SECRET.

CABINET 30 (22).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W. on Tuesday, May 30th, 1922, at 11.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

THE PRIME MINISTER (IN THE CHAIR).


The Right Hon. The Viscount Birkenhead, Lord Chancellor.


The Right Hon. The Viscount Peel, G.B.E., K.C.B., Secretary of State for India.


The Right Hon. Sir A. Mond, Bart., M.P., Minister of Health.

The Right Hon. Sir A. Griffith Boscawen, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The Right Hon. R. Munro, K.C., M.P., Secretary for Scotland.


The Right Hon. S. Baldwin, M.P., First Lord President of the Board of Trade.

The Right Hon. H.A.L. Fisher, M.P., President of the Board of Education.

The Right Hon. T.J. Macnamara, M.P., Minister of Labour.

The Right Hon. The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, K.T., First Commissioner, H.M. Office of Works.

Mr. Thomas Jones. .................................. Principal Assistant Secretary.
Mr. R.B. Howorth. ................................. Assistant Secretary.
(1) With reference to Cabinet 29 (22), Conclusion 1, the Cabinet approved the announcement in the House of Commons the same day of the names of Sir Philip Lloyd Greame and Lieutenant-Commander Hilton Young as the British Expert Representatives on the International Commission which is to meet at the Hague on June 15th, in accordance with the recommendations of the Genoa Conference.
(2) With reference to Cabinet 29 (22), Conclusions 2-4, the Cabinet agreed with the Prime Minister and the Lord Privy Seal that, in view of the latest developments in regard to reparations (viz., according to Press reports, the acceptance by Germany of the proposals of the Reparations Commission), and in view of an intimation from Sir Donald Maclean that he did not wish to discuss the question on the Motion for the Adjournment of the House of Commons, it was unnecessary that the Prime Minister should speak on the subject of German reparations and our relations with France on the following day.
(3) With reference to Cabinet 27 (22), Conclusion 3, the Secretary of State for the colonies made a statement on the present Irish situation. He said that up to ten days ago he was looking forward to a free Election when the issue of the Treaty would be put to the people. It was common ground to all parties, including extremists, that such an election would have resulted in an overwhelming majority for the Treaty. At the last moment, however, an Agreement had been reached between De Valera and Collins which prescribed that the existing proportions of Treaty and anti-Treaty representatives should be returned by at the Election on June 16th, and it should be followed by a Coalition Government in which would be included four Republican Ministers. This pact had been come to by a Government which was avowedly for the Treaty; it was an arrangement full of disaster; it prevented an expression of opinion on the Treaty; it gave the Provisional Government no further representative of strength or authority from the Irish people; it left the Government in its present weak and helpless position; it ruptured Article XVII of the Treaty. The British Government had not insisted, in the interim Parliament, on exacting an oath from the members, but had laid down that there must be a declaration by Ministers. It was believed to be their intention to make De Valera one of the four Ministers, and if he and the three others became Ministers of the Government the Treaty would be definitely violated. At that stage some strong measures might become necessary, such as the resumption of powers or occupation of Southern areas.

The reasons given by Mr Griffith and Mr Collins for an action which caused great dismay to some of their own officers was force majeure. There could not have been, they said, a real Election. Small bands of armed men could
have seized and destroyed the ballot boxes, and in other ways prevented the free exercise of constitutional rights. A second and weightier reason which they gave was the state of disorder in the country, which would be aggravated by an Election.

When Mr Collins was asked why he did not afford protection to the R.I.C. and the Unionists, his answer was that he does in fact afford such protection and prevents many outrages. Had the Elections proceeded, he said, the Republicans would have maddened England with a series of outrages. Whereas there were fanatical Republicans who were pure in motive though violent in method, behind them had gathered all the desperate elements of the population, who pursued rapine for private gain. They could not be distinguished from the others and over all of them was the glamour of the Republic. Hence the agreement to proceed with the Election, and the Provisional Government which resulted from it would be elected in accordance with the statutory forms which we had required. But it was equally the Third Republican Ball, and that was its only sanctity in the eyes of the Irish.

