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C.M. (47)

59th Conclusions

CABINET 59 (47)

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, 3rd July, 1947, 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., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. HUGH DALTON, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.	The Right Hon. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade.
The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., Minister of Defence.	The Right Hon. VISCOUNT JOWITT, Lord Chancellor.
The Right Hon. J. CHUTER EDE, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department.	The Right Hon. VISCOUNT ADDISON, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. J. WESTWOOD, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland.	The Right Hon. A. CREECH JONES, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.
The Right Hon. THE EARL OF LISTOWEL, Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.	The Right Hon. G. A. ISAACS, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.
The Right Hon. E. SHINWELL, M.P., Minister of Fuel and Power.	The Right Hon. ANEURIN BEVAN, M.P., Minister of Health.
The Right Hon. T. WILLIAMS, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.	The Right Hon. GEORGE TOMLINSON, M.P., Minister of Education.

The following were also present :

The Right Hon. JOHN STRACHEY, M.P., Minister of Food.	The Right Hon. LEWIS SILKIN, M.P., Minister of Town and Country Planning (<i>Item 2</i>).
The Right Hon. HECTOR McNEIL, M.P., Minister of State (<i>Item 3</i>).	The Right Hon. WILLIAM WHITELEY, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (<i>Item 1</i>).

Secretariat :

Mr. W. S. MURRIE.
Mr. S. E. V. LUKE.

CABINET 59 (47)

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Parliament.
Business in
the House of
Commons.

1. The Cabinet were informed of the business to be taken in the House of Commons in the following week.

The Report Stage of the *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Bill* would be taken on 7th July.

On 8th July there would be a debate on the *Import Programme*. The Lord President would speak at the beginning of the debate and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would wind up.

9th July would be the first day of the Report Stage of the *Finance Bill*.

It was hoped to take the Second Reading of the *Indian Independence Bill* on 10th July and the remaining stages on 14th July. In view of the difficulties in maintaining the Interim Government in India, it was most desirable that the Bill should become law as soon as possible, and the aim was to secure its passage by 20th July.

The Third Reading of the *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Bill* would be taken on 11th July. It had been agreed that the debate should occupy only two hours in order that progress might be made with other business.

Report of the
Committee of
Privileges.

The Lord President said that he proposed to resist any suggestion that there should be an immediate debate on the Motion put down by certain Opposition Members relating to the Report of the Committee of Privileges on the complaint made to the House on behalf of Mr. W. J. Brown, M.P. It would, however, be impossible to avoid a debate on this Motion later in the month, and the Cabinet ought to consider the issues raised by it.

The Cabinet—

Invited the Lord President to circulate a memorandum on the issues raised in the Motion relating to the Report of the Committee of Privileges on the complaint made to the House on behalf of Mr. W. J. Brown, M.P.

Town and
Country
Planning
Bills.
Constitution
of the Central
Land Board.
(Previous
Reference:
C.M.(46)107th
Conclusions,
Minute 4.)

2. The Cabinet considered a memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland (C.P. (47) 192) about the constitution of the Central Land Board which it was proposed to establish for the purposes of the English and Scottish Town and Country Planning Bills.

The Secretary of State for Scotland explained that the English Bill provided that the Minister of Town and Country Planning and he should jointly appoint the Board and the Scottish Bill provided that in carrying out their functions in Scotland the Board would be subject to directions given by himself. During the Committee Stage he had resisted an Opposition amendment providing for the appointment of a Scottish Committee of the Board to whom the Board might delegate any of their functions under the Scottish Bill, but had undertaken to amend the Bill to provide that the Board should maintain in Scotland a staff sufficient for the proper performance of Scottish business. The proposal for a Scottish Committee had been pressed again during the Committee Stage of the English Bill in the House of Lords and the Lord Chancellor had stated that if, when the Scottish Bill was before the House of Lords, he received instructions to accept an amendment of this kind he would do so very readily. The case for the appointment of a Scottish Committee of the Board was very weak and if the proposal made by the Opposition were accepted it would be extremely difficult to resist pressure for similar arrangements under the Transport Bill and the Electricity Bill. Moreover, an amendment providing for the appointment of a Scottish Committee would make it necessary to recommit the Scottish Bill, which would involve delay. For these reasons he proposed to resist the proposal for a Scottish Committee of the Board. He would, however, like to be able to announce that there would be appointed to the Board at least two

members with special knowledge of Scottish conditions and that he hoped that the qualifications of one or other of them would make him suitable for appointment as Deputy Chairman.

