CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, 19th May 1920 at 12 Noon.

PRESENT.
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P., (in the Chair),
Lord Privy Seal.

Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.,
Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Right Hon. B. Shortt, K.C., M.P.,
Secretary of State for Home Affairs.

Right Hon. W.S. Churchill, M.P.,
Secretary of State for War.

Right Hon. T.J. Macnamara, M.P.,
Lord of Labour.

Right Hon. H.H.L. Fisher, M.P.,
Lord, Board of Education.

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT:-

Right Hon. the Lord Hardinge of
Estcourt, K.G., P.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I.,
K.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., I.O.D.,
First Under-Secretary of State for
Foreign Affairs. (for Minutes 9 & 9).

Right Hon. Sir A. Mond, Bart.,
First Commissioner of Works, (for Minute 10).

Right Hon. Sir J. Mclay, Bart.,
Coal Controller. (for Minutes 7, 8 & 9).

Mr. W.C. Bridgeman, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Board
of Trade. (for Minute 1).

Mr. A. Noel, M.P., Parliamentary
Secretary, Ministry of Transport, (for Minute 7).

Mr. A.R. Duncan, Coal Controller
(for Minute 1).

Mr. J.F. Hope, M.P., Parliamentary
and Financial Secretary
Ministry of Munitions, (for
Minutes 2 & 10).

Lieut.-Colonel Sir M.P.A. Hankey, G.C.B.,
Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Jones, Principal Assistant Secretary.
With reference to Cabinet 25 (20), Conclusion 2, the Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Shipping Controller relating to the price of bunker coal for foreign-going vessels, and recommending that the price be lowered (Paper C.P.-1180).

The general principle laid down by the Shipping Controller, that a British ship is entitled to the same advantages as a British factory in the matter of coal prices, was not disputed. It was pointed out, however, that it would be administratively very difficult to discriminate between home and foreign-owned ships in the same port, and that in the event of such discrimination in the case of American ships we should lay ourselves open to retaliation by the United States in their ports. It was desirable, on general grounds, to bring foreign ships back into British trade, as before the Tar 35 per cent. of our imports were brought here in foreign bottoms.

It was pointed out that there would be considerable public criticism if, as the result of Government action, the price of bunker coal was reduced with no corresponding drop in the freights, the difference going into the pockets of the shipowners.

The Cabinet decided —

(a) To approve the proposal to reduce the price of bunker coal to that charged to home freethrows, and that there should be no attempt to discriminate between home and foreign-owned vessels.

(b) That in those cases where freights were still under the regulation of the Ministry of Shipping, there should be made a corresponding decrease in the freights:

(c) That in all other cases the Shipping Controller should endeavour to bring about a similar reduction in freights.
(2) With reference to Cabinet 16 (20), Conclusions 1 and 2, the Cabinet had before them a Joint Memorandum by the Minister of Labour and the Parliamentary and Financial Secretary of the Ministry of Munitions, dealing with the question of discharges from Woolwich, in which it was urged that the proposal made by the Ministry of Munitions for the establishment of wire-drawing plant at Woolwich should be examined by the War Office; and that the Cabinet should, at an early date, consider the question of withdrawing the embargo on the manufacture of general articles of trade to the extent of enabling the Government, at Woolwich, to act as sub-contractors to engineering firms (Paper C.P.-1277).

The Cabinet were reminded that the factory at Woolwich would be transferred from the Ministry of Munitions to the War Office on June 1st., and that it was the intention of the War Office to take over at that time only such staff as was necessary to the proper organisation of the factory. It was stated, further, that the general policy of the War Office would be gradually to reduce the establishment at Woolwich to normal dimensions, but it was understood that such reduction would have to be spread over a number of years, partly because of the acute housing shortage in other districts to which workmen might desire to remove.

The Cabinet were informed that the Secretary of State for War had invited Sir James Stevenson to overhaul the organisation at Woolwich with a view to carrying out any necessary reforms.

