that, although they had been brought up to strength, the training of the replenished divisions left much to be desired, inasmuch as General Foch would not allow them to be withdrawn from the line to the training centres, and training whilst in or close behind the front line presented serious difficulties. As regards the United States troops, General Harington stated that they were now being put into such of our divisions as had been reduced to cadre, but that lack of training was evident as regards their officers and staffs.

The Italian Front.

2. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that two additional Austrian divisions had been sent to the Austrian front, making a total of 51 divisions in all on that front. The latest information from Lord Cavan was to the effect that there was no indication as to any increase of offensive preparations on the part of the enemy. General Macdonogh was of opinion that, if any attack were made, it was likely to take place astride the Brenta.

Mesopotamia.

3. The Director of Military Intelligence informed the War Cabinet that General Marshall had made a cavalry advance to Fatha, on the Tigris, with the result that the Turks had retired to Kula Djebaa. The result of General Marshall's recent operations had been that the Azerbaijan Turkish force had been reduced from 3,600 rifles to 2,500, 1,100 rifles having been withdrawn from that force to reinforce the Turks on the Zab and Tigris. General Macdonogh stated that the Turkish forces on the Tigris, north of Fatha, now amounted to only about 5,700 rifles. A large part of the Turkish force was now in Palestine. His estimate of the total Turkish force now only amounted to about 120,000 rifles.

East Africa.

4. General Macdonogh stated that our columns were closing in on von Lettow's force, and indicated on a map the action that had been taken to deal with it.

Maintenance of the Army in France.

5. Lord Milner drew the attention of the War Cabinet to a memorandum (Paper G.T.-4518) he had circulated with reference to the maintenance of the army in France, and added that the War Office was being pressed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces to make up our cadre divisions, and to do all in our power to prevent the breaking up of units which are essential for the roulement required to release French divisions. Lord Milner pointed
out that the only way in which it is possible to obtain men for this purpose is (1) by the reduction of troops now available for Home Defence, and (2) to take men from the Labour and Employment Companies. By these means the following would be obtained:

(a.) 4,500 “A” men.
(b.) 20,000 “B. I” men (nearly “A” men).
(c.) 60,000 low category “B. I” and “B. II” men.

Of the above, those under (a) and (b) would be used as drafts for our fighting or front line divisions, and (c) would be used to make up cadre divisions in order that the latter may be employed on quiet parts of the French front.

The War Cabinet approved the proposals of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff as set out in Paper G.T.-4598.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 23, 1918.
WARRCABINET, 415.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Thursday, May 23, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.
General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 13).
Major P. Lloyd Greame, M.C., Secretary, Ministry of National Service (for Minutes 14 and 15).
The Right Hon. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., M.P., President, Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (for Minute 14).
Colonel Sir A. Lee, G.R.E., K.C.B., M.P., Director-General, Food Production Department (for Minute 14).
Mr. U. F. Wintour, C.B., C.M.G., Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Food (for Minute 14).
Mr. J. Lamb, C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary for Scotland (for Minute 14).

Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 13).
The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minutes 14 and 15).
Sir Stephenon Kent, K.C.B., Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 15).
The Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Labour (for Minute 15).
Sir D. J. Shackleton, K.C.B., Secretary, Ministry of Labour (for Minute 15).
Captain E. C. Collard, R.N., Admiralty (for Minutes 12 and 13).
Sir John S. Bradbury, K.C.B., Joint Permanent Secretary, Treasury (for Minute 16).
Mr. Stanley Leathes, C.B., Civil Service Commission (for Minute 16).
Professor W. G. Adams (for Minute 14).

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
The Western Front.

1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that he had nothing to report as regards the Western front. In reply to a question as to what would be the best policy for the Germans to adopt, he remarked that he thought that it would be more advantageous for the Germans to wait, say, another ten days, so as to get the maximum number of their divisions available, and to attack the British on a "flat face." General Wilson added that he had seen General Foch, who was very confident and held the view that every day the offensive was deferred was a day in our favour, and that he was generally satisfied with the digging and wiring that was taking place.

Supply of Barbed Wire.

2. The question was raised as to whether the supply of barbed wire was adequate for our requirements.

Sir Eric Geddes stated that, during a recent visit to the Western front, several Generals had expressed the view to him that there was a shortage of wire. The Admiralty had now accepted a certain and limited responsibility for the supply of barbed wire to the Army which he had recently set out in a letter to the Secretary of State for War. The maximum output in this country had been increased from 800 tons to 1,100 or 1,200 tons a week, and it would take, he was told, five to six months to lay down additional plants to increase the output above that figure. The resources in this respect of the United States were ample.

Lord Milner remarked that orders had been given by the War Office to obtain all that was possible from the United States, and that he understood that some 5,000 tons were now en route.

Sir Eric Geddes added that he understood that 11,000 tons had been supplied from this country to France since the 21st March.

Lord Milner stated that it was now fully realised that the supply of wire was inadequate to meet the demands which were now being made, but that everything possible was being done to meet requirements.*

Salonica:

3. Attention was drawn to the last report from the General Officer Commanding at Salonica, a portion of which indicated that the sick rate had considerably increased.

Lord Milner informed the War Cabinet that he was making enquiries into this matter with a view to remedying as far as possible the conditions that prevailed.

Submarines.

4. The First Sea Lord stated that—

(a.) The Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean reported that a French trawler destroyed an enemy submarine, believed to be the "UC 35," off the coast of Sardinia, thirty of the crew being rescued.

(b.) A force of four destroyers attacked an enemy submarine in the vicinity of the "Galloper" light-vessel, many depth charges being dropped and one of the vessel's paravane exploded. It is considered that the submarine was sunk.

(c.) An airship and United States destroyers attacked a submarine in the St. George's Channel, with possibly successful results.

* Sir Eric Geddes subsequently put in a copy of his letter to Lord Milner (Paper G.T. 4558).
5. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that H.M.S. "Phoenix" had been torpedoed in the vicinity of Valona Bay, and had afterwards capsized and sunk, the casualties being two killed and three wounded.

6. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that air reconnaissances indicated that there were twenty-four destroyers or torpedo-boats and twelve submarines locked up in the Bruges Docks. The view was now held that the Bruges-Ostend canal contained less water than had previously been thought, and consequently, although Ostend Harbour was now partially clear, that port could not be used for the ingress and egress of destroyers and submarines now at Zeebrugge. Admiral Wemyss stated that the navy were now bombarding the enemy craft in the Zeebrugge canal, and were negotiating with the Air Ministry for the return of some squadrons that were lent to them some time ago. His view was that the opportunity for bombing these craft under such favourable conditions might not occur again, and it was therefore highly desirable that as large an air force as possible should be used forthwith for this purpose.

7. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that during a recent bombardment of Zeebrugge, an enemy destroyer was hit and had sunk in the fairway between the "Thetis" and the block-ships.

8. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that four British machines had raided Cattaro. The attack was a complete surprise, and direct hits had been obtained on the submarine headquarters, which were seen to be on fire in two places, and on the barracks and in the arsenal buildings. All our machines had returned.

9. Sir Eric Geddes informed the War Cabinet that, in accordance with the Prime Minister's instructions, he had communicated with M. Clemenceau with regard to the command of the Mediterranean and Adriatic, and it had been arranged that, if the French and the Italians were unable to agree as to the command of the combined French and Italian force, we should suggest a British Admiral as Admiralissimo.

M. Clemenceau had stated that, if the Italians refused to agree to the French proposal, he would agree to a British Admiral being detailed in the first place to co-ordinate the Allied naval forces in the Mediterranean, and that such Admiral should, at a later date, pass from that of Co-ordinator to Commander of the Allied naval forces. The Italians had been asked to reply within four days, but, as no answer had yet been received, M. Clemenceau had wired to Rome asking the Italians to expedite their reply, and he will let us know the result. Admiral Sims had been approached as regards United States vessels in the Mediterranean, and the Japanese would undoubtedly agree to their vessels being placed under British command. The First Lord of the Admiralty was of opinion that the appointment of a British Admiralissimo would result in a better control being maintained over the Allied forces, if such were worked judiciously, and it would also be of assistance in dealing with the submarine menace in the Mediterranean; further, that we should get a correct disposition of the forces in those waters, and be able to make more use of the light cruisers and small craft of our Allies. There were certain minor difficulties to be surmounted, but he did not think they were insuperable.
Next Meeting of the Supreme War Council.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 410, Minute 14, Mr. Bonar Law informed the War Cabinet that M. Clemenceau was averse to any postponement of the date of the next meeting of the Supreme War Council, even in order to enable Colonel House to attend. The War Cabinet therefore decided that—

If no reply was received from Colonel House by to-day, a telegram should be sent to M. Clemenceau notifying him of the Prime Minister’s agreement that the meeting should be held at Versailles on the 1st June next, and that one of the items to be placed on the agenda should be the appointment of an Admiralissimo in the Mediterranean, if this matter had not been settled prior to that date. The responsibility of drafting the telegram was left to the Secretary.

Exchange of Prisoners of War.

11. With reference to War Cabinet 405, Minute 10, the question of the exchange of prisoners of war and their treatment was considered by the War Cabinet, and the view was held that, now that the French had entered into an agreement with the Germans for the exchange of their prisoners of war, the situation was completely altered, and it was impossible for us to do otherwise than to go the same lengths as regards the exchange of our prisoners; further, that it was highly desirable that, when Parliament met, a statement should be made that we had taken steps to open up negotiations in this matter with the German Government.

Sir Eric Geddes pointed out that the naval position was unlike the army position as, although the number of naval prisoners was small, any general exchange of such would be of great advantage to the Germans out of all proportion to the numbers involved from a military point of view, as we had a considerable number of skilled German naval ratings who had been captured from submarines, and that the German submarine activity was being greatly curtailed by their lack of skilled crews for such vessels. He was going into the question as to whether we could effect any exchange, man for man, without releasing these skilled ratings.

As regards the question of the bad treatment of our prisoners of war, relative to which a number of reports were now current, it was advanced that the question of treatment would have to be considered apart from the question of exchange, but that any attack on the treatment would be mitigated if it were known that the question of exchange was under consideration.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) Without going into any questions of detail, Lord Newton should initiate a communication, through the Netherlands Government, asking if the German Government would be prepared to discuss and enter into some agreement for the exchange of prisoners of war.

(b.) Lord Newton should attend an early meeting of the War Cabinet to explain the situation in regard to prisoners of War.

Situation at Murmansk.

12. The War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Paper G.T.-4589) and a telegram from the Admiralty to the Rear-Admiral at Murmansk (Paper G.T.-4596) with regard to the situation in the Murman province.
Lord Milner thought it undesirable at the present moment to discuss with the United States the proposed despatch of an American brigade to Murmansk, and mentioned that, in the meantime, additional Royal Marines were being sent to Murmansk, and that some troops would shortly follow. He recommended that the War Cabinet should approve the policy under which we used any force that can be got together in that region. He added that there was a small number of Serbs in the vicinity, who might be used, and that he had received information from M. Clemenceau that the latter agreed to the use of Czechoslovak troops at Murmansk and Archangel, except such as had already arrived at Vladivostock.

Sir Eric Geddes drew the attention of the War Cabinet to two telegrams that had been received from the Rear-Admiral at Murmansk, in one of which it was stated that M. Chichirin had informed the local Soviet there that Allied military reinforcements were expected, and that, unless such had received visas from the Russian Representatives abroad, the troops were not to be allowed to land.

In this connection it was felt that such orders might be only of the nature of "camouflage," in view of German pressure on the Russians to prevent our sending troops there, and that no notice could be taken of such restrictions. The second telegram gave Rear-Admiral Kemp’s proposals as to the command of all the forces landed, and he had suggested that General Poole should be placed in supreme command of all naval ratings disembarked, and at the same time be given political control.

Sir Eric Geddes stated that the Admiralty instructions to Admiral Kemp were that he was to operate in every way possible with General Poole, and they approved of all naval ratings landed being placed entirely under General Poole's orders while on shore.

(a.) The War Cabinet approved the proposals set out in the paper by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (G.T.-4589), but decided that—

The question of American participation in the expedition should not be dealt with until the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs might think desirable.

(b.) The War Cabinet further approved the proposal that General Poole should be placed in command of the Royal Marines and naval ratings that might be landed.

13. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to Foreign Office telegram No. 920 to the British Minister at Stockholm, and the reply, No. 1389, relative to the use of a number of Finnish Red Guards in support of the Allied troops at Murmansk and Archangel. The latter telegram indicated that the British officials at Stockholm were strongly opposed to the use of these Red Guards for such a purpose.

Lord Milner considered it essential that it should be left to General Poole to do the best he can with any force that he might be able to obtain. Whilst he was not averse to General Poole being made aware of the objections that had been raised to the use of the Finnish Red Guards, it must be urged, be left to him to decide as to whether he would use them or not.

The War Cabinet requested—

Lord Robert Cecil to draft a telegram relative to the Finnish Red Guards, and to forward the same to the Secretary of State for War for his consideration and transmission to General Poole.
14. With reference to War Cabinet 412, Minute 15, the War Cabinet had before them the following documents:

Memorandum by Mr. Prothero (Paper G.T.-4409),
Memorandum by the Food Controller (Paper G.T.-4499),
Memorandum by Mr. Prothero, covering a report by Sir Arthur Lee (Paper G.T.-4599).

Mr. Prothero explained that the Food Production Department had prepared a programme for the further extension, during the next twelve months, of the arable acreage of England and Wales, but, in view of the new situation created by the transfer of agricultural labour to the army, which had recently been agreed to (War Cabinet 409, Minute 7), it did not now seem possible to proceed with the contemplated extension. This was very regrettable, as, for the increased programme, the additional men required would have been only 3,500 skilled ploughmen in September 1918, 3,500 in February 1919, and 15,000 unskilled men. The efforts of the Department to increase home-grown supplies of corn had met with so much success that the proportion of land now under tillage was not far short of that of the seventies of last century, and, if the results already achieved were to be maintained, legislation would be necessary. The land could not go on yielding under its present strain without their being relief land to rest the existing cornland. Legislation was required to maintain the present output. Landowners had accepted the Corn Production Act on the understanding that the compulsory powers now exercised by the Board of Agriculture under the Defence of the Realm Regulations should cease on the 20th August, 1918, and that the Corn Production Act should then come into operation. It would be necessary to ask Parliament to postpone the operation of Part IV. of the Corn Production Act for another year. Unless this were done the Board would be unable to retain possession after the 21st August next of any of the land which had been taken over, either because it was badly farmed or because it was required for allotment purposes. He advised the introduction of a short Bill to amend the Corn Production Act.

Lord Milner said that, in view of the man-power situation, he feared that it would not be possible at present to do more than maintain the remarkable level reached in 1918. Even that could only be done with the help of the Minister of National Service. By the agreement reported to the War Cabinet on the 11th May, the Board of Agriculture had undertaken to release 30,000 Grade I men, and an effort is to be made to replace these partly by prisoners of war—say 10,000—and partly by men raised by the Minister of National Service. He was in favour of postponing for a year the operation of the Corn Production Act, as asked for by Mr. Prothero. He would not shut out the possibility of undertaking some or all of the larger programme.

Major Lloyd Greame stated that the Minister of National Service was arranging to recruit as agricultural volunteers men from 45 to 50, who should be exempt from military service, but it was not possible to predicate how many would be forthcoming.

Lord Curzon feared there would be some opposition in the House of Lords to the continuation for another year of the powers under the Defence of the Realm Regulations, and he thought the War Cabinet should have the views of Mr. Long on the attitude of landowners towards the matter.

Mr. Prothero thought that any probable opposition could be dealt with by explaining, when the Bill was being introduced, the limited operations contemplated under it by the Boards of Agriculture, viz., compulsory powers to plough up, say, 250,000 acres of grassland, and to remain in occupation of the land already occupied. Originally he had asked for powers to plough up 700,000 acres, and he would prefer not to be limited to any definite figure.
The War Cabinet decided to ask—

Mr. Prothero to submit a draft Bill, with a covering note indicating the extent to which it was desired to exercise compulsory powers;

and instructed—

The Secretary to bring the matter before the War Cabinet on a day next week when Mr. Long could be present.

15. With reference to War Cabinet 393, Minute 13, the War Cabinet had before them details of the arrangements for the extension of the War Munitions Volunteer scheme, prepared by the Ministry of Munitions after consultation with representative employers and trade unionists, the Ministry of Labour, and the Ministry of National Service.

Sir Robert Home said he had been requested to express Lord Pirrie's view that the application of the scheme to any yards and shops under his control was certain to create great disturbance among the shipyard employees and men in the engineering shops, and he objected very strongly to this being done. Sir Robert Home further explained that the Admiralty had not been consulted before these proposals were brought to the Cabinet, and that they involved a very serious policy in the way of applying great pressure to men to compel them to become War Munition Volunteers. The Admiralty were opposed to this being done in the yards and shops over which they had jurisdiction.

Mr. Churchill pointed out that the principle set forth in his paper (G.T.-4577) had been approved by the War Cabinet, and it would lead to serious administrative difficulties if the policy laid down was to be applied by one Department and not by another. It would be impossible for the Ministry of Munitions to continue releasing men for the army and to maintain the output of munitions unless they were free to make the best use of the labour available by means of mobilisation and dilution. He believed that, in the long run, the Admiralty would not lose in output by adopting the policy of dilution, provided it were done gradually and systematically.

Sir Stephenson Kent doubted whether the Munitions Volunteer scheme could be made at all effective without the full co-operation of the Admiralty.

Major Lloyd Greame agreed that it would lead to an impossible industrial situation if the two Departments pursued different policies.

Sir Robert Horne objected to the assumption that the policy of the Admiralty in regard to dilution differed from that of the other Departments. The absence of repetition work in many branches of the Admiralty precluded the widespread adoption of dilution possible to other Departments. He agreed that a great deal could be done by setting up a general system which would bring together all the leading Departments for the purpose of dealing with mobile labour, and the Admiralty were prepared to do all that was possible in that direction with a view to releasing as many men as possible for the army.

The War Cabinet approved the procedure set forth by the Minister of Munitions in Paper G.T.-4577, as regards shops under the Ministry of Munitions.

Mr. Churchill undertook not to initiate the procedure for some days, inasmuch as General Smuts was considering the general question of the supply and regulation of the shipyard labour in accordance with War Cabinet 411, Minute 2.
16. With reference to War Cabinet 387, Minute 7, the War Cabinet had before them an Interim Report of a Committee appointed to enquire into the organisation and staffing of Government Offices (Paper G.T.-4387).

The Committee recommended—

(i.) That, save in certain exceptional cases, where very large staffs have to be collected as a matter of extreme urgency, the recruitment of the standard classes of clerks and typists for all London Departments should be centralised in the hands of the Civil Service Commission.

(ii.) That to make their machinery adequate for this purpose, the Civil Service Commission (a) should open a special office in their present premises; (b) take further steps to secure candidates from all available sources; (c) extend the personnel of their Selection Boards; and (d) improve the method of selection by the institution of suitable test examinations or otherwise.

(iii.) That in the exceptional cases where very large staffs are required in an emergency, independent recruiting should continue subject to the strict observance of the rules stated in paragraph 14 of the Interim Report.

(iv.) That the Civil Service Commission should continue to supply Higher Grade Women Clerks, but that it should be open to Departments to nominate the applicants whom they desire to appoint to such posts for the approval of the Commission.

The War Cabinet approved the Report.

17. With reference to War Cabinet 402, Minute 15, the War Cabinet took note of the Proclamation prepared by the Minister of National Service for calling up men born in the years 1870 and 1871 (Paper G.T.-4607).

18. With reference to War Cabinet 394, Minute 10, the War Cabinet had before them a Report by Mr. Chamberlain (Paper G.T.-4559), recommending that Inter-Allied Programme Committees should be created, composed of experts, who should examine the resources and programmes of the Allies as regards all classes of imported commodities.

The War Cabinet approved the recommendations contained in Mr. Chamberlain's Report, and decided that—

His Majesty's Government should be represented upon each of the Programme Committees, and that the proper Departments of the British Government should co-operate with the representatives of the French, American, and Italian Governments in carrying the plan into effect, utilising, so far as practicable, existing organisations.

(Initialled) A. B. L.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 23, 1918.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Thursday, May 23, 1918, at 7 P.M.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Ireland.

1. The War Cabinet had under consideration a draft statement in regard to the recent Irish arrests (Paper G.T.-4621).

The War Cabinet discussed the draft in detail, and amendments, as shown in inverted commas, on the statement approved for publication, were suggested and inserted (Appendix).

Mr. Barnes said that, while he agreed that the action which had been taken by the Irish Executive was necessary for the defence of the Realm, he considered that public opinion would not be satisfied until the evidence in possession of the Government had been submitted to Judges.

In reply to Mr. Barnes, it was pointed out that, where evidence of conspiracy existed, any conspirator could, under the Defence of the Realm Regulations, be kept a prisoner without trial. At the same time, any person arrested under this section of the Regulations had the right of appeal to a Special Committee, when the evidence against the accused would be laid before Judges.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The draft statement, as amended, should be issued to the press for publication on the morning of the 25th May.

In view of the fact that the Chief Secretary was returning to Ireland immediately, the War Cabinet instructed—

The Secretary to make the necessary arrangements with the Press Censor for the publication of the statement.
2. With reference to War Cabinet 415, Minute 10, the War Cabinet had before them the draft of a telegram from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Lord Reading, on the subject of the visit of Colonel House to this country, and approved of the use of the following words in the telegram:

"The next Meeting (of the Supreme War Council) would, in the ordinary course, take place in about a month, but, should Colonel House be able to come over before then, as the Prime Minister much hopes, there is little doubt that arrangements could be made."

(Initialled) A. B. L.

2, Whitehall Gardens S.W.,
May 23, 1918.
STATEMENT IN REGARD TO IRISH ARRESTS.

The revolutionary movement in Ireland, which culminated in the arrest of a considerable number of persons last week, consisted of two closely related series of activities:

(a.) The attempts of the German Government to foment rebellion in Ireland; and
(b.) The preparations made in Ireland to carry those attempts into action.

The story of the active connection between the leaders of the Sinn Fein movement and the Germans, as disclosed by documents in possession of the British Government, falls into two parts: the period prior to, and the period since, the abortive Irish rebellion of Easter 1916. The events of the first period can be told with some "detail," but the second period, which concerns recent events, permits of no more than a "summary," as a full statement "of the facts and documents in possession of the Government" would disclose the names of persons who stood by the Government, and also the channels of communication through which the German Government was acting, and which it would not be in the public interest to reveal at present.

I.

The story begins as early in the war as the 6th November, 1914, when Herr Zimmermann transmitted through Count Bernsdorff a message from Casement asking that a messenger, if possible a native-born American, be sent to Ireland with the word that everything was favourable. He was to carry no letter, for fear of arrest. Casement also asked that an Irish priest should be sent to Germany with the assistance of the German Legation in Norway to work in prison camps and corrupt Irish prisoners of war. This priest was a certain Father John T. Nicholson, an American citizen of Irish birth. He reached Germany safely, and we find him in January 1915 transmitting messages to America. According to a report of Captain von Papen dated the 5th December, 1914, the verbal assurances sent in response to Casement's request had produced an excellent impression in Ireland.

In the beginning of 1916 the plot ripened. On the 10th February of that year Count Bernsdorff sent to a covering address in Rotterdam a despatch signed with the name of Skal, one of his principal American agents. This despatch included an extract from a report of John Devoy, the head of the Clan-na-Gael, to the effect that action in Ireland could not be postponed much longer, since he feared the arrest of the leaders. It had been decided, he said, to begin action on Easter Saturday, and he urged that the arms and munitions must be in Limerick by that date. Later in the same month Count Bernsdorff, following his usual practice, surreptitiously attached to a message to Berlin, passed by the American Government, a note fixing Easter Saturday for the rising and urging the despatch of munitions in time.

On the 4th March von Jagow replied that the arms would be landed in Tralee Bay, and asked that the necessary arrangements should be made in Ireland through Devoy. On the 14th March Bernsdorff replied that the Irish agreed, and that full details were being sent to Ireland by messenger. Next day Bernsdorff telegraphed a code to be used between the Germans and the rebels while the arms were in transit, and explained that a submarine might safely enter Dublin Bay and go as far as the Pigeon House without encountering nets.

On the 26th March von Jagow replied that the arms would be sent and that a special code would be used every night as an introduction to the German Wireless Press Service. In a message from Bernsdorff to Berlin the Germans were assured that there were numerous private wireless receiving stations in Ireland.

On the 15th and 19th April urgent messages were sent from America to Berlin, fixing the delivery of the arms for the evening of Easter Sunday, pressing for the landing of German troops, and asking for an air raid on England and a naval attack on the English coast. These attacks actually took place between the 24th and 26th April. It was the declared hope of the rebels and their German and American friends to blockade the Irish ports against England, and establish bases in Ireland for German submarines.
The rebellion broke out a day later than the schedule on Easter Monday, the 24th April; but, as the world is aware, the German support had miscarried, and it ended in complete failure.

The Report of the Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland stated: "It is now a matter of common notoriety that the Irish Volunteers have been in communication with the authorities in Germany and were for a long time known to be supplied by money through Irish-American societies. This was so stated in public by Mr. John McNeill on the 8th November, 1914. It was suspected long before the outbreak that some of the money came from German sources." The evidence on this subject in the possession of the British Government provides the clearest proof of these suspicions.

II.

It became clear very soon after the rising that the Sinn Fein leaders were again asking Germany for help. On the 17th June there was a message from Berlin to Washington referring to "A250 of the 6th May" (a message which is missing), and saying that Germany was perfectly ready to give further help if the Irish would only say what sort of help they required. On the 18th June Bernsdorff had already sent a despatch giving an account of the rebellion as far as his information went, and stating that 1,000£ had been provided for the defence of Casement. On the 25th July he sent a long message giving further news from Ireland and explaining that the work of reorganising the rebels was making good progress and that their lack of money had been remedied by him.

On the 8th September, in a despatch to Berlin, he enclosed a memorandum from a person called "Irish Revolution Director Resident in America," which contained detailed proposals for a fresh rising. Any rising, says the Irish Revolution Director, must be contingent upon the sending by Germany of "an expedition with a sufficient military force to cover the landing." On this new occasion the German Government was to fix the time, and, as an inducement, the advantage of having submarine and Zeppelin bases in the West of Ireland was insisted upon.

Count Bernsdorff was evidently having difficulty with his tools, for on the 24th October, he warned his Government not to allow a certain Captain Boehm, then resident in Rotterdam, to write to Irishmen in America, since his letters were apt to go to the wrong people. Later Captain Boehm was arrested by us in British waters.

On the 4th December we find Count Bernsdorff again attaching surreptitiously a note to a message passed by the American Government, in which he mentioned that the Irish leaders in America were pressing for an answer to their proposal of the 8th September. He seems to have followed this on Christmas Day with a message which is missing, for, on the last day of 1916, Herr Zimmermann informed him of the quantities of munitions which it was proposed to land between the 21st and 25th February, 1917. He added that it was impossible to send German troops. On the 18th January, 1917, Bernsdorff replied that his Irish Committee declined the proposal, as, without German troops, a rising would be useless.

After America's entrance into the War on the 4th April, 1917, the line of communication between the German Government and the leaders of the Sinn Fein Party was temporarily broken, though there is no reason to believe that the messenger service devised by John Devoy between America and Ireland was affected. "A clue to the new line of communication was subsequently obtained and has been actively followed up. The effect of this new line in Ireland is "visible in the speeches of the Sinn Fein leaders during this period. For example, de Valera, addressing the Convention of Irish Volunteers on the 27th October, 1917, said:—

"'By proper organisation, recruiting, they could have 500,000 fighting volunteers in Ireland. That would be a big army, but without the opportunity and the means of fighting, it could only be used as a menace. There had already been too much bloodshed without success, and he would never advocate another rebellion without hopeful chances of success. They could see no hope of that in the near future, except through a German invasion of England, and the landing of troops and munitions in Ireland. They should be prepared to leave nothing undone towards that end.'

"On another occasion in January, this year, de Valera said:—

"'So long as Germany is the enemy of England and England the enemy of Ireland, so long will Ireland be the friend of Germany.'"
For some considerable time it was difficult to obtain accurate information as to
the German-Sinn Fein plans, but about April 1918 it was definitely ascertained that
the plan for landing arms in Ireland was ripe for execution, and that the Germans only
awaited definite information from Ireland as to the time, place, and date. The British
authorities were able to warn the Irish Command regarding the probable landing of an
agent from Germany from a submarine. The agent actually landed on the 12th April,
and was arrested. The new rising depended largely upon the landing of munitions
from submarines, and there is evidence to show that it was planned to follow a success­ful
German offensive in the West and to take place at a time when Great Britain
would be presumably stripped of troops. According to documents found on his
person, de Valera had worked out in great detail the constitution of his rebel army,
and hoped to be able to muster 500,000 trained men. There is evidence that German
munitions were actually shipped on submarines at Cuxhaven at the beginning of May,
and that for some time German submarines had been busy off the west coast of Ireland
on other errands than the destruction of Allied shipping.

It will thus be seen that negotiations between the executive of the Sinn Fein
organisation and Germany have been virtually continuous for three and a half years.
At first a section of the Irish-Americans was the intermediary for most of the
discussions, but since America’s entrance into the War communications with the enemy
have tended to be more direct. A second rising in Ireland was planned for last year,
and the scheme broke down only because Germany was unable to send troops. This
year, plans for another rising “in connection with the German offensive on the
Western front” were “maturing” and a new shipment of arms from Germany was
imminent. An important feature in every plan was the establishment of submarine
bases in Ireland to menace the shipping of all nations. In these circumstances, no
other course was open to the Government, if useless bloodshed was to be avoided, and
its duty to the Allies fulfilled, but to intern the “authors and abettors” of this
criminal intrigue.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, May 24, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.


The Right Hon. Lord Newton, Controller, Prisoners of War Department, Foreign Office (for Minute 17).


Major-General Sir H. Sykes, C.M.G., Chief of the Air Staff (for Minutes 8 to 13).

Major P. Lloyd Greame, M.C., Ministry of National Service (for Minutes 14 and 15).


Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. Storr, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
1. With reference to War Cabinet 415, Minute 1, the Secretary informed the War Cabinet that he had received a telephonic communication from the Prime Minister, to the effect that Mr. Lloyd George desired, if possible, to insert in the statement in regard to the Irish arrests some words which would connect with the German designs in Ireland persons who had been detained, other than de Valera. Mr. Lloyd George had pointed out that the speeches of de Valera, quoted in the statement, identified him with the German Sinn Fein plans, but that no speeches were quoted or evidence produced in the statement with respect to the other persons detained.

The opinion was expressed that, in the absence of the Chief Secretary (who had returned to Ireland) and any official from the Irish Office who could assist the War Cabinet in adding any such statement, it was impossible to add such a statement as the Prime Minister desired.

The War Cabinet therefore decided that—

The statement as approved should be issued to the Press at once.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 214, Minute 12, Lord Curzon drew the attention of the War Cabinet to the visit of the Secretary of State for India to India. Lord Curzon said that Mr. Montagu had gone to India with a Mission to draw up a scheme in order to carry out pledges given with regard to the progressive institution of responsible government in India. Mr. Montagu had spent six months in India, and had put forward his proposals in the form of a Blue Book, which had not yet been circulated to the War Cabinet. The scheme was signed by the Viceroy of India and himself. Lord Curzon pointed out that this was a very serious document, and requested a decision of the War Cabinet as to the action which was to be taken with this Report.

Lord Curzon expressed the opinion that there were three alternatives:—

(a.) To publish the Report, by which method Indian and British public opinion on the proposals would be shown;
(b.) For the War Cabinet to give a perfunctory examination to the scheme and to authorise the publication of the Report;
(c.) For the War Cabinet carefully to consider the Report and then authorise its publication, with any necessary observations as to their own policy and views.

Lord Curzon added that Mr. Montagu was strongly in favour of the first alternative. There was not much to be said in favour of the second. The third, though it might be theoretically the best, would involve very considerable delay.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that, in the absence of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for India, it was not possible to give a definite decision on this question to-day, but that it would be very helpful to the War Cabinet, when the Report came before them, if Lord Curzon would prepare a memorandum putting forward his views on the scheme.

Mr. Chamberlain said that he considered (c) would be the proper course to take if time were available for adequate consideration to be given to it in the first place, but that was impossible at present. He therefore favoured the adoption of (a). He had suggested to Mr. Montagu that he (Mr. Montagu) should put forward, for the consideration of the War Cabinet, a short memorandum, not for publication, in order to inform the War Cabinet of the opinion which Mr. Montagu considered was held by Indians and Anglo-Indians, and of the amount of backing which his proposals were likely to
receive. It was also desirable that the opinion of Mr. Montagu's colleagues who accompanied him on his Mission to India should be known. Mr. Montagu had expressed himself as willing to do this.

The War Cabinet requested—

(a.) Lord Curzon to lay before the War Cabinet a memorandum putting forward his views on Mr. Montagu's report.

(b.) The Secretary of State for India to forward to the War Cabinet a memorandum which would give his views of the strength of Indian and British-Indian opinion on the subject of the report, and which would also express the opinion of the other members of the mission to India.

The Western Front

8. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that there was no news of importance to report with regard to the Western front.

As regards the German divisions in the vicinity of the British front, the situation was as follows: There were 14 fresh divisions, all of good quality; 24 divisions which had been roughly handled but were now refitted, and 23 fresh divisions in line, which could be taken out by roulement; if the Germans attacked on a 50-kilometre front, they would have from 20 to 25 more divisions available for the offensive, making a total of 80 to 80. If the Germans deferred their attack until about the 15th June, they would by that time have reached their maximum available force, and might attack with at least 100 divisions, which would be a larger force than that which took part in the offensive on the 21st March.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff to prepare a statement showing what force the French and ourselves might be able to put up to oppose such an offensive.

Armed Merchant Cruiser "Moldavia."

4. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that the armed merchant cruiser "Moldavia" had been sunk off Newhaven, and that, amongst others, over 400 United States troops were on board. He added that, as far as had been ascertained, the whole of the passengers and crew had been saved.

5. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that a telegram had been received from the Naval Attaché in Russia to the effect that the Germans might be expected to enter Petrograd on the 23rd May. He had added that the Soviet Government appeared to realise that its end was near, and that it was now willing to accept help from anyone.

56 American troops were unaccounted for.
town, in the vicinity of the docks, would not be hit during an attack on the latter.

The Secretary informed the War Cabinet that a telegram had been sent the previous day (No. 38872 D.M.O.) to General Headquarters, France, to the effect that, in view of the vital importance of exploiting to the full the present unique opportunity of destroying enemy submarine and other craft in Bruges Dock, it had been decided that the bombing units of the 5th Group should be reinforced temporarily from the units under Sir Douglas Haig's command.

7. Attention was drawn to the losses which had taken place in the Mediterranean convoy, as reported in the "Overdue and Captured List of British Vessels" issued by the Admiralty on the 20th May.

The First Lord stated that the protection to the mercantile marine in the Mediterranean at the present time was totally inadequate, and that the traffic was at present running a greater risk than usual, owing to some patrol vessels being taken off convoy work and being trained for work on the Otranto barrage, where it is thought they will ultimately afford a better protection.

Admiral Wemyss pointed out that we were short of destroyers everywhere, and that our escorts were greatly strained, owing to the need of convoying transports bringing over United States troops.

8. The Chief of the Air Staff informed the War Cabinet that during the past week we had brought down 177 German machines, and that a further 51 had also been forced to land after engagement with our aeroplanes. Our losses were 63 missing.

9. The Chief of the Air Staff informed the War Cabinet that two reconnaissance flights had been removed from the southern part of the French front to the northern portion; that there was some increase in aerodrome accommodation in the Lille sector; that a large number of enemy scouts had been carrying out night reconnaissances at great altitudes north of the River Lys, and that their bombing machines had been very active of late in bombing our back areas.

10. Questioned as to the reports that had appeared in the press as to a German attack on a base hospital, Major-General Sykes stated that he was inclined to believe that the act was not a deliberate one on the part of the enemy.

It was pointed out that the hospital, which was situated at Étaples, was in close proximity to a very important railway junction. Attention was called, however, to the report that the German aeroplanes had used their machine-guns.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for War to furnish, for their information, a full report of the attack.

11. The War Cabinet had under consideration a paper by the Air Minister on General Aerial Policy (Paper G.T.-4622).

It was pointed out that the Air Policy Committee of the War Cabinet comprised, among others, the Heads of Departments mainly concerned with the questions in the paper, viz., the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, and the Air Minister, and it was suggested that the initial portion of Sir William Weir's
Long-range Bombing.

12. The War Cabinet next considered the second part of the Air Minister’s paper, which dealt with the arrangements necessary for carrying out the progressive developments of long-range bombing of Germany, and requested that the following propositions should be put before the Supreme War Council at as early a date as possible:

(a.) The formation of the independent long-range bombing Command;
(b.) Its ultimate development into an Inter Allied Command, under a British General Officer Commanding, so long as the British portion is larger;
(c.) M. Clemenceau to obtain the support of the French Army authorities to this scheme.

The Secretary of State for War stated that he was in entire agreement with the Air Minister’s views on this subject, and would strongly support them. He anticipated, however, great difficulty in securing the approbation and co-operation of the French, for the following reasons:

(i.) They would wish to insist that the independent Air Force should be under General Foch. To this plea, however, Lord Milner considered we had a good answer,
(ii.) The French were becoming seriously alarmed at the growing activity of the Germans in respect of the intensive bombing of their towns. Our own long-range bombing operations started from French territory, and the French feared that their own country would suffer most from the enemy’s retaliation.

It was suggested that it might be advisable to wait for a few months before approaching the French, as General Trenchard would, by that time, be fully established in his new Command, and would have a large force at his disposal. What was especially necessary at the moment was the sanction of the Cabinet to the long-range bombing policy outlined in Sir William Weir’s paper.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that a telegram had already been sent by the Foreign Office on the 23rd instant (Foreign Office telegram No. 1026D) to Lord Derby, stating that the Air Council had constituted an independent force for the purpose of carrying out bombing raids on a large scale, and asking Lord Derby to inform the French Government immediately of this arrangement, to secure their recognition of General Trenchard’s separate Command, and to request them to put all necessary facilities at the disposal of the Royal Air Force in France. The telegram further stated that, as these long-range operations would soon partake of an international character, His Majesty’s Government proposed that the broad lines of action should be laid down by the Supreme War Council.

In reply to a question, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he understood that the independent character of General Trenchard’s Command, the fact of which had been communicated to
the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-chief, had been fully accepted by Sir Douglas Haig, but undertook to make certain of this. He also pointed out that General Trenchard’s force would be stationed in, and would operate from, the French zone, and not behind the British lines.

The War Cabinet decided—

To adopt the Air Minister’s memorandum on the independent Air Force Command for long-range bombing on Germany, and further agreed that, subject to the Prime Minister’s approval, this policy should be given the fullest support when the subject came up before the Supreme War Council.

The War Cabinet then examined the third part of the Air Minister’s memorandum, dealing with American aviation.

The Air Minister emphasised the necessity for establishing on this side of the Atlantic an American Air Staff, which must be not only empowered to confer with the British and French Air Staffs on aerial matters, but should further be authorised, as soon as definite decisions had been arrived at by the three Staffs, to send instructions to America which would require no further sanction prior to being acted upon.

The First Lord stated that no objection had been raised in regard to paragraph 2 (a) of this portion of the Air Minister’s memorandum, but he demurred to sections (b) and (c) of the said paragraph, which left to American resources the provision of large aircraft and strategic bombing, anti-submarine work and protective aircraft. In view of the fact that, in aeronautical manufacture, the United States had proved to be a broken reed, he disputed the wisdom of committing the War Cabinet to these proposals.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff expressed the hope that, whatever policy in this respect might be adopted, there would be no clashing with the Aviation Committee of the Supreme War Council at Versailles, where there was already in existence an Inter-Allied organisation to deal with aeronautical questions.

Lord Robert Cecil said that, as regards America, there was a fundamental difference between that country and the other belligerents. The Washington Government was apparently not prepared to trust, or concede any real authority to, their representatives. This, he said, was conspicuous as regards their shipping delegates, and he cited other instances of the reluctance of the United States Government to allow their representatives freedom of action.

The Air Minister hoped that there would be no delay in getting to work on the right lines: it was all-important to have in this country a competent and authoritative American Air Staff, even if their authority only lasted long enough to enable a definite combined programme to be laid down now for the spring of next year.

After further discussion, and in view of the foregoing consideration, the War Cabinet decided—

(a.) To approve the recommendations contained in paragraph 2 (a) of the third portion of the Air Minister’s memorandum;
(b.) To refer sub-sections (b), (c), and (d) of the said paragraph to the Air Policy Committee for examination and report;
(c.) To approve the proposal (sub-section (e)) to send a British mission of experts to Washington, subject to the concurrence of Lord Reading.

Man-power.

Recruitment from Coal Mines.

14. With reference to War Cabinet 395, Minute 1, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Coal Controller, with a covering note from Sir Albert Stanley (Paper G.T.-4614) on the subject of the recruitment from coal mines, together with a
memorandum by General Nash (Paper G.T.-4562) on the coal situation in France

The Coal Controller explained that the situation at the end of 1917 admitted of the recruiting of 50,000 men from the mines for the Army, and it was agreed that the Home Office should decertificate miners between the ages of 18 and 25 with the object of 50,000 Grade I. men being taken. Before this number had been withdrawn from the mines it was agreed that a second quota of 50,000 men should be given up under certain conditions. When he agreed to these proposals he was unaware of certain factors involving increased demands for shipment:

1. Improvement in shipping position brought about by changes in convoy system, resulting in the shortening of time for voyages and thus making neutral and other tonnage more quickly available.
2. Increased obligations entered into by other Departments with neutrals.
3. Increased French demand due to results of German offensive.

At a later date, in view of the above considerations, the Controller of Coal Mines informed the Minister of National Service that he could only agree to 25,000 men being taken in the month of May (War Cabinet 395, Minute 1). The making good of the output of the Pas-de-Calais mines and the increased demands for coal by neutrals, and the improved shipping position, had materially altered the coal situation, and he therefore asked that not more than 62,500 Grade I. pre-war miners should be posted to the Army or enlisted in the Royal Navy, the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, or the Royal Marines, since the 1st January, 1918, and that no men of lower grades should be taken from the coal mines other than such post-outbreak-of-war miners as may still remain and be liable to recruitment until such time as the full effect of the withdrawal of that number of men is determined.