It was at this stage that the draft Irish Constitution was received which the Provisional Government had agreed should be published not later than June 6th, so as to give the electorate ten clear days in which to consider it. This was the pledge given to Ardfheis and De Valera. The British Signatories had examined the draft, and it had caused serious disappointment. Each Signatory saw it separately and reached the same conclusion, that it was a negation of the Treaty, though they were assured by Mr Griffith and Mr Collins that it was not intended to be so. Yesterday they gave the Irish representatives their observations upon it. The Irish leaders said they would make the Constitution conform to the Treaty.
There was nothing to complain of in their attitude in this regard. The practical step now being taken was a discussion of the draft by the Lord Chief Justice and the Irish Legal Adviser, Mr Hugh Kennedy, K.C. They were meeting today to see if they could together frame a Constitution which would give full effect to the Treaty, but the distance between their Constitution and the Treaty was almost as great as when the Prime Minister began his negotiations with Mr De Valera.

The Lord Privy Seal said that Mr Collins had described the reply as "a pretty poor document".

The Secretary of State for the Colonies, continuing, said that the Election would take place in the middle of June. It would not be right to say that it would be worthless, for some Labour and Independent candidates might be elected, and Mr Collins had received assurances that after the Election some of De Valera's supporters would cross over, because they were convinced that England was loyally carrying out her pledges. The idea was to try and get a non-Party Government, so as to secure tranquillity in Ireland, and at a later stage a proper Election on the main issue. The June Election would not be one in which the Irish people could be regarded as arming the Parliament to carry out the Treaty. If the four Republican Ministers did not take the oath, it was possible there might be a resort to some subterfuge which would conform to the letter of the Treaty and yet not involve the Republicans in a serious departure from their principles.

The Constitution had to be passed through this June Parliament. If an agreement was reached on the Constitution it would be odious to the Republic and members of the Dail, and an endless discussion would follow. Had there been a
Parliament with a big pro-Treaty majority, the Constitution could probably have been quickly pushed through. If they agreed on a Constitution it would be published; if they did not agree, then he supposed the Irish would still publish theirs and we should have to denounce it. He hardly knew what would then happen. During these inconclusive discussions we might find either (1) the deterioration of the country continuing: if so, it would slide into complete anarchy, with more murders of Protestants, more confiscation of property, and a larger stream of refugees: or (2) if they isolated brigandage, there might be a social gain which might enable us to pass to a quieter period without tragic occurrences.
Mr Churchill then turned to the position in Ulster. The two Governments were further apart than ever, and each blamed the other. Sir James Craig blamed the supporters of De Valera who had succeeded in upsetting the agreement between Craig and Collins on the 31st March, and Collins admitted this. Since the breach the boycott and other measures of the I.R.A. had become more effective. Whether it was a case of six or one and half a dozen of the other, he did not know. He would be sorry to try and arrive at any other ratio. The border was in a dangerous situation, and matters were worse in Belfast than they had been. We had 19 Battalions in North Western Ulster, and yesterday some artillery was sent over. In addition there were 48,000 "A" "B" and "C" Specials, and orders had been given to accede to Sir James Craig's request for arms and munitions to equip these.

Mr Churchill here continued as follows:­

"I am bound to say that I think we could do no less, having regard to the gathering of the forces from the South and the ferocious steps used against Ulster. The continuance of disorder of a serious kind in Ulster may be looked for and at any moment patience may be ruptured and we shall find ourselves in an atmosphere where people 'scream'. Ministers should read the Irish papers, such as the "Freeman". These papers, published in Dublin — and they are pro-Treaty papers — describe only the murders of Catholics and attribute these horrors to Sir James Craig's Government and the Orangemen. Every outrage on one side is replied to by an outrage on the other in a crescendo of conflict which may bring about an explosion which may put an end to our watching the laboured processes (connected with the Constitution)".

