Government's Policy at the London Conferences.

1. The relevant material for the consideration of the question of the Government's Policy at the forthcoming London Conferences with the Jews and Arabs is contained in the Memorandum circulated to the Cabinet by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Paper C.P. 4 (39)). We also draw attention to the memoranda circulated to the Cabinet by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Papers C.P. 18 and 19 (39)), the latter of which is concerned with the legal arguments likely to be advanced by the Arab Representatives, and also a Note (Paper C.P. 7 (39)) by the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence covering a Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee on the strategic importance of Egypt and the Arab countries of the Middle East.

2. The recommendations of the Secretary of State for the Colonies are summarised in paragraph 74 on pages 21 and 22 of his Memorandum under the heads of Future Constitution-Immigration - Land. We agree with these recommendations and in particular with the Secretary of State's suggestion that we should not reach an absolutely final decision on any of the points mentioned in paragraph 74 until the discussions with the Jews and Arabs have proceeded some way. It is evident that the attitude of either party during the discussions might lead us to the conclusion that it would be wise to modify, in some way, one or other of these proposals.
3. Dealing first with the constitutional issue we are in agreement with the Secretary of State in considering that neither the Jewish claim for the creation at some future date of a Jewish state covering the whole of Palestine nor the Arab claim that the country should become an Arab state can be admitted. We should leave open the possibility, remote though it may be, that at some time in the future either the Arab or the Jewish population in Palestine may be ready to acquiesce in the creation of an independent state in which the other party predominates.

4. We are in agreement with the Secretary of State for the Colonies in considering that the United Kingdom Delegation should be empowered to put forward the offer of an Advisory Council, which would include, besides an official bloc, Jewish and Arab representatives in equal numbers, and that provision should be made that if a majority of the members of the Advisory Council, which included a majority both of the Arab and Jewish representatives passed a resolution asking that the Advisory Council should be superseded by a Legislative Council on the basis of parity between the two peoples, then such a Legislative Council should be established. We recognise the difficulty of persuading the Arabs to agree to the principle of parity but, on the assumption that Jewish immigration will be strictly limited, representations on a basis of population would condemn the Jews to a permanent minority
position, and we agree with the Secretary of State that this would be contrary to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration.

5. We suggest that in dealing with the constitutional issue, our rejection of the Arab demand for independence should be softened, if possible, by some gesture of special regard for Moslem religious susceptibilities; for example, by an offer to surrounding Moslem countries of the right to participate by means of a body of guards or otherwise, in the protection of the Moslem Holy Places in Jerusalem. Such a gesture would assure the Moslem delegates of our intention to safeguard their Holy Places against any possibility of Jewish encroachment, and might be of special value in winning the confidence of Egypt and the neighbouring Arab States.

Government. 6. We are in agreement with the proposal that the powers of municipal bodies under the Municipal Corporations Ordinance should be re-examined and extended as far as possible and that the revenues of the larger municipalities should, if possible, be increased, perhaps by allotting to them a portion of the urban property tax collected in their areas.

Immigration. 7. We have fully considered the question of Immigration which we agree with the Secretary of State for the Colonies is the most crucial of the questions to be examined at the London Conferences. An agreed solution of this question would, if it could be reached, go a very long way towards settling the Palestine problem.
8. We agree with the Secretary of State that for the reasons set out in paragraphs 42-47 of his Memorandum, the demand of the Arabs for the immediate and complete stoppage of Jewish immigration into Palestine cannot be entertained. We also agree that there can be no permanent peaceful settlement in Palestine unless we can rid the Arabs of their fears of Jewish domination, and that the time has come to set definite limits to the expansion, without the consent of the Arabs, of the Jewish National Home.

9. We recommend the Cabinet to adopt the Secretary of State's suggestion that our representatives should listen to the Arab and Jewish arguments and by judicious soundings during the course of the discussions form conclusions as to which of the two alternative proposals (A) and (B) on page 22 of C.P. 4(39) should be suggested for adoption.

10. It will be seen that the fundamental difference between proposals (A) and (B) is that, whereas under (A) the question of further Jewish immigration after the next ten years is left open for consideration, under (B), at the end of the ten-year period, there would be no further Jewish immigration without Arab consent.

