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C.C. (57)  
82nd Conclusions

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CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1,  
on Thursday, 28th November, 1957, at 11 a.m.

Present :

The Right Hon. HAROLD MACMILLAN, M.P., Prime Minister

The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, M.P.,  
Secretary of State for the Home  
Department and Lord Privy Seal.

The Right Hon. SELWYN LLOYD, Q.C.,  
M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign  
Affairs.

The Right Hon. The EARL OF HOME,  
Secretary of State for Commonwealth  
Relations.

The Right Hon. JOHN MACLAY, M.P.,  
Secretary of State for Scotland.

The Right Hon. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P.,  
Minister of Defence.

The Right Hon. D. HEATHCOAT AMORY,  
M.P., Minister of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food.

The Right Hon. HENRY BROOKE, M.P.,  
Minister of Housing and Local  
Government and Minister for Welsh  
Affairs.

The Right Hon. HAROLD WATKINSON,  
M.P., Minister of Transport and Civil  
Aviation.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT KILMUIR,  
Lord Chancellor.

The Right Hon. PETER THORNEYCROFT,  
M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Right Hon. ALAN LENNOX-BOYD,  
M.P., Secretary of State for the  
Colonies.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HAILSHAM,  
Q.C., Lord President of the Council.

The Right Hon. Sir DAVID ECCLES,  
M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

The Right Hon. IAIN MACLEOD, M.P.,  
Minister of Labour and National  
Service.

The Right Hon. LORD MILLS, Minister  
of Power.

The Right Hon. GEOFFREY LLOYD, M.P.,  
Minister of Education.

Dr. The Right Hon. CHARLES HILL, M.P.,  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

The following were also present :

The Right Hon. JOHN HARE, M.P.,  
Secretary of State for War (*Item 4*).

The Right Hon. AUBREY JONES, M.P.,  
Minister of Supply (*Item 4*).

The Right Hon. GEORGE WARD, M.P.,  
Secretary of State for Air (*Item 4*).

The Right Hon. DEREK WALKER-SMITH,  
Q.C., M.P., Minister of Health  
(*Item 5*).

The Right Hon. EDWARD HEATH, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury.

Secretariat :

The Right Hon. Sir NORMAN BROOK.

Mr. B. ST. J. TREND.

Mr. H. O. HOOPER.

SECRET



**Joint  
Intelligence  
Committee.**

1. The Cabinet were informed that the Joint Intelligence Committee had been brought within the Cabinet committee structure so that its services might be more readily available to Ministers as well as to the Chiefs of Staff. Arrangements would be made for a selection of the Committee's reports to be circulated, as appropriate, either to Ministers generally or to those directly concerned with the subject matter.

**Parliament.**

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

The Cabinet were also informed that the Opposition might ask for facilities for a general debate on foreign affairs before the forthcoming meeting of the North Atlantic Council, and that the state of Parliamentary business would permit of such a debate being held on 11th December. In discussion it was agreed that it would be preferable to avoid holding this debate until after the Christmas recess—though the demand for an earlier discussion might have to be conceded if it were strongly pressed.

**Sexual  
Offences.  
(Previous  
Reference:  
C.C. (54) 29th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 5.)**

3. The Cabinet were informed that on 4th December the House of Lords were to debate the recommendations made in the report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution. It would be convenient if some indication could then be given of the Government's attitude towards the report.

Discussion showed that there was general agreement in the Cabinet that, while legislation might be introduced in the current session to give effect to some of the Committee's recommendations on prostitution, it would not be practicable for the Government to promote legislation at the present time to change the law relating to homosexual offences. On that subject public opinion was divided and strong views were held; and there was not a sufficient measure of public support for the Committee's recommendations to justify the Government in introducing legislation to give effect to them. On the other hand it would be premature for the Government to announce a final decision on this point in the forthcoming debate in the House of Lords, since Ministers had previously indicated that they would wish to take account of the general state of opinion in the House of Commons before reaching their final conclusion.

The Cabinet—

Authorised the Lord Chancellor to indicate, in the debate in the House of Lords on 4th December, that there was no early prospect of Government legislation to amend the law relating to homosexual offences.

