CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, 11th October, 1945, at 11 a.m.

Present:

The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Lord President of the Council.

The Right Hon. ARTHUR GREENWOOD, M.P., Lord Privy Seal.

The Right Hon. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

The Right Hon. LORD JOWITT, Lord Chancellor.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT ADDISON, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. G. H. HALL, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT STANSGATE, Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. E. SHINWELL, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.

The Right Hon. J. J. LAWSON, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. G. A. ISAACS, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT ADDISON, Secretary of State for Education.

The Right Hon. ANEURIN BEVAN, M.P., Minister of Health.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. J. WILMOT, M.P., Minister of Supply and Aircraft Production (Item 4).

Mr. GEORGE BUCHANAN, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Items 4–6).

The Right Hon. P. J. NOEL-BAKER, M.P., Minister of State (Items 1–2).

Mr. R. G. HOWE, Foreign Office (Item 1).

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.

Mr. NORMAN BROOK.

Mr. W. S. MURRIE.
## CABINET 40 (45).

**CONTENTS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minute No</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>International Labour Conference</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Local Government Elections. Participation by Ministers</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Justices of the Peace Proposed Appointment of Royal Commission</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. At their meeting on the 4th October the Cabinet had invited the Palestine Committee to report on a proposal made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for the appointment of an Anglo-American Commission to consider means of alleviating the situation of the Jews in Europe and to examine the problem of immigration into Palestine in that context.

The Lord President of the Council summarised the recommendations made in the report (C.P. (45) 216) now submitted by the Palestine Committee. It was proposed in the report that the United States Government should be invited to join with His Majesty's Government in setting up a Committee of Enquiry—

(i) to examine the position of the Jews in Europe;
(ii) to make an estimate of the number that could not be settled in the countries from which they originated;
(iii) to examine the possibility of relieving the position in Europe by immigration into other countries outside Europe including the United States; and
(iv) to consider other available means of meeting the needs of the immediate situation.

The Foreign Secretary stressed the importance of seeking a solution of the problem of Palestine as part of the policy of His Majesty's Government for the Middle East as a whole. At the same time, it was essential to take steps to allay the agitation in the United States which was poisoning our relations with the United States Government in other fields. He did not accept the view that none of the Jews now in Europe could ever find a permanent home there. The report made by Mr. Earl Harrison to President Truman had not been based on a proper investigation, and there would be great advantage in holding a careful enquiry in which the United States were associated with us. The United States should make some contribution to receiving those Jews who had to be removed from Europe. In this connection we should point out that, in assessing our ability to contribute, account must be taken of the fact that in accordance with the pledge given by Mr. Churchill the British Commonwealth had a responsibility for finding homes for large numbers of Poles, some of whom would be Jews.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies and he had seen Dr. Weizmann and had understood that, if a new and determined approach were made to the whole problem, he would co-operate in seeking to arrange a truce in Palestine pending the outcome of the discussions.

The method of approaching the Arab representatives on the continuance of Jewish immigration into Palestine would require careful consideration. It might be desirable to send a special envoy to Ibn Saud.

The Colonial Secretary said that he hoped it would be possible to give Dr. Weizmann some definite information as to the lines on which His Majesty's Government were working before he left for the United States on the 22nd October. The Cabinet must, however, appreciate that it would be some time before even the interim arrangements could be worked out and that the situation in Palestine, which was already serious, was likely to deteriorate. Armed bands of Jews had already attacked camps where illegal immigrants were detained.

The following points were raised in discussion:

(a) It should be made clear in any public announcement that the enquiry into the position of the Jews in Europe would be confined broadly to the British and United States zones of occupation.
(b) The proposed Committee should take into consideration the possibility of increasing the scope for immigration into Palestine by the development of the Negeb area.
(c) The proposal in paragraph 7 (b) of C.P. (45) 216 that action should be taken with a view to securing a modification of the rate of immigration was not intended to lead to any reduction in the rate.

(d) If the Committee began their enquiries in Europe, there was a risk that they would be impressed with the hardships of the Jews in Europe before they realised to the full the difficulties of accommodating them in Palestine or elsewhere; and reports of their views might leak out and aggravate the fears of the Arabs. Would it not be desirable, therefore, that the Committee should visit Palestine at a very early stage in their investigations and hear representations from both Arabs and Jews?

(e) The Home Secretary drew attention to the increasing pressure for the admission of Jewish refugees from the Continent into this country. So far he and his predecessors had been able to resist pressure of this kind, but it would become increasingly difficult to hold the position.

