WAR CABINET, 521.

Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, January 28, 1919, at 3:0 p.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P. (in the Chair).

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. the Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for the Colonies (for Minute 1).
The Right Hon. W. Long, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty (for Minute 1).
The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Secretary of State for War (for Minute 1).
General Sir H. H. Wilson, G.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff (for Minute 1).
Lieutenant-General Sir G. M. W. MacDonnough, K.C.M.G., C.B., Adjutant-General to the Forces (for Minute 1).
The Right Hon. Sir A. Stanley, M.P., President, Board of Trade.
The Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, LL.D., M.P., President, Board of Education.
Sir S. Kent, K.C.B., Controller-General of Civil Demobilisation and Resettlement (for Minute 1).
Major-General Sir F. H. Sykes, K.C.B., C.M.G., Chief of the Air Staff (for Minute 1).

The Right Hon. the Earl of Reading, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., His Majesty's High Commissioner and Special Ambassador to the United States of America.
The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.D., M.P., President, Local Government Board (for Minute 1).
The Right Hon. R. Munro, K.C., M.P., Secretary for Scotland.
The Right Hon. J. I. MacPherson, M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland (for Minute 1).
Major-General Sir F. Burnett-Hitchcock, C.B., D.S.O., Director-General of Mobilisation (for Minute 1).
Mr. A. C. T. Beck, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Service (for Minute 1).
Brigadier-General F. O. Festing, C.M.G., Air Ministry (for Minute 1).

Mr. Thomas Jones, Acting Secretary.
Captain L. F. Burgess, Assistant Secretary.
Colonel L. Storr, C.B., Assistant Secretary.
THE War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War, covering the Report of a Committee he had appointed to consider the immediate provision of the armies of occupation required in the several theatres of war and of the home and overseas garrisons, and appending a letter received from Sir Auckland Geddes (G.T.-6674, Appendix), and also a Note (G.T.-6709) by the President of the Local Government Board on the above Memorandum.

The Secretary of State for War said that his own Memorandum, together with the Report of the Adjutant-General's Committee, which had been circulated to the Cabinet, represented the considered views of his Department. He had just returned from France where he had submitted the proposals contained in the Report to the Prime Minister, and these proposals had been discussed at one or two conferences at which the Prime Minister, the C.I.G.S., and he himself had been present, and some of which had been attended by Sir Eric Geddes. The result of these conferences was embodied in a Note to which he proposed to refer later. He would now merely say that the Prime Minister had suggested no substantial modifications of the War Office proposals, the principle underlying which remained unchanged. What the War Office required was 1,200,000 men during 1919, whose services would have to be retained under compulsion, for the following purposes: (a) to occupy the Rhine bridgeheads allotted to us, and (b) to tide over the period until we could raise a voluntary army of sufficient size to meet our requirements. The position to-day was that, apart from the old "Regulars," we had men of two categories, (i) those who had undertaken to serve for the duration of the war, and (ii) those whose services could be retained for a period of six months after the cessation of hostilities. At a certain moment, which might come unexpectedly, we might simultaneously be deprived of our military forces all over the world,—France, India, Egypt, Palestine, &c, as well as those required for purposes of home defence and to support the civil power in case of need. In this uncertain interval it would be impossible for us to create a voluntary force of sufficient size. So far, only 18,000 men had volunteered for further military service. We needed at home 250,000 men, which number might be divided as follows: 45,000 in Ireland (instead of 110,000 as maintained at present), 20,000 in England as a reinforcement for the Irish garrisons, 35,000 to maintain order at home (which was a smaller number than we had hitherto regarded it necessary to keep up), 10,000 for coastal artillery and anti-aircraft purposes, 17,000 in Dispersal Stations, 16,000 in Pay Offices, 3,000 in Record Offices, 10,000 to look after horses, and 10,000 to look after Mechanical Transport, 20,000 for draft-finding units, and 28,000 to guard enemy prisoners. As regards the Army on the Rhine, the Prime Minister had agreed to our reducing the number of our divisions for this purpose from 15 to 10, and had instructed Field-Marshal Haig to secure Marshal Foch's approval of this reduction. The French were maintaining no less than 50 divisions, and the Americans would certainly have more than 10 divisions in France. We were, therefore, in comparison with these two co-belligerents, doing rather less than our share. Mr. Churchill pointed out that the actual army to be maintained overseas and at home was a matter for the decision of the Government; it was for his Department to provide the men which the Government decided were necessary. In any case, however, compulsion would be necessary to bridge the gap between the present time and the period when a voluntary army of sufficient size would be forthcoming. If the Government decided on a drastic reduction of our armies in Europe, we could not undertake our share of the garrisoning of the Rhine bridgeheads, and we would be failing in our obligations to our Allies. The scheme he put forward was, he maintained, elastic and adapted to meet whatever policy the Government might approve.
Mr. Bonar Law said that the main thing the Cabinet had to decide that afternoon was the nature of the proclamation in which the Government's policy should be announced to the nation. The essence of their discussion was to arrive at the actual numbers which were required at the moment.

