SECRET.

WAR CABINET, 486.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, October 15, 1918, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:
The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. Smuts, K.C.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C.M.G., M.P., Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.


The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

The Right Hon. H. W. Forster, M.P., Financial Secretary, War Office (for Minute 11).


Lieutenant-General Sir G. W. MacDonogh, G.C.M.G., C.B., Adjutant-General to the Forces (for Minute 12).

The Right Hon. Lord Weir, Secretary of State for the Royal Air Force (for Minutes 9, 10, 12).

Major-General F. H. Sykes, C.M.G., Chief of the Air Staff (for Minutes 9, 10, 12).


Captain the Hon. F. E. Guest, D.S.O., M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (for Minute 13).

Mr. James Parker, M.P., Lord Commissioner of the Treasury (for Minute 13).

Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Sanders, M.P., Treasurer of His Majesty's Household (for Minute 13).

Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff.

The Right Hon. T. J. Macnamara, M.P., Financial Secretary, Admiralty (for Minute 11).

Mr. A. F. Pease, Second Civil Lord, Admiralty (for Minute 12).


The Right Hon. Sir G. Cave, K.C.M.G., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs (for Minute 13).

The Right Hon. W. Long, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (for Minutes 5, 6).


The Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Labour (for Minutes 11, 12).

Sir D. J. Shackleton, K.C.B., Secretary, Ministry of Labour (for Minutes 11, 12).

The Right Hon. Sir A. Stanley, M.P., President, Board of Trade (for Minute 12).

Sir Guy Calthrop, Bart., Coal Controller, (for Minute 12).

Sir A. Ninme, Coal Controller's Department (for Minute 12).

The Right Hon. Sir J. MacIay, Bart., Shipping Controller (for Minute 12).

Mr. W. T. Layton, C.B.E., Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 12).

Major M. B. U. Dewar, Ministry of Munitions (for Minute 12).

Mr. Stanley Baldwin, M.P., Joint Financial Secretary, Treasury (for Minute 11).


Mr. Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P., Assistant Secretary.

Captain Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary.

Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that, in the attack to the north of the Lys on the previous day, a total of 10,000 prisoners had been captured by the Allies. It had been found that the enemy's forces in this attack had contained the same ten divisions holding the line, as before. On the whole front between Switzerland and the North Sea it was reported that there were now only two fresh German divisions. The enemy were undoubtedly in a most difficult position, but, on the other hand, unfortunately, the troops of the Allies were greatly exhausted. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the Allies were now within 6 kilorn. of Thourout. Courtrai was now within range of our 9-inch howitzers, and the railway junction, which, fortunately, was outside the town, was being bombarded.

2. With reference to War Cabinet 484, Minute 3 (Appendix, Annex 1), the attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to a telegram from the General Officer Commanding, Aden, to the War Office, dated the 14th October, 1918, to the effect that, in the event of any armistice with Turkey involving the evacuation of occupied territory, it was hoped that the peculiar position of the Turkish forces in Sheikh Said and Lahej would receive consideration. It would be undesirable to allow the Turks to retire beyond the Protectorate boundary into the Yemen unmolested, where they would be a potential source of much trouble, and their surrender should be insisted upon. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that instructions to this effect had already been sent to General Allenby.

In connection with this question of a possible armistice with Turkey, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he had received two visits on the previous day: one from M. Venizelos, and the other from the Italian Chargé d'Affaires. M. Venizelos had agreed that it had been perfectly proper, in the case of the Bulgarian armistice, to exclude the Greek forces from entering Bulgaria, but he begged that the Greeks might be allowed to take their share in any occupation in the event of an armistice with Turkey. The Italian Chargé d'Affaires, who had called soon after M. Venizelos had left, had said that he had heard that Greek troops were to be used to occupy Smyrna. He had expressed the view that this would be a great mistake, and contrary to the understandings which had been reached in regard to Italian claims.

It was pointed out that there was no immediate likelihood of Smyrna being occupied by either the Greeks, the Italians, or any other troops, and therefore, in these circumstances—

No decision was recorded.

3. The First Sea Lord said that the enemy batteries on the Belgian coast had not been evacuated. Our ships had got within 10,000 yards, and had heavily shelled the enemy, who had replied vigorously. The squadron had done a good deal of damage, and had returned without being hit.

