CABINET 7 (24).

Meeting of the Cabinet, to be held at No. 10, Downing Street, S.W. 1, on WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23rd, 1924, at 4 p.m.

AGENDA.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CABINET COMMITTEES.
   (e.g. Committee of Home Affairs.
        Unemployment Committee.
        Committee on Irish Affairs.
        Committee on Housing.
        Committee on Agricultural Policy.)

2. FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.
   (To invite the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Secretary for Scotland to report and advise the Cabinet at an early date.)

3. THE STRIKE ON THE RAILWAYS.
   (a) To ask the Ministers principally concerned to report on the latest information, more particularly in regard to maintenance of supplies.
   (b) To invite some Minister to become definitely responsible for all arrangements connected with the maintenance of supplies.

4. TO ASK THE MINISTERS MAINLY CONCERNED TO EXAMINE AND REPORT AT AN EARLY DATE ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OF INTELLIGENCE:
   Anglo-Persian Oil Company
   (Chancellor of the Exchequer,
    The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
    The President of the Board of Trade,
    The First Lord of the Admiralty.)

   British Dyes.
   (The Chancellor of the Exchequer,
    The President of the Board of Trade.)

   (Contd.)
The Heads of the three Service Departments.
The Lord President of the Council, as Head of the Industrial Research Department.)

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

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1,
January 23, 1924.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street on WEDNESDAY, 23rd. JANUARY, 1924 at 4 p.m.

PRESENT:
The Right Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P.
Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. (in the Chair).

The Right Hon.

The Right Hon.
J. R. Clynes, M.P.
Lord Privy Seal.

The Right Hon.
A. Henderson, Secretary of State for Home Affairs.

The Right Hon.
Stephen Walsh, M.P.
Secretary of State for War.

Brig.-Gen. The Right Hon.
C. B. Thomson, C.B.E., D.S.O., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon.
Sidney Webb, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

The Right Hon.
Charles Trevelyan, M.P., President of the Board of Education.

The Right Hon.
Tom Shaw, C.B.E., M.P., Minister of Labour.

The Right Hon.
Vernon Hartshorn, O.J.E., M.P.
Postmaster-General

The Right Hon.

Sir M. P. A. Hankey, G.C.B. Secretary.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet, held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1, on WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1924, at 4 p.m.

I. The Prime Minister asked his colleagues to make every effort to secure punctuality in regard to Meetings of the Cabinet.

After hearing from the Prime Minister a short summary of the Secretarial arrangements under the previous Government, the Cabinet agreed —

(a) To adopt the principle of a Cabinet Secretary:

(b) That the Secretary should circulate a Memorandum in regard to his instructions as to procedure under recent Government:

(c) That, for the present, the Secretary should record Conclusions only, with such explanatory notes as are essential to render the Conclusions intelligible:

(d) That the Secretary should circulate the Conclusions in draft as soon as possible after the Meetings, and Ministers should return the draft with any necessary corrections, which should be embodied in a final draft to be submitted to the Prime Minister for approval:

(e) That Ministers should be responsible for making such communication as they deem necessary to their respective Departments in regard to the Conclusions of the Cabinet:

(f) That, in order to ensure that a correct list of the members present at Meetings of the Cabinet is available to the Press at the earliest possible moment, the Secretary should continue the previous practice of issuing the list at each Meeting as soon as the whole Cabinet has assembled.
2. After hearing from the Prime Minister the composition and some particulars as to the sphere of activity of the Cabinet Committee of Home Affairs under recent Governments, the Cabinet agreed —

(a) That the Prime Minister should make further enquiries from the Secretary in regard to the scope of the work of the Committee of Home Affairs, with a view to a decision being taken later by the Cabinet as to whether it should be re-established, and, if so, what the composition of the Committee should be:

(b) That, in his Memorandum in regard to Cabinet Procedure (see Conclusion 1 (b) above) the Secretary should give details as to the work of the Committee of Home Affairs under the late Government, including a list of subjects discussed by the Committee.
3. The Cabinet agreed —

(a) That a Committee, composed as follows:—

- Mr Sidney Webb (President of the Board of Trade) (in the Chair).
- Mr Clynes (Lord Privy Seal)
- Mr Philip Snowden (Chancellor of the Exchequer)
- Mr Tom Shaw (Minister of Labour)
- Miss Margaret Bondfield (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Ministry of Labour)
- Mr John Wheatley (Minister of Health)
- Mr Charles Trevelyan (Minister of Education)
- Mr Walter R. Smith (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Board of Agriculture)
- Mr James Stewart (Under Secretary of Health for Scotland),
- other Ministers, such as the Heads of the Service Departments, being invited to attend for consultation when the business rendered it desirable,

with Mr R.B. Howorth as Secretary,

should meet at once, with power to appoint Sub-Committees in order to investigate all aspects of the question of Unemployment and the connected question of Housing, and to make definite recommendations to the Cabinet as to what schemes for dealing with these subjects are practicable and desirable:

(b) That the Ministers at the head of all Departments which are in a position to make any contribution on the subject should furnish information to the Committee as to existing or possible schemes in regard to the questions before the Committee: Ministers' reports to be forwarded as soon as possible to the Secretary, at 2, Whitehall Gardens, for circulation to the Committee.

