MEETING of the Cabinet, to be held at No. 10, Downing Street, S.W.1., on WEDNESDAY, 14th November, 1923, at 11.0 a.m.

AGENDA.

1. AGRICULTURAL POLICY.


2. FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(To be raised by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs).

3. COMMITTEE ON IRISH AFFAIRS.

Consideration of recommendations on the following subjects:

(i) Assistance to Irish Loyalists.

(ii) Northern Ireland Land Bill.

(Reference: I.A.C/16th Conclusions) - (Circulated herewith).

See also I.A.C. 45. (To be circulated).

(Signed) M.P.A. HANKEY
Secretary, Cabinet.

S. Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1.

November 13, 1923.

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CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1., on WEDNESDAY, 14th NOVEMBER, 1923, at 11.0 a.m.

PRESENT :-

The Prime Minister (in the Chair),

The Rt. Hon.

The Marquess of Salisbury, K.G., G.C.V.O., G.C.B.,
Lord President of the Council.

The Rt. Hon.

E. Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P.,
Lord Privy Seal.

The Rt. Hon.

W. Bridgeman, M.P.,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Rt. Hon.

The Duke of Devonshire, K.G., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Rt. Hon.

Lord Robert Peel, G.B.E.,
Secretary of State for India.

The Rt. Hon.

Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame, K.C.B., M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

The Rt. Hon.

E. Wood, M.P.,
President of the Board of Education.

The Rt. Hon.

Sir Montague Barlow, K.B.E., M.P.,
Minister of Labour.

The Rt. Hon.

Sir L. Worthington-Evans, Bart., G.B.E., M.P.,
Postmaster-General.

The Rt. Hon.

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks, Bart., M.P.,
Minister of Health.

The Rt. Hon.

R.A. Sanders, Bart., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries.

The Rt. Hon.

Viscount Novar, G.C.M.G.,
Secretary for Scotland.

The Rt. Hon.

Viscount Cave, G.C.M.G.,
Lord Chancellor.

The Rt. Hon.

Neville Chamberlain, M.P.,
Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Most Hon.

The Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.B., G.G.I.E.,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Rt. Hon.

Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.B.,
G.C.V.O.,
Secretary of State for War.

The Rt. Hon.

Sir Samuel Hoare, Bart., M.G.,
M.P.,
Secretary of State for Air.

The Rt. Hon.

B..A. Sanders, Bart., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries.

Secretary.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1. on WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1923, at 11 a.m.

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS.

1. The Cabinet agreed —

That the date for the re-assembly of Parliament, to be inserted in the Order-in-Council dissolving Parliament, should be January 8th, 1924.
2. The Cabinet resumed their discussion on Agricultural Policy, having before them the same documents as at the previous meeting.

After considerable discussion, the Cabinet agreed—

(a) To adopt, as a basis of their Agricultural Policy at the forthcoming General Election, the main lines of the Report of the Cabinet Committee (Paper C.P. 456 (23)), that is to say:

(i) That the system of subsidy should take the form of a fixed sum at the rate of 30/-s per acre on all arable land:

(ii) That as regards wages, it should be announced that the main object of the subsidy is to prevent the increasing unemployment of agricultural labour and the consequent fall in wages, but in any case the subsidy will not be given to any farmer who pays a wage of less than 30/-s per week:

(iii) That as regards Wages Boards, members of the Government (if pressed) should state that in districts where wages rule above the minimum, it is confidently hoped and expected that the labourers will in the ordinary course obtain in their wages their share in the benefit of the subsidy. In this regard it rests with the farmers to prove in practice what they have so frequently maintained, — that Wages Boards are unnecessary for the purpose. But the Government must reserve the right, in case of necessity, to establish machinery to secure that a fair wage is paid:

(iv) That provision will have to be made to prevent agricultural rents being raised on account of the subsidy. There will have to be some provision for inspection as a check on bad farming.

(b) That the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries should have authority, in his speech at Cirencester the same day, to announce the above policy, and that the Prime Minister should announce it in the House of Commons on the following day.

(c) That, insomuch as the subsidy to Agriculture is to be furnished out of the proceeds of a Customs Tariff which will be imposed in Ulster as well as in Great Britain, it is essential to make some arrangement whereby Ulster will receive its appropriate share of the subsidy. But it will be for the Ulster Government.
to decide as to the application of the subsidy; e.g., they might prefer a reduction of Ulster’s contribution.
3. The Cabinet agreed --

That the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries should have authority to announce that the Government would put a Customs Duty on Malting Barley.
4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informed his colleagues that the French Government had asked for a special meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors to take place on the following day, Thursday, November 15th, to consider the question of the return of the Crown Prince to Germany, as well as the question of the resumption of military control, which they considered, in the circumstances, should be treated together. As regards the Crown Prince, the French proposal was to ask for his surrender to the Allied Governments as a war criminal. As regards the resumption of control, which had fallen into abeyance during the disturbances in Germany, the French Government had also formulated drastic demands. M. Cambon, on behalf of his Government, had already notified the Ambassadors' Conference that if satisfaction were not given by the German Government in both cases, sanctions must be exacted, either by the Allied Governments in concert, or, failing this, by the French alone (Paris telegrams Nos. 1004, 1005 and 1006, of November 12, 1923). They had suggested that if the sanctions were taken by all the Allied Governments, some port, such as Hamburg, might be occupied; if taken by the French alone, the sanction would probably take the form of the occupation of Frankfort.

