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MEMORANDUM BY THE MINISTER OF LABOUR.

THREATENED DOCKS DISPUTE.

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1. For the information of my colleagues I circulate the following particulars regarding the threatened Docks Dispute.
2. Following the issue in March 1920 of the Report of the Court of Inquiry presided over by Lord Shaw, the National Council of Port Labour Employers and the National Transport Workers' Federation came to an agreement dated 5th May 1920, by which the minimum daily wage for the greater ports was fixed at 16/- and for the smaller ports at 15/-. Wages were subsequently reduced by agreement between the employers and workers on the National Joint Council for Dock Labour, until at the present time they stand at 10/- per day for the greater ports and 9/- per day for the lesser ports.
3. The last reduction of 1/- per day took effect from the beginning of July 1923. In consequence of this reduction an unofficial strike of dock labourers took place in London and at Cardiff, Bristol, Avonmouth, Portishead, Hull, Grimsby, Immingham, Barry, Manchester, Birkenhead and Liverpool.
4. The Transport and General Workers' Union have recently made an application to the National Council of Port Labour Employers for an increase in wages of 2/- per day and for a guaranteed week. A meeting of the National Joint Council for Dock Labour took place on 17th January to consider the application of the Union. The Employers refused to grant the claim for an increase in wages, and, according to Mr. Bevin, the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, they in effect refused to give the application consideration. On

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Tuesday next, 29th January, there is to be a delegate Conference of the Transport and General Workers' Union at The Central Hall, Westminster, at which it is probable that a decision will be reached to tender notices in order to try to enforce the claim. I understand that the notices would be tendered on Saturday, 2nd February, to become operative on 16th February.

5. I understand that the employers will meet on the 30th, when they will be in a position to consider the situation in the light of what has transpired at the Central Hall.

6. Following a communication from the Union reporting the position, I had a talk with Mr. Bevin and I am making enquiries into the various aspects of the situation. The position is complicated by the existence of a rival Union in London, namely, the National Amalgamated Union of Stevedores, Lightermen, Watermen and Dockers, and by certain other factors with which, however, I need not at this stage trouble my colleagues. I shall keep in close touch with the situation.

(Intld) T.S.

Ministry of Labour.

28th January, 1924.