



(c) crown copyright

Printed for the War Cabinet. February 1944.

SECRET.

Copy No.

52

W.M. (44)

18th Conclusions.

WAR CABINET 18 (44).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Friday, 11th February, 1944, at 11.45 a.m.

Present :

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (<i>in the Chair</i>).	
The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P., Lord President of the Council (<i>Items 1-3</i>).	The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (<i>Items 1-4</i>).
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 LYTTELTON, 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. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P., Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. HUGH DALTON, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.	The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, M.P., President of the Board of Education.
The Right Hon. R. S. HUDSON, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.	Colonel the Right Hon. J. J. LLEWELLIN, M.P., Minister of Food.
Major the Right Hon. G. LLOYD GEORGE, M.P., Minister of Fuel and Power.	The Right Hon. BRENDAN BRACKEN, M.P., Minister of Information.
The Right Hon. RICHARD LAW, M.P., Minister of State.	The Right Hon. LORD CHERWELL, Paymaster-General.

The Right Hon. HARCOURT JOHNSTONE,
M.P., Secretary, Department of
Overseas Trade.

Secretariat :

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Sir GILBERT LAITHWAITE.

CONTENTS.

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Subject.</i>	<i>Page</i>
1	Miners' Wages	82
2	Security of Preparations for "Overlord"	82
3	National Health Service	83
4	Anglo-American Discussions under Article VII	83
5	Australia-New Zealand Agreement of 21st January, 1944	84

Miners' Wages.

(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (42) 79th
Conclusions,
Minute 5.)

1. *The Minister of Fuel and Power* said that a point had arisen in regard to the Porter Award on which the Government would have to make an immediate statement. Under that award the minimum weekly wages of adult underground workers and surface workers, and of youths under 21, had been increased and new rates had been laid down for overtime and week-end pay. He thought that the Government must accept the position that provision would be made either directly or indirectly from the Coal Charges Account to meet the cost of this Award, and also of a previous award dealing with holidays with pay. It would also be necessary that there should be an adjustment of pay in certain cases to remove certain anomalies arising directly from the Porter Award. Otherwise there would, for instance, be cases in which "contractors" would have to pay increases to day wage men in their gang without receiving corresponding increase themselves. It appeared, however, that negotiations had been started between the mine workers' and mine owners' representatives in certain districts (notably in South Wales) for a substantial increase in piece-work rates, on the understanding that such increases would be accepted as a charge against the Coal Charges Account.

The matter had been discussed in the Lord President's Committee that morning and it had been agreed that an announcement should be made that, while provision should be made from the Coal Charges Account to meet the cost of the Porter Awards, and of any necessary adjustments to meet obvious anomalies arising directly from those awards (*e.g.*, in regard to wages of "contractors"), the Government were not prepared to make similar provision in regard to other wage increases. He thought that, if the Government took this line, there was a risk of trouble in South Wales, and possibly in other districts. The Ministers concerned, however, were satisfied that this risk must be faced.

The Minister of Labour and National Service said that he agreed with the views of the Minister of Fuel and Power. Any further concession would have serious consequences of an inflationary character.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the course proposed; and took note that the terms of the announcement would be agreed by the Minister of Fuel and Power, in consultation with the Lord President of the Council and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

**Security of
Preparations for
"Overlord."**

(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (44) 10th
Conclusions,
Minute 5.)

2. *The Prime Minister* referred to the Committee which had been set up under his Chairmanship to deal with preparations for Operation "Overlord." At the meeting of this Committee held on Wednesday, the 9th February, consideration had been given to a scheme for the imposition of a visitors' ban over a coastal belt from the Wash to Land's End and covering certain areas of Scotland.

The Prime Minister said that it was of the utmost importance that due regard should be paid to military security. He thought, however, that consideration should be given to measures to deal with the matter on a different basis, namely, by preventing any information passing out of the British Isles. This involved consideration of the facilities enjoyed by the representatives of foreign Governments. He had asked that a Committee consisting of the Minister of Production (in the Chair), Minister of Aircraft Production and the Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply should be responsible for the preparation of a report on these measures. But, in view of the wide scope of the measures involved, he thought that representatives of the Foreign Office and of the Home Office should be associated with the three Ministers who had been asked to carry out this enquiry.