11. We have been warned that scheme (B) is likely to meet with the strongest possible opposition from the Jews, while the Arabs would regard scheme (A) as wholly unacceptable as providing no definite assurance as to the future
control of immigration. It may well be that our representatives may come to the conclusion that no useful purpose would be served by mentioning alternative (A) to the Arabs. Scheme (B) which will be open to strong Jewish objection, represents, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, the maximum that we are likely to persuade the Arabs to accept. Indeed as is pointed out in paragraph 54 of C.P. 4(39) we may in certain circumstances have to make greater concessions to the Arabs than is suggested in Scheme (B).

13. It must, we think, now be definitely accepted that, beyond a certain point, future Jewish immigration into Palestine must be dependent on the goodwill of the Arabs, and that we must endeavour to convince the Jews that this is the case.

13. Dr. Weizmann has recently informed the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that the Jews were not so much concerned about the actual number of Jewish immigrants into Palestine, as about establishing their claim that the Jewish people enter Palestine as of right and not on sufferance. As pointed out in paragraph 14 of C.P. 4 (39) the Jewish claim in this respect is open to doubt, but however that may be, there is no doubt that the position would be transformed if the Jewish leaders could be persuaded to take a broad and generous view of the whole problem and to make a unilateral declaration to the effect that they would in future
make the exercise of their right contingent on Arab consent.

14. While it might be doubted whether the Jewish leaders would be prepared to entertain such a suggestion, we recommend that the Secretary of State for the Colonies should be authorised to endeavour to persuade Dr. Weizmann to give favourable consideration to a declaration on these lines.

15. We have been warned by the Secretary of State for India that the Palestine problem is not merely an Arabian problem but is fast becoming a Pan-Islamic problem and that if the London Conferences fail to reach any agreement or end in what is regarded as a substantial victory for the Jews, serious trouble in India must be apprehended. In this connection we would draw attention to paragraph 54 of C.P. 4(59), from the concluding words of which it will be seen that the Secretary of State for the Colonies agrees that if any widespread hostility to us in the Moslem world is really involved, we cannot afford such a result and we must yield to the degree that may be necessary to avoid it. We are in general agreement with the views expressed in this paragraph, but it will be noted that the Secretary of State for the Colonies does not press for any decision on the point at the moment.
16. We recommend the Cabinet to approve the proposal in paragraph 74 III of C.P. 4(59) that legislative steps should be taken to restrict the sale of land by Arabs to Jews.

17. We recommend that the United Kingdom representatives at the Conference should be:

- The Prime Minister.
- The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
- The Secretary of State for the Colonies.
- Mr. R.A. Butler, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

18. We attach (Appendix) a Memorandum circulated to us by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on procedure, publicity and entertainment at the forthcoming London discussions. We recommend the Cabinet to approve the proposals contained in this Memorandum, a summary of which will be found in paragraph 11 on page 5.

Signed on behalf of the Committee.

N. CHAMBERLAIN.

Chairman.

Richmond Terrace, S.W.1,
30th January, 1939.
APPENDIX.

COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE.
CONFERENCES ON PALESTINE.

Procedure, Publicity and Entertainment.

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

1. My colleagues may like to have a brief outline of the arrangements which I contemplate as regards procedure, publicity and entertainment of delegates in connection with the Conferences.

2. St. James' Palace has been prepared for the use of the Conferences. In addition to rooms for the use of United Kingdom Ministers and the United Kingdom secretarial and clerical staff, the Picture Gallery has been arranged for general meetings and there will also be two large committee rooms which could be made available for the individual use of the Arab and Jewish delegations. It may be that they will prefer to confer in their own hotels between meetings, but there would appear to be much to be said, from the psychological point of view, for getting them into the atmosphere of the Palace by holding opening meetings very soon after their arrival, and, if possible, for getting each of the two delegations to make some use of the Palace thereafter for their own meetings.

PROCEDURE.

3. As regards a provisional time table, whilst we must, of course, be guided largely by the attitude of the delegations when they arrive in London, I think it would be useful to have in our minds the sort of procedure which we should like to adopt if the atmosphere is favourable. Inconvenient
though it will be, we must adhere rather strictly at the outset, I think, to the understanding on which the delegations are visiting this country, viz., that the Arabs and Jews are each coming to confer separately with His Majesty's Government. It is for this reason that we have adopted the title "Conferences on Palestine", and my present information indicates that any attempt to get the Arabs and Jews to sit down together in one room at the beginning would render the negotiations abortive. If we make satisfactory progress in our discussions with the two sides separately, there is the hope that we shall, at a later stage, succeed in bringing them into tripartite negotiation.