Major Lloyd Greame said that the decision of the War Cabinet reducing the second quota of coal miners to 25,000 has been based on the assumption that the Coal Controller would have to meet the worst possible situation in the Pas-de-Calais coalfield, viz.: 750,000 tons a month. (See Annex G.T.-4282.) That being so, the necessary supplies for France and Italy could be maintained without any further reduction of the number of men to be recruited. The recruiting of the second quota of 25,000 miners was now in full swing, and it would be very difficult suddenly to cease recruiting. The effect of permanently leaving out some men who happened to be lower down on the ballot than others who had been taken would be to bring trouble. It would also affect unfavourably the other recruiting schemes. Already the recruiting returns for this month were disappointing. This was owing to the repercussion on the Tribunals of the weakening on the part of the protected industries in their supply of men. He felt that the situation in the mines might be relieved if the Army could go on releasing men. Already 2,000 had been approved, and 7,000 names of men in lower categories than B I. had been handed in.

Lord Milner said that the position was most serious. Two months ago, after the reverse to our Army, we adopted extreme measures to save the situation. It was realised that American help would tide us over until the month of August, but after that date we should have to rely on our own recruiting. Now that there was a pause in the German attack, every point of our recruiting programme was beginning to break down, and demands for the release of men were coming in on every side. He thought that the claims of recruiting must have priority. There would be a big German attack very shortly, and we must be prepared for it.
Sir Leo Chiozza Money said that the Shipping Controller took a grave view of the export coal situation and that he had prepared a further memorandum on the subject which urged strongly that the recruitment of miners should not proceed beyond the first quota of 50,000. The chief points that he desired to urge were:

(a.) The danger of an aggravated coal crisis in France and Italy. France was sending 220,000 tons of coal per month (out of a promised 350,000 tons) to Italy by rail, and if she were compelled to stop this we should have to compensate Italy by sea-borne coal.

(b.) By export coal arrangements to neutrals we, in effect, bought the use of large blocks of neutral tonnage without which we could not obtain ore, pyrites, and other indispensable imports. These arrangements were made in our own interests and were moreover obligations into which we had entered.

(c.) There would be great danger to our bunker stocks in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, with consequent risk to all tonnage movements.

(d.) The danger of serious waste of tonnage owing to vessels having to sail without cargoes or to be diverted. Already this was taking place: in the three weeks ended the 18th May no less than 200,000 tons of shipping which ought to have taken out coal had to sail in ballast.

(e.) If we failed to export coal to South America, the Americans would be compelled to use more tonnage in that trade, with consequent grave reaction upon Atlantic traffic.

He pointed out further that the failure to obtain coal cargoes in April and May was in spite of the fact that fewer than 50,000 miners had yet been recruited and that the Béarnay position had not developed to the worst. What would be the position if the Béarnay supply altogether failed and the Coal Controller had to make up the further big deficiency?

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that we had undertaken heavy obligations for the supply of coal to France and Italy, and to neutral countries. It would be disastrous if a coal famine was created in any of the Allied countries, especially in Italy. He was perfectly willing to do his utmost to reduce the demands of neutrals, but he hoped that the Cabinet would consider the serious effect of any reduction of the demands of France and Italy.

Mr. Calthrop said that if our obligations to neutrals were to be maintained, it would result in the munition works going short. The supplies for domestic and industrial consumption at home were considerably behind, and it took time to elaborate a general scheme of rationing. If he could be allowed some latitude in restricting supplies to neutrals, he would do his best to furnish the miners promised for the Army. He felt that both France and Italy should have priority over neutrals.

Lord Robert Cecil suggested that there might be a small Committee appointed to go into the question of the supply of coal to neutrals with a view to arranging the most equitable distribution of the available supplies.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The recruitment of miners should proceed up to the number of 75,000 Grade I. men from the 1st January, 1918, including voluntary enlistments;

(b.) France and Italy should have priority over neutral countries in regard to supplies of British coal;

(c.) Lord Robert Cecil should summon a Committee, consisting of representatives of—
The Foreign Office,
The Board of Trade,
The Ministry of Shipping,

to go into the question of the demands of foreign countries for coal.

(d.) The Board of Trade should at once initiate a scheme for rationing industrial and domestic coal supplies at home.

Recruitment for the Royal Navy.

15. Mr. Calthrop drew the attention of the War Cabinet to the recruitment from the mines for the Navy and the Royal Naval Volunteers. He asked that this should cease.

The Secretary pointed out that on the 25th March, 1918 (War Cabinet 372, Minute 10), the War Cabinet decided that the recruitment for the Navy should cease for two months, which, by agreement between the Departments, had afterwards been reduced to one month. That period had now expired.

The Second Sea Lord laid stress on the importance of recruiting miners for continuous service in the Navy as stokers. Unless this were done, the Navy would be seriously handicapped at the conclusion of peace.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The recruitment for the Navy from the mines should cease until further notice.

Allied Intervention in Siberia.

15. The War Cabinet had before them the note of a conversation between Lord Robert Cecil and the Japanese Ambassador (Paper G.T.-4617), in regard to Allied intervention in Siberia, and a copy of a telegram, dated the 19th May, 1918, from Baron Goto to the Japanese Ambassador in London. (Appendix.)

Lord Robert Cecil explained that in this telegram four questions had been asked to which His Majesty's Government were invited to reply. It was obvious, from the first three of these questions, that the Japanese Government did not wish us to continue negotiating with the Soviet Government, or wait until they (the Soviet Government) asked for Allied intervention in Siberia. Then there was the question of Semenoff. The Japanese were supporting this General, but we had told the Bolshevik Government that we were not doing so, and that he was advancing at his own risk. The Japanese wished to know what our attitude was in regard to the Semenoff movement. Lord Robert Cecil continued that he thought we should deal perfectly frankly with the Soviets. He himself was prepared to back Semenoff, provided that his activities were part and parcel of an Allied movement, otherwise we should have nothing to do with him.

The opinion was expressed that we might leave Semenoff entirely to the Japanese, and say nothing to Trotsky unless the matter were raised by him. It was suggested, however, that this would not be dealing frankly with the Soviets, as, should intervention in Siberia ever materialise and Semenoff become part of the Allied movement, we should naturally support him. To recognise Semenoff now, on the other hand, was to recognise an avowed enemy of the Bolsheviks.

After further discussion the War Cabinet decided that—

The question involved decisions too momentous to be arrived at without the presence of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
and they therefore instructed—

The Secretary to put the matter down on the agenda on the earliest possible date, when both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would be present.

17. With reference to War Cabinet 415, Minute 11, the War Cabinet discussed a telegram (No. 1385 n) received from The Hague with regard to the exchange of prisoners with Germany. The telegram stated that General Friederich was now at The Hague, and wanted to know whether British delegates could not go there at once and discuss the question.

Lord Newton said that he would like the Cabinet’s view as to the proposal we were prepared to make. It would be difficult to do less than the French had done, and he thought we might tell Germany that we were prepared to consider an agreement on the same lines.

It was pointed out, however, that care should be taken over using the words “on the same lines,” which the Secretary was directed to delete from the draft minutes of the previous day.

The Admiralty, in the discussion on this subject yesterday, had expressly asked that certain ratings of the captured crews from submarines should not be included in any exchange. An agreement on the lines of the French exchange might involve this.

Lord Newton said he thought there was little danger of this, as a representative of the Admiralty could attend the negotiations, and in any case it would take at least a year to put any agreement into force.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) Lord Newton should draft a telegram for the Foreign Office to send to Sir W. Townley, enquiring whether the Germans were prepared to discuss an agreement for the exchange of prisoners of war, and stating that, in the event of a reply in the affirmative, we were prepared to send representatives to The Hague to discuss the question.

(b.) Lord Newton should lay before the War Cabinet draft proposals to form the basis of such exchange.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 24, 1918.
APPENDIX.

(With reference to War Cabinet 417, Minute 16.)

QUESTION OF ALLIED INTERVENTION IN SIBERIA.

I.—Note of a Conversation between Lord R. Cecil and the Japanese Ambassador.
II.—Copy of a Telegram from Baron Goto to the Japanese Ambassador in London.

I.

Note of a Conversation between Lord R. Cecil and the Japanese Ambassador, in the form of a Draft Telegram to Sir C. Greene, Tokyo.

THE Japanese Ambassador called on me to-day and left with me a copy of a telegram which he had received from Baron Goto.

He read it to me, and I told him that the questions raised in it were so important that I could not give him a final answer without further consideration; but if he would allow me to express my private opinions on the subject, for what they were worth, I should be glad to do so.

He assented, and I then told him that, in my view, the situation in Russia rendered the question of intervention extremely urgent. As far as I was concerned, I should be quite willing that Semenoff should be supported, if that was the wish of the Japanese military authorities. In the same way, the Government had been anxious to make use of the Czecho-Slovaks now collecting at Vladivostock, and we had approached the French Government on the subject. I recognised that these forces could be effective only if they were strongly supported by Japan, and if that happened I should be quite willing that Japan should take the direction of the whole expedition, provided of course that the Japanese made it clear that they were going into Siberia, not for the purpose of obtaining any territorial advantage, but in order to assist Russia and the Allied cause generally; and provided that the Japanese were prepared to push their expedition as far west as Chiliabinsk, or somewhere in that neighbourhood.

With respect to the particular questions in the telegram that he had read to me, I told him that Mr. Lockhart believed that joint action in Moscow with the Soviet Government would be successful, but that he had now arrived at the conclusion that intervention was so urgent that we ought to act whether we obtained the invitation of the Bolshevist Government or not. I did not deal specifically with the second and third questions, nor did I express a definite opinion as to whether we should leave Semenoff in the lurch, but I promised to consider that.

The Ambassador asked me what was the state of affairs in Washington.

I avoided giving him a direct reply, but I read him a passage from your telegram No. 535, in which Baron Goto is reported to have said that the President showed some signs of reconsidering his objections, and I told the Ambassador that we would spare no effort to obtain American approval for intervention.

I then asked him whether he thought that his Government, with American approval, would be prepared to intervene to the extent of sending a force to Chiliabinsk or somewhere for the purpose of making a diversion which might oblige the Germans to diminish their forces on the Western front.

The Ambassador professed that this was an entirely new idea, and said that his Government had so far considered only the necessity of intervening to prevent German penetration to the Pacific coast. The proposal that they should intervene in general assistance of the Allied cause had not, as far as he knew, been fully considered by them.

I then said that the matter was of the utmost importance; that the whole course of the war might be determined by an effective intervention in Siberia; and that I ventured to appeal to the Japanese, as our Allies, to do their utmost to come to our assistance. I added that if we knew that they were ready to intervene on this scale our hands would be greatly strengthened in any negotiations we might have in Washington.
He again said that, from his own point of view, he would be glad to give a favourable reply, but that he felt he could not do so without consulting his Government, as the matter was undoubtedly a new one to them.

I did not tell him that this appeared to be inconsistent with the tenor of Baron Goto's observations to your Excellency and with the various communications which have been made to us by the Japanese General Staff.

The Ambassador left me, saying that he would report to his Government the observations I had made as coming from myself, and that he would hope to have in the course of a few days an official reply to the telegram which he had left with me.

Foreign Office, May 22, 1918.

(Initialled) R. C.

II.

Copy of Telegram, dated May 19, from Baron Goto to the Japanese Ambassador in London.

Some time ago the British Government made a proposal to the Imperial Government looking to an intervention in Siberia, which they deemed necessary in order to check the penetration of German influence. Subsequently, however, having regard to the attitude of the American Government in the matter, the British Government are understood to have found it advisable to induce, if possible, the Soviet Government to invite the Allied intervention, and instructed Mr. Lockhart to enter upon the negotiations with the Soviet Government on these lines. The recent course of these negotiations is unknown to the Imperial Government, but it is presumed that no concrete result has yet been obtained. On the other hand, the British Government, fearing that the continued support on the part of the Allies to the Semenoff detachment, whose avowed object is to crush the Bolsheviks might hinder the progress of the negotiations above referred to, requested the Japanese Government to give also an advice to Semenoff, with a view to restraining for the time being the advance of his detachment. The desired advice was given to Semenoff through a Japanese in touch with him, but it is found impossible to dissuade him from his determination. On the contrary, he is continuing his advance encouraged by the success he has so far achieved over the Bolsheviks, and, thanks to the continuous enlistment of the Cossacks in his detachment, its strength has already reached 5,000 and is growing stronger every day. He is now menacing Kalimuskaya.

You are hereby requested to seek an interview with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and in calling his attention to the above circumstances you will express to him the deep concern felt by the Imperial Government in regard to the situation thus created for them as well as for the Allies, and ask for the frank expression of his views on the following points:

1. Is there any positive prospect of Mr. Lockhart's efforts in inducing the Soviet Government to invite the Allied intervention being crowned with the desired success in an immediate future?

2. In the event of an invitation for the Allied intervention being extended by the Soviet Government, the immediate object aimed at by the latter would presumably be either the suppression of the recalcitrant elements in the country or the defence of Russia against the German invasion. In the opinion of the Imperial Government, it appears that in the first case there would be no reason for the Allies to accept the invitation, while in the second case, so long as the German military operations do not extend to Siberia, the scheme of despatching troops there, as originally proposed by the British Government, would not be compatible with the object as held in view by the Soviet Government. What would be the views of the British Government on this point?

3. It is true that the Soviet Government are now exercising the actual power in various parts in Russia, but they can hardly be said to represent the will of Russians in general. It is a patent fact that there exist a great many elements totally incompatible with the said Government owing to the profound animosity felt against them. In these circumstances, it is feared that the Allied intervention undertaken as the result of an understanding with the Soviet Government, even though with the object of resisting the
German aggression would be liable to provoke the ill-feelings of these elements against the Allies, as having the effect of strengthening the position of the Soviet Government. What would be the opinion of the British Government on this point?

4. Semenoff launched forth the present enterprise in entire reliance upon the moral and material support of the British, French, and Japanese Governments, and it is not without reason that he should be counting upon the continuous assistance of the Allies. If the Allies were to stop their help suddenly at the present moment and leave him in the lurch, would it not bring about the loss of their prestige in the eyes of Semenoff's friends, and give the false impression to the general populace in Russia that the Allies are unreliable, with the result of driving them into the arms of Germany?
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, May 27, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Major-General F. H. Sykes, C.B., C.M.G., Chief of the Air Staff.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.O.
The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 4).
Mr. Philip Kerr (for Minute 9).

Lieutenant-Colonel L. Storr, Assistant Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that information had just been received to the effect that the IXth Corps, which was holding a 30-kilometre line on the Chemin des Dames, had been attacked by the Germans, and that, as far as our knowledge went at present, there were indications that they had been driven off the top of the ridge. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that this corps was composed of four tired British divisions, which had replaced four French divisions formerly stationed in this area, the latter having been sent to reinforce the IIInd Army.
Submarines.

2. The Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet as follows, relative to losses of enemy submarines:

(a.) Submarine "H. 4" had sunk a German submarine in the Straits of Otranto, two survivors being picked up. Unfortunately, the enemy submarine was carrying British prisoners who had been taken from the steamship "Snowdon."

(b.) Patrol craft "No. 60" ran over a submarine in the vicinity of Trevose Head, a heavy explosion taking place shortly after the patrol craft cleared the submarine. The patrol vessel was considerably damaged.

(c.) A seaplane attacked a submarine in the vicinity of Portland, and wreckage came to the surface.

(d.) A further report stated that the armed yacht "Lorna" had sunk an enemy submarine 2½ miles from Portland Bill on the same day, capturing one survivor.

As regards the reports under (c) and (d), the Deputy First Sea Lord stated that verification was necessary as to whether one or two submarines had been sunk.

Vladivostock.

3. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that a telegram had been received from H.M.S. "Suffolk" to the effect that a big demonstration took place at Vladivostock on 22nd May, public bodies and workmen, numbering 10,000, protesting against the Soviet taking over municipal powers, speeches being delivered against Bolshevik tyranny and in favour of universal suffrage. There was great enthusiasm, but no disorder. The Commanding Officer of the "Suffolk" had added that the present moment appeared most favourable for the Allies to declare their intentions of following a firm line of policy.

The Czech-Slovak Forces.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 413, Minute 12, the Deputy First Sea Lord stated that the captain of the "Suffolk" had also telegraphed that the Czechs are not willing to interfere in Russian affairs, that they wish to fight on the Western front, but that great efforts are being made by enemy agents to turn them away from their purpose. He adds that the men are of splendid physique with good discipline and some years of war experience, and should prove a valuable force; 10,000 are now at Vladivostock, and another 13,000 are expected shortly.

Russia: M. Pichon's Visit.

5. Lord Robert Cecil informed the War Cabinet that the French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was due to arrive in London that evening. The principal object of his visit was probably to discuss the policy to be pursued in regard to Russia.

The War Cabinet decided that—

M. Pichon should be invited to confer with the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, and Lord Robert Cecil at 11 A.M. the following day, in the Cabinet Room, prior to a meeting of the War Cabinet at noon.

Lord Robert Cecil undertook to invite M. Pichon's attendance.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff was instructed to arrange to attend, in case his presence be required.

South Persia.

6. Lord Robert Cecil stated that affairs in South Persia were in a rather disturbed state. Recent restlessness in that quarter had culminated in the preaching of a jihad by Soulet, the leader of the Kashgai tribe (Sir C. Marling's telegram No. 446, dated the
24th May, 1918), and the siege of Fort Khanet Zinian, held by a detachment of the South Persian Rifles, by a body of Kasghai estimated at about 2,000 men. The hostile movement appeared to be spreading. As prompt action was necessary, and time would not admit of the Eastern Committee being consulted, Lord Robert Cecil had telegraphed on Saturday to Sir C. Marling, giving Sir Percy Sykes full authority to act as he thought best.

Lord Curzon, as Chairman of the Eastern Committee, said that the area of the present disturbance was between Shiraz and the sea. Sir Percy Sykes had under him the South Persian Rifles, who constituted a scattered unreliable force of about 5,000 men, in regard to whose loyalty we had lately received somewhat ominous reports, and, in addition, approximately 1,200 Indian troops near Shiraz. Lord Curzon considered that Lord Robert Cecil had no alternative but to act as he had done. The Eastern Committee was to meet the following afternoon, and would discuss the situation and the measures to be taken to meet it.

The War Cabinet decided that—
The matter should be dealt with by the Eastern Committee.

Russia:
The Czecho-Slovak Council.

7. The War Cabinet had under consideration a note by Lord Robert Cecil on the subject of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, and a draft letter addressed to Dr. Beneš, the London representative of the Czecho-Slovak Council (Paper G.T.-4647).

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that a request had been put forward by the Czecho-Slovak National Council to the effect that the British Government should accord it the same recognition as had been given to it by the French and Italian Governments. Lord Robert Cecil said that he proposed to address a letter, as drafted, to the London representative of the Czecho-Slovak Council, which, while giving them the measure of recognition desired, would not commit the Government to any increased war obligations.

The War Cabinet approved the draft letter to the London representative of the Czecho-Slovak Council.

Replacement of Vessels Lost by War Risks.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Shipping, with reference to the proposal to replace vessels lost by war risks, by giving the owner a standard ship (Paper G.T.-4610).

As there was no dispute on the subject of this proposal, the War Cabinet requested—
The Chancellor of the Exchequer to confer with the Minister of Shipping with reference to the answer to be sent to the owners who had made the application.

American Reinforcements.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 412, Minute 13, the Prime Minister referred to the recent telegrams which had been received on the subject of American reinforcements from Lord Reading (Nos. 2329, 2356, and other telegrams which had been received from the War Office from the British Mission at Washington). Mr. Lloyd George said that, while these telegrams were fairly clear as to the number of troops which were being sent, it was very difficult to ascertain from them what actual numbers of American reinforcements were available in France at the present time, or what the position, as regards these reinforcements, would be for the next two months.

The Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that during May 160,000 American troops would reach France. These, however, were not all infantry and machine-gunners, as other services had been brought over, including field engineers, signallers, and ambulances. Of these 160,000, it might be reckoned that 60 per cent. to 70 per cent. would be infantry and machine-gunners.
General Harington said that, in his opinion, there should be 70 American battalions complete by the end of this month, and that, of the 10 divisions which would reinforce the British Army, the elements of 9 were in France, and the advance party of the 10th had arrived; 113,000 Americans had arrived in France this month, and he had just heard of another 40,000 sailing between the 18th and 24th May, of which 20,000 were infantry and 3,000 machine-generers.

The Prime Minister said that it was very important that the Cabinet should know how many American infantry there would be available for use by the end of May, and to what extent the American troops in France would be available to repair the damage which would be done by the second German offensive of this year, and for a third German offensive when it came.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff promised to procure the information desired, but said that he had already asked Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig to send him a return every Saturday stating how many Americans would be put into line by the following Saturday. He would therefore have a statement on this subject to lay before the War Cabinet every Monday. Sir Douglas Haig had informed him that there would be, by the 1st June, three American battalions in the line held by the British troops, and that a further six were in training behind the line. Sir Douglas Haig was of opinion that, if necessary, these battalions in training could be used if the German offensive continued for any time, but General Foch was not so optimistic, and had expressed the opinion that it would be better for these battalions to be employed on the southern portion of the line. General Wilson said that he had just received a message from Sir Douglas Haig, who, after a conference with General Foch, had now changed his plans, and come to the conclusion that it was undesirable to put the American battalions into cadre divisions, and had decided that they should be trained for three or four weeks in back areas first. General Wilson said that this decision might alter all the arrangements as regards transport, &c., which had been made. General Wilson pointed out that the American rule was that all the American troops arriving in France were supposed to have had not less than five months' training before starting. It was evident that many of these troops had not had such training, and, owing to the unequal degree of efficiency of the battalions sent, Sir Douglas Haig had desired to take out of each battalion now in France men unfit to go in the line, and put the remainder of the battalion in, though under strength. General Foch suggested that it was more desirable to ear-mark battalions in categories according as they were ready to go into the line.

The Prime Minister pointed out that, although President Wilson was insisting on five months' training (telegram No. 2356), it was clear that the training which the American troops were receiving in America was in no way adequate, and Mr. Lloyd George suggested that it would be better for the American troops to be brought as soon as possible, either to England or France, where they could be trained under officers who had had practical experience of modern warfare. Mr. Lloyd George was strongly of opinion that any proposals on this head should be clearly put forward in a memorandum to be laid before the Supreme War Council at Versailles by General Foch, as General-in-Chief of the Allied Forces on the Western front. There was another point which Mr. Lloyd George emphasised, was of the greatest importance, namely, the steps which were being taken by the authorities in America for having an army available and ready for operations in 1919.

General Wilson, when asked whether General Foch had any idea as to how many American troops he required, said that he (General Wilson) aimed at 100 divisions from America; but Mr. Lloyd George pointed out that, according to present arrangements, there would only be 42 American divisions in France by
June next year, of which 28 would be combatant divisions and 14 replacement divisions.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Chief of the Imperial General Staff should prepare two memoranda for the consideration of the War Cabinet. The first memorandum should show:—

(i.) The number of American infantry and machine-guns available for the reinforcement of the British line at the present time;

(ii.) The number of such reinforcements which are likely to be available in six weeks' time;

(iii.) The total assistance which may be expected to be available as the result of the American promise to brigade American battalions with the British Army.

The second memorandum to show:—

(i.) The preparations which were being made by the Americans to get in readiness an army available for operations in 1919;

(ii.) The recommendations which should be made at the Supreme War Council on the subject of the numbers and the training of this army.

(b.) Before the next meeting of the Supreme War Council the Chief of the Imperial General Staff should place himself in communication with General Foch, with a view to the latter making a statement to the Supreme War Council on the above subjects.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,

May 27, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 419.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, May 28, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P. Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade. Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 7).

The Right Hon. the Lord Newton, Controller, Prisoners of War Department (for Minute 10). General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 9).


Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, May 28, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade.
The Right Hon. the Lord Newton, controller, Prisoners of War Department (for Minute 10).

Lieutenant-Colonel Earl Stanhope, D.S.O., M.C., General Staff (for Minute 10).

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. A. J. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.
Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 7).
General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 9).

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
1. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported, with the aid of a map, that, after a heavy bombardment yesterday morning from the line Leuilly, north of Soissons, to Brimont, north of Rheims, the enemy had attacked on a 50-kilometre front, and had advanced to an extreme depth of 14 miles and an average depth of about 8 miles. They had apparently crossed the Chemin des Dames, the Aisne, the next rise, and the River Vesle. Up to last night, 15 divisions had been identified, and there may have been another 5, making 20 in all. There were 4 of our divisions, 3 in the front line and 1 in reserve. The French had 3, and possibly 4, divisions in front, with 3 in the rear, making 10, 11, or 12 divisions, as far as was now known. Nothing was yet known of the losses in men or guns, but it seemed probable that a large number of guns must have been lost. The British had given up much less ground than the French, but whether this was due to a heavier attack on the French was not known. Tanks and gas were mentioned as having been used by the enemy. General Foch was moving up 5 divisions. Possibly the enemy hoped that the Allied reserves would be tempted to come down from the north, and, in view of their initial success, it was possible that the enemy would convert the present attack into their main offensive, with Paris as its objective. The reverse was a substantial one, and disquieting from the point of view of the moral of the troops. The Chemin des Dames and the line of the Aisne were very strong lines.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 416, Minute 2, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that a telegram had been received from M. Clemenceau, inviting Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig and his Chief of Staff to the next Meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles.

It was pointed out that, in view of the military situation on the Western front, Versailles might prove to be an inconvenient meeting place for the Generals, and it was agreed to await developments before finally fixing on the place of meeting.

3. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that between 31st October, 1917, and 21st May, 1918, it was estimated that we had inflicted 75,500 gross casualties on the enemy in Palestine. Of this number, 6,200 were killed, and 20,300 were prisoners.

4. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that—

(a.) With reference to War Cabinet 418, Minute 2 (d), further details had been received, confirming the report of the sinking of a submarine by the armed yacht “Lorna.” One survivor had been recovered, who stated that the submarine was the “U. 74.”

(b.) A report had been received from Santander that the propellers, rudder, engine parts, and spare gear were being removed from the interned submarine “U. 56.”

5. The First Sea Lord reported the sinking, by torpedo, of the steamship “Leasowe Castle,” with 3,200 troops on board, about 100 miles from Alexandria, at 10:30 P.M. on the 26th May. 2,400 troops had been rescued, and it was reported that the remainder were in boats. The transport was on her way to France, and was one of five ships escorted by six destroyers.
6. The First Sea Lord stated that a report had just been received of a successful attack by aeroplane on a destroyer at Durazzo. The destroyer had been directly hit, and had been seen to turn over and sink. This was the first time that such a result had been observed with absolute certainty.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 413, Minute 9, the First Sea Lord said that no confirmation of the sinking of an Austrian Dreadnought had been received. The Austrians had issued no reports on the subject.

8. Lord Curzon raised the question of the use of French and British troops held in reserve and in the fighting line. Lord Curzon said that he was under the impression that, taking the front line from the sea down to the Somme, British troops were being used to do all the fighting in this sector, whilst the French troops were held in reserve. He thought that there was a good deal of feeling in the country on this point, and he anticipated that questions might be asked in Parliament.

In reply, it was stated that the sector from the sea to the Somme was the British sector, and that it was only natural that British troops should do most of the fighting. When an attack took place in the sector held by the French, as in the case of the present attack on the Chemin des Dames, the French troops did most of the fighting.

It was pointed out that eleven French divisions were being used in the North, and that the line recently held by us on the Somme was now almost exclusively held by French troops.

9. Lord Curzon also raised the question of the supply of the Allied Forces in France. He said that there was now a long line in which British, French, and American troops were interspersed, and the question of their supply naturally arose. He feared that we should have a very strong demand made upon us for the unity of the supply services.

It was stated that Lord Milner was now in Paris discussing this question, but that there was little fear of our having to hand over the control of our supply services to one of our Allies. In this respect we had all the cards in our own hands, inasmuch as the supply of the whole of the armies in France would break down were it not for shipping, over which we had complete control.

The Prime Minister said that this problem would probably be raised at the next meeting of the Supreme War Council.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 417, Minute 17, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by Lord Newton on a proposed exchange of combatant and civilian prisoners between England and Germany (Paper G.T.-4667).

Lord Newton stated that it was a matter for the Cabinet to decide—

(a) Whether they would make an exchange on the same lines as had recently been agreed upon by the French; and

(b) Who should be sent to The Hague to represent the British Government in such an eventuality.

He added that there were approximately 35,000 British non-commissioned officers and men who had been in captivity for over eighteen months, the German figures being approximately the same. As regards combatant prisoners, we had in our hands, both here and
in France, about 124,000, and the British combatant prisoners in German hands were at the present moment believed to be over 130,000. With regard to civilians, there were about 21,000 interned here, and about 10,000 interned in the Dominions. On the other hand, there were only about 4,000 British civilians interned in Germany. With regard to the claims of the Admiralty that naval submarine ratings should not be exchanged, Lord Newton considered that this could be achieved by releasing rather more German civilians than would be the case in a man-for-man exchange. Lord Newton stated that the proceedings in carrying out any exchange, such as had been suggested, would be very lengthy.

Attention was drawn to telegram No. 1929 of the 27th May, 1918, from The Hague, which indicated that General Friederich had, on behalf of the German Government, expressed himself willing to take part in a conference to deal with the repatriation of prisoners, and such other subjects as might be raised.

With reference to the question as to whether, if we effected exchanges, the Germans would carry out their part of the contract not to employ men—
(a.) On the front,
(b.) On lines of communication,
(c.) In occupied territory.

General Belfield suggested that they might use their released combatant prisoners and civilians in Russia, and advance the plea that, as they were at peace with Russia, the men were not being employed on military operations. This would result in combatants being released from the German troops on the Eastern front for employment on the Western front. General Belfield stated, however, that there was nothing to prevent our using any of our non-commissioned officers and men that might be released for the purpose of training troops preparing for the front, and that there was no objection to their being sent abroad, to, say, India and Gibraltar, and they might also be sent to Ireland for recruiting purposes. General Belfield further mentioned that the military members of the Army Council were averse, on military grounds, to any exchange of prisoners, and he understood that it was their intention to put forward, for the information of the War Cabinet, their reasons for this view. He also pointed out that, if we entered into an exchange agreement with the Germans, although 35,000 might represent the number of combatants now over eighteen months in captivity, and therefore likely to be exchanged if agreement was reached between the two Governments, the terms of the French agreement were such that the longer the war went on the more men we should release, inasmuch as the Germans would probably endeavour to come to a "running agreement" with us, as they had done in regard to their arrangements with the French.

General Belfield concluded by stating that, in his opinion, if it was explained to our prisoners in Germany that by being released from captivity they would materially assist the Germans, they would one and all refuse to accept such release.

As against these arguments against an agreement, it was pointed out that, owing to the French having reached one with the Germans, we were placed in an extremely difficult position, more particularly as our number of prisoners was far smaller than those of the French, and, consequently, public opinion would be strongly opposed to the French prisoners in this matter receiving preferential treatment, although it was pointed out that there was some evidence, given by prisoners who had escaped from Rubleben, indicating that their lot was not such a hard one as recent publications in the press had led the British public to imagine.

The First Lord hoped that, if any exchange was negotiated, all German submarine prisoners should be eliminated from the terms of any agreement, and pointed out that, if we were called
upon to release those prisoners now in our hands, it would be equivalent to giving the Germans efficient crews for ten submarines.

The Prime Minister suggested that, in any agreement arrived at, we should follow generally the lines of the recently concluded Franco-German agreement, and thus throw the responsibility largely on to the French, and that, at the same time, he should take an early opportunity of informing M. Clemenceau of our views in this matter, and of the effect that any considerable exchange of prisoners would have on the available man-power of Germany during the next year.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) British delegates should be sent to The Hague to discuss with the German delegates certain urgent questions relating to prisoners of war, and that, amongst other matters, they should consider a wide scheme of exchange of prisoners, following generally the lines of the recently concluded Franco-German agreement, but omitting any consideration of the release of German submarine prisoners now in this country.

(b.) An announcement to this effect should be made in both Houses of Parliament.

(c.) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should inform the British Minister at The Hague of the War Cabinet's decision.

(d.) The Prime Minister should discuss the matter with M. Clemenceau at the first convenient opportunity.

(e.) The question as to what delegates should represent the British Government should be further considered by the War Cabinet after receiving the views of the Admiralty and the War Office in the matter.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 28, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 420.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, May 29, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. LORD ROBERT CECIL, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade.

The Right Hon. the VISCOUNT MILNER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.


The following were also present:

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.C.

The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

Lieutenant-Colonel SIR M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. ROW, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Captain CLEMENT JONES, Assistant Secretary.
1. IN continuation of War Cabinet 419, Minute 1, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that the Germans had continued to advance. They were within 15 miles of Soissons and 3 miles of Rheims. It appeared probable that Soissons would fall during the day. It was less certain whether the Germans would take Rheims at present, although it was probable that they would take it later on. So far only sixteen German divisions had been identified, but it might well be that more had been engaged, for during a rapid retirement it was difficult to obtain exact identification. No information had been received as to the number of guns lost nor as to prisoners captured, beyond the statement which had appeared in the German wireless to the effect that 15,000 prisoners had been taken.

It was pointed out that the Germans claim to have attacked with inferior numbers. Some uncertainty prevailed as to the relative numerical strength of the opposing forces, but it was clear in any case that the numerical superiority of the enemy was not sufficient to account for his rapid advance, which must therefore be supposed to be due to the employment of German tanks against our front and to the use of mustard gas by the enemy all along the line.

Questioned as to the depth of the enemy's advance, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the extreme depth was from 16 to 17 miles, and that the average depth might be taken as half that amount. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff pointed out the seriousness that would be occasioned by the fall of Rheims and Soissons, owing to the fact that the enemy would be enabled to mend and use the railway connecting those places, the Rheims-Soissons railway then forming a base line for further operations. The distance from Paris to these points was about 60 miles.

At a later stage in the Meeting a further communiqué was received, to the effect that the enemy was continuing to increase his gains in the Champagne. At a late hour on the previous night he had entered Soissons, but had been driven out by counter-attack. The junction between the IXth British Corps and the French was believed to be about Savigny-sur-Ardre. So far, 21 German divisions had been identified, but it was thought that at least 10 more divisions had been engaged. Prisoners stated that the attack would be extended as far west as Noyon.

2. Lord Milner, who had just returned from France, reported that a serious strike had occurred at St. Etienne. The Government had managed to settle it, but the serious feature was that the strike appeared to be entirely political, and of a pacifist nature. It was a strike to compel the Government to state their War Aims, indicating that the strikers were not in favour of continuing to fight for Alsace-Lorraine, and would be glad of peace on any moderate terms. While the strike had ended for the moment, it must not be inferred that it would not break out again.

3. The Secretary of State for War said that General Petain had requested that no reference should be made in our communiqués to the British troops under his Command, as he wished to treat the operation as one. The necessary precaution to be taken in regard to these communiqués would be attended to by the British Commander-in-Chief.
4. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that H.M.S. “Ouse” had attacked a submarine in the vicinity of Flamborough Head. The “Ouse” attempted to ram, and passed just over the conning-tower of the submarine and dropped depth charges, with the result that the explosions of the depth charges were followed by several other large under-water explosions.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 416, Minute 5, the First Sea Lord stated that, as far as had been ascertained up to the present, the losses from the steamship “Leasowe Castle” were: 13 military officers, 79 other ranks, 9 of the ship’s company, including the captain, making a total of 101.

6. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that a telegram had been received from the naval attache at Petrograd stating that orders for the destruction of the Russian Black Sea fleet had been signed by the Soviet Government, and that the instructions were to have been despatched to Novorossisk on 27th May. It was mentioned that the Russians had refused to allow a British naval representative to accompany the orders for the destruction, on the ground that by doing so the orders might be compromised.

Attention was called to telegram No. 204 from Mr. Lockhart, dated the 23rd May, 1918, in which he stated that the Germans had informed the Russians that, if the remainder of the Russian Black Sea Fleet would return to Sebastopol, the Germans would only sequester the same and would return the ships to Russia after the war.

In this connection the First Lord stated that, in regard to the vessels that had been captured by the Germans at Sebastopol, some of the light craft might by now have been sufficiently repaired to enable them to go to sea, but that the heavier craft would probably take another month before they would be sufficiently efficient for that purpose.

With regard to the possibilities of units of the Black Sea Fleet carrying out raids into the Mediterranean, the First Lord stated that it was highly desirable that the question of the appointment of the Admiralissimo to command the whole of the Allied ships in the Mediterranean and Adriatic should be definitely settled at the next meeting of the Supreme War Council (War Cabinet 416, Minute 9).

7. With reference to War Cabinet 417, Minute 16, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Lord Robert Cecil, dated the 25th May, 1918 (Paper G.T.—4663), in regard to Baron Goto’s telegram of the 19th May, 1918 (Paper G.T.—4617), asking whether our negotiations with the Soviet were likely to be successful, and, if so, whether success was desirable. As a particular case, were we to refrain from helping Semenoff for fear of quarrelling with the Soviet? Lord Robert Cecil had also circulated a note on Allied intervention in Siberia (Paper G.T.—4683), in which he asked that the matter might be discussed immediately, as he feared that any further delay would convey to Japan the impression of hesitation and uncertainty.

The Prime Minister said that Lord Robert Cecil’s note implied that the whole delay, involving the loss of four months, had been due to the action of the British Government. He could not accept this criticism, nor admit that it was fair. He pointed out that the policy of the British Government had been steadily in favour of intervention. It had, however, been difficult to secure the necessary
support of the United States Government in the matter. At the same time, the Japanese had said that they would not act unless the Americans co-operated, and this the Americans had refused to do. On the 24th January, 1918, the Cabinet had decided on intervention, but the President of the United States had intimated that we had only acted in obedience to French pressure. On 25th February (War Cabinet 353, Minute 12), the War Cabinet had requested the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to send a telegram to Lord Reading, informing him that His Majesty's Government viewed with favour the idea of Japanese intervention in Siberia up to Cheliabinsk. On this point, however, the Japanese had replied that, while they were ready to intervene for the protection of Eastern Siberia up to Irkutsk, their army of 250,000, with 200,000 reserves, was not considered by their General Staff to be sufficient to warrant attempting to advance as far as Cheliabinsk unless they were advancing through a friendly country with the assistance instead of the hostility of the population (telegram from Lord Reading, No. 1951, dated 1st May, 1918). That might be called the first proposal of the British Government, and it had been thwarted by the United States Government. The second proposal was that 20,000 Czecho-Slovaks should be used as a nucleus for an expeditionary force (War Cabinet 437, Minute 12), but this proposal had been negatived by M. Pichon. It did not appear clear, therefore, what more we could have done, or, what was more important, what we ought to do now.

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that though the decision to take action was on the 24th January, no effective step to induce the United States to move was taken till the 25th February; that at first the United States had not been unwilling to act, but that later they had gone back; that somehow the impression had been produced in Japan that we were not determined and the Japanese had complained of it; and that the United States Government had allowed it to be known that they regarded us as not much interested in the matter, but as being driven forward by the French. At the same time, he expressed his entire agreement with the Prime Minister that the main thing now was our future action, and that criticism of the past was of less importance.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs agreed with the Prime Minister that we had tried every possible means to induce the President of the United States to co-operate in the policy of intervention, but he had sheltered himself behind his military advisers. We had made our policy perfectly plain; we had stated that we did not propose to interfere in Russian internal affairs; our object was directed entirely against the Germans. To this end we had always worked with the de facto Government in Russia: we had worked first with the Czar while he was in power; we had worked next with the Socialists under Kerensky; then we had worked with the Bolsheviks, and we would be prepared to work with whatever successors there might be to the Bolsheviks. We had backed up Semenoff originally, and had only ordered him not to move further forward because our representative on the spot had warned us against him; we should support Semenoff again if his advance formed part of a big movement.

Lord Milner said that the question now appeared to be whether we were to allow the attitude of the United States Government to paralyse us for ever in the case of Japanese intervention, as it had done during the past few months. It would, of course, be far preferable that all the Allies should co-operate in intervening in Siberia, but the hesitation of the United States ought not to be allowed to block the whole policy and leave the field clear for German influence to dominate over the whole of Northern Asia. He therefore suggested that the policy of Japanese intervention should be pursued, even without the co-operation of the United States.
It was pointed out that the pursuance of such a policy on our part, if not very carefully handled, might lead to a snubbing from the Japanese and a quarrel with the Americans.

On the other hand, it was argued that it was not proposed to say to the United States: "If you do not come in, we shall go ahead without you." What was proposed was, that we should urge General Foch, at the meeting of the Supreme War Council, to point out, for the benefit of President Wilson, the supreme military necessity of intervention in Siberia, and the desirability that the United States should furnish a substantial force for that purpose; if, unfortunately, the United States Government felt unable to co-operate in the work, it was still held desirable that the Japanese should intervene, and it was hoped that the United States Government would agree to such intervention being made.

The Prime Minister said that this question was to be raised at the forthcoming meeting of the Supreme War Council, and it was essential that he and his colleagues who were accompanying him should go to the Council with a clearly formulated plan.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The matter should be discussed again on the following day, Thursday, 30th May.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 29, 1918.
support of the United States Government in the matter. At the same time, the Japanese had said that they would not act unless the Americans co-operated, and this the Americans had refused to do. On the 24th January, 1918, the Cabinet had decided on intervention, but the President of the United States had intimated that we had only acted in obedience to French pressure. On 25th February (War Cabinet 353, Minute 12), the War Cabinet had requested the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to send a telegram to Lord Reading, informing him that His Majesty's Government viewed with favour the idea of Japanese intervention in Siberia up to Cheliabinsk. On this point, however, the Japanese had replied that, while they were ready to intervene for the protection of Eastern Siberia up to Irkutsk, their army of 250,000, with 200,000 reserves, was not considered by their General Staff to be sufficient to warrant attempting to advance as far as Cheliabinsk unless they were advancing through a friendly country with the assistance instead of the hostility of the population (telegram from Lord Reading, No. 1951, dated 1st May, 1918). That might be called the first proposal of the British Government, and it had been thwarted by the United States Government. The second proposal was that 20,000 Czecho-Slovaks should be used as a nucleus for an expeditionary force (War Cabinet 414, Minute 12), but this proposal had been negatived by M. Pichon. It did not appear clear, therefore, what more we could have done, or, what was more important, what we ought to do now.