There were thus, said Mr Churchill, three main factors:­

(1) The Constitution adjusted to our view might prove insuperable to them when they return to Ireland;
(2) Disorder in the South;
(3) The situation in Ulster.

The Prime Minister interjected that if they made their Constitution conform to our view De Valera would not be able to accept it and the pact would be broken. On the other hand if the Constitution were not made to conform to the Treaty then we should be confronted with a larger issue of the Republic versus the Empire.

Mr. Churchill, in reply to questions, said there had been endless conflict in regard to the Collins-Craig agreement of March 31st. Both had resisted each other on small points. Sir James Craig had made a great effort to help, but after the De Valera-Collins pact he had gone over to the other side. Sir James Craig had been willing to go great lengths and while he could not stand for unity he would resign rather than stand in its way. Had Collins taken strong steps and turned the Irregulars out of their Dublin strongholds the whole situation in Belfast would have improved, but having joined hands with avowed Republicans we could hardly wonder that the North had gone back to its extreme and violent position. "I think we have to give them assurances of help."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked whether the conversations between the Prime Minister and the Lord Privy Seal with Mr. Griffith and Mr. Collins that morning threw any light on the situation.
THE PRIME MINISTER: "Mr. Chamberlain and I had an interview lasting 1½ hours with Mr. Griffith and Mr. Collins. It bore out Mr. Churchill's account of the situation. They are more anxious about the North-East than about anything else. They talked of the extermination of the Catholics. I retorted that that was a great exaggeration. 80 Catholics have been killed, and 163 wounded since December 6th, 1921. They are considerable figures, but they do not justify Mr. Collins description. It just happens that 72 Protestants have been killed and considerable numbers wounded. We could get Mr. Collins to talk of nothing else, and when we were at last able to point out that there had been 37 murders in the South, he replied that this was due to the excited state of feeling provoked by Belfast, and that unless something were done the whole of Ireland would get out of hand. I quoted to him Lord Randolph Churchill's remark to Mr. Gladstone, 'You call yourselves a Government, whom do you govern?' and added 'You have handed over the Government of Ireland to an Englishman, to Erskine Childers'. Their general answer was 'You must let us govern in our own way. The solution will depend on the maintenance of good feeling. We will get Ireland right.' They went on to argue that we were paying for the police in Ulster, and, therefore, we had the responsibility there. They alleged that the murders were committed by "specials" in our pay. They urged that we had handed law and order over to Sir James Craig, and the responsibility, therefore rested with us.
us. They recalled cases of investigation in Ireland by Great Britain, and suggested an impartial enquiry. They asked, why did we not let British troops take charge and proclaim martial law. There would be great confidence in British officers. This was a most extraordinary suggestion, but it was one to which Mr. Griffith came back repeatedly."

Mr. Churchill pointed out that the Northern Government were against martial law.

The Prime Minister said the 48,000 "specials" were in fact an army.

The Secretary of State for War pointed out that they were not under military discipline.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said he had opposed the increase of the "specials" on the ground of their great cost, but Sir James Craig had maintained that they were more useful than the ordinary army.

The Prime Minister said Mr. Griffith had pointed out that ordinary policemen were trained men whereas the "specials" were not.

Mr. Chamberlain: "Mr. Griffith said "you might as well go and arm the East End."

The Prime Minister: "The Fascisti in Italy would be a more exact analogy. The situation did seem to point to the need for impartial investigation into the facts."

Mr. Churchill said that Sir James Craig had repeatedly recognised our right to investigate as much as we liked.

The Prime Minister said we certainly had the right as we were maintaining an army of about 57,000.

Mr. Churchill said that Mr. Collins had asserted that the murderers in the North were known, and Sir James Craig had asked for the names, but none had been forthcoming.
The Prime Minister said the most significant feature of the interview was that two or three times Mr. Collins had indicated that he was willing "to give Ireland back" to us "as a present."

