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CABINET

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS: INCREASED AID

MEMORANDUM BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

On 12th February the Cabinet agreed that I should continue to negotiate with the interests concerned on the basis that—

- (i) The maximum rate of grant on the categories of voluntary school building work now eligible for grant should be increased from 50 to 75 per cent.
- (ii) A maximum grant of 75 per cent. should be payable for the provision of new secondary schools needed to match aided primary schools of the same denomination that exist at present (C.C. (59) 8th Conclusions, Minute 2).

The Cabinet also invited me to arrange for the necessary legislation to be drafted and agreed to consider at a subsequent meeting the appropriate time for its introduction.

2. The attitude of the Free Churches remains substantially unchanged. They are opposed to both my proposals, but especially to (ii). They regard it as a substantial departure from the "settlement" of 1944 and believe that it will open the way for the Roman Catholics to press successfully, possibly within a few years, their demand for grant for all new schools.

3. The Church of England initially had similar doubts about this particular proposal, though they saw its educational advantages. I have now been able to remove their doubts and I have been assured of the Church's support for my proposals.

4. The Roman Catholics have not abandoned their aim of securing grant on all voluntary school building and they will, when they judge the time ripe, press this claim. But they acknowledge that my proposals will be a real help and their representatives have assured me that they will commend them to the Hierarchy.

5. In the light of these exchanges I consider that we should be justified in going ahead. Even if the Free Churches press their opposition I do not believe that they will carry much weight, either in the country or in the House. Other educational opinion, though not unanimous, is for the most part disposed to put the educational needs of the children first.

6. I accordingly ask my colleagues to agree that, subject to its detailed terms being approved by the Legislation Committee, the necessary legislation should be introduced immediately after the Easter recess and passed into law as quickly as possible.

G. L.

*Ministry of Education, W. 1,
12th March, 1959.*

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