Meeting of the Cabinet to be held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1., on WEDNESDAY, February 13th, 1931, at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA.

1. FOREIGN AFFAIRS. (If required).

2. UNEMPLOYMENT. (If required).

3. THE COTTON INDUSTRY.
   (Reference Cabinet 13 (31), Conclusion 8).
   Memorandum by the Home Secretary and the President of the Board of Trade.
   (C.P. 41 (31) - already circulated).

4. TIN RESTRICTION. (IF READY).
   (Reference Cabinet 13 (31) Conclusion 7).
   Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.
   (C.P. 7 (31) - already circulated).
   Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.
   (C.P. 34 (31) - already circulated).

5. OIL FUEL RESERVE.
   Note by the First Lord of the Admiralty covering memorandum by the Naval Staff.
   (C.P. 51 (31) - circulated herewith).

6. QUESTION OF THE REVISION OF THE COST OF LIVING INDEX NUMBER.
   (C.P. 44 (31) - already circulated).
   Extract from 11th Conclusions of the Economic Advisory Council.
   (C.P. 44-A (31) - already circulated).
7. NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN.

(Reference Cabinet 11 (31) Conclusion 11).

Memorandum by the Home Secretary.
(C.P. 13 (31) - already circulated).

Memorandum by the Home Secretary.
(C.P. 45 (31) - already circulated).

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
(C.P. 53 (31) - to be circulated).

8. TITLE TO PENSION UNDER THE CONTRIBUTORY PENSIONS ACT, 1939.

Memorandum by the Minister of Health.
(C.P. 39 (31) - already circulated).

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland.
(C.P. 47 (31) - already circulated).

9. CINEMAS - SUNDAY PERFORMANCES.

(Reference Cabinet 13 (31) Conclusion 12).

Memorandum by the Home Secretary.
(C.P. 48 (31) - already circulated).

TO TAKE NOTE OF:

10. EDUCATION (SCHOOL ATTENDANCE) BILL.

Memorandum by the President, Board of Education.
(C.P. 50 (31) - circulated herewith).

11. PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS.

For Friday, February 20th.

(i) Wills and Intestacies (Family Maintenance) Bill.
(ii) Solicitors Bill.
(iii) Hire Purchase Bill.
(iv) Road Traffic Act, 1930 (amendment) Bill.

For Friday, February 27th.

(i) The Live Stock Clubs Bill.
(ii) The Highway Authorities (Acquisition of Land) Bill.
(iii) The Sharing-out Clubs (Regulation) Bill.

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

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1.
February 17th, 1931.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1., on Wednesday, 18th February, 1931, at 10.30 a.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. J.H. Thomas, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. Lord Sankey, G.B.E.,
Lord Chancellor.

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

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

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

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

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

The Right Hon. William Adanson, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Scotland.

The Right Hon. Arthur Henderson, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

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

The Right Hon. J.R. Clynes, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Home Affairs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. The Cabinet discussed briefly the arrangements for speakers in the Debate on the Second Reading of the Unemployment Insurance Bill. It was arranged that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour should speak first for the Government, that the Minister of Labour should wind up, and that the Lord Privy Seal should be available to take part in the Debate if necessary.
The Prime Minister informed his colleagues that he understood that a request was likely to be made from the Opposition side for two days of Parliamentary time for Debates on India, one on the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, and the other on the Round-Table Conference.

There was general agreement that a Debate on the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission was hardly justified at the present time and in the present congested state of Parliamentary business.
3. The Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary and the President of the Board of Trade (C.P. 41 (31)) covering a detailed Memorandum prepared in the Office of the Chief Industrial Adviser on the subject of the re-organisation of the industry. The first part of this latter Memorandum indicated in broad outline the steps that have been taken in Lancashire since the publication of the Government Cotton Report; the second part consisted of notes indicating the position that had been reached in regard to the application to the Cotton Industry of the recommendations in the Report.

In the course of the discussion a tribute was paid to the value of the above Report.

Various suggestions were made during the discussion, including a proposal that one or more persons should be appointed to draw up a definite scheme for the re-organisation of the Cotton Industry on the lines of the Cotton Report; that for this purpose the person or persons concerned should be sent to Lancashire, to remain there until the plan was worked out; and that a meeting should be held at which the Prime Minister could make a personal appeal for cooperation between the various parties concerned in re-organisation. The names of persons who might be suitable for working out the plan of re-organisation in consultation with the interests concerned were discussed.