The Lord Privy Seal said that the initiative for the interview had come from the Irish leaders, and it was obvious that they were eager for it. They had raised the question of Ulster at once, and the tone of the interview throughout had been of great gravity and of a menacing character - not that the language used was menacing, but that the nature of the discussion was so serious as to be menacing. They alleged that the murders in Belfast were part of a deliberate warfare on Catholics, and they had remarked to the Prime Minister that he (the Prime Minister) and De Valera should share the government of Ireland between them, as much as to say that "one was as impossible as the other." The Lord Privy Seal, continuing, said he had put the following question to Mr. Collins: "Supposing we were to give you this investigation, would you be prepared to disavow the I.R.A. in the Six Counties, to tell them and all persons affiliated to them there that they were bound to obey the Northern Government pending the results of the Boundary Commission?" His reply was that he was prepared to carry out the agreement of March 31st but that he was not prepared to hold up the hands of the Ulster Government while Catholics were being murdered. Mr. Collins had then handed him a dossier with particulars of the murders in Ulster.

The Secretary of State for War suggested that Mr. Collins' answer indicated that he was behind the 2 1/2 Divisions of the I.R.A. who were causing so much trouble in the North.

The Lord Privy Seal said he did not think his reply amounted to a confession that he encouraged the I.R.A., but it did mean that he would not openly discourage them.
THE PRIME MINISTER: "He says, "I can’t leave these people unprotected with 46,000 Specials out against them.""

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES said the I.R.A. were endeavouring to upset the Ulster Government.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL: "They are in rebellion against a Government which is a part of the Treaty."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES said that in the Agreement of March 1st Collins had given up nothing, whereas Craig had undertaken to revise 170 sentences, to set up dual police, and a Catholic Investigation Committee.

(Copies of the Agreement were handed to the Cabinet.)

All kinds of difficulties had been put in the way of the execution of the Agreement.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL said the only case he and the Prime Minister had been able to argue in detail was why the Agreement had not been kept. They had laid the main stress during the discussion on the fact that the I.R.A. was in rebellion against the Ulster Government.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS pointed out that the only way for the Ulster Government to maintain its frontier would be to cross it. What would be the situation when that happened?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES described in some detail the military situation which would then arise.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH pointed out if there was to be civil war this country would join in.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR, in reply to a question, said it would not be easy for our troops both to hold the border indicated by Mr Churchill and to police Belfast.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION thought an Enquiry into the outrages in Belfast, partly administrative and partly judicial in character, would be valuable.
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES pointed out that the temper in this country was high and rising, and the Government would be told that they had been cheated by the South, and that when loyal Ulstermen defended themselves we proposed an Enquiry. The public would ask, "What about an Enquiry into the South," where there was no provocation, whereas the Catholics in the North were a part of a movement to shatter the Northern Government. Sir James Craig had four men under sentence of flogging; in the South not one person had been brought to justice.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL thought it would not do to have an Enquiry in the North without one also in the South.

THE PRIME MINISTER pointed out that one was a Dominion and the other was not. In the North we had accepted financial responsibility for law and order. The burden of maintaining the Police was almost exclusively ours, and we thus had a special responsibility. He was profoundly concerned with the public presentation of the trouble when it came. He was not sure that Collins was not manoeuvring us into a position where our case was weak. He had challenged us on Ulster. The first murders were the murders of Catholics. — in the main, the murder of members of the minority. No-one had been punished, we had made no enquiry, we had armed 48,000 Protestants. It would be a bad case. Our appeal would be to an Empire which was Protestant and Catholic. There had been 80 Catholics and 49 Protestants murdered and nobody had been punished or arrested. It was our business to maintain a stern impartiality between all races and creeds. We were not a Protestant, or a Catholic, or even, as some tried to make us believe, a Mohammedan Empire. We were bound to be sternly impartial. It was very important to carry the Dominions with us, to carry America and to carry the outside world. We should not have a breach where
a great case could be made against us. If we broke on the issue of "Republic versus Monarchy" we could count on solid support; but if we broke on Ulster we should get into the same atmosphere of doubtful responsibility as in the case of Repri-
sals. He warned the Cabinet solemnly that there would be a shout of approval tomorrow if immediate action were taken, but that the shouters themselves would give the most trouble three months hence; their tenacity would come out, and they would turn to criticise the Government's methods and charge them with being too gentle here or blundering there. The religious communities would be against them. Democratic communities were sentimental communities, and that was why a policy of repression could not be carried through. He strongly urged that they should take such steps as would eliminate the Ulster issue and leave a clean issue of "Republic versus British Empire". Whoever took the job on, however much the shouting might be for the first few weeks, would find the shouters turn against them. He was in favour of a Judicial Enquiry. He did not see why Sir James Craig should object. They had to find the money, and Sir James Craig came to them with a demand for £5,000,000 - a very considerable sum. During the Enquiry neither side would care to create evidence against itself, and they might thus be able for a time to stop the outrages and give time for the other issue to develop.