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The Prime Minister said that this question was to be raised at the forthcoming meeting of the Supreme War Council, and it was essential that he and his colleagues who were accompanying him should go to the Council with a clearly formulated plan.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The matter should be discussed again on the following day, Thursday, 30th May.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 29, 1918.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Thursday, May 30, 1918, at 11-30 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.B.

The Right Hon. A. Balfour, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:—


The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.


Mr. P. H. Kerr (for Minutes 1 to 7).


Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

In continuation of War Cabinet 420, Minute 1, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that 24 German divisions had been identified on that portion of the Western front in which the present offensive was taking place. Four of these were fresh divisions, and 20 were those that had been in action on the Somme and had had at least a month's rest. Behind these 24 divisions were 5 fresh divisions, and a further 13 who had been in action on the Somme or in the vicinity of Ypres, but who had had less than a month to recover. As regards the employment of other divisions, the situation was being closely watched, with a view to ascertaining whether the Germans were drawing on their troops to the north and east of the present offensive area. Between Rheims...
and Switzerland the Germans had 5 fresh divisions in reserve and 12 divisions in line; consequently they had an available force of 35 divisions without touching those to the northward. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff added that Soissons had been taken, and that the best German divisions were fighting in that vicinity, which appeared to indicate that they were throwing more weight on that flank, with a view to turning the Montdidier-Noyon line. He added that if the Germans were able to force the French to retire a distance of about 15,000 yards, they would obtain the use of the railway, which would be an advantage to them.

At a later stage of the meeting the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the Germans had now advanced another 2 miles or so beyond Fere-en-Tardenois. He also reported that the Germans had captured Rheims.

The Italian Front.

2. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that two more Austrian divisions had arrived from Russia, that one had been sent to the Brenta and the other to the Lower Piave. Lord Cavan had reported that there were further indications of an enemy concentration on the Piave, but that he was sure, if an offensive were started in that locality, another would also be carried out by the Austrians on the Brenta.

Salonica.

3. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that General Woolcombe had reported that the French were taking away from the Salonica front some 12,000 French troops. The Prime Minister pointed out that at the meeting of the Supreme War Council at Abbeville the French had made the strongest protests against the withdrawal of British troops, and that they were now taking away French troops without a word of warning to us.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff considered that no action was necessary at the moment, as General Woolcombe indicated that, if Indian battalions were sent, a few British battalions could be withdrawn.

Submarines.

4. The Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that patrol craft No. 65 had attacked a submarine with depth charges during the night of the 27th May in the Irish Channel, with the result that the submarine’s hull broke surface, showing 20 to 30 feet of side, and apparently turning over. The explosion of the third depth charge dropped by the patrol craft was followed by a second explosion, which indicated the probable loss of the submarine.

Ireland.

5. Lord Milner informed the War Cabinet that, whilst in Paris, M. Clemenceau had told him that the French anticipated a magnificent harvest this year, but that they were very short of labour to bring it in. He had suggested the possibility of the use of Irish labour for this purpose, and had pointed out that the effect in Ireland might be very beneficial. A proposition of the Irish harvesters might, as a result of their association with the French people, be moved to volunteer for military service for the defence of France.

Submarines.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 412, Minute 18, the Prime Minister stated that, on the previous day, he had learned that a Proclamation was about to be issued by the Irish Government, to the effect that 20,000 volunteers ought to be forthcoming by the 1st August next. Mr. Lloyd George said that he had felt grave
doubts as to whether it was expedient to mention so low a figure at present, and had arranged for the suspension of the Proclamation until the War Cabinet had had an opportunity of considering the question. Mr. Lloyd George expressed the opinion that to put so low a figure as 20,000 would create the impression that the Government was not in earnest in the policy of compulsory military service.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland explained that he had not a copy of the Proclamation with him, but that, as regards the number of 20,000 mentioned, he had been in communication with all the authorities in Ireland, including the Registrar-General and the Head of Recruiting. This question had been discussed at the Council Meetings of the Irish Executive, and he had come to the conclusion that, after paying due regard to the claims of food production and agriculture, it would be wise to insert this number of volunteers, who would be recruited by the 1st August, and also to state that it was expected that further recruits, to the number of 3,000 a month, would attest after that date. Mr. Shortt said that, in his opinion, it was important to name a figure, as, unless this were done, uncertainty as to the actual requirements would be left in Ireland, and it was doubtful if Ireland would pay any attention to the Proclamation at all. Mr. Shortt added that the Proclamation made it clear that this was an appeal to the young men from the towns, of ages from 18 to 25, and that it was proposed to say that we were not seeking to interfere with agriculture and essential industries.

Mr. Long said the real difficulty was that no one could tell the Chief Secretary what was the maximum number of free men which could be procured from Ireland. He pointed out that 1½ million acres of grassland had been broken up for food production, and that Irish farming differed entirely from that of Great Britain, as the farms consisted mainly of small holdings, which the farmers cultivated themselves. It was also doubtful if many men could be spared from Ulster, if the maximum products of the industries there were to be produced. Mr. Long said that he had been informed that, even if conscription were working smoothly in Ireland, not more than 79,000 to 80,000 men could be called up, many of whom would be rejected on physical grounds. Mr. Long expressed the hope that the Cabinet would agree to the number of 20,000 being inserted, pointing out that, if the number was put too high, it would be in excess of what the people in Ireland thought was right, but if fairly low the scheme would not only probably succeed, but also a larger number than the number named would possibly enlist.

Mr. Bonar Law pointed out that it would be immediately asked in the House of Commons if this proposal meant the end of the Government policy of conscription in Ireland.

The Prime Minister said that while the answer to that could be in the negative, yet it would be said that Ireland, if it responded to the appeal, was doing so to avoid conscription, and that was why he did not think the figure of 20,000 was sufficiently high, for, if it were high enough, it would be possible to say that it was not necessary to enforce the Military Service Act in Ireland. Mr. Lloyd George said that it had always been considered that if 50,000 recruits were obtained in Ireland it would be a good start, and he would prefer that figure to 20,000. At the same time he would prefer that no figure should be given at all, that the results of the Proclamation should be watched, and that the Government would then be able to consider the situation afresh, and whether the response was adequate. He pointed out that it was not possible to exclude the rural areas and only take into consideration the industrial centres, as there had been no emigration from Ireland for three and a half years, and that there were doubtless large numbers of young men who, had it not been for the war, would probably have left for the United States. It was most undesirable to confine the appeal to towns and cities, particularly as it was the men in the rural areas who were giving the most trouble in Ireland.
Lord Milner took strong exception even to the figure of 50,000, pointing out that, even if this figure were attained, Ireland would not be making an equivalent response to that made by Great Britain.

In the discussion which ensued as to the number of men within the present limits of military age, fit for general service who could be recruited in Ireland, it was pointed out that the Minister of National Service had given his estimate as 250,000 (War Cabinet 372, Minute 13).

Mr. Long stated that he did not know how Sir Auckland Geddes had arrived at this number, as he understood that no medical examinations had been held in Ireland.

Both Mr. Barnes and General Smuts said that, having regard to the difficulties in applying the Military Service Act to Ireland, they were inclined to support the Irish Government in their proposal.

Mr. Long, in agreeing with them, said that he did not think the War Cabinet realised the state of affairs in Ireland, and that it was surely better to get 20,000 men quietly without the serious trouble which must ensue if conscription were enforced.

Mr. Shortt asked whether he might discuss the question again with the Viceroy on his return to Ireland, and if it were decided to put the number of "50,000" into the Proclamation, how many months would the War Cabinet agree to for raising that number? Mr. Shortt also suggested that it would be worth while for the Minister of National Service to proceed to Ireland, where he could help the Government with his large experience, and where he would have an opportunity of confirming the figures he had given to the War Cabinet as to the number of men available. There was another point which must be discussed soon, and that was the question of the training of the men raised. He was strongly of opinion that the men raised in Ireland should be trained in Ireland, but he understood that the War Office did not agree with that view.

The Prime Minister suggested that the Irish Government should also consider the advisability of opening recruiting in Ireland for men in low medical categories for the Army Service Corps and Labour Battalions, who would be invaluable, and were very urgently needed at the present time.

The War Cabinet, while reluctant to override the Irish Government, decided that—

(a.) The limit of 20,000 named in the Proclamation was altogether inadequate;
(b.) If a figure at all was mentioned, it should not be less than 50,000; but, in the opinion of the War Cabinet, if possible no number should be mentioned, and the adjective "adequate" should be used;
(c.) If the Irish Executive desired to alter the date in the Proclamation from the "1st August," their proposals on this subject should be submitted to the War Cabinet;
(d.) The Chief Secretary for Ireland should submit to the War Cabinet a new scheme for recruiting;
(e.) The Irish Government should consider immediately the desirability of opening recruiting for the Army Service Corps, Labour Battalions, and similar units;
(f.) The Chief Secretary for Ireland should confer with the Minister of National Service with reference to the desirability of the latter visiting Ireland at an early date in order to confer with the Irish Executive in regard to recruiting and the numbers available.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 420, Minute 7, the War Cabinet had under consideration the following documents in regard Allied intervention in Siberia:—
Note of Conversation between Japanese Ambassador and Lord Robert Cecil (Paper G.T.-4617).

Telegrams between General Bridges and the War Office (Paper G.T.-4662).


The Prime Minister said that it was essential for the Government to be prepared with some definite proposal on this question, to be laid before the Supreme War Council.

In this connection two memoranda—one from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and one from the Minister of Blockade—came under consideration.

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that in his paper he had submitted that the Government should ask the Supreme War Council to express a strong view in favour of intervention, and to get its opinion endorsed, in as strong language as possible, by General Foch and the other Allied military authorities. He had also suggested that it would greatly assist our cause if we could get from the Japanese a definite statement that they were prepared to intervene in support of Allied interests generally, and that it would be worthwhile to enquire from the Japanese Ambassador here whether he could give an answer to the questions which he had put to him last week.

Lord Robert Cecil also said that he had pointed out that he considered it desirable to send General Knox over to America immediately.

The attention of the War Cabinet was also drawn to an interview, which was published in the press that morning, between the “Daily Mail” special correspondent in the Far East and Baron Goto, the Japanese Foreign Minister.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in speaking of his memorandum, said that the conclusion at which he had arrived was that, if the United States of America refused to co-operate with the Allies, assistance to Russia would have to be confined to what we could do at Archangel and Murmansk, and by diplomacy and promises of material and financial assistance. Mr. Balfour said that he had asked whether, supposing Japan were ready to come in without America, and that America, while refusing for her own part to take any share in the policy, was prepared to regard it with benevolent acquiescence, we should in these circumstances be justified in pressing on the scheme.

The Prime Minister asked if it was quite clear that America would refuse to co-operate if strong representations were made by the Supreme War Council, especially if these representations were based on military arguments. He called attention to a telegram from Lord Reading on this subject (No. 2338, of the 24th May, 1918), in which Lord Reading had said that he found President Wilson quite decided in the opinion that the moment for the intervention was inopportune, and that he had the support, in this opinion, of his military advisers, who supported his views expressed previously, that no military advantage would be gained by intervention.

Lord Robert Cecil, referring to recent telegrams from Mr. Lockhart, said that Mr. Lockhart had become genuinely terrified of the advance of the Germans into Russia, and that he was of the opinion that, unless the Allies took some action, the whole of Russia was going over to Germany. In this connection he called attention to a telegram from Mr. Lockhart (No. 219, of the 25th May), in which Mr. Lockhart said it was becoming increasingly clear that, with the change in Germany’s policy towards the Bolsheviks, intervention would be extremely problematical. Mr. Lockhart had added that it was therefore extremely important that intervention itself should be hurried on as quickly as possible.

Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that what might be called the two extreme contingencies had been considered, namely, on the one hand, that President Wilson should be pressed by General Foch
and the Versailles Council to co-operate whole-heartedly and send American troops, and, on the other, if he refused this proposal, that the Japanese should be encouraged to intervene, assisted by French and English, in spite of President Wilson's opposition. But there was a third contingency which did not seem to him to have been fully considered, namely, that President Wilson, whilst unwilling to send any American troops, or to participate actively in intervention, might be induced to regard intervention by Japan and the other Allies with good-will.

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that there was an unlimited number of variations between protest and support, even if there were acquiescence on the part of President Wilson, that might mean veiled hostility. President Wilson might, however, in view of the difficulties with which he was faced in putting American troops under the Japanese flag, while unable to join in a joint Proclamation, issue one of his own, and, while unable to send troops, yet might give technical assistance. Lord Robert Cecil expressed the view strongly that, in view of the desperate state of affairs in Russia, he was very doubtful of the success of the Allied forces in the war, unless a revolution occurred in Austria or Germany. Lord Robert Cecil suggested that Mr. Balfour should see the Japanese Ambassador, and ask him whether the Japanese would intervene with American approval.

Mr. Balfour said that he had sent a telegram to Colonel House, embodying one which he desired to send to the British Ambassador at Tokio, and asking if Colonel House saw any objection to his making an appeal to the Japanese on these lines. Colonel House did object, and consequently Mr. Balfour had not sent the telegram.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Mr. Philip Kerr should draft a memorandum, to be laid before the Supreme War Council, putting forward the arguments in full in favour of Allied intervention in Siberia;
(b.) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should communicate with Lord Reading, asking him for his opinion as to the advisability of General Knox being sent to America.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a report of a meeting held at the Ministry of Shipping on the 24th May, 1918, in regard to the repatriation of Russian subjects (Paper G.T.-4676). The meeting had agreed that, while the present situation continued, the Ministry of Shipping should only accept requisitions for passages to North Russia (other than Military and Naval personnel proceeding on duty) from the Director of Military Intelligence or the Director of Naval Intelligence, and that, for convenience, the Foreign Office would arrange for any requisitions for passages they may desire to make to be sent to the Ministry of Shipping, through the Director of Military Intelligence.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The conclusions reached at the meeting, and recorded in the report, should be confirmed and communicated to the Government Departments concerned.

9. The War Cabinet took note of Joint Note No. 26 to the Supreme War Council by its Military Representatives, in regard to the reduction in the number of horses in the Allied armies, and in the oats and hay ration.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 30, 1918.
W AR C ABINET. 422.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Room, House of Commons, on Thursday, May 30, 1918, at 5 P.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.
The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:—

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.
Mr. A. C. T. Beck, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Service.
Professor W. G. S. Adams (for Minutes 1 and 2).
The Right Hon. R. Munro, K.C., M.P., Secretary for Scotland.

Dr. R. B. Greig, M.C., Scottish Office.
The Right Hon. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., M.P., President, Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (for Minutes 1 and 2).
Colonel Sir A. Lee, G.B.E., K.C.B., M.P., Director-General, Food Production Department (for Minutes 1 and 2).
The Right Hon. W. Hayes Fisher, M.P., President, Local Government Board (for Minute 3).

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
1. With reference to War Cabinet 415, Minute 14, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Paper G.T.-4658), setting forth two alternative programmes of food production, the first of which provided an insurance only against decreased production in 1919. In order to ensure as high a production of foodstuffs in 1919 as in 1918, it would be necessary to add 550,000 acres to the 11,000,000 acres now under tillage. This insurance programme would require 13,500 labourers, in addition to the 30,000 whom it was hoped to replace from German prisoners and National Service volunteers (War Cabinet 412, Minute 15), and also 3,000 prisoners for drainage work. The second and larger programme proposed to add 1,000,000 acres to the tillage land of England and Wales. This addition would provide about five weeks' supply of breadstuffs, and would save shipping to the extent of about 870,000 tons. It would require 10,500 labourers over and above those required for the insurance programme.

Mr. Prothero explained that, to carry out either programme, legislation would be necessary to extend the compulsory powers of the Board, under the Defence of the Realm Act, for one year beyond the period fixed for the expiration of those powers by the Corn Production Act, namely, 20th August, 1918. Even if both programmes were rejected by the Cabinet, legislation would still be necessary, in order that allotment-holders might retain possession of their holdings, and in order that the English and Scottish Boards of Agriculture might retain possession of the land which they had entered upon and were cultivating under the Defence of the Realm Act. The present powers of the Boards came to an end in August, owing to the insertion of Sub-Section 3 of Section II in the Corn Production Act during its passage through the House of Lords.

Mr. Long was certain that there would be opposition to the proposed extension of the powers of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries unless there were some guarantee as to the reasonable use of those powers in certain counties. At present there was no equality of treatment from county to county. Some Agricultural Committees had an Appeal Tribunal, which, on the whole, acted fairly; in other areas there was no Tribunal. Speaking generally, the Committees had done their work extremely well, but there were some glaring instances to the contrary, where, as a result, land was being wasted. In some cases the District Committees did little or nothing, and the whole work was thus done by the Central Executive, which became both judge and jury. The result was the creation of serious and widespread dissatisfaction. He would like to see some provision made for the appointment, in all areas, of competent Appeal Tribunals.

Mr. Prothero agreed that there had been isolated cases, such as those described by Mr. Long, which had caused great irritation, but that was not, perhaps, surprising when the magnitude of the tillage programme was borne in mind. He proposed to issue an instruction to the War Agricultural Committees which would provide that objections should be heard by a small Tribunal on which the land-owning interest would be represented.

Mr. Long thought that such machinery would meet his criticism. With reference to the opposition in the House of Lords, he was prepared to co-operate with the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in conciliating such opposition, provided that his proposals were approved.

Mr. Prothero suggested that, with reference to the two programmes, it would not be necessary for the Cabinet to decide in favour of either at present, provided the extended powers asked for were given to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Sir Arthur Lee urged the adoption of the larger programme and pointed out that the number of men required for the larger programme over and above the number required for the smaller
programme was only 10,500 men. Unless the smaller programme were secured, it would be impossible to avert a serious decrease in the present food output, the reason being that it was essential to "rest" some of the land now growing corn crops. He emphasised the necessity of informing the County Committees, without further delay, as to the programme for the coming year.

Mr. Beck stated that the Minister of National Service did not see the labour in sight for the larger programme. The main supplies of casual labour were already allocated.

It was pointed out that, on the one hand, tractors were coming forward in considerable numbers, and that the quality of women's work on the land was steadily improving, although there were difficulties in connection with housing women where farms were small. On the other hand, if the larger programme were announced, there would be demands put forward at once for the labour to carry it out, and this would upset the present recruiting arrangements. It was undesirable, therefore, to put forward at this stage a programme for the carrying out of which the means were not in sight.

The War Cabinet decided—

(a.) To authorise the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to proceed with a Bill extending the compulsory powers of the Board, not for one year, but for the duration of the war.

(b.) That the programme put forward by the President should have the smaller scheme for its minimum and the larger for its maximum, the actual amount attempted to be made clearly dependent on the necessary supply of labour being forthcoming.

(c.) The Secretary of State for the Colonies should use his influence with landowners and occupiers with a view to obtaining their acceptance of the extension of the Board's compulsory powers, on the understanding that his proposals above mentioned were approved.

(b) Scotland. 2. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary for Scotland, dealing with the Agricultural Programme for 1919 (Paper G.T.-4691), in which it was shown that, owing to the increased cultivation this year, there would be comparatively little room for further increase of the area to be put under cultivation for 1919.

Mr. Munro stated that he was in substantial agreement with Mr. Prothero, but he wished to emphasise the great dissatisfaction which was being caused in Scotland by the competition of Government contractors for farm labour. Strong representations from three important agricultural areas had been made to him of the great difficulty in retaining labour on the land. Further, it was a matter of urgent necessity that spare parts should be imported at once in sufficient numbers to replace worn-out parts when tractors were overhauled during the summer, and to prepare for breakages during the next cultivation season.

Mr. Beck stated that instructions had been issued with a view to controlling supplies of labour to Government contractors and farmers by the Employment Exchanges.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain stated that, with reference to the purchase of spare parts, the Ministry of Munitions had co-ordinated the demands of the various Departments, and authority had been given by the American Board to purchase what was required from the United States. He suggested that the Boards of Agriculture and Fisheries should put forward any new demands to the Ministry of Munitions for submission to the American Board.
The War Cabinet decided—

To authorise the Secretary for Scotland to proceed on lines similar to those approved above (Minute 1) for England and Wales.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 415, Minute 17, the War Cabinet had before them a proposed Proclamation, prepared by the Minister of National Service, withdrawing certain certificates of exemption from military service (Paper G.T.-4671).

Mr. Beck explained that, in effect, the Proclamation took away Tribunal rights from boys under 19 years of age. The Proclamation did not affect protection certificates issued under the Schedule of Protected Occupations, namely, to men employed on Admiralty, War Office, or Munitions work, &c., but it did affect Civil Servants. Parliamentary trouble might arise in connection with recruiting of the last surviving son of a widow, of whom at least one son had died in the war; but that criticism would not only apply to those between 18 and 19, but also up to the other ages cut out by Proclamation, and, in the view of the Minister of National Service, no exception should now be made for the cases under 19. If any concession had to be made later on, it could not be restricted to those under 19. Mr. Beck agreed that it was possible, by administrative action, to allow those covered by the Proclamation to go before Tribunals.

The War Cabinet approved the submission of the Proclamation to His Majesty the King.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 31, 1918.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, May 31, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:


Brigadier-General P. P. de B. Radcliffe, C.B., D.S.O., Director of Military Operations (for Minute 1).

The Right Hon. Sir G. Cave, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minutes 7 and 8).

Sir Stephenson Kent, K.C.B., Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 10).

Major P. Lloyd Greame, M.C., Ministry of National Service (for Minute 10).

Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 2 to 5).

Sir D. J. Shackleton, K.C.B., Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour (for Minute 10).


Mr. E. A. Gowers, C.B., Secretary, Conciliation and Arbitration Board for Government Employees (for Minute 10).


Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
1. The Director of Military Operations explained the situation on the Western front by means of a map, and stated that the Germans had not reached Château-Thierry, but had advanced to the Marne on a small front. Heavy fighting was taking place to the north-east of Château-Thierry, and the Germans had made an advance of about 4 miles since yesterday in that direction. The position at Rheims was uncertain. In reply to a question as to whether he could offer any explanation for this rapid advance on the part of the Germans, General Radcliffe stated that it appeared that, in the first night, a gap occurred in the line on the River Vesle, and they pressed through this, possibly with armoured cars. He mentioned that, unless the Germans extended the width of their salient, their advance could not materially progress, and that at present they were in a dangerous position if General Foch was able to bring up reserves on either side. In this connection the Director of Military Operations pointed out that the whole of the troops employed in the present offensive were from the Crown Prince's Army. We had identified 26 German divisions, and estimated the number employed at from 30 to 36 divisions. The French estimate was from 40 to 45 divisions. The whole of Prince Rupprecht's army in the north was intact, and consisted of 45 divisions, of which 17 were fresh. General Foch had to bear this fact prominently in mind in considering any withdrawal of Allied divisions facing Prince Rupprecht's army. Asked as to what action had taken place as regards the transfer of troops from other portions of the allied line, General Radcliffe stated that General Foch had moved from 15 to 16 divisions from south of the Somme, and he had warned the Xth French Army, under General Maistre, to be ready to move. General Radcliffe was of opinion that the Allies had sustained great losses in men and guns. As regards the British corps, he had received a report that the 8th Division had sustained 5,000 casualties and two other divisions 2,000 to 3,000 each. The only British division now in the line was the 19th, which was fighting very well. The remainder of the IXth Corps had been withdrawn.

2. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that a large convoy of fourteen ships, with 32,000 United States troops on board, had arrived safely in Europe.

3. The Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that an enemy submarine had attacked the Irish fishing fleet during the previous night, and had sunk five of the same by gunfire. Their crews had been landed.

4. The Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that H.M.S. "Fairy"—an old destroyer—had rammed a submarine that morning in the vicinity of Flamborough Head. The submarine (which was the "U.C. 75") was sunk and survivors had been picked up. The "Fairy" herself was badly damaged and sank shortly afterwards, her crew being saved.

5. The Deputy First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that the naval attaché at Petrograd had reported that the Senior Naval Officer of the Russian Baltic Fleet had been arrested at Moscow on the 27th May, as a counter revolutionary and organiser of an anti-Bolshevik movement in the Fleet.
6. The War Cabinet had under consideration a letter (Paper G.T.-4697) from the Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, relative to setting apart a day as a day of public humiliation, prayer, and fasting.

Attention was drawn to the decision in War Cabinet 252, Minute 3, and the War Cabinet decided that—

Subject to the Prime Minister's approval, they should not entertain the suggestion.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 419, Minute 10, the War Cabinet had before them the question of the selection of delegates to proceed to Holland to represent British interests in the proposed exchange of prisoners of war.

It was considered very desirable that Lord Newton and General Belfield, who had been the representatives on the previous occasion and had intimate knowledge of the subject, should again attend. In view, however, of the widespread interest now taken in the subject, it was proposed that a Minister with Cabinet rank should proceed as its Head, and that Sir George Cave should be invited to accept this position.

It was also suggested that the delegation should include a representative of the Red Cross Society, who might act as an assessor in case of need.

After some discussion, Sir George Cave having expressed his willingness to accept the position, the Cabinet decided that—

Sir George Cave should proceed as Head of the delegation, which should include Lord Newton and General Sir H. Belfield, and that he should consider whether, and, if so, in what way, representatives of the Red Cross Society might be utilised.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 267, Minute 2, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the Ministry of Food (Paper G.T.-4651), relative to the release of wines from bond.

It appeared that the authority issued by the War Cabinet on the 23rd November, 1917, had not resulted in the release of additional wines, and the Food Controller therefore asked for authority to remove all restrictions on the delivery of wine from bond. It was estimated that such removal would not result in the rate of delivery of wine for home consumption exceeding the rate for 1916.

The War Cabinet approved the proposal of the Food Controller.

9. Mr. Barnes drew attention to a letter which he had received from the National Federation of General Workers, in which it was suggested that he and Mr. O'Grady should be sent by the War Cabinet to America as members of a Labour Mission to that country. Mr. Barnes said that, in view of telegrams from Lord Reading, which had expressed the opinion that it might be advisable to limit the number of missions sent from this country, he had asked Lord Beaverbrook to obtain Lord Reading's view as to this proposed mission.

It was pointed out that, if such a mission went, it would be desirable that it should go on the same understanding as that on which the Labour Mission from America recently visited this country. Under that understanding the mission would visit America with the
knowledge and good-will of the British Government, while not representing it.

Mr. Barnes promised to represent these views to the National Federation of General Workers.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 283, Minute 17, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Conciliation and Arbitration Board for Government Employees, dealing with the proposed extension of the Munitions of War Acts to Crown Establishments (Paper G.T.-4547).

Sir Stephenson Kent explained that the question of dropping from the Draft Bill the clauses to which objection had been taken, was under consideration, and therefore, for the present, no question of revising the Terms of Reference of the Conciliation and Arbitration Board arose.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
May 31, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 424.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Monday, June 3, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.
The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:—
The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Acting Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 4.)
Brigadier-General P. P. de B. Radcliffe,
C.B., D.S.O., Director of Military
Operations (for Minutes 1 to 3).

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Dally Jones, C.M.G., Acting Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel L. Storr, Assistant Secretary.
Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. THE Director of Military Operations reported that heavy
fighting was continuing between the Oise and the Marne. The
French were fairly well satisfied, but they had lost a certain amount
of ground astride the Ourcq. The main pressure was now coming
on the western part of the line—not between Château-Thierry
and Rheims. The French were holding on to the southern portion
of Château-Thierry, and they had blown up the bridges over the
Marne. The Germans were not reported to be across the Marne,
and Rheims had not been taken.

General Radcliffe stated that thirty-seven German divisions had
now been absolutely identified, and probably at least forty-five
divisions had been engaged. It was reported that two divisions had
come from Prince Rupprecht's army; one of these, however, had
been an unlocated division, and Prince Rupprecht's reserves might
still be said to be intact. Prince Rupprecht has eighteen fresh
divisions, and the Crown Prince had two fresh divisions, while every
day further divisions are becoming fresh again after their month’s rest. In view of these enemy reserves, it was still possible that the Germans might attack in the north.

The Director of Military Operations reported that the Xth French Army, which had been behind the British IIIrd and I st Armies, had now been brought down, and was believed to be going into the line south of the Oise.

Asked as to the possibility of a counter-offensive by the French against the triangular-shaped wedge which the Germans had now driven into the French line, the Director of Military Operations replied that there were at present no indications of such a counter-offensive on a large scale.

2. The Director of Military Operations said that he wished to bring to the notice of the Cabinet the fact that on Friday evening last, 31st May, the “Star” published a passage criticising the Allied Command for being “surprised” during the recent attack. General Radcliffe said that the statement published was entirely contrary to what had been said at 2:45 the same afternoon in the Press Lecture that had been given by the Duke of Northumberland. A further Press Lecture was, therefore, being given to-day, with a view to correcting the impression given, and showing the harm that might be done. With regard to the “surprise” referred to, the Director of Military Operations pointed out that enemy concentrations which occurred by night could not be discovered now by aeroplane reconnaissance, any more than in August 1914. The possibility of surprise was the greater now, since the Germans had adopted the practice of commencing bombardment without any previous registration. This practice had been introduced by General Byng with great effect at the battle of Cambrai.

In reply to an enquiry for further details about the cause of the success of the Germans, the Director of Military Operations said that he could not answer the questions put to him on the subject, because the information received from the French was so very meagre.

The general feeling of the Cabinet was that very little information was being received, and that, if possible, more should be obtained.

In these circumstances, the War Cabinet instructed—

The Acting Secretary to send a telegram to the Prime Minister, from the War Cabinet, in the above sense, and expressing the hope that he might find it possible to arrange for fuller information to be transmitted.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 415, Minute 12, the First Sea Lord reported the receipt of a telegram from the Rear-Admiral at Murmansk, to the effect that, in reply to a protest sent by M. Lenin to the German Government in regard to the sinking of Russian ships, the Germans had stated that sinkings would cease when the British withdrew from Murmansk.

Asked for his opinion in regard to the position generally at Murmansk, Lord Robert Cecil said that, while the matter was a military one, he thought that, if the Germans succeeded in getting together a Finnish force of, say, 40,000 men, our position would become very hazardous. There could no longer be any doubt that the Soviet Government had gone over, lock, stock, and barrel, to the Germans, and it must therefore be expected that they would assist the Germans to turn us out of Murmansk.

In view of the possibility of Murmansk becoming untenable, the War Cabinet decided that—

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff should send a telegram to General Poole, asking him for an appreciation of the situation at Murmansk.
4. With reference to War Cabinet 413, Minute 10, the War Cabinet took note of a memorandum by the President of the Local Government Board (Paper G.T.-4712), with reference to the electoral position of soldiers and sailors under the Representation of the People Act.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 417, Minute 14, the War Cabinet had under consideration a letter from the Minister of Shipping, on the subject of the Recruitment from Coal Mines (Paper G.T.-4721).

It was pointed out that this letter practically asked for a revision of the decision given in War Cabinet 417, Minute 14 (a).

The War Cabinet requested—

Lord Robert Cecil, and the Committee appointed by the War Cabinet under paragraph (c) of the above-quoted minute, to deal with the question of the demands of foreign countries for coal, to confer with the Minister of Shipping on this question. If the Committee was satisfied that an alteration of the War Cabinet decision referred to should be made, the question should again be brought before the War Cabinet for further consideration.

6. The War Cabinet had under consideration a copy of a letter from the Secretary of the Ministry of Munitions, addressed to the Secretary of the War Cabinet, on the subject of the Departmental responsibility for the safe treatment of explosives at Liverpool (Paper G.T.-4724).

It was pointed out in the letter that the responsibility for the whole arrangements connected with explosives at Liverpool was a collective one, resting upon the Admiralty, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Munitions, War Office, Home Office, and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, and that the only satisfactory arrangement appeared to be that representatives of these authorities should be constituted an executive body and established by the authority of the War Cabinet.

The War Cabinet approved the setting up of an official Explosives Committee at the port of Liverpool, authorised to take all necessary steps to safeguard the manner of dealing with explosives at that port.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 3, 1918.
WAR CABINET. 425.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, June 4, 1918, at noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:—
The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P., Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 16).
Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 15).
Lieutenant-General Sir H. E. Belfield, K.C.B., D.S.O., Director of Prisoners of War (for Minutes 18 and 19).
The Right Hon. W. Long, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (for Minutes 18 to 20).

Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 19).
Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 19).
The Right Hon. Sir A. Stanley, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (for Minute 20).
The Right Hon. Sir G. Cave, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minutes 18 and 19).
The Right Hon. Lord Newton, Controller, Prisoners of War Department (for Minutes 18 and 19).

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Dally Jones, C.M.G., Acting Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel L. Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.
1. THE Director of Military Intelligence reported that there had been a good deal of fighting yesterday to the west of Château-Thierry, but the situation was much more stable. The German advance yesterday was insignificant, and the French had recaptured several villages. On the whole, the result of the fighting on Sunday and Monday had been satisfactory, because, according to General Anthoine (Chief of Staff to General Pétain), Sunday and Monday were critical days, as on those days no Allied reinforcements would be arriving, and, in the result, the general position had been maintained. The number of German divisions which had been identified in the Aisne battle was 41, although perhaps as many as 47 had been employed. Up to the present, Prince Rupprecht’s reserves were practically untouched, only one division having, it was thought, been drawn from his reserve, though not yet engaged on the Aisne–Marne front, leaving him with 19 fresh divisions in reserve from the sea to the Somme. During the next eleven days, German divisions would be recovering at the rate of about one a day.

General Macdonogh stated that no more German divisions were coming over from the Eastern front at the moment, although perhaps 10 might be brought over out of the 33 now remaining in Russia.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 418, Minute 1, the Director of Military Intelligence said that he had had a conversation on Sunday last with General Hamilton-Gordon, the commander of the IXth Corps, from whom he had learned some particulars of the opening phases of the recent German attack. General Hamilton-Gordon had three divisions of the IXth Corps in the front line on the 27th May: the 50th division on the left, the 8th in the centre, and the 21st on the right, in the Berry-au-Bac area. The first news of an impending attack came on the night of the 25th-26th May from a deserter. The battle started with heavy gas shelling, especially of the back areas, followed by an intense bombardment for 2½ hours. The wire having been cut by trench mortars, the enemy attacked in the usual way, with the assistance of tanks. The 50th division was left “in the air” by the retirement of the 22nd French division on the left, without warning to the 50th division. The Germans were already in the town where the commanding officer of the 50th division was quartered when he received the first intimation that the French had fallen back. The Germans came through the gap left by the 22nd French division, and got behind the 50th division, which suffered severely. The German tanks were used mainly at the point of junction of the 50th and 8th divisions, and succeeded in working along a valley and getting behind the 8th division. The 21st division made a very good fight, but, owing to what had happened to the 8th division, it had to withdraw eventually behind the Aisne. The 25th division, which was in reserve, was put, by order of the French Army Commander, into the second position, and was overrun by troops coming back. All four divisions suffered heavily. The faulty French lateral communications, and especially the failure of the 22nd French division to warn the 50th British division, were important factors in causing the retreat.

3. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that the enemy had made great use of tanks on the first day of the battle, but they did not follow up on the second day, so that probably they were of a heavy type. A new pattern of heavy tank was being employed by the enemy, having a gun mounted in a turret in the centre of the tank, whereas the first pattern had a gun in the bows. The Germans were using tanks on Saturday last, east of Rheims, and the French were said to have captured four of them.
4. The Director of Military Intelligence, in reply to a question, said that he did not think the German casualties in the recent fighting had been severe, except in the neighbourhood of Soissons and opposite the 21st division. In the advance from the Ailette to Fismes they had probably been very light. On the other hand, since Saturday last, they had probably increased considerably.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 411, Minute 5, the Director of Military Intelligence stated, in a reply to a question, that, so far as he knew, there was no evidence of the success or failure of our recent use of projector gas, but he would have enquiries made and report later to the War Cabinet.

6. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that three Austro-Hungarian cavalry divisions had appeared behind the Piave front on the Portogruaro area. Some additional aerodromes had also been observed, and the evidence pointed to a probable attack on that front. The Italians had 8 divisions there, confronting 13 Austrian divisions and 6 Austrian cavalry divisions. Conditions in Austria were undoubtedly bad, but he would not like to say that they were so bad as to prevent an attack. General Delmé-Radcliffe had sent a telegram to Lord Northcliffe stating that no report of the recent Rome Conference had yet reached the Jugo-Slavs in Austria, and its effect, therefore, would not be felt on the next offensive. He understood that General Diaz was taking steps to improve this faulty propaganda by dropping leaflets from long-distance aeroplanes.

7. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that the attack made by the Greeks on the 30th May appeared to have been very successful. The Greek troops, supported by French artillery, had attacked on the west of Doiran, on a front of some 7½ miles and a depth of 1½ miles, and had captured their objective at once, taking 1,500 Bulgarian prisoners (including 33 officers) and a large quantity of material. The result was greatly to improve the position of the Allied forces in that sector of the front.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for War to draft a message congratulating M. Venezelos on the success of the Greek troops.

8. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that two German battalions were being sent across the Black Sea, probably to Batum, for use in the Caucasus in co-operation with the Turks. The Turks had occupied Sukhum Kale. It was reported that the Germans were taking arms with them with a view to arming prisoners. News had been received that the Germans were contemplating making Tiflis a base for a flank guard along the Central Asian area.

9. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that a number of German prisoners were returning to Germany from Russia and would be a further source of man-power to the enemy.

10. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that another Turkish division from the Caucasus had appeared in Palestine, making 13 in all.
11. The Director of Military Intelligence informed the War Cabinet that a certain number of Turks were being withdrawn from the Kirkuk area for operations against the Jelus.

12. The First Sea Lord reported that the usual bombing of Bruges and Zeebrugge had taken place.

13. The First Sea Lord reported that one of our armed trawlers, while following astern of a convoy off the North Coast of Ireland, had been attacked by an enemy submarine and sunk by gunfire. Fourteen men were killed, and the skipper and two men were taken on board the submarine, two of these being wounded, including the skipper. Four survivors, three of whom were wounded, had been picked up by a destroyer. All confidential books had been destroyed.

14. The First Sea Lord stated that a telegram had just been received from the Naval Attaché at Rome reporting that an Austrian aeroplane had flown from Pola and had surrendered apparently without fighting.

15. Mr. Chamberlain called the attention of the War Cabinet to a telegram to Rio de Janeiro (No. 262), according to which the French were offering coal to Brazil from Cardiff. This was an extraordinary offer, in view of the fact that we were unable to supply coal to Brazil because of our efforts to supply coal to France and Italy.

The War Cabinet referred the matter to Lord Robert Cecil's Committee (see War Cabinet 424, Minute 5).

16. The War Cabinet had before them a note by the Foreign Office on a decision of the Netherlands Government to despatch a convoy to the Dutch East Indies (Paper G.T.-4710).

Lord Robert Cecil stated that the Dutch proposed to send the convoy through our blockade and to bring it back again. The probable object of the Dutch, acting under enemy pressure, was to break our blockade. Lord Robert Cecil added that the situation had changed since the memorandum by the Foreign Office was written, and that he proposed circulating in the near future another memorandum setting out the particulars up to date.

The War Cabinet decided—

To refer the matter to the Northern Neutral Countries Committee for consideration and report.

17. Lord Curzon drew the attention of the War Cabinet to the publication in the press of the evidence taken in the Pemberton Billing libel action, and stated that, in his opinion, such publication was doing more harm than anything that had appeared in this connection for many years. Opportunity was being taken to attack every section of society, and the social effect must inevitably be bad. Insinuations and accusations were being made against public men without a shred of foundation. Lord Curzon asked if nothing could be done, by means of censorship or otherwise, to prevent such publications being made by the press in the future.

Sir George Cave pointed out that the publication of evidence which was scandalous but not obscene must be left to the honour of the press, and that even if such matter was submitted to the
Exchange of Prisoners of War:
Appointment of Delegation.

Censor, the press could only be asked not to publish it, there being no penalty if the orders of the Censor were disobeyed, unless the matter contained information prejudicial to the conduct of the war. Sir George Cave added that he was informed that the Judge, in the present case, had asked the press not to publish some of the evidence. The Judge could not direct such cases to be held in camera; and, even if this could have been done, the suspicion and talk which would have arisen outside the Court, relative to what had been suppressed, would have been endless.

18. The First Sea Lord drew the attention of the War Cabinet to their decision in War Cabinet 419, Minute 10 (e), in which it was stated that the views of the Admiralty were to be considered as to what delegates should represent the British Government in the discussion relating to the exchange, &c, of prisoners of war, and pointed out that, by War Cabinet 423, Minute 8, no Admiralty representative had apparently been appointed as one of the delegates. He drew the attention of the War Cabinet to Paper G.T.-4737, recommending that Captain Kitson should be appointed as the Admiralty delegate, and pointed out the great difference, in his opinion, between the status of a delegate and of one who is only called as an expert to express the Admiralty views.

It was mentioned that, in deciding as to the delegates, it had been overlooked that the views of the Admiralty had not yet been received in regard to this matter.

Sir George Cave pointed out that he considered it highly desirable, now that the composition of the delegation had been communicated to the Germans, that no additions should be made thereto. He added that he was quite willing to undertake that, in putting forward any agreement bearing on naval matters, he would consult the Admiralty expert accompanying the delegation, and would give him every opportunity to refer to the Admiralty any points of conflict which might arise.

It was also pointed out that, if a Naval delegate was now appointed, we should be emphasising to the Germans the extreme importance we attach to our retention of enemy submarine officers and men, and that, moreover, the Admiralty would have an opportunity of expressing to the War Cabinet direct any objections that they might have to the agreement, inasmuch as no such agreement would be concluded without the War Cabinet first considering the same.

The War Cabinet decided that—

An Admiralty delegate should not be appointed, but that Admiralty representatives should accompany the delegation.

19. Sir George Cave informed the War Cabinet that he had drawn up some general instructions, in wide terms, for the consideration of the War Cabinet, and the guidance of the delegation. He suggested that the Terms of Reference should be somewhat as follows:—

(a.) The transfer to neutral countries of British officers captured in 1914, 1915, and 1916, in exchange for a similar number of German officers captured in those years.
(b.) The repatriation of other British combatant prisoners captured in those years, in exchange for a similar number of German combatant prisoners of corresponding rank.
(c.) The repatriation or internment of British civilian prisoners upon such terms as may be arranged.
(d.) The adjustment of any other question which may be raised in connection with the exchange and treatment of prisoners.