The Cabinet, who were impressed with the importance of pushing on rapidly in this matter, agreed —

That the Home Secretary and the President of the Board of Trade, when meeting representatives of the Cotton Industry the same afternoon, should make clear to them the determination of the Government to expedite the
re-organisation of the Cotton Industry, and should have authority to discuss with them the best means for carrying out their intention and the most suitable person or persons to be employed.
4. The President of the Board of Trade reported that he had now studied the Bruce-Gardner Report on the re-organisation of the Iron and Steel Industry, which was a very bulky document.

In the course of the discussion the question was raised as to whether, in view of the extensive leakages that had occurred, the Report of the Committee of the Economic Advisory Council on the Iron and Steel Industry (C.P.-189 (30)) should not now be made public. No decision was taken, but in this connection the President of the Board of Trade undertook to send to the Secretary of State for War, in the original, the German pamphlet that had been published containing extracts from the Report.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the President of the Board of Trade should circulate a summary of the Bruce-Gardner Report, which would be placed on the Agenda Paper for their next Meeting.
5. In addition to the two Memoranda by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (C.P.-7 (31) and C.P.-34 (31)) on the subject of Tin Restriction, which had been considered at the Meeting referred to in the margin, the Cabinet had before them the Report of the Committee appointed at the same Meeting to consider the question in its wider aspects (C.P.-46 (31)). After careful examination the Committee were fully satisfied with the practicability of the scheme of Tin Restriction particularised in the Memoranda by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and had made the following recommendation to the Cabinet:

"To authorise the Secretary of State for the Colonies to announce publicly that His Majesty's Government have approved the Tin Restriction scheme in principle, subject to his being satisfied as to details of the scheme after negotiations with Representatives of the Netherlands and Bolivian Governments, and on the definite understanding that the scheme is controlled by Representatives of the four Governments concerned."

The Cabinet agreed —

(a) To adopt the above recommendation:

(b) That an announcement should be made by Question and Answer in the House of Commons, and that in framing the reply the Secretary of State for the Colonies should be authorised to make clear that the interests of consumers had been taken into full consideration in the decision to approve the scheme.
6. The Cabinet had before them a Note by the First Lord of the Admiralty (C.P.-51 (31)) covering a Memorandum by the First Sea Lord expressing the anxiety of the Sea Lords of the Admiralty in regard to the present situation as to the oil fuel reserve. Attached to the First Sea Lord's Memorandum was a detailed Memorandum on the oil situation as it affects the Fleet. It was explained in the covering Note that the Memorandum was circulated with the object of placing on record the view of the Sea Lords on the omission from the Navy Estimates of any provision for adding to the oil fuel reserve.

The First Lord of the Admiralty informed his colleagues that recent experiments had shown that oil produced from coal could be used for Fleet purposes, but not at an economic price.

The Cabinet took note of the views of the Sea Lords of the Admiralty as set forth in C.P.-51 (31).
COST-OF-LIVING INDEX.

7. The Cabinet had before them the following documents relating to the revision of the cost-of-living index-number:—

The Report of a Committee of the Economic Advisory Council (C.P.-44 (31)) containing a recommendation that a revised cost-of-living index-number should be established as soon as practicable and that a new series of index numbers should be compiled and issued on the new basis, as well as detailed suggestions for carrying out the proposal:

An Extract from the Conclusions of the Economic Advisory Council (C.P.-44A (31)) containing the following recommendations:—

(a) That His Majesty's Government should, in the first instance, discuss the Committee's recommendations confidentially with the Trades Union Congress General Council and the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations; and

(b) That, pending such consultation, the Report should not be published.

The suggestion was made that the present moment was unfavourable for making any announcement on this question, as it was likely to lead to fresh negotiations between employers and Trades Unions, which might provide a disturbing element in industry.

The Cabinet were informed, however, that the existence of this Report was known outside, and that Questions were being asked on the subject in Parliament.

The Cabinet agreed —

To defer the question for the present.
8. The Cabinet had before them the following documents relating to Nationality of Married Women:

A Memorandum by the Home Secretary (C.P.-45 (31)) prepared after studying the events that had occurred at the recent meeting of the Council of the League of Nations at Geneva on the subject. The Home Secretary asked that the Cabinet should now take into consideration the proposals he had made in an earlier Memorandum (C.P.-13 (31)) to the effect that the Government should give no further facilities for the Nationality of Married Women Bill, introduced by the late Dr. Bentham, but should announce its intention of introducing at some future date a Bill to carry out the policy set forth in his Memorandum and reproduced in the Conclusions of the Cabinet mentioned in the margin:

A Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (C.P.-53 (31)), in reply to the above, stating that the question now seemed to have been opened up in a way that was not contemplated when the late Dr. Bentham's Bill was last before the House, and that to proceed in the manner suggested by the Home Secretary would probably arouse criticism from the Women's Organisations both in this and other countries. The Conclusions of the Imperial Conference would undoubtedly prevent our going as far as the provisions contained in the late Dr. Bentham's Bill, and the question would certainly be the subject of debate in the next Assembly of the League. In these circumstances two courses appeared to be open:—

(i) Having regard to other claims upon Parliamentary time, to try to dispose of Dr. Bentham's Bill on the ground that a new situation has been created by the decision to place the matter on the Agenda of the next Assembly;

(ii) For the Home Secretary to ascertain the views of the women's organisations in this country before proceeding further with the Bill.
The Home Secretary, while not opposing the first of the proposals of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was averse from any initiative being taken by the Government on the second proposal. It was suggested to him that if the Women's Organisations pressed for him to receive them his attitude towards them should be in accordance with the decision set forth below.

The Cabinet agreed —

That when the late Dr. Bentham's Bill reached the Standing Committee, the Home Secretary should announce the new situation that had arisen and try and dispose of the Bill on these grounds.
9. The Cabinet had before them the following documents relating to title to Widows' Pension under the Contributory Pensions Act, 1929:

A Memorandum by the Minister of Health (C.P.-39 (31)) on the Position of Widows whose husbands had been incapable of work for more than three years before death, which had been affected by a High Court decision in the case of Jennings & Ors. v. The Minister of Health. The result of the Judgment was to leave it open to the Referees, as a matter of law, either to admit or reject certain claims for which pension would have been awarded if the view of the Ministry of Health had prevailed. As the position, as the result of this Judgment, differed from what the Minister of Health stated to be the original intention of the Act, the Memorandum contained a suggestion that a one-clause Bill should be introduced to rectify the matter:

A Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland (C.P.-47 (31)) expressing agreement with the above proposal.

In explaining the case in detail, the Minister of Health laid stress on the fact that 2,600 claims had been held over for decision by the Department, nearly all of which would have to be rejected. There were also some thousands of cases in which awards had been made in accordance with the line taken by the Ministry of Health, and which had now become illegal. If nothing were done there appeared no alternative to recovering the payments that had been made.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the Minister of Health should sound the Leaders of the Opposition Parties with a view to facilitating the passage of a Bill, as proposed in his Memorandum, and should report the result to the Cabinet at their next Meeting.
CINEMAS.

Sunday Performances.

Sabbath Day Observance.

(Previous Reference: Cabinet 13 (31), Conclusion 12.)

F.R. 15(31).

10. The Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary (C.P.-48 (31)) on the difficult situation which had arisen out of the recent Judgment of the Courts on the question of the Sunday opening of cinemas and other places of entertainment. The effect of this Judgment was, briefly, that the Sunday Observance Act, 1780, was still fully in force and that no person or authority had any power to grant exemption from, or to give any consent to, the breach of its provisions. As the result it was now illegal to open for public entertainment or amusement on Sundays any house, room or other place to which persons are admitted by payment of money or by tickets sold for money. In the view of the Home Secretary some solution of the difficulty must be found without delay. His proposal was for the Government to introduce legislation based on the following principles:—

(i) The question whether Sunday entertainments should be allowed to be left to the decision of the local Licensing Authority:

(ii) The Licensing Authority should be required to satisfy itself that there is a general demand in the area for the opening of the premises on Sunday and that such opening would be in the public interest:

(iii) The element of private gain should, as far as possible, be eliminated, receipts in excess of specified expenditure being given to local or national charities approved by the Licensing Authorities:

(iv) Safeguards against the employment of persons for more than six days a week in a place of entertainment:

(v) The Licensing Authorities to be entitled to impose other conditions tending on the hours of opening and the character of the entertainment.

The Home Secretary further suggested that before introducing such legislation the Leaders of the Opposition Parties should be consulted.
In the course of the discussion the Cabinet were informed that the theatrical profession, while perhaps not anxious to open the theatres on Sundays, nevertheless objected strongly to the privileged position occupied by the cinemas, which, since the introduction of the "talkie" films, practically produced stage plays. The Cabinet were also reminded that halls and theatres were frequently engaged for political meetings. Sometimes a charge was made for admission. Sometimes, also, these meetings included musical performances and other entertainment, although in some places the Local Authorities would not allow this.