4. The First Sea Lord reported that our coastal motor-boats had attacked and torpedoed a vessel called the “Brussels,” alongside the Zeebrugge Mole, and had put her out of action. It was thought that the “Brussels” was assisting in the evacuation of aerial stores. Our motor-boats had been heavily fired upon, but there were no casualties.
5. With reference to War Cabinet 485, Minute 8, the War Cabinet had under consideration a telegram from Washington, dated the 15th October (No. 4621), which had been despatched *en clair*, containing the reply of the United States Government to the German Note (Appendix).

In view of the fact that this telegram had been sent *en clair* and already communicated to the newspapers, the War Cabinet were of opinion that it would not be necessary for any statement to be made on the subject in either House of Parliament.

The Prime Minister then read to the Cabinet a telegram which he had received from Sir Eric Geddes, who was in the United States. Sir Eric Geddes reported that he had had a full talk on Sunday last with the President, whose attitude, now that he had received the German reply, appeared to be hardening towards caution. (a) He was fully alive to the need for continuing the prosecution of the war. He proposed shortly to announce the undiminished despatch of troops and war effort of the United States. (b) He realised that the time had arrived when consultation with the Allied Powers was essential. (c) He had stated that our armistice terms, framed by naval and military officers, must be viewed in the spirit that undue humiliation would be inexcusable, except in so far as the enemy must be prevented from taking advantage of the armistice to re-form their forces and better their position. (d) He inclined to take Germany to task for recent atrocities, e.g., the sinking of the “Leinster.” (e) In talking of his Fourteen Points, the President’s views on the Freedom of the Seas appeared to be unformed. (f) The President had referred to the absolute necessity for the break-up of Austria, owing to commitments to oppressed nationalities. The whole tone of the discussion had been most cordial, but he was outstandingly fearful lest the naval and military authorities might urge an armistice so humiliating that the German nation could not accept it. The President’s mind appeared to be set upon the kind of armistice which would leave no rancour, and demonstrate the high plane upon which the Allies stand.

The Prime Minister asked whether the opinion of the Cabinet was that some notice ought to be taken of President Wilson’s reply.

Mr. Bonar Law said that the real point was that the President ought not to make these pronouncements without first consulting the other Allies. If the President had laid down terms which he would recommend the Allied Governments to discuss as a basis for peace, and if we could not accept these terms as a basis for discussion, there would be exposed to all the world a rift in the Allies’ policy.

Lord Reading said that the situation was not a bad one for us. The Germans had asked President Wilson to handle the terms of peace, and he had so manoeuvred that the Germans were unlikely again to try to make peace through him.

In the circumstances, the War Cabinet were of opinion that—

No message need be sent by the Foreign Office with reference to President Wilson’s reply, beyond a civil expression of welcome in regard to the proposed visit of a representative of the United States Government.

6. The Prime Minister read to the Cabinet a telegram which had been received by the Secretary of State for the Colonies from Canada to the effect that the Prime Minister of Canada was in Virginia and would shortly be visiting Washington. It was requested that Sir Robert Borden might be kept closely informed by the British Embassy, during his visit to Washington, in regard to whatever communications might be taking place on the subject of peace overtures.
The War Cabinet agreed to this proposal, and requested—

The Secretary of State for the Colonies to make the necessary arrangements with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for keeping Sir Robert Borden acquainted with the subject.

7. The War Cabinet had before them a letter addressed to the Secretary of the War Cabinet by Lord Northcliffe covering a memorandum by the Policy Committee of the British War Mission on propaganda in regard to the question of peace (G.T.-5934). The letter requested that the assent of the War Cabinet might be given to the use of this memorandum as an outline of propaganda policy.

The War Cabinet delegated to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the examination on their behalf of the memorandum with a view to ensuring that it was in all respects consistent with the policy of the British Government and its Allies before being used for propaganda purposes.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by General Smuts on the position of the Northern neutral countries (G.-224). General Smuts explained that on the 8th January, 1918, the War Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the Northern Neutral Committee as put forward in Paper No. G.-186 dealing with co-operation of British naval and military forces with the Dutch naval and military forces in the event of danger to the Island of Walcheren from German attack. General Smuts said that the Dutch now considered they could deal with this question themselves, and had now requested us to base our plans on providing a certain number of troops to be landed in Holland as reinforcements, should Holland be attacked by Germany.

On the advice of General Smuts the War Cabinet decided—

(1.) That their previous approval of the recommendations of the Northern neutrals as put forward in Paper G.-186 should be rescinded.

(2.) That with a view to co-operation with the Dutch military authorities in the event of an attack by Germany on Holland, the British Naval and General Staffs should be authorised to work out the details of a scheme by means of which as many divisions as the military situation might require could be transported and landed in some port to be agreed upon in Holland.