With regard to limiting the time to the years 1914 to 1916, Sir George Cave pointed out that the object of this was to avoid having a running agreement, similar to that of the French, without further negotiations on the subject taking place, but it was pointed out that it would be difficult to defend any agreement that gave less favourable terms to our men than those that had been obtained by the French. It was decided that the delegates should have a free hand on this point.

It was pointed out that the Terms of Reference, as proposed by Sir George Cave, did not lay sufficient stress with regard to an improvement in the treatment accorded to our prisoners in Germany, and that it was important that some modification should take place in this connection, in view of the strong feeling that prevailed in the United Kingdom.

Lord Newton asked that the delegates might be authorised to threaten retaliation of some kind if the treatment of our prisoners did not improve, and it was admitted that, as we had accepted retaliation in principle, it would be only right to give the delegation the power to use the threat.

As regards the civilian prisoners, of which we had a very large preponderance in this country, Sir George Cave pointed out that the Germans would probably press for an "all-for-all" exchange, as had been done in the case of the French, where neither side had any marked preponderance, but he was opposed to such a concession.

It was pointed out, however, that these civilian prisoners might be used as a means of obtaining compensation with regard to combatant prisoners and also as regards merchant officers and men, whom we do not treat as combatants.

With regard to the civilians interned in the dominions, the view was held that no means of transport would be forthcoming, and Mr. Long mentioned that no proposal of the Germans to use ships flying the German flag for this purpose would be tolerated by the dominions. It was mentioned, however, that the Germans might propose the use of neutral ships flying neutral flags in this connection.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The British delegates should be authorised to negotiate for the repatriation or internment in neutral countries of British combatant prisoners who had been for upwards of eighteen months in captivity in exchange for a similar number of German prisoners and for the repatriation or internment of British civilian prisoners in Germany upon such terms as can be arranged.

(b.) An agreement should not be made for the exchange of German submarine prisoners or for the transport of German prisoners from overseas without consultation with the Admiralty representative, and that, if necessary, the questions should be referred home for further instructions.

(c.) Civilian prisoners should not be exchanged without regard to numbers except upon the terms of some equivalent compensation being given.

(d.) The delegates should put forward in the strongest possible way the breaches by the Germans of their agreements as to the treatment of British prisoners and the grave ill-treatment of some of such prisoners, and should endeavour to obtain guarantees against the recurrence of these practices; and the delegates should be authorised, if necessary, to threaten reprisals:
(e.) The delegates should have full power to settle any minor matter connected with the treatment or exchange of prisoners which they might consider it desirable to raise, or which might be raised by the German delegates;

(f.) The agreement should be subject to ratification by His Majesty's Government.

20. The War Cabinet had under consideration the following papers relative to Enemy Debts:

- Report of the Enemy Debts Committee (Paper P.-23);
- Memorandum on Return of Debts and Properties (Paper P.-23 A);
- Extract from a letter from the Chairman of the Enemy Debts Committee to the Treasury (Paper 25/T/87).

In the latter it was stated that if the Recommendations of the Committee appear to His Majesty's Government acceptable in principle, it will, no doubt, be thought necessary to consult the Governments of the Dominions of India and of the other parts of the Empire, and that the matter would appear to be suitable for discussion with the Dominion representatives when they are in this country for the Meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet. The extract further pointed out that simultaneous consultation would be facilitated if the Report were published.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The matter should be brought before the Imperial War Conference, and that at present the Report of the Enemy Debts Committee should not be published.

21. Mr. Barnes informed the War Cabinet that he was on Wednesday addressing a meeting of the Munitions Trade Union Advisory Committee and representatives of the Munitions Industry, and that the Director of Military Operations had drawn up a memorandum containing statements as to the position and numbers of the Allied forces on the Western front, which he was willing that Mr. Barnes should put before the meeting if the War Cabinet approved. Mr. Barnes pointed out that this statement contained information giving the relative numbers of the opposing forces, which he considered it was undesirable to give.

The War Cabinet agreed with Mr. Barnes, and suggested that in his speech to the meeting he should give a general statement as to the serious position on the Western front, without giving any figures.

(Initialled) A. B. L.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 4, 1918.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, June 5, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The PRIME MINISTER (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P. The Right Hon. A. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.
The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. the VISCOUNT MILNER, Admiral Sir R. E. WEMYSS, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. ROw, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel LESLIE WILSON, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there was practically no news from the Western front. Questioned as to whether the Germans were still attacking, General Wilson said that he understood that the line between Scissen and Château-Thierry was now steadying.

Seaplane Engagement.

2. The First Sea Lord reported that five large “America” machines left Yarmouth yesterday on anti-aircraft patrol. Three of these machines returned and reported that they had engaged ten hostile machines; that two enemy aircraft had been shot down; that one of our machines was down with engine trouble, and had been seen taxi-ing towards Terschelling Islands, and that the other was down five miles east of Hakko Light Vessel, surrounded by Dutch fishing craft. The Harwich striking force had been sent in search of the latter, but had not yet found it.
3. The First Sea Lord reported that on the 4th June five enemy machines attacked our machines when over Zeebrugge, and that two of the former had been driven down and crashed on the sea. Eight 230-lb. bombs had been dropped over Zeebrugge, and two 230-lb. bombs over hostile batteries there.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 425, Minute 19, the First Sea Lord drew the attention of the War Cabinet to War Cabinet decision (b) of that Minute. Admiral Wemyss pointed out that on a previous occasion the War Cabinet had decided that, in discussing any question of exchange with German delegates, the consideration of the release of German submarine prisoners now in this country should be omitted (War Cabinet 419, Minute 10).

Both Sir Eric Geddes and Admiral Wemyss urged the importance of this question not coming under discussion between the British delegates and the German delegates at the forthcoming meeting.

The War Cabinet decided that—

War Cabinet 425, Minute 19 (b), should be amended as follows:

“(b.) An agreement should not be discussed for the exchange of German submarine prisoners, and that an agreement should not be made for the transport of German prisoners from overseas without consultation with the Admiralty representative; and that, if necessary, this question of the transport of German prisoners should be referred home for further instructions.”

5. The War Cabinet took note of the following resolutions, which were agreed to at the meetings of the Supreme War Council held at Versailles on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd June, 1918:

I. The Appointment of an Admiralissimo in the Mediterranean.

The Supreme War Council had a discussion on the subject of the appointment of an Admiralissimo in the Mediterranean. No conclusion was reached.

II. American Co-operation.

The Supreme War Council approved the following telegram to be sent to the President of the United States in the name of the Prime Ministers of France, Italy, and Great Britain:

“We desire to express our warmest thanks to President Wilson for the remarkable promptness with which American aid, in excess of what at one time seemed practicable, has been rendered to the Allies during the past month to meet a great emergency. The crisis, however, still continues. General Foch has presented to us a statement of the utmost gravity, which points out that the numerical superiority of the enemy in France, where 162 Allied divisions are now opposed to 200 German divisions, is very heavy, and that, as there is no possibility of the British and French increasing the number of their divisions—on the contrary, they are put to extreme straits to keep them up—there is a great danger of the war being lost unless the numerical inferiority of the Allies can be remedied as rapidly as possible by the advent of American troops. He therefore urges with the utmost insistence that the maximum possible number of infantry and machine-gunners, in which respects the shortage of men on the side of the Allies is most marked, should continue to be shipped from America in the months of June and July to avert the immediate danger of an Allied defeat in the present campaign owing to the Allied reserves being exhausted before those of the enemy. In addition to this, and looking to the future, he represents that it is impossible to foresee ultimate victory in the war unless America is able to provide
such an army as will enable the Allies ultimately to establish numerical superiority. He places the total American force required for this at no less than 100 divisions, and urges the continuous raising of fresh American levies, which, in his opinion, should not be less than 500,000 a month, with a view to establishing a total American force of 100 divisions at as early a date as this can possibly be done.

"We are satisfied that General Foch, who is conducting the present campaign with consummate ability, and on whose military judgment we continue to place the most absolute reliance, is not overestimating the needs of the case, and we feel confident that the Government of the United States will do everything that can be done, both to meet the needs of the immediate situation and to proceed with the continuous raising of fresh levies, calculated to provide, as soon as possible, the numerical superiority which the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies regards as essential to ultimate victory.

"A separate telegram (Appendix) contains the arrangement which General Foch, General Pershing, and Lord Milner have agreed to recommend to the United States Government with regard to the dispatch of American troops for the months of June and July."

The Supreme War Council took note of the fact that an agreement had been arrived at on this subject between General Pershing and Lord Milner, and that this agreement had been adhered to by the French, Italian, and Belgian Governments.

The Supreme War Council took note of the agreement reached that morning by the Foreign Ministers of France, Great Britain, and Italy, to approach the Japanese Government on the subject of action in Siberia; the common desiderata of the aforesaid Powers being—

(a.) That Japan should promise to respect the territorial integrity of Russia.

(b.) That she would take no side in the internal politics of the country.

(c.) That she would advance as far West as possible for the purpose of encountering the Germans.

It had been further agreed among the Foreign Ministers that, should Japan consent to intervention on these conditions, an effort should then be made to obtain the assent of the President of the United States.

The following resolution was agreed upon:

In order to expedite the transport of Czecho-Slovak troops from Vladivostock to France, as agreed at Abbeville, the Supreme War Council resolve that:

(i.) The British Government should ask the Japanese to assist with tonnage unless and until required for an expedition to Vladivostock.

(ii.) That the tonnage at present allotted to the transport of German and Austrian subjects from China to Australia should be diverted to the transport of Czecho-Slovaks in so far as this can be done without a dislocation of existing and essential military transport programmes.

The following declarations to be made on behalf of the Entente Powers collectively on the subject of:

(a.) The Czecho-Slovak and Jugo-Slav peoples,

(b.) Poland,

agreed to by the Foreign Ministers were noted:

"The Allied Governments have noted with pleasure the declaration made by the Secretary of State of the United
States Government and desire to associate themselves in an expression of earnest sympathy for the Nationalistic aspirations towards freedom of the Czecho-Slovak and Jugo-Slav peoples.

"The creation of a united and independent Polish State with free access to the sea constitutes one of the conditions of a solid and just peace, and of the rule of right in Europe."

It was understood that the Governments separately would be at liberty to supplement these declarations as suitable occasions arose.

VI. Recruiting in Abyssinia.

The Supreme War Council decided to refer for consideration to the Military Representatives the question of recruitment in Abyssinia.

The Supreme War Council approved—

VII. Joint Note No. 4 of the Military Representatives. The Balkan problem.

VIII. Joint Note No. 26 of the Military Representatives. Reduction in the number of horses in the Allied armies and in the oats and hay ration.

IX. Joint Note No. 27 of the Military Representatives. Relations to be established with the Dutch General Staff in case military assistance should be given by the Entente Powers.

X. Joint Note No. 28 of the Military Representatives. Inter-Allied Transportation Council: Procedure and appointment of Chairman.

XI. Joint Note No. 29 of the Military Representatives. Supply of textile products to the Central Powers.

XII. Joint Note No. 30 of the Military Representatives. Tanks.

XIII. The Supreme War Council decided that the following declaration shall be published simultaneously in the press of the Allied countries on Wednesday, 5th June:

"The Supreme War Council has held its Sixth Session under circumstances of great gravity for the Alliance of free peoples. The German Government, relieved of all pressure on its Eastern front by the collapse of the Russian armies and people, has concentrated all its efforts in the West. It is now seeking to gain a decision in Europe by a series of desperate and costly assaults upon the Allied armies before the United States can bring its full strength effectively to bear. The advantage it possesses in its strategic position and superior railway facilities has enabled the Enemy Command to gain some initial successes. It will undoubtedly renew the attacks, and the Allied nations may be still exposed to critical days.

"After a review of the whole question, the Supreme War Council is convinced that the Allies, bearing the trials of the forthcoming campaign with the same fortitude which they have ever exhibited in the defence of the right, will battle the enemy purpose, and, in due course, will bring him to defeat. Everything possible is being done to sustain and support the armies in the field. The arrangements for unity of command have greatly improved the position of the Allied armies, and are working smoothly and with success. The Supreme War Council has complete confidence in General Foch. It regards with
pride and admiration the valour of the Allied troops. Thanks to the prompt and cordial co-operation of the President of the United States, the arrangements which were set on foot more than two months ago for the transportation and brigading of American troops will make it impossible for the enemy to gain a victory by wearing out the Allied reserves before he has exhausted his own.

"The Supreme War Council are confident of the ultimate result. The Allied peoples are resolute not to sacrifice a single one of the free nations of the world to the despotism of Berlin. Their armies are displaying the same steadfast courage which has enabled them on many previous occasions to defeat the German onset. They have only to endure with faith and patience to the end to make the victory of freedom secure. The free peoples and their magnificent soldiers will save civilization."

Prime Minister's Statement.

6. (i.) With reference to the previous Minute, Lord Curzon said that he had read the notes of the meetings of the Supreme War Council and that they had left in his mind a rather disagreeable impression. Although the meetings had ended with agreement, Lord Curzon said that the notes had struck him as being rather symptomatic of a feeling which might become more serious in future.

The Secretary pointed out that only a part of the notes of the meetings had reached the War Cabinet at present, and that the later meetings were of a more friendly character.

Admiralissimo in the Mediterranean.

6. (ii.) The Prime Minister said that there had certainly been a difference of opinion with the Italians on the question of the appointment of an Admiralissimo in the Mediterranean, but expressed the opinion that, if judicious pressure were exercised, the attitude now taken up on this question by the Italian Government and the Italian Admiralty would be considerably altered for the better.

American Reinforcements.

6. (iii.) With regard to the question of American reinforcements, Mr. Lloyd George said that the decision which had been arrived at was a very good one. One of the difficulties at present to be faced in connection with American reinforcements was that the rate at which they were pouring into the country was causing grave difficulties in assimilating them. While it was true that comparatively few Americans were actually in the fighting line at the present moment, yet, if a great emergency occurred, there was no doubt that many thousands now in France could be utilised. In this connection Mr. Lloyd George said that he had been informed by M. Thomas of the excellent manner in which one American division which had been engaged to the north of Chateau-Thierry had conducted itself.

Open Warfare.

6. (iv.) In speaking of the recent fighting in France, the Prime Minister said that, from information which he had received, the Germans were apparently adopting a method of open warfare hitherto unknown in Europe. Enemy troops advanced, not in masses, as had been so often reported, but with a thin screen of machine-guns, followed by small patrols, which took advantage of all cover available. By these means the French in many cases, while holding villages or other points, had found themselves suddenly fired upon from the rear, the effect of which was consequently most demoralising, and the result had been that very rapid retreats had taken place without heavy losses to the enemy. Mr. Lloyd George said that the French military authorities hoped that they would be able to arrest the present advance in three or four days. As to the direction from which the next attack will come, it was generally thought that this would be in the neighbourhood of Montdidier.
8. (v.) Mr. Lloyd George discussed at length the various points which General Foch had brought to the notice of the Supreme War Council with reference to the man-power available for the French and British armies, as compared with that of the German army. He said that he had considered it desirable, in view of the statements which had been made at the Supreme War Council on this subject, to invite M. Clemenceau to send a representative to this country, who should have full liberty to study the figures in this connection. Mr. Lloyd George said that he did not think that the French authorities realised the extremely heavy demands made on this country with regard to man-power, not only in connection with the supply of coal, steel, cotton, wool, and other commodities to our Allies, but more particularly in connection with the maintenance of the British Navy, and all which that entailed in regard to the auxiliary portions of the Fleet. Consequently, Colonel Roure had been deputed by M. Clemenceau to come to England, and all information on this question would be put at his disposal.

It was pointed out that, while the Minister of National Service had a complete record of all figures available on this question, yet there were several other Departments which could amplify the information which Sir Auckland Geddes could give, and which could show Colonel Roure the very serious demands that were constantly made on the man-power of this country for other services in connection with the war than that of the supply of men for the armed forces of the Crown.

The War Cabinet requested—

Mr. Chamberlain to confer with the Minister of National Service, in order that the information to be given to the French representative on the subject of man-power should be as full as possible.

7. The War Cabinet had under consideration two memoranda by the President of the Board of Trade, on the subject of the possible diversion of traffic from London and East Coast ports to West Coast ports (Papers G.T.—4606 and G.T.—4606 A).

The War Cabinet decided that—

These memoranda should be remitted to the War Priorities Committee for consideration and report.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 6, 1918.
APPENDIX

An Agreement concluded between General Foch, General Pershing, and Lord Milner with reference to the Transportation of American troops in the months of June and July.

THE following recommendations are made on the assumption that at least 250,000 men can be transported in each of the months of June and July by the employment of combined British and American tonnage:

We recommend—

(a.) For the month of June:

1st. Absolute priority shall be given to the transportation of 170,000 combatant troops (viz., six divisions without artillery, ammunition trains or supply trains amounting to 126,000 men and 44,000 replacement for combat troops).

2nd. 25,400 men for the service of the railways, of which 13,400 have been asked for by the French Minister of Transportation.

3rd. The balance to be troops of categories to be determined by the Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces.

(b.) For the month of July:

1st. Absolute priority for the shipment of 140,000 combatant troops of the nature defined above (four divisions, minus artillery, &c., &c., amounting to 84,000 men, plus 56,000 replacements).

2nd. The balance of the 250,000 to consist of troops to be designated by the Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces.

(c.) It is agreed that if the available tonnage in either month allows of the transportation of a larger number of men than 250,000, the excess tonnage will be employed in the transportation of combat troops as defined above.

(d.) We recognize that the combatant troops to be despatched in July may have to include troops which have had insufficient training, but we consider the present emergency is such as to justify a temporary and exceptional departure by the United States from sound principles of training, especially as a similar course is being followed by France and Great Britain.
WAR CABINET. 427.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Thursday, June 6, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the EARL CORZON OF KEMLESTON, K.G., G.O.S.I., G.C.I.E.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.C.B.

The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

The following were also present:—


The Right Hon. LORD ROBERT CECIL, K.C., M.P., Minister of Blockade.


Admiral SIR R. E. WEMYSS, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff.

Mr. P. H. KERR (for Minute 8).

Lieutenant-Colonel SIR M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.

Captain CLEMENT JONES, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. STORR, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel LESLIE WILSON, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. ROW, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front. 1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that, up to date, we had not identified any divisions of Prince Rupprecht's army as having taken part in the present offensive. Prince Rupprecht himself to-day had at his disposal 41 divisions, of which 20 were fresh and 21 were roulette divisions. If the German Higher Command still wished to keep Prince Rupprecht's army intact, they had still 8 fresh and 22 roulette divisions upon which the Crown Prince could draw.

Seaplane Engagement. 2. With reference to War Cabinet 426, Minute 2, in which it had been stated that, in an air engagement with ten hostile machines, two of our own machines were missing, the First Sea Lord informed
the War Cabinet that both pilots of our two machines had arrived in Holland, one of them without his machine. He assumed that this latter would be treated as a shipwrecked mariner, and that the other would be interned.

3. The First Sea Lord reported that there had been a very heavy attack on Dunkirk by hostile aircraft the previous night. No details were as yet to hand, but it was reported that very considerable damage had been done. He gathered, however, that one of our block-ships had been sunk in the dock, and he had issued instructions that two other block-ships, which were under orders to go to Dunkirk, should not proceed there for the present.

In reply to a question as to whether it was true that a considerable amount of naval and military stores had recently been removed by us from Dunkirk, the First Sea Lord stated that he had no information on the subject, but undertook to make enquiries and report to the War Cabinet in due course.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 413, Minute 8, the First Sea Lord stated that, according to the latest information, it appeared that the naval operations against Ostend had been attended with a larger measure of success than had first been reported. He had heard that the Germans were apparently evacuating their repair staff at that port. It was quite possible that the entrance to the port was rapidly silting up. Larger craft for the present were unable to get through, and it seemed as if we had made a miscalculation as to the depth of the channel.

5. With reference to War Cabinet 426, Minute 4, attention was drawn to the draft decision of the War Cabinet in regard to prisoners of war, according to which “An agreement should not be discussed for the exchange of German submarine prisoners.” It was suggested that this draft went beyond the intentions of the War Cabinet, and would unduly tie the hands of our delegates.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) This decision should be amended to read as follows:—

“(b.) The British delegates are not to raise the question of submarine prisoners, and no preliminary agreement for the exchange of submarine prisoners should be entered into without special reference to the War Cabinet. An agreement should not be made for the transport of German prisoners from overseas without consultation with the Admiralty representative, and that, if necessary, this question of the transport of German prisoners should be referred home for further instructions.”

(b.) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should transmit this decision to Sir George Cave, and should explain to him that the policy of the War Cabinet is to avoid entering into any agreement which would enable the Germans to claim submarine prisoners.

6. Lord Curzon, speaking as the Leader of the House of Lords, said that a reply, which had been made to a question, by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War, the previous afternoon, on the subject of the exchange of prisoners, had unfortunately aroused considerable feeling in that Chamber. The country as a whole was,
naturally, deeply interested in the question, which required the most
delicate and sympathetic handling.

After some discussion, the War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for War should be asked to make a
statement in Parliament, at the earliest convenient date,
reviewing the situation and explaining the policy of the
Government.

Possible Peace
Overtures.

7. Attention was drawn to telegram No. 2047, from Sir Walter
Townley, stating that it was possible that attempts might be made
to sound Sir George Cave tentatively with regard to possible terms
of peace.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that, in a recent
speech in the House of Commons, he had laid it down that if the
enemy had anything to say on the subject of peace we were ready to
listen.

The Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that, during his
recent visit to France, he had been told that a great deal of harm
had been done in that country by the idea which obtained that
M. Clemenceau intended to reject every peace overture. The
working-classes there had the impression that the Government were
determined not to make peace. This was unfortunate, as those same
classes were quite prepared to fight on so long as they felt that, if a
really favourable approach were made for an honourable peace, the
Government would be prepared to take it into serious consideration.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should instruct Sir
George Cave on their behalf in the following sense:—

"The War Cabinet have had under consideration
Sir Walter Townley's telegram regarding possible peace
overtures. In meeting such overtures the attitude you
should adopt should be as follows: that you will naturally
listen to anything that may be volunteered to you on the
subject, but that you have no instructions, and that what­
ever may be said to you you will report to us."

Russia:
Allied Intervention
in Siberia.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 421, Minute 7, in regard to
any proposed Allied intervention in Russia, the Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs pointed out that this question was never properly
discussed at the meeting of the Supreme War Council recently held
at Versailles, and that the decision of the War Cabinet on the
30th May had not been carried into effect.

In this connection the Prime Minister explained that he had
received very definite and precise information as to President
Wilson's opposition to intervention in Siberia, and therefore it was
decided that it was impossible to discuss the question fully in the
Supreme War Council, but that the three Foreign Ministers who
were present at Versailles should consider it. Mr. Lloyd George
said that he had intended to ask General Foch to write a memo­
randum on the subject, but unfortunately General Foch was called
away on the morning when the matter came up for discussion.

The Secretary of State for War, however, was asking General Foch
for this memorandum.

Mr. Balfour quoted from a private telegram which had been
received from Sir William Wiseman by Sir Eric Drummond, and
pointed out that President Wilson's views, as given in this telegram,
were not so emphatic against intervention in Siberia as those which
had been expressed to Mr. Lloyd George. In this telegram it was
stated that President Wilson had agreed as to the necessity for the
re-creation of the Russian front, and that assistance should be given
to the Russian people, but at the same time he had said that no military authority had been able to convince him that any scheme was likely to succeed. President Wilson had proposed that a Commission, composed of Allied representatives, should be sent to Russia, both to Vladivostock and to Murmansk, for the purpose of organising supplies, and had said that, if the Allies were invited to intervene in Russia by any recognised body there, he was of opinion that it ought to be done.

Lord Robert Cecil expressed the opinion very strongly that it was most unfortunate that the Supreme War Council had not been asked to deal with this question, principally in view of the fact that it was essential, in his opinion, that a strong recommendation in favour of intervention, passed by the Supreme War Council, should be received by President Wilson.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the Supreme War Council had had the matter under consideration, and referred to the agreement reached by the Foreign Ministers of France, Great Britain, and Italy, of which the Supreme War Council had taken note (War Cabinet 420, Minute 5 (iv)).

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that the Supreme War Council had only taken note of an agreement between the three Foreign Ministers, and had not expressed any military opinion, nor had the Council recommended any approach to President Wilson until the assent of the Japanese to the proposal has been received. He said that he considered the manner in which this whole question had been dealt with was most unsatisfactory.

The Prime Minister explained the difficulties with which President Wilson was faced, and pointed out that the main opposition to any intervention in Siberia by the Japanese came from the Western Coast of America, where President Wilson had strong political interests. It was firmly believed by those in America who opposed Japanese intervention that, if once the Japanese sent forces into Russia, Siberia would become very largely, at any rate from an economic point of view, a Japanese province.

Lord Robert Cecil said that he saw no prospect of a successful conclusion to the war unless something were done in this matter. In the course of the next year it was certain that the Germans would be able, unless something were done, to get the Russians not only to work for them but perhaps to fight for them, thus adding very seriously to the sources of man-power in Germany and to the sources of supply to that country. With regard to the suggestion of operating from Archangel or Murmansk, Lord Robert Cecil said that he did not consider any force operating from those areas would produce a serious effect unless it was backed up by a large expedition from Vladivostock. He did not think that the War Cabinet had ever been quite certain of what it really wanted; that it had never been sure that intervention was right; and that, consequently, this feeling of uncertainty had also been felt by our agents abroad. In his opinion, opportunities had been lost in the past, for though at first President Wilson was not unfavourable, later, political interests began to operate. Since then we have been told that there has been a great change in public feeling in America, and he considered that, if strong pressure of a military character supported by a decision from the Supreme War Council, could be brought to the notice of President Wilson, President Wilson might agree, although perhaps reluctantly.

The First Lord of the Admiralty agreed that it was difficult to obtain a considered view of the War Cabinet on this question, but said that, in his opinion, in view of the grave difficulties of transport and communication which must result from an expedition from Vladivostock, the efficacy of an effort from Murmansk should be compared to the efficacy of an effort even with Japanese help west of Cheliabinsk. Sir Eric Geddes was strongly of opinion that to develop a railway from Vladivostock, capable of carrying
stores and supplies, under modern conditions, was too colossal an undertaking for the Japanese to consider. He had never seen a considered and exhaustive study or report on the two possible efforts, and he thought the indefinite policy which Lord Robert Cecil complained of, and of which he was also very conscious, was due to the absence of such a report.

The Prime Minister agreed that the resuscitation of the Trans-Siberian Railway could not possibly be done without the whole-hearted co-operation of America, and pointed out the difficulties of transport which already existed in Siberia. Mr. Lloyd George also said that it was necessary to take into consideration the demand which had been made by M. Clemenceau that priority of claim to Japanese shipping should be given to the transport of Czecho-Slovak troops from Vladivostock to France.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that no considered statement had been made by the Military Authorities as to the possibilities of intervention, or as to the strength of force which would be required. On this point he had sent a telegram some time ago to Lord Reading, giving the reasons why the British Government considered intervention necessary, and saying that this telegram would be followed by a detailed military argument. The telegram had been sent over to the War Office, but the War Office had declined to write any memorandum on the subject, giving as a reason that this question was not entirely a military one. Mr. Balfour agreed that the principal factor to be taken into consideration was the reception which any force would receive from the inhabitants of the country.

Sir Eric Geddes said that he thought the possibility of intervention should be considered by the Military Authorities from three points of view:—

(a.) With the inhabitants of Siberia friendly,
(b.) Actively friendly, or
(c.) Inert.

Before this question could be properly reasoned out there must be some considered opinion as to the force which would be necessary to produce useful results, and it was essential that the prospect of such results should be put before President Wilson. Sir Eric Geddes was of opinion—that it should be considered on the most favourable footing of passive inertia from the local inhabitants, and also that a decision should be come to as to what force could be maintained at Cheliabinsk, or beyond. He was still of opinion, however, that a much smaller effort via Murmansk would give better results in diverting German forces from the Western front, but, in the absence of the exhaustive study of the possibilities of intervention in Siberia and Murmansk, he did not see how the Cabinet or President Wilson could adopt the definite policy which Lord Robert Cecil asked for.

Mr. Balfour pointed out that the objections to any operations from Murmansk were tonnage and men, and that the merit of intervention via Vladivostock was that 500,000 first-class fighting troops could be utilised, while operations from Murmansk would entail taking away troops already fighting in other theatres of war.

The Prime Minister suggested that, in view of the possibility of Lord Reading's return from America for a visit to this country, Lord Robert Cecil should himself go to America in order to lay his views on this question personally before President Wilson, and he said that the War Cabinet would equip Lord Robert Cecil with all the necessary military arguments, and also obtain the views of General Foch on the question.

Considerable discussions ensued, in which it was pointed out that it was most desirable to prevent the Germans withdrawing supplies from Russia, even if it were not possible to develop a campaign against the German army.
It was also agreed that, if a considerable Allied force could be concentrated at Valogda, there would be a considerable rally to the Allied forces there.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff should prepare a memorandum showing—

(a.) A detailed military argument with regard to Allied intervention in Siberia.
(b.) The size of the Allied army which could be maintained as far westward as Cheliabinsk.
(c.) Whether it would be possible to maintain an army at the latter place of sufficient strength to prevent supplies being withdrawn from Russia to Germany.
(d.) The necessary force of Allied troops which would be requisite to carry out active operations from Murmansk or Archangel, either with or without intervention through Siberia.
(e.) With regard to the above-proposed operations, the difference in the number of men and the amount of material and supplies which would be necessary if the local inhabitants were—

(i.) Friendly.
(ii.) Indifferent.
(iii.) Hostile.
(iv.) Partly hostile and partly friendly.

Holland: 9. With reference to War Cabinet 425, Minute 16, the War Cabinet had under consideration a report by the Northern Neutrals Committee as to the action to be taken with regard to the decision of the Dutch Government to send a convoy from Holland to the Dutch East Indies.

The First Sea Lord urged that, if the recommendations of the Committee were accepted, we should publish a communique on the subject, setting out our contentions in this matter, and pointing out that it was imperative in the interests of the Allies that we should maintain our right of search.

General Smuts stated that such was the intention of the Committee, but that it was not possible to issue any communique on the subject until we had answered the note of the Dutch Government, received their reply, and definitely settled our policy if they were not prepared to accept our suggested compromise.

The Minister of Blockade took exception to the last few lines of the Report of the Committee, which advocated that, if the Dutch refused to meet us in this matter, the War Cabinet, before issuing an order for the seizure of the Dutch merchant ships, should carefully reconsider the case in all its bearings. Lord Robert Cecil expressed the view that our policy should be definitely settled now, and pointed out that, failing agreement with the Dutch, it was essential—if the blockade were to be efficiently maintained—that we should exercise our right of search. He realised, however, that that meant a remote possibility of war with Holland.

General Smuts stated that he was unable to accept the contention of the Minister of Blockade, that the question should not be reconsidered if the Dutch refused to accept the compromise recommended by his Committee, and he could not take part in a course of action that might lead to war with Holland. Before such a step was taken he thought General Botha should be consulted, as it might have grave results in South Africa. His view was that we
must safeguard our own position as far as possible, but that, before insisting on our right of search to the extent of taking action in the matter, we ought to consult our Allies. In this connection he pointed out that only the Germans and ourselves insisted on the right of search when merchant ships were under convoy of their own men-of-war, and, further, that at the Naval Conference in 1909–10 both the British and German Governments had expressed their readiness to adopt the view of the other Powers, with certain safeguards. Consequently, if we insisted on exercising the right of search, we might find ourselves in a false position with regard to our Allies.

The First Lord of the Admiralty pointed out that, although our present Allies may have held contrary views to us on this question before the war, it was probable that their opinion in the matter now coincided with ours, and the division of opinion which General Smuts quoted was really an obsolete one, and not of current adverse character.

Lord Curzon expressed the view that at the present stage it was undesirable for the War Cabinet to decide that we would, without reconsideration of any further proposals that might be made by the Dutch, insist, even to the extent of going to war with Holland, on what we had always contended were our rights with regard to the search of neutral merchant ships.

The War Cabinet approved the proposals set out in the Report of the Northern Neutrals Committee (Paper G.–210).

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 6, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 428.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, June 7, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:

The PRIME MINISTER (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.G.

The Right Hon. A. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

The following were also present:


Major-General SIR G. M. W. MACDONOGH, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 6).

The Right Hon. W. LONG, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (for Minutes 11 to 14).

The Right Hon. H. A. L. FISHER, LL.D., M.P., President, Board of Education (for Minute 14).

Mr. PHILIP KERR (for Minutes 11 to 13).

Rear-Admiral G. P. W. HOPK, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 7 to 9).

The Right Hon. E. S. MONTAGU, M.P., Secretary of State for India (for Minutes 11 to 13).


SIR T. W. HOLDERNESS, G.C.B., K.C.S.I., Permanent Under-Secretary, India Office (for Minute 11 to 13).


Mr. THOMAS JONES, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. BURGES, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. STORR, Assistant Secretary.
1. THE Director of Military Intelligence stated that there was no further news from France, except that there was considerable aerial activity and a certain amount of movement on the 111th French Army front north of the Aisne. No definite report had yet been received as to the result of the enemy attack yesterday south-west of Ste. Euphraise.

2. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that Prince Rupprecht’s reserves were still intact. One German division had, however, been moved from near Bruges to a point in rear of the Mont Rouge–Sherpenberg front. There was also evidence that a number of hospitals, &c., had been moved to Lille, which rather indicated that we might expect a small attack on the Lys front. General Macdonogh said that a heavy attack on the Montdidier–Noyon front was in preparation.

3. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that, according to the German wireless, the Germans claimed the following amount of prisoners and booty:

- 55,000 prisoners.
- 650 guns.
- 2,000 machine-guns.
- 2,000,000 heavy shell.

They also estimated that the Allied casualties were between 200,000 and 250,000. They stated that their own casualties had been exceptionally small.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 410, Minute 1, the Director of Military Intelligence showed to the War Cabinet a picture of a German tank. He stated that it was not such an effective weapon as our own tank, owing to the fact that it could not climb a 4-foot bank or cross an 8-foot ditch. The Germans in their wireless had stated that they had used captured British tanks on the Aisne with good results.

5. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that the expected attack on the Italian front on the 6th June had not materialised. There were signs, however, of preparations for an Austrian attack on the Piave.

6. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that the Dutch hospital ship “Koningin Ilegentes” had been sunk at 1:15 yesterday afternoon, 20 miles east of the Lemon Bank Lightship. Four firemen had been drowned, but the remainder had been saved. Admiral Hope said that a report had appeared in the press that the British delegates going to Holland to negotiate an exchange of prisoners were on board this boat. This was incorrect, as the delegates were on board the “Sindoro.”

7. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that on the 5th June a trawler, trawling in an enemy submarine resting-place 3 miles south-east from the Manacles, fouled a supposed enemy submarine. The trawler was towed in circles, and eventually the wire parted. Depth charges were dropped, and an under-water explosion was felt.
Air Attack on Dunkirk.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 427, Minute 3, Admiral Hope reported that, during the air attack on Dunkirk on the night of the 5th-6th June, over 300 bombs were dropped by about 25 enemy aircraft. Several of our aerodromes were bombed, and a considerable number of our aeroplanes were damaged. This did not, however, prevent our aeroplanes from Dunkirk undertaking a raid on Zeebrugge on the night of the 5th-6th instant, when 6½ tons of bombs were dropped on Zeebrugge Lock Gate, the Bruggeise Works, Bruges Dock, Bruges Canal, Ghistelles Aerodrome, and Marialter Aerodrome.

American Military Assistance: Man-Power.

9. Attention was drawn to telegram No. 2535, dated the 5th June, 1918, which had been received from Lord Reading.

The Prime Minister read an extract as follows:

"M. Jusserand being anxious to receive a formal assurance from the President as to the 100 divisions of American strength put the point to him, Mr. Wilson replied that not only did this figure not frighten him, but that if necessary it would be exceeded. President added, however, in this connection that two points should be considered. First, in view of effort which the three Allied Governments were demanding of United States it would be necessary that each of them should examine its military potentialities, and inform United States Government that number of combatants furnished was really the maximum possible. It might in certain circumstances, President said, be useful to communicate such a declaration to Congress, and even if need be to American public to meet possible criticism."

It was suggested that the matter should be referred to the Minister of National Service, in order that he might frame a statement on the subject, to be considered by the War Cabinet; or, on the other hand, we might afford the American Government the same facilities for investigating the position of our man-power as we were according the French Government (War Cabinet 426, Minute 6). It was pointed out, however, that, if we informed the United States Government that the French were enquiring into the state of our man-power, it might convey the impression that the French were suspicious that we were not making full use of our resources.

Attention was drawn to the fact that Sir Auckland Geddes had already collected from the different Departments the material for a full statement as to the utilisation of British man-power, and that this might be of assistance when replying to Lord Reading's telegram.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, after consulting the Minister of National Service, should supply to Lord Reading a full statement of our man-power figures, and say that the French Government were already sending a representative to examine our figures, and, should the American Government so desire, we would afford them similar facilities.

Imperial War Cabinet: Agenda.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 411, Minute 18, the War Cabinet had before them the Report (Paper G.T.—1742) of Lord Curzon's Committee, which had been appointed to draw up Provisional Agenda for the forthcoming meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet.

It was agreed that it would probably be impossible to adhere
absolutely to any cut-and-dried programme, but that the Committee’s recommendations might usefully be followed so far as might prove practicable.

The War Cabinet decided that —

(a.) The first meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet should be held at 10, Downing Street, on Tuesday next, 11th June, 1918, at 11:30 a.m.

The Secretary was instructed to issue the necessary invitations.

(b.) At the first meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet, the procedure adopted at the previous Session should be followed viz.: That the Prime Minister should make a statement surveying the past year’s effort, and giving a general outline of his views as to the future, and that his review should be followed by general statements by the Dominion Premiers and the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and India.

(c.) At the second meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should make a general statement upon foreign policy.

(d.) The Imperial War Cabinet should ordinarily meet on the mornings of Tuesday and Thursday in each week, Friday afternoon being reserved for a third meeting if this should be found to be necessary or desirable.

(e.) The first meeting should take place on the 11th instant, whether or not the whole of the Dominion Prime Ministers had arrived in England.

11. With reference to War Cabinet 389, Minute 13, the War Cabinet had under consideration a Minute from Lord Islington to the Prime Minister (Paper G.T.-4190) on the subject of the cancellation of passports granted by the Government of India to Mr. Tilak and other Home Rule delegates who were proceeding to the United Kingdom for the purpose of holding public meetings and conducting a political agitation in support of the Indian Home Rule movement.

When the matter had been brought up before the War Cabinet on the 11th April, 1918, they had decided that Mr. Tilak’s party should not be permitted to proceed.

The Secretary of State for India said that he had no intention of asking the Cabinet to reverse this decision. There was, however, another question involved. The action of the Cabinet had stopped the progress of the libel action which Mr. Tilak had brought against Sir Valentine Chirol, and the India Office had received letters from the solicitors of both parties, representing the inconvenience caused by further postponement of the hearing of the case.

Mr. Montagu said that he proposed to reply to Mr. Tilak’s solicitors in the following sense:—

"With reference to the first paragraph of your letter, I am to say that your client must be under some misapprehension. The enclosure of my letter of the 8th May will have made it clear to you that the decision which led to the cancellation of the passports of Mr. Tilak and other Home Rule delegates was the act of His Majesty’s Government, and that no question of permitting Mr. Tilak to proceed to this country for the purpose of prosecuting his suit in the Courts is pending in this Office. With regard to the inconvenience and possible injury which may accrue to your client from further postponement of the hearing, I am to say that he has only himself to thank. Had he strictly confined his journey to the one object of proceeding with the suit, and had he made clear his intention of abstaining from political agitation, his movements would not have been interfered with.”
After some discussion the War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) Mr. Tilak should be permitted to proceed to the United Kingdom for the sole purpose of prosecuting his libel action.

(b.) No Indian Home Rule delegates should be permitted to proceed with him, and that he should be accompanied by his solicitor only.

(c.) Before being permitted to proceed, Mr. Tilak should give an undertaking, on behalf both of himself and his solicitor, that during their stay in the United Kingdom neither of them would take part in propaganda work of any kind whatsoever.

(d.) Mr. Tilak and his solicitor should undertake to return to India immediately after the conclusion of the legal proceedings.

The Secretary of State for India was requested to take the necessary action.

Commissions for Indians.

12. With reference to War Cabinet 400, Minute 13, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for India (Paper G.T.-4661), and a note by Lord Curzon (Paper G.T.-4752).

The War Cabinet decided—

To postpone the discussion on this subject until the Secretary of State for War and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff could be present.

Indian Reforms.

13. With reference to War Cabinet 417, Minute 2, the War Cabinet had under consideration a Report by the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy, with a covering note by the Secretary of State (Paper 112-D), and a note by Lord Curzon on the above Joint Report (Paper 113-D), (Appendix).

The Secretary of State for India said that he would preface his remarks by a brief reference to the degree of support which the proposals of the Viceroy and himself might expect to receive. He had circulated to the Cabinet a letter signed by his colleagues from England, Lord Donoughmore, Sir William Duke, and Mr. Charles Roberts, M.P., and also by Mr. Bhupendranath Basu, which stated that the signatories uniedly support the recommendations made in the Report, and were prepared to recommend their adoption to public opinion both in England and India. He had also circulated a despatch from the Government of India which stated that, although this most important document represented views for which the signatories thereto were alone responsible, the Indian Government desired to record the fact that it was framed after prolonged discussion with them. They added that they were not unanimous in regard to all the detailed recommendations, but they wished to convey their cordial support to the general policy which the Report embodies. Mr. Montagu attached importance to the fact that Sir Sankaran Nair, the Indian member of Lord Chelmsford's Council, was in general agreement with the proposals. Further, his own Council at the India Office (with the exception of Sir Arnold White, who was absent from illness, and whose views he had consequently not been able to obtain) unanimously supported the policy advocated in the Report, reserving consideration of details. In reply to a question by Lord Curzon as to whether support of the policy meant was support of the general principles on which it was founded or of the proposals for carrying them out, Mr. Montagu said that it applied to both. As regards the Viceroy's
Council, two members, Sir William Vincent and Sir S. Nair, had dissented in respect of two points not of principle. The first doubted whether the Grand Committees in the Provinces were, numerically, rightly proportioned; and the second questioned the wording of the formula the Government of the Provinces could use in carrying the budget for renewed subjects. Mr. Montagu said that he therefore claimed that both the Government of India and his own Council at the India Office were in favour of carrying out the policy suggested in the Report. Both the Viceroy and himself fully realised the enormous responsibility resting upon themselves, and the overwhelming difficulties which confronted them. They had both, however, been gratified by the unexpected authoritative backing which that policy had received, and by the general desire shown to progress towards the goal, indicated in the pronouncement in the House of Commons on the 20th August, 1917, on the lines laid down by the Viceroy and himself. He had read the memoranda by Lord Curzon and Mr. Chamberlain, and he was in general agreement with the latter, and would be quite satisfied should the Government endorse the latter's recommendation, subject to two provisos:

(a.) That positive principles should be put first.
(b.) That the wording should be slightly altered.

