CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held in the Board Room, Treasury, S.W., on
Tuesday, 12th April, 1921 at 12 noon.

PRESENT:
The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P., Lord
Privy Seal. (In the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. Basil, O.M., M.P.,
Lord President of the Council.
The Right Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. E.S. Montagu, M.P.,
Secretary of State for India.
The Right Hon. The Earl Lee of Fareham, G.B.E., K.C.B., First Lord
of the Admiralty.
The Right Hon. H.A.L. Fisher, M.P.,
President of the Board of Education.
The Right Hon. Sir Eric Geddes,
G.C.B., G.B.E., M.P., Minister of
Transport.
The Right Hon. R. Munro, K.C.,
M.P., Secretary for Scotland.

The Right Hon. E. Shortt, K.C.,
M.P., Secretary of State for
Home Affairs.
The Right Hon. W.S. Churchill,
M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.
The Right Hon. Sir L. Worthington Evans, Bart., M.P., Secretary
of State for War.
The Right Hon. Sir Alfred Mond,
Bart., M.P., Minister of Health.
The Right Hon. Sir A. Griffith-
Boscawen, M.P., Minister of
Agriculture.
The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.P.

Mr. R.B. Howorth .................................. Assistant Secretary.
The Lord Privy Seal explained that during the present crisis, when the Prime Minister's time was almost entirely occupied with negotiations in regard to the industrial crisis, Mr Lloyd George had asked him to summon meetings of the Cabinet and Conferences as required to meet the situation.

Mr Hodges, whose attitude indicated extremist leanings, had made a lucid and skilful speech in which he had shown that his policy was to force to the front, as an immediate issue, the question of a national pool. If this were refused, it was idle, in Mr Hodges' view, to discuss such matters as the 17 per cent. and other figures. The Prime Minister had therefore discussed with Mr Chamberlain what line he should take. A suggestion had been made to him from a Labour quarter that he should play for time and try and prolong the negotiations beyond tonight. The Prime Minister, however, thought that while the miners could understand a direct refusal, they would vigorously resent any jockeying or finessing. He had thought, therefore, that it would be advisable to state clearly that a pool was impossible. Mr Chamberlain had then made the suggestion that, while a national pool in the sense that all profits should go into a pool, with a uniform rate of wages for all districts, was clearly out of the question, it might be worth making it clear that we did not exclude the possibility of a national settlement with wages varying in the different districts. An analogous system was already in operation in connection with various other Trade Unions: for example, the Dockers, Agricultural Labourers, and School Teachers. The Prime Minister had agreed that this proposal was worth considering, and a document had been prepared setting out that, in the view of the Government, a compulsory pool was impossible, a pool on a voluntary basis would break down, and that in any case pooling must result in inefficient and uneconomical working of the industry; but that national negotiations, combined with
varying district rates of wages, was a practicable method of dealing with the difficulty. The Prime Minister was disposed to put the positive suggestion of national negotiations first, and the negative statements afterwards. He had thought, however, that the situation was of such a grave character as to warrant a meeting of the Cabinet to review the arrangements made and to see that everything was in order, in the event of an extension of the dispute.

Some misgivings were expressed as to the way in which the crisis had been brought about, and the very sudden and heavy fall in wages involved in the proposals of the coal-owners. It was also pointed out that any arrangements which involved the closing of a number of uneconomic mines must have serious consequences on the employees, and that everything should be done to mitigate the economic effects of such closure. During the War the miners had shown that they were intensely patriotic, and it would be a calamity if Labour generally obtained the impression that the Government was siding in this matter with the employers.

On the other hand it was pointed out that the Government had throughout been most anxious not to commit themselves in any way as to the reasonableness of the offer of the owners.

Reference was made to Mr Hodges' explicit statement that there was not enough money in the industry to pay the men's demands, and to the considered decision of the Government that unless the industry was de-controlled the negotiations between the owners and the men could make no progress.

Situation in the Coalfields. (3) The Cabinet were informed by the Minister of Transport that his latest information showed a general improvement in the coalfields. Pumping was being carried out generally, except in Fife, where the disturbances were dying down.

The Secretary for Scotland agreed that the situation as regards law and order was better today, except in Fife, where complaints were being made of intimidation and inadequate protection. We read a telegram received from the Solicitor-General for Scotland (See Appendix I), and also
a reply which he had sent that morning after consulting with Sir Robert Horne (See Appendix II). He asked the Cabinet to approve the action taken.

The Cabinet took note of and confirmed the action taken by the Secretary for Scotland in the matter.

Extremist Preparations.

(4) The Cabinet were informed by the Home Secretary that the Lord Mayor of Newcastle was recruiting Special Constables for the express purpose of dealing with the Sinn Fein difficulty in the neighbourhood of Newcastle. He also referred to the mischievous activities of the Independent Workers of the World and the Communists at Bradford.

(5) The Home Secretary informed the Cabinet that the "Daily Herald", which had been sailing very close to the wind for some days, contemplated issuing at midnight tonight special editions in London and Manchester advocating revolution in very violent terms. Sir Basil Thomson proposed to intercept the copies and, after reading one with Sir Archibald Bodkin, to take steps with a view to a prosecution if the contents warranted such action.

