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S E C R E T.

Copy No.

C A B I N E T 7 (31).

Meeting of the Cabinet to be held at No. 10,  
Downing Street, S.W.1., on FRIDAY, 16th  
January, 1931, at 5.0 p.m.

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A G E N D U M.

CONFERENCE ON THE VOLUNTARY SCHOOL QUESTION.

(Reference Cabinet 6 (31) Conclusion 3).

Memorandum by the President of the Board of  
Education, the Minister of Health, and the  
First Commissioner of Works.

(C.P. 11 (31) - circulated herewith).

(Signed) M.P.A. HANKEY,

Secretary, Cabinet.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1.

16th January, 1931.

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C A B I N E T 7 (31).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at  
10, Downing Street, S.W.1., on FRIDAY, 16th  
January, 1931, at 5.0 p.m.

...

PRESENT:-

The Right Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P.,  
Prime Minister. (In the Chair).

The Right Hon.  
Philip Snowden, M.P.,  
Chancellor of the  
Exchequer.

The Right Hon.  
Lord Passfield,  
Secretary of State for  
the Colonies.

The Right Hon.  
Lord Parmoor of Frieth,  
K.C.V.O., K.C., Lord  
President of the Council.

✓ The Right Hon.  
W. Wedgwood Benn, D.S.O.,  
D.F.C., M.P., Secretary of  
State for India.

The Right Hon.  
Tom Shaw, G.B.E., M.P.,  
Secretary of State for  
War.

The Right Hon.  
Lord Amulree, G.B.E., K.C.,  
Secretary of State for  
Air.

The Right Hon.  
Vernon Hartshorn, O.B.E.,  
M.P., Lord Privy Seal.

The Right Hon.  
Arthur Greenwood, M.P.,  
Minister of Health.

The Right Hon.  
Margaret Bondfield, M.P.,  
Minister of Labour.

The Right Hon.  
Christopher Addison, M.P.,  
Minister of Agriculture  
and Fisheries.

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

The Right Hon.  
W. Graham, M.P.,  
President of the  
Board of Trade.

The Right Hon.  
A.V. Alexander, M.P.,  
First Lord of the  
Admiralty.

The Right Hon.  
George Lansbury, M.P.,  
First Commissioner of  
Works.

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THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT:-

✓ Mr. Thomas Kennedy, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary  
to the Treasury and  
Chief Whip.

✓ For the last part of the Meeting only.

Colonel Sir M.P.A. Hankey, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., ..... Secretary.

## EDUCATION.

The Voluntary  
Schools Problem.

(Previous  
Reference:  
Cabinet 6  
(31), Con-  
clusion 3.)

F.R.

8(31)3.

7  
7A(31)1.

1. The Cabinet had before them a Joint Memorandum by the President of the Board of Education, the Minister of Health and the First Commissioner of Works (C.P.-11 (31)) reporting the results of the Conference on the Voluntary Schools Problem. In this Memorandum it was stated that finally it appeared that the representatives of the Church of England and the Roman Catholics were prepared to accept the proposals on behalf of their respective Churches. The representatives of the Local Authorities and of the Teachers also were prepared to agree, though they could not to the same extent commit their organisations. The Nonconformists remained dissatisfied. A copy of the proposals, as amended in the course of the Conference, was appended to the Joint Memorandum (See Appendix). The three Ministers recommended that legislation should be undertaken on the lines of these proposals. As a definite announcement would have to be made by the President of the Board of Education on Wednesday, January 21st, they asked for a decision by the Cabinet.

In the course of a long discussion it was recalled that the policy announced by the Labour Party before they came into office was that they would endeavour to secure a settlement of the Voluntary School problem and would assemble a Conference for that purpose. There had been a general understanding that if agreement were reached they would implement it. It was pointed out, however, that up to the present time agreement had not been reached as the Nonconformists remained dissatisfied.