(3.) That the supply of war material as authorised by the War Cabinet (G.-186) should be continued as the exigencies of the shipping situation allowed.

9. With reference to War Cabinet 475, Minute 9, the War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by Mr. Balfour (G.T.-5931) outlining a scheme for carrying out reprisals against the enemy for acts of devastation in France and Belgium. Mr. Balfour suggested we should subject one or more of (say five) selected towns to systematic bombing, and that we should give a number of days' clear notice of our intention to do this in order to permit women and children to leave the threatened areas. After this we should proceed to action at any time convenient to ourselves. His idea was to create as much panic and destroy as much property as possible, and not in any way to select as our bombing objectives points of military importance or necessarily large towns. He thought the
enemy would be unable to defend with an adequate number of guns any of the second-rate towns we selected for our operations.

Lord Weir said the Independent Air Force was already devoting every resource to the bombing of the Rhineland towns, but lately they had been greatly hampered by the weather conditions. His information was that these operations were having the desired effect, and the exasperation and panic in the Rhineland towns had greatly increased.

It was pointed out that if the Independent Air Force undertook these reprisals for the devastation of French and Belgian towns, it would strengthen the French claim that the Independent Air Force should be put under the direct command of Marshal Foch.

Mr. Balfour said that as the Minister for Air did not appear to be particularly attracted by his proposal he would not press it.


10. With reference to War Cabinet 475, Minute 9, the War Cabinet had before them the translation of a letter addressed to the British Ambassador in Paris endorsing a declaration of the French National Executive Committee for the complete reparation of damage caused by the war. Attention was drawn to the fact that the French Government had already addressed to us a communication on this subject, and, as this communication was in very general terms, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had been requested by the War Cabinet (War Cabinet 481, Minute 8) to ask the French Government to define their proposals more closely. Mr. Balfour said that he had carried out the War Cabinet instructions in this matter, but had, so far, received no reply from the French Government.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the French Government had already issued an announcement on this subject, which had been published in the British press on the 7th October.

The War Cabinet decided that—

It should be left to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to take any action with the French and Belgian Governments which he might consider appropriate.

Soldiers' and Sailors' Pay Committee.

11. With reference to War Cabinet 477, Minute 4, the War Cabinet had under consideration the Seventh and Supplementary Interim Report of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Pay Committee (C.T. 5921).

Mr. Barnes said that this report dealt with separation allowances only. The Committee over which he presided was authorised by the War Cabinet (War Cabinet 479, Minute 14) to deal not only with the question of separation allowances, but also with that of pay for the three services. The latter question had been discussed, but no recommendations had yet been submitted in the report now before the War Cabinet. The Committee dealt with the case of the childless wife, which case had been commented on very freely in the House of Commons, and about which the Government would undoubtedly be questioned. The Committee recommended that the flat rate of 12s. 6d. per week should remain unchanged; the only alternatives to this being an increase of 100 per cent. to all, which would mean a total cost of some 60,000,000l. per year; or a smaller increase of 2s. 6d. per week, which would amount to 40,000,000l. per year; or a 2s. 6d. to childless wives only, which would cost 2,600,000l. per year. The case for any increase of the flat rate was not strong, as, of the 400,000 childless wives, it was probable that 380,000 of them were women who had never set up homes and who were employed in Government offices or munitions factories. It would be impossible to raise the flat rate for the childless wife without raising the rate for all wives. The Committee therefore recommended that the
supplemental allowances now payable by the Special Grants Committee should be increased from 4s. a week to 6s. 6d., and that the conditions under which it was paid should be so amended that this allowance was paid as a matter of course in every case where the woman was unable to work, unaccustomed to work, or unable to obtain work without change of residence. The estimated cost of this proposal was about 500,000£.

With regard to the scale of separation allowances for women with children, this was based on the anticipation of a further increase in the cost of living from the time that the last concessions were made in July last up to the time the present recommendations would come into force, namely, January 1919. An increase of 25 per cent. in the cost of living might be anticipated during this period, and the recommendations now before the War Cabinet were, in effect, that the wife with one child would receive an increase of 18 per cent.; the wife with two children an increase of 25 per cent.; and the wife with three or more children an increase of 29 per cent. It was proposed that 1s. a week should be added to the children's allowance for the first child; 1s. for the second; 2s. for the third; and 1s. for the fourth and subsequent children, these amounts to be in addition to the previous increases. The Committee also recommended that 1s. a week should be granted to the first motherless child, and 1s. a week to the second and subsequent motherless children, in addition to the existing scales. The approximate estimate for these proposals was 3,765,000£.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he was afraid that these proposals would not satisfy all the criticism which had been made with regard to separation allowances. There were three points which had been particularly pressed with regard to the increases announced last July:

(1.) That the extra allowances for children stopped at the second child.
(2.) That the flat rate of 12s. 6d. for the childless was too small.
(3.) That the parents' allowance of 5s. a week was only payable at the age of 21, and not payable to the parents of men serving below that age.

