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*Secretary*

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## CABINET 74 (20).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1, on MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1920, at 12 Noon.

PRESENT:-

The Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P., Lord Privy Seal.	The Right Hon. A.J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., Lord President of the Council.
The Right Hon. E. Shortt, K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs.	The Right Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.
The Right Hon. E.S. Montagu, M.P., Secretary of State for India.	The Right Hon. Sir Hamar Greenwood, Bart., K.C., M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland.
The Right Hon. R. Munro, K.C., M.P., Secretary for Scotland.	The Right Hon. Sir E. Geddes, G.C.B., G.B.E., M.P., Minister of Trans- port.
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 Educa- tion.
The Right Hon. Lord Lee of Fare- ham, G.B.E., K.C.B., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.	The Right Hon. Sir L. Worthington Evans, Bart., M.P.

The following were also present:-

The Right Hon. C.A. McCurdy, K.C., M.P., Minister of Food (For Conclusion 2).	The Right Hon. Lord E. Talbot, G.C.V.O., D.S.O., M.P., Parlia- mentary Secretary, Treasury (For Conclusion 2).
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Mr P. Kerr, C.H.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir M.P.A. Hankey, G.C.B., Secretary.  
Mr Thomas Jones, Principal Assistant Secretary.

THE STATE OF  
IRELAND:

Arrival of  
Mr de Valera.

(1) The Cabinet were informed that Mr de Valera was expected to land in England today.

The question was considered as to whether he should be arrested or not.

The Cabinet agreed —

That no action should be taken until the Cabinet had further considered the question.

In this connection the members of the Cabinet were invited by the Prime Minister to read two recent Press articles, viz., one by Mr Stephen Gwynn in "The Observer" of the previous day, and the other in the "Times" of today, by its Irish Correspondent.

(2) Arising out of the previous question some discussion took place in regard to the recent deplorable incident of the shooting by a Police Cadet of a priest who was entirely innocent of any crime or malpractice.

There was general agreement that there could be no question but that justice should be distributed with absolute impartiality, and the Cabinet took note that the man accused was to be tried by General Court Martial.

PREROGATION  
OF PARLIAMENT.

Draft of  
King's Speech.

(g) The Cabinet had before them a preliminary draft of the King's Speech on the prerogation of Parliament, based on material furnished by the various Government Departments and prepared by Mr Philip Kerr (Paper C.P.-2327).

The draft was examined in detail, and various verbal alterations were made.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the draft should be revised in the following respects:—

- (a) The paragraph dealing with Finance to be re-drafted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer:
- (b) The paragraph dealing with Trade and Unemployment to be re-drafted by the President of the Board of Trade and the Minister of Labour:
- (c) The paragraph dealing with the League of Nations to be re-drafted by the Lord President of the Council and the Minister of Education:
- (d) A new paragraph, dealing with Mandates, to be drafted by the Secretary of State for India:
- (e) The paragraph dealing with the Agriculture Bill, circulated by the Minister of Agriculture, should be adopted if the Bill passed into law:
- (f) The paragraph dealing with Ireland should be re-drafted by the Chief Secretary, and a reference made to the provision in the Government of Ireland Bill for the establishment of two Parliaments with a Council, and to the opportunity which would thus be afforded to the Irish people to manage their own affairs and to set up a single Irish Parliament whenever they wish to do so.

Subject to the above, the Cabinet left it to the Prime Minister or Lord Privy Seal to approve the Draft Speech for submission to His Majesty and to the Privy Council.



(4) With reference to a Conference of Ministers held on December 18, 1920, the Cabinet had before them Memoranda by the Minister of Labour, dealing with the abolition of the requirement of four weeks' contributions under the Unemployment Insurance Act (Papers C.P.-101 and C.P.-111).

It was explained that the Memoranda had been circulated to the Cabinet Unemployment Committee but had not been discussed, and were now raised as a matter of urgency, in view of the statement to be made on Unemployment in the House of Commons on the following day.

The Cabinet were reminded that the new Unemployment Insurance Act brought into insurance about 8,000,000 work-people for the first time. Owing to the bad state of trade, a number of these who had been expected to qualify would be unable to meet the requirement of the Act that contributions must be paid in respect of employment in each of four weeks before a workman became entitled to receive benefit. Strong representations had been made to the Minister of Labour that this rule should be waived in present circumstances. It had been estimated by the Ministry of Labour that the cost of waiving the rule, on certain assumptions set forth in the Memoranda, would be about £1,000,000, which sum would fall on the funds accumulated in the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and would neither be a fresh burden on the Treasury nor impose a greater charge upon the Fund than had been allowed for in the actuarial calculations.

The Cabinet agreed —

That the proposal should be accepted, subject to the conditions set out in the Memoranda, and that the concession should be announced in the House of Commons in the course of the Debate on Unemployment on the following day.

EMPLOYMENT. (5) With reference to Cabinet 72 (20), Conclusion 2, the

Grants Commit- Cabinet agreed ---  
 e's Terms of  
 ference.

That Condition 4, applicable to the  
 distribution of the grant to Local  
 Authorities, should read as follows:-

"(4) The grant must not in any case  
 exceed 30 per cent. of the wages  
 bill of additional men taken on  
 foywork".

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated  
 that he had appointed Miss K.T.Wallas,  
 of the London County Council, to be a  
 member of the Grants Committee in place  
 of Mr Norman, who was unable to serve.

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Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1,  
 December 20, 1920.

A P P E N D I X.

THE FOUR WEEKS' QUALIFYING PERIOD FOR  
UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT.

- (1) Subject to the following conditions, in the present emergency the four weeks' qualifying period shall be waived between now and the 31st March next in the cases of persons normally employed in Trades within the scope of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1920.
- (2) Persons will be regarded as normally employed in such Trades if they have been so employed for not less than 10 weeks since 1st January, 1920, to the date of their claim; or if they have been employed for four weeks since 5th July, 1920.
- (3) The production of a Health Insurance Card duly stamped by an Employer for the requisite number of weeks will be accepted as proof of such employment.
- (4) Cases in which it appears doubtful whether the applicant has been normally in employment and is genuinely seeking whole-time employment, and unable to obtain it, may be referred by the Department to a Local Employment Committee for consideration.
- (5) Ex-Service men and women, and merchant seamen, who fall within the terms of the Out-of-Work Donation scheme are already provided for by that scheme and will not receive the benefit of this special concession.

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