CABINET

THE ROBBINS REPORT

MEMORANDUM BY THE FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE

At their meeting on 26th September the Education Policy Committee had before them a memorandum by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Paymaster General containing proposals for the contents of a statement of Government policy on the recommendations of the Report, and a memorandum by the Minister of Education about the Robbins Committee recommendation on the creation of a council for national academic awards.

2. The Committee considered that while many of the recommendations contained in the Report would require further consideration in the light of the opinions expressed by those concerned after the publication of the Report, it was important that a statement of Government policy should be made early in the new Session on a number of matters, including in particular those with respect to the Government's intentions on the Committee's recommendations for the expansion of the Universities in the periods up to 1967–68 and 1973–74.

3. The Committee agreed that subject to the approval of the Cabinet such a statement should include decisions on the 16 matters set out in paragraphs 2–17 inclusive of the Annex to this paper.

R. A. B.

Office of the First Secretary of State, S.W. 1,
1st October, 1963.

ANNEX

OUTLINE OF GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

1. The Government welcome the Robbins Report; commend its academic recommendations to the educational world; and accept the challenge which it represents.

2. Accept the basic assumption of the Report: "that courses of higher education should be available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them, and who wish to do so".

Expansion Programme

3. Government accept the Report's calculations of the requirements of places, both in total higher education and in institutions of university status, and accept them as objectives for 1967–68 and 1973–74, and will make plans and provide resources accordingly.
4. In order to meet the rapidly growing number of qualified students as the "bulge" reaches its peak, the Government will seek to accelerate the expansion of the next few years, with the objective of 197,000 places of "university status" by 1967-68: current and capital grants will be adjusted in accordance with this "emergency" objective: University Grants Committee and Education Departments have been asked to explore the possibilities with the institutions.

5. This is the first step in formulating a 10-year programme designed to provide 390,000 places by 1973-74, of which 217,000 in institutions of "university status".

6. This programme will take account of the need for further considerable expansion after 1973-74, but it would be premature (and recognised to be so in the Report) to try to decide the scale now.

7. Cost of 10-year programme estimated at £3,500 million, involving more than doubling present annual cost by 1973-74. Very important to get most economical use and value for money on resources devoted to higher education.

8. Also very important to keep this programme in proper relationship with the development of school and technical education. In the immediate period in which the "bulge" is reaching university age, the provision of an adequate number of places is of particular urgency.

Development of Institutions

9. Accept in principle proposal of "university status" for Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs), and certain Scottish central institutions; and preliminary action will be initiated at once. Promotion of other institutions will be considered later.

10. Accept proposal for Council for National Academic Awards to award degrees to students in non-university institutions.


12. Report's proposals for new institutions will be considered when the 10-year programme is being formulated by the University Grants Committee (UGC) and Education Departments. Government have asked UGC for an early report on the recommendation for a new university to be located in Scotland.

13. Government welcome emphasis on building up technological universities, and has asked UGC for an early report on the further development of Imperial College and the Glasgow and Manchester Colleges of Science and Technology, and on the proposal for a completely new technological university. The Government will give consideration to the proposal to develop one of the CATs.


Machinery of Government

15. Government agree that the autonomous institutions should draw the Government's financial support from an independent Grants Commission, on similar lines to the UGC.

16. Government will make full review of the system of higher education (and student) finance in the light of the considerations put forward in the Report.

17. Government agree on the need for changes in machinery of government, which will involve legislation, but Government will not decide this in advance of public discussion. This will not delay action on the expansion programme, on which the Departments concerned and the UGC are working as one team.