The Secretary of State for War, resuming, said that 280,000 men were wanted in France for salvage purposes, in order to save property, the value of which amounted to many hundreds of millions of pounds. This salvage work could, of course, be handed over to civilians, but only at enormous loss. Many of the salvage men might be found from the Demobilizables, who would be glad to continue to serve at higher rates of pay. He estimated that we should need 200,000 men to hold the Rhine, 50,000 on the Lines of Communications, 250,000 (which might possibly be reduced to 120,000) for salvage work. If the reductions in regard to salvage men were found feasible, the total required for France would be 370,000. For the Middle East we should want 100,000 European soldiers and 250,000 native soldiers. The European soldiers were estimated at the low number of 100,000, because the Prime Minister had represented that he hoped to be able considerably to reduce our commitments in those regions. The said regions comprised the whole of the Middle East, where our troops were at present, excepting India, and involved the evacuation of the Dnestra and the Caucasus, and reducing our present garrison in Syria. We had, in Siberia and North Russia, some 14,000 men. He would here remark that the situation of our troops in Russia was most unsatisfactory. Owing to our having an unsettled policy, it had not been possible to send out a sufficient supply of medical services or enough railway men, &c., in order to enable our troops to hold their own with confidence against the Bolshevik armies, which were growing in efficiency and audacity.

As regards India, the garrison of 96,000 white troops was being reduced by 20,000, and in this connection he would invite the attention of the Cabinet to the fact that the white troops now in India were the old Territorial Units, whom we were pledged to return to England on the cessation of hostilities, and it would now be necessary to keep them in India at least until the following winter.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that although on the one hand it might be contended that our Territorials in India had at least escaped all active service and had saved their skin, to use Mr. Bonar Law's phrase, on the other, many of them had died or were broken in health, or had not been on leave for over four years. Moreover, many of them were drawn from one area, i.e., whole battalions from one district, which meant that the district in question naturally did not understand why their men did not come home.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he believed that most of the Territorials now in India had at one time or another served in Mesopotamia.

The Secretary of State for War, resuming, said we had further about 10,000 men garrisoning Malta and Gibraltar, &c. If the troops from the latter place were withdrawn, there would be nothing to prevent the Spaniards from marching in and occupying it as soon as Peace was signed. Briefly, his proposal amounted to this: 800,000 men should be retained and 2,700,000 should be released. Put in another way, it was proposed that three out of every four men should be released according to Trade Categories "outside the net," the remainder being kept on in military service at higher rates of pay.

The Adjutant-General said that the War Office proposals also included the demobilization of every man over 39 years of age enlisted since the 1st January, 1916.

