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Reports and papers of the Egyptian Administration Committee

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About this record

The file contains copies of memoranda and reports relating to the government and administration of Egypt. Included are memoranda produced by the War Cabinet on the subject and minutes of four meetings held by the Egyptian Administration Committee during September and October 1917.

Lord Cromer
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Printed for the War Cabinet. September 1917.

CONFIDENTIAL. 4

G.T.—2061.

I CIRCULATE to the Cabinet a Memorandum on the future government of Egypt, drawn up at my request by Lord Edward Cecil, together with two Minutes by Lord Hardinge and Sir R. Graham. While expressing my strong sense that the present position is not satisfactory and may easily lead to Parliamentary and other difficulties, I recognise that it would be unfair to expect the War Cabinet to give the necessary time for the adequate discussion of this very difficult question. I venture, therefore, to suggest that it may be referred either to the existing Mesopotamia Committee or some other Committee specially constituted for the purpose.

R. C.

MEMORANDUM BY LORD EDWARD CECIL RESPECTING THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT.

THE establishment of a British Protectorate over Egypt has naturally led to the review of the actual system of control exercised by the British Government over the British officials in Egypt, and through them over the administration of Egypt itself. For a long time it has been obvious that the control was defective and inadequate. Such as it is, it has grown up without plan or regular form. In fact, the question has never been seriously taken up.

The reason of this is simple enough. During the early part of the occupation the situation was regarded as essentially a temporary one, and therefore beyond stopping scandalous abuses British interference in internal administration was restricted to a minimum. The questions of importance were those connected with foreign influence and aggression rather than domestic matters. As time went on and it became apparent that Great Britain could not withdraw from Egypt, British intervention in local affairs increased. Meanwhile Lord Cromer had gained the fullest confidence, not only of the Foreign Office and the Government, but also of the British nation at large. Less and less was it felt advisable, less and less, indeed, was it possible, to interfere with his conduct of Egyptian affairs.

Though during Sir Eldon Gorst's short tenure of office there was probably more control from London than there had been before, with the arrival of Lord Kitchener the Consul-General became again, to a great extent, independent.

Thus up to the outbreak of war Egypt had, except in matters of first-class importance or those touching her foreign relations, been controlled by the Consul-General without the intervention of the Home Government.

Moreover, had it been desired in London to take a greater part in the management of the internal affairs of Egypt it would have been difficult to do so, as there was no one in the British service with sufficient local knowledge to deal with the questions.

As now Great Britain has by assuming a formal protectorate over Egypt made herself, at all events indirectly, responsible for the internal government of that country, and as it will be impossible in the future always to obtain men of the qualities and experience of Lord Cromer and Lord Kitchener to fill the position of High Commissioner, it is clear that an effective and adequate system of control of Egyptian affairs by His Britannic Majesty's Government should be instituted and the necessary machinery set up.

If this is admitted, the first point to be considered is to what Ministry the care of Egyptian affairs should be committed.

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Up to the present the Foreign Office has dealt with Egypt.

This was obviously right when the principal questions arising with regard to Egypt were of a diplomatic nature and when Egypt was a foreign State under the suzerainty of the Turkish Empire. Now that Egypt is a British Protectorate and Great Britain has become formally responsible for her internal policy and administration, it would seem that some other authority is needed to deal with Egyptian affairs.

The Foreign Office has nothing to do with administration, and naturally cannot deal efficiently with such matters.

It is rumoured that it is intended to group the Near Eastern British interests under a new administration, but whether this is the case or not, it is clear that this question cannot be fully decided till the conclusion of hostilities. As the control of Egyptian affairs is intimately bound up with other Near Eastern problems, the ultimate decision as to its head must also remain undecided for the present.

It is not possible to solve this difficulty by deferring the institution of control over Egypt till the end of the war. The crucial time when the control, advice, and assistance of the Home Government will be most needed will arise directly hostilities cease. The administration of Egypt must then be altered to fit her new conditions. Many anomalies in her government which were forced upon her by her international position will be swept away. Demands for the extension of general or local self-government will be pressed on the British authorities. Many decisions which will vitally affect her future must be taken, and taken rapidly, if the evils of agitation and even unrest are to be avoided. It is all-important that by that period the control of Great Britain over the political organisation and administration of Egypt should be working smoothly and effectively.

If, then, it is essential to proceed with this matter at once, it is suggested that, for convenience, Egypt should remain under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs until other Near Eastern questions are settled.

It has been said already that the Foreign Office cannot cope satisfactorily with questions of internal policy and administration. If Egypt is to be temporarily left under the Foreign Secretary, it is necessary to form a special Department which is capable of dealing with such matters. Though for convenience this new Department must be for the time being under the Foreign Secretary, this should be frankly recognised as a temporary measure and the Department be so constituted that it can be at any time detached and placed in the charge of any other Minister without inconvenience.

The Department must be capable of advising the Secretary of State on all matters connected with Egypt, and must act as the channel between him and the Egyptian Government, but it will in no sense form a portion of the regular Foreign Office. It is even advisable to keep the offices of the two bodies entirely separate. The management of the foreign relations of Egypt will naturally continue to form a part of the ordinary business of the Foreign Office.

In addition to the duties of the Department towards the Secretary of State, it will act the representative of the Egyptian Government in England, obtaining all information required by that body, carrying on negotiations on industrial, legal, financial, and other matters, and deal with all questions of British personnel, appointments, leave, &c.

In this connection it must be remembered that the amount of Egyptian business now transacted by the Foreign Office will only form a small portion of that which will pass through the hands of the new office.

It is almost certain that in future Parliament will take a deeper interest in Egyptian affairs, and it will be no longer possible for the British Government to hold, as in the past, that the responsibility for Egyptian administration rests principally on the shoulders of the Egyptian Government.

Sir A. Webb transacts a certain amount of business for the Egyptian Government, principally that connected with the Egyptian railways and War Office, and there are several other agents of a less official character. It has also been customary in Egypt for years past to deal direct with many of those in Great Britain who have business with the Egyptian Government, though the lack of competent representatives in London has been often very inconvenient. Naturally the Foreign Office could not be employed on such matters, and practically it was only used for business which involved communication by cypher. All this work will be dealt with by the new Department. Such a general agency has been long wanted, and the question was raised as long ago as 1902, but for political reasons the matter has always been deferred.

The Egyptian Educational Mission in Great Britain would also be absorbed in the Department.

The composition of the new Department must naturally be governed by the work to be carried out. It is all-important, however, to avoid the common initial error of over-staffing, which makes neither for efficiency nor economy. Another reason for beginning with as small a staff as possible is that, as in all new Departments, it is impossible to predict in what directions it will grow until some experience has been gained.

The Chief of the Department, representing, as he will, a country more important in political position, population, and wealth than some of the small independent States of Europe, must have direct access to the Secretary of State. It will be better if he is not called by a title which will give rise to any confusion as to his position. As he and his Department are only placed under the Foreign Secretary as a temporary measure, any title must be avoided which implies that he is an integral part of the Foreign Office.

It is suggested that he should be called simply the Director of the Egyptian Department, though in pay and position he should rank at least with Under-Secretaries.

As he may at a later period be charged with more extended functions in regard to the Near East, he should be selected from amongst those who have had long administrative experience in Eastern countries and who have filled high positions, if possible, in more than one of them. For the reasons given above, it is important that he should not be selected from amongst the Foreign Office officials.

The Department to start with might be divided into three sections. The first to be called the Political. This would deal with those matters dealt with by the Arab Bureau in Cairo and with the internal political affairs of Egypt.

The second section, to be called the Administrative Section, would deal with questions concerning the administration of Egypt, legislation, finance, internal government, irrigation, legal matters, education (including the Educational Mission), public health, agriculture, &c., &c.

The third section, to be termed the Agency Section, would carry out all business matters on behalf of the Egyptian Government, purchases, contracts, &c.

A legal adviser, if possible with Egyptian experience, should be retained to assist the Department when required.

At first one official for each of the first two sections might be appointed, whilst for the present Sir A. Webb's staff could carry on the duties of the third. As the work develops and increases the staff must be added to where the need is felt.

In regard to the personnel, when an increase becomes necessary the principle which should be adhered to, as far as possible, is that the staff should be a judicious mixture of officials drawn from the British Civil Service, who understand the government of this country, and Anglo-Egyptian officials who will supply the personal and accurate knowledge of Egypt which will be required. These latter, and it is a point to which importance is attached, will only serve in the Department for a limited period, say two years. When this time expires they will revert to the Egyptian Service and their places will be taken by others. In this way the specialist knowledge at the disposal of the British Government will be kept up to date and the officials sent back will have a broader view of questions than they would have had had they remained in Egypt. This system will also tend to lessen any friction which may arise between the Department and the Civil Service in Egypt.

I would urge that if it is intended to give effect to this or any similar project it is essential that the matter should be taken up at once.

Minutes.

Lord Hardinge,

I submit herewith my observations on Lord E. Cecil's note regarding the future administration of Egypt. In view of the fact that a variety of questions affecting Egypt have recently been raised, it is desirable that the Foreign Office should be afforded the fullest information, with regard to the present situation in that country from all authoritative sources. Apart from Lord E. Cecil and myself, who have had opportunities of expressing our views, there are now in London the Advisers

to the Egyptian Ministries of Public Works and Education, also Sir M. Cheetham and Mr. Storrs, and I would strongly urge that they should be given an opportunity of expressing their opinion.

R. G.

September 2, 1917.

FUTURE ADMINISTRATION OF EGYPT.

The progress of Egypt during the last 30 years, from a condition of bankruptcy and anarchy, to one of stable government and great economic prosperity, forms the most striking instance of the success of British methods of administration. This success, achieved under the Foreign Office in the face of unexampled difficulties, has not been equalled in any of our other Colonies and Dependencies. It is due in large measure to the wise policy adopted of trusting to the men on the spot and of affording them a whole-hearted support. Lord E. Cecil refers to the only departure from this rule, when an attempt was made to dictate a policy from London during the early days of Sir E. Gorst's régime, but this period was by no means the brightest page in the history of our administration of the country.

At the present time Egypt is administered under a mixture of ordinary and military law by Sir R. Wingate in concert with the G.O.C. I am in full agreement with Lord E. Cecil, that at the end of the war the system of Home Control over the Government of Egypt must necessarily be regularised, although I hope that it will not be unduly extended. Full Official Reports must be received at the Foreign Office in regard to the situation in and administration of the country, instead of the voluminous private letters with which Sir W. Wingate now keeps us informed. It should be remembered that the very detailed annual reports from the Residency have only been discontinued since the beginning of the war.

If eventually we have to undertake the administration of Mesopotamia, that country, Egypt and Aden should be administered by a special department of the Foreign Office. But as regards Mesopotamia, it has been decided that the military situation does not justify an attempt to place the civil administration of the country on a more regular footing, nor even the dispatch of the proposed mission to study the local situation, and the country remains for the present under purely military control. In Egypt we are following the policy of giving Sir R. Wingate full support and as free a hand as possible. I trust that this policy will be maintained until the end of the war, and that no attempt will be made to hamper him or to add to his difficulties by increased interference or control from London.

Lord E. Cecil urges that, leaving Mesopotamia aside, a Department should be set up at once for Egypt with Political, Administrative and Agency sections. This proposal may appear attractive in theory, but I do not think it would be justified in practice. At present the ordinary routine-work in the Foreign Office connected with Egypt cannot take up more than a few hours a week. Unless we call on Egypt for reports on Political and Administrative questions and attempt to re-organise the Egyptian administration from London, I cannot see how the Political and Administrative sections could justify their existence. Lord R. Cecil in a recent minute remarked that a reference in a memorandum of mine to the need of reforms in the Ministries of Finance and Interior indicated that increased control from London was required. I would respectfully point out that all such reforms must originate in Egypt if they are to be successful. When proposals for such reforms are received from Egypt, they can be considered here, if necessary, by a competent committee. But the Egyptian authorities have their hands full at present with the new Judicature Law, which is being considered, as the reports from Cairo come in, by a special legal committee already appointed, and in Mr. Hurst we already possess a most competent legal advisor with special knowledge of Egyptian problems. As regards the Agency section, Sir A. Webb's office deals with Egyptian Government contracts for railway material, coal, stores, &c. I should like to know whether Sir R. Wingate and the Egyptian Government as a whole consider that there is anything to be gained by bringing this Office or the Educational Mission under the new special department in London. I greatly doubt it!

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Lord E. Cecil's present proposals involve the entire elimination of the Foreign Office from administration of Egypt, which is to be undertaken by a separate Department only nominally attached to this Office, and under an independent chief having direct access to the Secretary of State. They represent the feeling of personal dissatisfaction with the Foreign Office which has always animated and has been freely expressed by Lord E. Cecil, and which was, to a certain extent, shared by the late High Commissioner. They do not represent the feeling of the native elements who cherish the connection with the Foreign Office, nor of the present High Commissioner, nor of the other branches of the Egyptian Government, which appreciate and are perfectly satisfied with the Foreign Office administration. Sir M. MacDonald, Mr. Dunlop, and the late Judicial Adviser (who are now in London) would bear me out in this.

While agreeing with Lord E. Cecil that a new Department should be formed in the Foreign Office to control Egypt at the end of the war, I disagree altogether with his recommendation that this Department should be only nominally attached to the Foreign Office, and that its chief should be independent of the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Lord E. Cecil presupposes that at the end of the war international problems in regard to Egypt will cease, and that it will be possible for the new special department to settle down to the purely internal administration of the country. I do not believe that this forecast is in accordance with the true facts of the case. Egypt always has been, and will remain a cosmopolitan country, in which questions of foreign subjects and interests will be constantly to the fore. Great stress was laid on this feature by Lord Cromer in his book and in his annual reports, and it accounts for his and Sir W. Brunyate's idea that the legislative body in Egypt should be internationalised. It will be remembered that the High Commissioner is also Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will he, in this capacity, be under the Foreign Office, or the head of the new separate department, or is it proposed that he should be under the former for Foreign Affairs, and the latter for Administration? The frontiers of Egypt with Tripoli and Abyssinia, and the control from Cairo of the Hedjaz and the Arabian coasts will give rise to constant questions of foreign relations. The abolition of the capitulations, and of the Caisse de la Dette, and the acceptance by the Powers of the new Judicature Law, &c., will have to be negotiated by the Foreign Office, and will engage diplomacy for years to come. The treatment of French commercial interests in Egypt should depend on the treatment of British commercial interests in Morocco, and this entails supervision by the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office. Last but not least, what will be Turkey's relations with Egypt in the future? Instead of the old Turkish High Commissioner, there will presumably be a Consul-General in Cairo. And the full support of the Foreign Office will be required to prevent his Consulate from becoming a centre of nationalist and Pan-Islamic agitation. In former days the German Agency was also a centre of anti-British propaganda and intrigue. Will not this continue with a German Consulate? Certainly for many years to come Egypt with its mixed population and interests, and its political importance, must remain a field for diplomatic struggles and problems.

To sum up, I submit that if Mesopotamia falls to our administration, there will be full scope for the establishment of a Near Eastern Department for Mesopotamia, Egypt and Aden, under a Head of Department, or even under an Under-Secretary. This department should be recruited, partly from the Foreign Office and partly from the Egyptian and Mesopotamian or other administrative services. If Mesopotamia remains in Turkish hands and we are solely concerned with the government of Egypt and Aden, a considerably smaller department will be required, but it should be recruited in the same manner. In either case the department should form part of the Foreign Office and its Under-Secretary, or Head of Department, should be under the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. If and when it becomes evident that we must administer Mesopotamia, the department should be constituted at once. If Egypt alone is concerned, preparations should be made for constituting a department at the end of the war, but its actual establishment might well wait until then, the control remaining as at present. There is already an official in the War Department who deals with Egypt, but it would be advisable to entrust this duty to a more senior man. From enquiries I have made, there does not appear to be anyone on the Foreign Office staff, at present, who would

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be available to give up his whole time to Egyptian affairs. Lord E. Cecil's strictures regarding the administrative incompetence of the Foreign Office point to an immediate change, but I may be permitted to observe that at the present moment, and probably until the end of the war, there will be a Permanent Under-Secretary, who has been Viceroy of India, and an Assistant Under-Secretary with 10 years' experience of Egyptian administration, both in normal times and, as it is at present, under military law, during which latter period he represented the G.O.C. with the native administration.

As regards the future Head of the new Near Eastern or Egyptian Department, I believe that it will be found necessary that he should have some knowledge of foreign politics; further, as Egyptian and Arab notables, few of whom speak English, will expect to be received by him when they visit London, it is desirable that he should possess a good colloquial knowledge of French and, if possible, of the Arabic language also.

R. G.

September 2, 1917.

The whole case of Lord E. Cecil's memorandum is, as he himself admits, dependent upon whether the need of a more effective control of Egyptian affairs is accepted or not.

The combination of Foreign Office control of policy with a free hand for local recommendation of measures is the system under which Egypt has been gradually brought into the British Empire and has reached its present flourishing condition. That system has, up to date, been approved by Anglo-Egyptian opinion. The question now raised is one of such far-reaching importance that the dictum of Lord E. Cecil alone is not sufficient to carry conviction, and before any decision is taken the opinions of those responsible for the administration in Egypt and of others in England who have a fundamental knowledge gained by experience of the system of Government in that country should be invoked.

Consequently the first question that arises is whether a more effective control from home than that exercised at present over the administration of Egypt is either desired by Parliament and public opinion or is to the advantage of the Empire and of Egyptian interests in their present phase. As far as Parliamentary control is concerned it is difficult to see how the scheme propounded by Lord E. Cecil makes it more effective than now. Parliamentary control does not depend upon whether a department is inside or outside of the walls of the Foreign Office, while administrative control is more likely to be efficient when exercised by a body experienced in the tactful handling of delicate matters than by a hybrid body recruited from Heaven knows where and with but little or no such experience. Whether the present control of Egypt is "defective and inadequate" or not the fact remains that Egypt has now been in British occupation for 35 years, and has developed under our administration into one of the most prosperous and contented of countries. It must be conceded that the progress and development of Egypt during that period constitute one of the brightest pages in the records of the Foreign Office. In writing this I have no desire to claim that this prosperity and contentment are primarily due to Foreign Office control, although the Foreign Office and Diplomatic service have contributed a considerable proportion of officers to the little band of administrators who have succeeded in making the Government of Egypt a success. The Foreign Office has never claimed to be a body organised for the detailed control of administration carried on in foreign lands, but it has the advantage, perhaps from the training of its members, of being able to assimilate its views to foreign conditions and thus to inspire sympathy and confidence with the minimum of interference in administrative details. This has succeeded admirably in the past, and it is interesting to note that a very large slice of Africa now under the control of the Colonial Office, consisting of Somaliland, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Nigeria, has during a stage of transition been under the control of the Foreign Office with beneficial results. Egypt is still passing through that transitional period which will not have closed until a definite decision has been taken as to the future status of Egypt and the Sudan, whether as a Protectorate or as an annexed territory, which in view of the Sultan's health cannot be long deferred, and until agreements have been concluded with foreign Powers for the abolition of the Caisse de la Dette, the Capitulations and extraterritorial jurisdiction which now hamper the progressive development of Egypt.

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These are questions with which the Foreign Office alone, from its long and intimate experience of such questions in Turkey and elsewhere, is competent to deal, but they will certainly require at least another five years for negotiation and solution, entailing as they do the preparation of codes, the creation of new tribunals and the co-operation of foreign Powers. When these have been satisfactorily settled it will be sufficient time to raise the question whether the period of transaction has not terminated and whether a new control should be set up to take the place of the Foreign Office. Nothing could be more inopportune than any such administrative change at the present moment, when the political situation in Syria and Arabia is in the melting pot and the chief concern of our policy in the Middle East, conducted as it is through the Residency at Cairo, is to resist foreign encroachments and the pretensions of France and Italy in Arabia and the Red Sea. The same situation prevails in Western Arabia, where we have to play the rôle of mediator between the Italians and the Idris.

As for the responsibility of England for the internal government of Egypt, the change of status caused by the Proclamation of a Protectorate has made but little alteration. The responsibility was great before, and is equally so now. The Administration will also remain practically the same until the changes mentioned above have been negotiated at the end of the war and put into execution. No new and costly machinery is needed at present. The political control and administration of Egypt are working smoothly and effectively. There is no agitation, and little crime, and the people are very prosperous and contented. There is therefore no immediate necessity for any change.

The High Commissioner, Sir R. Wingate, is a thoroughly experienced administrator, in whom the Government have confidence, while the record of his administration in the Sudan is remarkable. Thanks to his influence and popularity, he has been able, with a handful of troops, to maintain peace in a fanatical country, while the Mohammedan world was seething with unrest owing to the entry of Turkey into the war.

It is stated in the Memorandum that "the control of Egyptian affairs is intimately bound up with other Near Eastern problems." This is perfectly true, but the association goes further than Lord E. Cecil seems to be aware. It begins with the European Colonies in North Africa, and extends through Abyssinia to the Red Sea littoral and Arabia. Egyptian affairs are nearly affected by our relations with France and Italy in all these countries. Whatever may be the future of Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Syria, Cairo tends to become more than ever the centre of British interests in the Near East, and the point from which we influence the rulers of the Hedjaz and other important Mohammedan countries. Many of these Chiefs will be subjected to competing European influences in one way or another, and cannot, for a very long time ahead, be effectively dealt with by any other Imperial organisation than the Foreign Office. Yet the Memorandum contemplates the withdrawal from the Foreign Office of the Arab Bureau in Cairo (the main Intelligence Office) and its subordination to the new and independent Department. This can only mean a complete divorce between Arab policy and the Foreign Office. Further comment seems needless.

There remains the question of Turkey. Egypt will in any case be sensitive to what may happen in Asiatic Turkey. If the Ottoman power survives Egypt will be deeply influenced by events there. Sir R. Wingate considers this influence so important as to be likely to force us to annexation in order to prevent Turkish intrigue in Egypt. Everything here also seems to point to the necessity for the treatment of our interests in the two countries by the same Department.

Analysis of the Memorandum gives the impression that its author is preoccupied with the future of Egyptian internal administration. If this is so, it is all the more curious that there should be no mention throughout the Memorandum of the existence of the foreign colonies in Egypt. Their importance is well known. It is brought out in a Note by Sir W. Brunyate enclosed in a recent despatch from Cairo on the question of the annexation of Egypt. The leading business and professional men in Egypt, who provide the brains of the country, are drawn from a population of about 200,000 Europeans including the British colony. The question of the right government of Egypt must be misjudged unless the problem of co-operation with these people is faced in connection with that of educating and using, when possible, Egyptian native elements. Such co-operation must inevitably be best understood by the Foreign Office. Present developments are eminently satisfactory. A commission is sitting in which, under the guidance of

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a British Chairman, a Frenchman and an Italian are taking a leading part in the introduction of British principles into Egyptian law and administration. The work on which they are engaged is probably the most important reform since the institution of the Mixed Courts. We have, moreover, still to devise some method of giving the European colonies some voice in Egyptian legislation, a problem for which Lord Cromer and Lord Kitchener proposed solutions now out of date; these colonies are likely to increase in numbers and weight and, if they are properly handled, their influence should be a counterpoise to excesses of native feeling.

As to the question of the modifications which it is desired to introduce into the character of British control over Egyptian internal administration, it would seem that Lord E. Cecil dislikes the almost autocratic position of the High Commissioner locally and wishes to reduce his powers. Equally objectionable, in his view, though its existence is not mentioned, must be the Political Department or new Foreign Office in Cairo, which, as an adjunct of the High Commissioner, has now been developed by the grouping together with the previous Agency Staff of the Arab Bureau, the Sudan Agency, an embryo Intelligence Department, and the Desert Administration in process of growth. This central office plays a very large part in the direction of the Egyptian departments. Matters concerning more than one of these are, in view of the weakness of the Council of Ministers, necessarily referred to it. Its personnel now contains, in practice, British members of the Anglo-Egyptian Service who have been attached for convenience as *officiers de liaison*. Reading between the lines of the Memorandum the intention appears to be to arrest this development which alone permits the British Representative to supervise the whole Administration. The management of internal affairs would be altered by obtaining more decisions from London over the head of the High Commissioner. This would be accompanied by a weakening of the personal influence and ascendancy of His Majesty's Representative over both Egyptians and British Civil Servants which has hitherto been the main factor of our control. I think such weakening would be a mistake and that the High Commissioner's authority should if anything be strengthened. The Protectorate is proceeding on the basis of the unwritten law that the High Commissioner's advice must be taken. A number of organic changes must no doubt be made before or after the end of the war by Supreme Authority in England as part of the establishment of the Protectorate, and their effect will be to reduce friction with Egyptians, but a situation will still remain in which the intervention of the British Representative is constantly needed. Personal Government of this kind, compatible with perfect control from home where necessary, is understood in Egypt, and has, I understand, proved a flexible instrument of Imperial policy. The sketch of historical development given in the first few paragraphs of the Memorandum does not appear to be correct. We probably intervened in Egyptian local affairs as much as was feasible or desirable so long as our action in the country was capable of being made a cause for complaint by one or more first class Powers. But a large measure of discretionary power was not given to any Agent and Consul General without design. This power should not be impaired so long as it is exercised on the general lines laid down from home.

