CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W.1., on Thursday, 19th June, 1952, at 11.30 a.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Most Hon. the MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.
The Right Hon. Sir DAVID MAXWELL FYFE, Q.C., M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Welsh Affairs.
The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTELTON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.
The Right Hon. LORD LEATHERS, Secretary of State for Co-ordination of Transport, Fuel and Power.
The Right Hon. PETER THORENJCROFT, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT SWINTON, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
The Right Hon. ANTONY Head, M.P., Secretary of State for War (Items 2–6).
The Right Hon. GYVILYR LLOYD-GEORGE, M.P., Minister of Food (Items 5–10).
The Right Hon. DAVID ECCLES, M.P., Minister of Works (Items 3–7).
The Right Hon. PATRICK BUCHAN-HEPBURN, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (Items 1 and 4).

Admiral of the Fleet Sir RHODERICK McGRIGOR, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Item 2).

Secretariat:
Sir NORMAN BROOK.
Lt-General Sir IAN JACOB.
Mr. R. M. J. HARRIS.
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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 agreed that the Assistant Postmaster-General should speak for the Government in the debate on 23rd June on the Licence and Agreement for the British Broadcasting Corporation. The Home Secretary would hold himself in readiness to intervene in the debate, if required.

Korea.

2. The Foreign Secretary said that he had been considering, in the light of reports from the Minister of Defence and the Minister of State on their mission to Korea, what arrangements could be made to ensure that we were kept more closely and continuously informed on military and political developments in Korea. Some dissatisfaction was being expressed in Parliament about the existing arrangements. He did not think it would be advisable to press at this stage for British representation on the delegation conducting the armistice negotiations: this would be taken to imply a lack of confidence between ourselves and the Americans. He also saw difficulty in securing for ourselves a larger political rôle in Korea, though he would discuss with the United States Secretary of State the possibility of our appointing a more senior diplomatic representative with the South Korean Government. A more promising possibility was the integration of British officers in the Headquarters of the United Nations Command. The Minister of Defence had reported that the United Nations Commander, General Mark Clark, had himself suggested the appointment of a British Deputy Chief of Staff for operations in Korea; and, if the United States Government could make a statement welcoming the introduction of some British officers, this would be helpful in allaying public anxiety in this country. If the Cabinet approved, the Minister of Defence might be asked to discuss this suggestion with the United States military authorities in Washington, with a view to stimulating an initiative on their part.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the Chiefs of Staff had been quite satisfied with the military direction of operations in Korea from the time of the appointment of General Ridgway, and also with the handling of the military side of the armistice negotiations. They did not favour the establishment of an integrated Allied Headquarters: the introduction into the Headquarters of a number of comparatively junior British officers would have no effect on military policy. They were, however, ready to fall in with the suggestion that a British Deputy Chief of Staff should be appointed. This officer would fit into the existing organisation and would not require a British staff.

The Prime Minister said that the United Nations had entrusted the conduct of the Korean campaign to the United States; and we should be well-advised to avoid a position in which we shared the responsibility without the means of making our influence effective. The difficulties that had arisen in Korea were political rather than military and our influence could be exerted most effectively by the Foreign Secretary in his dealings with the United States Government.

In further discussion there was general agreement with the limited proposal for the appointment of a British Deputy Chief of Staff. The Cabinet considered that this should be a United Kingdom officer, rather than an Australian or Canadian.

The Cabinet—

(1) Invited the Foreign Secretary to inform the Minister of Defence that they would welcome the appointment of a British Deputy Chief of Staff for operations in Korea, and to ask him to discuss this proposal with the Canadian Government and subsequently with the United States military authorities.
(2) Invited the Foreign Secretary to instruct Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington to inform the Prime Minister of Australia of this proposal during the course of his visit to Washington.

The Coronation.

3. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Commonwealth Secretary (C. (52) 197) recommending, on behalf of his Committee, that Departments should be authorised to make preparations for the celebration of the Coronation on broadly the same scale as in 1937 at an estimated gross cost of £1½ million and inviting the Cabinet to decide whether additional expenditure of about £½ million should be incurred on Army uniforms and Service Reviews.

The following were the main matters covered in discussion:

(a) Army No. 1 Dress

The Secretary of State for War said that the cost of his proposals had now been reduced to some £205,000, of which a proportion at least might rank as part of the cost of the additional textile orders to relieve unemployment approved by the Cabinet on 10th June.

The Prime Minister said that it was important to avoid any commitment to extend the issue of blue No. 1 dress throughout the Army.

The Cabinet—

(1) Authorised the issue of blue No. 1 dress to all Army troops taking part in the Coronation parade at an estimated cost of £205,000.

(b) Service Reviews

The Commonwealth Secretary said that his Committee had felt that, if any major feature of the 1937 Coronation celebrations had to be omitted in 1953, this should be the Service Reviews, which might together cost some £250,000. The Hyde Park Review of ex-servicemen, on the other hand, would be likely to give satisfaction out of all proportion to its estimated cost of £4,000.

