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SECRET

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C.M. (48)

29th Conclusions

CABINET 29 (48)

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, 22nd April, 1948, at 10 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. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., Minister of Defence.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT ADDISON, Lord Privy Seal.

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

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 Right Hon. J. H. WILSON, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

The following were also present :

The Right Hon. W. WHITELEY, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (*Item 1*).

Secretariat :

Sir NORMAN BROOK.

Mr. S. E. V. LUKE.

CABINET 29 (48)

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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.

It was proposed that the debate on Foreign Affairs should be taken on 4th and 5th May. The Opposition had suggested that the latter part of the second day might be devoted to a discussion of a detailed motion on European Union, which had been tabled by Mr. Ronald Mackay, M.P.; and other members. The Cabinet agreed, however, that it would be inexpedient that the debate should end with a formal vote on such a motion. An informal arrangement might be made between the Parties, with the concurrence of Mr. Speaker, by which the latter part of the debate would be devoted to discussion of this subject so long as the discussion was not taken on the basis of a motion and did not end in a formal vote. The Cabinet invited the Chief Whip to seek an agreement on this basis through the usual channels.

Business in
the House of
Lords.

The Cabinet were informed that the Second Reading of the Criminal Justice Bill would be taken in the House of Lords on 27th April. The Lord Privy Seal was seeking to arrange that this should be a general debate on the Bill as a whole, and that the debate on capital punishment should be taken during the Committee Stage. It seemed likely that the Lords would invite the Commons to reconsider the new Clause suspending capital punishment as a penalty for murder but that, if the Commons insisted on it, they might acquiesce in its becoming law.

Foreign Policy
in Europe.

(Previous
Reference:
C.M. (48) 24th
Conclusions,
Minute 4.)

2. The Cabinet considered a memorandum by the Foreign Secretary (C.P. (48) 108) reporting the results of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the signatory Powers of the Brussels Treaty held in Paris on 17th April, 1948.

The main purpose of the meeting had been to settle the organisation and permanent seat of the Consultative Council to be set up under the terms of Article VII of the Treaty. It had been decided that the Council should be composed of the five Foreign Ministers and should meet, at least once every three months, in each of the capitals of the signatory States in turn. The permanent organ of the Council and the Secretariat, as well as the bodies responsible for security matters, would, however, be established in London. Provision had also been made for meetings of Ministers or officials to carry out the intentions of the Treaty in economic, social and cultural matters.

In view of recent developments in Europe it had been urged that, while every effort should be made to secure United States support, the five Powers should simultaneously initiate military conversations designed to build up gradually a combined military force and a single defensive organisation. The Foreign Secretary had accepted this proposal, but had argued that equal importance should be attached to the other aspects of co-operation for which provision had been made in the Treaty. Financial discussions would in fact take place in The Hague during the following week. The permanent organ would meet on 26th April, and its first task would be to put the military conversations in train.

In discussion, the following points were made:—

(a) M. Bidault had suggested in conversation that the five Powers might organise a joint Social Services Exhibition. This suggestion could be examined by the Official Committee on the Social Services in Western Europe.

(b) The Foreign Secretary had emphasised the need for avoiding any overlapping between the organisation established under the Treaty and the Continuing Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, and this view had been accepted by the other Foreign Ministers.

The Cabinet—

Endorsed the policy followed by the Foreign Secretary at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the signatory Powers of the Brussels Treaty on 17th April, 1948.

**European
Economic
Co-operation.**

(Previous
Reference:
C.M. (48) 26th
Conclusions,
Minute 5.)

3. The Cabinet considered a memorandum by the Foreign Secretary (C.P. (48) 109) reporting recent developments in the organisation of European economic co-operation.

On 16th March a Ministerial meeting of the Committee of European Economic Co-operation had arranged for a working party to prepare a multilateral agreement containing certain pledges on the part of the participating countries and a constitution for a continuing organisation. On 16th April a convention, combining the multilateral agreement and constitution in one document, had been signed by Ministers representing the participating countries, and this would be published shortly as a White Paper. The Organisation for European Economic Co-operation would comprise a Council of all the participating members with an Executive Committee of seven. Its constitution was flexible and would give freedom for development to meet needs as they arose. Some difficulties had been encountered in selecting the site for the seat of the Organisation, and in filling the chief posts. It had now been decided that Paris should be the seat of the Organisation; and that M. Marjolin should be appointed Secretary-General, for which post he was eminently qualified. In order to meet the wishes of the Benelux countries, the Foreign Secretary had renounced the Chairmanship of the Council in favour of a Belgian representative; but the United Kingdom Delegate to the Organisation would be Chairman of the Executive Committee.

The Cabinet—

Took note with approval of the arrangements made for the establishment of an organisation for European Economic Co-operation.

*Cabinet Office, S.W. 1,
22nd April, 1948.*

