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SECRET.

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W.M. (43)**165th Conclusions.****WAR CABINET 165 (43).**

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, 2nd December, 1943, at 6 p.m.

Present :

The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister (*in the Chair*).

The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.

The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTTELTON, M.P., Minister of Production.

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.

The Right Hon. LORD WOOLTON, Minister of Reconstruction.

The following were also present :

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Lord Privy Seal.

The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. THOMAS JOHNSTON, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland.

The Right Hon. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P., Minister of Aircraft Production.

The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, M.P., President of the Board of Education.

The Right Hon. BRENDAN BRACKEN, M.P., Minister of Information.

The Right Hon. the EARL OF SELBORNE, Minister of Economic Warfare.

The Right Hon. LORD CHERWELL, Paymaster-General.

The Right Hon. JAMES STUART, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (*Item 1*).

The Right Hon. W. WHITELEY, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (*Item 1*).

Secretariat :

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Mr. PHILIP ALLEN.

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Parliament.
Business of the
House of
Commons.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (43) 163rd
Conclusions,
Minute 5.)

1. The War Cabinet further discussed the course of the Debate on the Address and subsequent business in the House of Commons.

Friday, 3rd December.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer had undertaken to reply on behalf of the Government to the amendment in regard to pensions of State servants.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Food, was to reply to the amendment dealing with food shortages and agricultural matters.

Tuesday, 7th December.

The War Cabinet decided that Sir William Jowitt should speak on behalf of the Government if the Labour Party amendment regarding reconstruction was moved.

Wednesday, 8th December.

It seemed likely that three amendments might be moved on that day:—

- (a) urging the transfer of productive resources from private to common ownership.
- (b) relating to location of industry.
- (c) relating to demobilisation.

The War Cabinet decided that the Postmaster-General should reply to the first, and Mr. McCorquodale to the third.

It was proposed that the Debate on the Address should be concluded on this day.

Thursday, 9th December.

The War Cabinet decided that the remaining stages of the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill and the Local Elections and Register of Electors (Temporary Provisions) Bill should be taken.

They should be followed by a Debate on the Supplementary Pensions (Determination of Need and Assessment of Needs) Regulations.

The War Cabinet decided that the Debate should be opened on behalf of the Government by the Minister of Health (if available), or, failing him, by the Secretary of State for Scotland. The Minister of Labour and National Service undertook to wind up the Debate.

Friday, 10th December.

The War Cabinet decided that the Second Reading of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Bill should be taken.

The House of Commons had been informed that a two days' Debate on the war situation and foreign affairs should be arranged during next week. It would be necessary to inform them, in Secret Session, on the following day, that this Debate would have to be postponed until the series of Sittings beginning on Tuesday, the 14th December.

Education.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (43) 98th
Conclusions,
Minute 1.)

2. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the President of the Board of Education (W.P. (43) 540) covering the draft Education Bill, together with a Note outlining the main features of the Bill (H.P.C. (43) 136).

The following were the main points of the discussion:—

- (a) *Functions of the Ministry.*

The President of the Board of Education said that it was proposed to add a new paragraph to Clause 92, saving the position of the University Grants Committee.

(b) *Title of the Minister.*

The view was expressed that it was a great pity to abolish the title of "President of the Board of Education." It was explained that there were practical disadvantages in retaining the Board of Education.

The President of the Board of Education undertook to consider and report to the War Cabinet on a suggestion that, while the Board should be abolished, the Minister should retain the title of "President of the Board."

(c) *Cadet Corps.*

It was pointed out that no reference was made to cadet corps in the Bill. It was suggested that such a reference might be included in Clause 52 (1).

The President of the Board of Education said that the reference to "other bodies" in Clause 41 (3) was regarded as drawn in sufficiently wide terms to cover cadet corps. He was unwilling to refer specifically to cadet training in the Bill, as if he did so, it would be necessary also to refer to Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, youth movements and the like.

The War Cabinet agreed that no amendment should be inserted making specific reference to cadet corps in the clauses of the Bill which dealt with further education, but that the President of the Board of Education should make it clear, in his speech on the Second Reading, that the Bill, as drafted, permitted appropriate arrangements to be made for cadet training.

(d) *Young People's Colleges.*

The question was raised whether any provision should be made for religious education in young people's colleges. It was urged that, if this was not done, it would be argued that the State was providing general education of a purely secular character in these colleges.

The President of the Board of Education said that he had told the Youth Council of the Churches that, if they wished religious instruction to be provided in young people's colleges, the right course would be that the various denominations should join together in asking for arrangements to be made for undenominational worship. This had already been done, in certain instances, e.g., at Walthamstow.

The War Cabinet agreed that the President of the Board of Education should deal with the matter on these lines.

(e) *Recovery of Cost of Meals.*

Reference was made to the provision in Clause 51 whereby the Local Education Authority was required to recover the cost of meals, &c., supplied to school children from parents who could afford to pay. At the meeting of the Legislation Committee two days earlier, the President of the Board of Education had undertaken to look into this matter, in consultation with the Treasury.

The President of the Board of Education read to the War Cabinet a draft amendment, which had been prepared to take the place of Clause 51 (2), designed to give the President of the Board of Education power to make Regulations to provide what sums, if any, should be recoverable. He also read a draft statement, to be included in the notes accompanying the Bill, making it clear that this Clause had been inserted so as to enable the matter to be adjusted in accordance with whatever decision was reached by the Government in regard to children's allowances.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he had not had the opportunity of considering the terms of these drafts. He explained that his object was that the Government should not be committed

by the Education Bill to a provision which formed part of the Social Security Scheme as a whole, and should be dealt with on that basis.

In discussion, it was suggested that, in any event, it would be desirable to deal in separate Clauses with the provision in regard to repayment for board and lodging and with the provisions in regard to milk and school meals.

On further consideration the view was expressed that the most satisfactory course would be to omit from the present Education Bill all provisions in regard to school meals, more especially seeing that, under the time-table proposed, these provisions could not come into operations until the 1st April, 1945, at the earliest.

The President of the Board of Education undertook to examine this suggestion, and to submit a report on it to the War Cabinet, for consideration at their Meeting on the following Monday.

(f) *Duties of Teachers in relation to School Meals.*

Objection was seen to Clause 49 (2), which provided that no teacher should be required to perform any services in connection with the preparation or serving of meals for pupils, except those of supervising the service of such meals and the conduct of the pupils thereat.

It was pointed out that there was a long history in regard to this matter. Nevertheless, objection was seen to dealing, by statutory enactment, with a matter which should be one for reasonable arrangement between Local Authorities and teachers.

Furthermore, the *Secretary of State for Scotland* pointed out that this sub-section might well have a very hampering effect on the provision of meals in single-teacher schools.

The President of the Board of Education undertook to submit a report on this matter to the War Cabinet on the following Monday.

The War Cabinet—

Adjourned consideration of the later Clauses of the Bill until Monday, the 6th December, 1943.

*Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
2nd December, 1943.*