There was general agreement that the cost of holding Service Reviews could not be justified. In view of the traditional association of Naval Reviews with a Coronation, arrangements might, however, be made for some of Her Majesty's ships in home ports to be illuminated and to be “at home” to the public at the time of the Coronation.

The Cabinet—

(2) Agreed that Coronation Reviews of the Fighting Services should not be held in 1953.

(c) Disposal of Seats

The Minister of Works said that there was further evidence of a mounting demand for seats for overseas visitors and the chances of showing a profit on the erection of stands by his Ministry were consequently improving.

The Cabinet—

(3) Approved the plans for disposal of seats outlined in paragraph 14 of C. (52) 197, including the sale of blocks of seats to agencies at a profit.

(d) Decorations, &c.

The Minister of Works said that the development of television and colour photography enhanced the importance of effective decorations on the procession route. He therefore proposed on this occasion to spend only a very small proportion of the total sum allowed for decorations on buildings off the route, including provincial buildings.
There was general agreement that it would be mistaken to restrict unduly expenditure on decoration of the processional route, floodlighting and fireworks.

The Cabinet—
(4) Agreed that the Minister of Works should have discretion to spend up to £150,000 on these items.

e) Film Rights
The Commonwealth Secretary said that his Committee had considered whether special steps should be taken to secure for the Exchequer a proportion of the profits likely to be derived by those receiving facilities for filming the main Coronation events.

There was general agreement that this would be inappropriate in respect of the Abbey ceremony and that, so far as the procession was concerned, the practical objections were likely to be overwhelming.

f) Medals
The Commonwealth Secretary said that, while the Royal Mint would as usual strike a special Coronation medal as a decoration, it was not proposed on this occasion to put any Coronation medals on sale to the public. At current prices the demand for such medals seemed likely to be even smaller than in 1937.

General agreement was expressed with this proposal but it was suggested that the possibility of issuing a five-shilling piece, as for the Festival of Britain, should be explored.

The Cabinet—
(5) Agreed that in 1953 no Coronation medals should be put on sale to the public, but invited the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider the possibility of making a special issue of five-shilling pieces.

g) Visit by The Queen to Scotland
The Secretary of State for Scotland said that a small additional charge might be incurred on account of a visit by Her Majesty to Scotland as part of the Coronation celebrations.

It was explained that the provision for contingencies in the Estimate of the Ministry of Works took account of this item.

h) Presentation to School-children
The Lord President suggested that the possibility should be considered of making some small presentation to school-children to mark the Coronation. He believed that such a presentation had been made at at least one Coronation before 1937.

The Cabinet—
(6) Invited the Commonwealth Secretary to arrange for the possibility of a Coronation presentation to school-children to be examined.

i) Expenditure by Local Authorities
The Minister of Housing and Local Government said that, following the 1937 precedent, he intended to issue a circular to local authorities in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1933, authorising them to incur reasonable expenditure on Coronation celebrations.

j) Committee Arrangements
The Commonwealth Secretary said that it had been suggested to him that it might be desirable to merge the small Committee over which he had presided with the Coronation Committee of the Privy
Council. He was inclined to think, however, that there might be a continuing need for a small Committee composed of Ministers only, to which points requiring Ministerial guidance, particularly those involving questions of expenditure, might be referred.

The Cabinet—

(7) Invited the Prime Minister to consider whether a Ministerial Committee on Coronation Preparations would continue to be needed and, if so, what form it should take.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister said that the Cabinet were indebted to the Commonwealth Secretary and his colleagues on the Committee for the guidance contained in the memorandum before them, with which they were in general agreement.

The Cabinet—

(8) Approved the recommendations made in sub-paragraphs 1 (a) and (b) of paragraph 17 of C. (52) 197.

4. In the debate on the White Paper on Broadcasting held in the House of Commons on 11th June, the Labour Party had pressed their opposition to the proposal that Governors of the British Broadcasting Corporation should in future be appointed and removable by a committee under the chairmanship of the Speaker of the House of Commons. The Government would have been in serious political embarrassment if they had appeared to withdraw this proposal in deference to Opposition criticism; and the Opposition amendment had been defeated. As, however, the proposed appointment of the committee had thus become a matter of political controversy, the Speaker and the two Judges (whose membership of the committee was intended to guarantee its impartiality) had now indicated that they would not feel able to accept appointment to it. The Leader of the Opposition had also declined to act.

The Prime Minister said that in these circumstances the Government had no choice but to drop this proposal and to advise Her Majesty that the existing system by which Governors were appointed by the Crown on the sole recommendation of the Prime Minister of the day should be continued. He proposed to make a statement to that effect in the House of Commons that afternoon.

The Cabinet—

(1) Invited the Prime Minister to advise the Queen that the existing method of appointment and removal of Governors of the British Broadcasting Corporation should be continued.