Sir Eric Geddes said that there was a conflict between two principles. The Government had adopted the principle of
demobilization by industrial selection. If they proceeded on those lines there would eventually be no army at all. Therefore, he suggested that a line should be drawn round certain ages, that is, of men enlisted after a certain date; any surplus in the net the Secretary of State for War might decline to demobilize by industrial selection; but if the old Army were to be demobilized by this latter process it was undesirable to throw the net too wide. As regards the Adjutant-General's statement that everybody over 39 should be demobilized, he thought it was decided in Paris that the age should be 36.

The Secretary of State for War said that he understood that 39 had been the age agreed upon by the Adjutant-General and Sir Stephenson Kent.

The Adjutant-General said that there were two alternatives: (a) to fix the age high and get in more combatants than we require, and (b) to fix the age low and discriminate between the administrative and the combatant services. He himself thought much the best policy would be to have one rule for the whole Army. There was already considerable unrest among the administrative services.

Mr. Bonar Law said that a big principle was involved. If we retained in the net twice the number of men we require we should be up against public opinion, and there would be a considerable loss of labour for industrial purposes. As regards the Adjutant-General's point, he thought there need be no discrimination in reality so long as an equal proportion of combatant and administrative services were released.

Sir Eric Geddes said that it was proposed so to throw the net as to get more men than we require. The A.S.C. on the lines of communication contained a large proportion of the older men. In the combatant services there were many older men who were pivotal N.C.O.'s and who must be retained. He himself therefore did not see why it should be necessary to discriminate against the A.S.C. It had been suggested that Tribunals composed of Civil and Military Representatives should decide whether certain men should be released because they were fathers of families or had a certain number of wound stripes, &c.

The Secretary of State for War suggested that the Cabinet might decide that the War Office net should be so adjusted as not to catch more than 1,200,000 men, and that he should then discuss the details with Sir Eric Geddes. It had been proposed that 800,000 men should be retained out of the classes which now held 1,500,000, and that the surplus should be gradually released by ages. He was, however, willing to try to reduce the 1,500,000 to 1,200,000, and to secure the 800,000 from the latter number. They were now releasing 35,000 men a day, and it was a matter of urgency to settle the size of the Armies of Occupation at once.

In regard to legislation, he did not propose in the draft which he submitted to Mr. Bonar Law just before the meeting to go beyond "the consent of Parliament, where necessary, would be asked for at the earliest possible moment." This would commit the Government to nothing absolutely definite. In reply to a question he said that this would apply to the current year. What he asked was to be allowed to retain not less than 800,000 men, on condition that they would be released by categories as might be found feasible, and to raise a Volunteer Army. He contemplated that when the Army Annual Act next came up for Parliament, assurances should be given that the men retained should be released as soon as possible, and to ask for power to form a voluntary Army, which would allow the compulsory quota gradually to be diminished.

(Mr. Churchill then read out notes of the Conferences held in Paris, at the end of which he stated that, should the demobilization of the German Army be carried out in a thorough and satisfactory manner, the Prime Minister might wish to reduce our Army on the Rhine below 10 divisions.)
Mr. Bonar Law said that he did not think it necessary to give the public precise figures. Public opinion would not worry about figures, but it was very much concerned about the conscript Army. In the circumstances, therefore, it was not essential to cut the figures too fine. In their Election speeches practically all the Members of the Government had pledged themselves to no conscription after the war. He was apprehensive as to what would be the effect on the public mind if the Government's first Act in Parliament were to pass a Conscription Bill. It might be possible to explain the circumstances and carry the Bill, but a formidable opposition would be roused in the country. He suggested that it should be announced that the arrangements considered necessary by the Government were subject to a statutory date, until which date no new compulsory Service Act should be introduced. The Army Council were now trying to get volunteers for a post-war Army; it was possible that when discharged soldiers came home and found no work waiting for them they would be disposed to volunteer again for military service. On the other hand, this factor of possible unemployment of discharged men might dangerously affect the labour situation.

The Secretary of State for War said that in his opinion the Cabinet ought to meet the situation in a frank and courageous manner; any vacillation would have an unfortunate reaction upon the Peace Conference in Paris. It was essential that we should have an Army to bridge the gap until a voluntary force could be raised.