The Cabinet felt that the interruption of military control was far more serious than the return of the Crown Prince. They were advised that the return of the Crown Prince was not specifically prohibited by the Treaty of Versailles, and they considered that to demand his surrender as a war criminal would result in giving him an importance in German eyes which at present he did not possess.
As regards military control, the Secretaries of State for War and Air got into touch, by telephone, with their respective Departments and ascertained that the last date on which control had been exercised was June 28th. On that date British and Italian officers had undertaken with success two inspections allotted to them, but in the case of eight inspections undertaken by French and Belgian officers the results had been a failure and the officers had been refused admission to certain premises for the purposes of inspection.

After considerable discussion, the Cabinet agreed —

(a) That the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should instruct the British Ambassador in Paris to support the French Government in bringing home to the German Government the risk which they ran of fomenting trouble in their own country and of disturbing the peace of Europe by having allowed the return of the Crown Prince. He should, however, make it clear that the British Government could not be a party to the proposed demand for the surrender of the Crown Prince as a war criminal. He should also be authorised to support representations to the Dutch Government as to their share of responsibility for any difficulties which may arise subsequently from this event.

As regards military control, Lord Crewe should be authorised to support a strong affirmation of the principle of control and inspection, as formulated in the first part of the draft French Note on this subject. He should further be authorised to propose that inspection should be undertaken for the present, on behalf of the Inter-Allied Commission of Control, by British and Italian officers only, provided that the responsible military authorities on the Commission of Control considered that this could be done without risk to the officers themselves.

As regards sanctions, whether in regard to the Crown Prince or military control, the Ambassador should be instructed to make clear that the British Government could not associate themselves with the Inter-Allied sanctions proposed by the French Government, and could not acquiesce in the taking of separate sanctions, either by the French Government alone or in conjunction with the Belgian Government:
(b) That the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should take the opportunity of an interview he was to have that afternoon with the German Ambassador, to make a strong representation as to the necessity of Germany carrying out her obligations under the Treaty and rendering possible a re-commencement of inspection.
5. The Cabinet had before them the following documents:

(i) The Conclusions of the Cabinet Committee on Irish Affairs, of November 12, 1923 (I.A.O. 11th Conclusions);

(ii) A Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council, suggesting certain Resolutions for consideration by the Cabinet in regard to the Southern Irish Loyalists' claims (C.P.-458 (23));

(iii) A Memorandum by the Home Secretary covering the draft of the Northern Ireland Land Bill (I.A.O.-45).

After considerable discussion, the Cabinet agreed —

(a) To approve the following Resolutions, based on the Resolutions circulated by the Lord President of the Council:

(i) That the Chancellor of the Exchequer be authorised to make arrangements with Lord Eustace Percy to extend the powers of his Committee so as to enable it to meet hard cases not at present sufficiently covered;

(ii) That the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Eustace Percy should draft for the Prime Minister a statement for issue to candidates at the forthcoming General Election;

(iii) That the Cabinet reiterate their adhesion to Mr Churchill's pledge;

(iv) That the Cabinet record their opinion that, in any negotiations for giving priority to an Irish Loan, regard should be had to the desirability of pressing the Irish Free State Government to make satisfactory arrangements respecting claims for compensation;

(v) That the Cabinet recognises that the British Government is under an obligation to ask Parliament to guarantee Irish Land Bonds unconditionally, and that the Secretary of State should be authorised to arrange with the Minister of Finance, after consultation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the date and manner in which the guarantee should be given:

(b) The following Resolution, suggested by the Lord President of the Council, was reserved for consideration at the next Cabinet meeting:
"That in the settlement of Irish Land Purchase claims, the Cabinet recognises
that there is an obligation upon the British Government, taking everything
into account, to see that this should be not less favourable to the owners in
Southern Ireland than is finally considered just by the Imperial Parliament
in the case of the owners in Northern Ireland".
6. The Chancellor of the Exchequer informed his colleagues that he was advised by the Treasury that there was no fund from which the proposed purchase could be made in this country of articles to the value of £100,000, as approved by the Cabinet at the previous meeting, for relief in Japan.

The suggestion was made that the necessary purchase could be made from the funds allotted to Lord St. David's Committee if an instruction were given to that effect and if the funds of the Committee were not already committed elsewhere.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the Chancellor of the Exchequer should look further into this proposal.
7. The Secretary of State for War asked the Cabinet to take note that he had arrived at an agreement with the Financial Secretary to the Treasury and the Secretary of State for India in regard to the third Cavalry Regiment for India.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1,

November 14, 1923.