The Minister of Town and Country Planning said that, in his view, the establishment of a separate Scottish Board or of a Scottish Committee of the Board could be justified on administrative grounds. He recognised, however, that to yield to the Opposition in this matter would embarrass the Minister of Fuel and Power and the Minister of Transport and he had no objection to the course which the Secretary of State for Scotland proposed to follow.

In discussion it was urged by some Ministers that the demand for separate administrative arrangements for Scotland in this and other fields could not be justified on merits and was not backed by any substantial body of Scottish opinion. Moreover, any concessions made were likely to lead to demands for similar treatment from Wales.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that, while it would be undesirable to have a separate Board for Scotland or even a Scottish Committee of the Board, the arrangements proposed by the Secretary of State for Scotland for the maintenance in Scotland of a staff sufficient for the proper performance of Scottish business and for the appointment to the Board of two members with special knowledge of Scottish conditions were reasonable in view of the differences between the English and Scottish systems of land tenure.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Agreed that, in resisting any pressure from the Opposition for the establishment of a Scottish Committee of the Central Land Board, the Secretary of State for Scotland should announce that there would be appointed to the Board at least two members with special knowledge of Scottish conditions, but should not suggest that one or other of these members might be appointed as Deputy Chairman.
- (2) Agreed that in the selection of members of the Central Land Board the possibility of appointing a member with special knowledge of Welsh conditions should be considered.

Malaya.
Future
Constitution.
(Previous
Reference:
C.M. (46) 103rd
Conclusions,
Minute 5.)

3. The Cabinet considered a memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (C.P. (47) 187) about the future constitution of Malaya.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies recalled that on 5th December, 1946, the Cabinet had provisionally approved certain revised proposals for a new federal constitution for Malaya. These proposals had since been discussed with both the non-Malay and the Malay communities, and broad agreement had been reached. It had not been necessary to suggest any departure from the basic aim of creating a strong central government with a common citizenship open to all who had adopted Malaya as their true home, but it was proposed to modify in certain respects the proposals relating to the introduction of elections, the acquisition of citizenship and the composition of the Central Legislature. It had not been possible fully to reconcile Malay and non-Malay views on the last two matters, and agreement with the Malays had still to be reached on the question of the control of immigration policy, while their demand that the Malay Rulers should in future have the right of concurrence in the appointment of successive High Commissioners would have to be rejected. It was not proposed that Singapore should form part of the Federation of Malaya at the outset, though it might be found desirable to include it later. He proposed that, as soon as agreement had been reached with the Malays on out-

standing points, an announcement of the Government's decisions should be made in Parliament and a summary of the proposals should be published as a White Paper.

The Secretary of State for India asked that the Government of India should receive advance information of the announcement.

The Cabinet—

Took note, with approval, of the results of the further consultations in Malaya on the future constitution, and invited the Secretary of State for the Colonies to proceed as proposed in paragraph 7 of C.P. (47) 187.

Wages Policy.

Agricultural
Wages.

(Previous
Reference:
C.M. (47) 44th
Conclusions,
Minute 4.)

4. *The Minister of Agriculture* drew the attention of the Cabinet to the decision of the Agricultural Wages Board in favour of increasing the minimum wage of agricultural workers from £4 to £4 10s. a week. It had been estimated that the last increase of 10s. in the minimum wage would add £18½ million a year to farmers' costs and it was clear that the Government would be asked to review agricultural prices in order to take account of this fresh increase.

In discussion it was pointed out that the increase in the minimum wage of agricultural workers was likely to lead to applications for higher wages from other rural workers, such as roadmen, and would make it difficult to resist the claims of building workers.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Invited the Minister of Labour to consider what steps might be taken to prevent the decision of the Agricultural Wages Board from leading to increases in the wages of other rural workers.
- (2) Agreed to discuss the general question of wages policy at their meeting on 8th July.

*Cabinet Office, S.W. 1,
3rd July, 1947.*