Mr. Bonar Law suggested that the Government should announce that, in order to obtain the fruits of victory, it was necessary to keep an Army in the field; and that until we knew what the Peace Conference was going to decide, it was impossible for us definitely to fix the size of our Army.

The Secretary of State for War maintained that this course would lose the moral advantage of having a definite policy, and Ministers would meet Parliament nursing, as it were, a guilty secret. He strongly advocated the Government taking a frank and bold line. If their opponents saw that they were too timid to take a strong line there would be endless trouble.

Sir Eric Geddes said that he agreed with Mr. Churchill's suggestion. He himself thought it was essential to kill the hope of the men who were expecting to get out of the army at once. The present uncertainty was responsible for most of the existing discontent and unrest. So long as the men at the front relied on the hope of getting back shortly to England they would move heaven and earth to obtain their discharge.

Mr. Bonar Law contended that his plan would not leave this uncertainty. The Government would state that their arrangements must hold good for five or six months until peace was signed, when we should know exactly where we stood.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said he also strongly supported Mr. Churchill. He foresaw no trouble if Parliament were frankly told exactly what the situation was. As regards the alleged pledges in respect of no compulsion, he had attended several meetings during the Election, and the question which had been put to candidates was, "Are you committed to compulsory service in the future?" The answer given was "No, but until peace is signed we must maintain our armies at the front." Moreover, the Prime Minister himself had said that so long as foreign Governments maintained conscription Great Britain must keep up her army.

The President of the Local Government Board said he raised two points. The first was that it was stated that we needed a statutory legislation to maintain compulsion until the end of the war; and second, that recruiting under the Military Service Act...
was to be reopened. These involved two different things, namely—

(a.) Compulsion.
(b.) Recruiting machinery.

He agreed with Mr. Churchill that the men at the front would not object to remaining there in order to enable the nation to reap the fruits of victory, but to restart machinery for compulsory enlistment at home was quite another matter and he was opposed to it. We ought to try to get what extra men we want by voluntary means.

The Secretary of State for War said that he was glad that Dr. Addison had raised this point. He was not asking for compulsory powers to enlist young men; that might be necessary as months go by should Europe fail to settle down. He did want, however, to be empowered to tell the country that, broadly speaking, we were releasing three-quarters of the army to return to civil life.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he agreed that the right policy was to take the fence boldly. The present uncertainty and timidity on the part of the Government will merely result in the boiling up of public opinion. He thought that they had a good case, but whether the country would accept their proposals or not would largely depend on how the case was presented and on the number of men required. There was, for example, a great psychological difference between asking for under and asking for over a million. His own Department was, of course, greatly concerned in the decision which might be reached by the Cabinet. The original proposal to grant a bonus to 1,200,000 men was estimated to cost £36,000,000. This amount would be substantially reduced if the size of the army were limited to 800,000 men.

The President of the Local Government Board said that if it were not proposed at once to reintroduce compulsory enlistment he would not oppose the present suggestion. He did not anticipate any great difficulty in retaining an army of 800,000. He understood that the proposal to retain these men compulsorily would be for a limited period only.

The Secretary of State for War said that the proposal would operate like the Army Annual Act, that is to say, that new legislation would be introduced as circumstances required. As time went on and the voluntary system was re-established, they would be able to reduce the total held back compulsorily.

Mr. Bonar Law hoped that in the pronouncement to be made by the Secretary of State for War we would not be committed to the definite figure of 800,000.

The President of the Local Government Board said that he thought it was most important in the pronouncement to make it absolutely clear why compulsory retention was necessary.

The Secretary of State for War said that he had consulted Mr. J. H. Thomas, now in France, and had told him that it would be necessary compulsorily to retain some eight or nine hundred thousand men, and that Mr. Thomas had not been seriously disturbed at the prospect. As regards the actual number of men to be retained he hoped it would not be limited to 800,000, as he thought it desirable that they should have an additional 100,000 men in their sleeves.