It was suggested, in the course of the discussion, that it would be an advantage if all Government establishments similar to that of Woolwich were visited by a competent accountant, who should examine the methods of accounting in vogue, in order to discover whether or not they furnished true costs of production. In connection with Woolwich it was stated that this had been done during the War.
The Cabinet decided—

(a) To approve the recommendation that Woolwich should be placed in a position to act as sub-contractors to engineering firms, subject to Sir James Stevenson being satisfied that this could be done without the Government suffering financial loss thereby:

(b) That Sir James Stevenson should be asked to examine the proposals of the Ministry of Munitions for the establishment of a wire-drawing plant at Woolwich:

(c) That the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary of State for the Colonies should ascertain whether the maximum number of orders for the Government of India and the Crown Colonies were being placed at Woolwich:

(3) The Cabinet had before them a note by the Secretary dealing with the recent Conversations at Hythe (Paper C.P.—1297).

The criticism was made that it was not clear from this Note that there was to be a free discussion with the Germans. It would seem, indeed, that the intention of the Allies was to deal with the Germans almost as prisoners in Court rather than as ex-enemies with whom peace had been concluded and who, according to all precedent, were entitled to discussion on equal terms.

It was urged that without the co-operation of the Germans the reconstruction of Europe was impossible, and that now Peace had been concluded it was desirable to meet the Germans face to face with a view to advancing such reconstruction as rapidly as possible.

In reply to this criticism of what had taken place at Hythe, it was pointed out that it was based on a misapprehension, due possibly to the brevity of the report which had been circulated. The character of the Spa Conference was clearly indicated in the draft Note to the German Government reproduced on the first page of the Secretary's Note, where it was stated that "the primary purpose of the Spa Conference is to enable the Heads of the Allied Governments to examine with the responsible Heads of the German Government
the serious questions raised by the failure of Germany to fulfill the solemn obligations " etc. The French, on the one hand, had insisted that the Germans were not to be invited to Spa to revise the Treaty, but to examine methods for carrying it out. With this we had agreed, but in consenting to a postponement of the Conference we had equally insisted that when the Germans came there must be no change in the character of the Conference as already agreed: that is to say, there must be a face to face discussion, and in all respects the conversations must be effective conversations. Similarly with reference to the discussions on finance at Hythe there had been no concessions made to the French. The French had asked for priority in certain classes of reparation which did not affect the Dominions and in which our interest was very limited. The Prime Minister had pointed out that this matter had been discussed and settled with M. Clemenceau. In the end, all that was agreed upon was stated in the Communiqué which had been issued, and the rest had been referred to the experts, whose duty it would be to work out the problem within the terms of the original agreement, namely, the proportion of £11 to France to £5 to the British Empire. We had been committed to nothing fresh, but all were agreed that it was necessary, in order to ascertain the credit position of the Allies, to the experts should study simultaneously the question of Inter-Allied obligations and the settlement by Germany of her obligations to the Allies.

(4) Arising out of the foregoing discussion on the Anglo-American Debts, the attention of the Cabinet was called to the importance of avoiding any final settlement of our liabilities to the United States independently of the settlement of our loans to France and Italy, and the repayment of reparation by Germany. It was urged that any undertaking on our part to forgo repayment by France should be
at present provisional, and should be contingent on the United States granting a similar release to us. In any case it was contended, if we could not take this line ourselves it might be taken by one of the neutrals, and if the case were properly presented to the world it was bound to secure widespread support in the United States, at any rate after the Presidential Election was over.

In reply to the above, it was stated that the Prime Minister had fully considered the Paper on Inter-Allied and Anglo-American Debts, which had been circulated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Paper C.P.-1259), and did not approve the adoption at the present time of the policy recommended therein. In these circumstances the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not proposed to trouble the Cabinet further in the matter, but he was proceeding with negotiations for meeting our demand obligations by giving the Americans interest-bearing bonds payable at fixed dates. This would not necessarily prevent the United States dealing generously with this country later on, and the conclusion of these negotiations was desirable, because a number of other financial readjustments depended upon it.

The Cabinet were impressed with the importance of the issues raised by the discussion, which had arisen without notice, and decided —

(a) That the Secretary should place the subject on the Agenda for a Cabinet Meeting to be held before June 1st:

(b) That in the meantime the Chancellor of the Exchequer should interrupt the negotiations and resume them with the American representative after further consideration by the Cabinet.