(NOTE: In all Departments where facilities exist, the Memoranda should be reproduced in the Departments, 50 copies being forwarded to the Secretary.)
4. The Cabinet agreed —

(a) That a Committee, composed as follows:—

Mr Noel Buxton (Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries) (in the Chair),
Lord Parmoor (Lord President of the Council)
Sir Sydney Olivier (Secretary of State for India)
Mr Adamson (Secretary for Scotland)

should meet at once to inquire into the position of Agriculture, with full discretion to consult all the agricultural and urban interests concerned in such manner as they deem most convenient, and to make recommendations to the Cabinet:

(b) That the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be consulted as to the financial aspects of any recommendations before their submission to the Cabinet:

(c) That the Minister of Health should be consulted in regard to any proposals affecting rating before they are submitted to the Cabinet; any other Departments affected being consulted in the same manner.
5. The Cabinet agreed —

(a) That the various questions raised by ex-Servicemen should be enquired into at once:

(b) To take note that the Prime Minister had already instructed the Minister of Pensions to examine these questions in a sympathetic spirit and to take without delay any administrative measures within the power of his Department to mitigate the grievances and deal sympathetically with ex-Servicemen, subject to no additional expenditure being incurred without Treasury sanction:

(c) That the Minister of Pensions should be asked to prepare, for early consideration by the Cabinet, a Memorandum formulating the various questions of principle as well as of detail which require investigation, and containing all possible information and advice to the Cabinet as to the most convenient method of enquiry.
6. The Cabinet agreed —

That, with a view to an announcement by the Prime Minister of the Government's policy on the re-assembly of Parliament, Ministers, after consultation with their respective Departments, should prepare a list of measures which they would like to introduce. These lists should be forwarded to the Secretary of the Cabinet as soon as possible for circulation with a view to early consideration by the Cabinet, when the Prime Minister would make his proposals as to the policy to be announced.
The Cabinet agreed —

That the Chancellor of the Exchequer should examine the Estimates of the various Departments, with a view to making his proposals on the subject to the Cabinet at an early date.
The Cabinet invited the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Secretary for Scotland to examine the situation in regard to foot-and-mouth disease,

(Previous Reference: including the question of bacteriological and other forms of research, with a view to early report to the Cabinet.)
9. After hearing from the Home Secretary a report on the present position in regard to milk, food, coal supplies, and other matters arising out of the strike on the railways, the Cabinet agreed —

(a) That the Home Secretary should keep the Cabinet informed as to all developments:

(b) That no Proclamation under the Emergency Powers Act should be issued without the approval of the Cabinet:

(c) That if the Home Secretary should deem the situation serious, he should consult the Prime Minister, who would then decide as to whether an emergency Meeting of the Cabinet should be held.
10. The Cabinet were informed that a number of photographers were assembled in Downing Street and had asked to be allowed to take a flashlight photograph of the Cabinet in the outer hall on the conclusion of the Meeting.

After consideration, the Cabinet agreed —

That a reply should be sent to the effect that the Cabinet were exceedingly obliged to the photographers, but that they regretted they were unable to accede to their request.
11. The Cabinet agreed —

That the Chancellor of the Exchequer should circulate, for consideration by the Cabinet, a Memorandum on the subject of the recent proposals for the sale of the British Government's shares in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and for the amalgamation of that Company with other Companies, and that any other Ministers whose Departments were concerned (such as the Board of Trade, the Foreign Office and the Admiralty) should, at their discretion, circulate their views on the receipt of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Memorandum.
12. The Cabinet agreed —

(a) That the President of the Board of Trade should circulate a report in regard to the present position of the British Dyestuffs Corporation:

(b) That the Ministers at the head of other Departments concerned, such as the Treasury, the Admiralty, the War Office, the Air Ministry and the Department of Industrial Research (Lord President of the Council), should, at their discretion, circulate their views on receipt of the Memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade.
13. The Prime Minister invited the Postmaster-General to make immediate enquiry into the question of Broadcasting and to report to the Cabinet on the subject.
14. The Prime Minister invited the Postmaster-General to examine into the present position in regard to the Imperial Wireless System and the negotiations with the Marconi Company, with a view to an early report to the Cabinet in the subject.

Previous Reference: Cabinet 23 (23), Conclusion 4(d).
15. The Prime Minister invited his colleagues to consider, with a view to early discussion at the Cabinet, the question of what attitude the Government should take on the re-assembly of Parliament in regard to the appointment of the Chairman of Ways and Means and the Deputy Chairman, and, more particularly, whether it might not be desirable that the holders of these offices should be appointed by the House of Commons on grounds of their personal fitness for the post rather than for Party reasons.
16. The Cabinet agreed, in accordance with the procedure of the late Government,

That the Secretary of State for the Colonies should see Mr Cosgrave, the President of the Irish Free State, and Sir James Craig, the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, who would come to London for the purpose, on the question of the boundary between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies was asked to keep in touch with the Home Secretary on the subject, and to report the results of his negotiations to the Cabinet.
17. The Cabinet agreed --

That the question of the removal of the barrier erected at the entrance to Downing Street should be discussed between the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary.
18. After hearing from the Home Secretary a report as to the discussion of the question of salaries at a recent Party Meeting, and from the Lord Chancellor particulars of arrangements he had already made for the return to the Exchequer of a large part of his salary, the Cabinet agreed—

That the question of the salaries of Ministers, including the question of equalisation, should be discussed at an early meeting of the Cabinet.
FOREIGN POLICY. 19. The Secretary was instructed to place the question of Russia on the list of questions for early consideration by the Cabinet.

(Previous Reference: Cabinet 49 (23), Conclusion 4.)
20. The Cabinet agreed —

To meet again on Monday, January 28th, 1924, at 3 p.m.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1,
January 24, 1924.