As for the scheme propounded by Lord E. Cecil, I see no advantage in it unless it is desired to create new posts and a costly machinery, of which there is no real need. It is proposed to create a new Department and to place it under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but to locate it outside the walls of the Foreign Office and to remove it from any kind of Foreign Office control. One may well ask why the new Department should be placed under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who is to be deprived of the services of his own expert advisers. It is even stated that it is important that the officer to be appointed head of the Department should not be selected from among the Foreign Office officials in spite of the fact that the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service are the only public services in England that have had any connection with Egypt and that they contain several first-rate officers of long experience in Egypt and with knowledge of the language. The staff that it is proposed to create is to be composed of officials "drawn from the British Civil Service who understand the Government of this country and Anglo-Egyptian officials." It is difficult to know why an understanding of the Government of this country should primarily be required from such officials. Some knowledge of Egypt and Egyptian local conditions would be far more useful. Such knowledge is already in the possession of many officials employed in and under the Foreign Office, but is not ordinarily to be found amongst the qualifications of other ranks of the British Civil Service.

The existence of the Egyptian Agency in London under Sir A. Webb, subject to the orders and control of the Egyptian Government, seems to be the stand-by of the whole scheme, and I can only say that from my experience in India of the operations of the Department of the Director of Supplies in the India Office in supplying the needs of India, the example is not one that I would wish to see imitated. I am informed that the Agency is conducted to the entire satisfaction of the Egyptian Government, and it will be far wiser in every way to leave well alone.

As for the educational system, it is more likely to work well under the paternal control of the Egyptian Government than under a bureaucratic Department in London.

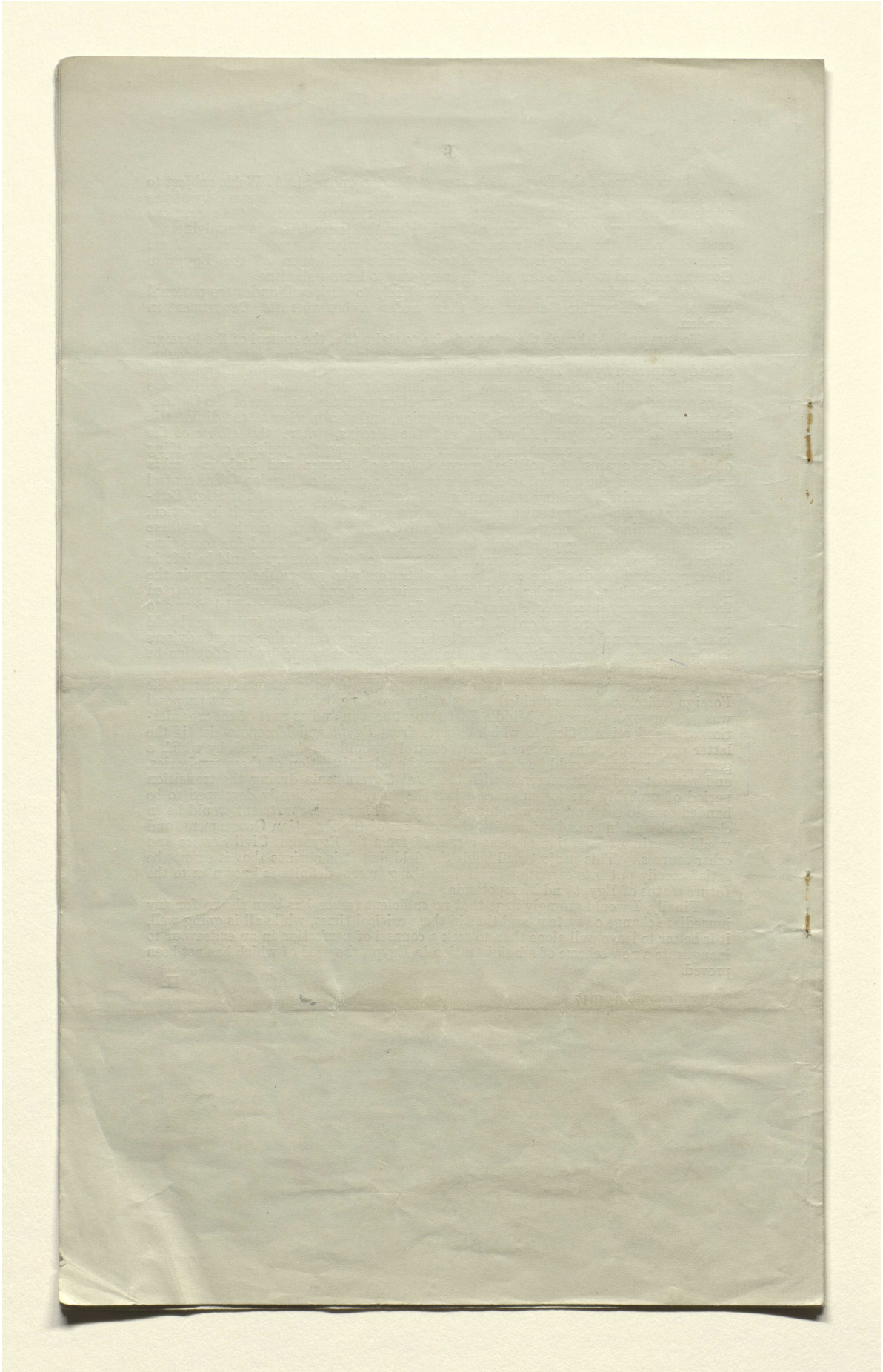
To sum up. Although there is no desire to claim that the control of the Foreign Office should be prolonged indefinitely, it is maintained that in view of the doubts already expressed by the High Commissioner as to the future status of Egypt in the event of the Sultan's death, in view of the important negotiations which will have to be carried on with Foreign Powers in connection with the abolition of the Capitulations and foreign extra-territorial jurisdiction, and also in view of the diplomatic situation in Tripoli, Syria, Abyssinia, and the Hedjaz, where the efforts of the Foreign Office are at present concentrated on maintaining the position of the King of the Hedjaz against the political encroachments of France and Italy in Arabia and the Red Sea, the moment to close the transition period of Foreign Office control has not yet arrived, and any substitution of control from that of the High Commissioner to a Department somewhere in London would be likely to result in friction, lack of co-ordination, and the addition of a fifth wheel to the coach. In these critical times, when Egypt is administered under martial law, and for some time after the close of the war, the internal government of that country should be left in the experienced hands of the capable administrators who govern the country in the name of the Sultan, but under the High Commissioner, and who should be protected from unnecessary interference from home. In any case, the scheme which seems to have been put forward by Lord E. Cecil on his own authority and initiative should in the first instance be commented upon by Sir R. Wingate and other expert advisers in Egypt, since the authority of the High Commissioner would by its adoption be considerably restricted, and practically a new situation created.

Under existing circumstances the control of Egypt is not a serious burden to the Foreign Office, but it was decided some months ago, long before the present proposal was put forward, to create a Middle East Department in and as part of the organisation of the Foreign Office, to which experts from Egypt and Mesopotamia (if the latter province remains under British control) would be appointed, by which a general supervision would be exercised over the administration of these territories, and without undue interference with the local Governments during the transition period of probably five to ten years, when they may be sufficiently developed to be handed over to some other controlling Agency. This new Department would be in close touch and in consultation with the advisers of the Egyptian Government, and would contain an Egyptian element recruited from the Egyptian Civil Service and other sources. This project still holds the field, but it is obvious that it cannot be satisfactorily put into execution until something more definite is known as to the future status of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Finally, I would strongly urge that no sufficient reason has been shown for any immediate change of system, and that in these critical times, while all is going well, it is better to leave well alone than to seek a counsel of perfection in an endeavour to inaugurate a new scheme of administration in Egypt, the need of which has not been proved.

H.

September 6, 1917.



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G.T.—2061.

21

I CIRCULATE to the Cabinet a Memorandum on the future government of Egypt, drawn up at my request by Lord Edward Cecil, together with two Minutes by Lord Hardinge and Sir R. Graham. While expressing my strong sense that the present position is not satisfactory and may easily lead to Parliamentary and other difficulties, I recognise that it would be unfair to expect the War Cabinet to give the necessary time for the adequate discussion of this very difficult question. I venture, therefore, to suggest that it may be referred either to the existing Mesopotamia Committee or some other Committee specially constituted for the purpose.

R. C.

MEMORANDUM BY LORD EDWARD CECIL RESPECTING THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT.

THE establishment of a British Protectorate over Egypt has naturally led to the review of the actual system of control exercised by the British Government over the British officials in Egypt, and through them over the administration of Egypt itself. For a long time it has been obvious that the control was defective and inadequate. Such as it is, it has grown up without plan or regular form. In fact, the question has never been seriously taken up.

The reason of this is simple enough. During the early part of the occupation the situation was regarded as essentially a temporary one, and therefore beyond stopping scandalous abuses British interference in internal administration was restricted to a minimum. The questions of importance were those connected with foreign influence and aggression rather than domestic matters. As time went on and it became apparent that Great Britain could not withdraw from Egypt, British intervention in local affairs increased. Meanwhile Lord Cromer had gained the fullest confidence, not only of the Foreign Office and the Government, but also of the British nation at large. Less and less was it felt advisable, less and less, indeed, was it possible, to interfere with his conduct of Egyptian affairs.

Though during Sir Eldon Gorst's short tenure of office there was probably more control from London than there had been before, with the arrival of Lord Kitchener the Consul-General became again, to a great extent, independent.

Thus up to the outbreak of war Egypt had, except in matters of first-class importance or those touching her foreign relations, been controlled by the Consul-General without the intervention of the Home Government.

Moreover, had it been desired in London to take a greater part in the management of the internal affairs of Egypt it would have been difficult to do so, as there was no one in the British service with sufficient local knowledge to deal with the questions.

As now Great Britain has by assuming a formal protectorate over Egypt made herself, at all events indirectly, responsible for the internal government of that country, and as it will be impossible in the future always to obtain men of the qualities and experience of Lord Cromer and Lord Kitchener to fill the position of High Commissioner, it is clear that an effective and adequate system of control of Egyptian affairs by His Britannic Majesty's Government should be instituted and the necessary machinery set up.

If this is admitted, the first point to be considered is to what Ministry the care of Egyptian affairs should be committed.

[968—2]

B

Up to the present the Foreign Office has dealt with Egypt.

This was obviously right when the principal questions arising with regard to Egypt were of a diplomatic nature and when Egypt was a foreign State under the suzerainty of the Turkish Empire. Now that Egypt is a British Protectorate and Great Britain has become formally responsible for her internal policy and administration, it would seem that some other authority is needed to deal with Egyptian affairs.

The Foreign Office has nothing to do with administration, and naturally cannot deal efficiently with such matters.

It is rumoured that it is intended to group the Near Eastern British interests under a new administration, but whether this is the case or not, it is clear that this question cannot be fully decided till the conclusion of hostilities. As the control of Egyptian affairs is intimately bound up with other Near Eastern problems, the ultimate decision as to its head must also remain undecided for the present.

It is not possible to solve this difficulty by deferring the institution of control over Egypt till the end of the war. The crucial time when the control, advice, and assistance of the Home Government will be most needed will arise directly hostilities cease. The administration of Egypt must then be altered to fit her new conditions. Many anomalies in her government which were forced upon her by her international position will be swept away. Demands for the extension of general or local self-government will be pressed on the British authorities. Many decisions which will vitally affect her future must be taken, and taken rapidly, if the evils of agitation and even unrest are to be avoided. It is all-important that by that period the control of Great Britain over the political organisation and administration of Egypt should be working smoothly and effectively.

If, then, it is essential to proceed with this matter at once, it is suggested that, for convenience, Egypt should remain under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs until other Near Eastern questions are settled.

It has been said already that the Foreign Office cannot cope satisfactorily with questions of internal policy and administration. If Egypt is to be temporarily left under the Foreign Secretary, it is necessary to form a special Department which is capable of dealing with such matters. Though for convenience this new Department must be for the time being under the Foreign Secretary, this should be frankly recognised as a temporary measure and the Department be so constituted that it can be at any time detached and placed in the charge of any other Minister without inconvenience.

The Department must be capable of advising the Secretary of State on all matters connected with Egypt, and must act as the channel between him and the Egyptian Government, but it will in no sense form a portion of the regular Foreign Office. It is even advisable to keep the offices of the two bodies entirely separate. The management of the foreign relations of Egypt will naturally continue to form a part of the ordinary business of the Foreign Office.

In addition to the duties of the Department towards the Secretary of State, it will act the representative of the Egyptian Government in England, obtaining all information required by that body, carrying on negotiations on industrial, legal, financial, and other matters, and deal with all questions of British personnel, appointments, leave, &c.

In this connection it must be remembered that the amount of Egyptian business now transacted by the Foreign Office will only form a small portion of that which will pass through the hands of the new office.

It is almost certain that in future Parliament will take a deeper interest in Egyptian affairs, and it will be no longer possible for the British Government to hold, as in the past, that the responsibility for Egyptian administration rests principally on the shoulders of the Egyptian Government.

Sir A. Webb transacts a certain amount of business for the Egyptian Government, principally that connected with the Egyptian railways and War Office, and there are several other agents of a less official character. It has also been customary in Egypt for years past to deal direct with many of those in Great Britain who have business with the Egyptian Government, though the lack of competent representatives in London has been often very inconvenient. Naturally the Foreign Office could not be employed on such matters, and practically it was only used for business which involved communication by cypher. All this work will be dealt with by the new Department. Such a general agency has been long wanted, and the question was raised as long ago as 1902, but for political reasons the matter has always been deferred.

The Egyptian Educational Mission in Great Britain would also be absorbed in the Department.

The composition of the new Department must naturally be governed by the work to be carried out. It is all-important, however, to avoid the common initial error of over-staffing, which makes neither for efficiency nor economy. Another reason for beginning with as small a staff as possible is that, as in all new Departments, it is impossible to predict in what directions it will grow until some experience has been gained.

The Chief of the Department, representing, as he will, a country more important in political position, population, and wealth than some of the small independent States of Europe, must have direct access to the Secretary of State. It will be better if he is not called by a title which will give rise to any confusion as to his position. As he and his Department are only placed under the Foreign Secretary as a temporary measure, any title must be avoided which implies that he is an integral part of the Foreign Office.

It is suggested that he should be called simply the Director of the Egyptian Department, though in pay and position he should rank at least with Under-Secretaries.

As he may at a later period be charged with more extended functions in regard to the Near East, he should be selected from amongst those who have had long administrative experience in Eastern countries and who have filled high positions, if possible, in more than one of them. For the reasons given above, it is important that he should not be selected from amongst the Foreign Office officials.

The Department to start with might be divided into three sections. The first to be called the Political. This would deal with those matters dealt with by the Arab Bureau in Cairo and with the internal political affairs of Egypt.

The second section, to be called the Administrative Section, would deal with questions concerning the administration of Egypt, legislation, finance, internal government, irrigation, legal matters, education (including the Educational Mission), public health, agriculture, &c., &c.

The third section, to be termed the Agency Section, would carry out all business matters on behalf of the Egyptian Government, purchases, contracts, &c.

A legal adviser, if possible with Egyptian experience, should be retained to assist the Department when required.

At first one official for each of the first two sections might be appointed, whilst for the present Sir A. Webb's staff could carry on the duties of the third. As the work develops and increases the staff must be added to where the need is felt.

In regard to the personnel, when an increase becomes necessary the principle which should be adhered to, as far as possible, is that the staff should be a judicious mixture of officials drawn from the British Civil Service, who understand the government of this country, and Anglo-Egyptian officials who will supply the personal and accurate knowledge of Egypt which will be required. These latter, and it is a point to which importance is attached, will only serve in the Department for a limited period, say two years. When this time expires they will revert to the Egyptian Service and their places will be taken by others. In this way the specialist knowledge at the disposal of the British Government will be kept up to date and the officials sent back will have a broader view of questions than they would have had had they remained in Egypt. This system will also tend to lessen any friction which may arise between the Department and the Civil Service in Egypt.

I would urge that if it is intended to give effect to this or any similar project it is essential that the matter should be taken up at once.

Minutes.

Lord Hardinge,

I submit herewith my observations on Lord E. Cecil's note regarding the future administration of Egypt. In view of the fact that a variety of questions affecting Egypt have recently been raised, it is desirable that the Foreign Office should be afforded the fullest information, with regard to the present situation in that country from all authoritative sources. Apart from Lord E. Cecil and myself, who have had opportunities of expressing our views, there are now in London the Advisers

to the Egyptian Ministries of Public Works and Education, also Sir M. Cheetham and Mr. Storrs, and I would strongly urge that they should be given an opportunity of expressing their opinion.

R. G.

September 2, 1917.

FUTURE ADMINISTRATION OF EGYPT.

The progress of Egypt during the last 30 years, from a condition of bankruptcy and anarchy, to one of stable government and great economic prosperity, forms the most striking instance of the success of British methods of administration. This success, achieved under the Foreign Office in the face of unexampled difficulties, has not been equalled in any of our other Colonies and Dependencies. It is due in large measure to the wise policy adopted of trusting to the men on the spot and of affording them a whole-hearted support. Lord E. Cecil refers to the only departure from this rule, when an attempt was made to dictate a policy from London during the early days of Sir E. Gorst's régime, but this period was by no means the brightest page in the history of our administration of the country.

At the present time Egypt is administered under a mixture of ordinary and military law by Sir R. Wingate in concert with the G.O.C. I am in full agreement with Lord E. Cecil, that at the end of the war the system of Home Control over the Government of Egypt must necessarily be regularised, although I hope that it will not be unduly extended. Full Official Reports must be received at the Foreign Office in regard to the situation in and administration of the country, instead of the voluminous private letters with which Sir W. Wingate now keeps us informed. It should be remembered that the very detailed annual reports from the Residency have only been discontinued since the beginning of the war.

If eventually we have to undertake the administration of Mesopotamia, that country, Egypt and Aden should be administered by a special department of the Foreign Office. But as regards Mesopotamia, it has been decided that the military situation does not justify an attempt to place the civil administration of the country on a more regular footing, nor even the dispatch of the proposed mission to study the local situation, and the country remains for the present under purely military control. In Egypt we are following the policy of giving Sir R. Wingate full support and as free a hand as possible. I trust that this policy will be maintained until the end of the war, and that no attempt will be made to hamper him or to add to his difficulties by increased interference or control from London.

Lord E. Cecil urges that, leaving Mesopotamia aside, a Department should be set up at once for Egypt with Political, Administrative and Agency sections. This proposal may appear attractive in theory, but I do not think it would be justified in practice. At present the ordinary routine work in the Foreign Office connected with Egypt cannot take up more than a few hours a week. Unless we call on Egypt for reports on Political and Administrative questions and attempt to re-organise the Egyptian administration from London, I cannot see how the Political and Administrative sections could justify their existence. Lord R. Cecil in a recent minute remarked that a reference in a memorandum of mine to the need of reforms in the Ministries of Finance and Interior indicated that increased control from London was required. I would respectfully point out that all such reforms must originate in Egypt if they are to be successful. When proposals for such reforms are received from Egypt, they can be considered here, if necessary, by a competent committee. But the Egyptian authorities have their hands full at present with the new Judicature Law, which is being considered, as the reports from Cairo come in, by a special legal committee already appointed, and in Mr. Hurst we already possess a most competent legal advisor with special knowledge of Egyptian problems. As regards the Agency section, Sir A. Webb's office deals with Egyptian Government contracts for railway material, coal, stores, &c. I should like to know whether Sir R. Wingate and the Egyptian Government as a whole consider that there is anything to be gained by bringing this Office or the Educational Mission under the new special department in London. I greatly doubt it!

Lord E. Cecil's present proposals involve the entire elimination of the Foreign Office from administration of Egypt, which is to be undertaken by a separate Department only nominally attached to this Office, and under an independent chief having direct access to the Secretary of State. They represent the feeling of personal dissatisfaction with the Foreign Office which has always animated and has been freely expressed by Lord E. Cecil, and which was, to a certain extent, shared by the late High Commissioner. They do not represent the feeling of the native elements who cherish the connection with the Foreign Office, nor of the present High Commissioner, nor of the other branches of the Egyptian Government, which appreciate and are perfectly satisfied with the Foreign Office administration. Sir M. MacDonald, Mr. Dunlop, and the late Judicial Adviser (who are now in London) would bear me out in this.

While agreeing with Lord E. Cecil that a new Department should be formed in the Foreign Office to control Egypt at the end of the war, I disagree altogether with his recommendation that this Department should be only nominally attached to the Foreign Office, and that its chief should be independent of the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Lord E. Cecil presupposes that at the end of the war international problems in regard to Egypt will cease, and that it will be possible for the new special department to settle down to the purely internal administration of the country. I do not believe that this forecast is in accordance with the true facts of the case. Egypt always has been, and will remain a cosmopolitan country, in which questions of foreign subjects and interests will be constantly to the fore. Great stress was laid on this feature by Lord Cromer in his book and in his annual reports, and it accounts for his and Sir W. Brunyate's idea that the legislative body in Egypt should be internationalised. It will be remembered that the High Commissioner is also Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will he, in this capacity, be under the Foreign Office, or the head of the new separate department, or is it proposed that he should be under the former for Foreign Affairs, and the latter for Administration? The frontiers of Egypt with Tripoli and Abyssinia, and the control from Cairo of the Hedjaz and the Arabian coasts will give rise to constant questions of foreign relations. The abolition of the capitulations, and of the Caisse de la Dette, and the acceptance by the Powers of the new Judicature Law, &c., will have to be negotiated by the Foreign Office, and will engage diplomacy for years to come. The treatment of French commercial interests in Egypt should depend on the treatment of British commercial interests in Morocco, and this entails supervision by the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office. Last but not least, what will be Turkey's relations with Egypt in the future? Instead of the old Turkish High Commissioner, there will presumably be a Consul-General in Cairo. And the full support of the Foreign Office will be required to prevent his Consulate from becoming a centre of nationalist and Pan-Islamic agitation. In former days the German Agency was also a centre of anti-British propaganda and intrigue. Will not this continue with a German Consulate? Certainly for many years to come Egypt with its mixed population and interests, and its political importance, must remain a field for diplomatic struggles and problems.

To sum up, I submit that if Mesopotamia falls to our administration, there will be full scope for the establishment of a Near Eastern Department for Mesopotamia, Egypt and Aden, under a Head of Department, or even under an Under-Secretary. This department should be recruited, partly from the Foreign Office and partly from the Egyptian and Mesopotamian or other administrative services. If Mesopotamia remains in Turkish hands and we are solely concerned with the government of Egypt and Aden, a considerably smaller department will be required, but it should be recruited in the same manner. In either case the department should form part of the Foreign Office and its Under-Secretary, or Head of Department, should be under the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. If and when it becomes evident that we must administer Mesopotamia, the department should be constituted at once. If Egypt alone is concerned, preparations should be made for constituting a department at the end of the war, but its actual establishment might well wait until then, the control remaining as at present. There is already an official in the War Department who deals with Egypt, but it would be advisable to entrust this duty to a more senior man. From enquiries I have made, there does not appear to be anyone on the Foreign Office staff, at present, who would

be available to give up his whole time to Egyptian affairs. Lord E. Cecil's strictures regarding the administrative incompetence of the Foreign Office point to an immediate change, but I may be permitted to observe that at the present moment, and probably until the end of the war, there will be a Permanent Under-Secretary, who has been Viceroy of India, and an Assistant Under-Secretary with 10 years' experience of Egyptian administration, both in normal times and, as it is at present, under military law, during which latter period he represented the G.O.C. with the native administration.

As regards the future Head of the new Near Eastern or Egyptian Department, I believe that it will be found necessary that he should have some knowledge of foreign politics; further, as Egyptian and Arab notables, few of whom speak English, will expect to be received by him when they visit London, it is desirable that he should possess a good colloquial knowledge of French and, if possible, of the Arabic language also.

R. G.

September 2, 1917.

The whole case of Lord E. Cecil's memorandum is, as he himself admits, dependent upon whether the need of a more effective control of Egyptian affairs is accepted or not.

The combination of Foreign Office control of policy with a free hand for local recommendation of measures is the system under which Egypt has been gradually brought into the British Empire and has reached its present flourishing condition. That system has, up to date, been approved by Anglo-Egyptian opinion. The question now raised is one of such far-reaching importance that the dictum of Lord E. Cecil alone is not sufficient to carry conviction, and before any decision is taken the opinions of those responsible for the administration in Egypt and of others in England who have a fundamental knowledge gained by experience of the system of Government in that country should be invoked.

Consequently the first question that arises is whether a more effective control from home than that exercised at present over the administration of Egypt is either desired by Parliament and public opinion or is to the advantage of the Empire and of Egyptian interests in their present phase. As far as Parliamentary control is concerned it is difficult to see how the scheme propounded by Lord E. Cecil makes it more effective than now. Parliamentary control does not depend upon whether a department is inside or outside of the walls of the Foreign Office, while administrative control is more likely to be efficient when exercised by a body experienced in the tactful handling of delicate matters than by a hybrid body recruited from Heaven knows where and with but little or no such experience. Whether the present control of Egypt is "defective and inadequate" or not the fact remains that Egypt has now been in British occupation for 35 years, and has developed under our administration into one of the most prosperous and contented of countries. It must be conceded that the progress and development of Egypt during that period constitute one of the brightest pages in the records of the Foreign Office. In writing this I have no desire to claim that this prosperity and contentment are primarily due to Foreign Office control, although the Foreign Office and Diplomatic service have contributed a considerable proportion of officers to the little band of administrators who have succeeded in making the Government of Egypt a success. The Foreign Office has never claimed to be a body organised for the detailed control of administration carried on in foreign lands, but it has the advantage, perhaps from the training of its members, of being able to assimilate its views to foreign conditions and thus to inspire sympathy and confidence with the minimum of interference in administrative details. This has succeeded admirably in the past, and it is interesting to note that a very large slice of Africa now under the control of the Colonial Office, consisting of Somaliland, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Nigeria, has during a stage of transition been under the control of the Foreign Office with beneficial results. Egypt is still passing through that transitional period which will not have closed until a definite decision has been taken as to the future status of Egypt and the Sudan, whether as a Protectorate or as an annexed territory, which in view of the Sultan's health cannot be long deferred, and until agreements have been concluded with foreign Powers for the abolition of the Caisse de la Dette, the Capitulations and extraterritorial jurisdiction which now hamper the progressive development of Egypt.