He suggested that the Report should be published with the following announcement:

"The Government publish the Report, in accordance with the decision which the Secretary of State was authorised to make, for criticism in England and India. In publishing it the Government state that they generally and provisionally accept the policy embodied in the Report, and will embody their own proposals in a Bill after they have had the advantage of considering the criticisms which they now invite."

Mr. Montagu cited the case of the Morley-Minto proposals in 1909, which had been published as a Parliamentary Paper for criticism before they had been discussed in Parliament. He agreed with Lord Curzon that the Report should run the gauntlet of public criticism before any attempt at legislation was made. He welcomed such criticism, and agreed that the Cabinet should not settle anything definitely until the public had had time and opportunity to discuss and criticise the proposals of the Viceroy and himself. He hoped, however, that, in sanctioning the publication, the Cabinet would not impose any conditions to the effect that neither the Viceroy nor himself should have any power to make statements or explanations to meet such criticisms as might be offered, as the responsibility of the Report rested upon himself and Lord Chelmsford, and not upon the Cabinet. In reply to a question as to whether he and the Viceroy wished from time to time to make defensive and explanatory speeches, Mr. Montagu said they wished to be empowered to use their discretion. The Report embodied the policy of the Viceroy and himself, and it would be difficult for the former, in particular, to sit still under criticism and objections without replying to them. As regards details, apart from general policy, these were, of course, subject to modification, and the Viceroy and he would gladly modify them, as useful and instructive criticism might show to be desirable. The Viceroy would constantly be receiving deputations, and he could send to the India Office all suggestions which he regarded as valuable. It would be easy for the Government to make it clear, when publishing the Report, that they did not as yet commit themselves absolutely to the policy therein advocated. He suggested that, after publication, a debate on the Report in each House of Parliament would be required. Further discussions could then be postponed until the Bill itself was introduced.
The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, with reference to the formula which the Secretary of State for India had suggested should accompany the publication by the Government of the Report, that he thought whatever formula was adopted it should be one which would least commit the Government to early legislation. He himself suggested the following alternative:

"The Government think it right to publish this Report, which is intended to carry out the policy announced on the 20th August, 1917, before they have themselves had time to examine it, in order that, prior to coming to a final decision, they may have the advantage of considering the views and criticisms which they now invite."

The Secretary of State for the Colonies enquired when the publication would take place. This particularly affected his Department, as it was certain that Ceylon and other parts of the Dominions would put forward demands for similar treatment. He suggested that, before publication, the Secretary of State for India should get certain people of prominence and leading, who would be sure to array themselves against the proposals put forward in the Report, to come and see him personally, so that he could explain those proposals and meet his critics in advance. There were many who had either a commercial or a sentimental interest in India who would be sure to range themselves on the side of the critics. If the Government decided on the immediate publication of the Report, they could easily say that the Report had only been in their hands a week, and that India would hardly expect them to act on it at once. He himself, however, deprecated an early and premature publication. In his view, the Government could hardly publish and disavow responsibility. The Secretary of State for India was already committed to the policy advocated in the Report, and it would be a new departure for the Government to publish the Report and, later, to dissociate themselves from the views put forward in it. He confessed he was alarmed at the position in which the Government might shortly find themselves. The Report recommended a startling change of policy which the Government had not yet had time to examine. Were they, at the most critical moment in the Empire's history, deliberately to add to their existing difficulties? In saying this, he especially referred to coming trouble in Ireland.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs suggested that the publication of the Report might be accompanied by an announcement in Parliament on the following lines:

"The Government publish the Report in accordance with the decision which the Secretary of State for India was authorised to make. In publishing it, the Government desire to state that, in their view, the Report is in conformity with the declaration of the 20th August, 1917; and, after it has been fully examined by them and has received the advantage of public criticism in this country and in India, will serve as the foundation of the legislation they propose to introduce."

Lord Curzon said that he knew the Cabinet fully appreciated the great difficulties with which the Secretary of State for India had had to contend, and the thoroughness and ability with which he had examined the welter of advice that had been offered him. They also recognised the weight of authority which he had shown behind his scheme, but he thought that, before the Report was published, the Government should be satisfied that the policy it recommended would command general approval. The Report advocated profound, vital, and revolutionary changes, and upon these the opinion of both the local Governments in India and of this country, and of both Houses of Parliament, none of which had been ascertained, were desirable. He deprecated
the idea, at this stage, of committing the Government to any general support of the scheme. Later on they might think that the policy suggested was on the right lines, but a sustained examination and a more ample discussion were necessary before the Government could arrive at any decision. He had good reason for believing that the scheme would be strongly opposed at home. The attitude of both Houses was uncertain as it was, and in the House of Lords there were many ex-Governors of Indian Provinces, who would be foremost among the critics. If he were asked in Parliament whether this publication involved any acceptance at this stage by the Government of the scheme, he must ask that he should be empowered to say that it did not. A revolutionary policy of this magnitude required the fullest deliberation by the Cabinet. As regards the formula which should accompany the publication of the Report, he attached much importance to the form which it would take. The Indian mind was prone to dissect phrases and to examine very minutely every word of a Government Proclamation. Before the Secretary of State for India made any such statement as had been suggested by Mr. Chamberlain, if indeed any such were made at all, he thought that it should be submitted in its draft form to the Cabinet. He warned the Government against committing themselves to this new scheme, even in principle, until they had heard the criticisms which it would be sure to evoke. He was quite unable to agree to the formula propounded by the Foreign Secretary. He himself did not think it was necessary to make any restatement of principle at this stage. In his view, there was no need for the Government to go beyond their pronouncement of the 20th August, last year. They had then made a broad statement of policy: they had said that they were sending out the Secretary of State for India on a mission to that country to give them his advice; and the pledges they had given on that occasion they were faithfully carrying out. He confessed himself to be frankly opposed to any fresh declaration of policy on the part of the Government until they knew what the views of the public were and had made up their own minds. A midway declaration of policy would only revive old controversies, and it would be asked if the Government had receded from or progressed beyond their pronouncement of last August. He hoped the Cabinet would guard against committing themselves to any appearance of approving a policy which they had not examined. The Report, he understood, could be published before the end of the present month. During the next three months the public must be given the opportunity of examining the project. The time would then come for the Cabinet to make up their mind. In any case, there was no chance of legislation being passed before the end of the year.

Mr. Chamberlain, speaking as a former Secretary of State for India, said that he was in favour of some declaration on the part of the Government to accompany the publication of the Report. He thought that such a declaration was necessary: first, in order to reassure moderate Indian opinion and to make it clear to all classes of opinion that there would be no receding from the pronouncement of the 20th August; and, secondly, to fix with at least equal clearness the limits beyond which His Majesty's Government would not permit the present measure of reform to go. He thought that the Government might state certain broad features of
the method by which they proposed to give effect to their pronouncement of last year. They could give a rather clearer and ampler indication of what reforms they thought it necessary to carry out. They must remember that any declaration by the Government carried enormous weight in India. In stating that it was necessary clearly to fix the limits beyond which the Government would not permit the present measure to go, he had in his mind extreme partisans of Home Rule for India. In any case it was desirable to let the out-and-out opponents of the Government's new policy know that the Cabinet had no intention of going back upon their pronouncement of last year. He thought that, on the occasion of publishing the Report, the opportunity should be seized of reaffirming the principles then laid down. He suggested that the drafting of the expository statement in Parliament might be left to Mr. Montagu and himself. The Report was known to be in existence. If the Cabinet held up the Report and devoted themselves to a thorough examination of it, they could produce a scheme. On the other hand, if they postponed the publication they would be confronted with violent expressions of dissatisfaction in India.

The Secretary of State for India reminded the Cabinet that, in their pronouncement the previous August, it had been stated that—

"Ample opportunity will be afforded for public discussion of the proposals which will be submitted in due course to Parliament."

He suggested that he should arrange that a question should be asked in the House of Commons regarding the date of publication, and that he should draft a reply for the Cabinet's approval. He farther requested that sanction of the Cabinet to the publication of the pertinent despatches simultaneously with the Report.

The Minister of Education recalled that, in the case of the report of the Public Services Commission, great public indignation had been caused by the withholding of publication for two years. The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) In view of a question being asked in the House of Commons at an early date regarding the publication of a joint report, the Secretary of State for India, in consultation with Mr. Chamberlain, should prepare a draft reply, on the lines suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which should be submitted to the War Cabinet for their approval;

(b.) All pertinent despatches should be published simultaneously with the Report.

14. With reference to War Cabinet 411, Minute 2, and War Cabinet 415, Minute 15, regarding supply and regulation for shipyard labour and mobility of munitions labour, the War Cabinet took note of the decision arrived at by the War Priorities Committee, as circulated in Paper G.T.-4738.

2. Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 7, 1918.
APPENDIX (Minute 14).

112-D.

INDIAN REFORMS.

I.—Note by Mr. Montagu.

I PRESENT to the Cabinet the results of my mission to India in the form of the accompanying report* by the Viceroy and myself. Our joint signatures show that we worked in harmony, and are in agreement in our proposals.

2. We have tried to make our report a self-contained document. It first reviews the growth of the existing system of government in India and the political and social conditions in which the task of reconstruction must be undertaken. We should not have attempted to set these matters before the Cabinet at a time when the calls upon their energies are so heavy but for our strong feeling that they were really essential to our purpose if the difficulties of revising the machinery of government in India were to be understood. It was necessary to show (1) that there was a definite problem before us; (2) that the problem was the outcome of past policy; (3) that a new departure was needed; (4) that while past history and present conditions alike made advance necessary, they also imposed some limitations to the extent and character of the advance; (5) that the suggestions most popular in India could not be recommended. Chapters I, II, and III, IV and V, VI and VII deal roughly with these five points.

3. The stages by which we arrived at our own conclusions may be summarised as follows: We received deputations representing every kind of political views, and gave hundreds of interviews to representative men; there were discussions with individual Heads of Provinces, constant meetings between myself and my colleagues, and numerous conferences between us and the Government of India. We had a week’s conference with the Heads of Provinces collectively; and the Viceroy and I also had a conference with representative Indian Princes regarding the matters which affect them. Whenever there was a divergence of view between us and any members of the Government of India, we set up a joint committee to deal with it. On minor points our proposals took final shape in personal discussion between the Viceroy and myself.

4. Being both convinced that the main defect in the existing system was the fact that it denied responsibility to Indians, and being equally convinced that the time was not ripe for complete self-government, we speedily realised that the problem was to find some way of giving responsibility in certain matters while reserving it in others, and to provide some means of periodically and deliberately enlarging the sphere made over to responsible control. We rejected the Congress League Scheme which found general support, among Indian politicians because it would be unworkable and lead to deadlock (Sections 174-177). Nor could we adopt alternative schemes (presented to us in different forms, both in Calcutta and the United Provinces), because, though they were based on our own principles of a temporary division of the functions of government, they were unacceptable because they held out no prospect of satisfying Indian opinion. They were in some respects retrograde, and in their more ambitious form they involved drastic and unpopular geographical redistributions (Sections 242-243). Our own conclusion was that the provinces were the right areas in which to begin the progressive realisation of responsible government. Anything smaller was too small; the Government of India, on the other hand, was concerned with the supreme interests of the country and was not the right sphere in which to initiate constitutional changes.

5. I may now summarise very briefly our cardinal proposals:

(1.) In the Provinces some responsibility should be given at once. Pending the development of an electorate, responsibility cannot be given in vital matters. Therefore we must amend the constitution so as to transfer to Indians the control of some provincial matters while reserving others (Sections 212, 213, 238, 240).

* War Cabinet Paper 112-D.
(2.) The Government of India must, for the time being, remain responsible to Parliament only, and therefore capable of imposing its will in essential matters, but it should be simultaneously given a legislative assembly far more representative of Indian opinion than the present Legislative Council. These two objects can only be achieved by instituting a bicameral system such as may develop hereafter into a full parliamentary constitution (Sections 276, 277).

(3.) Expedients such as we propose cannot be permanent, and must be recognised as transitional; and machinery must be provided to ensure, as fitness is demonstrated, the considered and orderly enlargement of the popular element in the Government (Sections 260–264, 288).

(4.) While Parliament's control should be relaxed in detail, means should simultaneously be found to make it better informed and more real (Sections 291–295).

(5.) The door should be opened to the closer ultimate relations of the Native States with British India (Sections 305–312).

These are the fundamental proposals. But I attach great importance also to making local self-government a reality (Sections 192–197), increasing the number of Indians in the public services (Sections 313–317) and granting military commissions (Section 330).

6. Now as to the degree of support which our proposals may be expected to receive. I attach in the first place a joint letter signed by my colleagues from England and Mr. Basu, which speaks for itself. I attach also a copy of a despatch which is on its way from the Government of India. I shall be surprised if the divergence of view on points of detail which is mentioned proves to relate to any of our five fundamental points, or embraces more than a small minority of Lord Chelmsford's Council. On points of detail in a matter of such complexity it was not to be expected that men of very different views would all see alike.

7. As regards Local Governments, I have already stated that we conferred both individually and collectively with Heads of Provinces. But time did not allow us to place our final proposals before them. I am expressing, therefore, only my personal opinion when I say that I believe that our proposals will have the adherence of the majority of the eight Local Governments to whom they are intended to apply.

8. As regards Indian opinion, I am hopeful of receiving considerable support from sober and moderate men. No scheme which the British Government could bring before Parliament could satisfy those who are radically opposed to British rule, whose hostility must therefore in any case be expected. But judging from candid conversations which I have had with responsible politicians, and in which I have freely expressed my ideas, I believe that, provided we take action promptly, we shall secure widespread support. Sober opinion is growing tired of the excesses and impracticable utterances of the more violent party, and will welcome genuine reforms such as we offer them by constituting the Provincial Governments with a strong popular element, by providing machinery for further progress, and by Indianising the services. Mr. Basu tells me that in his own discussions with his friends among leading politicians he found 'complete unanimity of approval of the general and essential features of the scheme.' He adds: 'I am assured that... your scheme will have the cordial support of by far the largest and most influential section of the Indian people.' I attach importance also to the fact that Sir Sankaran Nair, the Indian member of Lord Chelmsford's Council, is in general agreement with the proposals.

9. The general attitude of the European non-official community is well known. They are not much interested in politics; they are not enthusiastic about the announcement of the 20th August. But the clearer-sighted members of the community fully recognise that advance is necessary. Their opinion will be critical but by no means uncompromisingly adverse; indeed, I believe that possibly a majority in Bombay and a considerable minority in Calcutta will adhere to the scheme. The agitation conducted by Lord Sydenham certainly does not represent the views of the community as a whole.

10. Finally, I hope that the official services, which recognise as clearly as anyone that the situation imperatively demands new treatment, though they may have valuable criticisms to offer on points of detail, will lend their undoubtedly effective voice in support of such a programme as we put forward. In any case,
I feel sure that they will loyally support whatever the decision of His Majesty's Government is.

11. I come now to the action which I hope the Cabinet will agree to take. It would, of course, be an immense gain if our proposals could go forth to encounter the criticism for which we are explicitly pledged to afford an opportunity, under the definite endorsement of the Cabinet. But the subject is very complex, and at this time of great pre-occupation, it seems to me impossible that the Cabinet should give it the necessary study without involving great delay in publication. But delay is in itself an evil. I know that the Viceroy thinks so, and my colleagues have expressed the same opinion in the letter which I attach. There is great danger that if we delay to take action we shall afford another opportunity to those who wish to misrepresent us in India of saying that faith is again being broken. Therefore, of the three courses which were suggested at the Cabinet's preliminary consideration of this matter, I incline to think that the alternative of assenting to publication for criticism both in England and in India without detailed consideration or endorsement by the Cabinet is the best practical course.

12. I am reluctant to add to the war anxieties of the Cabinet, but even the question of political changes in India cannot be dissociated from the war. India's capacity for war effort is definitely limited, and I do not pretend that anything we can do to satisfy her political aspirations will call forth such access of co-operation as will be in any way decisive. But it is certainly important to avoid a state of things in India which would not only impair her war effort, but might also place new positive burdens upon the military resources of the Empire. At the Conference which, in response to the Prime Minister's recent message, the Viceroy called at Delhi, it was apparent, in spite of the absence of the more bitter critics of Government, that it would be impossible to secure the cessation of political activity during the war, and that many of those present were awaiting the application to India in a manner suitable to its conditions of the principles for which the British Empire stands. If, therefore, there is any prolonged delay in making it plain to India that His Majesty's Government have under their consideration a genuine measure of advance towards responsible government, I apprehend that the comparative quietude of expectancy which has characterised the country since August last will come to an end, and that we shall be faced with a recurrence of agitation, and possibly disorder, with which it will tax our immediate resources to cope, and, what is more serious, which will leave a feeling of great bitterness that will make the eventual settlement much more difficult.

E. S. M.

May 29, 1918.

APPENDIX I.

H.M.S. "Dufferin,"

Dear Montagu,

You have communicated to us, who formed part of your mission to India, the scheme of constitutional reforms proposed in the system of government in British India which has been worked out and agreed upon between His Excellency the Viceroy and yourself.

The scheme is the outcome of discussions, in which you have given us the privilege of taking a continuous part, and it embodies the conclusions arrived at in those discussions. We need only say, therefore, that we uniteiy support your recommendations and are prepared to recommend their adoption to public opinion, both in England and in India. In our view, while safeguarding Imperial interests and providing for the proper maintenance of law and order, they carry out His Majesty's Government's announcement of the 20th August last by providing at once for such an instalment of self-government as is at present practicable and safe, together with statutory machinery for its development at subsequent stages.

We would further submit an urgent plea for the publication of these proposals as soon as can be arranged. It is impossible now to avoid discussions on constitutional reforms in India, whatever may be the objection to having such discussions in war-time; but we are convinced that there would be serious inconveniences and even risks unless the further discussion of these subjects is guided by regard, on the one hand, to the substantial measure of reform that is now practicable, and, on the other, to the limits within which reforms at this stage must be necessarily confined. We would, therefore, wish to represent to you our strong view of the desirability of
publishing the proposals for consideration, both in England and in India, without any undue delay.

We have only, in conclusion, to express to you our sense of the readiness with which you have throughout taken into consideration any suggestions which we have from time to time placed before you; and to assure you that if at any later stage we could give any assistance towards the passage of these reforms into law, we would gladly do whatever is in our power.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) DONOUGHMORE.
F. W. DUKE.
BHUPENDRANATH BANU.
CHARLES ROBERTS.

The Right Hon. the Secretary of State for India.

APPENDIX II.

Despatch from the Government of India.

1. We have the honour to inform you that we have been furnished with copies of the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms drawn up by His Excellency the Viceroy and yourself for submission to His Majesty's Government.

2. Though this most important document represents views for which the signatories thereto are alone responsible, we desire to record the fact that it was framed after prolonged discussion with us. There are, no doubt, detailed recommendations on which some of us hold divergent views, but we wish to convey our cordial support to general policy which the Report embodies.

II.—NOTE BY LORD CURZON.

I was instructed at the Cabinet of the 24th May to write a note on Mr. Montagu's report of his recent mission to India.

This report has been circulated to the Cabinet, and gives an account in general terms of the proposals put forward by his colleagues and himself, and of the degree of support which he expects them to meet with in India.

I think that the Secretary of State has under-estimated the fundamental nature of the change which he proposes to introduce into the Government of India, proceeding as it does far beyond anything that has been previously contemplated or discussed in this country (even if it falls short of the expectations that may have been aroused among the small but vociferous band of extremists in India), as well as the degree of opposition which it will encounter.

His proposals, if adopted, will create a complete revolution in the governing relations between India and this country—a revolution all the more incalculable in effect, because some of these plans are admittedly only a transitory expedient, bridging the gap between the old order and an unexplored future, and are certain to give rise to an early agitation for concessions much more extreme. This revolution may be inevitable. It may conceivably be wise. I do not pause to discuss that to-day. But let none of my colleagues conceal from himself that the change will be as profound and vital as between an Ireland under the Imperial Parliament at Westminster and an Ireland under a Home Rule Parliament at Dublin.

Further, when the proposals are known, I doubt very much whether the "official classes," as the Secretary of State calls them, by which I understand him to mean the Indian Civil Service in particular, will give them even the tacit measure of support which he anticipates. On the contrary, I think that they will excite a very widespread criticism and alarm.

It would be premature, however, to discuss these aspects of the case, or to determine to-day whether we shall do well to accept the scheme or not.

The Secretary of State's immediate plea is for early publication and an appeal to public opinion in this country and in India. There I think that he is right.
The reasons against such a course are not of negligible value. It may be said that publication will render it difficult for the Government to modify, and impossible for the Government to reject, the main outlines of the scheme hereafter. Nationalist opinion in India may agitate for more, but will not, it may be urged, be content with less. It will be represented with more or less plausibility—and no doubt with much exaggeration—that a deplorable effect would be produced in India—by which, be it remembered, is always meant only a minute section of the entire Indian population—if curtailment of the plan were afterwards insisted upon. This argument is indeed always employed by the advocates of any considerable change in India—we have heard it more than once during the past few weeks—and India is not deficient in either the talent or the experience to see that the prophecy, if made, shall be as far as possible fulfilled.

Further, it may be said that the experiment of launching upon the public a scheme for the future government of India which, though it emanates from the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, has not been seen by the local Governments in India, has not been approved (so far as I know) by the India Council at home, and has not even been examined by the Cabinet in London, is wholly without precedent in the history of our relations with India. I believe this to be the case. No previous change—and none has approached this in magnitude—has been inaugurated without having to run the gauntlet for many months, perhaps years, of all these tribunals, or without the final imprimatur of Government approval.

There is much force in these arguments, but I do not regard them as conclusive for these reasons.

In the first place, the proposed appeal to public opinion before a final decision is arrived at is in a sense an admission that that opinion—and it cannot be the opinion of a selected class or section only of the interested parties—is entitled to be heard before judgment is passed, and may even exercise a potent influence upon the verdict. This in itself may render change not more but less difficult.

Secondly, the publication of the Report should be accompanied by the clearest explanation that it has taken place before and in the main because the Government have not yet found time to consider, much less endorse, the scheme, and has been sanctioned only with a view to help the Government in undertaking the task later on.

I should not advocate publication were such an explanation—which can be given in reply to a Parliamentary question or otherwise—not to be forthcoming, nor should I advocate it if I thought that publication were to be accompanied by a full exposition of the scheme from the Secretary of State, since such an exposition could not fail to invest the announcement with a measure of Government authority which it does not at present possess, and would render it exceedingly difficult either for the Government to introduce, or for the Secretary of State to accept, modifications later on. When a Secretary of State speaks from the Front Bench he speaks for the Government with full responsibility, and his utterance implies their united support. But in this case he is the author of a report to the Government analogous to the many reports that are constantly presented to the War Cabinet by Ministers and Secretaries of State, and which do not become a Government policy or claim the privilege of being so announced in Parliament until the Government has discussed and accepted them in Cabinet. If this report is published, in advance it is only because considerations of expediency and convenience appear to render it desirable.

In these circumstances the appeal to public opinion if made should not, I submit, be attended by anything which will, however remotely, appear to prejudge the ultimate decision. Indeed, if such a statement were made in the House of Commons there are plenty of persons in the House of Lords who would at once challenge it and insist on exploring the real position. Equally if the Secretary of State does not make a pronouncement here, ought the Viceroy not to make a pronouncement, as I am told that he desires to do, in India. If he were at liberty to do so, any substantial modification of the scheme at a later date could only be followed either by a further rebuff to him or by his resignation. When public opinion in India and here has had time to pronounce upon the scheme the Cabinet will be in a position to undertake its examination with greater advantage. Till then I will ask leave to postpone any remarks that I may have to make, only asking my colleagues once more to bear in mind that whether the proposed plans be regarded as moderate or extreme, and very likely both opinions will be heard, they will, if accepted, involve a complete and irrevocable change in the political and administrative relations of Great Britain and India. For they propose to do two things, neither of which has hitherto been contemplated, and both of which have been quite recently and solemnly disavowed by British Liberal Ministers,
viz., (1) to lay the foundations of a parliamentary system in India, which was almost passionately repudiated by Lord Morley in 1909; and (2) to set up almost complete Indian provincial autonomy, which Lord Crewe, his successor as Secretary of State, from his seat in Parliament not less emphatically and authoritatively disavowed. Both of these Ministers may have been quite mistaken. But their mistakes, if they were so, should make us more, not less, cautious.

C. OF K.

June 3, 1918.

III.—Note by Mr. Chamberlain.

Lord Curzon's note on Mr. Montagu's Report raises three important questions: First, whether the Report is now to be published; secondly, what action is to be taken by the Cabinet upon it; and, thirdly, if it be published, what attitude are the Secretary of State and the Viceroy to adopt towards it?

Lord Curzon rightly lays stress upon the immense change in the governing relations between India and this country which is proposed in the Report, and the Cabinet will be under no misapprehension upon this point. It is, in my opinion, no exaggeration to say, as Lord Curzon does, that it amounts to "a revolution." But it is not, in my opinion, Mr. Montagu's Report which make this revolution. It is the declaration which the Secretary of State was authorised to make on behalf of His Majesty's Government on the 20th August, 1917. It was then stated that "the policy of His Majesty's Government is . . . . the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

It is this declaration which is the fundamental point of departure from anything which up to that time had been avowed by any British Government. From the moment that it became necessary to make a declaration it was, in my opinion, impossible for the British Government to avow as the goal of their policy any other object than the one here stated. But once that object was avowed, the break with the past was made, and the revolution of which Lord Curzon speaks became inevitable.

This declaration, necessitated by the rapid development of Indian politics under the stimulus of the war and the declared war aims of Great Britain and her Allies, naturally aroused great expectations in India where the interest in political reform was stimulated and sustained at a high pitch by the visit of the Secretary of State and his colleagues. Whatever be the possible disadvantages of publishing the Report, I think they are outweighed by the certain disadvantages of attempting to withhold it. It will be remembered that the Secretary of State informed Parliament that ample opportunity would be afforded for public discussion and consideration of any changes which he might recommend. To attempt now to withhold the Report would, I think, produce on the one hand an impression that the British Government was insincere, and did not intend to follow up the declaration of August last, and on the other hand, would lead to a violent agitation in India which would set at naught all the limits and restrictions fixed in that declaration and would sweep into the ranks of the extremists all the disappointed reformers of moderate views.

I agree, therefore, with Lord Curzon, that the Report must be published. I agree, further, that under the circumstances it must be published for information and discussion, in advance of any detailed consideration by His Majesty's Government and without their final decision upon it. I think, however, that it would be a misfortune if it went out without any indication of our views. It seems to me that we should accompany the publication with a statement repeating the declaration of the 20th August; that we should reaffirm the decision of His Majesty's Government in favour of "the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire," and their determination that "substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible," but that we should also reaffirm explicitly, because it has been challenged, the statement that "the British Government and the Government of India must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance."

I think it would be a great advantage if we could also say that, whilst reserving for further consideration the methods of applying these principles, we accept certain broad principles laid down in the Report, such for instance as that the Government of India must be capable of imposing its will in essential matters, and must therefore remain for the present responsible to Parliament only; that in no case can complete
responsibility, even for provincial government, be transferred at present to an elected assembly or to an assembly in which elected members are in a majority, but that we accept the idea of a division of subjects and the immediate transfer of responsibility in regard to some of them to such bodies. Again I should like to affirm the necessity for allowing great latitude in the application of the reforms to the different provinces, and the expediency of a large measure of devolution of authority from the Government of India to provincial Governments, with the consequent relaxation of control by the home Government and Parliament. The circumstances of the Indian provinces are so diverse, that on no other conditions is progress safe or indeed possible. It is true, as pointed out by Lord Curzon, that this runs counter to Lord Crewe's declaration in the House of Lords (though not to his Delhi despatch), but in my opinion no more shortsighted declaration of policy in relation to India was ever made unless it be Lord Morley's expressed belief that the reforms associated with his name offered a permanent resting place for the Government of India. It may be that the Secretary of State would be prepared to suggest other broad principles which might be similarly stated. In particular, I think it likely that he will consider that some mention must be made of the relation of the Native States to British India. But these are matters which can be discussed in greater detail if the principle of such a declaration is approved. The reasons for which I think some declaration is important are, first, to reassure moderate Indian opinion and to make clear to all classes of opinion that there will be no going back from the declaration of the 20th August, and secondly to fix with at least equal clearness the limits beyond which His Majesty's Government will not permit the present measure of reform to go. To leave any doubt upon the first point would imperil our chances of success by encouraging any portion of the Indian Civil Service or Anglo-Indian community which is opposed, to the policy then announced to believe that it is still possible for them to defeat that policy in principle instead of concentrating their attention on the safeguards which are necessary in its execution. To leave any doubt upon the second point would be to forgo the use of the immense influence which an authoritative declaration by Government still has upon the Indian people and to make easy the attempt of extremists to rush Indian opinion over the limits which His Majesty's Government deliberately fixed when they decided to enter upon the new path.

Lastly, I come to the consideration of the attitude which the Secretary of State and Viceroy must adopt to the Report when published. It is clear that under the circumstances the position of the Secretary of State, though he is a member of the Government, cannot be exactly that of the Cabinet or of the Government as a whole. It has to be remembered that the Report is the Report of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy and that it bears their signatures. They cannot disclaim a responsibility for its recommendations which the Cabinet have not yet assumed; they cannot treat the propositions announced in it as open questions to the same extent that the Cabinet can do. But I agree with Lord Curzon that it is very desirable that they should commit themselves as little as possible to the particular methods which they have sketched, and not at all to details—in other words, I think they should confine themselves as much as possible to a broad exposition of the principles underlying the scheme, and to such explanations as may be necessary to make their proposals intelligible and to prevent or remove misapprehensions. But I think it would be quite impossible to exact from them an undertaking that they should launch their bark upon the ocean without a word of explanation and without the right to give some broad explanation and argumentative defence of the conclusions at which they provisionally arrived. They have very wisely abstained from attempting to solve in detail many of the problems with which they were confronted. They have, in my opinion rather unfortunately, entered into details on some points which were not essential for the purpose in hand. I hope that in anything they say they will make it clear that they still have an open mind as to the best methods of carrying out many of the objects which they wish to secure, and that they are ready to welcome and profit by both the public and private discussion to which their Report will give rise. But I think that the Cabinet must be content to trust to their discretion in the use of the liberty which cannot be denied to them. The position of any Viceroy or Secretary of State who had signed such a Report and was yet precluded from giving any explanation of it or replying to any criticisms would, I think, be one that none of us would be prepared to accept for himself, and cannot impose upon a colleague.

June 6, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 429.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, June 10, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 10).

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.

General Sir Henry H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 and 2).

Rear-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, C.B., Deputy First Sea Lord (for Minutes 1 to 14).

Major-General F. H. Sykes, C.B., C.M.G., Chief of the Air Staff (for Minutes 1 to 14).

The Right Hon. W. Long, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (for Minutes 15 to 18).

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Dally Jones, C.M.G., Acting Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. Storr, Assistant Secretary.

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

I. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that a German attack had broken out the previous morning between Montdidier and Noyon, on a front of 30 kilom. The front of attack, however, was reduced in the afternoon to 25 kilom. On this part of the front the French had 7 divisions in line, 3 in rear, and 3 still further back. Eleven German divisions had been identified, 2 of which were picked divisions from Prince Rupprecht's army, 1 being a Guards division and the other the 3rd Jagers. The Germans had succeeded in penetrating to a depth of 6,000 yards at the deepest point. The French, however, were satisfied with the situation, and stated that the losses suffered by the enemy were much heavier than in the previous battle. The Chief of the
Russia:
The Caucasus.
2. With reference to War Cabinet 425, Minute 8, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that it was thought that the 217th German division had been moved to the Caucasus.

Attention was drawn to the fact that this might create a rather serious situation, and it was suggested that the Eastern Committee should consider the matter. It was stated, however, that the attention of the Eastern Committee had already been drawn to the possible transfer of the 217th German division to the Caucasus, but it was feared that little could be done in the matter.

Submarines.
3. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that several attacks on enemy submarines had been carried out by aircraft patrols. No definite results, however, had been reported.

Zeebrugge Bombarded.
4. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that our monitors had bombarded Zeebrugge with satisfactory results. The objectives had been the lock gates, the salvage craft, and an assemblage of vessels round the block-ships. Three enemy destroyers were also seen inside the lock, but these left by the canal for Bruges.

Air Raids on Brindisi.
5. Admiral Hope reported that the enemy had carried out two air raids on Brindisi on the 9th June. There were forty Italian, but no British casualties. Two machines, with the probability of a third, were brought down, and two prisoners made.

Air Raids on Cattaro and Durazzo.
6. The Deputy First Sea Lord stated that British machines had raided Cattaro, and Italian machines had raided Durazzo, on the morning of the 9th June with satisfactory results.

Russia.
7. In reply to a question by Lord Curzon, Admiral Hope stated that no news had been received from Captain Cromie, at Petrograd.

Loss of New Handley-Page Aeroplane.
8. In reply to a question regarding the new Handley-Page machine which had fallen over Golfer's Green on the previous Saturday, the Chief of the Air Staff stated that five occupants had been killed, but there was one survivor, Commander Ogilvie. The Chief of the Air Staff said that the cause of the accident was being investigated, but nothing definite was known at present. The machine was climbing steeply, and it is thought that at about 1,000 feet three of the engines stopped simultaneously. Enquiries were being pursued.

General Sykes said that another of these machines would be ready shortly. Forty altogether were on order.

Enemy Aircraft in France.
9. General Sykes stated that there was little increase in the number of enemy squadrons in France. The enemy were, however, trying different flying tactics. They now came out in bigger formations, and at different times during the day. Their usual patrol work over the lines suffered somewhat in consequence.
10. The Chief of the Air Staff said that the bombing of our back areas carried out by the enemy lately had been severe. We were endeavouring to counter this by organising the aerial defence of important towns in the back areas on the same lines as the defences in this country. This would necessitate increased numbers of anti-aircraft guns and searchlights. One squadron for night fighting was being sent from England to Abbeville as a first measure.

11. The Chief of the Air Staff said that there was no change in the aerial situation in Italy or in Mesopotamia, with the exception that there had been an increase in the number of enemy machines in the Venetian sector.

12. General Sykes stated that part of the American air personnel, of which there was the equivalent of four squadrons, hitherto training with British squadrons in France, were now being organised into two individual squadrons, and were being given some of our machines in order that they might commence operations. It was hoped that the first of these squadrons would be ready for use on the 20th instant, and the second about a fortnight later.

13. With regard to the three aerial squadrons in Ireland, General Sykes stated that the whole of Ireland, with the exception of the western coast, had been divided up into patrol areas. He said that he did not know whether it was possible to take one or two of these squadrons away; if so, they could be usefully employed in France at the present moment.

The Prime Minister said that this depended on the number of infantry that could be taken away from Ireland, but he was seeing Field-Marshal Lord French that evening, and would talk over the matter with him.

General Sykes said that, in view of the difficulties aeroplanes experienced in the mountainous country in the west of Ireland, small airships might possibly be more useful for observation work.

The Prime Minister said that he would also bring this to the notice of Lord French.

14. Attention was drawn to the fact that there were a great many American gunners for whom no guns could be found at present, and that it would be wasteful to turn them into infantry, and it was suggested that these gunners might well be drafted into British heavy-gun batteries which were at the moment short of men.

The Secretary of State for War undertook to look into the matter, and to report to the War Cabinet.

15. With reference to War Cabinet 413, Minute 11, Mr. Chamberlain said that he had been authorised by the War Cabinet to examine Sir Edward Carson’s Report (Paper G—190) with a view to the reorganisation of the Economic Offensive Committee. He had been impressed by the strong recommendations contained in the Report that the Committee should be reconstructed on a somewhat different basis. The situation had been examined afresh by the Committee under Mr. Barnes’s chairmanship, with the result that a Report had been circulated (Paper G—200), which the War Cabinet now had before them. The Report recommended—

(a.) That a Committee of Economic Defence and Development be appointed.
(b.) That this Committee should be a Cabinet Committee, consisting of a member of the War Cabinet as Chairman, together with the Minister of Reconstruction, the President of the Board of Trade, the Minister of Blockade (who would also represent the Foreign Office), the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and India, the Minister for Labour, and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

c.) That the Committee should meet regularly once a week at a fixed hour.

d.) That the Committee should have wide powers to deal within their discretion with any economic questions, and should refer to the War Cabinet only such large questions of policy as require Cabinet sanction, or questions upon which they have been unable to agree.

e.) That the Committee should have the authority to call for reports as to the execution of the measures decided upon.

(f.) That the Secretary of the War Cabinet should be instructed to refer to the Committee economic questions before they are brought to the Cabinet, unless there are special reasons to the contrary, and the Secretary of the Committee should be a member of the War Cabinet Secretariat, so that the work of the Committee may be properly co-ordinated with the general work of the Cabinet.

Mr. Chamberlain said that it was only at the last moment that he had learned of the scope of the enquiries pursued by the Imperial Trade Relations Committee, presided over by Mr. Long. He had previously understood that this Committee, which had been appointed by the Prime Minister a year ago, dealt only with the Imperial Preference Resolutions of the Imperial War Cabinet. Mr. Chamberlain said that the last thing the Economic Offensive Committee wished to do was to create machinery that would cause fresh overlapping. He felt, however, that there was scope for both Committees, and that the line of demarcation between the functions of the two Committees could be determined by the two Chairmen. It was most important that the two Chairmen should keep in the closest touch, with a view to prevent any overlapping.

The Prime Minister said that it would be impossible for the Cabinet to define the spheres of work in any Terms of Reference to the Committee, but if the Chairmen agreed as to division of work and gave one another the benefit of any previous experience that either Committee might have had, the difficulty in regard to overlapping would be minimised.

Mr. Long agreed that duplication of work could be prevented. Moreover, if he were represented by Mr. Hewins on the Economic Committee, there would be no danger of his not being kept informed of the work done by that Committee.

Mr. Barnes said that, since the retirement of Sir Edward Carson, he had acted temporarily as Chairman of the Economic Committee. He would like now, however, to vacate the chair in favour of Mr. Chamberlain, but he would wish to remain a member of the Committee.

The War Cabinet, in approving generally the recommendations contained in the Report (Paper G.-209), decided—

(i.) That the Committee should consist of the following:—

Mr. Chamberlain (Chairman),
Mr. Barnes,
The Minister of Reconstruction,
The President of the Board of Trade,
The Minister of Blockade (who would also represent the Foreign Office),
The Secretary of State for the Colonies,
The Secretary of State for India,
The Minister of Labour,
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury,
Sir Alfred Mond,

(ii.) That Mr. Chamberlain should consult with the Secretary of the War Cabinet as to who should be the Secretary or Secretaries of the Committee;

(iii.) That it should be left to the discretion of the Chairman of the Economic Defence and Development Committee and the Imperial Trade Relations Committee to define their spheres of work, and, as far as possible, prevent overlapping.

16. A discussion took place on Government organisation, in the course of which the formation of a similar Standing Cabinet Committee of the Interior (or of Home Affairs) to consider all questions of internal policy was suggested. It was further suggested that it should be the duty of the Committee to consider all domestic questions which required the co-operation of more than one Department, or were of such importance that they would otherwise call for the consideration of the War Cabinet. For example, recent instances had occurred in the cases of Afforestation, Ministry of Health, and Education. The Committee should have a wide discretion in dealing finally with questions on which agreement was reached, and should refer to the War Cabinet only such large questions of policy as required Cabinet sanction, or questions on which they had been unable to reach agreement.

The Cabinet approved the proposal, but wished it to be quite clear that the proposed Committee of Home Affairs should not be regarded as a second Cabinet.

Mr. Balfour also strongly advised against two Cabinets.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) A Standing Cabinet Committee of Home Affairs should be appointed to consider all questions of internal policy;

(b.) The Committee should be composed of:

- The Home Secretary (in the Chair),
- The President of the Board of Trade,
- The President of the Local Government Board,
- The Minister of Reconstruction,
- President, Board of Education,
- The Minister of Labour,
- The Secretary for Scotland, and
- One of the Law Officers of the Crown (who might be either the Attorney-General or the Solicitor-General, as occasion required);

(c.) The Committee should meet regularly once a week at a fixed hour;

(d.) It should be the duty of the Committee to consider all domestic questions which require the co-operation of more than one Department, or of such importance that they would otherwise call for the consideration of the Cabinet. The Committee should have a wide discretion in dealing finally with questions on which agreement is reached, and should refer to the War Cabinet only such large questions of policy as require Cabinet sanction, or questions on which they have been unable to reach agreement;

(e.) The Secretary to the War Cabinet should have instructions to refer to the Committee all questions falling within their competence before they are brought to the Cabinet,
unless there are special reasons of urgency which make this course impossible, and that the Secretary of the Committee should be a member of the War Cabinet Secretariat;

(f.) The Chairman should have authority to invite the attendance of other Ministers as occasion might require, and those Ministers should be authorised to seek the assistance of the Committee where they feel the need for it.

Pemberton Billing Case.

17. With reference to War Cabinet 425, Minute 17, in regard to the Pemberton Billing case, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he had heard from the Attorney-General to the effect that the Law Officers were of opinion that no step could usefully be taken by the Government in relation to the Pemberton Billing matter. The only possible course would be a Commission of Enquiry, and the objections to such a course were numerous and manifest.

The Chairman of the Exchequer suggested that perhaps it might be possible to prosecute some of the witnesses for perjury.