The Secretary of State for War asked the Prime Minister if he would be in favour of asking Collins to allow them to put troops on both sides of the border?

The Prime Minister replied that they might certainly do so.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies said that Sir James Craig ought to be seen, and that he proposed to ask him to come to England that evening.
THE PRIME MINISTER thought the invitation should be accompanied by an assurance that the Government would support his efforts to maintain order.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR suggested that a Scottish Judge might be selected.

THE PRIME MINISTER said there should be a Catholic and a Protestant Judge.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES stated that Sir James Craig might argue that this was putting a stigma on the Northern Government and upon their own Judges. It would be a difficult case to defend in the House of Commons, and pressure would be put for a similar Enquiry in the South.

THE PRIME MINISTER said that in the South there was no dispute about the responsibility: it was the I.R.A. There was nothing to investigate. In such an Enquiry as he proposed we should be following a precedent laid down by Lord Balfour and Lord Merley, who had instituted Enquiries which had given complete satisfaction on the ground of impartiality.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said they should be careful not to put Ulster in the dock and call the South as a witness. The state of things in the South was bad, and refugees were spreading all over the country. He was against an Enquiry in the North, but the scenic effect should be so arranged as not to put Ulster alone in the wrong.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL pointed out that, on the other hand, the strength of the case for an Enquiry was that the Special Constables were definitely charged with murder and that they were in our pay.
THE PRIME MINISTER said he would have an enquiry into the disturbances in the North.

MR CHURCHILL said that it was alleged by the Northern Government that Catholics friendly to that Government were murdered by other Catholics. The whole of Ulster had been knit together by the pact between De Valera and Collins. The arrival of a Judicial Enquiry would be out of relation to what would be going on all around and he did not think any effective conclusions would be reached. Another suggestion would be to take a particular area of Belfast and place it under strict Martial Law under a British Governor.

THE PRIME MINISTER: "And the Border too?"

MR CHURCHILL: "You have not enough troops for that. The Border trouble starts in Belfast. You could take a square mile of Belfast I think the Catholics would be relieved and Sir James Craig might be induced to agree to this; or, in the second place it might be possible to go back to the Agreement of the 31st March which has not been torn up."

(At this point there was a discussion on the military dispositions contemplated in certain emergencies.)

LORD BALFOUR thought that both the Belfast area and the Border ought to be dealt with.

LORD BIRKENHEAD pointed out that to deal with the latter might involve a rupture with the Southern Government.

MR FISHER suggested that the Ulster Battalions ought to be stronger and said that he was all for proclaiming Martial Law in Belfast.

After some further discussion as to the difficulties which had been experienced in carrying out the provisions of the Agreement of March 31st, the Cabinet agreed:

(1) That Sir James Craig should be invited by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to cross to London that night;
(ii) That the Prime Minister should put to Sir James Craig the proposal for a judicial enquiry into the disturbances in Ulster.
THE MINISTER OF LABOUR called attention to the debate on Ireland which was to take place before the adjournment on the following day and the apprehension felt on the question of four republican Ministers forming part of a Coalition Government recognised by us.