The Cabinet agreed —

(a) That the Law Officers of the Crown should be asked, in consultation with the Home Office, to advise the Cabinet as to what in fact was the present position of the law resulting from the recent Judgment, and that the Home Secretary should, inter alia, invite their particular attention to the various forms of political meetings now held on Sundays in different parts of the country, with a view to obtaining an opinion as to whether they are rendered unlawful:

(b) That the Home Secretary should enter into consultation with the leaders of the Opposition Parties in the House of Commons and should inform them that the general intention of the Government was to restore the status quo before the recent Judgment; he should discuss the whole matter, including the conditions proposed in his Memorandum, and should intimate that the Cabinet are rather concerned about the position of theatres on Sundays, and should ascertain their view:

(c) That the Home Secretary should report the result of his enquiries at the next Meeting of the Cabinet.
The Cabinet took note of a Memorandum by the President of the Board of Education (O.P.-50 (31)) stating that the Cabinet Committee appointed to negotiate a settlement of the Voluntary School question had met a Deputation from the Executive of the National Council of the Free Churches, when a series of resolutions had been discussed. It appeared eventually that nothing would content the Free Churchmen except the Church conceding the appointment of the Head Teacher in Voluntary Schools aided under agreements. The Committee had met afterwards and had decided to ask that on Tuesday next Lord Ponsonby should urge the House of Lords to give the Education Bill a Second Reading, in order to allow time for negotiation to be continued between the Education Authorities and the Churches.

The Cabinet were informed that there was every reason to believe that the Education (School Attendance) Bill would be thrown out by the House of Lords at the Second Reading the same afternoon.

Discussion then took place as to what the further action of the Government should be.

The Cabinet agreed —

That if the Bill were rejected by the House of Lords the Government should announce in the House of Commons their intention to pass it under the Parliament Act and that as the clause into which Mr Scurr's amendment had been incorporated would remain as part of the Act as finally passed, they proposed to continue the negotiations with a view to a settlement of the Voluntary School question.
THE WILLS AND INTESTACIES (FAMILY MAINTENANCE) BILL.

(Previous Reference: Cabinet 13 (31), Conclusion 11.)

THE SOLICITORS BILL.

(Previous Reference: Cabinet 13 (31), Conclusion 11.)

THE HIRE PURCHASE BILL.

(Previous Reference: Cabinet 13 (31), Conclusion 11.)

12. The Cabinet had before them the following Bills, introduced in the House of Commons by Private Members, which are down for Second Reading on Friday, February 20th:

THE WILLS AND INTESTACIES (FAMILY MAINTENANCE) BILL.

THE SOLICITORS BILL.

THE HIRE PURCHASE BILL.

The Cabinet were informed that the Solicitors Bill might be dropped.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the Law Officers of the Crown should be asked to deal with these Bills on behalf of the Government to such extent as was necessary. In doing so they should be asked to adopt an objective point of view and to indicate the defects of the Bills and not to encourage any expectation that time could be found for them.
13. The Cabinet had before them the Road Traffic Act, 1930 (Amendment) Bill, introduced in the House of Commons by a Private Member, which is down for Second Reading on Friday, February 20th.

As this Bill was not likely to be reached, the Cabinet contented themselves with taking note of it.
14. The Cabinet had before them the Live Stock Clubs Bill, introduced in the House of Commons by a Private Member, which is down for Second Reading on Friday, February 27th.

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries informed the Cabinet that this Bill was unworkable.
15. The Cabinet had before them the Highway Authorities (Acquisition of Land) Bill, introduced in the House of Commons by a Private Member, which is down for Second Reading on Friday, February 27th. The Cabinet took note of the above Bill.
The Cabinet had before them the Sharing-Out Clubs (Regulation) Bill, introduced in the House of Commons by a Private Member, which is down for Second Reading on Friday, February 27th.

The Cabinet took note of the above Bill.
17. The First Commissioner of Works reported that his Department had been asked by the Home Office to advise as to an amendment to the Architects (Registration) Bill. This Bill was being promoted by the Royal Institute of British Architects, but there was a large body of opinion adverse to certain provisions of the Bill. An amendment had therefore been put down in Committee suggesting that the Council of the R.I.B.A. should be replaced by an entirely new Council which should be as representative as possible of all architects and of all bodies interested in architecture. The new Council suggested in the amendment would be a body of 50 to 60 members, of whom six would be appointed by various Ministers of the Crown. He wished to know whether there was any objection in principle to the nomination of the members of this Council by the Ministers concerned. The First Commissioner pointed out that he and the Minister of Health already, under the Bill, nominated members of the Disciplinary Committee.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the Government should not become involved in the dispute on this amendment, but that if the Bill passed in the form proposed there would be no objection to the nomination of representatives by the Ministers concerned.
18. The Prime Minister informed his colleagues that it was possible that he would be absent from their next Meeting.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1,
February 18, 1931.