The first point had been met by the present recommendations, but Mr. Bonar Law expressed the opinion that further concessions ought to be made with regard to the other two points.

The Financial Secretary to the War Office said that the War Cabinet decided that it was desirable that women without children should be encouraged to work, and that, if the Government gave a separation allowance which was sufficient to keep them in idleness, a premium would be put on idleness. Under the present recommendations, the woman who was unable to work would have the supplemental allowance as a right, and the proposals would come into operation at once.

The Prime Minister said that he was afraid that there was much dissatisfaction amongst the soldiers themselves on the subject of separation allowances. He had been told by many officers, when in France, that the men said that their wives were in a far worse condition than the wives of munition workers. This was undoubtedly a real grievance, and it was not right that the Government should make concessions reluctantly in the case of soldiers when they had conceded large concessions to every other class. When the first Committee which dealt with this question met, wages were low and the cost of living was not high; now wages had doubled, as had the cost of living. The Government had provided for all those who were working at home in security, and it was only right that they should adequately provide for the wives of the fighting forces of the Crown.

It was pointed out that, while the increases as shown on Tables A and B of the Report did not all show 100 per cent.
increase from the 1st October, 1914, until the present date, yet the Government had made material increases to the pay and allowances of the men, which, if taken into account, would bring the total increase up to, if not over, 100 per cent. of what was paid in 1914. In September 1917 the War Cabinet approved of the allotment of 2s. 6d. a week paid by the men being paid by the State, and in November of the same year the minimum pay of all ranks was increased by 6d. a day. It could therefore be said that the pay of the men had been increased by 7s. a week, which should be added to the increases in Separation Allowances now granted.

The War Cabinet approved of the recommendations contained in the Seventh and Supplementary Report of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Pay Committee, subject to the reconsideration of the question of the age at which Parents' Allowances should be payable, and decided that—

The Chancellor of the Exchequer should have authority, in consultation with the Soldiers' and Sailors' Pay Committee, to decide whether Parents' Allowances should be payable at an earlier age than 21.

The Coal Situation.

12. With reference to War Cabinet 476, Minute 11, the War Cabinet had under consideration the following memoranda on the subject of the coal situation:—

Memorandum by the Coal Controller (Paper G.T.-5597).
Memorandum by the Minister of Labour (Paper G.T.-5533).
Letter from Sir A. Nimmo to the Prime Minister (Paper G.T.-5737).
Recommendations by the Allied Maritime Transport Council (Paper G.T.-5866).
Memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade (Paper G.T.-5901).
Memorandum by the Minister of Munitions (Paper G.T.-5966).

The President of the Board of Trade said that, in spite of many appeals to owners and men, the coal situation was not improved, and that there was no substantial increase in output. It would be wrong for the Government to hope for the position to be improved through any effort made by the men. Not only was the spirit not there, but the Miners' Federation was not in any way helpful. Sir Albert Stanley expressed the opinion that a decision must be taken now, and urged that the country should be informed that there will be a shortage of coal, and that this shortage must be faced, if it was decided that miners were not to be brought back very speedily from the Army. Both the Coal Controller and he had made the statement that sufficient men were not going to be sent back to re-establish the situation, but there was a general feeling that, if continued pressure were brought to bear on the Government, more men would be brought back. The Coal Controller stated that, while there was a slight improvement on the September output as compared with August, an output based on the best week would only give 221,000,000 tons for the year. Speaking for himself, Sir Albert said that he recommended that miners should not be brought back; but if this decision were taken it would be necessary to face the facts that there would be a grave shortage of coal, that many people would be thrown out of employment, and that there would be grave difficulties and hardships during the winter. It should also be realised that the distribution of coal could not be so controlled as to secure an adequate supply for household purposes; and, as regards industry, the shortage would mean that hundreds of thousands of people would be thrown out of employment.

