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Secretary

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SECRET.Final Copy No. 6CABINET 81(20)

CONCLUSIONS of a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10  
Downing St., S.W.1., on Thursday 30th December,  
1920, at 4 p.m.

PRESENT:-

The Prime Minister (in the chair).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law M.P. Lord Privy Seal.	)	The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P. Chancellor of the Exchequer.
The Right Hon. Lord Birkenhead, Lord Chancellor.	)	The Right Hon. L. Short, K.C., M.P. Secretary of State for Home Affairs.
The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.	)	The Right Hon. F.S. Montagu, M.P. Secretary of State for India.
The Right Hon. W.S. Churchill. M.P., Secretary of State for War and Air.	)	The Right Hon. Sir Hamar Greenwood, Bart., K.G., M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland.
The Right Hon. C. Addison, M.P. Minister of Health.	)	The Right Hon. T.J. Macnamara, M.P. Minister of Labour.
The Right Hon. Sir Robert Horne, G.B.E., K.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade.	)	The Right Hon. H.A.L. Fisher, M.P. President of the Board of Education.
The Right Hon. Sir E. Geddes, G.C.B., G.B.E., M.P., Minister of Transport.	)	The Right Hon. Sir L. Northington Evans, Bart, M.P.

The following were also present:-

Mr. Philip Kerr, C.H.

Sir M.F.A. Hankey, G.C.B.     ...     ...     ...     ...     Secretary

Captain L.F. Burgis.     ...     ...     ...     ...     Principal.

(1) With reference to Cabinet 77 (20) Conclusion 6, the Prime Minister informed the Cabinet that on the previous day he and some of his colleagues had had a discussion with Sir John Anderson and Generals Macready, Strickland, Boyd and Tudor.

They had asked for an extension of the area of Martial Law to the four counties of Clare, Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford. This was desired for administrative reasons, in order that the whole of the command might be included in one area.

Evidence was placed before the Cabinet indicating that Nationalist and Irish opinion generally would welcome this. The suggestion was made that discipline would be improved, and regrettable incidents by the forces of the crown would be less frequent, if this course were adopted.

The Cabinet agreed :-

To authorise the extension of Martial Law to Clare, Killkenny, Wexford and Waterford.

(2) The Cabinet discussed the question of the date at which the Government of Ireland Act should be brought into operation. They were informed that Ulster was desirous of bringing it into operation at the earliest possible date, that is to say, in February. The difficulty was that the South of Ireland had no similar desire. In fact, very little was known about the Act there and in this connection the Cabinet were in general agreement that steps must be taken to make the Bill better known.

The Cabinet were informed that the members of the Irish Executive and Military Forces had, on the previous day been unanimous that order might not be sufficiently restored in the South of Ireland to enable a fair election to be held there before May. The Head of the Royal Irish Constabulary, whose view was supported by the Chief Secretary, had however been more sanguine and roughly estimated the date at which order would be

IRELAND

Extension of Martial Law Area.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND ACT.

Preparations for application.

Dissemination of information regarding.

Reply to Report of Labour Commission.

sufficiently restored to enable election to be held at 2 months time.

After some further discussion the Cabinet agreed :-

- (a) That the Chief Secretary for Ireland, without prejudice to the eventual decision of the Cabinet as to the date at which the Parliaments would be established in the North and South of Ireland, should instruct Sir Francis Greer the Parliamentary Draftsman of the Irish Office to start the preparation of the necessary Orders-in-Council, Proclamations, and other machinery on the assumption that both Parliaments would be set up at the earliest possible date.
- (b) That the Chief Secretary should also invite Sir Francis Greer to advise the Cabinet as to whether, according to the provisions of the Act, the elections for the Northern Parliament could be held in advance of those for the Southern Parliament, and if this could be done, what documents would have to be prepared.
- (c) That, with a view to spreading knowledge of the Government of Ireland Act, more particularly in Ireland, the Chief Secretary should have prepared a careful summary of the Act, and should arrange to give it the widest possible publicity through any medium he might think best among which the following were suggested -
- The British Press,
  - The Irish Press, which might involve payment at advertisement rate.
  - Proclamations to be posted up by the Police throughout Ireland.
  - Proclamations to be posted up in British Towns with large Irish quarters or populations such as Liverpool, Glasgow and Dundee.
  - Copies sent to Irish priests and schoolmasters.
- (d) That the Chief Secretary for Ireland should be empowered to retain a barrister, (with regard to whom he might consult the Lord Chancellor) to prepare a detailed reply to the Report of the Labour Commission on Ireland.

(3) In the course of the previous discussion attention was directed to the fact that the man accused of killing a priest near Dunmanway had been reported as suffering from confusional insanity and was stated to be incapable of pleading.

The Cabinet felt that this was peculiarly unfortunate in view of the fact that the murderer of

Mr. Skeffington Sheehy had also been declared insane.

In order that the matter might be placed beyond all possible doubt or suspicion the Cabinet agreed:-

That the Home Secretary should arrange with the Chief Secretary for Ireland for the accused person to be examined by Doctors Baker and Nicholson.

DISCIPLINE  
OF  
POLICE  
FORCES.

(4) The Cabinet had some discussion in regard to the Discipline of the Police Forces in Ireland and agreed:-

That the Chief Secretary should make a personal appeal for discipline in the "Weekly Summary" which is now issued to the police.

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2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1.

December 30th, 1920.