The President of the Local Government Board said that he understood that the men outside the net would be demobilized on an industrial basis.

Sir Eric Geddes suggested that the men should be told that as certain ages were reached in the process of demobilization they would be placed in the demobilizable army, and they would be sent home according to industrial groups.

The Minister of Labour suggested that the Secretary of State for War, in his announcement, should also state that all pivotal
men would be released, as asked for, up to the end of this month. The trouble his Department had to contend with was that they could not dispose sufficiently rapidly of the general mass of demobilized men, as these could not be absorbed until the pivotal men were released.

Sir Eric Geddes thought that although the present labour situation in regard to employment was bad, it showed distinct signs of improvement.

The Minister of Labour pointed out that this improvement was only apparent and not real, as returned soldiers did not at present appear on the unemployment lists prepared by his Department. He desired again to press the necessity of releasing pivotal men with the least possible delay.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that from a financial point of view any delay in demobilization was a serious matter. The decision of the Cabinet that morning to grant a bonus to demobilizable men had included the grant of half the said bonus to men who would not be demobilizable by a certain time.

The Minister of Labour said that in raising the new army all pivotal men must be excluded from enlistment or retention.

Mr. Bonar Law said that everything depended upon the nature of the announcement to be made by the Secretary of State for War. He himself was inclined to think that the statement in its draft form should first be submitted to the Cabinet before it was issued to the Press.

The Secretary of State for War expressed the hope that the Cabinet would give him a free hand in interpreting the views of Ministers. Much delay would be involved if his announcement was to be debated line by line by the Cabinet.

Mr. Bonar Law said that he must ask to see the announcement before it was published. He would, therefore, request the Secretary of State for War to send him a copy in sufficient time for him to assemble Ministers to discuss doubtful points if necessary before it was issued to the Press.

Sir Eric Geddes said that among the many difficulties they would have to face would be the Secretary of State's proposal in regard to higher pay to be granted to non-demobilizable men.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said it was to the interest of his Department to keep the net drawn as narrowly as possible. As regards salvage men, he understood that the numbers quoted by the Secretary of State would be rapidly reducible. He himself would prefer that in this class the numbers should be underestimated rather than overestimated at the outset.

The Secretary of State for War said that the size of the net was a matter for the decision of the Government. He understood that the Cabinet hoped that it would not exceed 1¼ million men.

Mr. Bonar Law hoped that Tribunals would be used as little as possible. The Secretary of State for War said that it might not be possible entirely to dispense with them, but they would be required to work on certain lines.

The President of the Board of Trade asked how the release of miners was proceeding.

The Secretary of State for War said that 175,000 had already come home.

The President of the Board of Trade pressed for the immediate release of the remainder.

The Adjutant-General said that he had been informed by General Fowke (the Adjutant-General of the British Expeditionary Force in France) that all the coal-miners in that country had already been released. Coal-miners released from the Egyptian Expeditionary Force were now beginning to arrive in England.
The War Cabinet decided:—

(a.) That the Secretary of State for War should re-draft his proposed announcement in the Press in regard to the future strength of our armies and the necessity for maintaining forces of a certain size in various theatres, in the sense of the above discussion.

(b.) That the Secretary of State for War should submit, with the least possible delay, a copy of the re-draft to Mr. Bonar Law who should, if necessary, assemble a meeting of the Cabinet or a conference of Ministers to discuss and decide any doubtful points.

Industrial Unrest.

2. At the request of Mr. Bonar Law, Sir Robert Horne outlined to the Cabinet the present position regarding industrial unrest.

Sir Robert Horne said that the worst strikes were in the shipbuilding and engineering trades. These trades were out on the question of the 47-hour week. An agreement had previously been arrived at between the employers and employees on this matter, but the terms as to who should and should not be included in the shorter week were left very loose. For example, it was not clear whether the piece-worker and the piece-worker's helper should be included.