After discussing the matter at full length, both in its educational and political aspects, the Cabinet agreed --

- (a) To proceed with the Education (School Attendance) Bill, 1930, in the House of Commons on Wednesday, January 21st, as already arranged:
- (b) That, unless agreement has been reached in the meantime, the President of the Board of Education should inform the House of Commons during the Debate that negotiations with the various interests concerned in the Voluntary School question are being continued; that agreement has not yet been reached; and that pending such agreement the Government are unwilling to announce their policy:
- (c) That the President of the Board of Education should take such steps as he might deem best to ascertain from leading Nonconformists their objections to the proposals appended to C.P.-11 (31) and how they could be met, with a view to the re-assembly of the chief interests in this question if this is considered necessary and advisable:
- (d) That a further Meeting of the Cabinet should take place on MONDAY, JANUARY 19th, at 10, Downing Street, at 5 p.m. to receive a report on the situation.

. . .

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1,

January 16, 1931.

APPENDIX.

AMENDED PROPOSALS.

(The underlined passages represent amendments, made at the Conference, to the proposals in C.P. 418(30), which were placed before the Conference as a basis of discussion.

1. Local Education Authorities may make arrangements with Managers of Non-provided Schools which are required for purposes of re-organisation, or for raising the school leaving age.

2. Associations of schools may be constituted in the area of any Local Education Authority representative of the Managers of the schools of any particular Denomination and of its Church Authorities. Such Associations may be authorized to make agreements under this Section on behalf of their constituent Managers and to act for the Managers in every other respect under this Act if so desired by the Managers.

3. Such agreements are to be made between Local Education Authorities on the one hand, and, on the other, Associations of Schools or Bodies of Managers of individual schools. Throughout the proposals the word "Managers" means either Associations of Schools or individual Bodies of Managers.

4. Such agreements may be altered if both parties so agree.

5. Schools which come within an agreement shall be aided towards the necessary improvements or re-conditioning to the extent in the original agreement of not less than 50 per cent. and not more than 75 per cent. of the cost by the Local Education Authority.

6. The Local Authority shall have power to make future improvements, and shall be able to pay the whole or such proportion of the cost as may be agreed in each case. But

the duty of the managers to keep the Schoolhouse in repair remains unaffected.

7. The school cannot be closed without the consent of the Local Education Authority.

8. The Teachers are to be in the employment of the Local Education Authority and are to be appointed and dismissed by them.

9. The agreement shall lay down how many teachers shall be reserved, as having religious qualifications. The unreserved teachers shall be appointed as in Provided Schools. But the agreements shall permit a variety of arrangements as to the methods of appointing the reserved teachers.

10. The agreement may specify alternatively -

either (a) that the Local Education Authority shall appoint the reserved teacher provided that he possesses some certificate of competence or other qualification in relation to religious teaching as agreed on between the Local Education Authority and the Managers;

or (b) that the Local Education Authority shall appoint the reserved teacher, provided that the Managers are satisfied as to his fitness and his competence to give the required religious instruction;

or (c) that the Managers may have the right of recommending a teacher for appointment from a short list of not less than five applications selected by the Authority after consultation with the Managers; on the understanding that the Local Education Authority do not refuse to appoint the recommended teacher on grounds solely connected with his religious suitability and competence.

11. Reserved teachers are to be dismissable by the Local Education Authority. But the Managers may request the transfer or removal on religious grounds.

12. In case of a serious deadlock between the Managers and the Local Education Authority as to either appointment or dismissal, the matter shall be decided by an arbitrator appointed by the Board of Education, assisted by two assessors - one appointed by the Local Education Authority, the other by the Bishop of the Denomination to which the school belongs.

13. In any area where there is no effective choice of schools or where children over or under the age of eleven years are transferred from a school provided by the Local Education Authority to a school not so provided, or from a non-provided school of one denomination to a non-provided school of another denomination -

- (a) provision shall be made for religious teaching to be given in the school to which such children are transferred upon the syllabus (if any) prescribed or authorised by the Local Education Authority for use in schools provided by them.

Nothing in this Act shall prevent the giving of Special religious instruction under the provisions of Section 29 (5) (c) of the Education Act, 1921.

- (b) any child attending the school may be withdrawn from it during the time of religious instruction if -
- (i) his parent so desires:
  - (ii) the Local Authority are satisfied that arrangements have been made for him to attend religious instruction elsewhere.

14. The agreement may stipulate that religious teaching according to an agreed syllabus shall be obligatory in the school.

P. M. says the  
 20 Cabinet Meeting, but  
 just a discussion between  
 certain Ministers. Then  
 will refer to 20  
 minutes, though Stanley  
 says he has  
 printed words of the  
 discussion.

1796 — 201.