These are questions with which the Foreign Office alone, from its long and intimate experience of such questions in Turkey and elsewhere, is competent to deal, but they will certainly require at least another five years for negotiation and solution, entailing as they do the preparation of codes, the creation of new tribunals and the co-operation of foreign Powers. When these have been satisfactorily settled it will be sufficient time to raise the question whether the period of transaction has not terminated and whether a new control should be set up to take the place of the Foreign Office. Nothing could be more inopportune than any such administrative change at the present moment, when the political situation in Syria and Arabia is in the melting pot and the chief concern of our policy in the Middle East, conducted as it is through the Residency at Cairo, is to resist foreign encroachments and the pretensions of France and Italy in Arabia and the Red Sea. The same situation prevails in Western Arabia, where we have to play the rôle of mediator between the Italians and the Idris.

As for the responsibility of England for the internal government of Egypt, the change of status caused by the Proclamation of a Protectorate has made but little alteration. The responsibility was great before, and is equally so now. The Administration will also remain practically the same until the changes mentioned above have been negotiated at the end of the war and put into execution. No new and costly machinery is needed at present. The political control and administration of Egypt are working smoothly and effectively. There is no agitation, and little crime, and the people are very prosperous and contented. There is therefore no immediate necessity for any change.

The High Commissioner, Sir R. Wingate, is a thoroughly experienced administrator, in whom the Government have confidence, while the record of his administration in the Sudan is remarkable. Thanks to his influence and popularity, he has been able, with a handful of troops, to maintain peace in a fanatical country, while the Mohammedan world was seething with unrest owing to the entry of Turkey into the war.

It is stated in the Memorandum that "the control of Egyptian affairs is intimately bound up with other Near Eastern problems." This is perfectly true, but the association goes further than Lord E. Cecil seems to be aware. It begins with the European Colonies in North Africa, and extends through Abyssinia to the Red Sea littoral and Arabia. Egyptian affairs are nearly affected by our relations with France and Italy in all these countries. Whatever may be the future of Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Syria, Cairo tends to become more than ever the centre of British interests in the Near East, and the point from which we influence the rulers of the Hedjez and other important Mohammedan countries. Many of these Chiefs will be subjected to competing European influences in one way or another, and cannot, for a very long time ahead, be effectively dealt with by any other Imperial organisation than the Foreign Office. Yet the Memorandum contemplates the withdrawal from the Foreign Office of the Arab Bureau in Cairo (the main Intelligence Office) and its subordination to the new and independent Department. This can only mean a complete divorce between Arab policy and the Foreign Office. Further comment seems needless.

There remains the question of Turkey. Egypt will in any case be sensitive to what may happen in Asiatic Turkey. If the Ottoman power survives Egypt will be deeply influenced by events there. Sir R. Wingate considers this influence so important as to be likely to force us to annexation in order to prevent Turkish intrigue in Egypt. Everything here also seems to point to the necessity for the treatment of our interests in the two countries by the same Department.

Analysis of the Memorandum gives the impression that its author is preoccupied with the future of Egyptian internal administration. If this is so, it is all the more curious that there should be no mention throughout the Memorandum of the existence of the foreign colonies in Egypt. Their importance is well known. It is brought out in a Note by Sir W. Brunyate enclosed in a recent despatch from Cairo on the question of the annexation of Egypt. The leading business and professional men in Egypt, who provide the brains of the country, are drawn from a population of about 200,000 Europeans including the British colony. The question of the right government of Egypt must be misjudged unless the problem of co-operation with these people is faced in connection with that of educating and using, when possible, Egyptian native elements. Such co-operation must inevitably be best understood by the Foreign Office. Present developments are eminently satisfactory. A commission is sitting in which, under the guidance of

a British Chairman, a Frenchman and an Italian are taking a leading part in the introduction of British principles into Egyptian law and administration. The work on which they are engaged is probably the most important reform since the institution of the Mixed Courts. We have, moreover, still to devise some method of giving the European colonies some voice in Egyptian legislation, a problem for which Lord Cromer and Lord Kitchener proposed solutions now out of date; these colonies are likely to increase in numbers and weight and, if they are properly handled, their influence should be a counterpoise to excesses of native feeling.

As to the question of the modifications which it is desired to introduce into the character of British control over Egyptian internal administration, it would seem that Lord E. Cecil dislikes the almost autocratic position of the High Commissioner locally and wishes to reduce his powers. Equally objectionable, in his view, though its existence is not mentioned, must be the Political Department or new Foreign Office in Cairo, which, as an adjunct of the High Commissioner, has now been developed by the grouping together with the previous Agency Staff of the Arab Bureau, the Sudan Agency, an embryo Intelligence Department, and the Desert Administration in process of growth. This central office plays a very large part in the direction of the Egyptian departments. Matters concerning more than one of these are, in view of the weakness of the Council of Ministers, necessarily referred to it. Its personnel now contains, in practice, British members of the Anglo-Egyptian Service who have been attached for convenience as *officiers de liaison*. Reading between the lines of the Memorandum the intention appears to be to arrest this development which alone permits the British Representative to supervise the whole Administration. The management of internal affairs would be altered by obtaining more decisions from London over the head of the High Commissioner. This would be accompanied by a weakening of the personal influence and ascendancy of His Majesty's Representative over both Egyptians and British Civil Servants which has hitherto been the main factor of our control. I think such weakening would be a mistake and that the High Commissioner's authority should if anything be strengthened. The Protectorate is proceeding on the basis of the unwritten law that the High Commissioner's advice must be taken. A number of organic changes must no doubt be made before or after the end of the war by Supreme Authority in England as part of the establishment of the Protectorate, and their effect will be to reduce friction with Egyptians, but a situation will still remain in which the intervention of the British Representative is constantly needed. Personal Government of this kind, compatible with perfect control from home where necessary, is understood in Egypt, and has, I understand, proved a flexible instrument of Imperial policy. The sketch of historical development given in the first few paragraphs of the Memorandum does not appear to be correct. We probably intervened in Egyptian local affairs as much as was feasible or desirable so long as our action in the country was capable of being made a cause for complaint by one or more first class Powers. But a large measure of discretionary power was not given to any Agent and Consul General without design. This power should not be impaired so long as it is exercised on the general lines laid down from home.

As for the scheme propounded by Lord E. Cecil, I see no advantage in it unless it is desired to create new posts and a costly machinery, of which there is no real need. It is proposed to create a new Department and to place it under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but to locate it outside the walls of the Foreign Office and to remove it from any kind of Foreign Office control. One may well ask why the new Department should be placed under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who is to be deprived of the services of his own expert advisers. It is even stated that it is important that the officer to be appointed head of the Department should not be selected from among the Foreign Office officials in spite of the fact that the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service are the only public services in England that have had any connection with Egypt and that they contain several first-rate officers of long experience in Egypt and with knowledge of the language. The staff that it is proposed to create is to be composed of officials "drawn from the British Civil Service who understand the Government of *this* country and Anglo-Egyptian officials." It is difficult to know why an understanding of the Government of this country should primarily be required from such officials. Some knowledge of Egypt and Egyptian local conditions would be far more useful. Such knowledge is already in the possession of many officials employed in and under the Foreign Office, but is not ordinarily to be found amongst the qualifications of other ranks of the British Civil Service.

The existence of the Egyptian Agency in London under Sir A. Webb, subject to the orders and control of the Egyptian Government, seems to be the stand-by of the whole scheme, and I can only say that from my experience in India of the operations of the Department of the Director of Supplies in the India Office in supplying the needs of India, the example is not one that I would wish to see imitated. I am informed that the Agency is conducted to the entire satisfaction of the Egyptian Government, and it will be far wiser in every way to leave well alone.

As for the educational system, it is more likely to work well under the paternal control of the Egyptian Government than under a bureaucratic Department in London.

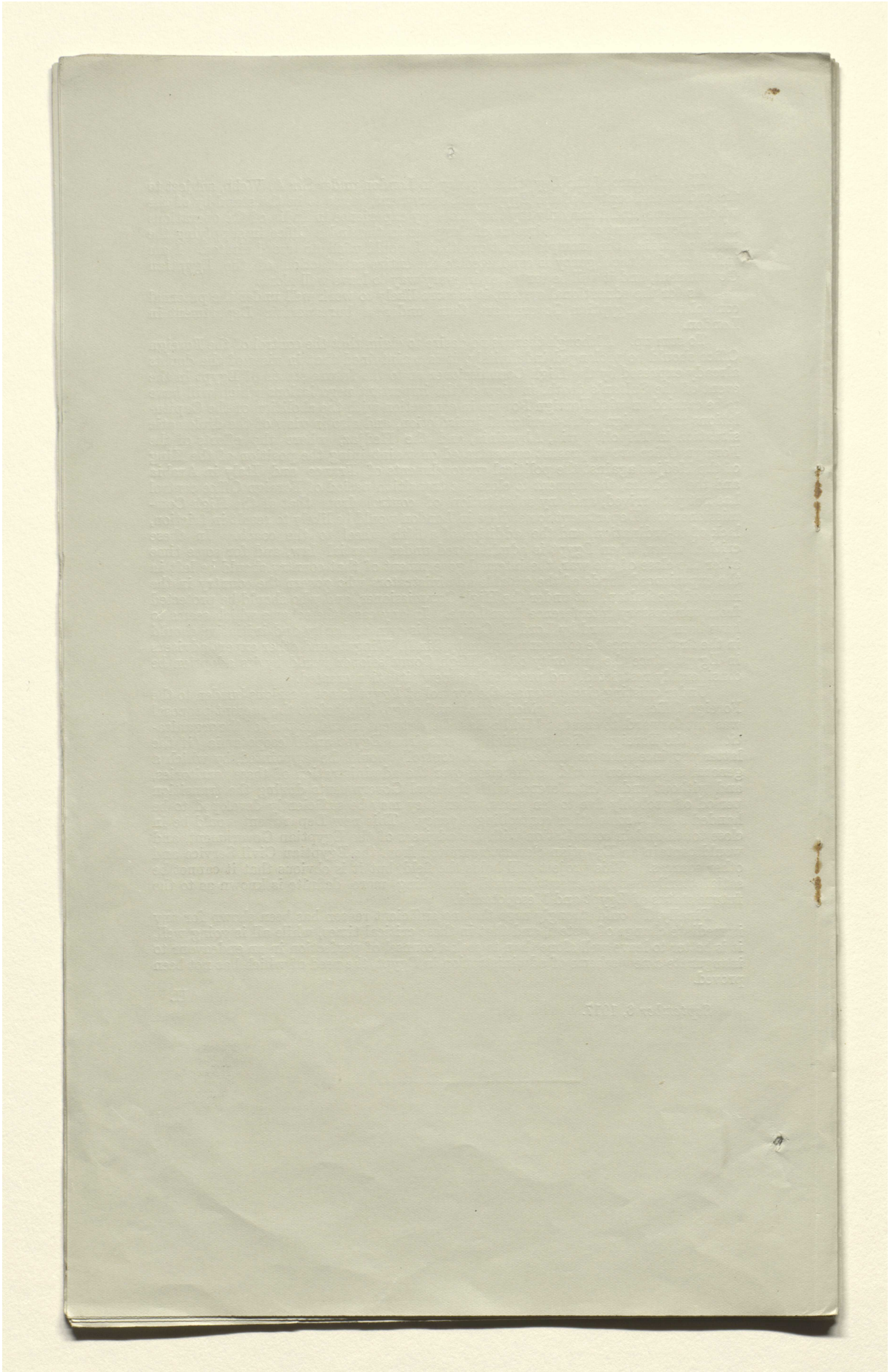
To sum up. Although there is no desire to claim that the control of the Foreign Office should be prolonged indefinitely, it is maintained that in view of the doubts already expressed by the High Commissioner as to the future status of Egypt in the event of the Sultan's death, in view of the important negotiations which will have to be carried on with Foreign Powers in connection with the abolition of the Capitulations and foreign extra-territorial jurisdiction, and also in view of the diplomatic situation in Tripoli, Syria, Abyssinia, and the Hedjaz, where the efforts of the Foreign Office are at present concentrated on maintaining the position of the King of the Hedjaz against the political encroachments of France and Italy in Arabia and the Red Sea, the moment to close the transition period of Foreign Office control has not yet arrived, and any substitution of control from that of the High Commissioner to a Department somewhere in London would be likely to result in friction, lack of co-ordination, and the addition of a fifth wheel to the coach. In these critical times, when Egypt is administered under martial law, and for some time after the close of the war, the internal government of that country should be left in the experienced hands of the capable administrators who govern the country in the name of the Sultan, but under the High Commissioner, and who should be protected from unnecessary interference from home. In any case, the scheme which seems to have been put forward by Lord E. Cecil on his own authority and initiative should in the first instance be commented upon by Sir R. Wingate and other expert advisers in Egypt, since the authority of the High Commissioner would by its adoption be considerably restricted, and practically a new situation created.

Under existing circumstances the control of Egypt is not a serious burden to the Foreign Office, but it was decided some months ago, long before the present proposal was put forward, to create a Middle East Department in and as part of the organisation of the Foreign Office, to which experts from Egypt and Mesopotamia (if the latter province remains under British control) would be appointed, by which a general supervision would be exercised over the administration of these territories, and without undue interference with the local Governments during the transition period of probably five to ten years, when they may be sufficiently developed to be handed over to some other controlling Agency. This new Department would be in close touch and in consultation with the advisers of the Egyptian Government, and would contain an Egyptian element recruited from the Egyptian Civil Service and other sources. This project still holds the field, but it is obvious that it cannot be satisfactorily put into execution until something more definite is known as to the future status of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Finally, I would strongly urge that no sufficient reason has been shown for any immediate change of system, and that in these critical times, while all is going well, it is better to leave well alone than to seek a counsel of perfection in an endeavour to inaugurate a new scheme of administration in Egypt, the need of which has not been proved.

H.

September 6, 1917.



EXTRACT



FROM.

11

WAR CABINET, 233.

*Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.,
on Friday, September 14, 1917, at 11.30 A.M.*

The Future
Government of
Egypt.

11. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum submitted by the Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which had been drawn up by Lord Edward Cecil, the Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government, and minutes thereon by Lord Hardinge of Penshurst and Sir Ronald Graham.

Lord Robert Cecil stated that when he first went to the Foreign Office he found considerable difficulty in getting papers dealing with Egypt, there being no proper organisation in the Foreign Office for obtaining any knowledge of, or dealing with, the many internal matters of Egyptian government. The main channels of communication with Egypt were private letters between Sir Reginald Wingate and Lord Hardinge. Lord Robert Cecil had considered the desirability of handing over the control of Egypt to some other office, such as the Colonial Office, but there appeared to be no existing office suitable. His brother, Lord Edward Cecil, came home in the spring to take up military duty, and informed him that from the Egyptian side he thought that there must be a lack of organisation at the British end, not so much in matters diplomatic as in matters administrative. Lord Robert Cecil stated that he felt considerable anxiety regarding this situation from the Parliamentary point of view. Supposing there were trouble in Egypt, we should have

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12

EXTRACT



FROM.

to take responsibility before the House of Commons, and to defend actions concerning the circumstances of which we had no knowledge. The whole position was irregular, and was the result of a system which had worked well in the days of Lord Cromer, when Egypt was nominally a Turkish province and we were merely advisers, but which could not possibly survive under the altered conditions of a British Protectorate and the growth of the demand for democratic control.

Sir Ronald Graham in his minute admitted that there must be large changes in the Egyptian Government as soon as martial law came to an end. Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that complicated legal matters were at this moment under consideration. In view of the fact that Egypt was becoming more and more the centre through which not merely Egypt, but the whole of Arabia and possibly Palestine and Mesopotamia would be managed, he regarded the matter as important and urgent, and suggested that a Committee should be established forthwith to investigate the whole question. He had thought that the question might be referred to the existing Middle-Eastern Committee, but was of opinion now that this Committee was far too big to deal satisfactorily with the matter.

Lord Curzon pointed out that the development of affairs in the Near and Middle East pointed to the possibility that an entirely new Department of State might become necessary. This Department could not be entirely separate from the Foreign Office, as many diplomatic questions gravitated round Egypt; for instance, the new independent Kingdom of Hedjaz. Lord Edward Cecil's paper raised the whole question of what we were accustomed to call the Middle East question, and how it was to be dealt with. A new grouping of countries was involved, with the attendant alteration of conditions, and the resulting problem could not be regarded as merely administrative.

Lord Milner stated that, from his own personal knowledge of Egypt, it was impossible to continue the existing system. He understood that great changes were going on in the Egyptian Government to-day of which he had no knowledge, and the establishment of our Protectorate made the reconsideration of the whole problem urgent. What was required was that what was going on inside Egypt should be known here, and to some extent controlled.

Mr. Barnes added that, from the Labour point of view, it was most desirable that he should be in a position to communicate to the more responsible Labour Leaders the British policy in the Near and Middle East, as up to the present the manifesto of the Independent Labour Party, which was demonstrably unsound, held the field.

The War Cabinet decided that—

A Committee, composed as follows:—

Mr. Balfour (*Chairman*),
Lord Curzon,
Lord Milner,

should be set up forthwith to examine all the points raised in Lord Edward Cecil's Memorandum, and report to the War Cabinet.

Lord Curzon, the Chairman of the Middle-Eastern Committee, undertook to provide a statement of the work of the Committee, including a general statement of British and *Entente* policy in the Middle East for the information of Mr. Barnes.

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X

13



Lord Curzon 9

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SECRET.
E.A.C./1st Mins.

WAR CABINET.

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

.....

The First Meeting of the Committee held in
Mr. Balfour's Room at the Foreign Office on Monday,
September 24th, 1917, at 6.20 p.m.

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. A.J. Balfour, O.M., M.P.,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. (IN THE CHAIR).

The Rt. Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.,
Lord President of the Council.

The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.,
Ronald Storrs Esq., C.M.G., SECRETARY.

.....

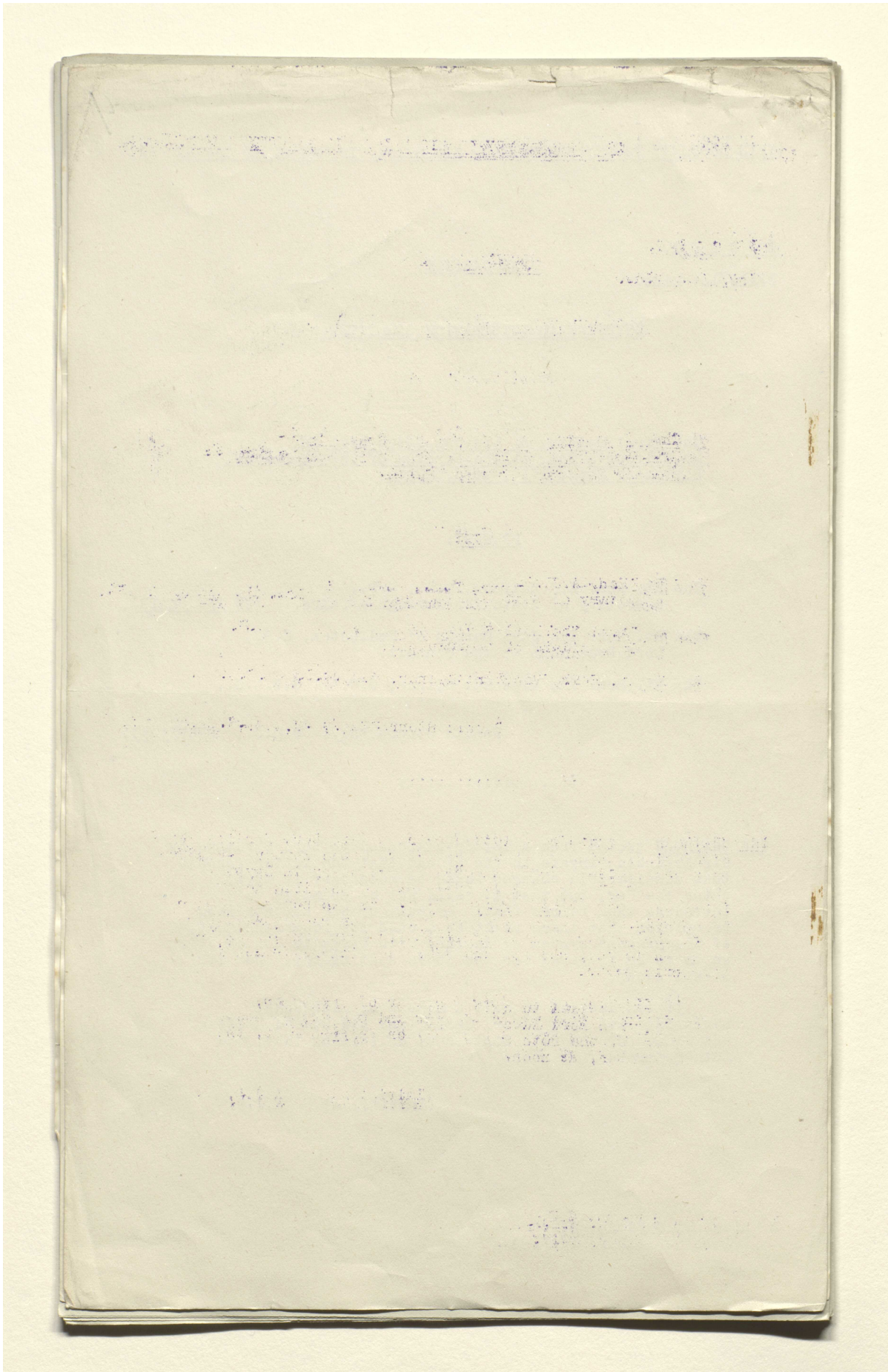
THE CHAIRMAN quoted from a letter addressed to Lord Hardinge by Sir Reginald Wingate to the effect that the latter foresaw that considerable changes would be necessary in Egypt after the War, but that it would not be possible to introduce them before that. Mr. Balfour was nevertheless of opinion that there might be a case for re-arrangement of the present system of dealing with Egypt in London so as to be prepared for the above contingency, when it should occur.

It was decided to call a number of witnesses, beginning with Lord Edward Cecil, and the Second Meeting was fixed for the 25th September, or failing that, the 26th September, at noon.

(Initialed) A.J.B.

2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
24th September, 1917.

14



Lord Curzon

(14)

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S E C R E T.

E.A.C./2nd.Mins.

WAR CABINET.

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The Second Meeting of the Committee held in
Mr. Balfour's Room at the Foreign Office on
Wednesday, September 26th, 1917 at 4 p.m.

PRESENT.

The Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P., (IN THE CHAIR).
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Rt. Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.,
Lord President of the Council.

The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.,

The following also attended:-

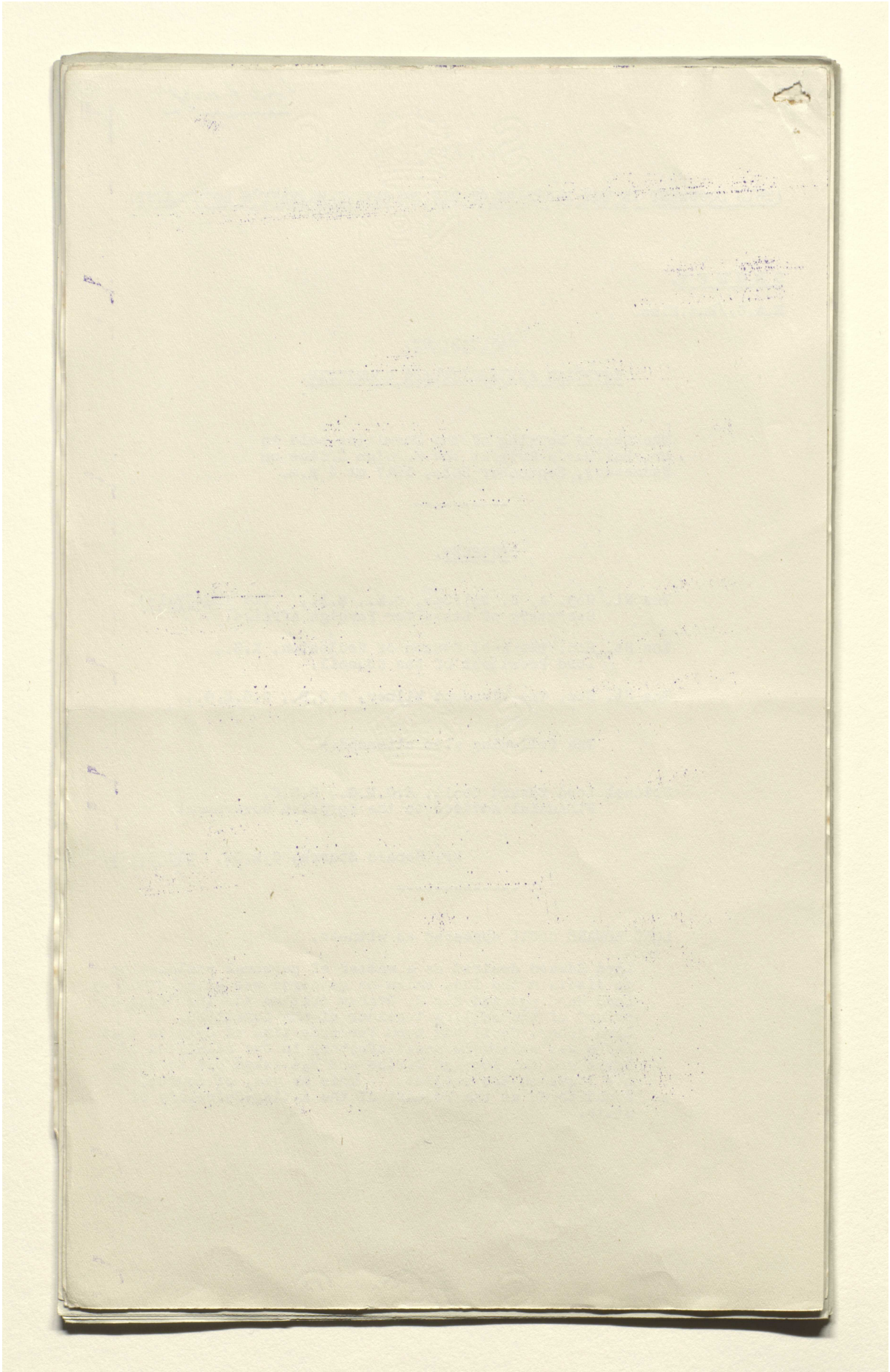
Colonel Lord Edward Cecil, K.C.M.G., D.S.O.,
Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government.

