CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, July 4, 1940, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair for Items 8 to end).

The Right Hon. Neville Chamberlain, M.P., Lord President of the Council (in the Chair for Items 1-7).

The Right Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.


The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. Viscount Caldecote, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. Lord Lloyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Item 11).

The Hon. Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War.


The Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., Minister of Information.

The Right Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service (Items 1 and 2).

Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril L. N. Newall, Chief of the Air Staff.

General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.

Major-General H. L. Ismay.

Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.

Mr. L. F. Burgis.

Major C. R. Price, R.E.
### WAR CABINET 193 (40).

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Man Power.

Calling up of men registered for military service.

1. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum (W.P. (G.) (40) 166) by the Minister of Information.

The Minister of Information said that the Home Intelligence Reports of the previous few days showed less anxiety than a week ago as to the delay in embodying the full man-power of the nation in the armed forces. In his Memorandum he had suggested that a Committee should be set up and invested with authority to take the necessary powers for compulsion. He now thought that the Committee should act in an advisory capacity.

The Minister of Labour said that the Ministry of Labour had consistently been in the position to meet all requirements made upon it by the armed forces for new recruits. When he took office 175,000 men had expressed preference for the Navy or the Air Force, but had not been interviewed because the Navy and the Air Force could not absorb the numbers which expressed a desire to enter those two services. The process of interviewing had been speeded up and 102,000 of these men had now been made available for the Army. Again, arrangements had been made for men to serve for three or four months as pioneers before starting on military training. He thought the Secretary of State for War would agree that, owing to the speeding up of the registration and medical examination machinery, the numbers of men available for the Army were now ahead of what the Army could absorb.

So far as whole-time fire-fighting and police services were concerned an arrangement had been reached with the Minister of Home Security whereby volunteers from a recent registration group were, if suitable, directed under the Emergency Powers Act to perform these services.

Turning to agriculture, the Minister said that the demands made by farmers had been most disappointing. Farmers had been urged for weeks to notify their requirements to the local offices of his Department, but the number of vacancies notified was far smaller than the number of unemployed agricultural workers on his registers. He was, however, in consultation with the Minister of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for Scotland on this subject.

With regard to the Women’s Services, the Minister said that he was endeavouring to secure the necessary recruits, but in London alone there were over 75,000 women registered for employment for whom no jobs were available. The opportunities for the employment of women depended largely on the numbers of skilled men available. Owing to increasing mechanisation, twice as many precision workers were required as in the last war. To get more skilled workers he had authorised 40 training centres, the number of centres at work had been increased to 17 and premises for a further 7 had been secured. By dint of carefully selecting semi-skilled workers for training 700 skilled men a week were now being turned out from the training centres.

As for the luxury and non-essential industry trade, the recent Board of Trade Order would increase the number of unemployed industrial workers by perhaps half a million and it would tax the powers of Government organisations to fit this large number into employment of value to the country. He had recently appointed Sir William Beveridge as Commissioner to undertake an investigation into the whole question of the appropriate utilisation of the man-power and woman-power of the country. The Minister added that he considered that the facts of the position should be explained to the country so as to remove misconception.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security, referring to the question of whole-time personnel for civil defence purposes, said that arrangements had been made that, when a class was called up, they were given the same opportunity of joining these services as they were for joining the Navy or the Air Force. Although there was no direct compulsion,
he hoped by these means to obtain sufficient whole-time paid personnel. The problem of applying compulsion in any form to the part-time voluntary personnel was more difficult. He was drawing up a scheme whereby the principle of compulsion could be applied, and he hoped this scheme would ensure that gaps in the part-time personnel service would be filled. The details of the scheme would be settled within the next few days.

The Secretary of State for War gave the following figures in regard to the man-power position:

Between the 6th June and the 29th July, a period of a little over 7 weeks, over 300,000 men would be conscripted into the Army alone. During the same period 70,000 volunteers might be expected. The following figures gave some indication of the number of males of military age now serving in the armed forces of the Crown, or in the Mercantile Marine:

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Male Population (20 to 41 years)</td>
<td>7,350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved occupations (including Mercantile Marine)</td>
<td>3,666,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less 20 per cent. unfit</td>
<td>2,947,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Armed Forces:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>1,430,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>173,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.A.F.</td>
<td>243,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.R.P. and A.F.S.</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferments</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of 20–41 year olds</td>
<td>801,000</td>
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From the military point of view he thought the time had arrived when the public should be more fully informed as to the manner in which the man-power of the country was being employed. General agreement was expressed with this view.