The Federation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Trades met last week and the men's representatives decided to go back to their Unions and recommend a return to work. The men, however, disregarded this advice and the Trade Union leaders turned to the Ministry of Labour for support.

In the meantime the workers on the Clyde arranged to strike for a 40-hour week, and those in Belfast for a 44-hour week. Both these strikes were disavowed by the Union leaders. Sir Robert Horne said on the N.E. coast the Unions were granting strike pay, but that it had not yet been discovered whether the shipyard Unions were giving strike pay in Glasgow and Belfast. He had a meeting on the following day with the Negotiating Committee, when he hoped it would be agreed to discontinue strike pay.

Sir Robert Horne said that the position was rendered extremely difficult as the Government could not actively interfere in the settlement of these strikes over the heads of the Union Executives, and the men had so far totally disregarded the advice of their leaders; all that it had been possible for him to do was to keep in close touch with the situation and give advice. The workers on the Clyde had telegraphed to him yesterday asking him to go down and negotiate, but he could not deal with these people except through their Union leaders.

Sir Robert Horne stated that another strike had broken out yesterday among the Thames ship-repairers. Some time ago the Committee on Production had allowed them 5s. a week increase when they had asked for 1s., and they were now striking for the extra 15s. This demand had been put forward to individual employers, and had not been submitted formally by the men's Unions.

In his opinion the newspapers were unduly alarmist about the situation. The present sporadic outburst of discontent was not unexpected. He had seen a number of pressmen with a view to allaying their apprehensions.

In answer to a question as to what stage he proposed to interfere, Sir Robert Horne said that if by to-morrow the shipyard position was still at a deadlock, he would feel bound to intervene directly.

Mr. Chamberlain said unfortunately in recent years there had been an increasing reliance placed on the Government as the
ultimate arbiter in labour disputes, with the result that strikes were prolonged by the fact that neither side would say the last word as to what they were prepared to concede, as they expected the Government to be called in at any moment.

Mr. Munro said that he had talked that morning with certain leading Glasgow citizens, who suggested that what was most required in Glasgow was unofficial propaganda.

Mr. Bonar Law agreed with this view and asked the Minister of Labour if he could give certain facts regarding the situation, such as he had just outlined to the War Cabinet, through the Press.

The War Cabinet requested the Minister of Labour to give to the Press, at latest on the following day the full facts regarding the present unrest, laying stress on the unauthorised character of the strikes.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1, January 28, 1919.

(Initialled) A. B. L.
I MUST ask the urgent attention of the War Cabinet to the attached Report that has been presented to me by a Committee that I appointed under the chairmanship of Lieut.-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, the Adjutant-General, to consider the immediate provision of the British Armies of Occupation required in the several theatres of war, and of the home and overseas garrisons.

The recommendations of the Committee in the final form in which they are now presented have secured the general agreement of a full and representative conference held by me at the War Office this morning, which included Sir Eric Geddes, Sir Robert Horne, Sir Douglas Haig, Sir William Robertson, and Sir Henry Wilson.

This is unquestionably the most pressing of the problems with which the Government is faced and immediate decisions are vital.

I also append a letter which I have received from Sir Auckland Geddes.

Winston S. Churchill.

January 17, 1919.

APPENDIX.

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3. The Committee are of opinion that the figures before them are so approximate that it would not be safe to work to a narrower margin to commence with, but they anticipate that, once the sorting out process has begun, it may be possible to dispense with further categories. Should this be the case, they would propose releasing in turn the higher age categories, i.e., first the men of 40, then those of 39, and so on. They are, however, met with the difficulty that a high percentage of the administrative and transportation services consist of men of these higher age categories, and that, though it may be found possible to replace these men by civilians to a considerable extent in Great Britain, it will not be practicable to do so in the Armies of Occupation or in Ireland, or in the overseas garrisons.