The War Cabinet asked—

The Chancellor of the Exchequer to refer this question about perjury to the Attorney-General.

Ireland:
Voluntary Service Movement.

18. The Secretary of State for the Colonies informed the War Cabinet that he had received a letter from Mr. Arthur Lynch, M.P., who was coming forward as a zealous and active supporter of the voluntary service movement in Ireland, saying that he thought he would be able to raise a battalion in Ireland of men who would volunteer for service, and asking for permission to start recruiting at once. He said that the Chief Secretary was in favour of the project, which was, however, opposed by the Viceroy on account of Mr. Lynch’s record in the South African War, when he fought against us, was taken prisoner, and was condemned to be shot as a traitor.

It was agreed that Mr. Lynch was now thoroughly imbued with pro-Ally sentiment, that in the South African War he had shown fine soldierly qualities, and that, in the circumstances, his previous history should not be allowed to stand in the way of his present patriotic offer.

At the request of the War Cabinet—

Mr. Long undertook to interview Field-Marshal Lord French in the course of the next twenty-four hours, and to ascertain whether he were not prepared to change his mind, and to report the result to the War Cabinet prior to the War Office being approached on the matter.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 10, 1918.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, June 12, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 4 and 5).

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.


Lieutenant-General Sir H. V. Cox, K.C.M.G., C.S.I. (for Minutes 6 and 7).


Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel L. Stood, Assistant Secretary.

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there was nothing to report in addition to the telegrams which had been received in regard to the counter-attack carried out by the French on the previous day. He had heard by telephone that the French were satisfied, on the whole; but no more details had been supplied. The French appeared to have used twenty divisions, and, so far, seventeen German divisions (including three from Prince Rupprecht's army) had been identified. No doubt, however, the Germans must have used a good many more than that number, because previous
experience had shown that during a retirement it was very difficult to identify the divisions of the advancing side. The Germans claimed that they had captured a total of 13,000 prisoners, including wounded, since the 9th June. The total number of British and French prisoners captured by the Germans since the 21st March now amounted to close on 200,000.

2. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that a submarine had been attacked with depth charges near the Tees, and possibly was sunk or badly damaged.

3. The Deputy First Sea Lord reported that, during a raid on Bruges Docks and Zeebrugge, 5½ tons of bombs were dropped.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 428, Minute 7, in regard to the sinking of the Dutch hospital-ship “Koningin Regentes,” the question was raised as to how the newspapers obtained information as to the departure of Sir George Cave and the delegates, which appeared in the press almost immediately before the delegates left. The view was expressed that it was most undesirable that any mention should be made in the press in regard to the movements of British Ministers about to proceed overseas. It was conceivable that the information may have originated from Holland.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary should draw the attention of the Press Bureau to the matter, and ask for a report as to how the information in regard to the time of departure of Sir George Cave and the other delegates was obtained by the press.

5. The War Cabinet had under consideration a note by the Director of Military Operations on a Report by the British Military Representative in regard to the Allied policy in the Balkans (Paper G.T.-4809).

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he wished strongly to endorse the request made by General Sackville-West, that the situation with regard to the Allied defensive policy in the Balkan theatre should be put on a more satisfactory footing. General Guillaumat had been repeatedly asked for his plans in the event of a retirement, but so far they had not been obtained. If (as there was reason to fear) there were no proper plans, it was quite possible that there might be a bad disaster to our troops in that theatre of war. In this connection the Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed the War Cabinet that General Guillaumat was being recalled, and was being replaced by General Franchette d’Esperey. In his Report General Sackville-West said that he would like the question brought before the Military Representatives at a very early date, and added that his position would be greatly strengthened if he received a letter from the Secretary of the War Cabinet asking for the views of the Military Representatives as to the adequacy of the plans which General Guillaumat was instructed in December last to forward.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary, under instructions from the Prime Minister, should inform the British Military Representatives that the War Cabinet have expressed anxiety as regards the situa-
Indian Reforms:
Publication of Joint Report.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 428, Minute 13, the War Cabinet had before them a draft of a proposed reply, by the Secretary of State for India, to a question in the House of Commons as to the publication of the joint report of the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy on Indian Constitutional Reforms (Paper G.T.-4310) (Appendix I).

The War Cabinet decided—

That the reply should be as follows:—

The Viceroy and I have embodied our proposals for carrying out the decision of His Majesty's Government of August last in the form of a report to the War Cabinet. It will be remembered that in the August announcement it was stated that ample opportunity would be afforded for public discussion of the proposals which would be submitted in due course to Parliament. Owing to their heavy preoccupation with the immediate work of the war, the Government have not yet been able to consider the report and to formulate their conclusions upon the proposals contained in it. But they have decided that it shall be presented to Parliament as soon as sufficient copies are available in India and here so as to afford the opportunity for public discussion promised in the August announcement, and so that in coming to their final decision the Government may have the advantage of considering any suggestions to which its publication may give rise.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 428, Minute 12, the War Cabinet had before them a note by the Secretary of State for India, dated 27th May, 1915, to which were appended certain telegrams which had passed between the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy (Paper G.T.-4661) (Appendix II), and a note by Lord Curzon on "Indian Commissions" (Paper G.T.-4752) (Appendix III).

The Secretary of State for India said that certain proposals in regard to the grant of Indian commissions had been made by the Commander-in-Chief in India during his own absence in that country. These proposals had been temporarily rejected by the Cabinet. His own memorandum summarised the case, and he had only a few additional remarks to make. During his visit to India he had been deeply impressed by the attitude of the Indian people towards this question, an attitude which was wholly produced by the war. There was a demand by all sorts and conditions of Indians to be allowed to learn how to defend themselves. This was partly due to the bombardment of Madras by the "Linden," which brought war home to the people. It was also due to two apprehensions, which he would categorise as follows:—

(a.) The historic fear of a great Mohammedan invasion from the north, and

(b.) The new fear of Japan, which was, however, more remote.

The Indian people had said to him: "We rely upon you to defend us, but we see your great and numerous preoccupations elsewhere, and we want to learn how to defend ourselves and how to help you more." Running through it all there was a feeling in the nature of shame or regret that they had not been able to render greater assistance. He would cite one instance, where an Indian politician had said to him, when they were discussing the question of Indian reforms and the recommendations that would be made in the
Viceroy’s and his own report: “I have worked for thirty years to get recommendations of this kind made to the British Government; now that they are going forward, I can die in peace; but what gives me much greater satisfaction is that my nephew is now fighting in Mesopotamia.” This was said by a man who did not belong to the recognised fighting classes, the unsuitability of which for military service, was, however, not due to want of physical bravery but to want of physical stamina. The motives underlying this feeling were anxieties about the defence of their country, a desire for more adequate training, better military opportunities, and a wish to make good soldiers, in order that they might discharge their duties to their own country and the Empire. Now, after long and careful deliberation, the Commander-in-Chief in India had put forward a request for the grant of a maximum of 200 temporary King’s commissions; that number to be worked up to gradually, recipients being selected with the greatest care, and the output limited to about fifty every six months. India had already raised about 450,000 men, including those who were in the army at the commencement of the war, and an appeal had now been made to her for another 500,000 soldiers. The request now before the Cabinet was only for some 200 temporary commissions, to be distributed over two years, should the war last that period. In the circumstances, he could not regard this as an exaggerated demand. He doubted whether the Empire had the right to ask for 1,000,000 fighting men from India, unless it would at the same time concede these 200 commissions. Were they to say to India that she alone in the Empire was unfit to provide officers? There was to-day a large number of young Indian gentlemen who were anxious to serve in the war, but who had been denied the opportunity, as commissions were not open to them, and questions of caste and tradition made it impossible for them to go into the ranks. They were debarred, therefore, from fighting, and no other appropriate vocation was open to them. Mr. Montagu said that he had read Lord Curzon’s paper, and he thought that either Lord Curzon or himself had misunderstood the Commander-in-Chief’s intentions. Sir Charles Monro stated that he wanted the commissions he now asked for principally for men who had won them, or would win them, by valour in the field. He agreed, however, with Lord Curzon’s proposal, that to announce that they intended to give 200 commissions would be both unwise and dangerous, and General Monro himself had now suggested that the output should be limited to about fifty every half-year. In Mr. Montagu’s view, the Commander-in-Chief should not pledge himself to any particular number. The Prime Minister had sent a message to India making a stirring appeal for another 500,000 fighting men. Of these 500,000 about 100,000 would be utilised for new formations, and the remainder were required to keep up existing formations in the field. He thought, in the circumstances, that this request for 200 commissions was not a very serious consideration, and, in view of the Prime Minister’s appeal for another 500,000 men, he urged that it should be granted. With a view to meeting possible objections he had prepared, for the consideration of the Cabinet, the following draft of a telegram to be sent to India:—

“The Government approves of your proposals to recommend for commissions within the estimate of fifty in six months provided that—

1. Preference be given to those who have served in the non-commissioned ranks of the army and who have won them by gallantry in the field.

2. That you should be very careful in recommending from outside the army, and that no commission should be given from outside or inside the army except after adequate training, in order to ensure that only those officers should be
sent to units for whom there is every prospect of success.

"3. That no number should be named, but that you should not make recommendations beyond your estimate, and that when, if ever, you reach 100, you should report to the Government at home and obtain from them fresh authority before making any further recommendations."

Lord Curzon thought that the Indian gentlemen referred to by Mr. Montagu were hardly justified in saying that they had been granted no opportunities during the war, as the Cabinet had, the previous year, sanctioned the grant of nine commissions for valour in the field. They were all agreed as to the desirability and the justice of granting commissions to men who had proved their capacity to hold commissions, and had earned them on the field of battle. He confessed, however, that he was in considerable doubts as to the second category and as to what actually was proposed. As he had stated in his note, the telegram from India of the 20th April was not very clear. In one place it was stated:

(a.) That these civilian candidates were to be nominated by local Governments;
(b.) That, from the list, the Commander-in-Chief was to select names for submission to the Viceroy;
(c.) That approved candidates are then to be given temporary commissions, subject to His Majesty's approval.

This undoubtedly implied that the commissions would have no connection with active military service, but would be in the nature of political rewards. A little later it was stated:

(i.) That a fair standard of education and some knowledge of English would be demanded;
(ii.) That all nominees will undergo preliminary instruction at an Officers' Training School, during which they will be graded and paid as Cadets;
(iii.) That only after these tests had been satisfied would the commissions be granted.

These, he submitted, were two entirely different conceptions, as, in the one case, the commission was to be the result merely of nomination, and, in the other, of a medium of instruction and certain elementary tests of fitness. It appeared that the grant of these commissions was to be less in the nature of reward for valour in the field than of encouragement to the land-owning classes. He thought the War Cabinet must be quite sure that nominees, before receiving their commissions, would undergo exactly the same tests as an aspirant for an English commission. He thought it might be deduced from the telegrams that these Indian gentlemen would be expected to raise troops and subsequently to train them. Was it intended that they should first go to college, or were they to proceed at once on service? Apart from the uncertainty as to the exact nature of the latest proposals of the Commander-in-Chief in India, there was the larger aspect of the question to be considered. Lord Curzon said that for years he had advocated the grant of commissions to Indians, and had his scheme materialised, as he had intended at its inception, there would not now be nine Indian gentlemen holding commissions, but at least forty or fifty. He deprecated treating these 200 commissions as a kind of bribe to India to supply another 500,000 fighting men. The question of selection, moreover, would require the greatest care, and might lead to serious complications. If unsuitable men were given commissioned rank the officering of the Indian army in future would undoubtedly be adversely affected. If, later, it were necessary to withdraw the commissions now granted, a vast amount of ill-feeling would be caused, and if the withdrawal had to be on an extensive scale, the policy now proposed would be dealt a very serious
It seemed that fifty commissions were to be given at the end of every six months. It was hardly conceivable that any Indian gentleman could become fit to hold a commission in so short a time. When he started the Imperial Cadet Corps he had suggested that approved cadets might get their commissions after two years, but Lord Kitchener, who was then Commander-in-Chief in India, had insisted that this period should be extended to three. The recommendation now before the Cabinet came from the Government of India, and was strongly pressed by the present Commander-in-Chief there. Was this recommendation, however, endorsed by the military authorities at the India Office and the War Office? He had before him an earlier paper, emanating from the India Office and sent him by Lord Islington, which was, he understood, drafted by the Military Secretary to that Department, in which it was stated that, in the unanimous opinion of the military officers, the proposed departure would have a disastrous effect on the recruiting of British officers for the Indian army. He would like to know more precisely what would be the course followed in the case of a zemindar of good birth who might be nominated for a commission. Did such colleges exist in India for this purpose? In any case it seemed to be no longer the intention. He feared that the Cabinet were to-day really being asked to come to a decision of the gravest importance and of far-reaching consequences, for a political object rather than to meet a military need. That this was so was apparent from the Viceroy's telegram of 18th May, 1918:

"It is most important that we should retain the goodwill of this class, and that their power should be utilised to the fullest extent in the interests of recruiting, and we are assured that a position in the army, with the prospect of securing permanent commissions in the case of those found suitable, would best effect this object."

The project was, indeed, ardently advocated by Sir Charles Monro; but had it the support of the leading military authorities with experience of the Indian army? And, even if such support were accorded at Army Headquarters in India, might it not be due to a sense of discipline rather than to feelings of genuine conviction? He urged the Cabinet to be quite certain, before adopting the proposal, that it was acceptable to military officers of real Indian experience.

The Secretary of State for India pointed out that it was not proposed to grant commissions to Indians after six months' training. The training was to be adequate, and he understood it took a year. It was only intended that every six months a fresh batch of fifty candidates should be selected.

Mr. Chamberlain said that he was much impressed with the case made out by the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of State for India, and he was quite prepared now to recommend its acceptance by the Cabinet. He thought they might lay down the following premises:

(a.) That they were ready to agree unhesitatingly to the grant of commissions for proved gallantry in the field and capacity to lead; and

(b.) They would grant commissions to other carefully selected candidates, who, after being trained as cadets and proving their fitness, would be posted to regiments and proceed on active service.

No commissions should, however, be given merely as a reward for success in recruiting. He suggested that an addition should be made to Mr. Montagu's draft in the sense that no commissions should be granted for ornamental purposes, but only to men who were fit and willing to serve at the front. As there was some doubt as to the exact meaning of the Commander-in-Chief's proposals, he would further
suggest that the telegram should give the Cabinet's own interpretation of them, and say that these were accepted subject to the foregoing provisions. As he had said, he was himself in full agreement with the recommendations of the Indian Government. No doubt long-standing and deep-rooted prejudices would have to be overcome. Everything depended on the leaders in the army and the extent of their loyal support. Many retired officers would resent the innovation, but a younger generation was growing up which would view things in a different light. He thought that they might trust the present Commander-in-Chief, who was a man of sound and ripe judgment; his reputation was at stake in this matter, and he would be bound to watch carefully every stage in the scheme as it developed. He himself would give the Commander-in-Chief the full confidence of the Cabinet, and a wide discretion. When he was Secretary of State for India he had discussed various questions with General Monro before the latter went out to take up his present appointment, among them the question of commissions. He had begged General Monro to go into the matter with an open mind, and had stated that he found it impossible to say in perpetuity to the fighting classes of India, "You can enter the professions with the prospect of eventually obtaining the highest positions, such as a seat on the Viceroy's Council, or a place on the Bench of the High Court but, as a fighting man you have no opening." It was this inequality of opportunity which, in Mr. Chamberlain's opinion, demanded a solution of the problem. General Monro had replied: "My view is, that if you did not mean to give commissions to Indians, you should not have brought them over to fight in France." In commending this question to General Monro's careful consideration, he had added: "I do not care how small your scheme is to begin with. The essential thing is that the first experiment should succeed." There had therefore been no pressure on General Monro to go faster than he thought safe. Further, General Monro had expressed to him his wish to start in India an Army Council. Mr. Chamberlain was himself opposed to the idea, but he believed, however, that the Commander-in-Chief had meetings of the principal members of the Staff at least once a week, when these and kindred problems were fully discussed, and that it must therefore be assumed that the Commander-in-Chief's recommendation was made after hearing the views of men in close touch with the Indian army and with their general concurrence.

The Adjutant-General said that he thought the project of raising an additional 500,000 Indian fighting troops was a chimera, as there were no officers or N.O.O.'s to train them. The scheme, he doubted, looked well on paper, but the white personnel for its training was not available. He himself had served in India, and before coming to the Cabinet he had consulted the Quarter-Master-General, who had a wider experience of that country, and they were both of opinion that if this concession were made it would adversely affect the recruiting of British officers for the Indian army. The present proposals seemed to be based on the raising of the additional 500,000 men. In order to train these men General Monro had to look to the War Office to give them the proper stiffening of white personnel and, in present circumstances, this could not be provided.

The Secretary of State for India pointed out that he had only yesterday received a letter from the War Office approving the offer of the additional 500,000 troops.

The Military Secretary to the India Office said that when the proposal first came before the War Cabinet they had no time to give the question proper consideration, as the Viceroy was anxious to make an announcement on the subject at the Delhi Conference. The War Cabinet had then said it was too important a matter to be decided in a hurry, and had asked for time for a further consideration. On re-examination, the proposal did not seem to him to be nearly so harmful as when it was first put forward. Lord Curzon had quoted from an India Office paper, in which it had been stated
that the project would have a disastrous effect upon the recruiting of British officers for the Indian army. When this paper had been written it had been naturally (from the Government of India telegram), but, as it turned out, erroneously assumed that it was intended to grant 200 commissions at once. As regards the training of selected candidates, there was at present in India a cadet battalion for the training of British officers for British battalions. He surmised that it was now proposed either to start Indian cadet battalions on the same lines or to attach Indian companies to the existing British cadet battalion.

Mr. Barnes said that he favoured the proposal subject to preference being given to men who were selected on account of their valour in the field.

Mr. Bonar Law said that he thought that the latest telegrams from India indicated that the present Commander-in-Chief had carefully considered every argument which had been put forward by General Macready. He himself thought that the Cabinet should adopt the proposal.

General Smuts said that he thought the Cabinet might well be guided by the Commander-in-Chief and Sir Herbert Cox. If they were confident that the scheme was necessary, that it would be successful, and produce no evil consequences, he thought it should be accepted. He had been much influenced by the larger considerations that the Empire was growing more and more to depend upon India for manpower, more especially in the Mesopotamian and Palestine theatres of operations. He did not think that the request for commissions to be given to 200 officers for an existing army of 500,000 men was too much.

The Prime Minister said that it was essential to raise the extra 500,000 men in India. They had to consider the military problem which would confront us next year. He thought that the Secretary of State for India had made out a very strong case for bringing Indian gentlemen into the Indian Army. What they wanted to-day in the commissioned ranks was a man who was an educated gentleman. He himself was disposed to trust the Commander-in-Chief in India, who was a man of great knowledge and of some experience of Indian conditions, as he had fought in more than one frontier campaign. He did not agree with Lord Curzon that the proposed scheme was mainly political in its object. It appeared that, as a matter of fact, General Monro’s views were supported by his Staff, who were all officers who were on the spot, who were men of great Indian experience, and, further, who had to consider both the problems that confronted us to-day and those which would require consideration after the war. He was therefore prepared to accept the scheme, and to leave it to the Commander-in-Chief in India and his advisers to watch its development.

The War Cabinet decided—

To authorise the Secretary of State for India to send the following telegram to the Indian Government:

“His Majesty’s Government approves of your proposals to recommend for commissions up to the number of 200, provided that—

“(i.) A fair proportion be given to those who have served as Indian officers or in the non-commissioned ranks of the Indian army, and who have won them by good service in the field.

“(ii.) That you should be very careful that no commissions should be given from outside or inside the army except after adequate training, in order to ensure that only those officers should be sent to units for whom there is every prospect of success.

“(iii.) That no number should be named publicly.”
8. The Prime Minister drew the attention of the War Cabinet to a telegram dated the 10th June, 1918, from Colonel Wagstaffe, which indicated the possibility of the six divisions of American troops that were being shipped to France during the month of June being allocated to the United States army. He pointed out that of the 120,000 Americans that had arrived during May, one half had been allotted to the French. There were objections to this, inasmuch as it was very important to keep our divisions up to strength, and, moreover, owing to the language difficulty, it was probable that better co-ordination would result if the Americans were brigaded with British troops in preference to French. In this connection the Prime Minister pointed out that if the new arrivals were brigaded with French troops, General Foch would be departing from the arrangements he had made with us. If, on the other hand, General Pershing proposed to incorporate them into the United States army, it would be a departure on his part from the agreement reached between the Americans and ourselves (vide Annexure (A) to Resolutions of the Supreme War Council, June, 1918), and it would be necessary, after learning General Foch's views, to telegraph to President Wilson on the subject.

General Du Cane, the Head of the British Military Mission with General Foch, stated that the sending of the United States troops sailing during June to the American area of the IVth Corps, might be only a preliminary arrangement, and that he felt sure that General Foch's only object was to get them organised and ready for use at the earliest possible moment, and consequently he was of opinion that General Foch would not agree to their joining up with the American army. As regards their incorporation in either the British or French armies, General Du Cane said that, in this connection, it would be necessary to consider whether we had the requisite machinery to deal with the whole of these United States drafts of infantry and machine-gunners.

The War Cabinet decided that—

General Du Cane, on his return to France, should, as soon as possible, lay the case before General Foch, and ascertain his views on this matter, and also his opinion as to whether General Pershing is proposing to depart from the terms of the recent agreement, telegraphing the information obtained from General Foch to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff for transmission to the War Cabinet.

9. In continuation of War Cabinet 425, Minute 20, the War Cabinet expressed a general approval of the principles recommended by the Enemy Debts Committee, as set out in their Reports P.-23 of January 23, 1918, and P.-23 A of February 6, 1918.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 12, 1918.
APPENDIX I.

G.T.-4810.

INDIAN REFORMS.

Publication of Joint Report of Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy.

Proposed Reply by Secretary of State for India to Question in House of Commons as to Publication. War Cabinet 428, Minute 14.

THE Viceroy and I have embodied our proposals for carrying out the decision of His Majesty's Government of August last in the form of a Report to the War Cabinet. It will be remembered that in the August announcement it was stated that ample opportunity would be afforded for public discussion of the proposals, which would be submitted in due course to Parliament.

Owing to their heavy preoccupation with the immediate work of the war the Government have not yet been able to examine the Report in detail, or to formulate their conclusions upon the proposals contained in it. But they have decided that it shall be presented to Parliament as soon as sufficient copies are available in India and here, so as to afford the opportunity for public discussion promised in the August announcement, and so that in coming to their final decision the Government may have the advantage of considering any suggestions to which its publication may give rise.

APPENDIX II.

G.T.-4961.

(Circulated by the Secretary of State for India.)

I REGRETTED to learn on landing of the decision of the War Cabinet with regard to temporary commissions for Indians, and as I am inclined to think that the decision may have been partly due to the fact that the telegrams from India did not sufficiently explain the situation, I venture to trouble the Cabinet with a memorandum on the subject.

Whilst the Viceroy and I were at Dehra Dun, nearing the completion of our report on constitutional changes in India, telegrams arrived from the Prime Minister asking for increased co-operation in the war. The specific references to Asia and the East in the telegrams led us to the conclusion that it was our duty to see how much could be done, and how far we could make a new contribution which the War Cabinet and public opinion would regard as satisfactory. We were both mindful of criticism that had been made in the past, and the extravagant figures of possibilities which had been published by irresponsible people. The second and secret telegram from the Prime Minister addressed to the Army Department told us definitely that in his opinion the war was spreading eastwards, and ended with a statement that the Viceroy should "do everything in your power to increase the Indian establishment for war, not only in troops, but," &c.

Here was a demand that we should do everything in our power to increase the Indian establishment for war, and my information leads me to think that by the time all the men that we can get in India are trained (for it takes longer to train an Indian soldier in the Indian climate than a British soldier at home—I believe the shortest period allowed is 28 weeks), we may require every man that we can get. Is a civilian student of the war indulging in empty speculation when he thinks that it is not impossible that this year's campaign on the Western front will not leave the German incapable of any further effort in any theatre of war, although it may leave him convinced that no useful purpose is to be served by attacks in France or Flanders? Is it not then likely that he should determine to endeavour to reconquer the territories that we have conquered in the East? Not only would he thus wrest from us the only territory we have conquered, but he might achieve disastrous consequences to us
by startling the Eastern world and threatening the security of India. Is it not also possible that the exhaustion of our own man-power would make it highly desirable in such an emergency to rely in the main upon troops raised in India for the defence of India, Mesopotamia, and Palestine? I do not believe that anyone could predict the effect of a German-inspired invasion of Persia or of Afghanistan upon the North-West Frontier. I am certain that thinking Indians are very alarmed at the possibilities that we may be too much occupied in the West to maintain our traditional function of defending the Indian border, and this feeling is at the bottom of a widespread demand to be trained in the art of defence. For these reasons, and because of the Prime Minister's own appeal, we determined that the situation was sufficiently grave and serious to risk the slight prolongation of my stay in India, and therefore on my own responsibility I suggested to the Viceroy that we should proceed at once to Simla, summon his colleagues and discuss the situation fully. (I telegraphed to the India Office and to the Prime Minister what I was doing.) We discussed all matters, not only with his Government, but with the Heads of Departments and Secretaries, but I will confine my remarks to the man-power problem, partly because this is the only matter upon which the Cabinet has expressed an opinion, and partly because the consideration of the financial proposals which I hoped to make had to be postponed on account of the unfortunate currency crisis which occurred at that time.

We started by trying to ascertain what was the number of recruits which could be handled by the military authorities. This question was complicated by the fact that mobilising is possible in India, that the discipline and health of the recruits could not be maintained under any form of billeting, and that it would necessitate building (and building materials are scarce) and the use of existing buildings intended for other purposes. There was also the question of officers to train the men. Without going into the subject in detail, it is sufficient to state that I understood from the Commander-in-chief that he could deal with and use 500,000 men.

The next question to decide was whether that number could be obtained, and, if it could be obtained, whether they would be serviceable fighting material. The universal opinion was that on certain conditions it could. To anyone not conversant with the details it would seem strange that there was some difficulty about raising so small a number out of a population of 300,000,000, but the limitations are very real.

If it should prove possible to get more than this number, well and good. I think we were all agreed that if the Prime Minister's telegram was to be taken seriously, we must deal with whatever we could get to the best of our ability, but that we should first concentrate on this 500,000.

The first condition which had to be met was that recruits should be assured that if they entered the ranks as privates, and fought their way by valour in the field and by gaining the confidence of their fellow-soldiers, access to the commissioned ranks should be open to them. The young Englishman who enters the army as a private has this prospect before him. I am sure you could not get him, and I think you ought not to get him, if he had not. The fact that a field-marshall's baton is carefully concealed among other impedimenta in the soldier's knapsack is one of the basic principles of the success of His Majesty's armies in the field, and although few, if any, privates are destined to wield it, it is the emblem which underlies the moral of our troops. We were all agreed that if we were to invite the Indians to come to our assistance in this war of democracy, this principle must be established. A refusal of it means that you will not get the men. If you do not want the men, the Prime Minister's telegram would never have been sent. The intention is to grant temporary commissions on the recommendations of commanding officers to men in the ranks who would be acceptable to their fellow officers and who had proved their capacity. There is no intention of giving an Indian a commission because he is an Indian, but only to give it on the same terms as an Englishman could earn it. The selected candidate would have to go through the necessary training before he took his place with his brother officers.

I would pause here to observe that this proposal has no connection whatever with the proposals hitherto made by the Government of India for the granting of commissions. Those proposals were intended as a permanent alteration in the fabric of the army. This is a method of earning by gallantry and good conduct in the field purely temporary commissions for the term of the war only. It is obviously inapplicable to peace conditions. It is difficult to foresee what the Indian army will be like after the war, but no one dreams of requiring 500,000 men under arms. It is meant as a temporary measure to suit war conditions, to stimulate recruiting, and
to assist us in providing officers at a time when British officers are necessarily scarce.

This, then, was the first condition of the possibility of assistance on this scale. We did not think that the men would come, or ought to be asked to come, without any prospect of obtaining commissioned rank before them. It was then held by the Government of India, I think unanimously, that the mere statement of this principle would not be sufficient, but that it must be applied on a liberal scale to show the Indians that we meant business. The military authorities were of opinion that there were large numbers of men who could be trained as officers, and principles have been so often announced in India without being applied that it was felt that a mere promise would not be sufficient. The Government, therefore, unanimously fixed the number of 200. They do not desire to put in unsuitable men; they believe that they can find suitable men, and if they cannot find them, they will not suggest unsuitable men for commissions.

But there is another condition which seemed to us at Simla essential. Conscription is impossible in India, partly because of the large numbers of the people who are hereditary conscientious objectors to the taking of life, and partly because you would get into your net such enormous numbers who would be no use to you. You have, therefore, got to rely on the recruiting efforts of the Indians themselves. Now there are many Indian gentlemen who would make, in our opinion, good junior officers, but who cannot be expected to enlist in the ranks. Their traditions and their civilisation would prevent them fighting side by side with their own ryots. We therefore thought that we could get help from large zamindars, young nobles, young princes, if we told them that if they helped us to persuade their ryots and servants to join in the ranks, and if they were willing to come themselves, we should be prepared to train them in cadet corps in order that they might take their share, if they were fitted, in leading those whom they helped us to secure. Therefore it was not suggested that all the 200 commissions should be allotted to those who had entered the ranks, but that some should be reserved for this other category of possible officers.

The effect upon British officers and their supply was carefully considered. It does not seem to me that any British officer should be reluctant, or would be expected to be reluctant, to do his share in the war whatever the conditions, and these are temporary commissions which will not affect the permanent and future conditions of Indian service. But it is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that this race feeling, which finds itself perhaps at present more drastically expressed in the army than anywhere else, must vanish in the future. Suitable Indians must have commissions, and British officers must learn to get accustomed to it. No one voices more strongly than the present Commander-in-chief in India his belief that men of all races will not hesitate to follow a capable officer of any race if he is capable, and that is the principle upon which these recommendations are framed.

Is it impossible to ask the War Cabinet to reconsider its decision? I cannot see my way to thinking that commissions in the Indian land forces would be a satisfactory alternative. The Indian land forces are a pure fiction, and commissions in them have been too long regarded as merely honorary. You will never get the whole-hearted assistance of India in the war if you make racial distinctions, and the offer of commissions in the land forces will merely be regarded as such a distinction, and will be taken to indicate that you cannot, even now when you are calling for help, get over discrimination between Indian and European. I can only say that the refusal of the War Cabinet to the proposal to grant temporary King's commissions will have a deplorable result on the war spirit in India. It is a proposal made by the Commander-in-chief on the full authority of the whole Government of India after discussion and consultation with the Secretary of State, and now emphatically re-asserted. A refusal will be taken as evidence that when they did their best to respond to the Prime Minister's appeal, their help was not wanted. So far as I can discover, many educated and thoughtful Indians, of all kinds of political creeds, are a little ashamed of the fact that they have not been able to do more in the war. They are anxious to equip themselves to defend their own country. They are afraid of Mohammedan invasion from the north, with results such as their history has made them familiar with. They are curiously and strenuously afraid of Japan. "Help us to defend ourselves, help us to train ourselves to assist you in defending us," is a cry which the Viceroy and I received on all hands. It is a proper spirit and a right spirit, and it is not only because I was responsible for these recommendations, but because of the effect of refusing, that I would ask the Cabinet to reconsider their decision at an early date.
I circulate herewith the telegram of the 27th April to the Government of India and their reply. I would myself prefer that there should be no public mention of any number of these temporary commissions. The Commander-in-chief has given an estimate, and I should like him to be authorised to recommend candidates within this number. The number actually given must depend on the actual supply of fit candidates and the duration of the war.

E. S. M.

May 27, 1918.

Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, 27th April, 1918.

Clear the line. Your telegram 5176 of the 22nd. Commissions for Indians. War Cabinet considered your proposals to-day in light of paragraph 4 of your telegram 5242 of the 23rd.

They agree to following portions of your scheme:

1. **Permanent Commissions.**—Ten yearly through Sandhurst as in paragraph 1 of my telegram 828 of the 5th instant. Also grant of King’s commissions to maximum of 20 to selected Indian officers specially distinguished in the war, with proviso as in last part of paragraph 38 of your Despatch 57 of the 3rd August. Cabinet wish that the selection of officers should not be confined to those who have served in France, but will include all theatres.

2. **Honorary King’s Commissions.** As in paragraph 2 (c) of your telegram 5176. It is presumed number you propose as establishment will be filled up gradually.

3. Your further proposal to grant temporary King’s commissions during the war up to maximum of 200 was strongly opposed on following grounds:

   (i.) Effect on recruitment of British officers for the Indian army would be most harmful. Steps already taken to admit Indians have created distrust among parents and guardians, and a large and sudden measure of this kind might dangerously affect future prospects.

   (ii.) From a military point of view the measure is unnecessary, as Indian officers with commissions in the native Indian land forces possess the same powers, except that of command of British troops, and perform the same duties in the Indian army as its British officers.

   (iii.) Proposal is inconsistent with opinion and warning of Government of India and Commander-in-chief expressed in paragraph 40 of your Despatch No. 57 of the 3rd August.

   (iv.) The political and temporary results which may be anticipated are not in military opinion here and at War Office commensurate with damage feared to Indian army as stated above.

   (v.) The whole scheme for grant of King’s commissions to Indians should be proceeded with cautiously, and step by step, otherwise risk of disaster is very great. Those who have been most anxious to secure King’s commissions for Indians have always dwelt on necessity for proceeding gradually and with great caution lest whole reform should be prejudiced or destroyed at outset. Large demand now made is in advance of preparations deemed essential to the original scheme.

4. As alternative to your proposal, Cabinet is willing to agree to grant of cadetships in cadre of native Indian land forces up to maximum of 200 during the war, provided you are satisfied that this large number will not be embarrassing after the war owing to the impossibility of providing suitable military employment except for a small minority. Those considered suitable after training to be gazetted temporary second lieutenants in same cadre and attached to units for regimental duties and best of these may ultimately become eligible for King’s commissions Indian army under same proviso as for the twenty above-mentioned, and provided they have also qualified themselves by distinguished service in the field. This presents features which should commend themselves to Indian opinion. It is a considerable advance in associating Indians with commissioned rank and definitely

[1365—430]
attaching them to units, while providing another doorway to King's permanent commissions.

5. Cabinet are prepared to consider any further representations you may wish to make, but in this case they desire that full weight be given to considerations set forth above. In particular they would desire replies to following questions:

(a.) Whether Commander-in-chief considers that Indians of real fighting capacity and good physique can be raised to the amount mentioned in paragraph 4 of your telegram 5242.

(b.) Does Commander-in-chief consider that the granting of temporary King’s commission up to 200 will materially influence numbers recruited, or would concession proposed by you appeal more to political than military classes, and to be unlikely to promote recruitment amongst classes who alone have any military value?

(c.) Whether he has considered probability that this large addition of Indians to King’s commission is likely to prejudice future recruiting of British officers of best class; and, if so, what is his answer to this objection?

(d.) Whether Commander-in-chief has fully considered effect on Indian army for the future if (c) above came to be the case.

6. If you wish question raised again, Cabinet desire the considered opinion of the Commander-in-chief on all above points, and any further reasons he or your Government may desire to advance for change of view from final lines of paragraph 40 of your Despatch 57 of the 3rd August last. Cabinet are prepared to consider full reasons for proposal, but cannot at present assent to this part of your scheme.

Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, the 18th May, 1918.

(6545,)

1. Your telegram of the 27th ultimo, 1036. Commissions for Indians. The following is our reply to your observations. It is arranged under two heads: Part I, which deals with suggestion made in paragraph 4 of your telegram; Part II, which deals with criticisms and questions contained in paragraphs 3, 5, and 6.

Part I. 2. Commander-in-chief’s great objection to grant of commissions in native Indian land forces is that Indians holding such commissions cannot be utilised in regimental capacity except under conditions which they consider humiliating. As they cannot command British officers or soldiers, an Indian captain holding commission in native Indian land forces ranks junior for purposes of command to last joined British second-lieutenant holding King’s commission. Indian land force officer is thus condemned to subordinate position throughout his career, which must destroy his zeal and self-confidence, besides lowering his authority and prestige. It is for this reason that commissions of this description are so lightly esteemed. Having regard to this serious objection, we cannot admit as correct conclusions arrived at in paragraph 3 of clause 2 of your telegram.

3. Commander-in-chief recommending grant of temporary King’s commissions desired to avoid perpetuation of irritating racial distinction above indicated. We hold that coming after declaration made in House of Commons on the 20th August, 1917, revival now of moribund native Indian land force cadre, except for purpose of granting honorary commissions, would be regarded as device for postponing full pledge then given. We cannot, therefore, accept alternative suggested in paragraph 4 of your telegram.

Part II. 4. Success of recruiting depends upon so many factors that Commander-in-chief cannot guarantee that we shall be able to recruit the half million indicated in our telegram of the 23rd ultimo, 5242. Judging from past experience, however, he thinks that there is reasonable prospect of our being to secure recruits of suitable physique and good fighting quality up to number proposed, provided we are able to use stimulus of commission given according to our proposals, and that we are authorised to increase sepoy’s emoluments for period of war. On this latter point we will address you separately.

5. Owing to great expansion of army we have been obliged to modify physical standards in certain cases and broaden basis of our recruitment by enlisting new classes as was suggested in your telegram No. 2414 of the 18th November, 1916. To judge from reports received by Commander-in-chief, and his own personal observa-
tion, this has been carried out judiciously and without lowering fighting value of army. Some classes have not come up to expectation, but general results have been satisfactory.

6. In recommending grant of temporary King’s commissions, Commander-in-chief had in view desirability of recognising services to recruiting rendered by men of influence more especially in frontier province, Punjab, Northern India, and certain native States. It is on gentlemen of this class, who nearly all belong to fighting races, that we rely for the further assistance needed to recruit large additional numbers required. Desire for commissions is keen, and has full support of O’Dwyer, Bikaner, Sindhis, Patiala, and others who have identified themselves with development of India’s man-power. Desire is not inspired by political agitators, but represents legitimate aspirations of a class which is conscious of having rendered important service to Empire, and is now anxious to prove its loyalty by further efforts.

7. Immediate grant of 200 temporary King’s commissions, such as was contemplated. This total was suggested as representing maximum likely to be required during war. It was to have been worked up to gradually, recipients being selected with greatest care, and output limited to about fifty every six months.

8. Commander-in-chief has realised all along that grant of commissions to Indians might be regarded with disfavour by parents and guardians at home. This risk, however, was faced by us when at your predecessor’s request we formulated proposals made in our Despatch No. 57, dated the 3rd August, 1917, and was accepted by you when you announced in House of Commons on the 20th August, 1917, removal of bar which had hitherto precluded admission of Indians to commissioned rank.

9. Importance of not going too fast in this matter is fully appreciated by Commander-in-chief. For this reason, instead of suggesting bestowal on Indians of large number of permanent King’s commissions which might have justified distrust of English parents, he deliberately advocated more cautious policy of granting temporary commissions. Moreover, the fact that additional commissions proposed were to be temporary not only gave guarantee that number permanently appointed would be carefully regulated, but provided means of eliminating all officers who failed to attain professional standard demanded or who proved themselves otherwise unfit.

10. Commander-in-chief attaches great importance to British officers of Indian army being recruited from same class as heretofore. The war has made great inroads on this class, extent of which cannot at present be estimated. This factor, however, is one which will affect post bellum officering of army as a whole, and not of Indian army in particular.

11. Commander-in-chief’s views as expressed above, have our full concurrence. We adhere to the opinions expressed in paragraphs 3, 4, 25, and 40 of our Despatch No. 57, dated the 3rd August, 1917, as to importance of moving slowly in the matter of permanent commissions, and we entirely agree that hasty and ill-considered action might prove disastrous. We cannot admit, however, that grant of temporary commissions on scale suggested in paragraph 7 would entail any material departure from cautious policy advocated in our despatch. Special situations demand special measures, and if India is to contribute to man-power of Empire on scale contemplated in Prime Minister’s message, number of commissions granted to Indians should bear reasonable proportion to number of men to be recruited.

12. We feel confident that disinclination of War Cabinet to accept our proposal was due primarily to the difficulty of stating within narrow compass of a telegram our reasons for recommendations submitted. We repeat that arguments in favour of our proposals stand now in stronger prominence than when we originally submitted them. Experience during war has taught us that among influential Indians there are many unemployed anxious to serve the Empire and set an example of personal service to those who look to them as their leaders. Owing to family tradition, however, they feel they cannot do so, and at the same time uphold their prestige, except as officers holding King’s commission.

13. It is most important that we should retain goodwill of this class, and that their power should be utilised to fullest extent in interests of recruiting, and we are assured that a position in army with prospect of securing permanent commissions in case of those found suitable will best effect this object.

14. In conclusion, we would remark that we are now actively engaged in doing all that is possible to promote recruiting throughout India, and that should War Cabinet feel themselves able to accept proposals made in paragraph 7 of this tele-
gram no greater encouragement could be given to martial classes, and no greater stimulus provided to arouse zeal and activity in getting expansion of man-power. On the other hand, we must state frankly that rejection of proposals will add very materially to the difficulty of raising greatly increased quota of recruits we desire to furnish.

APPENDIX III.

G.T.-4752.

INDIAN COMMISSIONS.

[NOTE BY LORD CURZON.]

THE Secretary of State has circulated a note explaining with greater fulness the recent proposal of the Government of India (which was refused by the Cabinet) to give 200 temporary King’s commissions to selected Indians, and we also have the reply of the Viceroy (18th May) to our telegram (27th April) stating our objections.

The Government of India renew their proposal. We must therefore re-examine it. Mr. Montagu uses the field-marshall’s baton-in-the-knapsack argument, and says that “this is a method of earning by gallantry and good conduct in the field purely temporary commissions for the term of the war only.”

If that were the nature and object of the commissions, no one, I think, would object; for it is precisely that character of commission with which we all sympathise, and which we have already authorised with a not illiberal hand since the beginning of the war.

But I gather from the later passages of Mr. Montagu’s note, and still more from the Government of India’s telegram, that the proposed commissions will not be mainly of this character. The great majority of them are to be of an entirely different description.

The Commander-in-chief puts in the forefront the desirability of recognising services to recruiting rendered by men of influence, more especially in the Frontier Province, Punjab, N. India, and certain native States.