MR. CHURCHILL said that in his statement he proposed to say quite definitely that we would not tolerate the presence of Ministers who did not make the Declaration required by the Treaty. He proposed to confront the House with the worst side of the position but he would not indicate the differences which had arisen on the question of the Constitution. Those would appear within a few days if no agreement were come to. He proposed to say that we were giving Ulster support in ships and arms and that that carried with it the responsibility for seeing how they were used. He would explain to the House the defence put up on behalf of the De Valera - Collins pact and would show the vice of the Agreement.

THE PRIME MINISTER said he thought every effort should be made not to create the impression that the trouble was in Ulster. We could not carry on a war with a divided country. No question of legislation by us would arise on the Constitution until it had been adopted in Ireland.
With reference to Cabinet 29 (22), Conclusion 5, the Cabinet had under consideration a Draft Despatch to Lord Hardinge (Paper C.P. 3992) circulated by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and a Note thereon by the Secretary of State for War (Paper C.P. - 4000). They were informed that Lord Balfour was circulating an amended draft.

The Cabinet agreed:

That the terms of the Despatch to be sent to the French Government should be left to the discretion of Lord Balfour.
(6) The Cabinet took note of the following Conclusions of Committee of Home Affairs No. III, held on May 9th, 1922, at 4.15 p.m.:

(1) Sale of Tea Bill
(2) Supply of Bread and Flour Bill.
(3) Places of Worship (Enfranchisement) Amendment Bill.
(4) Guardianship of Infants Bill.
(5) Celluloid and Cinematograph Film Bill.

(Appendix)

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1.
May 30th, 1922.
SECRET.

(H.A.C. 111th Conclusions.)

CABINET.

COMMITTEE OF HOME AFFAIRS. 111.

Conclusions of a Meeting of the above Committee held in the Ministers' Conference Room, House of Commons, S.W., on Tuesday, May 9, 1922, at 4.15 p.m.

Present:

The Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, M.P., President of the Board of Education (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. S. Baldwin, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

The Right Hon. Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The Right Hon. Sir Alfred Mond, Bart., M.P., Minister of Health.

The Right Hon. Sir A. Mond, Bart., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The Right Hon. H. H. Godley, Third Parliamentary Counsel.

The following were also present:

Sir William Mitchell-Thomson, Bart., K.B.E., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Board of Trade. (For Conclusions 1 and 2.)

Sir A. V. Symonds, C.B., Ministry of Health. (For Conclusions 1 and 2.)

Mr. R. B. Howorth, Acting Secretary to the Committee.

Mr. A. Maxwell, Private Secretary, Home Office. (For Conclusion 5.)

Mr. F. H. Collier, C.B., Food Department, Board of Trade. (For Conclusions 1 and 2.)

Mr. T. St. Quintin Hill, Principal.

Sale of Tea Bill.

1. With reference to H.A.C. 99, Conclusion 3, the Committee had before them a Memorandum (C.P. 3011) by the President of the Board of Trade, covering a draft Bill relating to the sale of tea.

It was explained to the Committee that this Bill had been prepared to implement a pledge by the Government that legislation would be introduced to make permanent the provisions of the Sale of Food Order (made under the Ministry of Food Continuance Act) relating to the sale of tea by net weight. The Bill accordingly provided for the retail sale of tea by net weight in ounces or pounds, or in multiples of ounces or pounds. This requirement would be a protection to the consumer, was supported by representatives of the Co-operative movement and of labour, and was likely to raise little, if any, opposition in Parliament.

[3875]
The Solicitor-General referred to ancient legislation regarding the sale of tea, and expressed the opinion that so far as possible it was desirable in any new Bill to codify existing legislation. He proposed to communicate to the draftsman a note on the subject.

The Committee agreed—

(1.) To take note of the opinion expressed by the Solicitor-General that when Bills were being drafted the opportunity should be taken to codify existing legislation.

(2.) To approve, subject to the consent of the Government Whips, the introduction into Parliament of the Sale of Tea Bill.

Supply of Bread and Flour Bill.