(f) The Minister of State said that it was hoped that the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organisation would be sufficiently well established by January to be ready to consider any proposals submitted by His Majesty's Government for an agreement placing Palestine under trusteeship.

The Prime Minister said that the Cabinet were grateful to the Foreign Secretary for the time and energy which he had devoted to the formulation of this new approach to the question of Palestine. It was clear that there was general support for the proposal to associate the United States Government in a Committee of Enquiry, and for the view that the problem of Palestine should be dealt with as part of the policy of His Majesty's Government for the Middle East as a whole. The form of any announcement to be made was, however, of the utmost importance and the draft annexed to C.P. (45) 216 would require some revision. Thus, it should bring out more prominently the fact that this constituted an entirely new approach to the problem. It should also state the actual position of the Jews in the British zone of occupation in Europe, and the extent to which the United States Government were committed to consultation with the Arabs on the question of Palestine. It was also for consideration whether there could not be a simultaneous statement with regard to our general policy in the Middle East, which would indicate the steps which we proposed to take to assist the Arab populations in that area. It was desirable that the Government's policy should be announced without delay, but the announcement in Parliament, could, if necessary, be postponed until the week beginning the 21st October. Meanwhile, it was of the utmost importance that the strictest secrecy should be observed with regard to the proposals.

The Foreign Secretary said that he would like to consider the plan further in the light of the views expressed by the Cabinet. He was not sure whether his negotiations with regard to the Levant and Egypt could be quickly brought to a stage which would permit of simultaneous announcements with regard to policy in Palestine and policy in the Middle East as a whole. He would, however, consider this point.

The Cabinet—

(1) Approved in principle the policy outlined in the report of the Palestine Committee (C.P. (45) 216).

(2) Agreed that the United States Government should forthwith be invited to join with His Majesty's Government in setting up a Committee of Enquiry on the lines proposed in that report.

(3) Agreed that the Governments of the Dominions and the Government of India and the High Commissioner for Palestine should be informed of this approach to the United States Government.
(4) Took note that, in the light of the discussion, the Foreign Secretary, in consultation with the Lord President of the Council and the Colonial Secretary, would give further consideration to the procedure to be followed by the Committee of Enquiry and to the form and content of the proposed announcement of His Majesty's Government's policy on Palestine.

2. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Labour and National Service (C.P. (45) 212) outlining the instructions which he proposed to give to the British Delegates regarding the principal items on the agenda of the 27th Session of the International Labour Conference, which was to open in Paris on the 15th October.

Discussion turned on the extent to which the British Delegates should be instructed to press the point that the International Labour Conference should not concern itself with matters which were primarily the concern of other international bodies, existing or projected, forming part of the United Nations Organisation.

The Minister of Education took exception on this ground to the draft resolution, mentioned in paragraph 5 of C.P. (45) 212, advocating a comprehensive plan for the general organisation of the protection of children and young persons as future workers or as young workers already in employment. The scope of this draft resolution was admittedly very wide, and covered health, social welfare and education. It was inappropriate that the International Labour Conference should seek to deal with the educational aspect of this question; and this was particularly undesirable now that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation had been established for the international discussion of educational questions.

The Minister of State said that a similar point arose in connection with the resolution mentioned in paragraph 3 of C.P. (45) 212, on the maintenance of a high level of employment. This expressed views on a number of matters in the economic field which would more appropriately be handled by other international bodies to be established under the United Nations Organisation.

The general view of the Cabinet was that it would not be enough for the British Delegates to approve these resolutions in principle and to content themselves with pointing out that these matters would be the primary concern of other international bodies. On that basis it would be open for the International Labour Conference to approach Governments on matters which were primarily the concern of other international bodies. The British Delegates ought therefore to propose appropriate amendments of these resolutions which, while preserving the right of the International Labour Conference to express its view on these matters so far as they affected the labour questions with which that Conference was concerned, would make it clear that the Conference was not proposing itself to take the lead in international discussion of matters which were primarily the concern of other international bodies established, or to be established, under the United Nations Organisation.

The Cabinet—

(1) Invited the Minister of Labour and National Service to amend the instructions proposed in paragraphs 3 and 5 of C.P. (45) 212 so as to take account of the views of the Cabinet, as summarised above.

(2) Subject to this point, approved the proposals put forward in C.P. (45) 212 regarding the instructions to be given to the British Delegates at the forthcoming session of the International Labour Conference.

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3. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (C.P. (45) 198).