Mr. Ronald Storrs, C.M.G., SECRETARY.

LORD EDWARD CECIL appeared as witness.

Lord Edward desired as a matter of personal explanation to disclaim the idea which he gathered was entertained by Lord Hardinge and Sir R. Graham that he was the "fons et origo" of the calling together of the Committee. Lord Robert Cecil had been for some time of opinion that there was something unsatisfactory in the relations of Egypt and the Foreign Office and had asked him to write his views on the subject. This he was, of course, bound to do at the request of the Acting-Secretary of State.

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-2-

THE CHAIRMAN stated that in his opinion the chief divergence between the two points of view appeared to be a different estimate of the quantity and quality of Foreign Office business which would be necessary in the Egypt of the future. If, as seemed possible, there would be a considerable quantity of such business, would the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, unaided by his permanent staffs, be sufficient as the sole link between the Foreign Office and the Egyptian Administration?

LORD EDWARD CECIL replied that Diplomatic affairs would remain under the Foreign Office.

LORD CURZON pointed out that this entailed a divorce between Egypt and Foreign Office affairs, in which case the position of the Secretary of State would be unenviable; he did not see why there should not be an independent Department inside the Foreign Office. Although the recruiting of this Department would not be on the same system as that of other Foreign Office Departments, there was no reason why it should not come under the permanent Under-Secretary of State.

LORD EDWARD CECIL explained that his idea was that the Department as he saw it, directly and immediately under the Secretary of State was only a temporary expedient to remain in vigour until the possible formation of a Near Eastern Government Department, which might enjoy the status of a Ministry.

LORD MILNER cited the analogy of the Sudan which, though under the Foreign Office, so far as Foreign Affairs were concerned, was for administrative purposes practically independent.

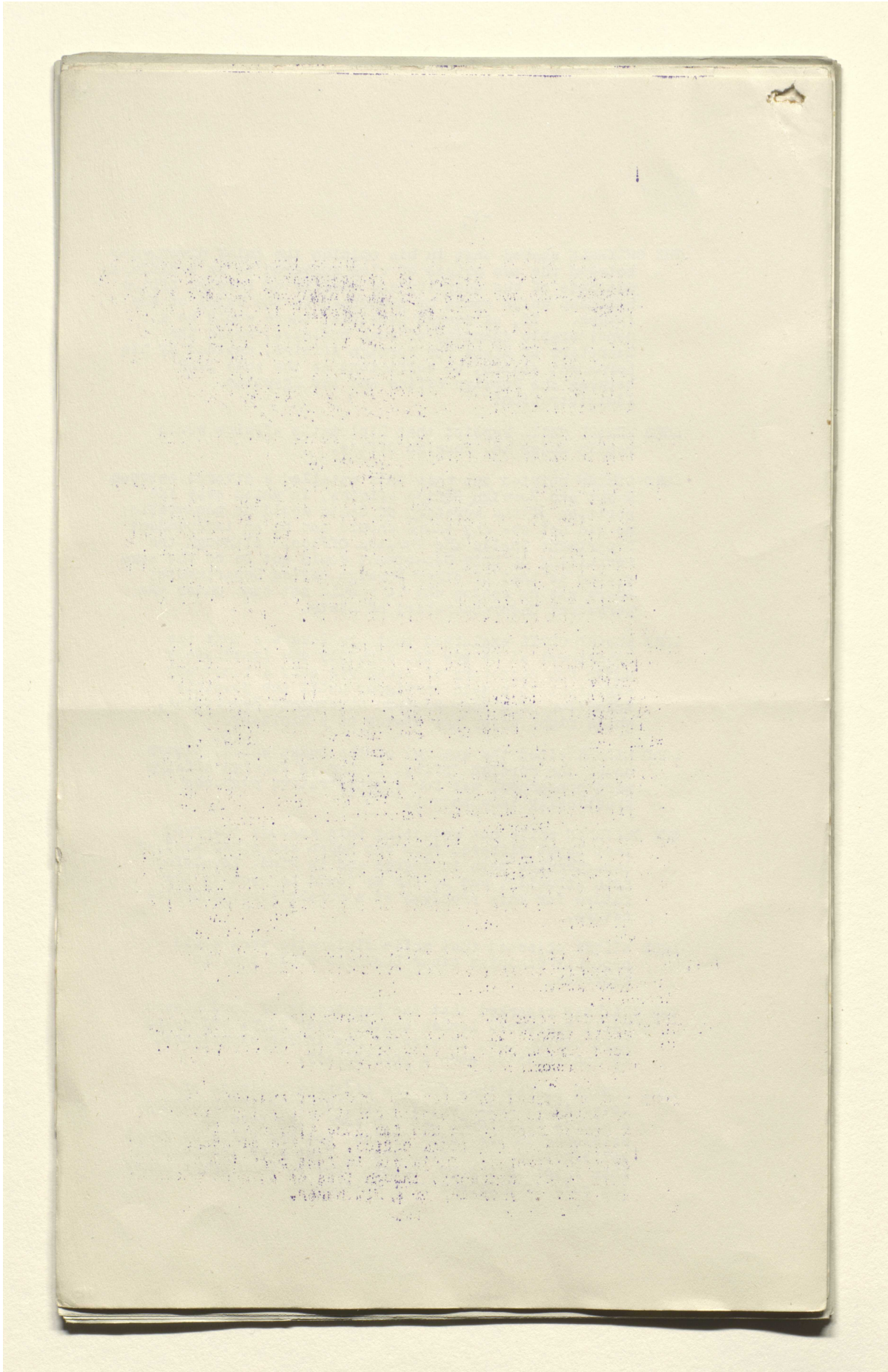
THE CHAIRMAN while not rejecting this analogy observed that Egypt differed from the Sudan and other similar dependencies both in degree and in kind, involving both actually, and as far as could be seen in the future far more problems of a purely Foreign Office nature.

LORD MILNER objected that while diplomatic work would probably diminish other business would tend to increase.

THE CHAIRMAN remarked that the hypothesis of Lord Edward Cecil increased London control over Egypt and asked Lord Curzon how, in view of his Indian experience, he contemplated such a possibility.

LORD CURZON stated that for the ordinary business of Government, India enjoyed considerable independence. A Stores Department had for some time been in existence in the India Office, and had given no great satisfaction. India was in fact more independent than Egypt in theory, though less so than Egypt under the rule of a Cromer or a Kitchener.

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-3-

LORD MILNER cited the Gezira irrigation scheme as necessitating a more or less specialist office. This kind of question would annually develop in quantity and complexity.

LORD EDWARD CECIL was of opinion that it was not realised what the state of Egypt would be at the end of the War when the Nationalists and malcontents were freed, the Press uncensored and the Legislative Council sitting, nor were the difficulties and problems which must then arise appreciated.

LORD CURZON agreed that the difficulties would be vastly increased but did not see why the Department that grappled with them should be outside the Foreign Office. Assuming we maintained our position in Mesopotamia, a new group of countries, possibly under a new Secretary of State as for India, would be necessary but this was not now the question. As a fact, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would in any case be responsible in the last resort. It was therefore necessary that a Department should be created to afford him the necessary knowledge and this Department with whatever machinery it might be constituted must be inside the Foreign Office.

THE CHAIRMAN accepted this idea so far as concerned Parliamentary necessities but was against undue extension of Foreign Office interference in the administration of the country.

LORD MILNER and LORD EDWARD CECIL disclaimed any such idea. Something analogous to a Colonial Representative was required and Lord Milner considered that such Official whether inside or outside the Foreign Office should be administrative and not diplomatic.

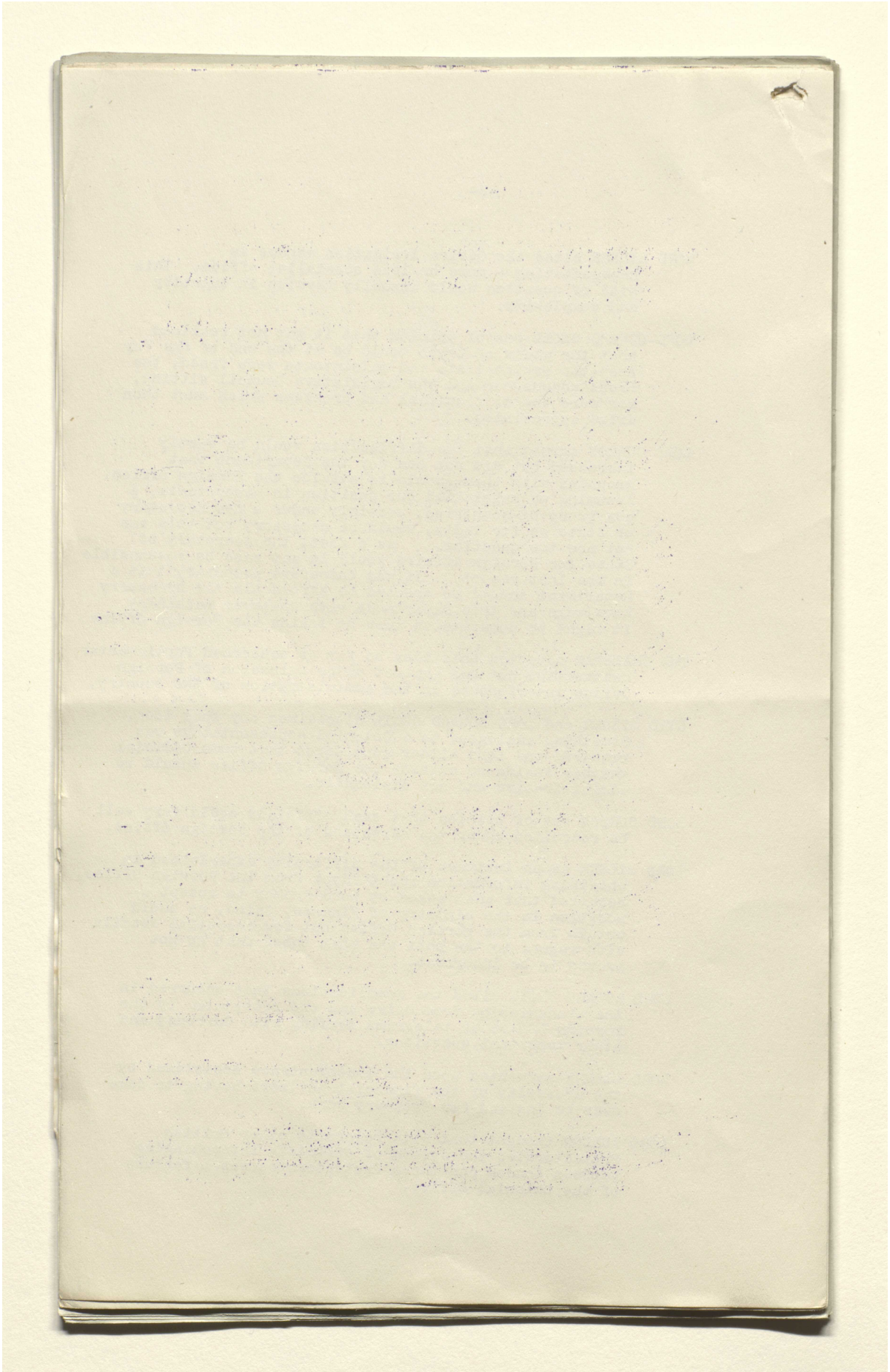
LORD CURZON was of opinion that such officials could very well be recruited under the direction of the Foreign Office.

LORD MILNER as an instance of the difficulty experienced in obtaining information about Egypt from the Foreign Office, recalled that when asked by Lord Cromer to accept a position in the Ministry of Finance, Cairo, he could obtain from the Foreign Office but few essential details with regard to the post and that those that he got proved to be incorrect.

LORD EDWARD CECIL cited the complications that occurred in the transmission from Cairo and the receipt by the Foreign Office of telegrams dealing with Currency and other important questions.

LORD MILNER commented upon the inconvenience occasioned by the necessity of the Financial Advisers having to come over to England for Treasury work.

LORD CURZON thought that with regard to other British Protectorates the system of officials interchanging between London and those Protectorates was a feature of the Colonial Office.



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THE CHAIRMAN was not sure of this and directed the Secretary to find out whether it was so.

LORD CURZON remarked with the concurrence of the Chairman that unless a new Secretary of State was created there was no other Ministry but the Foreign Office under which the Department could be placed.

LORD MILNER referred to a sentence in Sir Ronald Graham's Memorandum and asked whether Lord Edward Cecil agreed that there was not at present enough work to justify an Egyptian Department.

LORD EDWARD CECIL replied that it was true that comparatively little work came through the Foreign Office now, but much more was transacted through unofficial channels. It was certain that if the machinery was suitable much more business would with great advantage to both sides come through the Government channels. Besides the ordinary and current work it must be remembered that the whole constitution and internal government of Egypt was and must be in process of reconstruction. The legislative powers of the state must be entirely altered to enable laws to be safely applied to Foreigners. All past legislation needed revision and reconstruction. The Courts of Law would have to be remade; in fact, a complete change in the constitution and practice of the State was inevitable. On this new constitution the future welfare of Egypt depended and the action now taken might well influence Egyptian affairs for a century to come. It was especially advisable that all decisions now being arrived at on account of their great importance should be made with the full knowledge of H.B.M.G.

THE CHAIRMAN accepted the fact that new problems were being created and asked Lord Edward Cecil by whom he considered they should be solved.

LORD EDWARD CECIL replied that they should be solved by Egypt with the full cognizance and approval of His Majesty's Government. In reply to a question of Lord Curzon's he added that Sir Reginald Wingate had once expressed to him his opinion that a proper Egyptian Department was necessary.

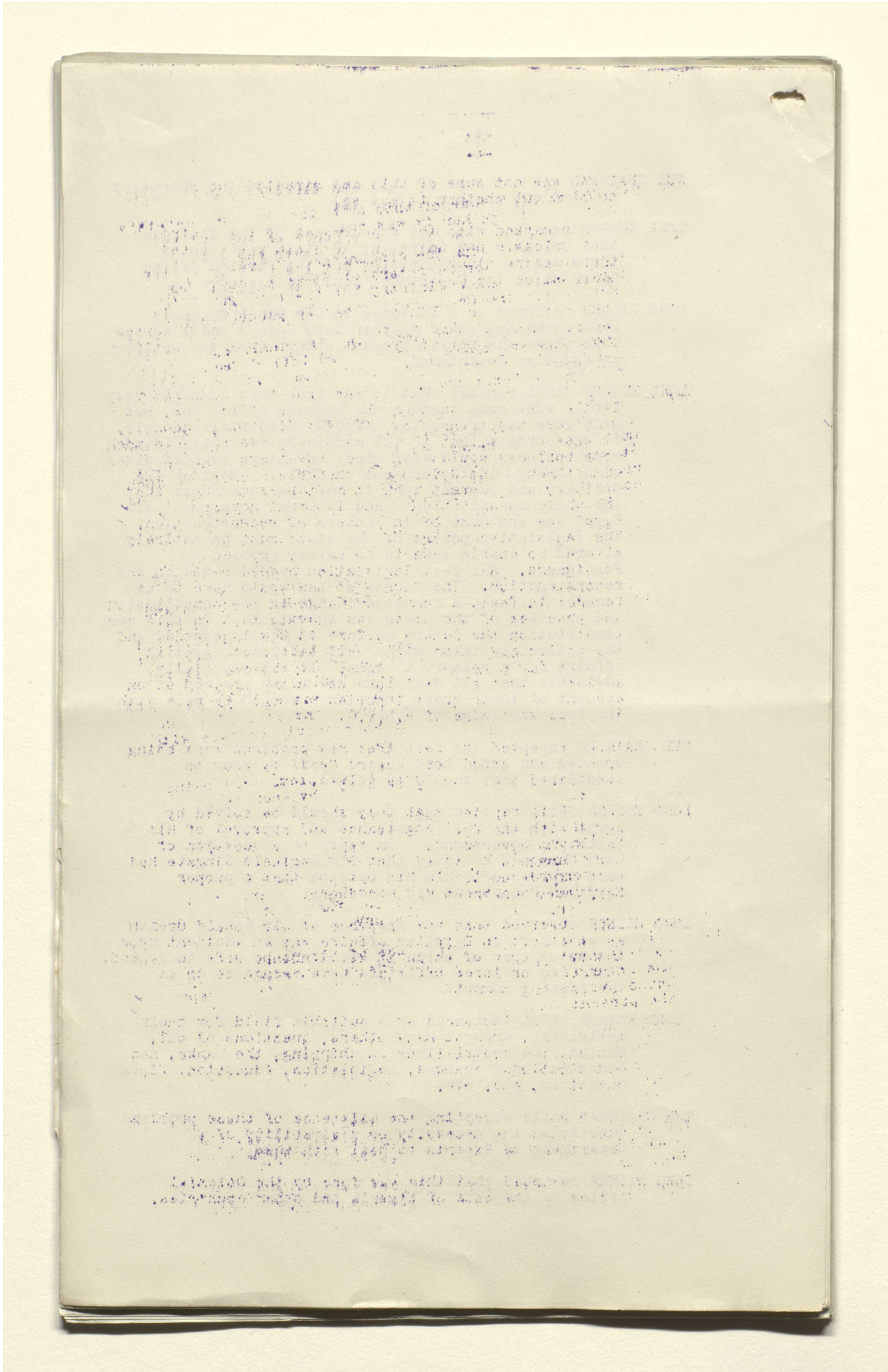
LORD MILNER observed that the presence of Sir Ronald Graham as an expert on Egyptian affairs was an accident upon the recurrence of which it would not be safe to depend. Would two or three officials have enough to do at the present moment?

LORD EDWARD CECIL instanced as a suitable field for their activities, amongst many others, questions of oil, cotton, the restrictions on shipping, the banks, new constitutional changes, legislation, education, fiscal questions, etc. etc.

THE CHAIRMAN while accepting the existence of these problems questioned the necessity or desirability of a Department of Experts to deal with them.

LORD MILNER remarked that this was done by the Colonial Office in the case of Nigeria and other countries.

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Reports and papers of the Egyptian Administration Committee [18r] (35/108)

-5-

LORD EDWARD CECIL considered that eventually about six officials at most would be necessary with expert knowledge upon Finance, Irrigation, the Ministries of the Interior, Education and Public Works.

LORD MILNER thought that as far as strictly Egyptian business was concerned three would be enough; dealing with (1) Finance, (2) Public Works and (3) the remaining branches of Administration.

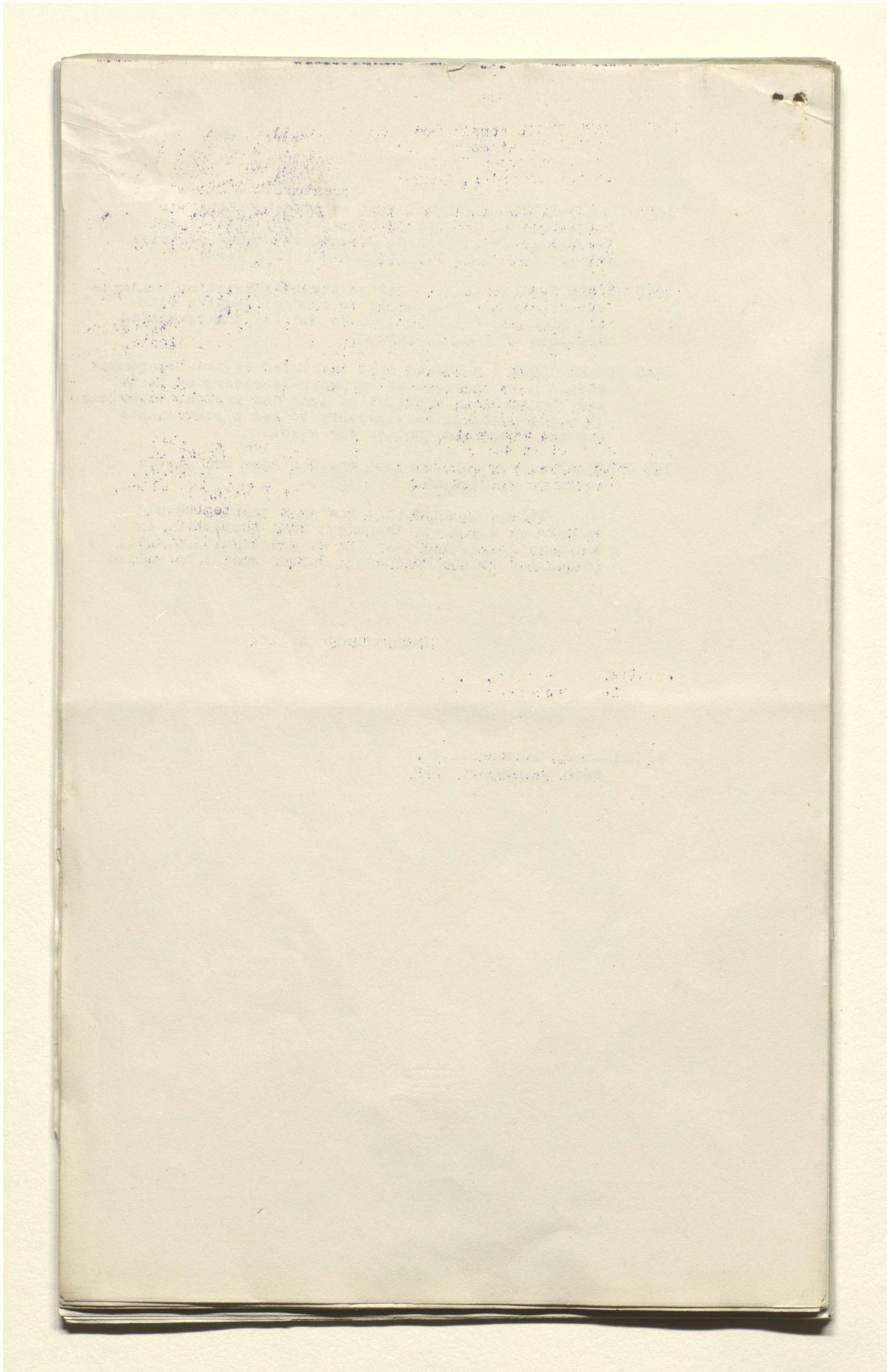
LORD EDWARD CECIL considered that the Chief of the Department should have the rank of an Under-Secretary of State and should be an official of long and various experience. It would probably be necessary to add a subordinate for the Sudan and another for Aden.

THE CHAIRMAN was of opinion that one for Aden and Arabia would be sufficient.

It was decided that the next Meeting should be held at 4 p.m. on Thursday, 27th September, in the same place, and that Sir M. Cheetham, K.C.M.G., Councillor to the Residency, Cairo, should be called.

(Initialed) A.J.B.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
26th September, 1917



Lora Curzon 10⁽¹⁹⁾

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S E C R E T.

E.A.C./3rd Mins.

WAR CABINET.

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The Third Meeting of the Committee held
in Mr. Balfour's Room at the Foreign Office
on Thursday, September 27th, 1917, at
4.10 p.m.

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PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. A.J. Balfour, O.M., M.P. (IN THE CHAIR)
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Rt. Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.
Lord President of the Council.

The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

The following also attended:-

Sir Milne Cheetham, K.C.M.G.
Councillor to the Residency, Cairo.