With reference to Cabinet 27/90, Conclusion 6, the Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Shipping Controller covering an agreement with the French Minister of Shipping in regard to the ultimate disposal of ex-enemy ships (Paper C.P.-1241).

The Cabinet gave their approval to the Anglo-French Agreement.
The Cabinet had before them a Further Memorandum by the Shipping Controller, dealing with the question of the British share of the ex-enemy ships to be divided amongst the Allies, and recommending that the British Delegate on the Reparation Commission should be instructed to make it clear that this country will only pay for the ships what they will fetch (Paper C.P.-1269), it being further understood that all possible steps will be taken to secure that a fair price is given.

The Cabinet approved the course recommended by the Shipping Controller, on the understanding that the sale of the ships would be confined to British subjects.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer undertook to instruct Sir John Bradbury accordingly.

COASTAL SUBSIDY. (7) With reference to Cabinet 22 (20), Conclusion 2, the Cabinet had before them a Joint Memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade and the Shipping Controller (Paper C.P.-1199) recommending that a Committee, consisting of representatives of coasting shipowners and of representatives to be nominated by the Ministry of Transport, should be appointed to consider the question of exceptional railway rates and the corresponding shipping rates, and to report by May 15th; and, pending a decision in regard to these railway rates, urging that the Coastal Subsidy Scheme should continue.

The Cabinet decided —

To adjourn the consideration of this subject until the Minister of Transport could be present.
(8) The Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Shipping Controller, in which attention was drawn to the steps which were being taken by the French and Italian Governments to restrict the emigration trade from the ports of those countries to their own national vessels (Paper C.P.-1285).

The Cabinet were informed that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had addressed Notes to the French and Italian Governments expressing surprise at the action which they were about to take, especially at a time when we were straining every effort to supply them with coal, and asking for an explanation of their policy.

The Cabinet approved the action of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and requested Lord Curzon to continue to bring pressure to bear upon the French and Italian Governments.

(9) In connection with Minute 8, a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who was unable to be present, was read, objecting to the casual way in which economic questions were dealt with between Departments, and to the way in which Departments failed to keep the Foreign Office informed of Conferences dealing with subjects involving diplomatic considerations (See Appendix C).

It was explained that the instructions to hold a Conference on the supply of coal to France and Italy had originated in the meetings of the Supreme Council at San Remo, at which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had been present.
With reference to War Cabinet 597, Minute 4 and Appendix, the Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the First Commissioner of Works asking for a Cabinet decision as to the relative claims of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Munitions for possession of Armament Buildings (Paper C.P.-1266).

It was pointed out that the Cabinet had already decided, so far back as July 1, 1919, that Armament Buildings should be allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture on its vacation by the Ministry of Munitions, but that so far it had not been possible to secure the evacuation of the premises.

The Cabinet were informed that there were at present a staff of 529 in Armament Buildings who could be removed to Caxton House, Imperial House, and Queen Anne's Gate in the course of two or three months if arrangements could be made for the transfer of some part of the staff of the Ministry of Health.

The Cabinet adhered to their decision, and requested —

The First Commissioner of Works to arrange for the removal of the staff of the Ministry of Munitions within four months of the present date.

With reference to Cabinet 27 (20), Appendix II (1), and Committee of Home Affairs 59, Conclusion 1, the Cabinet had before them the Interim Report of the Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee embodying the recommendations of the Committee with regard to Strikes in the Civil Service (Home C.1. 1267).

The Cabinet postponed the consideration of this Interim Report, but authorised the First Lord of the Admiralty to reinstate the two workmen involved in the recent strike, but to announce definitely that a reduction will be made in the pensions that would otherwise have been awarded to them at the end of their service on a scale to be approved by the Treasury.
(12) With reference to Cabinet 21 (20), Conclusion 4, the Cabinet took note of a Note by the Acting Secretary, Cabinet, covering a telegram from Mr Balfour with reference to the Cabinet decision with regard to the appointment of civilian members of the Technical Advisory Committees to be set up under the League of Nations (Paper C.P.-1282), and a Note by the Secretary, Cabinet, covering the reply sent by the Lord Privy Seal to Mr Balfour after consultation with the Ministers concerned.