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security, the Secretary of State for War, the Minister of Information and the Minister of Labour and National Service, to consult together and make arrangements through the Press for the public to be more fully informed of the use that was being made of man-power in this country.

2 The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary dealing with Communist Propaganda (W.P. (G.) (40) 171).

The Home Secretary said that a leaflet, recently issued by the Communist Party and widely distributed, was clearly designed to discredit the Government and was calculated to foment opposition to the successful prosecution of the war. He was satisfied that its distribution ought to be stopped. But the leaflet contained in tabloid form the material which was published in the Daily Worker, and he had come to the conclusion that it would be both wrong and ineffective to suppress the leaflet without also taking action...
against the *Daily Worker*. He proposed that an order should be made prohibiting the printing, publication and distribution of this paper.

A considerable measure of agreement was expressed with this proposal. On the other hand, a number of Ministers thought that it might well be unfortunate to suppress the *Daily Worker* at this juncture. They represented that there was some feeling of alarm in the country lest the Government intended to suppress any expression of free criticism, as had been done in France, with unfortunate results. In this connection, reference was made to several articles in *The Times* newspaper, which, it was suggested, represented an attempt by influential people in this country to prepare the country for the suppression of the Civil power and the handing over of the control of affairs to the Military authorities. The view was also expressed that there were a number of other newspapers which were as worthy of drastic action as the *Daily Worker*.

The War Cabinet decided:

That the Home Secretary's Memorandum raised questions of such importance that a decision should be postponed until a Meeting when the Prime Minister was present.

3. The War Cabinet accepted the recommendation made by the Secretary of State for War in his Memorandum (W.P. (G.) 40 187) that the following rules should be adopted:

(a) Leave to attend Parliament should continue to be granted as freely as the exigencies of the Service permit.

(b) Where a Member of Parliament is unwilling to continue serving on the understanding at (a), he shall be allowed to transfer to the Reserve, or otherwise be temporarily released until further notice.

Spain and Portugal.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 191st Conclusions, Minute 7.)

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to recent telegrams from Spain and Portugal, particularly Madrid telegram No. 463 and Lisbon telegram No. 355. The situation in the peninsula was clearly becoming difficult, but Sir Samuel Hoare's firm language to the Spanish Foreign Minister about the visit paid by armed Germans to San Sebastian and Bilbao had produced some effect.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

The Far East.

Future policy.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 189th Conclusions, Minute 12.)

5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that Sir Robert Craigie thought that the War Cabinet's proposed reply to the Japanese Government's demands would be regarded by the Japanese as tantamount to a refusal, since in his view the Burma Road question was the one point to which they attached importance. (Telegram No. 1149 from Tokyo.)

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Foreign Secretary to bring this matter before the War Cabinet again on the following day.
The United States of America.
Naval discussions.

6. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to Washington telegram No. 1201, reporting that President Roosevelt had agreed to technical naval discussions taking place in London.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

The North Sea.
Sinking at sight of unidentified vessels.
(Previous Reference: W.M. 40) 87th Conclusions, Minute 3.)

7. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs reminded the First Lord of the Admiralty that some weeks previously the Admiralty had pointed out that there was a large area in the Eastern part of the North Sea in which no legitimate neutral trading could possibly be taking place, and that there was every reason for sinking at sight unidentified vessels in those waters.

He had said that he was in agreement with this policy, but he had heard no more of the matter. In view of the threat of invasion, he hoped that the new instructions in this sense would be issued at once.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that he would look into this matter and would communicate with the Foreign Secretary.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

France.
The French Fleet.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 192nd Conclusions, Minute 5.)

8. The War Cabinet were given particulars of the operations undertaken on the previous day against French warships at Oran, and as to the present position at Alexandria.

The discussion and the Conclusions reached are recorded in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

Reference was made to the extent to which reports of the operations at Oran had already been broadcast or had appeared in the Press. It was important that we should get in first with our account of the action.

The Minister of Information said that an account of the action, presenting the British measures in a favourable light, had been telegraphed to the United States press by Mr. Knickerbocker.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that both M. Corbin, the former French Ambassador, and M. Cambon, the French Charge d’Affaires, had called at the Foreign Office to protest against our action in regard to the French warships at Portsmouth and Plymouth. We must, of course, expect much sharper protests when the news of the operations at Oran were known.