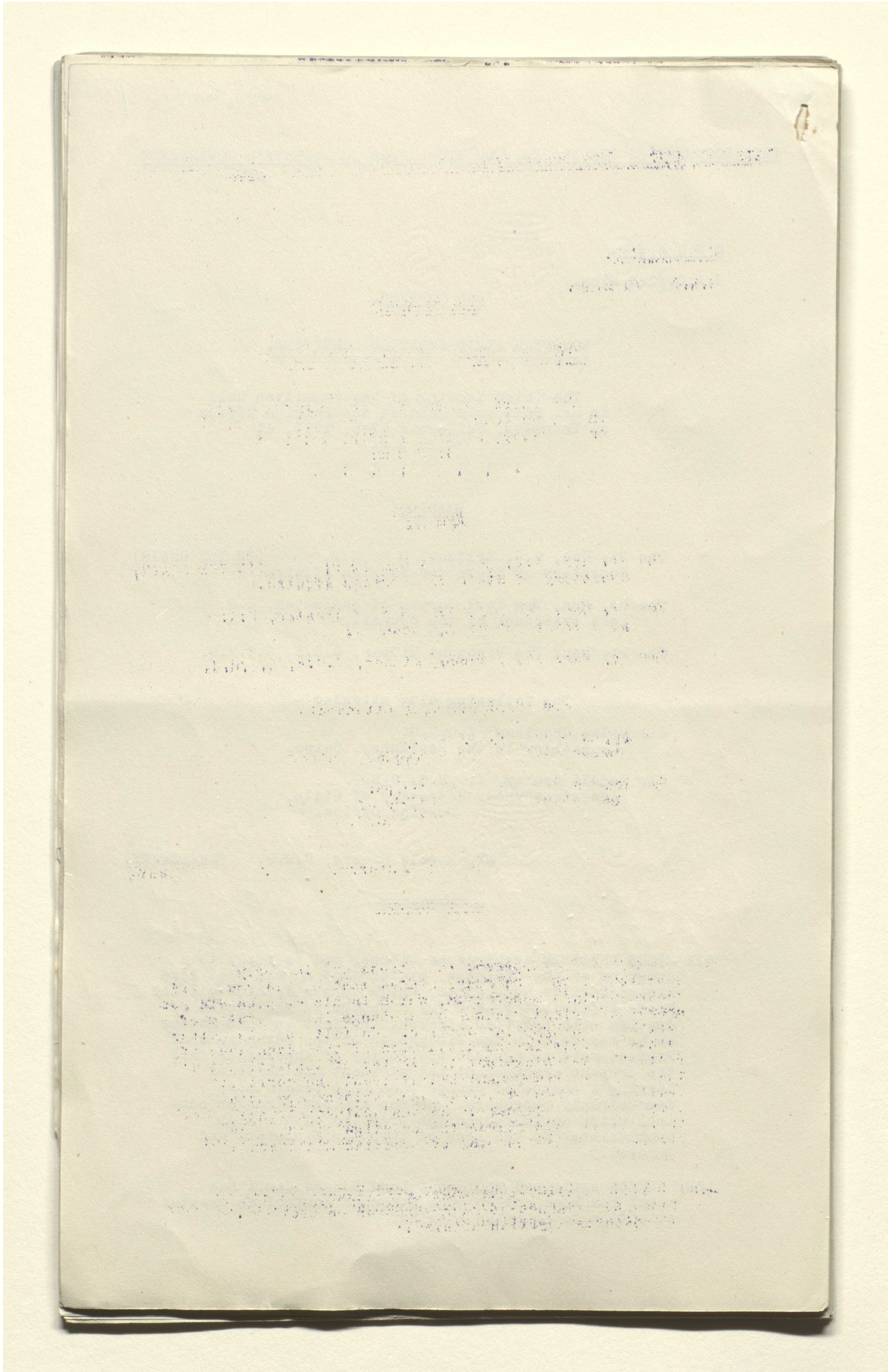
Sir Ronald Graham, K.C.M.G., C.B.
Assistant Under Secretary of State,
Foreign Office.

Mr. Ronald Storrs, C.M.G. (SECRETARY)

SIR MILNE CHEETHAM appeared as witness and in reply to a question of the Chairman, stated that he had read Lord Edward Cecil's Memorandum, which in his opinion did not prove sufficient reason for a change in the system of dealing with Egyptian affairs. He felt in this matter as he had felt in the discussion of the advantages of Protectorate as against the Policy of Annexation that the present arrangement had at least the merit of leaving a chance of change when this became more demonstrably necessary. He was against stronger control which would reduce the prestige of the High Commissioner in the eyes of Egyptian Ministers and generally.

LORD CURZON explained that what Lord Edward Cecil had meant had been not so much stronger control as greater attention to Egyptian affairs.

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SIR MILNE CHEETHAM was of opinion that an increase of attention was envisaged by Sir Ronald Graham; the other scheme seemed to involve the doubling of the High Commissioner, of the Financial Adviser, and of other departments. He laid stress upon the vital and permanent connection of Egypt with British Foreign Policy, and viewed with concern the possibility of foreign affairs and administration being dealt with by separate departments, as also the contemplated removal of the Arab Bureau which was really one wing of the Egyptian Foreign Office under the direction of the British Foreign Office. He would prefer an increase in the personality and prestige of some of the British Advisers to the Egyptian Government. He also cited the position of the numerous and important foreign colonies in Egypt in support of his thesis.

THE CHAIRMAN asked if Sir Milne had exper^{ed}ience that want of comprehension and assistance from the Foreign Office upon other than Foreign Office questions brought out by Lord Edward Cecil in his Memorandum.

SIR MILNE CHEETHAM asked how this defect could be remedied under the proposed system and Lord Curzon explained the principle of the opposite number.

THE CHAIRMAN stated that he had gathered that Foreign Office direction was at present not only inadequate, but that the Egyptian Government even acted without consulting it at all.

LORD MILNER pointed out that what was desired was to find someone to strengthen the High Commissioner in Egypt by holding at his disposal specialist knowledge in London.

SIR MILNE CHEETHAM, while agreeing with this theory, deprecated the establishment of two officials, in London and Cairo of more or less equal prestige and possibly diverging views upon any given question.

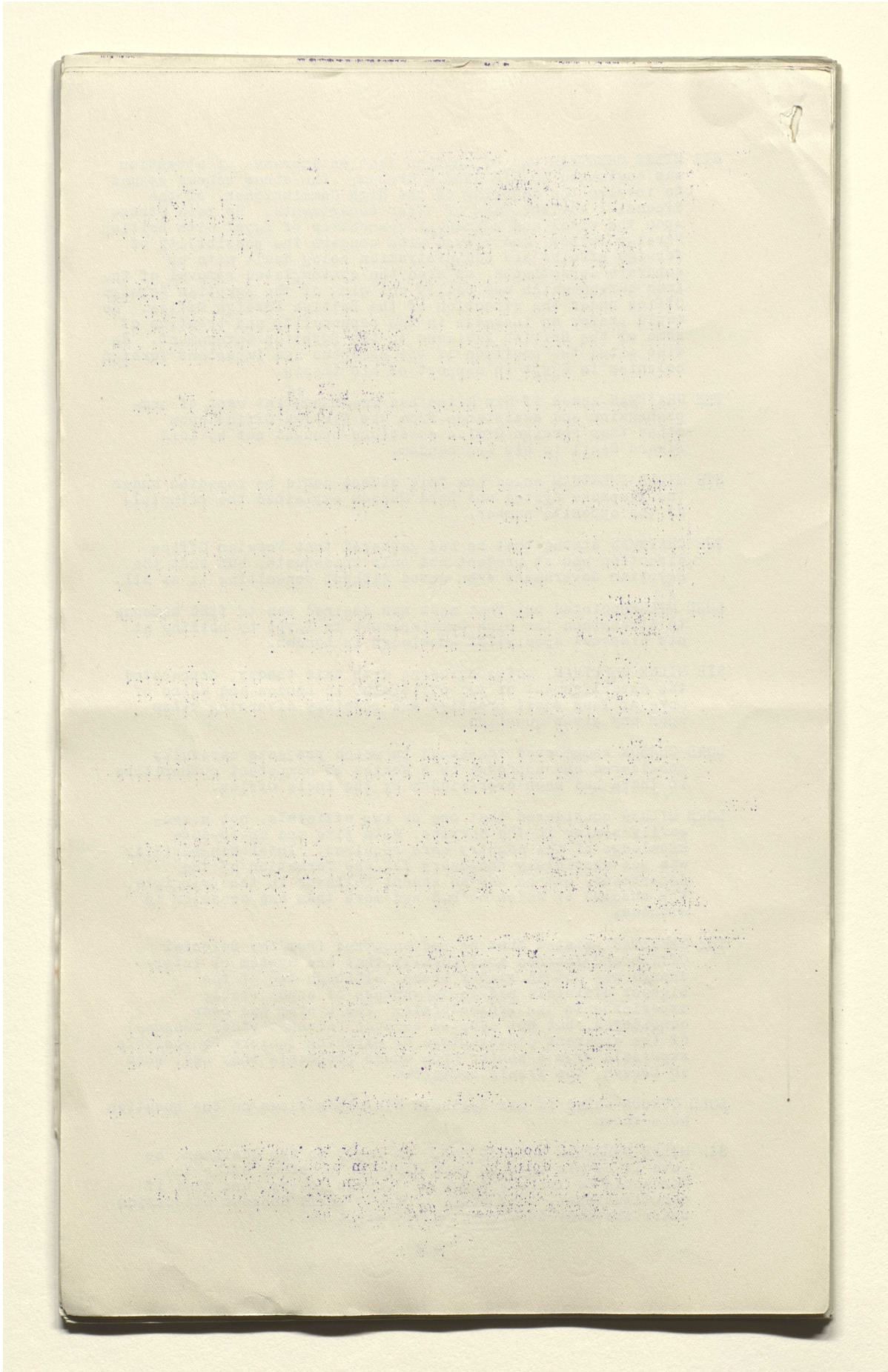
LORD CURZON remembered instances in which projects carefully considered and approved by a series of competent authorities in India had been over-ridden by the India Office.

LORD MILNER considered that one or two officials, not necessarily senior in the service, with live and up-to-date knowledge of the country were required. Interchangeability was not absolutely necessary for the formation of the department, but he was an ardent believer in the principle, the success of which he had had more than one occasion to witness.

THE SECRETARY stated that he had enquired from the Colonial Office and learned unofficially that the system of interchange was not in vigour there, although two of the highest officials had the advantage of considerable experience in the Protectorate. The system had been considered, but not adopted because (amongst other reasons) of the apparent disadvantage of exposing juniors to possible reprisals from a senior upon whose proposals they had, when in London, too freely commented.

LORD CURZON asked if Sir Reginald Wingate's views on the question were known

SIR MILNE CHEETHAM thought not. In reply to the Chairman, he gave it as his opinion that Egyptian problems after the War would be largely those of Foreign Policy, and that if constitutional, they would probably merit Cabinet discussion under whatever department Egypt might be.



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LORD CURZON asked whether the Egyptian element would be for or against the change, and Sir Milne thought that they would be against it as implying a more stringent and less sympathetic control. On the other hand if annexation took place, a proper department would at once become necessary, and the High Commissioner's powers would have to be defined like those of a Colonial Governor. Egypt was and would be for a long time to a certain extent a "Foreigners' Country" and should, therefore, be allowed to develop on its own lines and without a possibly "Opposing Chief" in London. In conclusion -

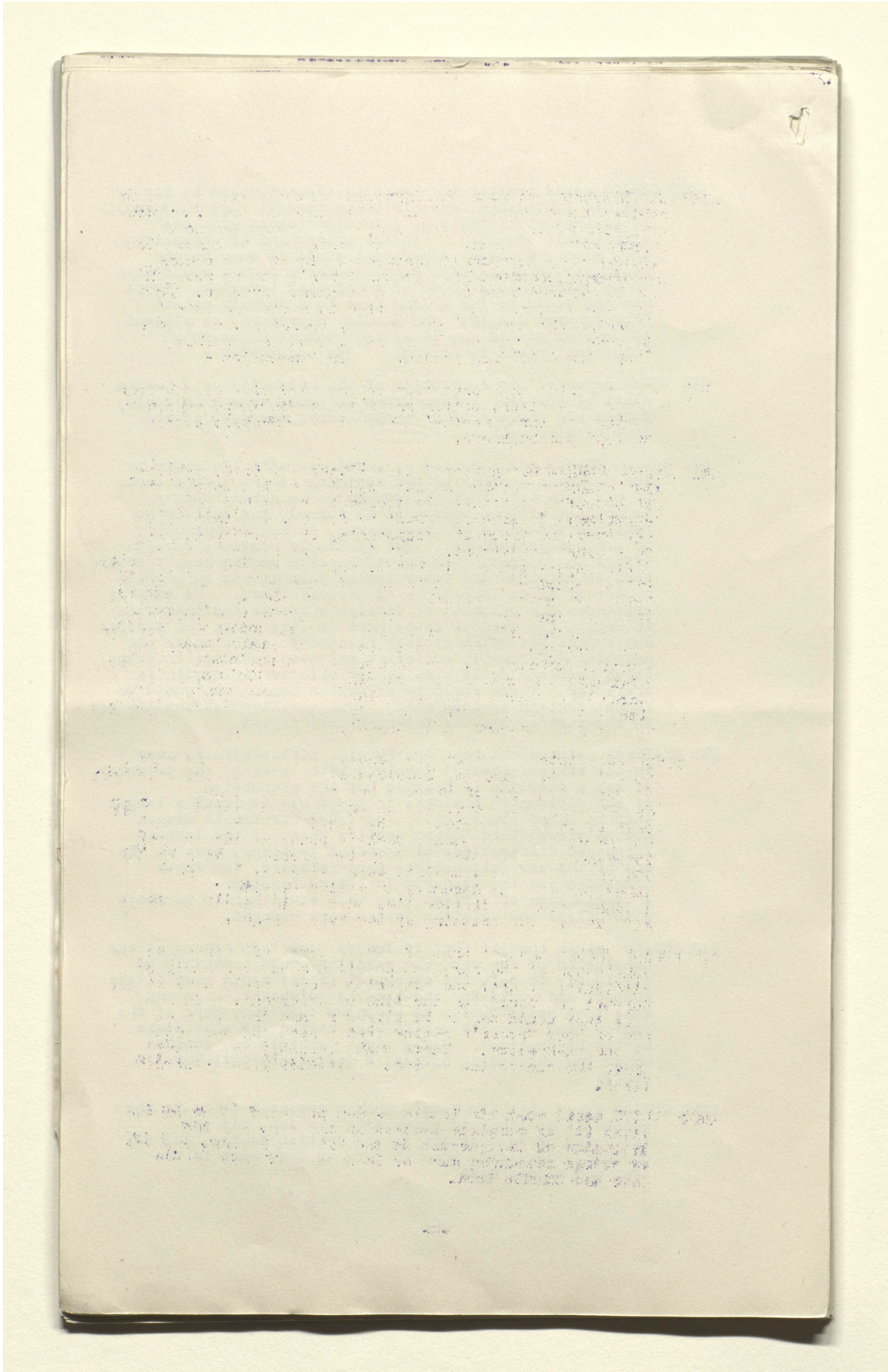
SIR MILNE repeated his conviction of the necessity of a better class of adviser, better known in London where he could, during his three months' annual leave transact a good deal of his business.

SIR RONALD GRAHAM who appeared as a witness at 5.10, asked by the Chairman whether he had anything to add to the terms of his note said that all seemed to be agreed that a department of some sort must be formed, and that if we retained the whole of Mesopotamia, it would eventually be a large department. But it should remain a Foreign Office Department. In Egypt, Foreign and internal affairs were so entwined and intermingled that it was in a great number of cases impossible to separate them. He gave as instances the quantity of foreign subjects and interests in Egypt, the Tripoli Arabs more or less under the Italian Government yet often closely related to Arabs under the Egyptian Government, and sometimes even resident in Egypt. Hejaz problems would also remain chiefly diplomatic in character. There would be a Turkish Consul who would be almost certain to intrigue. Even the five Foddans Law had in the past assumed an international aspect.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Foreign Office affairs were in all states somewhat involved with those of the interior. It was a question of degree; but the proportion of the diplomatic business in Egypt was admittedly larger than in other countries. He asked Sir Ronald Graham how he viewed Lord Edward Cecil's point of the largely increased difficulties of Egyptian problems, when at the end of the war Nationalists were released, the Press unmuzzled and the Assembly in active Session:- A combination of difficulties that could hardly be dealt with unless the existing system were changed.

SIR RONALD GRAHAM thought that if Turkey were left strong at the conclusion of the war, the position would certainly be difficult; if not, the extremist forces would have little support and would for the time be quiescent. In any case they would hardly be stronger than they were at the end of Lord Cromer's regime when helped and subsidised by the Ex-Khedive. There might possibly be, evolved under the succeeding Sultan, a definitely anti-Turkish Party.

LORD CURZON asked what Sir Ronald Graham proposed to do in the event (1) of complete success in the war, and the inclusion of Mesopotamia in the British Empire, and (2) of things remaining more or less as they were in the Near and Middle East.



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SIR RONALD GRAHAM replied that in the first eventuality a considerable Department would certainly become necessary, as regards the second he would in any case at once start the nucleus of a Department with one senior man in the Foreign Office assisted by one with official experience from Egypt. The department could be expanded if and when required, but would remain under himself as Assistant Under Secretary and the Permanent Under Secretary. This arrangement could hold at least until the end of the war. He added that dissatisfaction in Egypt with the Foreign Office regime was confined to the Ministry of Finance. Other Departments were perfectly satisfied and he invited verification through the Advisers concerned.

THE CHAIRMAN thought that might be because the Foreign Office left them entirely to themselves.

SIR RONALD GRAHAM demurred and pointed out that he had been for some time in daily conference on the Gezira scheme with Sir Murdoch Macdonald, adviser to the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works, and had been assisting him and the London Delegates with the Treasury and Board of Trade.

LORD MILNER objected that another Under Secretary might come without Sir Ronald Graham's knowledge of the country, and Sir Ronald Graham stated his conviction that it was very desirable to have at least one official in the Foreign Office with a personal knowledge of Egypt.

LORD MILNER AND LORD CURZON were both of opinion that it did not so much matter from which Egyptian department officials were drawn so long as they had some general knowledge of the country.

THE CHAIRMAN did not see how specialised questions such as that of cotton, could be dealt with by an Official of however good general knowledge from, say, the Egyptian Ministry of Education.

SIR RONALD GRAHAM stated that the Commercial department of the Foreign Office was in full possession of all facts and figures bearing on the question, and had good grip of the situation.

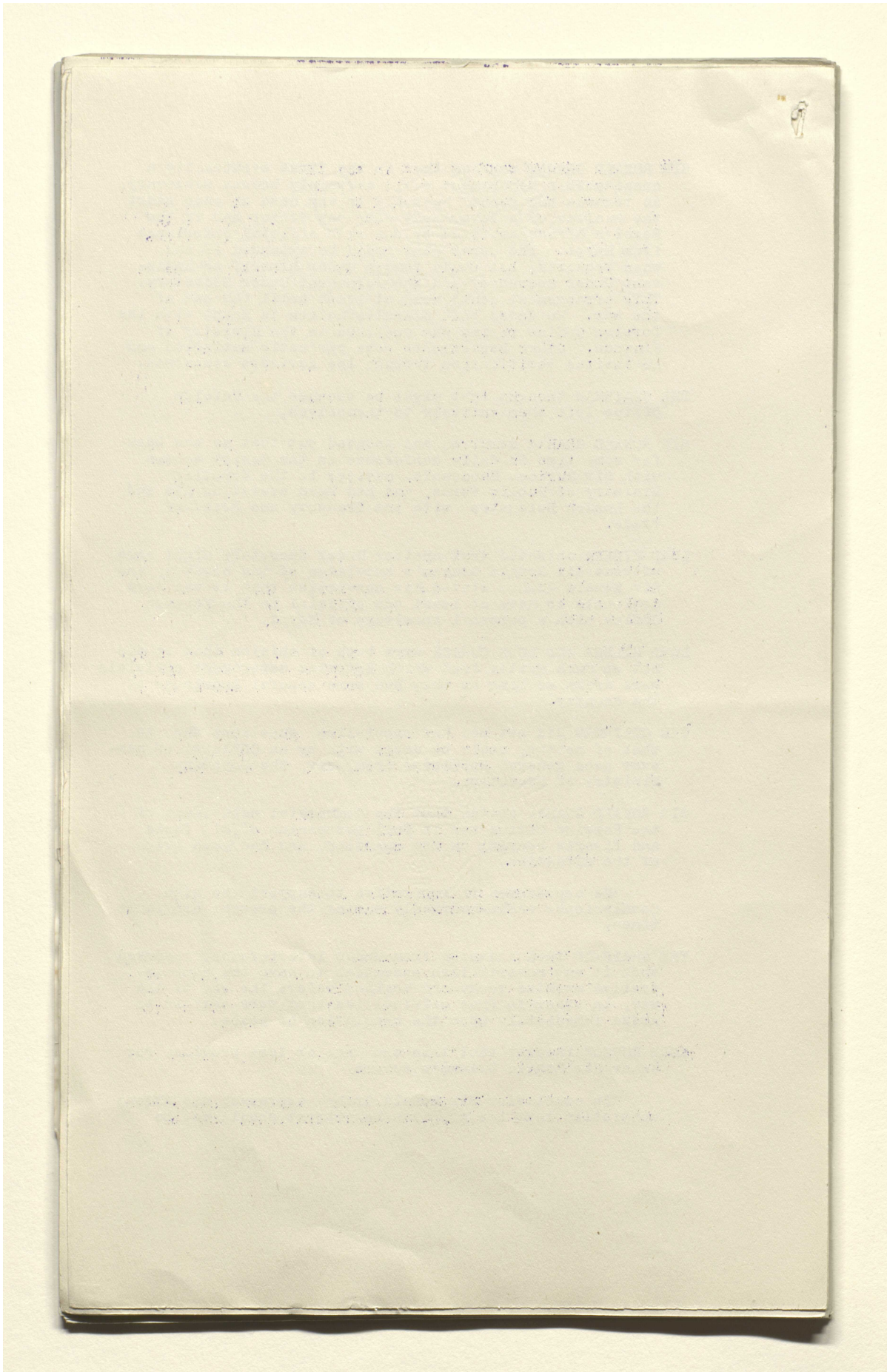
He considered it imperative to support the High Commissioner whole-heartedly during the present difficult times.

THE CHAIRMAN though averse from undue interference, remarked that it was nevertheless essential to have the administrative machine ready and working before the end of the war, in order to face difficulties that were certain to arise immediately upon the conclusion of peace.

LORD CURZON thought that this was more or less provided for under Sir Ronald Graham's scheme.

In conclusion Sir Ronald Graham expressed his strong conviction that the Egyptian Department should not be

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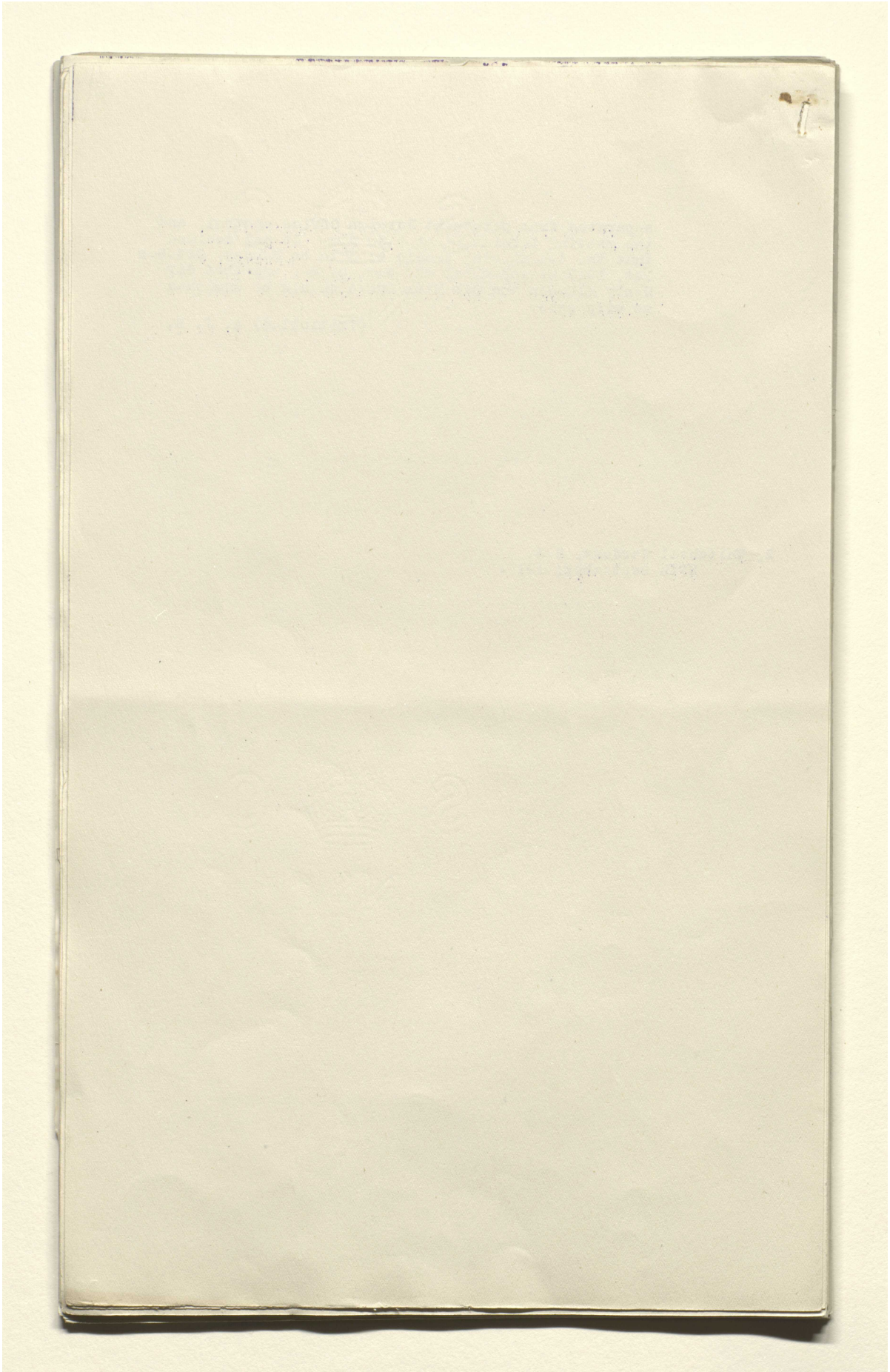
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separated from permanent Foreign Office control, and the meeting terminated at 5.30 p.m. It was decided that the 4th meeting should be held on Monday, October 1st, 1917 at 4 p.m. at the same place, and that Sir Henry McMahon and Sir Mark Sykes should be summoned as witnesses.

