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S E C R E T.

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C A B I N E T.

E D U C A T I O N A L P O L I C Y C O M M I T T E E.

3rd
S E C O N D R E P O R T.

1. The Cabinet Committee on Educational Policy, which was originally constituted in February 1934 (Cabinet 5 (34) Conclusion 5), is now, as part of the new arrangements approved after the last General Election and set out in C.P. 219 (35), composed of the following Ministers :-

The Lord President of the Council,
The Chancellor of the Exchequer,
The Lord Chancellor,
The Lord Privy Seal,
The Secretary of State for Scotland,
The President of the Board of Trade,
The Minister without Portfolio,
The President of the Board of Education,
The Minister of Health,
The Minister of Labour.

2. The position is that the main educational proposals of His Majesty's Government, so far as they require legislation, are now contained in draft English and Scottish Education Bills, which have been approved by the Home Affairs Committee, and are under consideration by the Cabinet. The Cabinet, at its Meeting on January 22nd 1936 (Cabinet 2 (36) Conclusions 7 and 8), referred to the Committee certain points on the two Bills which had been reserved for Cabinet determination by the Home Affairs Committee and any other points of difficulty that might be raised. The Committee met on January 23rd, 1936, and it then appeared that the only points requiring their further consideration were the following :-

- (a) The proviso to Sub-section 2 of Clause 2 of the English Bill, and the corresponding proviso of the Scottish Bill. The broad effect of these provisos, as drafted, was that exemptions from

the obligation to attend school until 15, for beneficial employment, would normally operate only from the end of each school term; if, however, the Local Education Authority issuing the employment certificates had been furnished, before the beginning of the term, with information sufficient to satisfy it that employment beneficial to a child was available, the Authority was empowered to issue a certificate in that case during the course of a term.

- (b) The effect of the English Bill was to continue the crediting of Unemployment Insurance contributions for attendance at schools between 14 and 15 in England and Wales whereas in Scotland, after the 1st September, 1939, such credits will not begin until the child has attained the age of 15.
- (c) The question of empowering Local Authorities in Scotland to provide medical treatment in Scottish Instructional Centres.

Grant of employment certificates during a school term.

3. After careful consideration we think that each case should be decided on its merits by the Local Authority in the light of its local knowledge and in the interests of the individual child. This can, in our opinion, be secured by a somewhat more elastic formula than that contained in the provisos as at present drafted, and we accordingly recommend the substitution for those provisos of some such wording as follows:-

"Provided that the issuing authority when so satisfied may nevertheless suspend certificates of employment until the end of the school term".

It will, of course, be understood that we have adopted this formula subject to any drafting amendments which Parliamentary Counsel may find it necessary to make, and to any consequential alterations which may be required.

Crediting of Unemployment Insurance Contributions.

4. We are agreed that in this matter uniformity of future practice throughout Great Britain must be secured and that such uniformity can only be secured by new unemployment insurance legislation. It has been suggested to us that the principle of the crediting of contributions for children of 14 to 15 will in future be wrong, and that accordingly the Government should decide to bring the practice in England and Wales into conformity with the practice in Scotland. On the other hand, we think that such a reversal of the 1934 policy in this respect would be difficult to justify, and that it would be politically impracticable to introduce within the next three years legislation which would take away privileges granted in Section 1 of the Unemployment Act, 1934, and continued by the English Bill. We also think that the decision of the Government should be announced forthwith. We accordingly recommend:-

That a statement should be made on the Second Reading of the Education Bill in the House of Commons to the effect that the Government have decided that the position in Scotland in regard to the crediting of Unemployment Insurance contributions shall be brought into line with the position in England and Wales; that for technical reasons effect cannot be given to this decision by means of the present educational legislation but that the decision will be fully implemented before the raising of the school leaving age provisions of that legislation come into operation in 1939.

Medical Treatment in Instructional Centres in Scotland.

5. We are advised that the title of the Education (Scotland) Bill precludes the introduction of a provision enabling local

authorities in Scotland to provide medical treatment in their Instructional Centres, and this matter will therefore have to be dealt with in other legislation on some convenient opportunity in the future.

Signed on behalf of the Committee

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

Chairman.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1.

January 25th, 1936.