(13) The Cabinet took note of the Conclusions of a Conference of Ministers, held on Tuesday, May 11, 1920, to discuss the State of Ireland and the Requirements of the Irish Government (See Appendix II).

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1,
May 19, 1920.
Memorandum by the Foreign Office.

It is urgently necessary to draw attention to the disadvantages of the present method of conducting negotiations on economic questions with our Allies.

Hearing that conversations were taking place between the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade on the subject of the quantities of coal which could be sent during the next few months to France and Italy, the Ministry of Shipping on May 12th asked the Foreign Office urgently that no decision should be come to until there should have been an opportunity to obtain from the French and Italian Governments an assurance as to the treatment to be accorded to British shipping companies engaged in carrying emigrants from French and Italian ports. There is a distinct possibility of British ships being excluded altogether from this very lucrative traffic.

On the part of the Foreign Office the opportunity was welcomed to make the coal supplies dependent on fair treatment of British shipping interests, but, before any action could be taken, it was learnt from the newspapers of May 17th that the French and British Coal Controllers had met at Rythe and had come to an agreement on May 15th whereby France is to receive monthly from the United Kingdom 45% of the coal available for export.

This agreement cannot now be set aside without causing the maximum of friction between ourselves and our Ally, and, in the meantime, a valuable lever whereby to obtain fair treatment for an important British
Interest has been lost.

A further result of this agreement with the French is that it has increased the difficulties of dealing with the question of British coal supplies to

(a) British possessions such as Egypt,
(b) The smaller Allied States, such as Portugal, Brazil, Greece,
(c) Neutrals, such as Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain,

from all of which urgent demands are being received at the Foreign Office. The effect on our relations with all of these countries and on British interests there, when it is known that an agreement has been made to send every month to one of the Allies nearly one half of our coal exports, is incalculable.

It will be recollected that this is not the first time that such a thing has occurred.

In March and April last an opportunity arose over the question of the allocation of ex-enemy tonnage to France to bring pressure to bear on the French Government to stop, among other things, the anti-British campaign which was being pursued in the French press, when, unknown to the Foreign Office or to His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, the British and French Shipping Controllers met and concluded an agreement. Had the Foreign Office been consulted by either of the Departments concerned before these two above-mentioned agreements were entered upon, much benefit would have resulted to the interests of this country abroad for which the Foreign Office primarily is responsible.

...
CONCLUSIONS of a Conference of Ministers held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.I., on Tuesday, 11th May, 1920, at 11.30 a.m.

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. A. Bonar Law, K.B. (in the Chair).
Lord Privy Seal.


The Rt. Hon. Sir L. Worthington Evans, Bart., M.P.


THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT:


Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M.P.A. Hankey, C.C.B., Secretary.
Mr. R.B. Howorth, Assistant Secretary.
Captain L.F. Burgis, Assistant Secretary.

Mr. R.B. Howorth, Assistant Secretary.
The Conference had before them a statement, prepared by the Irish Executive, of certain military and police requirements (Appendix).

After General Sir Bell Macready, the Commander-in-Chief of the Military Forces in Ireland, had given the Conference a full appreciation of the present situation in Ireland, and more particularly of the Military and Police requirements in view of the present state of disorder, the Conference reached the following Conclusions:

(a) The present situation is so serious that in the view of the Conference all the requirements of the Irish Executive should be promptly met.

(b) The Conference took note that the most immediate of the Irish Executive's requirements was in respect of mechanical transport required to render the existing military forces more mobile.

The Secretary of State for War undertook to submit a plan to the Cabinet for supplying these requirements of the Irish Executive, including personnel.

(c) The War Office should hold 8 Battalions in readiness to proceed to Ireland if required; but, in view of the smallness of the force which would be left after their withdrawal (29 Battalions), either for purposes of maintaining order or as the central reserve of the Empire, and of the present deficiencies of these Battalions in training, General Macready undertook, in calling for them, to have the utmost regard for the War Office exigencies.

(d) With a view to relieving the continued demands on the military forces, and to raising a force more suitable for the present emergency in Ireland, the Secretary of State for War undertook to submit to the Cabinet a scheme for raising a Special Emergency Gendarmerie, which would become a branch of the Royal Irish Constabulary: Sir Warren Fisher, on behalf of the Treasury, to be consulted about these proposals at an early stage.