Lord Curzon asked whether more could not be done by pressure
of public opinion. The country at large did not realise that it was going to suffer because one portion of the community was not doing its fair share of work. The general public only saw one side of the case in the newspapers, and, as it appeared, the output could be voluntarily increased by the action of the men themselves, the effect of public opinion on the men would be very considerable. It had undoubtedly been so in the case of the railway strikes.

Mr. Layton, representing the Ministry of Munitions, said that the demand for steel for work in munitions had been very insistent, and that a special allocation of steel had had to be made to meet the demand of the American army in the field, but that it was not possible to hope that the American army could be supplied with any large quantity. The Ministry could not reduce its steel budget below 9,500,000 ingot tons for the coming year, as against 10,000,000 tons last year. Only a very slight reduction in the coal demand had been found possible after every effort had been made, but it had been decided not to press for the increased demand of 5,000,000 tons of coal in addition to last year's budget, which had previously been asked for. Mr. Layton referred to the memorandum by the Minister of Munitions (Paper G.T.-5956), and said it was a fact, particularly in Scotland, that his Department was not receiving even the reduced requirement upon which their plans were based.

At the present time, with regard to munitions, both the French and ourselves were living largely on stocks in hand. The French stock of 75-mm. gun ammunition had been reduced by 50 per cent., and we were at the present time using more munitions than we could produce. The reserve was far lower than it was last year. As regards the American army, it would be a prudent course to assume that no big supply of munitions would be available from America until the beginning of the Spring Campaign.

Sir Robert Horne, speaking with regard to coal used by Admiralty contractors and suppliers, said that as the Cabinet had instructed the Admiralty to discuss the matter with the Ministry of Munitions, he had carefully gone into it with Sir James Stevenson, and the only feasible way in which consumption of coal could be reduced was by a restricted use of steel. The Admiralty were taking this year 200,000 tons of steel less than was previously thought would be required. This was due to the fact that less than was estimated had been taken for merchant shipbuilding. It was hoped, however, that there would be a considerable increase in merchant shipbuilding next year, which would require more steel. Owing to the fact that a certain amount of steel had been accumulated in yards and purchased from America, it would be possible for the Admiralty to get on with the same supply of steel as this year, but it could not do with less.

The Shipping Controller said that it was impossible for his Department to do with less coal than that asked for. Already the neutral countries which had been guaranteed a supply of coal in return for other commodities, were not getting it, and a difficult situation was being created. Sir Joseph Maclay expressed the opinion that it was essential that miners should be brought back from the army.

The Coal Controller, referring to the coal ration allowed for household consumption, said the average ration was between 3½ and 5 tons. This was not nearly as much as the average pre-war consumption. Sir Guy Culthorp said that the position now was that, doing all that was possible, coal could not be supplied to meet present needs, and that also it was quite impossible to meet the American demand for the Expeditionary Force. He had asked for 50,000 Class "A" men. Up to the present, 25,899 miners had been returned, mostly Class "B 2" and "B 3," and these men could only do an amount of work equal to that of about 16,000 "A" men. He therefore asked, in addition to all the "B 2" and "B 3" men available, that the balance to make up the equivalent of
50,000 Class “A” men should be provided by the services from categories “B 1” or “A.” It was calculated that, if this were done, the output in coal would be increased by about 12,500,000 tons per annum.

The Assistant-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs called the attention of the War Cabinet to the recommendations of the Allied Maritime Transport Council (Paper G.T.–5866) with regard to the double bunkering of vessels coming from America being extremely wasteful.

The Minister of Labour said that the possibility of some 500,000 people being thrown out of employment was causing him great anxiety. If this occurred, the Government would undoubtedly have to provide unemployment benefit. He could see no alternative but to bring miners back from the army in France.

The Secretary of State for War urged that this was the most unfortunate moment possible to ask Generals in the field to release miners to return to the mines. Every day the army in France was pushing forward against a weak enemy, and if Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig had 100,000 fresh men to put into the line, the enemy front would undoubtedly be hopelessly broken. Lord Milner said that he could not imagine anything more undesirable than the effect which would be produced on the army at the front if these men were taken away at the present time. Also, it was not possible, in his opinion, to release any from the training camps at home. There were practically no miners who were called up at the end of March who were not now trained men. The majority of these had gone abroad, and those still remaining at home formed reserves for the Guards and machine-gun corps—both of which would practically cease to exist if these men were taken. The real trouble seemed to be the disposition of the miners at home not to do their best, and it was not at all certain that the return of these men would increase the output to the extent anticipated by Sir Guy Calthrop.