**Hebrides.  
Rocket Range.**

4. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Defence (C. (57) 285) about the facilities required for Service trials and training with guided weapons.

*The Minister of Defence* said that, in the light of the policy announced in the Defence White Paper, it now appeared that adequate facilities for training with air-to-air and surface-to-air weapons could be provided, for a period of some five years ahead, by extending two existing ranges on the Welsh coast at a cost of about £2½ millions. Additional facilities in the Hebrides would then be needed only for training with surface-to-surface guided weapons and could be provided at a total cost of about £1.8 millions. These revised arrangements would provide the facilities required for a total expenditure of £4 millions instead of the £18 millions which was the estimated cost of implementing the original proposal to establish a range in the Hebrides for all Service trials and training with guided weapons.

## SECRET

In discussion the following points were made:—

(a) Although the new proposals might provide adequate facilities for all guided weapons likely to be developed within the foreseeable future, the need might eventually arise for an extended range in the Hebrides. This contingency should perhaps be recognised in the public announcement of the revised proposals.

(b) Even if the Service Departments were prepared to accept the limitations imposed on the use of the Welsh ranges by the need to avoid endangering shipping, it would be necessary to discuss this aspect of the proposals with the shipping interests in more detail before it could be established that these ranges would provide an adequate substitute for facilities in the Hebrides.

(c) The planning authorities in Wales should also be given an opportunity to consider whether the revised proposals would be acceptable from the point of view of the preservation of Welsh amenities.

(d) The decisions on these questions would affect the area of land in the Hebrides to be purchased under the revised plan and the compensation to be awarded to the crofters. It was undesirable that the Government should acquire land for which they had no immediate use. On the other hand negotiations had already proceeded to a point at which the Government might be morally committed to completing the purchase of all the land for which they had been treating. The expense involved in the acquisition of the land itself would be relatively small and, if there was any substantial possibility that the limited facilities which it was now proposed to provide in the Hebrides might need to be extended within the next few years, it might be expedient to complete the negotiations for acquiring title to the necessary land, provided that no pressure was brought to bear on any owner who was unwilling to sell. On this hypothesis there need be no question of compensating crofters who would not be disturbed in their use of the land until the range facilities were extended beyond the limits at present envisaged.

(e) The Scottish Land Court would begin to consider the claims of crofters in the near future. Pending any public announcement of a change in policy, the Court should, if possible, be induced to deal first with the claims of those crofters who would be affected by the more limited range which was now proposed.

The Cabinet—

(1) Approved in principle the proposals in C. (57) 286.

(2) Invited the Minister of Defence, in consultation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of Transport, to consider urgently the points raised in their discussion with a view to settling those issues which needed to be determined before guidance could be given to the Scottish Land Court and a satisfactory Parliamentary announcement of the Government's decision could be drafted.

**Wages Policy.**

National  
Health Service.  
(Previous  
Reference:  
C.C. (57) 81st  
Conclusions,  
Minute 2.)

5. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Health (C. (57) 280) and a memorandum by the Minister of Labour (C. (57) 287) about the wage dispute in the National Health Service.

*The Minister of Health* said that the deputation from the Whitley Council for the administrative and clerical staffs of the National Health Service which was due to meet the Secretary of State for Scotland and himself in the following week would probably seek to ascertain whether the Government would accept arbitration on the wage claim which the responsible Ministers had recently rejected. The Law Officers had advised that, if a dispute between the Ministers and the Staff Side was formally reported, the matter could be referred, with the consent of those Ministers, to arbitration under the Industrial

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Courts Act, 1919. It also seemed possible for the Staff Side to secure arbitration under the Industrial Disputes Order, 1951, if the issue was presented as a dispute between an individual hospital authority and their employees. The latter course was, however, open to the objection that the respondents would have no interest in representing the Government's point of view. The balance of advantage therefore appeared to lie in conceding arbitration between the Staff Side and the responsible Ministers under the Act of 1919; and he sought authority to inform the deputation, if they pressed for an assurance on this point, that the Ministers concerned would consent to arbitration and would undertake to implement the award.