(e) With regard to the deficiency of signal personnel in the military forces in Ireland, the Secretary of State for War undertook to convene a Conference in the War Office the same afternoon, and to make a report to the Cabinet as to what could be done, at the earliest possible moment.
(f) In regard to wireless telegraphy operators, the rapid recruitment of whom in sufficient numbers is a special difficulty, requiring, according to the experience of the War Office, some system of special bonus, the Chancellor of the Exchequer undertook to nominate representatives of the Treasury (including, if possible, Sir Warren Fisher) to confer with financial and other representatives of the War Office, with a view to the preparation of a scheme which would not react adversely from a financial point of view on other branches of recruiting.

(g) That a special officer, with suitable qualifications and experience, should be appointed to supervise the entire organisation of the Irish Police, namely, the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, who should have at his disposal a small staff, including a first-rate Intelligence Officer to coordinate and develop the Intelligence Services.

The Lord Privy Seal undertook to see the officer recommended by General Macready in order to induce him to accept the appointment.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff undertook to summon the officer in question to London at once.

(h) To approve the Secret Service scheme referred to at the end of the Appendix which was explained in detail by General Macready.

(i) General Sir Heil Macready undertook to confer with the Naval Officer Commanding the Battle Squadron which is about to visit Ireland, with a view to the best possible dispositions being made, during the cruise in Irish waters, for assisting the Irish Executive.

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2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1.
May 11th, 1920.
APPENDIX.

MILITARY REQUIREMENTS IN IRELAND.

Statement prepared by the Irish Executive.

I.

EXTRA SPECIE REQUIRED.

3 Battalions for 5th Division.
3 do. do. 6th "
2 do. do. Dublin District.

The extra transport required for the above is included in the Mechanical Transport Return.
# Deficiency of Signal Personnel

7.5.20

Against existing Establishments.

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<th>Name of Trade</th>
<th>Present Establishment of Spec: Sig. Company</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Men's trade</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men's trade</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract**

Given to Commander-in-Chief 7/5/20.

- Wireless Operators .......................................................... 70
- Wireless Operators & Electricians ....................................... 99
- Wireless Operators & Electricians ....................................... 75
- Telegraphists ................................................................. 101
- Machine and Brigade Section Pioneers ................................ 120
- Machine and Brigade Section Pioneers ................................ 13
- Machine and Brigade Section Pioneers ................................ 88
- Machine and Brigade Section Pioneers ................................ 107
- Machine and Brigade Section Pioneers ................................ 15
- Machine and Brigade Section Pioneers ................................ 23

**Total** 543

In addition 1 R.N. Company (either Field or 2nd) required.
**Mechanical Transport**

**Tactical**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Present allotment for tactical purposes</th>
<th>Total now required</th>
<th>Increase required</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 ton lorries</td>
<td>15 cwt. Box Bodies</td>
<td>Ford Vans</td>
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<td>5th Division</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Division</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dublin District</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

|                      | 56            | 89                 | 14        | 193       | 153   | 209    | 20         | 45         | 427        | 67    | 120    | 16  | 31 |

This will involve the H.Q. of an additional Company.

Every unit must be completed with its officer and M.C.O. personnel.

Vehicles supplied must be same types as those in use.

Motor cycles - six for each Division, Galway, Kerry, etc.
IV.

The two forces of the Irish Police, viz., the R.I.C. and the D.M.P., have reached a state where it is absolutely necessary that a thoroughly competent official should be appointed to supervise the entire organisation, and to recommend to the Irish Government such changes as are essential. It has been suggested that Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Bulfin, K.C.B., O.V.O., who is an Irishman, would be well qualified for this duty. He would require but a small staff, but it is essential that he should have a first-rate intelligence officer at his disposal to collate information and form by degrees a secret service or detective branch for the police forces in Ireland, which is now non-existent. A selected inspector or chief inspector from Scotland Yard would be invaluable to him for some months, to advise on purely police matters.

A secret scheme has been put forward to the D.M.I., War Office, to cope with the present state of siege in Dublin.

10th May, 1920.