(2) Took note, with approval, of the terms of the announcement on this matter which the Prime Minister was proposing to make in the House of Commons that afternoon.

(3) Invited the Postmaster-General to arrange for the relevant provisions of the Corporation’s new Charter to be adjusted accordingly.

5. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Works (C. (52) 184) reporting progress in his efforts to secure further economy in the use of office space by Government Departments.

The Minister of Works said that substantial progress had been made, and that since his memorandum was prepared the War Office and the Ministry of Food had undertaken to surrender between them
over 100,000 square feet. As a result of these measures he had already been able to surrender a number of requisitioned buildings. Further plans for the concentration of Government staffs were under discussion with Departments; and he hoped that these would result in more derequisitioning both in London and in provincial towns. These achievements would receive publicity in the monthly statements which he now issued on the progress of derequisitioning.

The Cabinet—

Took note, with approval, of C. (52) 184 and of the supplementary statement made by the Minister of Works.

6. The Minister of Works made a brief report on the progress of his plans for securing economy in the use of official cars. All official cars, save those used by the Foreign Office and the Post Office for the transport of documents, had now been brought together in a single pool; and cars which had previously been distributed over ten garages were to be concentrated in two. Forty-one Service drivers previously employed on this work had returned, with their vehicles, to military duties; and seventy-five civilian vehicles had been dispensed with. Despite these economies there were no indications that Departments were dissatisfied with the service now provided for them.

The Prime Minister suggested that he might make some announcement on this subject in the near future in answer to a Parliamentary Question.

The Cabinet—

Took note of this statement by the Minister of Works.

7. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Works (C. (52) 199) proposing an alteration in the limits below which building operations may be carried out without licence.

The Minister of Works said that, in order to increase productivity in the building industry, he was anxious to relax the limits now imposed on maintenance work. He was satisfied that this could be done without reducing the resources available for new building. He would himself have wished to make a substantial advance towards the point at which all detailed control over private maintenance work could be abandoned; but his colleagues on the Economic Policy Committee and the Building Committee with whom he had discussed the matter were doubtful about the expediency of going so far. In deference to their views he now proposed that for the twelve months ending 30th June, 1953, no change should be made in the limit of £500 which could be spent, without licence, on building work on industrial and agricultural buildings, but that the corresponding figure for houses and other buildings should be raised from £100 to £200.

The Minister of Housing and Local Government supported this proposal.

The Cabinet—

Authorised the Minister of Works to increase from £100 to £200 the limit of expenditure which might be incurred, without licence, during the year ending 30th June, 1953, on building work on houses and other "non-designated" buildings.
Food Prices.

(Previous Reference: C.C. (52) 57th Conclusions, Minute 3.)

8. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Food (C. (52) 188) proposing that the price of milk should be increased by 1d. a quart from 1st July. This was a seasonal increase, and had been foreshadowed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget statement as one of the measures necessary to reduce the rate of food subsidies to £250 million a year.

The Cabinet—
(1) Authorised the Minister of Food to increase milk prices by 1d. a quart from 1st July, 1952.

The Cabinet also discussed the timing of the other increases in food prices which they had approved on 29th May. It was the general view of the Cabinet that these further price increases should be introduced simultaneously in the autumn, when the increased family allowances and the other remaining Budget concessions came into operation.

The Cabinet—
(2) Invited the Minister of Food to arrange, in consultation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the remaining increases in food prices, set out in Appendix to C. (52) 178, to be introduced simultaneously at the time when increased family allowances came into operation in the autumn.

9. The Secretary of State for Co-ordination of Transport, Fuel and Power said that, in the light of the Cabinet's discussion on 27th May, he had kept continuously under review the possibility of increasing the amount of coal which could be made available for export. He had come to the conclusion that a further quantity of 1 million tons could now be made available for this purpose during the current year.

The Cabinet—
Took note of this statement.

10. The Paymaster-General said that some years previously, when we were negotiating with the Belgians a contract for the supply of uranium, we had promised to help them to construct an experimental pile. The Belgians now wished to build this pile, and had asked for the services of a British expert to take charge of the work. It was gratifying that they should have asked for a British, rather than an American, expert; and it was desirable that the Belgians' work on atomic energy should be developed in association with ourselves. It was important to retain their goodwill in respect of the uranium contract, which would fall due for renewal in 1956. These considerations seemed to outweigh the slight security risks which were involved in complying with this request.

The Foreign Secretary endorsed this view. He suggested that the United States authorities should be told in advance what we proposed to do, though their consent need not be sought.

The Cabinet—
(1) Authorised the Paymaster-General to make available to the Belgian Government a suitable expert to superintend the construction in Belgium of an experimental pile.
(2) Invited the Foreign Secretary to arrange for the United States authorities to be informed in advance that this assistance was to be given to the Belgian Government.

Cabinet Office, S.W. 1,
19th June, 1952.