4. In these circumstances, my present feeling is that the best course would be to have two separate opening meetings, preferably on the same day soon after the arrival of the delegates, one between United Kingdom Ministers and the whole of the Arab delegations, and the other between United Kingdom Ministers and the Jewish delegation. It would be a great advantage if the Prime Minister would consent to preside at these meetings and to welcome the delegates and to address them on general lines as to the desirability of some agreement between the parties concerned. The leaders of the delegations might make very brief replies to the Prime Minister's speech, and the method of further procedure (which would have been agreed beforehand in informal discussions) would then be formally approved by the delegations.

5. After these opening meetings with the two sides we should proceed, I hope, on the next day to meetings at which the delegations would state their views and put forward their suggestions for an equitable solution of the problem.
6. From that the discussion with each side would proceed without intermission in whatever manner seems best. Apart from the discussions between us and each of the other parties, we should try to encourage informal meetings between Jewish and Arab representatives. Only when our soundings have proceeded some way shall we be able to decide (a) whether there is any chance of turning the discussions into a formal conference of the three parties, and (b) whether and when we should produce our own proposals for a solution of the problem. We should of course endeavour throughout to guide the discussions in the direction of our proposals. We should keep a fairly firm guiding hand on the proceedings.

PUBLICITY.

7. I propose the following arrangements regarding publicity for the proceedings of the Conferences:

(a) That a Minister should be in charge of publicity arrangements for the Conferences and should be assisted by a Principal Press Officer. (If my colleagues agree, I would be prepared to undertake this duty myself.)

(b) That the Press should be excluded from Conference meetings.

(c) That brief communiqués should be issued at the conclusion of each meeting.

(d) That the Minister should give "background talks" to the Press at frequent but elastic intervals.

(e) That the principal Press Officer, assisted by the Departmental Press Officers, should be available to see the Press, in the periods between the Minister's background talks, on such aspects of the proceedings as the Minister might think fit.
8. Whilst it may be a counsel of perfection to suggest that the individual Arab and Jewish delegates will be able to refrain from talking to the Press, we should endeavour to secure the formal concurrence of the delegations in these arrangements and, if possible, to associate them with the Minister in charge of publicity through a Press Advisory Committee or Committees representative of the delegations. It would also be desirable, both on the arrival of the individual delegates and at the opening meetings, to ask them to concur in a general undertaking to treat the official discussions as confidential and to refrain from giving the Press controversial material during the Conferences.

ENTERTAINMENT.

9. It is proposed that the delegates and their staffs should be the guests of His Majesty's Government whilst in London. This offer has been made to, and accepted by the delegations from the Arab States. I understand also that it is likely to be accepted by the Jewish delegation. The offer will be made to the Palestinian delegation as soon as the composition of that delegation has been settled. Arrangements are being made to accommodate the delegates at various hotels, and to extend to them the courtesies customary in the case of official guests.

10. It may be that we shall find, when the delegations arrive, that not only are they unwilling to meet together for business purposes, but that they would also not be prepared to come together if they are invited to the same official entertainment. But we should be prepared to arrange an early general reception by His Majesty's Government at Lancaster House for both the Arab and the Jewish delegations. In addition, we might prepare for two Government luncheons, one to all the Arab representatives and the other to all the Jewish representatives and for various private luncheon or dinner parties to small numbers of the Palestinian Arab and the Jewish delegations.
SUMMARY.

11. My proposals may be summarised as follows:-

PROCEDURE.

(a) Separate meetings with the Jews and Arabs at the outset.

(b) An opening meeting with each side in St. James' Palace as soon as possible after their arrival, comprising a general address by the Prime Minister and very brief replies by the heads of delegations.

(c) Procedure after that to be settled in informal talks with the Arabs and Jews on their arrival.

PUBLICITY.

(d) A United Kingdom Minister to be responsible for publicity, assisted by a principal Press Officer.

(e) If possible, the Arab and Jewish delegations to be associated with this arrangement through a Press Advisory Committee or Committees.

(f) The formal discussions to be confidential, but brief agreed communiques and background talks by the Minister or principal Press Officer to be given to the Press.

ENTERTAINMENT.

(g) Preparations to be made for a possible official reception for both sides; two separate official luncheons for the Arab and Jewish sides, respectively; and for small luncheon or dinner parties for members of the Palestinian Arab and Jewish delegations to be given by private individuals.

(Intd.) M.H.

Colonial Office, S.W.1.,
24th January, 1939.