(Initialed) A. J. B.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
27th September, 1917.

24



Lord Curzon 18 (24)

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S E C R E T.

E.A.C. 2.

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Copy of letter from Sir R. Graham to Mr. R.
Storrs (Secretary).

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Foreign Office,
September 28th, 1917.

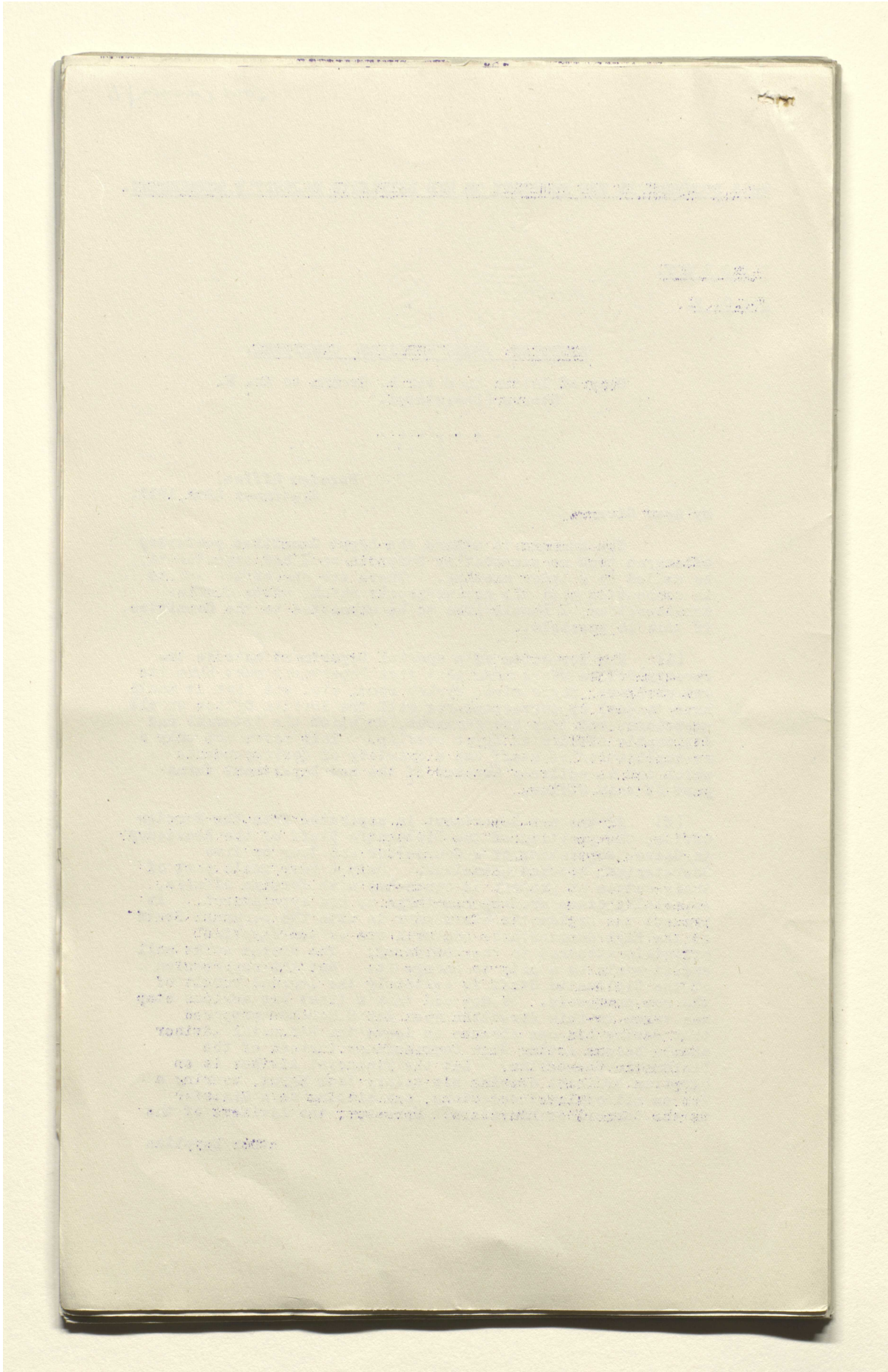
My dear Storrs,

The summons to attend the Egypt Committee yesterday afternoon took me somewhat by surprise as I had expected to be called to a later meeting. There are one or two points in connection with the new proposals which, after further consideration, I should like to be submitted to the Committee, if this is possible.

(1) The formation of a special Department outside the Foreign Office would mean that that Department must have its own archives, Registries, cypher room, etc. and that it would have to deal by correspondence with the Foreign Office on all questions, and they are numerous, on which the internal and diplomatic affairs of Egypt overlap. This means not only a re-duplication of staff but a quantity of correspondence which can be entirely avoided if the new Department forms part of this Office.

(2) If the new Department is separated from the Foreign Office, the position of the Diplomatic Staff of the Residency in Cairo, consisting of a Counsellor and four or five Secretaries, becomes anomalous. Only a very small part of their duties at present is concerned with foreign affairs, especially since Mr. Greg has taken up his appointment. At present the Diplomatic Staff work in with the personal Staff of the High Commissioner and with one or two Egyptian officials attached to the Residency. The system works well and it would be a pity to change it. But the suppression of the Diplomatic Staff is certainly the logical result of the new proposals. I may add that a first but serious step was taken in this direction when Sir H. McMahon proposed that during his own absence on leave the Financial Adviser should become Acting High Commissioner instead of the Diplomatic Counsellor. But the Financial Adviser is an Egyptian official drawing his salary from Egypt, wearing a fez on all official occasions, and sitting as a Minister on the Council of Ministers. Moreover, the Advisers of the

other Egyptian



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-2-

Egyptian Departments would have greatly objected to the Head of one Department being placed in this supreme position and being able to settle finally the various departmental questions which might be at issue between them. Sir H. McMahon's intention was reported by Sir M. Chestam privately to the Foreign Office in October last but as in the meantime he had been recalled and his successor did not share his views, the matter was allowed to drop. I cite it as an instance of the difficulties attending a change in present arrangements.

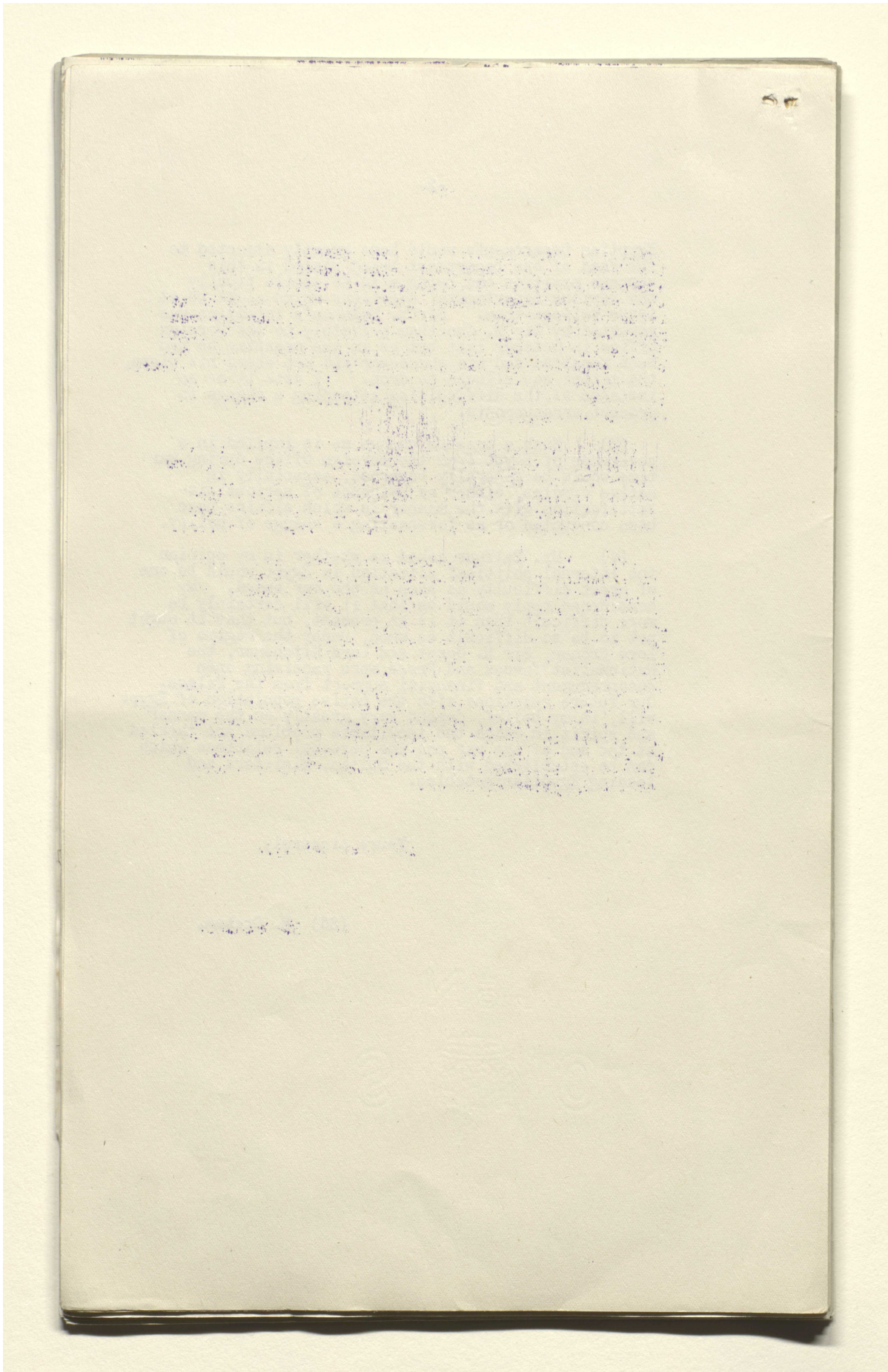
(3) Such a drastic change as is implied in a severance of Egypt from the Foreign Office during war time would be generally regarded, especially in native circles, either as evidence of serious dissatisfaction with the manner in which affairs have been conducted or as forecasting a change of policy.

(4) Mr. Balfour asked me whether in my opinion the internal political situation in Egypt would be one of great difficulty as soon as the war ended. My considered reply would be that it will certainly be more difficult than it is at present, but that it ought not to be so difficult as when, under the régime of Lord Cromer, Sir E. Gorst and Lord Kitchener, the Nationalist forces and Press were receiving open encouragement and financial support from the Palace. Our future relations with the native population of Egypt will, in my belief, depend very greatly on the manner and spirit in which the inevitable problems are tackled at the end of the war and the personal relations which can be established with the Sultan, Ministers and leading Egyptian notables.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd) R. Graham.

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4 (26)
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SECRET.

E.A.C. 2.

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Copy of letter from Sir R. Graham to Mr. R.
Storrs (Secretary).

.

Foreign Office,
September 28th, 1917.

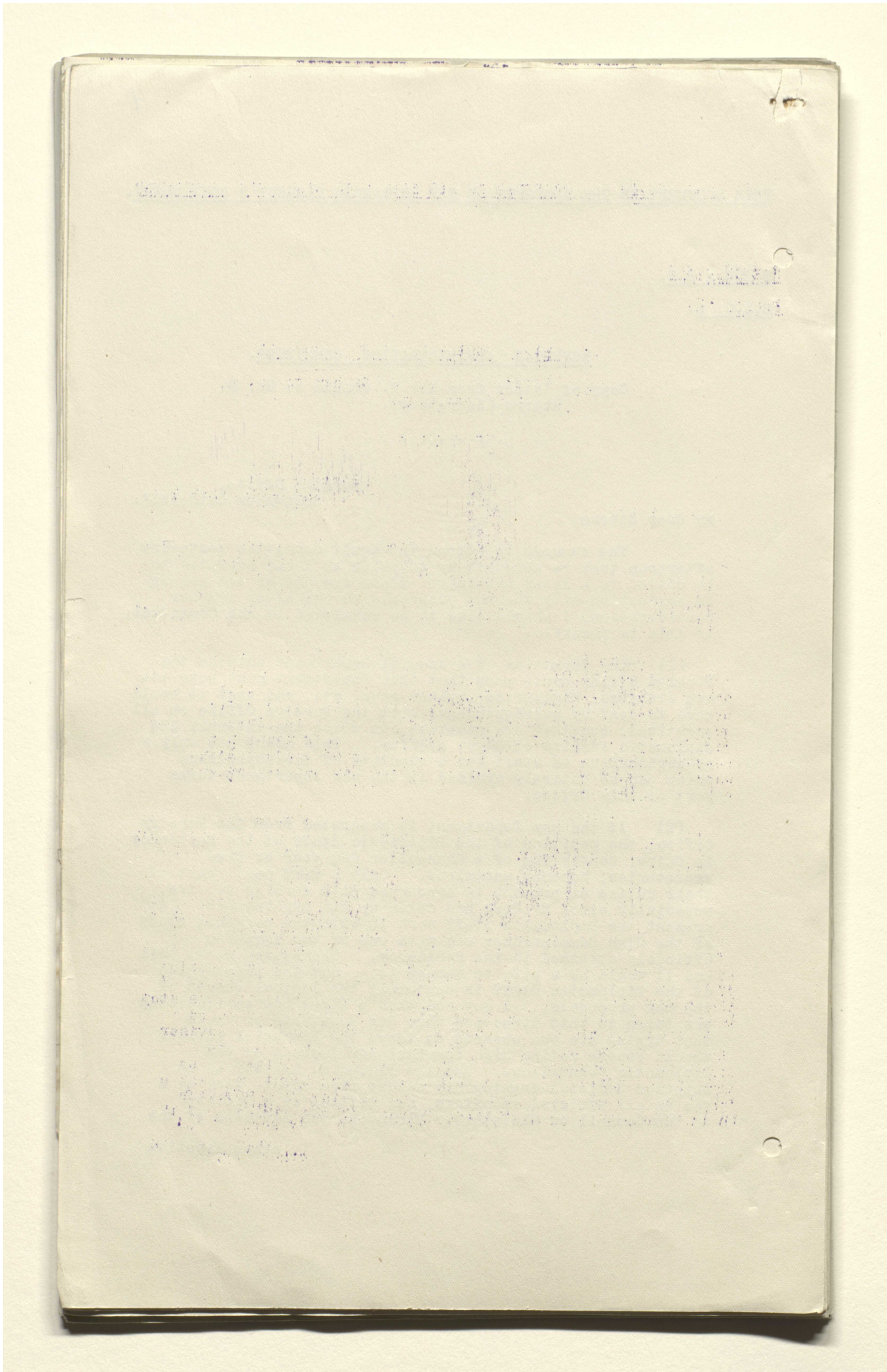
My dear Storrs,

The summons to attend the Egypt Committee yesterday afternoon took me somewhat by surprise as I had expected to be called to a later meeting. There are one or two points in connection with the new proposals which, after further consideration, I should like to be submitted to the Committee, if this is possible.

(1) The formation of a special Department outside the Foreign Office would mean that that Department must have its own archives, Registries, cypher room, etc. and that it would have to deal by correspondence with the Foreign Office on all questions, and they are numerous, on which the internal and diplomatic affairs of Egypt overlap. This means not only a re-duplication of staff but a quantity of correspondence which can be entirely avoided if the new Department forms part of this Office.

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other Egyptian



-2-

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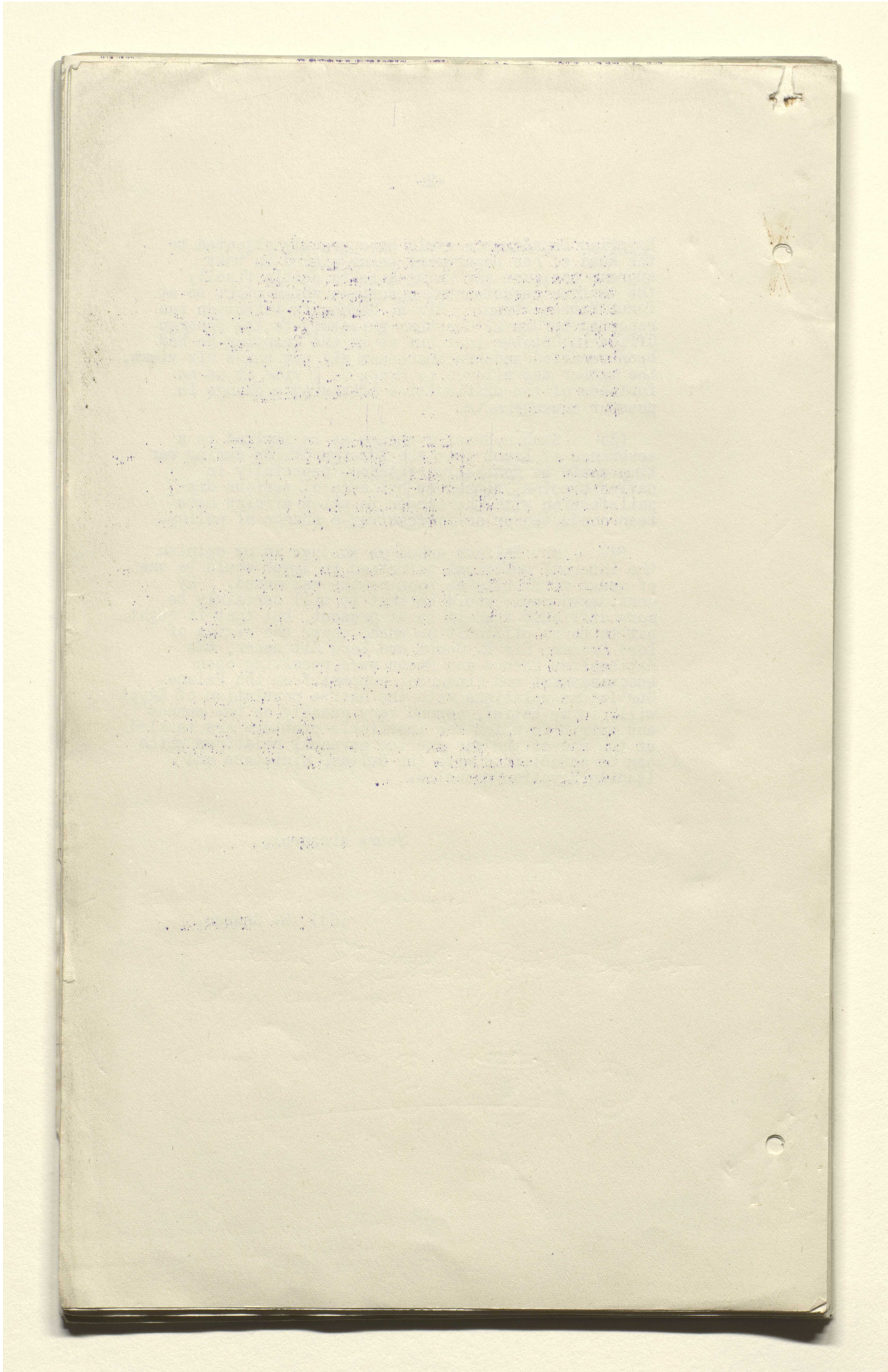
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Yours sincerely,

(Sd) R. Graham.

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S E C R E T.

E.A.C.1.

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

(Extract from letter dated 28th September
1917 from Lord Edward Cecil to Lord Curzon)

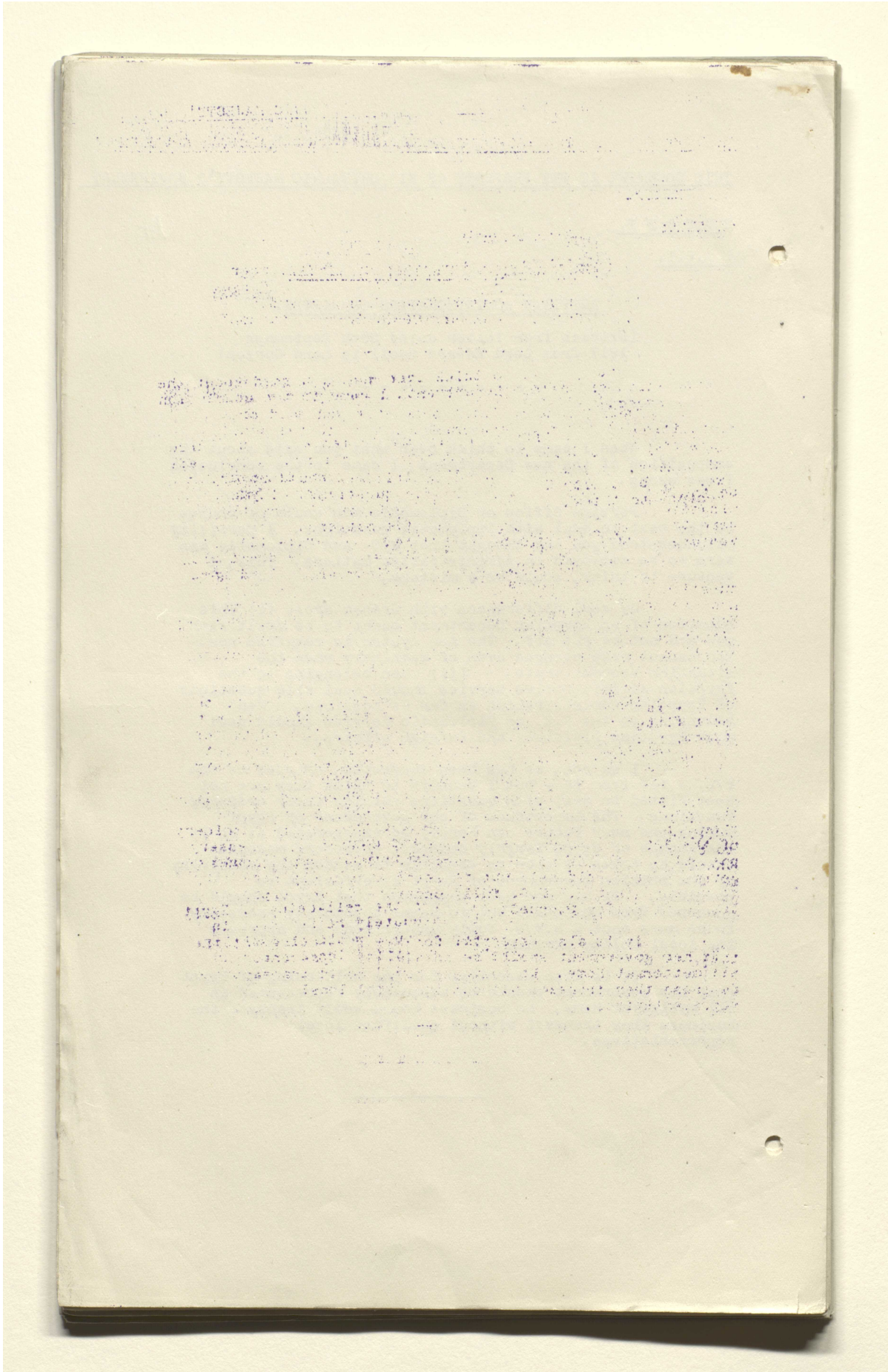
When I came to think over what you said about the composition of the new Department, I came to the conclusion I was wrong.

Foreign Office or Diplomatic men would of course be the best to deal with Diplomatic questions. I partially misunderstood you and thought that F.O. and Diplomatic men were to be employed on Administrative matters. This, I venture to think, would be a mistake.

My real differences with Graham are:- (i) This question of an Egyptian Department ought to be dealt with now and not be put off. The new system is required now. You cannot make changes even of machinery when the situation becomes acute. (ii) Men belonging to the Egyptian Administrative Service should deal with questions of Egyptian Administration as far as possible. Men belonging to the F.O. or Diplomatic Service should deal with Egyptian Diplomacy and Foreign affairs.

I am not, as has been suggested, opposed to the F.O. - far from it - but I venture to think they are not best fitted to deal with questions outside their ordinary functions. The importance of our government of Egypt during the near future can hardly be exaggerated as on it the future of Egypt largely depends; therefore measures should be taken as soon as possible to render the machinery of the British Government of Egypt as efficient as possible. It has not been suggested that Egypt should be governed from Whitchall but it seems absolutely necessary to be sure that H.B.M.C. fully understands and approves the local policy pursued.

It is also essential for the well-being of Egypt that her government should be adequately represented in all matters at Home. No business house would transact the business they transact without qualified local representatives.



Lord Curzon 13

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S E C R E T.

E.A.C./4th Mins.

WAR CABINET.