In other words the commission will not be given for military service in the field, but is to be a reward to country gentlemen for assisting in raising the 500,000 men promised for the Indian army—in fact, a sort of Indian Deputy-Lieutenancy. That this is the real ground of the proposal is again made quite clear in paragraphs 12, 13, and 14 of the Viceroy’s telegram of the 18th May.

Mr. Montagu further explains that these young gentlemen, if they are willing to come with their ryots, are to be trained in Cadet Corps in order that they may take their share, if fitted, in leading those whom they have helped to secure.

I turn to the earlier telegram, 20th April, for a fuller explanation of the procedure to be adopted. This telegram is not very clear, for in one place (paragraph 3) we are told—

(a.) That these civilian candidates are to be nominated by Local Governments.
(b.) That from the list the Commander-in-chief is to select names for submission to the Viceroy.
(c.) That approved candidates are then to be given temporary commissions subject to His Majesty’s approval.

This undoubtedly implies that the commissions will have no connection with active military service, but will be in the nature of political rewards.

But a little later we are told—

1. That a fair standard of education and some knowledge of English will be demanded.
2. That all nominees will undergo preliminary instruction at an officers’ training school, during which they will be graded and paid as cadets.
3. And that only after these tests have been satisfied will the commissions be granted.

These are two entirely different conceptions; for in the one case the commission is to be the result merely of nomination, in the other of a modicum of instruction and certain elementary tests of fitness.
In either case, however, it would appear that the commissions are to be given 
(a) apart from any field service; (b) after a period of instruction that cannot fail to be 
utterly inadequate according to any standard hitherto applied. When the Imperial 
Cadet Corps was founded no commissions could be won in the Indian army until 
after a course of three years. But the new type of officer is to be created at the rate 
of fifty every six months, after a preliminary training that would be deemed inadequate in 
any army in the world.

I cannot help wondering whether this is really the type of officer that we want or 
the character of commission that we ought to create. Remember that these commis-
sions are to carry the right to command British troops, and British officers of lower 
ranks, in the field. And if the reply be that "All officers are to be eliminated who 
fail to attain the professional standard demanded or who prove themselves otherwise 
unfit," the question arises whether the bulk of the commissions thus given may not 
have to be withdrawn, and whether the discontent thus aroused may not outweigh the 
compliment originally conveyed.

The Commander-in-chief speaks of confining this class of commission to native 
gentlemen of the fighting races. I wonder whether this will be found possible. 
Will not the seminaries of Bengal, Madras, and other non-fighting parts of India, 
when they see the prize of a British commission so lightly won, urge that the doors 
should equally be open to them? When the Commander-in-chief speaks of nominations 
by local Governments, can he pick and choose between the local Governments?

I do not consider that the Commander-in-chief has given an adequate reply about 
the probable effect on British parents of the grant of commissions thus proposed. He 
says that the Government faced the risk when we announced in the House of Commons 
on the 20th August, 1917, the removal of the bar which had hitherto precluded 
admission of Indians to commissioned rank. We did nothing of the kind. If the 
Secretary of State's reply be referred to, it will be seen that all that he did was to 
announce the grant of commissions to Indian officers who had served in the field, 
and to promise a carefully considered scheme after consultation with the Army 
Council later on. No such project as this was then dreamed of, nor has it any logical 
connection with the proposals thus contemplated, and of which I was and remain the 
most ardent advocate.

The effect of a too hasty or ill-considered grant of native commissions in India 
upon the future officering of the Indian army cannot be ignored. It is a considera-
tion of capital importance. The more you hand over the civil administration of India to 
the Indians, the more will you have to depend in the last resort for the stability 
of the British connection upon the prestige and authority of the army. That army 
has hitherto attracted the pick of young Englishmen aspiring to a military career. In 
India soldiering was in earnest, there service was to be seen, there military fame 
might be won. If we in any way shake the popularity of the Indian army with our 
people here we shall pay a heavy price later on. It would be a poor bargain to run 
any such risk on the mere chance of favourably affecting recruiting in India at the 
present stage of the war.

My colleagues should realise that the sentiment on the matter is universal and 
profound. Only the other day I had a letter from a Lieutenant-General of fifty years' 
service in the army, who rose to high military command in India, and was known there 
for his influence and popularity with the Indians. He said that he would not suffer 
any relation of his to enter a service in which he might be commanded by an Indian. 
This sentiment may be prejudiced or stupid, or both; the point is that it exists and 
is widespread; and that, if it is to be ignored, it should only be in cases which admit 
of strong defence.

If the Cabinet, therefore, is to be invited by the Secretary of State to reconsider 
its decision, I think we should realise exactly what we are asked to do; and that if 
these temporary commissions are to be granted at all to the class of persons proposed, 
it will be most undesirable to name a total of 200. I would not myself publish any 
number. I would gladly give the commissions to those who have won them in the 
field; but I would be very chary about granting in large numbers what will in reality 
be a complimentary rank, and will rest upon qualifications admittedly inferior to those 
possessed by British officers in any other part of the Empire. For this would not be 
to remove a racial bar, but to create a racial privilege.

June 3, 1918

C. OF K.
WAR CABINET. 431.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Monday, June 17, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMART, K.C.

The Right Hon. A. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

The following were also present:—

The Right Hon. A. J. BALFOUR, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 11).

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, K.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 1 to 7).

General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 7).

The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minutes 5 to 11).

Sir L. Worthington Evans, Bart., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 7).

Sir Stephenson Kent, K.C.B., Director of the Department of Labour Supply, Ministry of Munitions (for Minutes 5 to 7).

The Right Hon. Sir R. CHALMERS, G.C.B., Permanent Secretary, Treasury (for Minutes 7 and 9).


Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 7).

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Robert Horne, K.B.E., K.C., Director of Priority and Materials, Admiralty (for Minute 5).

The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction (for Minute 9).

The Right Hon. Sir W. Weir, Secretary of State for the Air Force (for Minute 7).

The Right Hon. Sir A. C. Geddes, K.C.B., M.P., Minister of National Service (for Minutes 5 to 7).

Major P. Lloyd Greame, M.C., Ministry of National Service (for Minutes 5 to 7).

The Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Labour (for Minute 9).

Sir D. J. Shackleton, K.C.B., Secretary, Ministry of Labour (for Minutes 5 to 9).


Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
The Italian Front.

1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff explained, with the aid of a map, the Austrian attack on the Italian front. On the whole, the result, so far, was favourable to the Allies, inasmuch as very little progress had been gained by the enemy in proportion to the size of his effort. The Austrians appeared to have succeeded in making two lodgments on our side of the Lower Piave; they had been driven back a little, and were now reported to be clinging on to the river bank. It might therefore be hoped that they might soon be pushed back into the river. On the Asiago Plateau, where the British troops were engaged, after giving way slightly, we had re-established ourselves, and the French troops appeared to have done the same. Twenty Austrian divisions had been identified in the battle, of which two had come down from the centre of Austria, but it was probable that more than this number had been engaged, although not actually identified. On the total front, from Switzerland to the coast, the enemy had fifty-five divisions, and the Allies had fifty-four. During the offensive the Austrians claimed to have captured 10,000 prisoners, while the Italians claimed about 3,000.

The Western Front.

2. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there was no news from the Western front beyond the ordinary raids and bombing. It was probable that the enemy were getting ready for their next attack, which might be expected to take place any day. General Wilson indicated the direction in which General Foch thought the next German attempt would be made. Asked as to whether he thought it likely that the enemy would attack in two places simultaneously, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he thought that this was unlikely, inasmuch as the army of the Crown Prince could not now contain many fresh divisions, while it would not pay to divide Prince Rupprecht's army into two halves. With regard to the fact that the Germans had ceased to press at Compiegne and Villers-Cotterets, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said it must be remembered, in the first place, that the country in that neighbourhood was extremely difficult, and also there was the normal difficulty in any advance for the advancing side to get their guns up. The retiring side, on the other hand, were able to fall back along their roads and railways.

Stores at Dunkirk.

3. With reference to War Cabinet 427, Minute 3, the First Sea Lord said that, as the result of enquiries which he had made in regard to the recent removal of naval and military stores from Dunkirk, he had been informed that the only stores which had been removed were some bridge work, light locomotives, and a small quantity of other stores; the bulk of the stores was still there.

It was generally agreed that Dunkirk should continue to be used for current work, but that it would not be wise to pile up supplies there.

Admirassime in the Mediterranean.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 426, Minutes 5 (i) and 6 (ii), the War Cabinet had under consideration an Admiralty memorandum (Paper G.T.-4788), dated the 8th June, 1918, relative to the co-ordination of the naval efforts of the Allies in the Mediterranean.

The First Lord of the Admiralty stated that since this paper was written there had been a meeting of the Allied Naval Council, and that the general attitude of the Italian representatives had not been satisfactory with regard to their making an increased effort in the Mediterranean. The submarine warfare in those waters was now being waged by British and French forces, the Italians keeping their anti-submarine craft for the protection of the Italian coast and ports, and not even taking steps to convoy the supplies which we
were sending to them. In view of the number of vessels of the Russian Black Sea fleet now in German hands, and of the fact that the latter had taken over a number of efficient Russian destroyers, steps were being taken to transfer a number of French destroyers, now in the Adriatic, to the Aegean, and the Italians had been informed that a number of British destroyers would be similarly diverted. There were also four British light cruisers attached to the Italians for the protection of the Adriatic and the Otranto barrage, but these had been allocated to Italy, under a convention, for the duration of the war, and, consequently, there would be some difficulty in withdrawing these vessels. What we desired was, that the Italians should throw their forces into an Allied pool, so that more general use might be made of the light forces in the Mediterranean, with a view to defeating the enemy's submarine activities in those waters. The First Lord stated that Admiral de Bon and Admiral Sims generally endorsed the British view, and he understood that they were prepared to send to their Governments a memorandum supporting the same and advocating its transmission to the Italian authorities. A strong note on these lines had been prepared by him, with a view to its transmission to the Italian Government, which he recommended should be followed up by a joint memorandum from Admiral Wemyss, Admiral de Bon, and Admiral Sims, stating in specific terms what action it was proposed should be taken to improve conditions in the Mediterranean if the Italians fully co-operated in that sea.

As regards the position of Admiral de Revel as Commander-in-Chief of the Italian naval forces, it was urged that, as he had British ships under his orders, and consequently our vessels might be exposed to danger if not adequately supported, the British Government would be justified in urging upon the Italian Government the withdrawal of Admiral de Revel from his command, just as they had done in the case of General Cadorna, although it was admitted that, in the latter case, the withdrawal only took place after a disaster to the Italian army.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Foreign Office, after consultation with the Admiralty, should communicate with the French and American Governments with a view to a separate memorandum being simultaneously presented to the Italian Government, urging upon that Government the need for efficient co-operation in the Mediterranean, with combined training, under one command, and, further, that steps should be taken by the Admiralty with a view to the preparation of a concerted representation to the Italian Government by Admiral de Bon, Admiral Sims, and Admiral Wemyss, setting out in specific terms the alterations proposed to improve the Allied naval situation in the Mediterranean.

The War Cabinet had before them a recommendation of the War Priorities Committee (Paper G.T.—4854) that, having considered the resolution of the Permanent (Labour) Sub-Committee, it was necessary to make the clean cut of Grade I men, born in the years 1898 and 1899, immediately effective.

General Smuts stated that the War Priorities Committee were of opinion that this clean-cut should become operative at once, and that no man born in these years should be retained after the 30th June in any occupation in Admiralty or Ministry of Munitions firms other than an occupation for which the age limit of 19 is fixed in the Schedule of Protected Occupations. General Smuts added that, with regard to the further recommendation of the Labour Sub-Committee as to men born in the years 1897, 1896, 1895, the War Priorities Committee had approved the principle of making the clean-cut effective in the case of Grade I men born in those years, but they had remitted the question to the Labour Sub-Committee to
report as early as possible as to the necessity and practicability of excluding any particular occupations and as to the possibility of providing a measure of elasticity. The only question, therefore, before the War Cabinet at the moment was the clean-cut of men of the ages of 19 and 20.

The Minister of National Service stated that a serious state of affairs had arisen. The Tribunals all over the country were now refusing to pass the older men into the forces so long as fit men remained in protected Government industries. He had received many resolutions from Tribunals on this subject. Sir Auckland Geddes pressed that a line of policy should be announced by the Government. There was no doubt that the clean-cut asked for would have a serious effect on production, but he was of opinion that this would only be temporary, and that within a month or so production would recover. It was vital to take some such step as that now proposed in order to avoid a complete failure of the Government's man-power policy. The number of recruits now being received was most unsatisfactory, and this month he expected to be 20,000, 30,000, or perhaps 50,000 below the estimate.

Mr. Churchill said that the Ministry of Munitions had accepted the principle of the clean-cut last October and that his Department was proceeding on these lines. He felt strongly, however, that, if this clean-cut was accepted by the Government, it should also be applied to Admiralty firms.

The First Lord of the Admiralty stated that the War Cabinet had decided on the 30th March, 1918 (War Cabinet 378, Minute 9), that 12,500 men should be released from Admiralty firms, and this would be completed before the agreed date, namely, the end of June, although the full number were not yet posted. If the further clean-cut of the men of the ages 19 and 20 was applied to Admiralty firms, he was afraid the consequences would be most serious. There were certain trades (for instance, the anchor and chain trade) that were at the present moment hard pressed. Great Britain supplied the whole of the Allied requirements in these trades, and if more men were taken away the consequences might be very serious.

Sir R. Horne said that a clean-cut would also affect the Admiralty tube works. The supply of labour for this particular trade was already difficult to obtain, and the number of tubes supplied had been diminishing at the rate of 40,000 tubes a month. It was only the existence of a reserve of tubes that had enabled the Admiralty to carry on an adequate supply. Any recruiting of coppersmiths also would have serious effects on the fitting out of ships, as there was already a shortage of coppersmiths. A similar condition existed with regard to instrument makers.

The Prime Minister said that he would have had more sympathy with the difficulties of the Admiralty as regards this question if they had made greater efforts during the last two or three years to meet the demands made upon them. In this particular case an impossible situation would be created if any difference were made in the treatment of Admiralty and other firms. The Prime Minister quite realised the risks that were being run in deciding on this clean-cut, but there were other risks to be considered, and it was the duty of the Government to make its choice between them. If, in a few months' time, the Admiralty found that their programme was being seriously hampered, they must put the case before the War Cabinet.

The War Cabinet approved the recommendation of the War Priorities Committee, that no man in Grade I, born in the years 1898 or 1899, should be retained after the 30th June in any occupation in Admiralty or Ministry of Munitions firms other than an occupation for which an age limit of 19 is fixed in the Schedule of Protected Occupations.
Recruitment from Coal Mines.

6. The War Cabinet took note of the Report of a Conference held at 10, Downing Street, on the 13th June, 1918, on the output of coal (Paper G.T.—4838).

After a short discussion—

The Secretary was instructed to ascertain what steps the Coal Controller had taken to bring pressure to bear on both the coal-owners and the miners in order to bring about an increase in output.

Treasury Committee on Contracts.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 319, Minute 5, the War Cabinet had before them the Report of the Treasury Committee on Contracts, and a memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject (Paper G.T.—4528).

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that since the Committee had reported he had been in consultation with the Departments affected, and that they now agreed that its recommendations should be carried into effect. The Minister of Munitions supported the recommendation of the Committee that there should be one Ministry of Supply; failing this, he had no objection to the other proposal of the Standing Committee. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that, subject to the approval of the War Cabinet, he had asked Lord Colwyn to preside over the Standing Committees to deal with contracts and stores respectively recommended in paragraph 4 of the report, and that he was proposing to add Sir Hugh Levick to the Committees to act as a representative of the Treasury. He asked for the authority of the War Cabinet to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee.

The War Cabinet approved the action that the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to take.

Proposal to invite a Resolution of Thanks to British Labour by the Imperial War Cabinet.

8. Mr. Barnes suggested that the Imperial War Cabinet might be moved to adopt a resolution thanking British labour for its great and strenuous efforts in the prosecution of the war.

Whilst agreeing with Mr. Barnes as to the value of the services rendered by British labour, it was pointed out that it might be invidious for the Imperial War Cabinet to address exclusive thanks to one section of the population or one part of the Empire. The Minister of Munitions also pointed out that quite recently the King had addressed a special message of thanks to the Munition workers for their exertions made since the attack on the 21st March.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The decision on this subject should be deferred for the present.

Army Demobilisation.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 274, Minute 14, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the Minister of Reconstruction with reference to Army Demobilisation (Paper G.T.—4771).

The Minister of Reconstruction pointed out that the only question at issue was the scale for unemployment benefit which was to be paid to discharged soldiers who happened during the transition period to fall out of work. The general principles had already been approved by the War Cabinet, but had been referred back for further consideration on this question. Dr. Addison said that the War Office, the Treasury, and the Ministry of Labour were all in agreement as to the principles of the scheme, but that the Treasury had not yet been able to deal fully with the financial obligations involved. Dr. Addison also pointed out that there was a very strong feeling that the members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps should be included in the proposals for Army Demobilisation.
The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The scale of payment as laid down in the memorandum quoted above should be approved, subject to the approval of the Treasury in regard to the finance of the scheme, and that, if the Treasury could not agree to the proposals, the question should be brought before the War Cabinet for further consideration.

(b.) The Minister of Reconstruction should forward a supplementary report dealing with the question of the inclusion of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and other women employed in France or other theatres of war in the scheme for Army Demobilisation.

10. With reference to War Cabinet 429, Minute 16, the War Cabinet had under consideration a letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing the opinion that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury should be a member of the Standing Committee of Home Affairs.

Mr. Bonar Law stated that it would be impossible for him personally to attend meetings of the Committee, but that it would be most desirable that the Treasury should be represented.

It was pointed out that all the members of this Committee held Cabinet rank.

The War Cabinet decided that—

This question should be deferred for discussion at a later date.

11. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Mr. Walter Long (Paper G.T.-4815), in which he stated that, in accordance with War Cabinet decision 387, Minute 9, copies of the First and Second Reports on War Materials, prepared by the Committee on the Trade Relations of the United Kingdom within the Empire, had been sent out to the Dominions, and it was proposed that these Reports should be discussed at the Imperial War Conference.

Mr. Hewins, who represented Mr. Long, said that, in order to facilitate this discussion, a series of draft resolutions, embodying the main proposals of the Reports, had been drawn up, and it was proposed, if the War Cabinet approved, that these resolutions should be discussed at the Imperial War Conference.

In view of the possibility that, after discussion at the Imperial War Conference, this question, at least in some of its bearings, might be discussed at the Imperial War Cabinet, the War Cabinet decided that—

It would not be expedient at this stage to commit themselves to any definite opinion with regard to them. They therefore took note of the above resolutions, and sanctioned the proposal that they should be forwarded to the Imperial War Conference for discussion.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 17, 1918.
Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Wednesday, June 19, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The PRIME MINISTER (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. G. N. BARNES, M.P.  
Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, K.C.
The Right Hon. A. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. the VISCOUNT MILNE, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War.
General Sir H. H. WILSON, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 to 6).

Major-General Sir G. M. W. MACDONOUGH, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Operations (for Minutes 7 and 8).
Admiral Sir R. E. WEMYSS, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 7).

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., Secretary.
Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. ROW, R.N., Assistant Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel L. WILSON, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
Captain L. F. BURGIS, Assistant Secretary.
1. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff explained the situation on a map. He stated that an Italian brigade of "storm troops" had cut in on the River Piave, and had reached Saletto, thus making a breach in the Austrian lines. This appeared to be a very satisfactory piece of work.

2. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that there was no news from the Western front, and no signs of a further attack by the Germans. In reply to a question as to his opinion regarding the delay in the German attack, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that it was possible that the Germans hoped, by waiting, to make more fresh divisions available. In Prince Rupprecht's army there were 21 fresh divisions up to yesterday. General Wilson was a little surprised at the delay, although it must be borne in mind that to mount a further attack against the French would take time. If, on the other hand, the enemy's design was to attack the British, not so much time would be needed. Every day that passed was a day to the good for us, as we should be nearer the date on which the American troops would make themselves felt. With regard to the possibility of the Germans moving further divisions from Russia, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that they might move another 10, but these would be inferior divisions. He stated that it was a hopeful sign that no German troops were taking part in the Austrian offensive, as it would seem to indicate that the Germans were afraid of straining their relations with Austria any further. There was little doubt that the Germans must be disgusted with the failure of the Austrian offensive.

3. The First Sea Lord reported that the transport "Candy" had been torpedoed off Bizerta, but that she was proceeding to port under her own steam. The submarine which attacked the "Candy" had been destroyed, and five survivors picked up.

4. Mr. Chamberlain called attention to an article which had appeared in the "Times" on the previous Saturday, with regard to Germany's economic policy. He expressed the opinion that this article should be used for propaganda purposes and circulated on the same lines as the Lichnowsky memorandum.

5. The First Lord drew the attention of the War Cabinet to a letter from the Secretary of the Allied Naval Council, dated the 15th June, 1918 (Paper G.T.-4857), written as a result of Joint Note No. 31, by the Military Representatives at Versailles, and Resolution, No. 4 (ii), by the Supreme War Council, dated the 3rd June, 1918. The recommendation of the Military Representatives was that there should be a single Command with the duty of directing both the defence by sea and the defence by land of the Russian ports in the Arctic Ocean. Sir Eric Geddes stated that he had consulted Lord Milner with regard to this proposal, and he understood that the joint note did not mean that the military Commander-in-Chief should have command of naval operations in those waters. As a result of his conversation with Lord Milner, Sir Eric Geddes expressed himself satisfied in this matter, and suggested that, as he understood it was not desired that the question should be again raised at the Supreme War Council, the
Secretary of State for War should write him a letter explaining fully the orders given to General Poole, as far as they relate to his non-interference in naval control afloat.

The War Cabinet approved this proposal.

The First Lord undertook to bring the letter to the notice of the Allied Naval Council, and to use his best endeavours to induce the Council to accept this letter as a final solution of the question.

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Strategic Considerations.

6. The First Lord of the Admiralty drew the attention of the War Cabinet to the conclusion reached by the Allied Naval Council at their fourth meeting, held in London on the 11th and 12th instant, relative to the situation at Murmansk and Archangel (Paper G.T.-4857). Sir Eric Geddes stated that, if we allowed the Finns or the Germans to get a submarine base between the Kola Inlet and the coast of Norway, such as Petchenza, or bases in the White Sea between Kandalakasha and Onega, which latter could be used by both submarines and patrol vessels, it would be quite impossible to safeguard traffic to Murmansk and Archangel. He pointed out that we had received information that there was a force of Finns congregating with a view to advancing on Petchenza, and that there was an unknown force in the South, with light railway appliances, preparing to advance on Kandalakasha. Further, that the enemy were building barracks for 12,000 men, and motor-boats were being assembled on Lake Ladoga. It therefore became a question as to what was the policy of the War Cabinet with regard to the defence of Murmansk and Archangel and the adjoining provinces. Owing to climatic conditions, it was essential that, if these places were to be held effectively, the necessary troops must be available on the spot within about the next two months, and, if this was to be done, it would necessitate taking away some of the anti-submarine forces, and utilising them in the Arctic for the protection of transports and supplies. It was therefore a question of whether the advantage of holding these ports, &c., was not outweighed by the additional losses in merchant-ships that would result from the withdrawal of the anti-submarine forces from their present duties. Sir Eric Geddes further pointed out that, if we allowed the Germans to establish a base at Petchenza, it would be very difficult to drive them out again.

As regards the force required effectively to hold the district in question, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that he was going into the matter, and his preliminary investigations were to the effect that two and a half divisions of infantry alone would be required. As soon as he had completed his estimate he proposed to send it in to the Admiralty for consideration as regards the naval questions involved. He was inclined to think that, unless the occupation of Murmansk and Archangel was backed up by intervention through Siberia, it might be desirable to abandon the Murman coast.

The Prime Minister hoped that the Chief of the Imperial General Staff would, however, consider that, although it might be impossible for operations to take place through Siberia, it was possible that Russia might be in existence in 1919, in which case Archangel and Murmansk would be invaluable as inlets to Russia; hence it was essential to maintain our position there if such could be achieved without the expenditure of large forces.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff continued to the effect that he had just received a reply that the despatch of the American brigade to Murmansk was still under consideration, and he understood the reason why the matter had not already been settled was that the American Government wanted to know General Foch's views on the subject.
Lord Milner added that the Americans had already been told what General Foch recommended.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The War Office should put forward a statement of the whole problem to General Poole, and ask him for an estimate of the force which he considers necessary in order to hold Petchenza, Murmansk, Archangel, and the Western shores of the White Sea. In telegraphing the same, he should also be invited to express his views on the subject generally.

7. With reference to War Cabinet 427, Minute 9, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informed the War Cabinet that, in spite of the fact that the Dutch Government had assented to all the views expressed by the British Government on the subject of the despatch of a convoy from Holland to the Dutch East Indies, the pledges which had been given had not been carried out, in so far as the list of passengers sailing had not been shown, the convoy was carrying goods of German origin in the form of aniline dyes, and there were other points of difference. The Dutch Government had consented to put off the sailing of the convoy for twenty-four hours, and Mr. Balfour expressed the hope that these troubles would be smoothed over, and that the pledges given would be carried out. Mr. Balfour pointed out that it was essential for the British Government to maintain its right of search if the agreement of the Dutch Government was not carried out, as on this right depended the whole continuation of any blockade against Germany. If we gave up this right in one case it would be difficult to see how it would be possible to enforce it in the case of other neutral countries. Mr. Balfour said that a decision on this subject must be taken within the next few hours.

The First Sea Lord said that the view of the Admiralty was that, if the Dutch convoy sailed without fulfilling the necessary obligations, the procedure would be to take the necessary steps to stop the convoy and to bring the ships into harbour to be searched.

Mr. Balfour called attention to a telegram from the Foreign Office to Sir W. Townley (No. 1307), which gave a full statement of the conditions which were to be observed by the Dutch Government in regard to the sailing of the convoy, calling particular attention to paragraph (F), which stated that the convoy was not to sail until all the stipulated particulars and undertakings had been furnished and had been found satisfactory by the British authorities.

In this connection Admiral Wemyss said that the Admiralty were satisfied that the paragraph referred to had not been complied with. Admiral Wemyss referred to telegram No. 2221 from Sir W. Townley, in which it was stated that the manifest, which should now be in the possession of the Foreign Office, would show that there were considerable quantities of aniline dyes on board, presumably of enemy origin, and that he was not aware that condition (F) had been fulfilled.

Mr. Chamberlain referred to a further telegram from the Foreign Office to Sir W. Townley, dated the 18th June, 1918 (No. 1415), which drew attention to the non-fulfilment of the various conditions, and expressed the hope that it should be clearly understood that the convoy should not sail until all these points had been fully met in accordance with the understanding now arrived at.

General Smuts expressed the opinion that the British Government would be made ridiculous if it went to war with Holland over some of the points mentioned in the foregoing telegram, and instanced the use of German coal by the ships of the convoy. It was, according to all military advice, of the highest interest that Holland should be kept out of the war. It must be assumed that as Holland had accepted our conditions she would abide by her undertaking, but if war had to come with Holland it must come only on a perfectly
clear issue. Such a clear issue would be raised if the convoy sailed before condition (F) was complied with.

The Cabinet agreed with these views.

The Director of Military Intelligence said that the question of the passengers carried was one of very great importance. He pointed out that the Dutch Indies were a centre of considerable German propaganda, with the object of spreading sedition in India, and, although the General Officer Commanding at Singapore had done a great deal to stamp out German influence, it was still a centre of sedition, and it was most important that no fresh German agents should be allowed to go there.

During the discussion which ensued, it was suggested that in case the convoy sailed without condition (F) having been fulfilled, it might be desirable to seize the collier accompanying the convoy.

But it was pointed out that this would not be sufficient, as the convoy might obtain sufficient coal in neutral ports to proceed as far as Cape Town, and its detention there would be very undesirable.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should instruct Sir William Townley to inform the Dutch Government that it was essential that the convoy should not sail until condition (F) had been complied with, namely, that the convoy was not to sail until the stipulated particulars and undertakings had been furnished and had been found satisfactory by the British authorities. Sir William Townley should be informed that the Government did not think it in the public interest to forbid the use of German coal by the convoy, but it was essential that they should be satisfied that there were no passengers on board to whom exception could be taken, and no goods of enemy origin.

(b.) In the event of the Dutch convoy sailing before the British Government were so satisfied, the Admiralty should be authorised to take action to intercept the convoy.

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S. With reference to the information which had been received that M. Troelstra intended to come to England, the Director of Military Intelligence was asked to give the War Cabinet any information which was available about him.

General Macdonogh said that, from information which he had received from The Hague, M. Troelstra often frequented the German Legation at The Hague, more particularly at the time of the political tension between Holland and Germany. For this he had been publicly reproached in the Dutch Parliament. It was certain, also, that M. Troelstra exercised considerable influence in the direction of securing the acceptance of German demands. General Macdonogh said that the French Minister at The Hague considered him a very dangerous man, and called attention to a telegram received from Lord Derby the previous day, which stated that the French Government would not allow M. Troelstra to come to France. General Macdonogh pointed out that M. Troelstra was in Berlin before the Stockholm Conference, and at the Conference he had opposed any discussion of the origin of the war, after consultation with his German friends. According to the information available, M. Troelstra was all in favour of a German peace.

Attention was called to telegram No. 2144 from Sir W. Townley, which stated that M. Troelstra had invited Herr Scheidemann to meet him at Leewarden, and that two Austrian Socialists were also coming from Vienna to be present at the meeting.

It was pointed out that Mr. Havelock Wilson had, on behalf of the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, refused to convey M. Troelstra
to England, but the opinion was expressed that if he could not get
to the United Kingdom on a British ship he would probably find
some other way, e.g., by obtaining permission to sail in a Dutch
hospital ship.

The opinion was expressed that it was most inadvisable that a
man with known German connections should be allowed to come to
this country. The French Government had refused to allow him to
go to France, and if we allowed him entry into England the
criticism would be made that the Allies were pursuing different
policies.

Mr. Barnes said that, on the other hand, there were two
arguments for allowing M. Troelstra to come to England. The
first was that M. Huysman was here now, and the second was that
Mr. Arthur Henderson would have a great grievance if M. Troelstra
were refused entry.

General Smuts pointed out that M. Troelstra had had an
interview with Herr Scheidemann on the subject of terms of peace,
and he would be coming here with the authority of the German
Socialists and speaking for the enemy. If he were allowed to come
here with a long list of terms from Germany, it was obvious that
only trouble could ensue.

The War Cabinet decided that—

A permit should not be issued to M. Troelstra to land in Great
Britain.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 19, 1918.
War Cabinet, 433.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Room in the House of Commons on Wednesday, June 19, 1918, at 7 P.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Lord Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The following were also present:—


The Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, LL.D., M.P., President, Board of Education.

Professor W. G. Adams.

The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.D., M.P., Minister of Reconstruction.


The Right Hon. E. Shortt, K.C., M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland.


Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Enlistment of Irishmen in the French Army.

1. The War Cabinet had before them a letter from the French Chargé d'Affaires to Lord Hardinge, under cover of a note by Mr. Balfour, together with correspondence between Lord Milner and Lord Hardinge, with regard to the possible enlistment of Irishmen in the French army (Paper G.T.-4808).

The War Cabinet were agreed that while, from the point of view of man-power, it would be desirable to allow Irishmen to enlist in the French army, either in a special Irish Brigade or in the Foreign Legion, there were, on the other hand, weighty political objections to the proposal.

The War Cabinet decided that—

M. de Fleuriau should be informed that no objection would be raised if such Irishmen as privately offered themselves were enlisted.
2. With reference to War Cabinet 421, Minute 6, the War Cabinet had before them the following documents:

Interim Report of the Committee on Government of Ireland Bill (Paper G.T.-4839);
Memoranda by Mr. Long (Papers G.T.-4728 and 4882);
Memorandum by Mr. Chamberlain on the Irish Question and Federalism (Paper G.-212).

Lord Curzon stated that in the House of Lords on the following day the policy of the Government in relation to Ireland would be raised, and it was necessary that he should be in a position to represent the views of the War Cabinet. He would probably be asked to explain why the Government's declared intentions of proceeding with conscription and a Home Rule Bill had not been carried out. To that question a perfectly satisfactory answer could be given on the lines set out by Mr. Long in his memoranda to the War Cabinet. But a further question would be put: granted there was good ground for not proceeding with conscription and a Home Rule Bill at present, were these measures only temporarily in abeyance, or had the Government decided to drop them indefinitely? Reference would probably be made to the speeches delivered in April by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House, and the Government might be charged with having departed from the policy therein laid down.

Mr. Balfour thought it should not be impossible to say that the Government had made a mistake as to the conditions in Ireland when they announced their intention of proceeding with both measures; that they had decided, on learning how grave those conditions were, that their first duty was to restore respect for law and order in Ireland, and that until this was done it was undesirable to outline any programme for the future.

Mr. Long said that, with reference to the speeches delivered by the Prime Minister and Mr. Bonar Law, the impression left upon the House was that conscription could and would shortly be put into effect, but that the preliminary arrangements would necessarily take some time. In the meantime a Home Rule Bill would be prepared and introduced, and would go through the usual process of discussion in the two Houses. It was understood to be part of the dual policy that, if they failed to pass the Home Rule Bill, the Government would resign.

The Prime Minister said that the view of the War Cabinet on the point just mentioned by Mr. Long had been that, if conscription had been put in force and a Home Rule Bill were defeated, then the Government would resign. When this decision was reached, the War Cabinet thought that there was sufficient general agreement, although in certain quarters it might be no more than sullen assent, to carry a Home Rule measure. Since then two things had happened. The first was the discovery of a grave Sinn Fein conspiracy, in which the real leaders of Irish opinion—men like de Valera and Arthur Griffith—were involved. The programme of the conspirators was timed to coincide with a great German offensive, which would menace the existence of the British army. The second factor in the situation was the challenge to the Imperial supremacy thrown down by the Roman Catholic Church, on an issue which hitherto had always been assumed to rest solely in the sphere of the Imperial Government. It was impossible to ignore these two facts, for an essential condition of legislation in war-time was that there should be substantial agreement between the main parties in the State. Two or three months ago Liberals would have warmly welcomed a Home Rule Bill, and many Unionists would have tolerated it as a war measure, but there had been so great a change in the political climate that he did not think a Home Rule Bill could be carried now.

Mr. Barnes agreed that it was not possible to pass a Home
Rule Bill at present, and the Prime Minister's argument was conclusive on that point; but he suggested that the production of a Home Rule Bill, even if not proceeded with, would tend to improve relations with Ireland, and it would be possible to obtain Irish opinion upon it.

Sir Gordon Hewart thought the Government would be charged with insincerity if they merely produced a Bill without any serious intention of proceeding with it.

Mr. Long pointed out that many in the House of Commons had reluctantly assented to a Home Rule Bill because they understood that on that condition they could get conscription applied to Ireland; but now conscription was postponed by the action of the Cabinet, and it was, therefore, idle to go on with the Home Rule Bill. On the other hand, if voluntary recruiting proved to be a failure, the Government would be pressed as to their further intentions. Many Unionists maintained that one of the most serious defects of the British policy in Ireland was that the Irish were kept in suspense as to what that policy really was. Ireland was perhaps suffering to-day more from suspense than from anything else.

Mr. Herbert Fisher said that, if it was the intention to put conscription in force in October, then it was important that the Home Rule Bill should be ready.

The Prime Minister concurred, and pointed out that in his speech on the 9th April he had argued that it would be impossible to carry conscription without stern measures; that such stern measures could not be applied without support, not only in Ireland, but in America and in this country; and that such support could not be obtained, especially from the Labour party, without a measure of Home Rule. The Government policy had thus been: If we cannot carry Home Rule we cannot carry conscription. In explaining the action of the Government, he would assume that they stood by their policy, and would draw special attention to the recent developments in the government of Ireland. Formerly Ireland had been largely governed from London, and the powers of the Irish Government had been increased. The first action of the new Irish Government had been to suppress the Sinn Fein conspiracy. Then they had advised the War Cabinet to make an experiment in voluntary recruiting, and the Cabinet had accepted that advice. If he were directly challenged as to whether the Government stood by their dual policy he would reply in the affirmative, but would add that the time and method of giving effect to it must be judged by the War Cabinet.

Dr. Addison said that the difficulty in declaring that the Government stood by its policy lay in the fact that there was, as yet, no agreed Home Rule Bill, and no decision had been come to on the proposed Federal solution, which he was increasingly disposed to favour.

Mr. Chamberlain made a strong appeal in favour of the adoption of the Federal principle. Otherwise, he said, it was not possible to secure a non-contentious measure. The ground had been so often explored, and was so thoroughly well known, that every proposition in a Home Rule Bill would be controverted, and with good reason, for the Bill would be founded on no logical basis. Devolution was as important to the other parts of the United Kingdom as to Ireland, and it would, at any rate, be some advantage to have to fight on new ground. The new Bill, as at present drafted, took away a great part of the measure already on the Statute Book, and would be certain to arouse fierce opposition. The Federal principle, on the other hand, was receiving increasing support from some of the best men in all parties. It was probably true that a Federal Bill would not be acceptable to the Nationalists, but they would acquiesce in it, and at least their case for agitation would have disappeared.
The Prime Minister said that he was about to receive a deputation on the subject of Federalism, composed of Members of Parliament drawn from the different political parties, and, before coming to a decision, it would be better to hear what views were put forward, and what support they commanded. It might then be worth considering whether, in the interval, while voluntary recruiting was being tried, a Committee of the House of Commons, or a Joint Committee of both Houses, might not consider the problem of Federalism.

The War Cabinet decided that—

Lord Curzon, in his speech,

(a.) Should proceed on the assumption that the dual policy had not been abandoned, although the Government must be the judge of the time and method of its application; and

(b.) Should state the reasons, as set forth above, why the dual policy of the Government was for the time in abeyance.

The War Cabinet further decided—

To adjourn the consideration of Federalism until after the Prime Minister had received the deputation referred to, and the War Cabinet had had an opportunity of learning its views and the support they were likely to secure.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 20, 1918.
Coal Rationing.

1. THE War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade with regard to the order for rationing household fuel and light (Paper G.T.-4889).

Sir Albert Stanley stated that there was one correction to be made in his memorandum. In paragraph 3, the first line after the scale, there should be added “up to a maximum of 20 tons” after the words “larger houses.” Sir Albert Stanley continued that the new regulations, as proposed in his memorandum, were in reality an extension of the Coal Rationing Order, which was applied to the London area last year. The new regulations would, however, apply to the whole country except Ireland, but the rationing would be on a reduced scale. The rationing of gas and electric light was also included in the order. In reply to a question as to how the new order would affect the larger houses, both in London and the country, Sir Albert Stanley said that this was met by taking into consideration the size of the rooms. A room of more than 4,000 cubic feet would count as two rooms, and a room of 8,000 cubic feet would count as three rooms. There was also the opportunity to appeal for a special assessment.
Sir Guy Calthrop said that the whole essence of rationing was the ability to deliver the goods. There was a shortage of 20,000,000 tons of coal. It was proposed that the reduction in consumption of household coal should provide 8,000,000 tons towards this shortage; the reduced allowance to industries would provide a large proportion, and he hoped that the remainder would be met by increased work on the part of the miners. There was no doubt that the proposed reduction would hit the householder very hard, but he felt confident that he would be able to supply the amount required. It might even be possible to increase the ration towards the end of the year.

The War Cabinet approved Sir Albert Stanley’s proposals.

2. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Mr. Churchill (Paper G.T.—4892) regarding the munitions position as affected by the prospective shortage of coal. Mr. Churchill requested in his memorandum that the matter should be referred to the War Priorities Committee without delay.

The War Cabinet approved Mr. Churchill’s suggestion.

3. Sir Albert Stanley asked that he might be authorised to increase the price of coal for home consumption by 2s. 6d. a ton, and the price of coal supplied to neutrals and Allies by 5s. a ton. This advance was necessitated by the increased cost of production.

The opinion was expressed that perhaps the present was not an opportune moment to announce an increase in the price of coal, in view of the fact that the Coal Controller was about to meet the miners regarding an increase in their wages. It was thought that the miners might take advantage of the increased price of coal to demand more wages than they otherwise would have done.

Sir Albert Stanley said the advance was required in order to meet the present situation. It might be necessary later on to make a further advance, and he thought it was better to do this in two stages in preference to one big advance. He was under the impression that the miners would not take advantage of the increased price of coal to demand higher wages, as they would not wish to increase the cost of coal to the consumer.

The War Cabinet approved the advance in the price of coal suggested by Sir Albert Stanley.

4. The War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade (Paper G.T.—4890), in which he stated that representations had been made to him by various classes of public utility undertakings—gas, water, tramways, and electricity—that their financial circumstances had been so injuriously affected by war conditions that it was necessary that some relief should be given to them by way of increasing their statutory powers of charge or otherwise. The memorandum contained the recommendations of a Select Committee of the House of Commons on the subject.

Sir Albert Stanley said that he proposed, with the approval of the War Cabinet, to introduce a Bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee.

The War Cabinet approved the action the President of the Board of Trade proposed to take, as laid down in his memorandum.
5. With reference to War Cabinet 412, Minute 1, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by Lord Curzon (Paper G.T.-4831) and a copy of a letter from Sir W. Graham Greene to Sir Edward Troup (Paper G.T.-4881).