The War Cabinet—

Took note, with approval, of this statement.

National Health Service.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (44) 17th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

3. *The Prime Minister* referred to the discussion on this matter two days earlier. The matter had, of course, been very fully discussed over a long period on the Reconstruction Committee. The issues involved were, however, very far-reaching, and he had come to the conclusion that, on the whole, it would be desirable that they should be rather more fully discussed than had been possible on the occasion of the earlier meeting, before a final decision was reached to publish the White Paper.

After a short discussion, the War Cabinet—

Agreed that consideration of this matter should be resumed at a meeting to be held at an early date in the following week.

Anglo-American Discussions under Article VII.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 173rd Conclusions, Minute 1.)

4. At their meeting on the 21st December the War Cabinet had invited the Minister of State to prepare a note focussing for ministerial decision the points arising out of the recent Anglo-American discussions under Article VII of the Mutual Aid Agreement, and had asked that the Minister of State should be informed of any points which Ministers wished to raise on the subject.

The War Cabinet now had before them—

- (a) Two Memoranda by the Minister of State (W.P. (44) 75 and W.P. (44) 81) focussing issues arising out of the Washington conversations and dealing with the points raised by individual Ministers.
- (b) A Memorandum (W.P. (44) 82) by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs recommending that the Censorship should be asked to arrange with the Press for the avoidance of all reference to the forthcoming discussions with the Dominions and India whether on the monetary or other aspects.
- (c) A Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal (W.P. (44) 95) criticising the outcome of the Anglo-American discussions under Article VII as representing in effect the revival of the gold standard issue and pressing for their rejection.

A general discussion took place on the issues arising out of the papers before the War Cabinet. A record is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

At the end of the discussion *the Prime Minister* summed up by saying that the general view of the War Cabinet was in favour of proceeding with a policy generally on the lines discussed at Washington, and as set out in the Minister of State's Memorandum, although no doubt there would be a number of specific points which would require further examination. The main point which had emerged from the morning's discussion had been the importance of this country securing adequate safeguards in respect of the transitional period. He thought, too, that those handling these questions should not neglect to consider the alternatives which we should have to adopt if no agreement were reached with the United States on the lines of the Washington discussions.

The Prime Minister added that it was a matter of urgency to settle the lines which our officials should take in the discussions with representatives of the Dominions and India, which were due to start on the 21st February. This immediate task should be entrusted to a small committee of Ministers, though it might later be found desirable to turn this body into a Standing Ministerial Committee to consider our post-war financial, economic and commercial policy in the international field, including general problems likely to arise in the transitional period.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that a Committee should be set up as follows :—

Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Chairman*),
 Minister of Production,
 Lord Privy Seal,
 President of the Board of Trade,
 Minister of State,
 Paymaster-General.

The Committee's task was to determine, in the light of the discussion in the War Cabinet as summarised by the Prime Minister, the attitude to be taken by United Kingdom officials in the forthcoming discussions with official representatives of the Dominions and India over the whole field of the Washington Conversations under Article VII.

It was, of course, open to the Committee to invite other Ministers to assist them, as might be necessary, in regard to any particular aspect of their enquiry.

**Australia—
 New Zealand
 Agreement
 of the 21st
 January, 1944.**

(Previous
 Reference:
 W.M. (44) 17th
 Conclusions,
 Minute 3.)

5. At their last meeting the War Cabinet had invited the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to arrange for a reply to the Australian and New Zealand Governments to be drafted and submitted to them. Copies of the draft reply were handed round and considered at the meeting.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the draft reply subject to the following points :—

- (a) the offer to share in defence responsibilities in the Pacific was a notable landmark, and should be made more cordial;
- (b) paragraph 7 should read as follows: "We are in agreement with the general principle laid down in this paragraph, with the proviso that its application in certain individual instances might be affected by the terms of the arrangements made at the time."

*Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
 11th February, 1944.*