Doubts were expressed as to the desirability of this course. It was generally felt that the publication of one statement of a revolutionary character would bring home to the nation the gravity of the crisis and might do more good than harm, although action would have to be taken to prevent its repetition.

The Cabinet agreed —

That no action should be taken as regards this particular issue of the "Daily Herald".

EMERGENCY COMMITTEES.

(6) The Cabinet were reminded that, in addition to the Supply and Transport Committee, a Committee of Ministers (with the Lord Chancellor in the Chair), known as the Internal Protection Arrangements Committee, was dealing with the industrial crisis, and it was suggested that the whole of the ordinary executive work should now be taken over by the Supply and Transport Committee, the Lord Chancellor's Committee remaining in existence so as to deal with important matters specially referred to it by the Cabinet or the Supply and Transport Committee.
The Cabinet agreed —

That the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should interview the Lord Chancellor, explain the position to him, and, if he concurred in the above suggestion, should arrange to notify the Secretary to the Cabinet to this effect.

SUPPLY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE. (7) The Minister of Transport informed the Cabinet that the arrangements of the Supply and Transport Committee were Final Arrangements up to date, but that it was highly desirable that certain decisions should be taken by the Committee in advance rather than after the actual declaration of a Triple Alliance strike; otherwise it would take 48 hours to bring certain schemes, such as the Milk Scheme, into force.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the Secretary to the Cabinet should keep in close touch with the Prime Minister and should convey the Prime Minister's instructions to the Minister of Transport, the Home Secretary and the Secretary for Scotland as to the moment of taking final Supply and Transport action.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO LOYAL WORKERS. (8) The Cabinet agreed —

That, as soon as the Prime Minister's instructions were received, a notice in the following form, which differs slightly from that given in Paper C.P.—2892, should be issued to the English Press by the Home Office and to the Scottish Press by the Scottish Office:

"In the event of the threatened extension of stoppage of work, the Government wish to make it clear that it will use the fullest power of the State to protect workers who remain at work in any of the services essential to the life of the Community. In any settlement which may be come to, the Government will give their support in securing that the position of such workers shall not be prejudiced as compared with their position before the stoppage."

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS. (9) The Cabinet agreed —

That a warning should be sent to the Post Office to keep important telegraph offices open tonight for dealing with Government business.

The Minister of Transport undertook to take up this matter.
JSP SPECIAL (IS) The Cabinet were informed by the Secretary of State for War that the total enlistments in the Defence Force up to last night amounted to 6,600 in 175 units out of 460, making a probable total of about 15,000 recruits on Monday. The somewhat unsatisfactory response was mainly attributable to the false impression given by the Press that the crisis had passed. To some extent it might be due to the false representations that the men were required for service in Germany. There was reason to believe that large numbers of loyal citizens would enrol in the Force if the crisis became more acute. Evidence was given of the good feeling existing between the troops and the miners in South Wales.

The Cabinet took note of this communication.

Birmingham and Nottingham. (11) The Lord Privy Seal informed the Cabinet that the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, who was a Quaker, had declined personally to take action in accordance with the request contained in the telegram sent on Saturday last by the Prime Minister to Local Authorities. As a result of special telegrams sent by the Prime Minister, arrangements had been made under which action in Birmingham would be undertaken by the Deputy Lord Mayor.

The Cabinet were informed that a similar situation had arisen in Nottingham.

PROPAGANDA. (12) It was suggested that, in view of the great importance of the public being correctly informed as to the situation, steps should be taken to deal with the Government propaganda on a more elaborate scale than was at present in force. It was agreed —

(a) That the Minister of Transport should raise this question at the meeting of the Supply and Transport Committee that afternoon;

(b) That the Committee should be informed that the Cabinet were prepared to authorise any proper expenditure on this service which the Supply and Transport Committee might think it necessary and desirable to incur.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1, April 12, 1921.
APPENDIX I.

TELEGRAM FROM THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND
TO THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND, DATED APRIL 12,
1921, 9-50 a.m.

Position in Fife midnight was miners obdurate no pumping resumed stop Phoned Sheriff, Cupar to report this morning he phoned position unchanged desires if possible delay decisive action pending meeting miners association today Glasgow stop This may involve further delay of 24 hours stop Have instructed Sheriff at once to get in touch with coal owners and ascertain 1. What pits are most critical 2. The area to be protected and 3. That owners are prepared to take risk unprotected areas stop My information last night was that at least two pits Westwood District were critical stop Also instructed if assistance sent to arrange for attendance of civil magistrate stop Scottish demand also warned at midnight that movement today might be necessary stop Have already reported arrangements as to personnel and transport completed stop Will wire report on Mid and Westlothian after seeing Sheriff Clyde.

SOLICITOR GENERAL.

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APPENDIX II.

TELEGRAM IN REPLY TO ABOVE, FROM SECRETARY
FOR SCOTLAND TO SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND.

Complaint received that protection is not being accorded in Fife in order to enable pumping operations to proceed. Home and I both of opinion that immediate protection should be given: that delay is unjustifiable and disastrous: and that abstention from military action is not in accord with the views of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet as expressed on Saturday. Please wire what action has been taken.

SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND.