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C.(57) 23

COPY NO. 51

5th February, 1957

CABINET

A FURTHER ADVANCE IN EDUCATION

Memorandum by the Minister of Education

My predecessor circulated his paper (C.F.(56) 278) before our recent discussions on economic policy. If it had been composed now, I think I should have put what he had in mind in greater detail. These points I will instead set out orally.

2. It is sufficient to say here that I feel most strongly that to offset the painful economies we have to make, we must have something positive to offer in the field of education. The proposals I have in mind will, at any rate in the immediate future, be quite modest and in the next Estimate will probably cost little or nothing.

3. The crux is the building programme. My colleagues will remember that this has been held up largely owing to the pressure on the building industry. This pressure is now relieved. Indeed, I am advised that if I were not to have the modest increase of authorisations for which I shall be asking, there might well come a hiatus owing to the increased rapidity with which schools are being built. This could be justified neither on the ground of economy nor of policy.

4. The building programme which my predecessor had in mind would involve an authorisation of £55 millions to commence in 1957/58, £60 millions in 1958/59, £65 millions in 1959/60 and £70 millions in 1960/61. But these figures - which would add nothing to the current Estimates - would obviously be a matter of negotiation between my Department and the Treasury and what is immediately necessary is the assurance that authorisations of £55 millions for 1957/58 and £60 millions for 1958/59 will be forthcoming. Any additions to the Education Vote, and there will be some, would be negotiated separately between the Departments, or dealt with in a later paper.

H.

Ministry of Education, W.1.

4th February, 1957