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SECRET.

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WAR CABINET, 78.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, on Thursday, February 22, 1917, at 11.30 A.M.

Present :

The PRIME MINISTER (*in the Chair*).

<p>The Right Hon. the EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.</p>	<p>The Right Hon. A. BONAR LAW, M.P. The Right Hon. A. HENDERSON, M.P.</p>
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In attendance :

<p>The Right Hon. A. J. BALFOUR, O.M., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.</p>	<p>The Right Hon. SIR A. H. STANLEY, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (for Minutes 3 and 4).</p>
<p>The Right Hon. the LORD HARDINGE OF PENSURST, K.G., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., I.S.O., Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (for Minutes 1 to 4).</p>	<p>The Right Hon. SIR G. CAVE, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minutes 3 to 8).</p>
<p>General SIR W. R. ROBERTSON, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minutes 1 and 2).</p>	<p>SIR ARTHUR THRING, K.C.B., Parlia- mentary Counsel (for Minutes 7 and 8).</p>
<p>Admiral SIR J. R. JELICOE, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., First Sea Lord of the Admiralty (for Minutes 1 and 2).</p>	<p>The Right Hon. R. E. PROTHERO, M.V.O., M.P., President of the Board of Agri- culture and Fisheries (for Minutes 5 and 6).</p>
	<p>SIR H. BABINGTON SMITH, K.C.B., C.S.I. (for Minutes 3 and 4).</p>
	<p>The Hon. E. G. STRUTT, J.P., Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (for Minutes 5 and 6).</p>
	<p>Mr. A. D. HALL, M.A., F.R.S., Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (for Minutes 5 and 6).</p>

Lieutenant-Colonel SIR M. P. A. HANKEY, K.C.B., *Secretary*.

Captain CLEMENT JONES, *Assistant Secretary*.

Mr. G. M. YOUNG, *Assistant Secretary*.

**The Forthcoming
Anglo-French
Conference.**

1. THE War Cabinet decided that—

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff should draft a telegram for the Foreign Office to send to the French Government in respect to the forthcoming Anglo-French Conference, insisting that the persons present at the Conference should be limited to the principals, namely: The Ministers representing the two Governments, the British and French Commanders-in-Chief, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, one Secretary for each country, and an Interpreter; all Staff Officers and officials being excluded.

Submarines.

2. The First Sea Lord reported the sinking of a "Q" ship by a submarine, which herself claimed to have sunk the submarine, as well as several other engagements with enemy submarines.

The First Sea Lord undertook to make enquiries regarding an apparatus, alleged to have been acquired by the United States Government, for detecting submarines. (Foreign Office telegram from Washington, No. 458, dated the 18th February, 1917.)

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs undertook to make enquiries through diplomatic channels, endeavouring, if possible, to obtain particulars of this machine in return for certain technical information for which the United States Government are enquiring.

**Interviews with
Press Representa-
tives.**

2 A. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff raised the question of military officers having any dealings with press representatives consequent on Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig's interview. (War Cabinet 75, Minute 8.) The War Cabinet agreed that the Prime Minister and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff should discuss the question with Sir Douglas Haig.

**Restriction of
Imports:
Licences.**

3. The War Cabinet considered the question of the machinery for the issue of licences for the importation of restricted articles. It was decided that—

The authority for issuing licences should be, except in the case of paper and paper-making materials, the Department of Import Restrictions of the Board of Trade, acting in concert with the Director of Timber Supplies as regards timber, and with the Department concerned as regards other articles.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The President of the Board of Trade should watch the working of the scheme of restricted imports and should report to the War Cabinet from time to time as to the relation between imports and shipping.

Onions.

4. The War Cabinet cancelled their previous decision to prohibit the importation of onions, subject to licensing 25 per cent., and decided that—

In view of their importance as an ingredient in the food of the people, there should be no restrictions on their importation.

Agriculture.
 ———
Raising of Rents.

5. The War Cabinet resumed the consideration of their decision of the 14th February (War Cabinet, 66, Minute 1 (d)) with special reference to the question of rents. They confirmed their previous decision that, during the period of State guarantee of agricultural prices, rents should not be raised except with the consent of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary for Scotland should examine the position in Scotland, with special reference to the law relating to teinds, and report to them.

The War Cabinet agreed that, in his statement in the House of Commons on the 23rd February, the Prime Minister should make a general appeal to landowners not to raise rents during the period of the War.

Credit for Farmers.

6. The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, in accordance with a request by the War Cabinet (War Cabinet, 42, Minute 6 (9)), reported that he had made arrangements with local banks by which they would furnish farmers with credit on a certificate from the County War Agriculture Committee that the money would be spent on increasing the productivity of the soil.

The War Cabinet approved the President's proposals, and agreed that a general reference to these arrangements should be included in the Prime Minister's speech on the 23rd February.

Enemy Princes.

7. The War Cabinet decided that—

The Draft Bill prepared by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs should be introduced in the House of Lords next week without any alteration.

Man-Power :
Fourth Report of
Director.

8. The War Cabinet had before them the Fourth Report of the Director of National Service, containing proposals for—

- (a.) A Departmental Order limiting the employment of fresh male labour between the ages of 17 and 61 (both inclusive, in certain trades scheduled to the Order.
- (b.) An amendment to be made to the Defence of the Realm Regulation, 41 (a), requiring employers to keep registers of their male employees of 16 years or over.

The War Cabinet approved the Order and amended Regulation, subject to the Chief Secretary for Ireland approving the provision made in connection with the extension of the Regulation to Ireland.*

(Initialled.) D. Ll. G.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
 February 22, 1917.

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* The Chief Secretary has temporarily withheld approval.

