CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, 1st November, 1921, at 11 - 30 a.m.

PRESENT:

THE PRIME MINISTER (IN THE CHAIR).


The Right Hon. E.S. Montagu, M.P., Secretary of State for India.


The Right Hon. Sir Edward Grigg, K.C.V.O., C.M.G., Secretary for Ireland.

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT:


Sir Edward Grigg, K.C.V.O., C.M.G., Principal Assistant Secretary, Treasury.

Col. S.H. Wilson, C.B., C.M.G., Principal Assistant Secretary, C.I.D.
(1) With reference to Conclusion 5 of a Conference of Ministers held on October 26th, 1921, the Cabinet were informed that the Admiralty and War Office were both contemplating laying wreaths on the tomb of the American Unknown Warrior. General Smuts was also understood to have asked the British Ambassador to lay a wreath on behalf of the Dominion of South Africa. The question therefore arose as to whether it was desirable for the Head of the British Delegation also to lay a wreath on behalf of the British Government.

The Cabinet were of opinion that the wreath to be laid by Lord Cavan on behalf of His Majesty The King should suffice so far as the British Government and the British Mission of the British Empire Delegation are concerned, and that, with the addition of a short speech by the Head of the British Empire Delegation, the programme as already recommended to His Majesty The King should be adhered to. They recommended to His Majesty The King that the revised programme should be as follows:

(a) A short speech by the Head of the British Empire Delegation;
(b) Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty to confer the Victoria Cross;
(c) General the Earl of Cavan to lay a wreath on behalf of His Majesty The King;
(d) No other wreaths to be laid by the British Mission.

(2) With reference to Cabinet 67 (21), Conclusion 3 (b), the Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on the subject of the forthcoming Washington Conference on the Limitation of Armaments (C.I.D. Paper 260-B).

After some discussion the Cabinet agreed ——
(a) That in the event of the question of a renewal of the Anglo-American Guarantee to France being brought up at the Conference, the British Empire Delegation should be authorised, and was in honour bound, to support and promote in every way the ratification by the United States of America of the Paris Agreement of June 27th, 1919, which has already been ratified by Imperial Parliament and only awaits the ratification of the Government of the United States of America to become operative.

(b) That, in regard to para. 29 and Conclusion (j) of the Committee of Imperial Defence Report, while adhering to the one-Power standard, full discretion should be given to the principal British Delegate, according to the circumstances of the Conference, to adopt the suggestion of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in regard to having ready a paper programme of capital ship construction, to be used for bargaining purposes with a view to inducing the other Powers to reduce their building programmes.

(c) That the question of limitation of aerial armaments should be taken up, and that advantage should be taken of the support which the French would expect from us on the subject of the guarantee, to try and induce them to agree to a limitation of aerial armaments.

(d) That, subject to the above and to full discretion to the British Empire Delegation (subject to reference to the Cabinet in case of necessity), the Report of the Standing Defence Subcommittee should be approved as a general guide.

(e) With reference to Cabinet 51 (21), Appendix V (1), the attention of the Cabinet was called to a recommendation by the General Officer Commanding, Ireland, supported by the Secretary of State for War, that it was desirable to divert American ships calling at Moville, so that they should arrive in this country first. This would make it more possible to check the importation of arms into Ireland. The Cabinet agreed —

That the Admiralty should be authorised to issue an Order prohibiting eastward-bound ships from entering Moville until further notice; the Admiralty to make such communications to the Foreign Office as may be necessary with a view to notifying Washington and other Governments concerned.

NOTE: By instructions from Mr. Chamberlain, no action is being taken on this Minute pending further consideration by the Cabinet.
(4) The attention of the Cabinet was called to certain breaches of the truce by Sinn Feiners at Rathkeale and elsewhere.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the matters complained of should be referred to the Committee on the Observance of the Truce.

(5) The Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty dealing with the retention of Coastguard Stations in the disaffected parts of Ireland, and pointing out that if an Irish settlement is reached it is proposed to close these stations. On the other hand, if the truce is terminated, the stations would be a dangerous complication. It was therefore preferable to evacuate them (S.P. (B) 17).

The Cabinet agreed —

To adopt the recommendation of the Admiralty that the Coastguard Stations should be evacuated as soon as possible.

(6) With reference to Cabinet TO (21) Conclusion 2 (a) the Cabinet briefly considered the position of Parliamentary business in relation to arrangements for the King's Speech.

Colonel Leslie Wilson indicated the stages reached by the various Bills, and expressed the belief that it would be possible for the House to rise on November 10th or 11th.

Some discussion took place on the financial requirements of the Treasury, and it was generally agreed to be undesirable to have a Debate on any Irish Estimates, in view of the Debate on the previous day and of the negotiations still proceeding.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer undertook to examine other ways of meeting the immediate needs of the Treasury.

The consideration of the arrangements for the King's Speech was adjourned.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
1st November, 1921.