4. The Committee desire to point out that the retention of the categories mentioned in paragraph 1 will require legislative sanction beyond the statutory date fixed for the termination of the war, and suggest that legislation should be asked from year to year for prolonging the liability to service both of these men and of Class Z Reserves. They further consider that recruiting under the Military Service Act should be reopened so as to enable relief to be carried out.

5. The Committee consider that their proposals for the retention of men should form the basis for the retention of officers so far as circumstances will permit. These proposals should supply an ample number of the junior ranks, 2nd Lieutenants and Lieutenants, but practically none of the senior regimental or higher ranks. Should volunteers of these ranks be insufficient, which is unlikely, the necessary numbers must be held compulsorily. They feel, however, that reasonable financial terms should be offered.

6. The Committee consider that a sufficiency of junior non-commissioned officers will be provided automatically by their proposals, and that a sufficiency of the higher warrant and non-commissioned ranks is likely to be obtained by volunteering if reasonable financial inducements are granted. Powers should, however, be taken to retain temporarily such warrant and non-commissioned officers as may be wanted.

7. The Committee recommended that all men held under their proposals should receive reasonable financial compensation.

8. The Committee propose that the 46 Graduated Battalions and 23 Young Soldiers' Battalions now in the United Kingdom should be sent to France as soon as General Headquarters are ready to receive them. They further recommend that authority should be given to send boys under 19 years of age to Armies of Occupation or garrisons in Europe.

9. The Committee consider that volunteers should be accepted from those men who are demobilizable under this scheme, and that any such volunteers should be set off against requirements, and consequently will produce a reduction in the upper limit of age for retention.

10. The Committee make the following minor recommendations:

   (a.) From a fixed date, say the 1st February, no leave except on urgent compassionate grounds should be given to any men overseas other than those excluded from demobilization.

   (b.) Leave on as generous a scale as possible should be granted to those who are held.

   (c.) The demobilization of any man guilty of acts of insubordination should be postponed.

   (d.) The demobilization of men who are to be released should be according to priority of industrial groups.

11. The Committee consider that the scheme when approved by the War Cabinet should become operative forthwith, so as to prevent the further demobilization of the retained classes. They would suggest that a full statement of the reasons for the adoption of this scheme should be made publicly immediately before orders for its execution are issued. The representative of the Ministry of Labour thought, however, that the date of bringing the proposals into operation should be postponed to 1st February.

12. The Committee are of opinion that all men forming part of the Armies of Occupation, Home and Overseas garrisons, should be liable to general service, except that boys under 20 years of age should not be employed outside Europe.

G. M. W. MACDONOGH,

Adjutant-General.

January 17, 1919.
My dear Churchill,

January 15, 1919.

I have been studying the existing machinery for demobilizing the armies and have formed the opinion that it is based on wrong principles, and that if it is allowed to continue to operate it will produce results deplorable alike in civil life and in the forces.

I strongly urge that a sufficient number of men to form the transitional army or armies of occupation, with their necessary services, be selected on some perfectly simple principle, and that the rest be demobilized as rapidly as possible.

Many alternative bases of selection of the transitional army will readily suggest themselves to you; for example, all men now under 33 who joined the colours after 1st January, 1916 (roughly the date of clear knowledge as to the terms of the first Military Service Act), might be retained and all others be demobilized. Those retained should, I think, either receive a bonus or increased pay.

The basis of selection decided on must, of course, be one which will allow sufficient numbers of men to be retained for strict military needs. At present, I believe, the worst suspicions of the Army as to the vagaries associated with the word "pivotal" have real foundation. We have all heard of the fried fish salesman released as pivotal and of other doubtful cases. I, myself, believe that the country is far more in need of the return to it of a fair sample of its manhood than of any selective return. It seems to me impossible to begin to get back to normal conditions until the population composition begins to return to the normal. In other words, I am sure that this "pivotal" theory of demobilization is fundamentally unsound. But even if it were sound in theory, which I am sure it is not, the staff required to work it does not exist and cannot, so far as I can see, be created.

Yours sincerely,

A. C. GEDDES.