Lord Curzon pointed out in his memorandum that a certain amount of criticism, mainly from the pro-racing public, had appeared in the public press, and a letter had been received from the Racing Emergency Committee with reference to the decision on steeplechasing, which, on the authority of the War Cabinet, had been communicated to the National Hunt Committees. A decision of the War Cabinet was therefore required as to whether there should be any modification of the decision already announced on this subject. The memorandum also drew attention to the holding of unauthorised or "flapping" meetings which are being held in munition areas, and on this point Lord Curzon asked for a decision as to whether these meetings should be prohibited. Lord Curzon stated that he had been instructed by the War Cabinet to deal with the question of horse-racing, and that the two questions referred to in his Memorandum had now arisen. On the subject of steeplechasing, he was of opinion that the War Cabinet should not depart from the decision at which it had arrived, and pointed out that a letter embodying this decision had already been written to the Senior Steward of the National Hunt Committee by the President of the Board of Trade, and a reply had been received accepting the stoppage of races under National Hunt Rules for the ensuing winter season. With regard to the unauthorised or "flapping" meetings, Lord Curzon stated that it was urged very strongly that it appeared inconsistent with the War Cabinet decisions on the question of flat racing to limit legitimate racing and to allow unauthorised racing to go on unchecked. In this connection, Lord Curzon stated that the Chief Secretary for Ireland had recently spoken to him on this subject, and that Mr. Shortt had pointed out to him that, with regard to Ireland, the question of these unauthorised meetings had not been raised, but that he was quite prepared to prohibit them if it was so desired. Lord Curzon explained that the difficulty was that no Government department seemed willing to take upon itself the responsibility for prohibiting these meetings, but he understood that they were held under licences from the Ministry of Munitions. In reply to a question as to what constituted "flapping" meetings, Lord Curzon read a letter from the Earl of Jersey, the Senior Steward of the Jockey Club, which explained that the courses on which these meetings were held were not licensed by the Stewards of the Jockey Club, and that the meetings were not under Jockey Club Rules.

Mr. Barnes stated that he understood that meetings were only authorised now at places where the railway facilities for essential traffic were not interfered with, but it was explained that the War Cabinet had authorised flat-racing to take place only at Newmarket, and that all other meetings, both under the Jockey Club and the National Hunt Committee, were prohibited.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Munitions stated that the view of the Ministry was that, if these unauthorised meetings were prohibited, the recreation of the workpeople would be interfered with and that labour unrest might ensue. The Under-Secretary to the Home Office explained that the Home Office had no power under any Regulation or Order under the Defence of the Realm Act to prohibit these meetings. Mr. Brace added that the power of refusing licences for such meetings rested with the Ministry of Munitions.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a) There should be no modification of the decisions already announced, either in respect of flat-racing or racing under National Hunt Rules.
(b.) Unauthorised or "flapping" meetings should be prohibited, and that the Ministry of Munitions should refuse to issue any further permits for the holding of such meetings under D.R.R. 9b., or if in the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown that power be insufficient, a new Defence of the Realm Regulation should be made.

6. With reference to War Cabinet 424, Minute 4, the War Cabinet took note of a memorandum by the President of the Local Government Board (Paper G.T.—4851) with regard to an Order in Council to be issued, proclaiming the areas where voting by proxy by naval and military voters was to be permitted.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 21, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 435.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, June 24, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. the Lord Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.
The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 9).
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 1 to 9).
Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 9).

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.
Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.
Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.

The Western Front.

1. THE Director of Military Intelligence reported that there was no special change on the Western front. The number of enemy troops that were rested and re-trained continued to increase. Prince Rupprecht now had 26 fresh divisions in reserve and 33 available for roulement. On the whole front there were now 32 fresh divisions in reserve and 57 available for roulement. Altogether, Prince Rupprecht had 93 divisions, and the Crown Prince had 79. Signs of a possible attack were to be found in the fact that there had been no special transfer of troops on the part of the enemy from north to south. The opinion at General Headquarters confirmed the view of General Foch as to the part of the front where the German attack most probably would be made. At the same time it was by no means certain that the main attack would take place on this part of the line; it might well be a subsidiary attack, with the
main attack elsewhere, at a place indicated by the Director of Military Intelligence. On the whole, the weather had been unfavourable to the Germans, but probably it was not bad enough to prevent an attack, because the ground had been very dry.

American Reinforcements.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 430, Minute 8, the Director of Military Intelligence said that General Bridges had reported that the shipment of American troops would drop to two divisions monthly in August, and the succeeding months. The War Cabinet were of opinion that this question of American reinforcements must be taken up again, and decided that—

The matter should be raised at the forthcoming meeting of the Supreme War Council.

The Italian Front.

3. The Director of Military Intelligence said that the Italian situation was exceedingly favourable. During the night of the 22nd–23rd June the Austrian troops had begun to evacuate the Montello. They had been crossing the Piave partly by ferry and partly by wading. The Italian troops had advanced and had reached the "Chord" line by 9 A.M. By 2 P.M. the Montello had been swept bare of the Austrian troops. The Italians had taken several hundred prisoners; they had recovered 72 lost Italian guns, and had captured some Austrian field artillery. The Italian troops were throwing bridges at Falze, and were organising an extensive bridgehead there and opposite Nervosa. The Xth Corps had moved up to the river bank along the whole front. The XXVIIIth Corps had reached the bank with its left flank, but its right was still meeting with resistance. The XXIIIrd Corps had advanced its whole front about half the depth of the enemy's occupation of the previous day. In this sector also the enemy was fighting a determined rearguard action, in order to cover the withdrawal of the remaining troops on the right bank by the road bridges at San Dona, which appeared to be intact. At San Dona and near Grisolera were the only bridges available to the enemy. The Italians, however, were throwing bridges and organising bridgeheads at Ponte di Piave and other points. Orders had been given for the withdrawal and reforming of all the Italian divisions which had suffered in the fighting, and General Badoglio estimated that they would be completely reformed and ready for further service in about a fortnight's time. With regard to casualties, General Delmée-Haddock had estimated that the Italian casualties of all descriptions were well under 80,000.

The Director of Military Intelligence undertook to provide the Prime Minister with the materials for a statement on this subject, to be made in the House of Commons the same afternoon.

Siberia.

4. The Director of Military Intelligence reported the receipt of a telegram from Captain Steventi, from Harbin, dated the 21st June, from which it appeared that a fight had taken place between Semenoff's force and that of the Bolsheviks. Semenoff's troops numbered about 2,000, and the Bolshevik forces were about 10,000, including some 8,000 German and Austrian prisoners. Semenoff's force had suffered casualties in number about 200; they had succeeded in driving the enemy from the railway, and the situation was considered satisfactory. It had been feared at one time that if Semenoff's force entered Manchuria they would be disarmed by the Chinese, but now arrangements had been made with the Chinese whereby Semenoff's men would not be disarmed unless they retired along the railway. On the 20th June a meeting had been held at
Harbin, consisting of 90 per cent. Socialists from various parts of Siberia. They had asked for intervention to help Russia to restore the Eastern front and to annul the Brest-Litovsk treaty.

It was pointed out that this information would be of value in soliciting American assistance in the matter, and supported statements made by the Prime Minister in a conversation he had had with the Japanese Ambassador.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Director of Military Intelligence should give the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs a paraphrase of the telegram referred to, in order that Mr. Balfour might communicate its contents to the Japanese Ambassador.

East Africa.

5. The Director of Military Intelligence explained, with the aid of a map, the recent operations reported from East Africa.

Submarines.

6. The First Sea Lord said that the Admiral commanding the Northern Patrol reported that vessels under his orders had sunk an enemy submarine by gunfire, after a hunt extending over 100 miles, and lasting from 10:45 A.M. on the 19th to 6 A.M. on the 20th June. The submarine was finally sunk 431/2 miles west of Sands Bank, Faroe Islands. Admiral Wemyss also reported that the special service vessel "Antic" stated that she had engaged and sunk a large enemy submarine on the 20th instant, 54 miles E.N.E. from May Island, damage and casualties nil.

Accident to Airship.

7. The First Sea Lord said that a report had been received from Rosyth to the effect that a non-rigid airship, the N.S. 3, whilst on patrol had come down in the sea about 6 miles E.S.E. of Dunbar, on the morning of the 22nd June. The engines sank, and the envelope was wrecked; five of the crew were picked up by H.M.S. "Moy" and landed at Rosyth, he remaining five members of the crew being presumed drowned.

Russia: The Caucasus.

8. With reference to War Cabinet 429, Minute 2, the Director of Military Intelligence reported that considerable trouble had arisen in the Caucasus between the Germans and the Turks on the question as to who should occupy the town of Baku first. An arrangement had been arrived at between the German Higher Command at Constantinople and Enver Pasha, that the forces of neither country should advance beyond a neutral zone which had been agreed upon. The Turks were, however, not conforming to this agreement, were still pushing on towards Baku, and a force of 7,000 had advanced to a point within 13 miles of Kurdamir (80 miles west of Baku) and had sent a detachment of 3,000 men to turn that town from the north. The Germans were complaining that the Turks had, contrary to their agreement, advanced north of Karaklis along the Tiflis Railway and had entrenched themselves at Kardehan Station, where they had fired on the Germans. General Macdonogh explained that the German military authorities had sent instructions to the effect that an attack on Baku was to be prevented, as they were afraid that if the Turks and the Tartars got into the town they would loot it and fire the oil wells. The Germans were getting reinforcements from the Ukraine, and then proposed to advance on Baku. General Macdonogh stated that Baku was full of Armenians, who were frightened of the Turks.

The Prime Minister said that this was a remarkable situation and asked whether advantage could not be taken of the fact that
the Turks and Germans had fallen out on this question. He pointed out that the Turks were more anxious to acquire this rich country than they were to regain Mesopotamia or Palestine, and suggested that some peace arrangement might be arrived at with the Turkish Government by which the Turanian territory might be given to them.

Lord Curzon stated that the question of Baku was being fully discussed by the Eastern Committee that afternoon, and pointed out that a telegram had been received that morning to the effect that General Bicharakoff had been to Baku and returned, and that a report was expected from him in the course of a day or so. General Dunsterville had also been anxious to take a force there, but he had been dissuaded from this course, as all the troops available were required for the Persian cordon. Lord Curzon also expressed the opinion that, to satisfy the Pan-Turanian ambitions of the Turkish Government, it would be necessary to give up the district of Azerbaijan, but that, in view of the fact that we were protecting the rights of Persia, it seemed to him impossible for us to barter a portion of Persian territory.

Mr. Lloyd George expressed the opinion that it would be better for us to hold Baku, as it was not probable they would ever be dangerous to our interests in the East, whilst, on the other hand, Russia, if in the future she became regenerated, might be so.

The Alien Question.

The War Cabinet had a short discussion on the treatment of aliens, and on certain statements contained in Sir Edward Troup’s memorandum (Paper G.T.-4931) regarding the internment of enemy aliens.

The Prime Minister said that no doubt a good paper case could be made defending the action taken by the Home Office, particularly in regard to each individual concerned. He had, however, in mind cases with which Sir Edward Troup’s memorandum did not deal. For instance, that of Sir Joseph Jonas (an ex-Lord Mayor of Sheffield), who had been fifty or sixty years in this country, and had made munificent grants to education, and also posed as a strong anti-German, but was now accused of having given information to the enemy before the war. The Prime Minister then instanced several cases of men of German nationality, or whose relatives were German, holding responsible positions in Government Departments. He felt that, during the war, when examining individual cases of this sort, the benefit of the doubt must be given to the State, notwithstanding that, in ordinary times, the benefit of any doubt was, in this country, always given to the individual.

The Director of Military Intelligence said that this was a difficulty with which he had always had to contend. When a case came before the Advisory Committee it was always assumed that the man was innocent until he had been proved guilty. This greatly hampered the work of the Intelligence Department, on whom was thrown the onus of proof.

Mr. Chamberlain, acting on behalf of the Home Office in the absence of Sir G. Cave, said that this statement was not acceptable by that Department.

The Prime Minister then read to the War Cabinet some suggestions he had received from a very able business man for dealing with the alien question.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) If the alien question was raised in the House of Commons a reply should be given to the effect that Sir George Cave was away, and that, as soon as he returned, an answer would be given.

(b.) On Sir George Cave’s return the War Cabinet should resume the examination of this question.
10. With reference to War Cabinet 411, Minute 26, the War Cabinet had under consideration a letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, requesting that the question of the increase in the rate of separation allowances now being paid to the wives and dependants of sailors and soldiers, which had been raised in the House of Commons, should be referred to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Pay Committee.

The Secretary pointed out that no member of the War Cabinet had been appointed to the Chairmanship of this Committee since the resignation of Sir Edward Carson.

The War Cabinet requested—

Mr. Barnes to undertake the Chairmanship of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Pay Committee.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 24, 1918.
SECRET

WAR CABINET, 436.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, June 26, 1918, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C. (for Minutes 1 to 12).

The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.

The following were also present:—

The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 13).

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 1 to 14).


Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 10).

Lieutenant-Colonel the Earl of Stanhope, D.S.O., M.C., Parliamentary Secretary, War Office (for Minute 13).

Brigadier-General T. G. O'Leary, C.B., C.M.G., Deputy Director of Prisoners of War (for Minute 13).

Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 14).


The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minute 14).


Major-General F. H. Sykes, C.M.G., Chief of the Air Staff (for Minute 14).

The Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Labour (for Minute 14).


The Right Hon. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., M.P., President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (for Minute 14).


The Right Hon. J. R. Clynes, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Food (for Minute 14).


Mr. R. C. Vansittart, M.V.O., Foreign Office (for Minute 13).


Paymaster-in-Chief P. H. Row, R.N., Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
The Western Front

1. THE Director of Military Intelligence reported that no operations of importance had taken place on the Western front. The number of fresh divisions in Prince Rupprecht's army was now 30. General Headquarters reported that they had little material with which to make any forecasts as to where the next German offensive would take place, but they inclined to the belief that an offensive from the Lys salient appeared to be most likely. The Director of Military Intelligence added that a telegram had been received from General Foch's Headquarters to the effect that they had received information that the next German attack might take place between Bethune and Ypres, and that there were no signs of a German attack east of Rheims. General Foch's Headquarters had also received a report from Copenhagen saying that an attack might be expected between the Somme and the Scarpe. On the whole, the balance of evidence pointed to an attack on Prince Rupprecht's army front.

German Divisions.

2. In reply to a question regarding a report that the Germans had broken up three or four of their divisions, the Director of Military Intelligence said that he did not attach much importance to this statement, as the Germans constantly formed divisions for certain purposes, and then broke them up again. It was true that the 226th division had been broken up and the units distributed among other divisions, and that the 302nd division on the Balkan front was now composed of Bulgars, only the Divisional Staff remaining German. The German units of this 302nd division had been sent to the Western front. The Director of Military Intelligence added that the 9th assault battalion had also been broken up. He agreed, however, that the total number of German divisions on all fronts was now reduced to 239.

The Italian Front.

3. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that operations on the Italian front had died down, with the exception of a little progress the Italians had made towards the mouth of the Piave.

Austrian Casualties.

4. The Director of Military Intelligence said that there was some difference of opinion regarding the estimate of casualties suffered by the Austrians during the recent battle. The Italian Command estimated the number at between 180,000 and 200,000. General Delmé-Radcliffe estimated the number at 150,000, whereas General Wilson put the figure at 100,000.

Command of Italian 8th Army.

5. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that the Command of the VIIIth Italian army had been assumed by General E. Caviglia, late commanding the Xth Corps, vice General Pennella.

Austrian Moral.

6. In reply to a question as to whether there was any truth in the report that the Hungarian soldiers were refusing to fight, the Director of Military Intelligence stated that he had received no evidence to this effect. He said, however, that the Poles were fighting well for the Austrians, and that the Polish prisoners had no knowledge of Allied propaganda or the recent developments in favour of the Polish Nation.

Sinking of Vessels in the Black Sea.

7. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that he had received a report to the effect that some Russian vessels and six torpedo-boat destroyers had been sunk by the Russians at Novorossiask.
American Divisions. 8. The Director of Military Intelligence stated, in reply to a question, that of the second five American divisions with the British army, three were ready to go into the line for defensive purposes, and that the other two were not yet ready. The total American force in France at the present moment, including all arms, was 920,000.

Mesopotamia. 9. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that on the 21st June, 1918, after some small fighting on the road with Jangalis, a portion of General Dunsterville's mobile columns had arrived at Resht. According to a telegram received from General Redl, Dutoff was clearing out the Bolsheviks between Taskhend and Orenburg. The telegram also stated that the Bolshevik movement was collapsing in Turkestan.

East Africa. 10. The Director of Military Intelligence informed the War Cabinet that, by the latest information, Von Lettow was advancing on Quilmane, at which place there were a small Portuguese cruiser and a British gunboat. To reinforce these in case of attack, 800 troops were being sent by sea, 150 of the K.A.R. had already arrived or were due to arrive, and a total of 800 should be there by the 1st July.

Bombing Attacks. 11. The First Sea Lord reported that the usual bombing of Zeebrugge and Bruges had taken place.

Submarines. 12. The First Sea Lord reported that the Italian Command at Taranto claimed to have sunk a German submarine. An unconfirmed report had been received from Portland to the effect that an armed trawler had sunk a submarine.

Prisoners of War. 13. With reference to War Cabinet 427, Minute 5, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Prisoners of War Department (Paper G.T.-4943) which stated that, in a telegram from The Hague (No. 2282, dated the 22nd June, 1918), the British delegates had raised two points regarding the negotiations which were now proceeding, on which the War Cabinet's decision was desired. The first point was that Germany had offered to repatriate some of the British combatants now in Holland as a counter-weight to the large surplus of German civilians interned in England as compared with the number of British civilians interned in Germany.

Mr. Vansittart, representing the Prisoners of War Department, said that the British delegates considered this exchange inadequate, and were insisting on the repatriation, in addition, of some British combatants now interned in Germany. Mr. Vansittart pointed out that, if an agreement regarding the repatriation of men who had been in captivity for 18 months and more was concluded, there would anyhow only remain in Holland some 450 sick combatant prisoners. It would be absurd to consider this small number as a counter-weight to the large surplus of German civilians interned in England. Mr. Vansittart was of opinion that the suggestion made by the delegates should be adhered to, and indeed that there should be a man-for-man exchange, or as nearly as possible, on the grounds that if repatriated combatants were not to be employed at the front or on lines of communication, repatriated German civilians, of whom the great majority would be of military age, would be as useful in the interior as ex-combatants.

The Adjutant-General agreed with this view.

Mr. Chamberlain said that the delegates' proposal proceeded on the hypothesis that combatant prisoners could not again be used for combatant service. If this was the case, a civilian was as good as a...
soldier, and there could be little objection to the delegates taking this line.

It was suggested that those Members of the House of Commons who were interested in getting our prisoners back to this country might object to an attempt to drive a bargain which might prove an obstacle to an agreement, and to the assumption that a trained soldier was on a par with a civilian. It was pointed out, however, that no one could possibly object to a man-for-man exchange, and that, if Germany intended to adhere to the agreement not to employ repatriated prisoners in the battle line, there was really no difference, from the point of view of exchange, between a soldier and a civilian.

At this point Lord Stanhope informed the War Cabinet that Sir George Cave was returning to England at an early date.

The War Cabinet decided—

(a.) That, as the bargain was based on the hypothesis that soldiers are not to be used in occupied territories, and the persons released are not to be used for military purposes, either on the line of communications or elsewhere, the British delegates should press for the basis of a man-for-man exchange, combatants and civilians being treated on the same footing;

(b.) To support the delegates with regard to the second point raised by them, that they were insisting that repatriated prisoners should not be employed in foreign territory, such as Russia or the East;

(c.) That the Prisoners of War Department should transmit the above instructions to The Hague, adding at the same time that they were issued subject to any modifications the War Cabinet might add after consulting Sir George Cave.

14. With reference to War Cabinet 431, Minute 5, and War Cabinet 409, Minute 7, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by the Admiralty (Paper G.T.-4894) and a memorandum by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Paper G.T.-4922).

Sir R. Horne said, with reference to the calling up of tube-makers, that the Admiralty regretted the necessity of bringing this matter again before the War Cabinet, but that the consequences of calling up all men of Grade I born in the years 1898-1899 had created a situation in regard to the production of necessary boiler tubes for naval craft which was extremely serious. This decision only involved about 715 men altogether. For months past the Admiralty had been face to face with the fact that the supply of tubes was not meeting the demand. The available margin in existence at the end 1916 had been reduced at the present time by a half, viz., 260,000 to 120,000 tubes, which was only equal to four weeks' supply. Frequent applications for labour had been made to the Ministry of National Service to reinforce the labour available, but it had been found that the class of labour required for such vigorous work was very difficult to obtain. Out of 148 men who had been sent to two firms, only twenty-eight had been able to stand up to the physical strain. Sir R. Horne said that the position was that, if these men were taken, the manufacturers would lose 30 per cent. of their output, or a total loss of 10,000 tubes per week, which represented a larger number than would be required for a destroyer. There were only four manufacturers making boiler tubes for the Navy, and about 150 men might be taken under this proposal from these manufacturers; but he presumed that any exemption granted to these firms must be granted also to other tube manufacturers. The effect on the manufacture of tubes for aeroplanes was almost equally serious, as the demand for these tubes was increasing very rapidly. If these men could not be retained, the only alternative was to bring
back stokers from the Navy to do the work, but these the Navy could not spare.

The First Sea Lord, in dealing with the executive result on the Navy, said that the loss of these men would mean the loss of one destroyer a week, either in the new programme or in the refitting programme, for thirteen weeks. It would take another month to regain that position, and meant that the programme was put back for four months, which was really a very serious matter in view of the fact that destroyers were the armament of which the Navy was most in need.

The Prime Minister indicated that it might be expedient for the sake of recruiting to let the men be called up, but thereafter to apply it to get them back to their industry.

The Minister of Munitions pleaded for equal treatment for all Departments, and said that it would be very invidious if any distinction were made. Mr. Churchill instanced the serious difficulties which were occurring, owing to the clean cut, in various Departments under the control of his Ministry. A resolution had been received from the Metropolitan Carriage, Wagon, and Finance Company (Limited), which was the firm most responsible for turning out tanks, in which a protest was recorded against the young men being taken before suitable men had been provided to take their places. In this firm there were from 200 to 300 men involved, and the effect of taking these men would be that the output of tanks would be reduced from 50 to 15 a week. Mr. Churchill quoted from reports which he had received from other industries, including the chemical industry employed in making poison gas, the manufacture of breech mechanism for guns, and the steel department, where the effect of calling up 556 men of the ages of 19 and 20 from the ore mines in Cumberland would involve the loss of 2,000 to 2,500 tons of ore. Mr. Churchill said that if the War Cabinet ruled that the decision should stand, but that exceptions would be allowed in cases which were serious and where numbers were small, it would be most unfair to apply those exceptions to one Department only, and that the only terms on which his Department had agreed to the decision were that there should be universality in the contract. He made a suggestion that the Admiralty and Ministry of Munitions should be allowed a discretion each to retain 1,000 men.

The Minister of National Service expressed the opinion that if the War Cabinet did not find itself able to stand by its policy of the clean cut for young men, then recruiting, so far as tribunals were concerned, would come to an end. Sir Auckland Geddes pointed out that he had received reports from the West country showing that there was very grave dissatisfaction with regard to the young men employed in the dockyards there, and that it would be impossible to keep recruiting going, in view of the new age period, if the young men were left. All the men of the ages between 19 and 20 were not being taken, but only Grade I men, and he would regard any departure from the policy laid down as a very serious matter.

The Minister of Labour said that he recognised the force of Sir Auckland Geddes' statement, and that if exceptions were made in any one case there would be very serious results on recruiting. Making exceptions in any case adversely affected the feeling of labour, as it was impossible to explain why exceptions were made, but Mr. Roberts said that he was not in a position to express an opinion on the strength of the case put forward by the Admiralty or the Ministry of Munitions.

The Prime Minister said it was obvious that these demands for any revision of the decisions given by the War Cabinet must be treated as a whole, and requested the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to put forward his proposals with regard to agricultural labour.

Mr. Prothero said that his Department had been asked to find [1365—436]
30,000 men, and had made every effort to do so. The result, however, showed that agriculture would be reduced to such a depleted state of labour that the harvesting of the crops of 1918 would be in danger, and that it could not be hoped to produce anything like the amount of food in 1919 which would be produced this year. Mr. Prothero pointed out that the farmers were very embittered and out of hand, mainly owing to the fact that they had been urged, in the national interest, to go to great expense and undertake arable farming, in which the chances of profit were less than that of grass farming, and yet the men absolutely essential to the harvesting of their crops were being taken away. Consequently, they were expressing the opinion that, after all their efforts, agriculture, as compared with the military exigencies, was of no account, and the farmers, becoming utterly dispirited, would not make any effort to grow food next year. Mr. Prothero said that the Counties had endeavoured to the very best of their ability to complete the quota scheduled for, but although, in very many cases, absolutely essential men had been taken, the total of men available between the ages of 19 and 23 was only 15,688, and he asked that the War Cabinet should give a decision that the recruitment of men from agriculture should stop at that number.

Sir Arthur Lee said that, owing to the leakage of agricultural labourers to other Government Departments, there were less men available for recruitment from agriculture than had been anticipated, and of those that remained a very much smaller proportion were fit men than was expected. Of those fit men, very many were key men, but the War Agricultural Committees had found it necessary, in order to attempt to complete the quotas required, to take away the only men on small holdings. Sir Arthur Lee said that he could not exaggerate the dangers as regards the existing crop, and expressed the opinion that every possible effort had been made by the Agricultural Committees.

Sir Auckland Geddes pointed out that it would be impossible to accept the suggestion of Mr. Prothero, as some 25,000 out of the 30,000 required from England would be posted by Sunday night. It was undoubtedly true that the quota in certain Counties had been too heavy, but, from information which had been supplied to him, it appeared that some Counties, such as Cumberland, Westmorland, and Durham, had not been strained over hard.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food expressed the opinion that the number which had been taken from agriculture was the extreme limit. In fact, Mr. Clynes said, he thought it was essential to restore some of the men to the farms if there was to be no waste of food, as neither woman, German, nor home labour could be used to supply the necessary services which were essential.

The Secretary of State for War pointed out that the army was far short already, not only of the numbers which the War Office hoped to get, but of the numbers on which the maintenance of the forces depended. So far as agriculture was concerned, it would not make much difference to the army if a certain number of men were allowed to stay out until the harvest was over, and would join the colours afterwards, but he regarded the calling back of the men who were already with the colours as a very serious matter. Lord Milner said that he could not believe that 30,000 men could not have been taken from agriculture without the necessity of removing the only workers on a farm.

The Prime Minister said that cases had been brought to his notice in which the only men on a farm had been called up; that there were threats of agricultural strikes, and that undoubtedly there were very many individual hard cases which it would be most difficult to defend in the House of Commons. There would be a debate on the following day on this subject in the House, and Mr. Lloyd George expressed the opinion that the time had come when the need for men for the army should be restated. He would
like the War Cabinet to realise what these demands meant with
regard to our man-power. The proposals of 9th April, which were
made in connection with the Military Service Act (No. 2), 1918, were
then regarded as essential. Since that time it had been found
necessary not to call up 25,000 men from the mines, because coal
could not be procured and ships were lying idle in ports for want of
bunker coal. It was now proposed to deduct 15,000 from the quota
to be supplied by agriculture, and another 15,000 were going
to be asked for from the mines. The Ministry of Munitions
and the Admiralty were requesting about 2,000 men to be
exempted. Mr. Lloyd George pointed out that this totalled 57,000
Grade I men, and, as the total number which it was expected to
obtain of this grade from the effect of the Act passed last April was
only 200,000, these deductions would come to a quarter of that total
at a time when every young man was essential for combatant work.
It was pointed out that there was a feeling in the country that
the American reinforcements would be able to relieve the strain on
our armies at the front.
Lord Milner said that, when we made an appeal to America, to
which it had responded so well, we said that we ourselves were
making an effort in order that, by the autumn, we should be able to
play our part again in France.
Mr. Prothero said that the Board of Agriculture were not con­
testing the clean cut, and that the ages involved were from 19 to 31.
Sir Auckland Geddes pointed out that any decision arrived at
by the War Cabinet should be one which could be administered,
and that it was necessary that sufficient interval should elapse
between the taking of the decision and its becoming operative to
allow of orders being issued to all parts of the country. Men
from agriculture were coming in from all over the country, and
the only possible way in which any alteration could be dealt with
administratively was to stop the issue of calling-up notices as soon
as possible. At the same time, if this were done, it should be
coupled with an earnest endeavour to get more men from Counties
and districts where the present quota had been reached without
undue strain.
The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) No more calling-up notices should be issued to men
employed in agriculture (as defined in agreements
between the Ministry of National Service and the Board
of Agriculture and Fisheries) until after the harvest;
(b.) The calling up of tube-makers for the Admiralty should be
proceeded with in accordance with War Cabinet 431,
Minute 5, but that, if the Admiralty, the Ministry of
Munitions, or other Departments, considered that the
calling up of particular men in certain industries
seriously affected the prosecution of the war, the
Department concerned should make application to the
navy or the army, as the case might be, asking that
individual men essential to the industries concerned
should be released.

15. With reference to War Cabinet 431, Minute 10, the War
Cabinet approved the addition of the name of Mr. Stanley Baldwin,
Joint Financial Secretary to the Treasury, to the Standing Committee
of Home Affairs.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 26, 1918.
WAR CABINET, 437.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Friday, June 28, 1918, at 11:30 a.m.

Present:

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

The Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, M.P.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 15).

The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for War (for Minutes 1 to 15).

Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Military Intelligence (for Minutes 1 to 15).

The Right Hon. Sir A. H. Stanley, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (for Minute 18).

The Right Hon. R. Munro, K.C., M.P., Secretary for Scotland (for Minute 16).


Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff (for Minutes 1 to 15).

The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Minister of Munitions (for Minute 18).

Sir Stephenon Kent, K.C.B., Director of the Department of Labour Supply (for Minute 18).

The Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Labour (for Minute 18).

Sir D. J. Shackleton, K.C.B., Secretary, Ministry of Labour (for Minute 18).

Sir G. Calthrop, Bt., Coal Controller (for Minute 18).

Sir Frederick Liddell, K.C.B., Treasury (for Minute 16).


Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.
1. The Director of Military Intelligence reported that the situation was unchanged on the Western front.

German Reinforcements.

2. The Director of Military Intelligence said that the German prisoners released from Russia had begun to appear in German units on the Western front. The number available as an increase to the German man-power was at present about 50,000, but General Macdonogh expressed the opinion that this number would increase, in view of the fact that about 200,000 Germans had been taken prisoners by the Russians. A large number of these, for various reasons, would not return, and he was of opinion that 100,000 could be given as an outside number of possible reinforcements from this source.

General Macdonogh said that Prince Rupprecht had now 40 divisions in reserve, of which only 6 had been less than one month out of the firing line.

The Caucasus.

3. With reference to Imperial War Cabinet 21, Minute 4, the Director of Military Intelligence reported that General Marshall had telegraphed that he had yet received no news from Enzeli, and that a report had been received from Miane that the Turks had advanced from Tabriz to the Shabli Pass.

East Africa.

4. With reference to War Cabinet 436, Minute 10 the Director of Military Intelligence reported that an advanced company of the 2/3 King’s African Rifles reached Quelimano on the 26th June, and was proceeding to Mhamacurra on the following day.

Herr von Kuhlmann’s Speech in the Reichstag.

5. Questioned as to whether the War Office considered that the speech recently delivered by Herr von Kuhlmann had been inspired by General Ludendorff, the Director of Military Intelligence said that he was strongly of opinion that General Ludendorff had been consulted before the speech was delivered. There had been a great deal of comment on the speech in Germany, and it was evident that it was very unpalatable to the majority of the German people.

Lord Curzon expressed the opinion that Herr von Kuhlmann would never have dared to make the speech without the sanction of the German military authorities.

Lord Milner said it appeared to him that, while Germany still intended to make a big military effort in order to win the war, yet the object of the speech seemed to indicate that the ground should be prepared for any criticism in case the military offensive was not successful.

Naval Action off Zeebrugge.

6. The First Sea Lord reported that three of our coastal motor-boats were in action on the night of the 26-27th June, about 7 miles north of Zeebrugge mole, with four enemy torpedo-boat destroyers. Torpedoes were fired by our ships, and one hit was claimed. All the boats had returned safely.

Action by Belgian Coast Patrol.

7. The First Sea Lord reported that, on the evening of the 27th June, the Belgian coast patrol destroyers, with monitors in support, sighted eight enemy torpedo-boat destroyers. Our patrol engaged the enemy at 12,000 yards, closing to 8,000, firing four torpedoes without success. The small monitors, with H.M.S. “Terror,” followed at fullest speed, but never sighted the enemy. Three more enemy torpedo-boat destroyers were subsequently sighted, and our
Bombing Raids.

8. The First Sea Lord reported that the usual bombing attacks had been made on Zeebrugge and Bruges. On 26th June three British machines from Otranto had raided Durazzo, reporting a direct hit on the seaplane jetty and buildings adjoining, and that the seaplane base had been set on fire. All the machines returned safely.

Submarines.

9. The First Sea Lord reported that a periscope had been sighted off Rattray Head. Depth charges had been dropped, and it was considered that the submarine was destroyed, as reports had been received that oil was coming up all day. Questioned as to whether it could not be considered certain that a submarine had been destroyed when oil and bubbles were seen, Admiral Wemyss pointed out that, while this was the probable conclusion to be arrived at, yet there was so much oil all round the coast that the Admiralty did not like to state definitely the destruction of submarines in all cases where oil and bubbles were seen.

British Destroyers in Collision.

10. The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet that a report had been received from the Commander-in-chief of the Grand Fleet to the effect that H.M.S. "Vancouver" and H.M.S. "Wessex" were in collision on 26th June; that both vessels had been severely damaged, and that the total casualties were 5 killed, 3 injured, and 1 missing.

Committee of Prime Ministers.

11. With reference to Imperial War Cabinet 19, Minute 8, the Prime Minister was asked whether he could give the War Cabinet any information as to the course which the Committee of Prime Ministers was taking, and Mr. Lloyd George said that, up to the present, the Prime Ministers had been, in the main, asking for information. No definite decisions had been arrived at, with the exception of the decision on the Russian situation (Imperial War Cabinet 21, Minute 10), which had already been communicated to the members of the War Cabinet.

The Czecho-Slovak Forces.

12. The Prime Minister drew the attention of the War Cabinet to the necessity of making financial arrangements in order to enable the Czecho-Slovaks to pay their way in Russia and Siberia. Mr. Lloyd George expressed the opinion that it was most desirable that these forces should be in a position to pay, as it was essential that the population should remain friendly to them. In the discussion which followed, it was pointed out that the French authorities had made all the arrangements to bring the Czecho-Slovak troops to Vladivostok, and that previous financial arrangements with regard to the troops in the Ukraine had been made between General Foch and the Director of Military Intelligence.
The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The Director of Military Intelligence should put himself in communication with the French military authorities, in order that the financial arrangements might be made to place the necessary money at the disposal of the Czecho-Slovak troops, for use either on their way to Vladivostok or in Russia or Siberia.

(b.) The amount expended, and the financial details, should be subject to the concurrence of the Treasury.

13. With reference to Imperial War Cabinet 21, Minute 10, the Prime Minister drew the attention of the War Cabinet to the impression which apparently prevailed in America that there was a division of opinion among the Allies on the subject of intervention in Russia.

Attention was called to the telegram on this subject received from Lord Reading the previous day.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that a telegram was now being prepared and would be sent to-day to Lord Reading requesting President Wilson not to commit himself on this question.

14. Owing to the absence of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the War Cabinet decided—

To defer the consideration of the question of the periodical publication in America of the total British casualties until his return.

15. The Prime Minister asked when it was expected that the Secretary of State for Home Affairs would return to England. In view of the many questions in connection with which his presence was necessary, Mr. Lloyd George expressed the opinion that it would be desirable that Sir George Cave should return as soon as possible.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs undertook to send a telegram to Sir George Cave to this effect.

16. With reference to War Cabinet 434, Minute 6, the War Cabinet had under consideration a memorandum by Mr. Hayes Fisher on the subject of the prolongation of the life of Parliament and the holding of local elections (Paper G.T.-4935), and a memorandum by the President of the Local Government Board (Paper G.T.-4569).

Mr. Hayes Fisher pointed out that it was necessary for the life of Parliament, which now stands extended until the 31st July next, to be further extended, and suggested that the extension should be for six months, namely, until the 31st January, 1919. Mr. Hayes Fisher said that it would, of course, be possible to have an election at any time on the new register after the 1st October, 1919, there would be time for further extension, should urgent military or other reasons make this necessary. With regard to municipal elections Mr. Hayes Fisher said that the Municipal Corporations Association were distinctly opposed to the holding of elections next November, and also to the proposal that the new register should be made the occasion of a complete new election of the whole Council and not merely of one-third, as is customary under the present law. He fully supported these views, mainly because a large number of
councillors were now serving on committees dealing with war work, who had gained considerable experience, and it would be very unfortunate if, by their failing to be elected, their services were lost to the locality. No question had been raised in Parliament previously on the subject of holding municipal elections, but one was on the paper now, which would require an answer. Mr. Hayes Fisher explained that the extension of local elections would apply only to those which took place before the 1st March, which would cover the Irish borough and urban district elections but not the English county or district council elections.

The War Cabinet approved the proposals put forward in the memorandum by the President of the Local Government (Paper G.T.-4935).

TREATMENT OF INVALIDED SOLDIERS FROM THE ARMY.

17. The attention of the War Cabinet was called to the dissatisfaction which existed in regard to the treatment of men invalided from the army still needing medical attention.

It was pointed out that these men were often discharged and told to go to civil hospitals for treatment, but that the necessary papers were not sent to the hospitals for a considerable time, and consequently their medical history was unknown to the authorities and the men failed to get proper attention. Cases were quoted in which men, failing to get adequate treatment, had attempted by desperate methods to get back to the army in order that they might secure attention.

The War Cabinet requested—

The Secretary of State for War to issue instructions to the Departments concerned, in order that the necessary papers concerning men invalided from the Army might be received at the civil hospitals before the arrival of the men to whom they relate.

COAL MINERS' WAGES.

18. With reference to War Cabinet 240, Minute 10, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Sir Albert Stanley (Paper G.T.-4959), in regard to the application of the Miners' Federation for a further increase in war wage of 1s. 6d. per day, or 9s. a week, to miners over 15 years of age, and of 6d. per day to those under 16 years of age, thereby doubling the war bonus obtained in September 1917.

Sir Albert Stanley pointed out that the Controller of Coal Mines had met the Executive of the Miners' Federation on the 25th June, and had offered an advance of 6d. and 3d. per day, although, according to the figures showing the increase in the cost of living since the 1st October last, even this amount was scarcely justified. In addition to offering this compromise, the Coal Controller had proposed that a Committee should be appointed, consisting of two nominees of the Mining Association of Great Britain and two nominees of the Miners' Federation, together with a neutral chairman to be appointed by the Government, who should examine the question of increase in cost of living and earnings. Both these offers, however, had been declined by the representatives of the coal miners, it being alleged that they had received the instructions of their Conference not to barter in connection with this application, which was the minimum the Conference was prepared to allow them to accept. In view of the fact that a compromise was impossible, there were only two alternatives, either to refuse or grant the application. If the demand was refused, then a strike must be faced, and the coal position to-day did not admit of stoppage. The effect of a strike upon munition works, essential industries, and shipping would be disastrous. France and Italy, without a steady supply of coal from this country, could not continue in the war. In addition, we had obligations towards neutrals, such as Sweden, whereby we supplied
coal in return for ships. Our own shipping, in the event of a strike, would begin to be stacked up in our ports. Moreover, it was by no means certain that public sympathy would be on the side of the Government if their refusal of the application resulted in a strike. As to wages generally, Sir Albert Stanley gave figures showing that, while the miners during the war had had their wages almost doubled, the railwaymen, on an average, had also had their wages practically doubled. It was true to say that there had been substantial increases throughout the whole field of labour.

Sir Stephenson Kent, in opposing the proposal to grant the miners' demand, said that he thought the time had come to call a halt. Wages generally were mounting up and up all along the line, and workpeople were taking advantage of the situation. For instance, there were cases of skilled mechanics going in and out of shops for a matter of a few hours in order to better their wages, and employers did not seem to care, owing to the operation of the Excess Profits Tax. It was the spirit of the times. He strongly urged that it was impossible to single out one trade, like the coal trade, for an increase in wages without starting the whole cycle of wages in all trades. He believed that acceptance of the miners' application would spread unrest without resulting in increase of work.

Sir David Shackleton, supporting what Sir Stephenson Kent had said about starting another cycle of wage-raising, said that the work of the Ministry of Labour would be made very difficult to carry on if the miners were allowed to enforce their own terms. The miners were demanding the additional 9s. a week simply because they knew their power, and it was not fair to the other trades who had agreed to arbitration. His advice was to resist the miners' application, to place the whole facts before the public, and to face a strike.

It was pointed out, on the other hand, that this was advice to go to war with the miners—a war which, having regard to the military situation, and the need for coal, as shown by the President of the Board of Trade, ought not to be risked.

Sir Guy Calthrop said that already this week seven pits were "out" because it was said that there had been too much delay over the negotiations. As an example of how trouble in the coalfields spread, reference was made to a recent dispute in the Tredegar mines on a point of discipline in the Union; the miners' leaders in this case had been in sympathy with the Government, and had asked that the men who had caused the trouble should not be reinstated; nevertheless, the trouble, at first local, had spread until 160,000 tons of coal had been lost, and in the end the men in question had to be reinstated.

The War Cabinet then had some discussion amongst themselves as to whether the application should be granted or refused. One view was expressed, that the advice of the representatives of the Ministry of Labour should be adopted; that the demand should be resisted; that the Government should debate the matter in Parliament and appeal to the nation. The majority of the Cabinet, however, while recognising that, in other times and in other trades, a strike could be afforded, were of opinion that, at the present time and in this particular trade, the risk was too great to be run.

The War Cabinet decided that—

(a.) The application of the Miners' Federation for the present War Bonus of 1s. 6d. per day to miners over 16 years of age and of 9d. per day to those under 16 years of age to be doubled should be granted, on the express understanding that the miners should increase their output.

(b.) The President of the Board of Trade should prepare a statement on the subject for the Prime Minister.

(c.) The announcement should be made by the Prime Minister to the representatives of the miners the same evening at 6 p.m.
19. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Paper G.T.-4921) in regard to new accommodation for the Department of Overseas Trade. In his memorandum the Foreign Secretary pointed out that the Office of Works had undertaken to erect, immediately, buildings on the Horse Guards Parade to accommodate the staff, provided the sanction of the War Cabinet was obtained, and this was now urgently requested.

The War Cabinet sanctioned this proposal, subject to the approval of the War Priority Committee.

20. The War Cabinet took note of the recommendations of the Economic Defence and Development Committee, as set forth in the note by the Secretary (Paper G.T.-4944).

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
June 28, 1918.
SECRET.

WAR CABINET.

SUBJECT INDEX TO MINUTES OF MEETINGS.

War Cabinet Papers (379 to 437, inclusive).

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