The Prime Minister said that it had been decided some time ago to make special efforts to appeal to all those engaged in mining to increase the output. These special efforts had been made, but while it could be said there was substantial improvement, it must be realised that the minimum amount of coal required for household and industrial consumption would not be got this winter. The fault was not entirely with the miners, although those directing the Miners’ Federation were not in any way helpful, but it rested also with the colliery proprietors and managers to a certain extent. Mr. Lloyd George said he regretted nothing more earnestly than the necessity of bringing any men back from the army. Only a short time ago he had been talking with the Commander-in-Chief, and, in view of what Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig had then said, he would not take one single man back from the army if it could possibly be avoided. It was impossible, however, to face the probability of 500,000 men being thrown out of employment, and especially at the present time, when so much depended on the moral of the people. If the present peace overtures failed, undoubtedly there would be some disappointment which would cause trouble, but this trouble should not be accentuated by unemployment and distress if it could be avoided. At the same time, it was most undesirable that any men should be taken now out of divisions which were actually in the line, and Mr. Lloyd George suggested that miners should be returned from the army at the present time only from divisions which had come out of the line, which were now resting, and which would not be employed again this year for active operations. Mr. Lloyd George said that the Cabinet must in any case be free to consider, in the event of operations continuing next year, whether it would not be necessary again to take the miners from the mines into the army.
The War Cabinet decided that—

The Secretary of State for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Air Minister should transfer to the Reserve their respective quotas of miners up to the numbers and of the medical categories asked for by the Coal Controller, subject to the conditions that men from the Army will be taken, in the first instance, from divisions which have been withdrawn from active offensive operations, and which will not be employed again this year for active operations, and that the Admiralty should be authorised to withhold the release of stokers serving in the Royal Navy.

13. The War Cabinet had before them the following Parliamentary Question, of which notice had been given by Mr. Jowett:

"To ask the Prime Minister whether the Government has considered the initiation of legislation to allow women to stand for Parliament, and whether he will give time for debate on a Private Member's Motion on which the House might record its wishes in this matter."

The War Cabinet decided—

To leave the question to the decision of the House of Commons.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
October 15, 1918.
APPENDIX.

Mr. G. Barclay to Mr. Balfour.—(Received October 15, 1918.)


FOLLOWING is reply of United States Government to German note:—

"Unqualified acceptance by present German Government and by large majority of German Reichstag of terms laid down by President of United States of America in his address to Congress of United States of 8th January, 1918, and in his subsequent addresses justifies President in making frank and direct statement of his decision with regard to communications of German Government of 8th and 12th October, 1918. It must be clearly understood that process of evacuation and conditions of armistice are matters which must be left to judgment and advice of military advisers of United States Government and Allied Governments, and President feels it his duty to say that no arrangement can be accepted by United States Government which does not provide absolutely satisfactory safeguards and guarantees of maintenance of present military supremacy of armies of United States and Allies in field. He feels confident he can safely assume this will also be judgment and decision of Allied Governments. President feels it is also his duty to add that neither United States Government nor, he is quite sure, Governments with which United States Government is associated as a belligerent will consent to consider an armistice so long as armed forces of Germany continue illegal and inhuman practices which they still persist in. At very time that German Government approaches United States Government with proposals of peace, its submarines are engaged in sinking passenger ships at sea, and not ships alone, but very boats in which their passengers and crews seek to make their way to safety, and in their present enforced withdrawal from Flanders and France, German armies are pursuing course of wanton destruction which has always been regarded as in direct violation of rules and practices of civilised warfare. Cities and villages, if not destroyed, are being stripped of all they contain not only, but often of their very inhabitants. Nations associated against Germany cannot be expected to agree to cessation of arms while acts of inhumanity, spoliation, and desolation are being continued which they justly look upon with horror and with burning hearts. It is necessary also, in order that there may be no possibility of misunderstanding, that President should very solemnly call attention of Germany to language and plain intent of one of terms of peace which German Government has now accepted. It is contained in address of President delivered at Mount Vernon on 4th July last. It is as follows: 'Destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb peace of world, or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at least its reduction to virtual impotency.' Power which has hitherto controlled German nation is of sort here described. It is within choice of German nation to alter it. President's words just quoted naturally constitute a condition precedent to peace if peace is to come by action of German people themselves. President feels bound to say that whole process of peace will, in his judgment, depend upon definiteness and satisfactory character of guarantees which can be given in this fundamental matter. It is indispensable that Governments associated against Germany should know beyond a peradventure with whom they are dealing. President will make a separate reply to Royal and Imperial Government of Austria-Hungary."