The Prime Minister indicated the main lines of the statement which he proposed to make in the House of Commons that afternoon.

A suggestion that we might offer compensation to the dependants of French personnel who had become casualties in the action off Oran was not approved, as being likely to be misinterpreted.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

Royal Navy.
Manning of French ships.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 192nd Conclusions, Minute 5.)

9. The Chief of the Naval Staff raised the question of the manning of the French light craft now in British hands in our ports. Nearly all of the French sailors who had volunteered were junior ratings, and in present circumstances might not prove very reliable. It was therefore proposed to man these craft with British crews under the White Ensign. At a later date a proportion of reliable French ratings could be drafted into the crews, if circumstances permitted.

The War Cabinet approved this course.
Royal Air Force.

Training organisation.

The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Air, outlining the steps which had been taken to speed up the training of pilots, to increase the output of training establishments, and to overhaul the training organisation (W.P. (40) No. 288).

"A"

"A"

The Secretary of State for Air said that a review of our long-term policy showed that we must now make the fullest use of aerodromes in the Dominions and Colonies. In particular, it was essential to resume shipments of aircraft for the Empire Training Scheme, which had been suspended when the fighting in Flanders had been at its peak. So far as possible, however, the needs of the Empire Training Scheme would be met from purchases in North America. Such shipments would not, of course, be made to an extent which would weaken our position in the next few critical months.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that opinion in Canada very strongly supported the resumption of shipment.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Took note with approval of the steps taken by the Secretary of State for Air in regard to the training of pilots.

(2) Approved the resumption of the shipment of aircraft for the Empire Air Training Scheme, on the basis indicated generally by the Secretary of State for Air at "A."

France.

The French Governor-General of the French Cameroons had given an assurance that he would stand by us. He (the Secretary of State) attached the utmost importance to negotiations being started in West Africa with the Governor-General at the earliest possible moment. He hoped that these negotiations would be followed by measures which would enable us to assume some measure of control over the country and over the French troops.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he was not acquainted with the details of this problem, but he saw no objection to the matter being explored with the Governor-General of the Cameroons.

The War Cabinet—

Authorised the Secretary of State for the Colonies to arrange for negotiations to be started with the Governor-General of the French Cameroons, with a view to ascertaining whether he was prepared to adhere to the French National Committee under General de Gaulle.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies undertook to report to the War Cabinet before any important decisions were taken as a result of these negotiations.

Parliament.

Facilities for M.P.s to inspect defences.

12. The Lord Privy Seal said that Mr. Shinwell had the following Question down for answer that afternoon:

"To ask the Prime Minister, whether, in view of the desire of honourable Members to satisfy themselves that our defence against invasion is adequate, and that our production in arms and aircraft is being speeded up, he will afford an opportunity for honourable Members to inspect defences and factories at an early date."

This Question was symptomatic of the feeling among a number of Members of Parliament that, although they had a certain responsibility for the defence of their constituents, they were not
sufficiently consulted or informed on Home Defence questions. On the previous afternoon he had been present at a meeting of protest attended by all the Welsh M.P.s.

In discussion, the view was expressed that the desire among M.P.s for information on defence matters was very strong, and that it would be desirable to make some concession to meet it.

One suggestion made was that instructions should be issued to local Commanders to give some information to Members of Parliament and to afford facilities for inspecting some, at any rate, of the defences in their constituencies.

On the other hand, the view was expressed that it would be dangerous to take any step which implied that any Member of Parliament, as such, had a right to be given information in defence matters.

Certain Members of Parliament thought that they were discouraged from having anything to do with the Local Defence Volunteers. There was, of course, no bar against M.P.s serving in this branch of defence, and many of them were doing so.

The Secretary of State for War undertook to ask General Pownall to take steps to remedy the position in this respect.

The Home Secretary said that he had asked the Regional Commissioners to make a point of keeping local Members of Parliament in touch with their work.

The view was expressed that prima facie there might be less objection to Members of Parliament being given special facilities to visit munition factories than to visit defences.

The Prime Minister suggested that the reply to be given to Mr Shinwell’s Question should be on the following lines:—

"The Government would always desire to treat Members of the House with all possible consideration and courtesy, but no general right to inspect military defences, dockyards or secret munition factories has ever been claimed by the House for its individual members, and I cannot think that any such departure should be taken at this time."

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that an answer should be given to Mr. Shinwell’s Question on the lines suggested by the Prime Minister.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,*

*July 4, 1940.*