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The Fourth Meeting of the Committee was held
in Mr. Balfour's Room at the Foreign Office, on
MONDAY, OCTOBER 1st, 1917 at 4.15 p.m.

.....

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, O.M., M.P. (In the Chair)
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Rt. Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I.,
Lord President of the Council.

The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Milner, G.C.B., C.C.M.G.

The following also attended :-

Sir Henry McMahon, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

Mr. Ronald Storrs, C.M.G. (Secretary.)

Sir Mark Sykes not having returned from Paris
was unable to attend.

.....

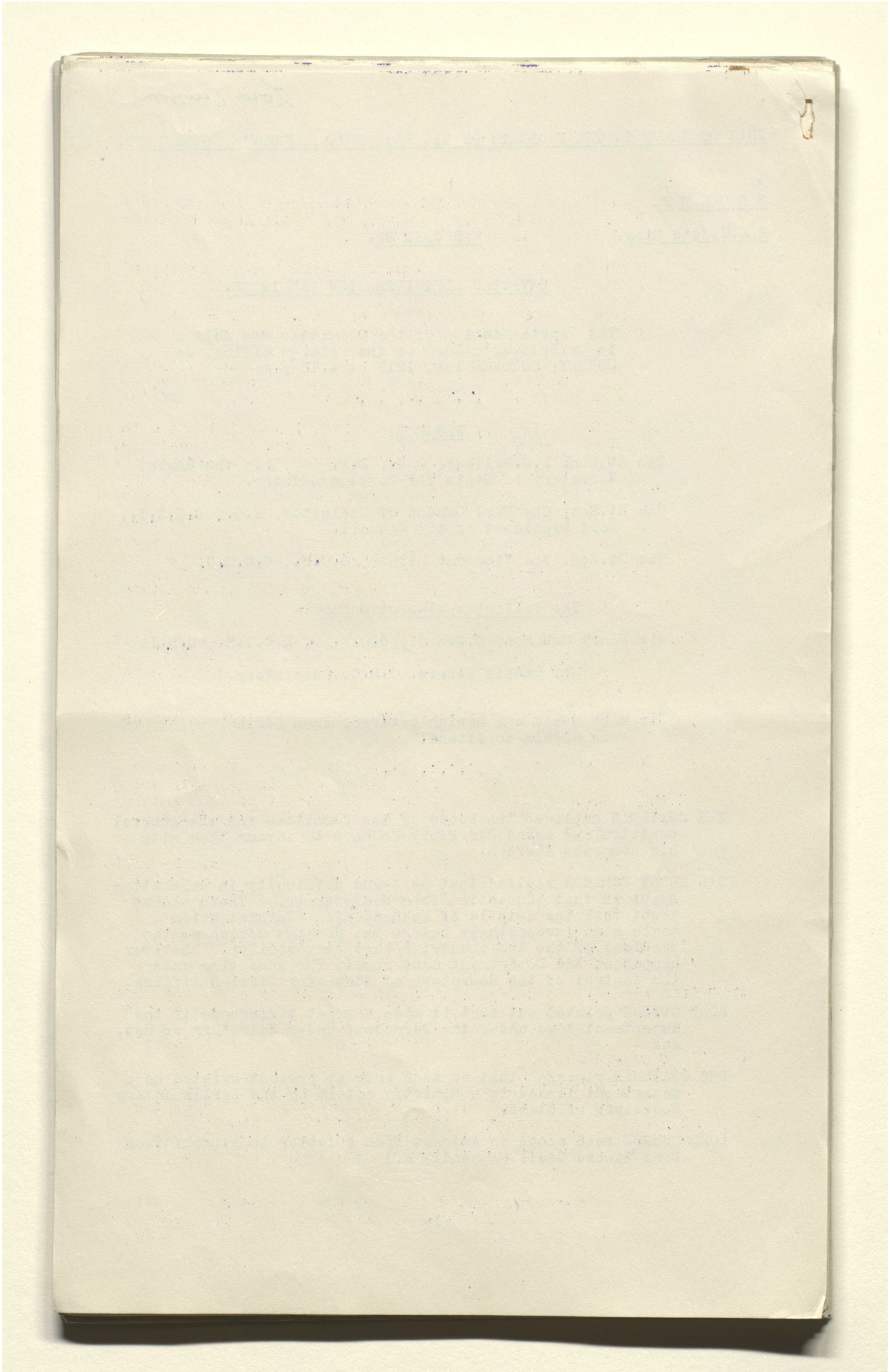
THE CHAIRMAN outlined the scope of the Committee and the general
position and asked Sir Henry McMahon to favour them with
his comments thereon.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON replied that he found difficulty in separating
Egypt in that connection from Mesopotamia. There was no
doubt that the details of Mesopotamian administration
would come increasingly before the Foreign Office as the
problems of the two countries were very similar. Whatever
happened, the Department must remain for some time under
the control of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

LORD CURZON pointed out that it made a great difference if the
department came under the Permanent Under Secretary or not,
and

THE CHAIRMAN remarked that no such body at present existed as a
department linked to a Ministry solely by the Parliamentary
Secretary of State.

LORD CURZON read aloud an extract from a letter to himself from
Lord Edward Cecil (Appendix A.)



Reports and papers of the Egyptian Administration Committee [30r] (59/108)

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SIR HENRY MCMAHON continued that problems were already arriving for solution from Mesopotamia, and these might be dealt with by the proposed Department.

LORD CURZON stated that his Committee was already dealing with these problems, and

THE CHAIRMAN added that they were as yet not of a routine nature and somewhat too chaotic for a department to handle.

LORD MILNER observed that the increase of Mesopotamian questions would entail an increase of the administrative work and so render it less and less suitable for the Foreign Office.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON explained the difficulties he had met with in Egypt owing to the absence of records and precedents. There was a lack of official memory with past experience of the country upon which a High Commissioner might draw; the staff was inadequately equipped with special knowledge, and there were too many changes.

LORD MILNER reminded the Committee that Egypt was in fact governed by an Embassy composed of a diplomatic staff in constant process of transfer and renewal. The Viceroy of India on the other hand could draw upon the service of experts on Indian affairs long in the country.

THE CHAIRMAN remarked that there might be a case for changing that state of affairs in Egypt, but that it did not necessarily affect the organisation of the Foreign Office in London.

LORD MILNER was of opinion that it must to a certain extent affect the Foreign Office as well.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON maintained that difficulties of all kinds differing from those of the past, both in quantity and degree, were going to arise. The capitulations would soon be abolished; this would entail police, judicial and other reforms.

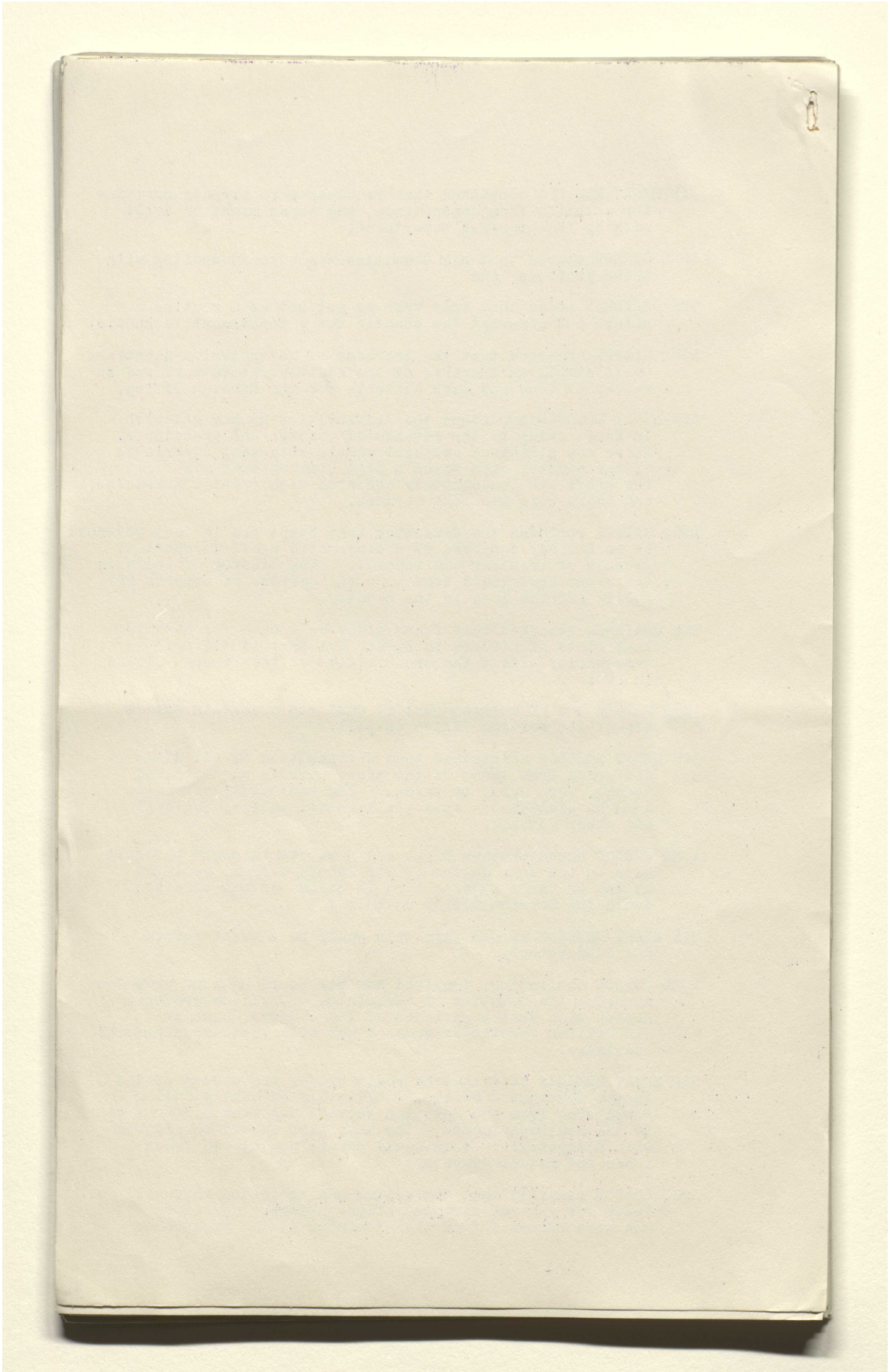
LORD CURZON asked whether Egypt and Mesopotamia could be dealt with in the near future if Sir Ronald Graham, assisted by two or three experts were in charge of its affairs. Could the Foreign Office do this?

SIR HENRY MCMAHON agreed that this would be a great reform and improvement.

LORD CURZON continuing, inquired how Sir Henry McMahon proposed managing the rotation of officials. Would he prefer a senior with past experience of the country, such as Sir William Garstin or younger men with up-to-date general knowledge.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON said that he would prefer the system of the Indian Government Office. Officials of some standing would come from the Egyptian service and remain 3 or 4 years in the new Department. The same plan should be adopted with Mesopotamia: this would ensure new blood, fresh ideas and mutual sympathy.

LORD CURZON remarked that the system had succeeded very well in India for general administrative purposes; promising young men were summoned from the provinces to the Finance or



Reports and papers of the Egyptian Administration Committee [31r] (61/108)

or Home Departments. He did not agree with the criticism of the Colonial Office. On the contrary, he had found senior officials glad of the resulting sympathy and inside knowledge with which their projects were handled.

LORD MILNER asked whether, in this Egyptian or Mesopotamian department, it would be necessary that the Head should be an expert, or would it suffice if only his subordinates were.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON replied that it would be better that he should be but that he feared this would not be very often possible. It was desirable but not essential.

THE CHAIRMAN remarked that a strong Office in London would have an opinion of its own which it would be in a position to enforce. He gathered, on the other hand, that it was precisely assistance and not control that was especially required.

LORD MILNER thought that in view of the great changes, probably some increase of control might be necessary and

SIR HENRY MCMAHON stated that though deprecating additional control, after being High Commissioner himself, he would, speaking as an Ex-High Commissioner welcome expert knowledge.

LORD CURZON remarked that there was a tendency among expert officials to mistake assistance for control. He asked the witness which departments of the Egyptian Government would be most usefully represented in London.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON replied that that depended more upon the individual than upon the Ministry from which he came, but that on the whole he thought that officials from the Finance or Interior would be most suitable. The Law was too highly specialised and legal questions could be dealt with by the Foreign Office Legal Advisers.

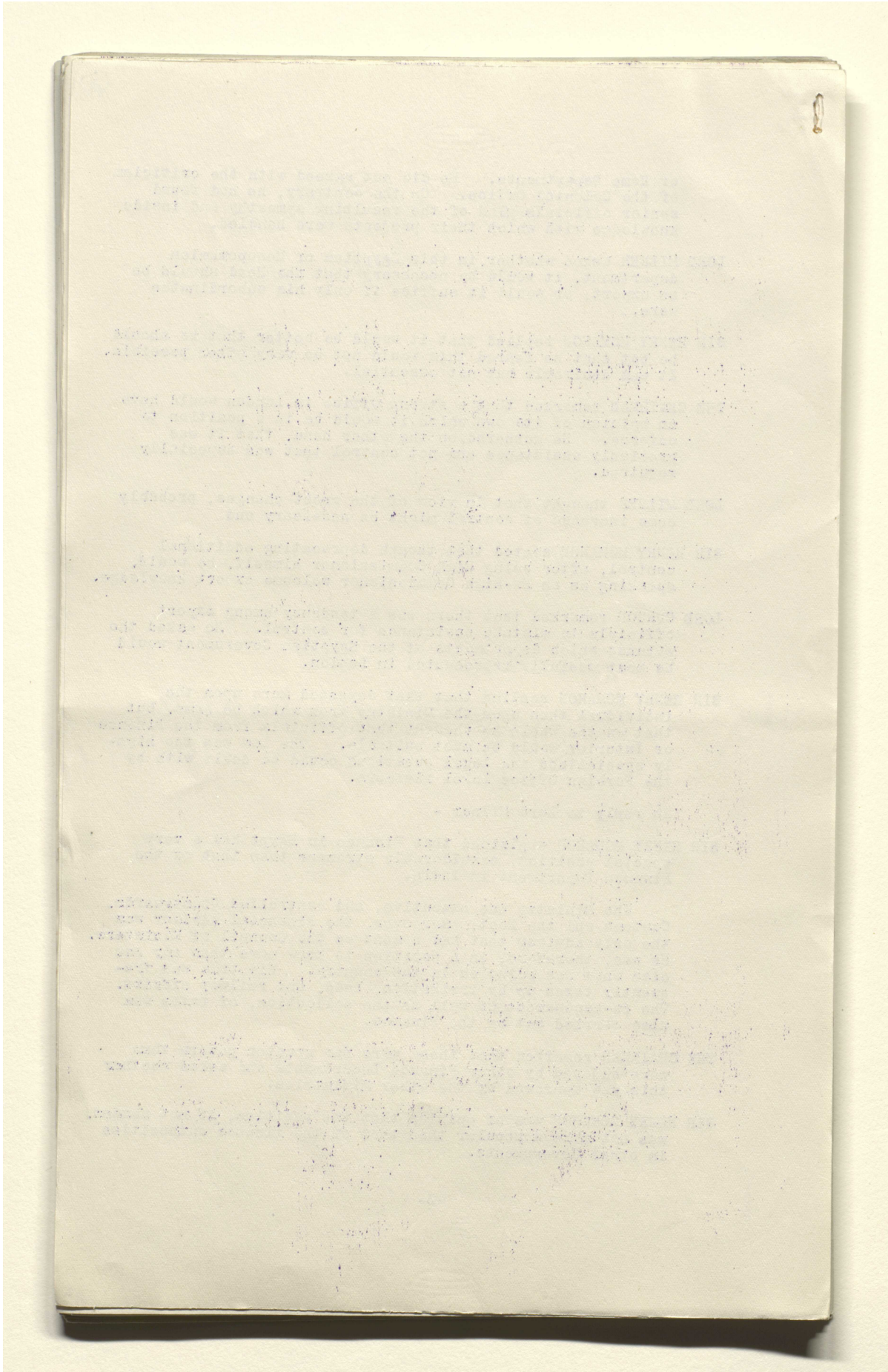
In reply to Lord Milner -

SIR HENRY MCMAHON explained that Finance in Egypt had a very special position, considerably stronger than that of the Finance Department in India.

The Ministry was executive, and controlled Coastguards, Customs and the Post; moreover, the Financial Adviser was the only adviser that had a seat on the Council of Ministers. He was, therefore, in a position to know more than any one else what was going on in the country. His time was frequently taken up by irrigation, land, and railway affairs. The re-assessment, of well as the collection, of taxes was also carried out by the Finance.

THE CHAIRMAN remarked that these were far greater powers than were enjoyed by other Finance Departments and asked whether this was approved by the other Ministries.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON was of opinion that the position, if not abused, was not more unpopular than that of the finance authorities in other Governments.



Reports and papers of the Egyptian Administration Committee [32r] (63/108)

32

LORD CURZON asked why, if the position of Egypt with regard to the Foreign Office was so unsatisfactory, no High Commissioner or British Agent had as yet pressed for a change.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON replied that the pace had quickened lately, and that greater and more complex problems would be perpetually coming up.

LORD MILNER asked, when would the capitulations be abolished?

SIR HENRY MCMAHON replied that this depended on the Foreign Office. Discussions had twice been conducted to the point of action, but on each occasion dropped.

LORD MILNER enquired if the special position of the Financial Adviser should be maintained under the Protectorate and

SIR HENRY MCMAHON was of opinion that it must be, if only because the Financial Adviser was a Member of the Cabinet, and it was undesirable to make all the other Advisers so.

THE SECRETARY communicated to the Committee a letter from Sir Ronald Graham (Appendix B) bringing forward one or two new points for consideration.

The Committee decided that :-

It was not necessary to summon further witnesses and instructed the Secretary to prepare a Draft Report of the proceedings.

The Meeting terminated at 5.30 p.m.

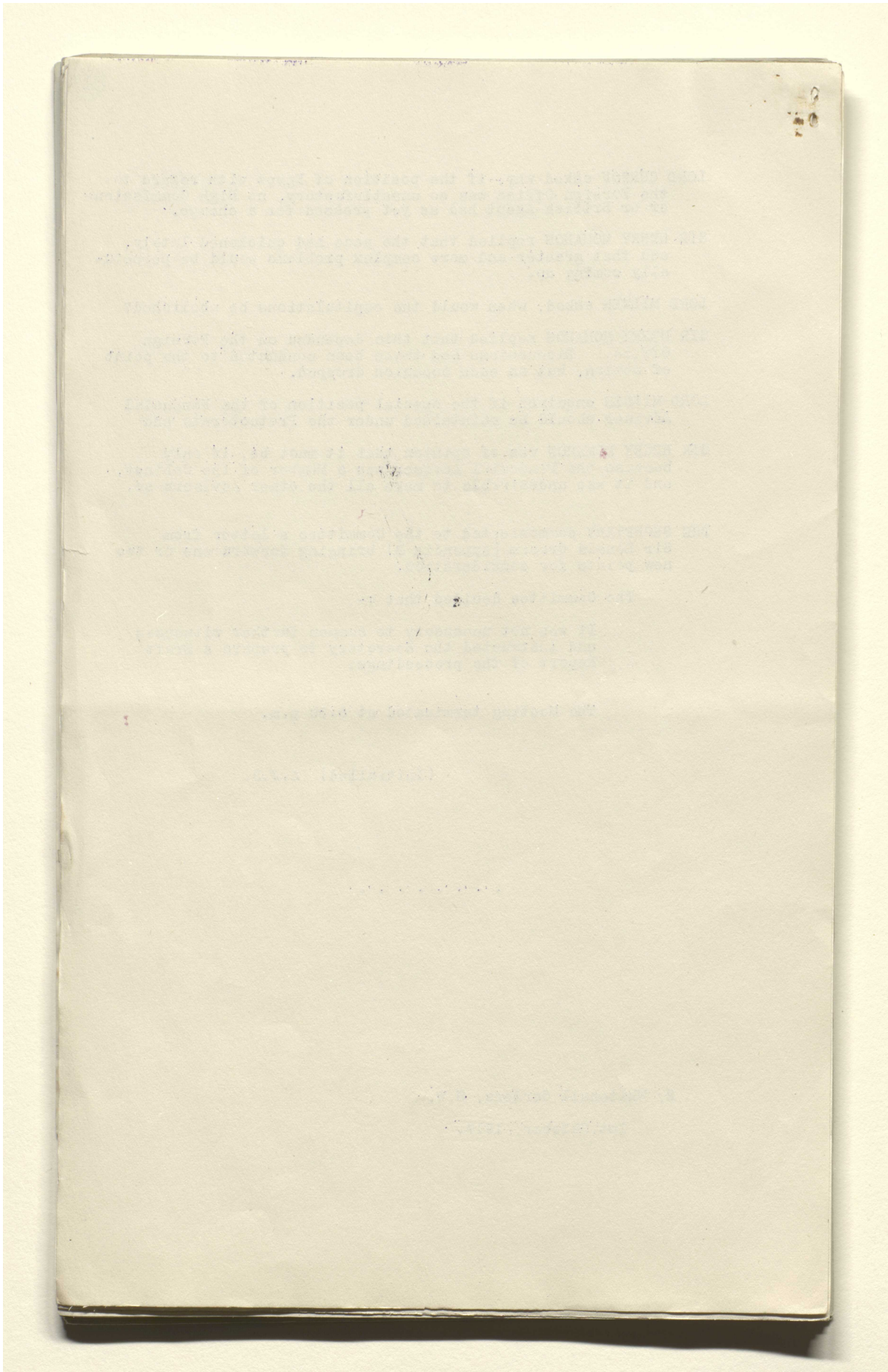
(Initialed) A.J.B.

.....

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.

1st. October, 1917.

33



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His Britannic Majesty's Government.)

Lord Curzon (23)

PRINTED FOR THE WAR CABINET, OCTOBER 1917.

13

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

S E C R E T

G - 162

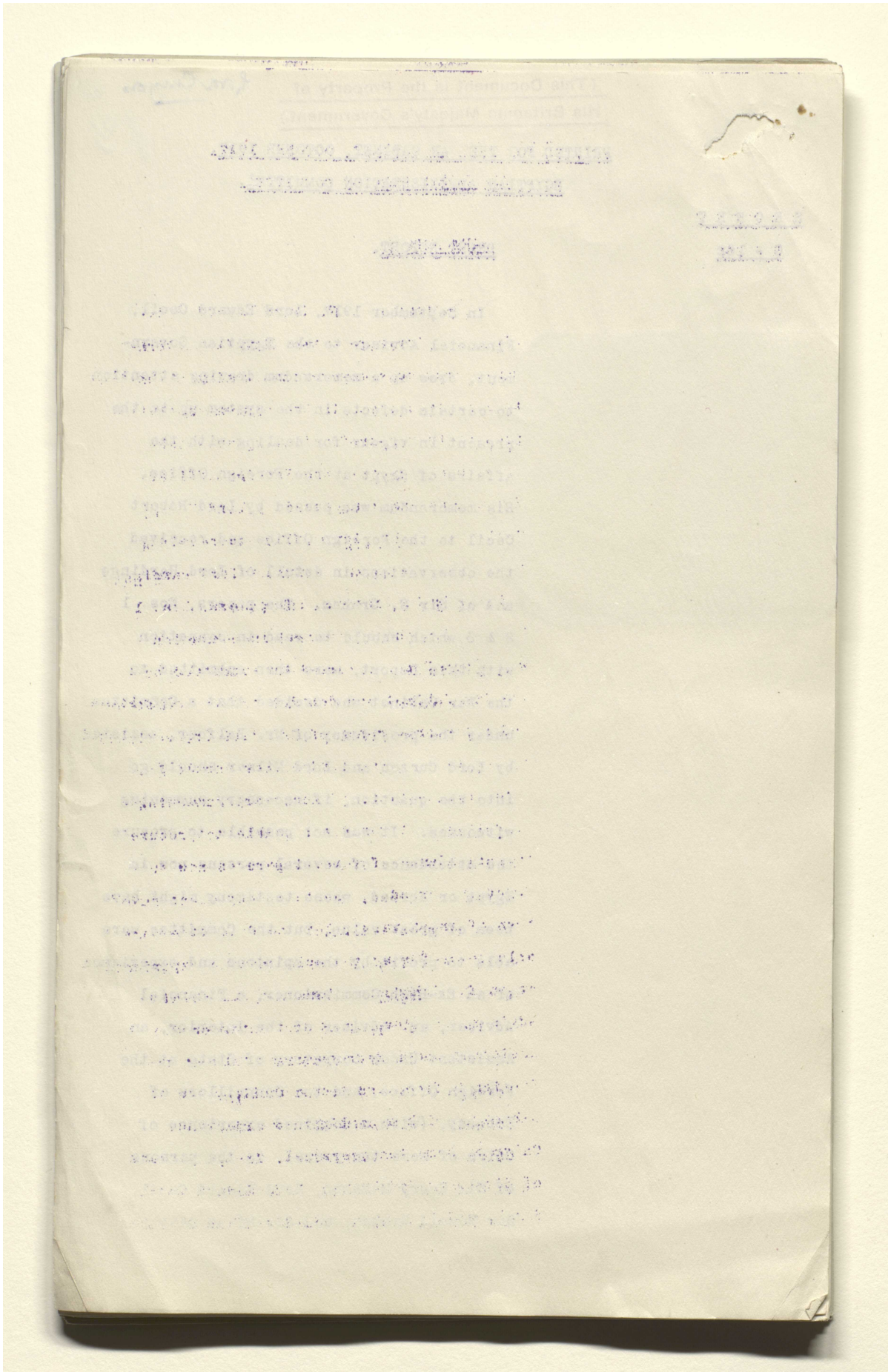
DRAFT REPORT.