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that this memorandum dealt with two points outstanding from a discussion by the War Cabinet, in the time of the Coalition Government, regarding emigration to Australia.

First, his predecessor had been asked to press the Australian Government to agree that ex-Service men and women emigrating from this country to Australia should receive the same treatment as regards preference for employment as was accorded to Australian ex-Service men and women. This point has been taken up with the Australian Government who, while adhering to the principle that preference for employment must be limited to Australian ex-Service men and women, were now willing to extend the benefits of Australian social insurance schemes to accepted ex-Service migrants from this country and also to make available certain other benefits given to Australian ex-Service men and women. The details of the Australian offer were set out in the annex to C.P. (45) 198; and the Secretary of State recommend that this offer should now be accepted.

Secondly, the War Cabinet had decided that the contribution to be made towards assisted passages to Australia by emigrants other than ex-Service men and women should be fixed at £15. The Australian Government maintained their view that the emigrant's contribution should be limited to £10. The Secretary of State now proposed to invite the Australian authorities to join him in discussions with the shipping interests, with a view to reaching some definite understanding about future passage rates for assisted emigrants, and to leave open for decision, in the light of these discussions, the question whether the Australian proposal to limit the emigrant's contribution to £10 could be accepted.

Points in discussion were—

(a) Was it desirable that any steps should be taken to encourage emigration from this country, in view of the prospective decline in the population? Would it not be preferable to leave emigration to be determined by the natural attraction of wider economic opportunities, without the artificial stimulus of assisted passages?

As against this, it was pointed out that the numbers likely to take advantage of these assisted passages were not so large as to have any appreciable effect on population trends. The proposed subsidy towards the cost of passages would not be enough to influence a man's judgment on the question whether or not he should emigrate; it would do no more than make it easier for those to emigrate who had already made up their minds to do so. A number of men and women in the Services wished to settle in the Dominions—many of them as a result of association with Dominion troops during the war—and it was reasonable that they should be assisted to do so.

(b) Were there satisfactory assurances that people emigrating from this country to Australia would not be forced to seek employment outside the towns? Experience between the wars had been unhappy in this respect.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that there was now little risk that the Australian authorities would seek to force all emigrants to work on the land. The greater risk was that they might seek to obtain too many of our skilled industrial workers, whom we ourselves could ill spare. He had already had occasion to warn the Australian authorities that we should not be able to agree to their exercising their discretion to "approve" emigrants in such a way as to select only skilled industrial workers.

The Cabinet—

(1) Authorised the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to conclude an agreement with the Australian Government on the lines indicated in C.P. (45) 198 regarding the emigration of ex-Service men and women from this country to Australia;
(2) Invited the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to ask the Australian authorities to join him in discussions with the shipping interests regarding future passage rates for other assisted emigrants, on the understanding that a further report would be made to the Cabinet in due course on the Australian proposal to limit the emigrant's contribution to £10 per adult.

4. The Cabinet discussed a Note by the Prime Minister (C.P. (45) 203) proposing that Cabinet Ministers and Ministers above the rank of Under-Secretary should not participate in municipal elections.

The Prime Minister explained that his Note was intended to apply to county council, as well as borough council elections. There was, of course, no objection to a Minister's sending a message to a candidate; but he thought it would be preferable that Ministers should not accept speaking engagements in the election campaigns. The public duties of Ministers imposed a heavy charge on their time; and it would give an undesirable impression if a number of Ministers engaged in election speeches in various parts of the country during the days immediately preceding the elections.

In discussion it was pointed out (a) that some Ministers had already accepted invitations to speak during the elections, before the Prime Minister's Note was circulated; (b) that some Ministers would find it specially difficult to decline such invitations, in view of their past association with local government affairs; and (c) that it was difficult for a Minister to avoid speaking if he happened to be in his constituency during the election period.

The Cabinet—

Agreed that, while it should be the general rule that Cabinet Ministers and Ministers above the rank of Under-Secretary should not accept speaking engagements in connection with local government elections, individual Ministers might have discretion to depart from this general rule in special circumstances, particularly in their own constituencies.

5. The Cabinet considered a memorandum by the Lord Chancellor (C.P. (45) 192) proposing the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the selection and removal of Justices of the Peace and certain other aspects of the administration of Summary Jurisdiction.