2. With reference to H.A.C. 99, Conclusion 3, the Committee had before them two Memoranda by the President of the Board of Trade (C.P. 3911 and C.P. 3957), the former covering a draft Sale of Bread Bill and the latter covering a draft Supply of Bread and Flour Bill, which it was proposed to substitute for the draft Sale of Bread Bill. The scope of the Supply of Bread and Flour Bill was limited to two objects:—

(1.) The bringing of the provisions of the existing Bread Acts as to weight into conformity with modern requirements; and

(2.) The removal of the anomalous prohibition on the use of self-raising flour.

It was explained that the Bill would make permanent the provisions of the existing Sale of Food Order, in accordance with a pledge given by the Government. The effect of the Bill would be to bring English law into line with Scottish law, which since 1892 had required that in Scottish burghs bread (with the exception of rolls and fancy bread) should be sold by weight and that the weight should be stamped on the loaf.

Attention was drawn to representations made by Scottish Local Authorities, who desired that either fancy bread weighing over 12 oz. should be covered by the Bill or that a definition of "fancy bread" should be given in the Bill. The Scottish Local Authorities had also asked that a deputation should be received by the President of the Board of Trade and the Secretary for Scotland.

Attention was called by the Solicitor-General to certain provisions of "The London Bread Act, 1822," and the Bread Act of 1836 which required to be co-ordinated with the provisions of the present measure.

As regards Clauses 4 and 5 of the Bill, it was explained that these provisions were inserted to legalise the use of self-raising flour, which, under existing legislation, was illegal, although non-injurious to health.

The Committee agreed—

(1.) To request the draftsman to take note of the points raised in regard to existing legislation by the Solicitor-General.

(2.) That the representations made by the Scottish Local Authorities should be dealt with in the clause relating to Scotland, on lines to be agreed between the President of the Board of Trade and the Secretary for Scotland after the proposed deputation had been received.

(3.) To approve the introduction into Parliament, subject to the consent of the Government Whips, of the Supply of Bread and Flour Bill.
3. The Committee had under consideration a note by the Acting Secretary covering the Places of Worship (Enfranchisement) Amendment Bill in the form passed by the House of Lords on the second reading, Lord Knutsford’s explanatory note, and a letter from the Attorney-General on the subject (C.P. 3964).

The Attorney-General informed the Committee that “The Places of Worship Enfranchisement Bill, 1920,” enabled trustees of leasehold premises used as places of worship to convert their leaseholds into freeholds upon payment of compensation to the landlord. The only exceptions made in the Act of 1920 related to premises which had been acquired by certain specified public bodies, or by the owners, for the purposes of a railway, dock, or canal for navigation under an Act of Parliament. The object of the amending Bill was to extend this exception to premises owned by a Charity, provided that the Charity can prove to the satisfaction of the Charity Commissioners, or the Board of Education, that the premises are needed for the extension of the work of charity.

The Bill had received large support in the House of Lords, and it was understood that the Labour Party would not oppose it, and that there would be considerable support for it in the House of Commons.

The Committee agreed—

That, subject to the consent of the Government Whips, arrangements should be made for the Government to assume responsibility for the Places of Worship (Enfranchisement) Amendment Bill, in the form approved by the House of Lords.

4. With reference to H.A.C. 105, Minute 3, the Committee were informed by the Attorney-General that he had seen the representatives of the promoters of the Guardianship of Infants Bill, and found that the promoters adhered to the main principles on which the Bill was based. In these circumstances it would be very difficult to draft any measure which was likely to command general acceptance.

The Committee agreed—

To request the Attorney-General to interview the promoters of the Bill with a view, if possible, to some agreement being reached.

5. The Committee had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary (C.P. 3935) covering the draft Celluloid and Cinematograph Film Bill, the provisions of which are designed to minimise so far as possible fire risks in the case of raw celluloid stores, and the premises of persons who let out cinematograph films.

The Committee agreed—

That, subject to the consent of the Government Whips being obtained, the Home Secretary should be authorised to arrange for the introduction forthwith of the Celluloid and Cinematograph Film Bill in the House of Lords.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W. 1,
May 9, 1922.