*The Minister of Labour* said that if, as was not unlikely, the arbitrator awarded a wage increase of the order of 4 per cent., the effect on other wage claims would be very damaging. Moreover, it was constitutionally improper to place upon arbitrators the responsibility of deciding whether a Minister had been right in his use of his Ministerial prerogative. Arbitration should therefore be avoided in the present case, but the staffs should be assured that their claim would be reviewed within a stated period. In order to avoid any impression that wage restraint generally could be relaxed after this interval, the review should be linked with consideration of the proposals contained in the recent report by Sir Noel Hall on the grading structure of administrative and clerical staffs in the Hospital Service. These proposals would in any case have to be discussed with the Staff Side, and if the review of the wage claim formed part of those discussions, such increase as the Government might then feel able to grant could be represented as only one element in a comprehensive reorganisation of the administrative structure of the Service.

In discussion it was suggested that, in so far as a reorganisation of this kind was itself liable to entail considerable additional expenditure, it would be preferable that the Government should not implicitly commit themselves to accepting it without first considering whether the administrative structure of the Hospital Service could be improved by other means at less cost. On the other hand Sir Noel Hall's report had now been published; the Government would therefore be compelled in any case to reach decisions on its recommendations; and it would be tactically advantageous if the disputed wage claim could be subsumed in the discussions with the Staff Side which would precede those decisions.

In further discussion it was emphasised that it had already been made clear to the Staff Side that the Government did not exclude arbitration on the disputed claim if an arbitrable issue was established. The Government should seek to avoid creating the impression that they were not now prepared to honour this undertaking, and if the Staff Side pressed for the issue to be referred to arbitration it would be difficult for the responsible Ministers to withhold their consent. But there was considerable advantage in deferring the settlement of this claim, if possible, until it had become clear how far, in the light of the Government's current economic policy, the major industrial unions were prepared to prosecute the substantial wage claims which they had in preparation. The deputation should therefore be strongly urged to accept the Government's suggestion that their claim should be reviewed in the context of the discussions on the recommendations in Sir Noel Hall's report; and, if they continued to seek a firm undertaking that the Ministers concerned would agree that the issue should be referred to arbitration, they should be informed that, if they would submit in writing their own definition of the arbitrable issue, the Government would give the matter further consideration.

The Cabinet—

Invited the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of Health to be guided, at their forthcoming meeting with the Whitley Council deputation from the National Health Service, by the views expressed in their discussion.

**Suez Canal.**

(Previous Reference: C.C. (57) 78th Conclusions, Minute 7.)

6. *The Foreign Secretary* said that, as a result of consultations held with other interested Governments, it was now clear that we should find it even more difficult than we had previously thought to abstain from supporting in the United Nations a resolution endorsing the proposal of the Secretary-General that the cost of clearing the Suez Canal should be recovered by means of a surcharge on Canal dues. There was some risk that the resolution might not be carried unless we supported it; and the Governments of the United States and France had made it clear that they would not be content for us to abstain from voting.

*The Minister of Transport* said that he had held further consultations with representatives of British shipowners and had warned them that we might find it necessary, for political reasons, to support this resolution. He no longer wished to oppose that course if the Foreign Secretary felt obliged to take it. But he warned the Cabinet that British ship-owners would ask that the extra cost to them should be reimbursed by the Exchequer and that, if this request were refused, some of them might decline to pay the surcharge.

In discussion it was agreed that no decision need be taken at present on the Government's attitude towards such a claim by British ship-owners. There would be strong arguments against conceding it.

**The Cabinet—**

Invited the Foreign Secretary to authorise the United Kingdom Representative at the United Nations to vote in favour of the resolution proposing that the cost of clearing the Suez Canal should be recovered by means of a surcharge on Canal dues.

**Privileges and Immunities.**

(Previous Reference: C.C. (57) 15th Conclusions, Minute 7.)

7. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Foreign Secretary and the Colonial Secretary (C. (57) 279) proposing that the privileges and immunities set out in the appendix to that memorandum should be extended to the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa south of the Sahara.

**The Cabinet—**

Approved the proposals put forward in C. (57) 279.

**Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa.**

*Cabinet Office, S.W. 1,  
28th November, 1957.*