There was general support for this proposal. The Lord President of the Council, however, said that he hesitated to assent for two reasons. First, he understood that one of the objects was to secure that recommendations for appointment to the Commission of the Peace should no longer be made on a political basis; and he himself thought it desirable that a due proportion of persons holding Labour views should continue to be appointed to the Commission. Secondly, an enquiry by a Royal Commission would result in a report recommending legislation; and he doubted whether legislation on this subject could be undertaken in the near future, in view of the heavy programme to which the Government were already committed.

The Lord Chancellor said that his intentions had been misunderstood by the Lord President. His desire was, not to reduce, but to increase the number of Justices holding Labour views. But he was satisfied that the existing machinery was not working satisfactorily, and he thought it essential that some better method of selection should be devised. He would like to have an opportunity of discussing this point with the Lord President.
6. The Cabinet had before them memoranda on the future of the hospital services by the Minister of Health (C.P. (45) 205) and the Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (C.P. (45) 207). The Minister of Health recalled that in the White Paper on a National Health Service (Cmd. 6502) it had been proposed to leave the voluntary hospitals under their own independent management, though subject to a certain measure of control in return for the assistance which they would receive from the Exchequer and local rates. Estimates made by the Ministry of Health showed that, when the National Health Service was established, at least 70 per cent., and in some cases as much as 80 or 90 per cent., of the income of a voluntary hospital would be derived from public funds. If income drawn from investments and past endowments were ignored, the current voluntary support given to voluntary hospitals would be negligible. Moreover, apart from the big teaching hospitals, voluntary hospitals did not render a satisfactory service and had conspicuously failed to provide the conditions necessary to maintain an adequate nursing profession. He had accordingly reached the conclusion that there was an overwhelming case for putting the voluntary hospitals under some form of public control. If this was admitted, the first question was whether this control could be exercised through some form of local government machinery. The existing local government areas were neither large enough nor so constituted as to suit the needs of hospital administration. He had considered the possibility of creating some new form of local government unit for this purpose, but he could not find any satisfactory solution either by the creation of new directly elected authorities or by the establishment of joint boards. He accordingly felt that the right course was to constitute a new National Hospital Service which would take over both the voluntary hospitals and the local authority hospitals, including sanatoria, mental hospitals and mental deficiency institutions. Safeguards against undue centralisation would be provided by the setting up of a regional board for each natural hospital region, and provision would be made for further delegation to divisional committees where the geography of a region made this desirable. It was only by a scheme of this kind that it would be possible to give contributors an equal return for the equal contributions which they would be required to make under the new scheme of national insurance. His proposals would undoubtedly excite strong opposition by the voluntary hospitals and the local authorities. He was confident, however, that their opposition could be overcome, and his conversations with the medical profession, so far as they had gone, left him with the impression that, confronted with a choice between a primarily local government service and a primarily nationalised service, the great majority of the doctors would prefer the latter.

As regards the suggestion of the Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland that the voluntary teaching hospitals should be brought within the proposed National Hospital Service, it was not his intention that the big teaching hospitals should be excluded altogether from the Service, but only that special provision should be made for them within the scheme.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that, in principle, he supported the proposals put forward by the Minister.
of Health. The existing organisation of hospitals by local government areas was incompatible with an efficient service, and a reorganisation on the regional basis suggested by the Minister of Health was desirable. At the same time, the opposition likely to be shown to the proposals should not be underrated, and much preliminary work and propaganda would have to be done before the scheme could successfully be brought into being. Provision should be made in the scheme for giving the maximum freedom to the medical profession for research and experiment and for improving the conditions of service of the nursing profession.

The Lord Privy Seal said that the voluntary hospitals were already finding it difficult to provide an adequate service; and when the new scheme of national insurance came into force the income derived by voluntary hospitals from contributory schemes would inevitably dry up. It should be recognised, however, that a radical reorganisation of the kind proposed by the Minister of Health would take some years to carry out, and there would have to be protracted discussions before a scheme could be formulated which could be embodied in legislation.

The Minister of Labour and National Service supported the proposals made by the Minister of Health. He was convinced, from the experience of the L.C.C. in running municipal hospitals, that if the voluntary hospitals were brought under public control a better service could be provided. Another merit of these proposals was that they would do away with the current methods of seeking voluntary contributions.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he was in general sympathy with the proposals, but must reserve his final judgment until he had had an opportunity of examining their financial implications. There would clearly have to be some readjustment of the block grant, which would take account of the extent to which the transfer of hospitals from the local authorities to a National Hospital Service would ease the burden on local rates.

The Cabinet—

Agreed to resume discussion of the proposals in C.P. (45) 205 and 207 at their meeting on the 18th October.

Cabinet Office, S.W. 1,
11th October, 1945.