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HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

Printed for the Cabinet. November 1964

C.C. (64)
6th Conclusions

Copy No. 36

CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W.1, on Thursday, 5th November, 1964, at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

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

The Right Hon. GEORGE BROWN, M.P., First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Economic Affairs	The Right Hon. PATRICK GORDON WALKER, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
The Right Hon. HERBERT BOWDEN, M.P., Lord President of the Council	The Right Hon. LORD GARDINER, Lord Chancellor
The Right Hon. JAMES CALLAGHAN, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer	The Right Hon. DENIS HEALEY, M.P., Secretary of State for Defence
The Right Hon. Sir FRANK SOSKICE, Q.C., M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department	The Right Hon. ARTHUR BOTTOMLEY, M.P., Secretary of State for Common- wealth Relations
The Right Hon. WILLIAM ROSS, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland	The Right Hon. JAMES GRIFFITHS, M.P., Secretary of State for Wales
The Right Hon. ANTHONY GREENWOOD, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies	The Right Hon. THE EARL OF LONGFORD, Lord Privy Seal
The Right Hon. MICHAEL STEWART, M.P., Secretary of State for Education and Science	The Right Hon. RICHARD CROSSMAN, M.P., Minister of Housing and Local Government
The Right Hon. DOUGLAS HOUGHTON, M.P., Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	The Right Hon. R. J. GUNTER, M.P., Minister of Labour
The Right Hon. FRANK COUSINS, Minister of Technology	The Right Hon. FRED PEART, M.P., Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
The Right Hon. FREDERICK LEE, M.P., Minister of Power	The Right Hon. TOM FRASER, M.P., Minister of Transport

The Right Hon. BARBARA CASTLE, M.P.,
Minister of Overseas Development

Also present:

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

Secretariat :

Sir BURKE TREND
Mr. P. ROGERS
Mr. D. S. LASKEY

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CONTENTS

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
1	PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS	3
2	OVERSEA AFFAIRS	3
	United States of America	
	France	
	Cambodia	
	The Sudan	
3	COMMONWEALTH IMMIGRATION	3

Parliamentary Business

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

Oversea Affairs
United States of America

2. *The Foreign Secretary* said that, in the light of his decisive victory in the United States Presidential Election, President Johnson might be disposed to adopt a firmer and more robust policy towards the Governments of countries such as France, Indonesia and the United Arab Republic. This would be a welcome development. It was also satisfactory that President Johnson had made it clear that, in the process of renewing contacts with other Governments after the election, he would wish to consult the United Kingdom first.

France

The Foreign Secretary said that there were increasing indications that General de Gaulle might seek either to withdraw France from the European Economic Community (E.E.C.) and perhaps the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or to frustrate any further constructive activity by these bodies. Our most effective counter-action would lie in seeking to strengthen the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), particularly since morale in the Association was already low.

Cambodia

The Foreign Secretary said that both the Government of India and the Soviet Government were pressing for the Geneva Conference on Cambodia to be reconvened. In answer to representations by the Soviet Ambassador in this sense he had pointed out that a prior condition of such a meeting should be an effective demarcation of the frontier between Cambodia and Vietnam. He had also indicated that he hoped the Soviet Ambassador's approach implied that the Soviet Government no longer intended to abandon their role of co-Chairman of the Conference.

Sudan

The Foreign Secretary said that the recent revolution in the Sudan seemed to be due partly to the endemic tension between the Arab and Negro elements in the Sudanese population and partly to growing dissatisfaction with military rule. It was disturbing that the civilian Government which had now been formed included four Communists, even though they did not occupy posts of critical importance. In these circumstances we must be alert for any threat to the important strategic facilities which we enjoyed in the Sudan; and Her Majesty's Ambassador in Khartoum had already been instructed accordingly.

The Cabinet—

Took note of these statements by the Foreign Secretary.

Commonwealth Immigration

3. The Cabinet considered a memorandum by the Home Secretary and the Commonwealth Secretary (C.(64)11) on Commonwealth immigration.

The Home Secretary said that the Government were committed to reviewing, in consultation with other Commonwealth Governments, the method of controlling Commonwealth immigration to this country but to maintaining the existing control in the interim. Since 1955, Commonwealth immigrants from countries other than the old Dominions now numbered some 600,000, to which must be added a substantial natural increase. This had created potentially serious social problems and had intensified the strain on housing and other services. It was therefore in the interests of all parties that a strict control should be kept in force while these immigrants were absorbed fully into the community; and this appeared to be accepted in principle by the other Governments concerned. An indication of

the potential inflow if the control was relaxed was provided by the existence of some 330,000 applicants on the waiting list for non-priority labour vouchers.

Part I of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962, under which the present control was exercised, would lapse at the end of the year and must therefore be continued in being by the annual Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. But it would be desirable that Government spokesmen in the debate should be able to indicate that the Government had already taken the first steps to give other Commonwealth Governments the opportunity to discuss immigration control with us. The draft of a message to the other Governments for this purpose was appended to C. (64) 11. This message should confine itself to an offer of discussion and should not invite the other Governments to put forward proposals of their own, since we should not expose ourselves to the risk of receiving suggestions which we might find embarrassing or impracticable. Meanwhile, however, it would be important to review possible means by which the existing arrangements for control might be made more humane, particularly in relation to the admission of dependants of immigrants already in the country.

Discussion showed general agreement with these proposals. In addition the following main points were made:

(a) The review of immigration control should be reinforced by positive steps to secure the full integration of immigrants into the community in accordance with the undertaking given in The Queen's Speech.

(b) It would assist the Government's policy of promoting agreements with other countries for the mutual abolition of visas if the control could be confined to independent Commonwealth countries, immigration from the remaining dependent territories being unrestricted. It was unlikely that this would result in any considerable increase in the number of immigrants, since the populations of the territories concerned were not large and voluntary schemes of control were already in force in some cases.

(c) Consideration should be given to the proposals recently put forward by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago for the provision of training facilities for potential immigrants in their home countries in order to fit them for employment in the United Kingdom.

(d) The reference in the draft message to the problems of accommodating immigrants "in large cities where work is available" should preferably be omitted, since it was precisely their concentration in such cities which exacerbated social and housing problems.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Approved, subject to the amendment suggested at (d) above, the draft communication to other Commonwealth Governments appended to C. (64) 11 and invited the Commonwealth Secretary to arrange for its despatch before the forthcoming Debate on the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill.
- (2) Invited the Lord President of the Council to arrange for the Commonwealth Immigration Committee to give further consideration, in the light of their discussion, to the manner in which the Government's policy on Commonwealth immigration would most appropriately be presented during the Debate.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1,

5th November, 1964.