There is a good deal in the concluding stage of this Report which I do not recall. It seems to me to be much more categoric & precise than the actual conclusions at which we arrived.

(Intd.) C.

In September 1917, Lord Edward Cecil, Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government, drew up a memorandum drawing attention to certain defects in the system up to the present in vigour for dealing with the affairs of Egypt at the Foreign Office. His memorandum was passed by Lord Robert Cecil to the Foreign Office and received the observations in detail of Lord Hardinge and of Sir R. Graham. The papers, Nos. 1 2 & 3 which should be read in connection with this Report, were then submitted to the War Cabinet who decided that a Committee under the presidency of Mr. Balfour, assisted by Lord Curzon and Lord Milner should go into the question, if necessary summoning witnesses. It was not possible to procure the attendance of several persons now in Egypt or abroad, whose testimony might have been of great value, but the Committee were able to profit by the opinions and experience of an Ex-High Commissioner, a Financial Adviser, an Adviser of the Interior, an Assistant Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, and two Councillors of Embassy, (with a combined experience of Cairo of some ten years), in the persons of Sir Henry McMahon, Lord Edward Cecil, Sir Ronald Graham, and Sir Milne Cheetham.

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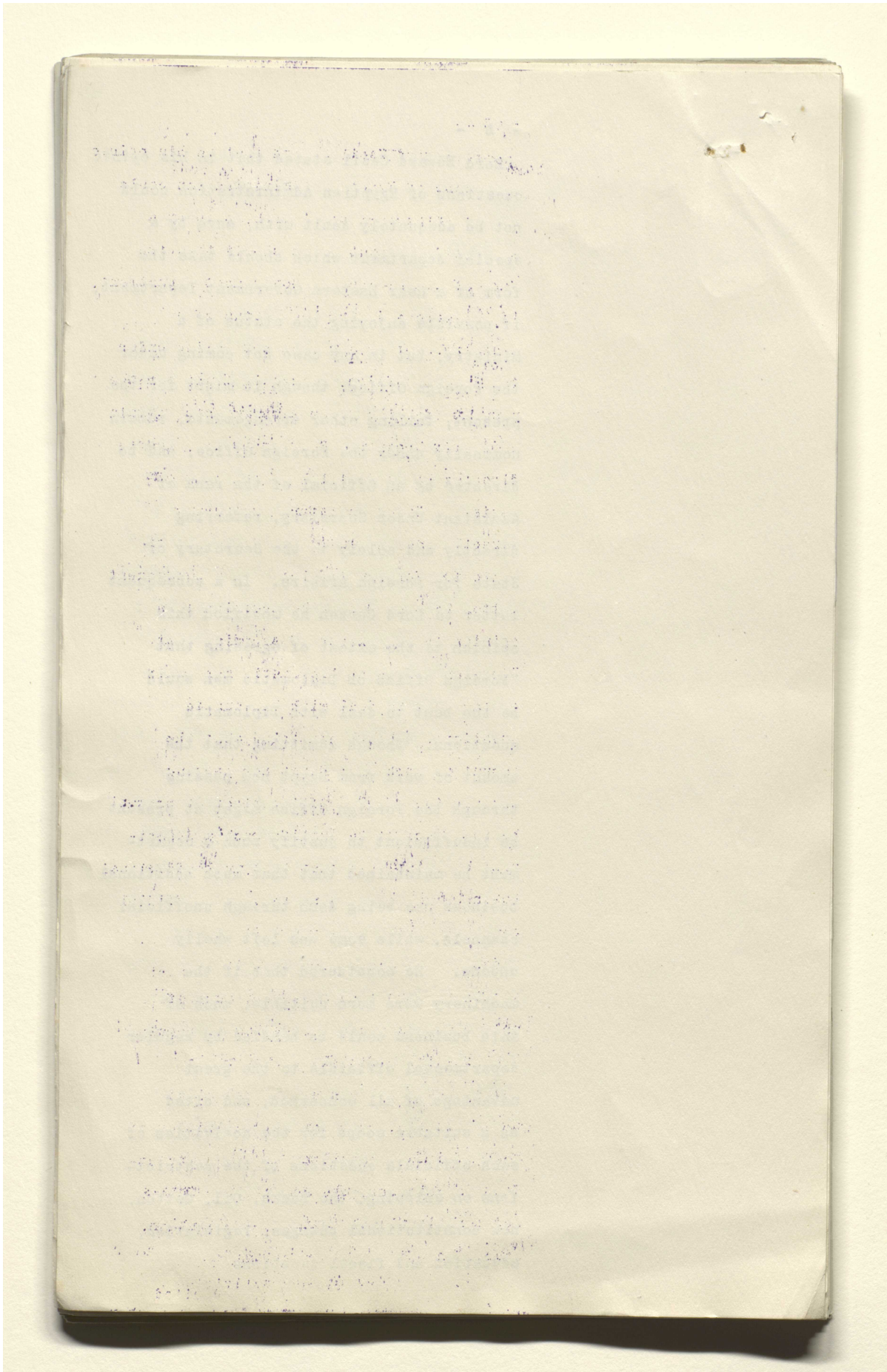


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- 2 -

Lord Edward Cecil stated that in his opinion questions of Egyptian Administration could not be adequately dealt with, save by a special department which should take the form of a near Eastern Government Department, if possible enjoying the status of a Ministry, but in any case not coming under the Foreign Office, though it might for the present, failing other arrangements, remain nominally under the Foreign Office, and be directed by an Official of the rank of Assistant Under Secretary, referring directly and solely to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In a subsequent letter to Lord Curzon he modified this opinion to the extent of agreeing that "Foreign Office or Diplomatic men would be the best to deal with Diplomatic questions. "Though admitting that the amount of work from Egypt now passing through the Foreign Office might at present be insufficient to justify such a department he maintained that that much additional business was being done through unofficial channels, while some was left wholly undone. He considered that if the machinery were more suitable, much of this business could be handled by regular departmental officials to the great advantage of all concerned, and cited as a suitable scope for the activities of such officials questions of the restrictions on shipping, the Banks, Oil, Cotton, new constitutional changes, legislation, education and fiscal questions/

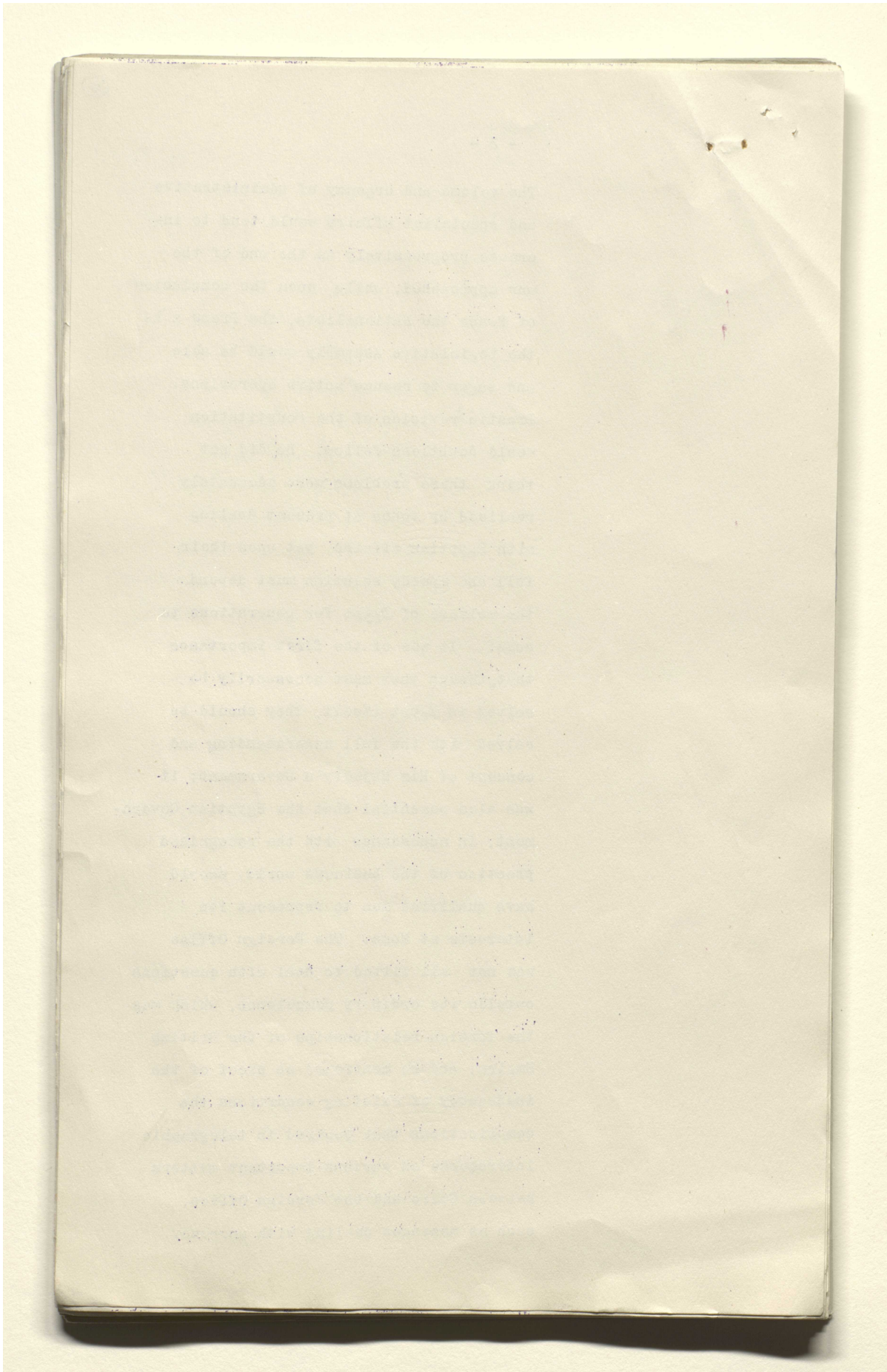
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- 3 -

The volume and urgency of administrative and specialist affairs would tend to increase progressively as the end of the war approached, while upon the conclusion of Peace the Nationalists, the Press and the Legislative Assembly would be able and eager to resume active operations. Drastic revision of the Constitution would doubtless follow. He did not think these problems were adequately realised by those at present dealing with Egyptian affairs, yet upon their full and speedy solution must depend the welfare of Egypt for generations to come. It was of the first importance that, though they must necessarily be solved in Egypt itself, they should be solved with the full understanding and consent of His Majesty's Government; it was also essential that the Egyptian Government, in accordance with the recognised practice of the business world, should have qualified men to represent its interests at Home. The Foreign Office was not well fitted to deal with questions outside its ordinary competence, which was the foreign relationships of the British Empire; and he mentioned as proof of the inadequacy of existing conditions the complications that occurred in telegraphic intercourse on various important matters between Cairo and the Foreign Office, such as messages dealing with currency.

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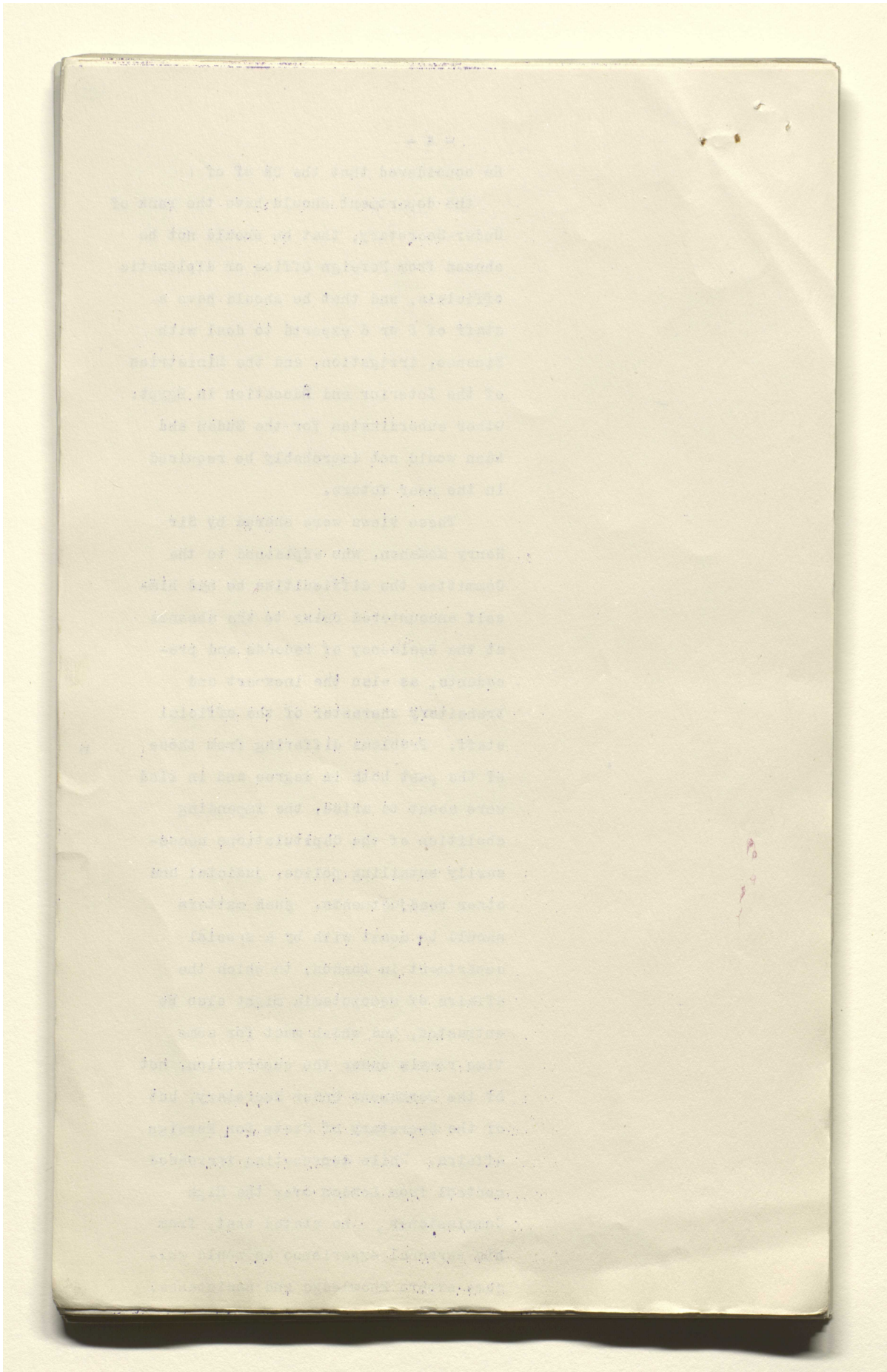


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- 4 -

He considered that the Chief of the department should have the rank of Under-Secretary, that he should not be chosen from Foreign Office or diplomatic officials, and that he should have a staff of 5 or 6 experts to deal with Finance, irrigation, and the Ministries of the Interior and Education in Egypt. Other subordinates for the Sudan and Aden would not improbably be required in the near future.

These views were shared by Sir Henry McMahon, who explained to the Committee the difficulties he had himself encountered owing to the absence at the Residency of records and precedents, as also the inexperienced and transitory character of the official staff. Problems differing from those of the past both in degree and in kind were about to arise, the impending abolition of the Capitulations necessarily entailing police, judicial and other readjustments. Such matters should be dealt with by a special department in London, to which the affairs of Mesopotamia might also be entrusted, and which must for some time remain under the supervision, not of the Permanent Under Secretary, but of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. While deprecating increased control from London over the High Commissioner, he stated that, from his personal experience he would welcome expert knowledge and assistance.

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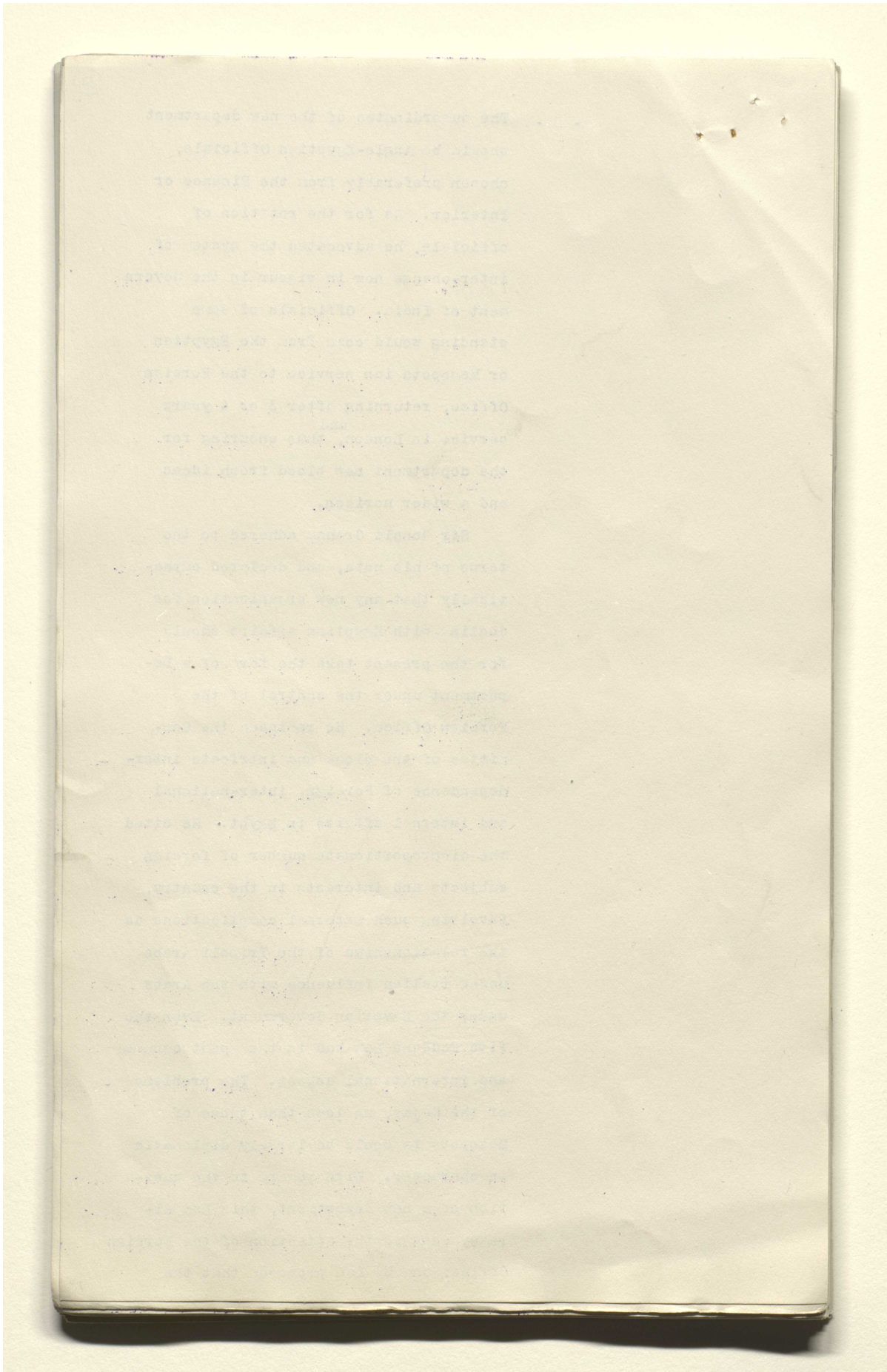


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- 3 - The subordinates of the new department should be Anglo-Egyptian Officials, chosen preferably from the Finance or Interior. As for the rotation of officials, he advocated the system of inter-change now in vigour in the Government of India. Officials of some standing would come from the Egyptian or Mesopotamian service to the Foreign Office, returning after 3 or 4 years service in London, thus ensuring for the department new blood fresh ideas and a wider horizon.

Sir Ronald Graham adhered to the terms of his note, and declared emphatically that any new organisation for dealing with Egyptian affairs should for the present take the form of a Department under the control of the Foreign Office. He reminded the Committee of the close and intricate inter-dependence of Foreign, inter-national and internal affairs in Egypt. He cited the disproportionate number of foreign subjects and interests in the country, involving such external complications as the relationships of the Tripoli Arabs under Italian influence with the Arabs under the Egyptian Government. Even the five Foddans Law had in the past assumed an international aspect. The problems of the Pejaz, no less than those of Mesopotamia would be largely diplomatic in character. With regard to the question of a new department, this had already engaged the attention of the Foreign Office, and he had proposed that the

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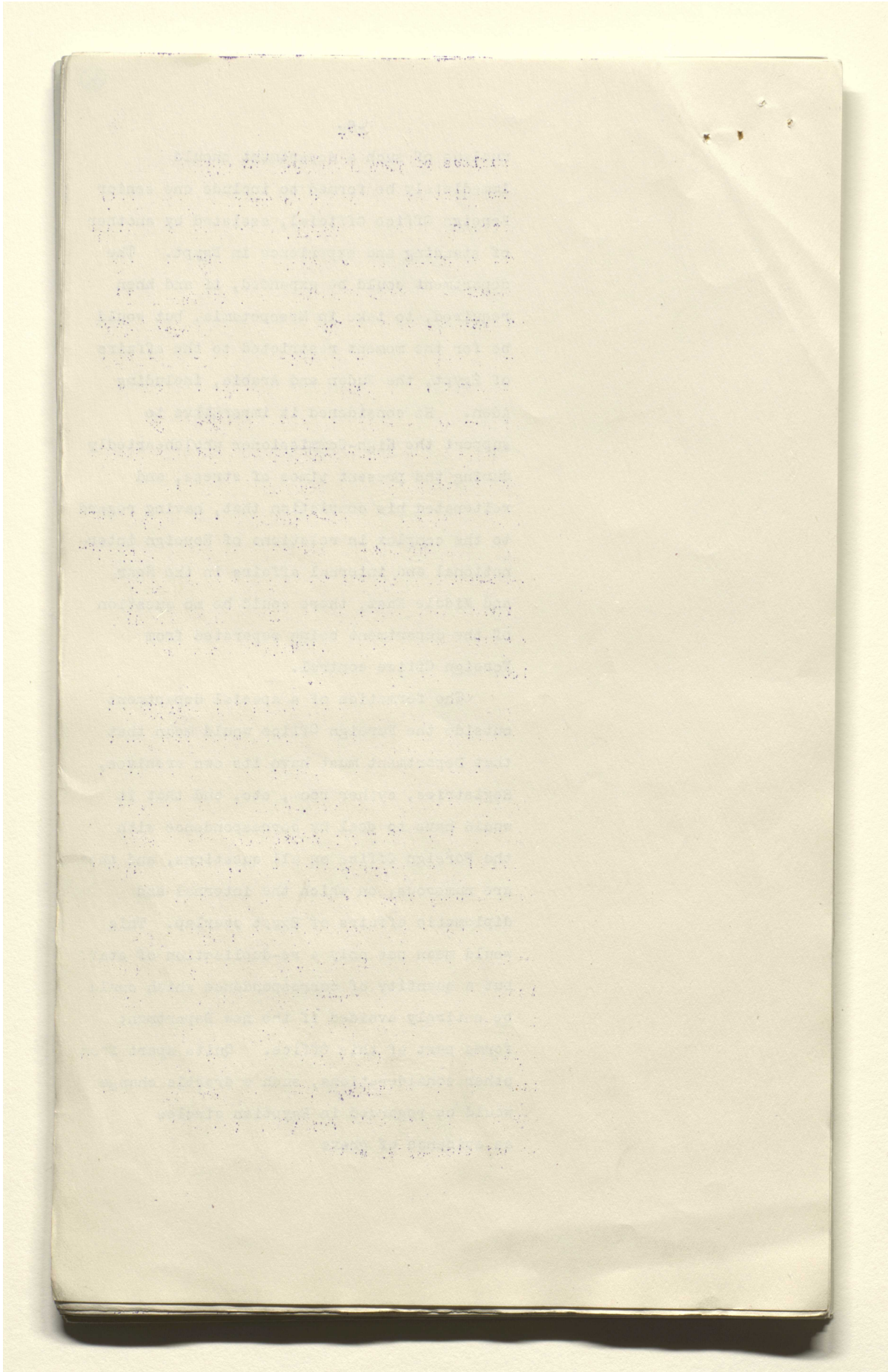


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-6-

nucleus of such a department should immediately be formed to include one senior Foreign Office Official, assisted by another of standing and experience in Egypt. The department could be expanded, if and when required, to take in Mesopotamia, but would be for the moment restricted to the affairs of Egypt, the Sudan and Arabia, including Aden. He considered it imperative to support the High-Commissioner wholeheartedly during the present times of stress, and reiterated his conviction that, having regard to the complex in relations of Foreign international and internal affairs in the Near and Middle East, there could be no question of the department being separated from Foreign Office control.

The formation of a special department outside the Foreign Office would mean that that Department must have its own archives, Registries, cypher room, etc. and that it would have to deal by correspondence with the Foreign Office on all questions, and there are numerous, on which the internal and diplomatic affairs of Egypt overlap. This would mean not only a re-duplication of staff but a quantity of correspondence which could be entirely avoided if the new Department forms part of this Office. Quite apart from other considerations, such a drastic change would be regarded in Egyptian circles as evidence of grave

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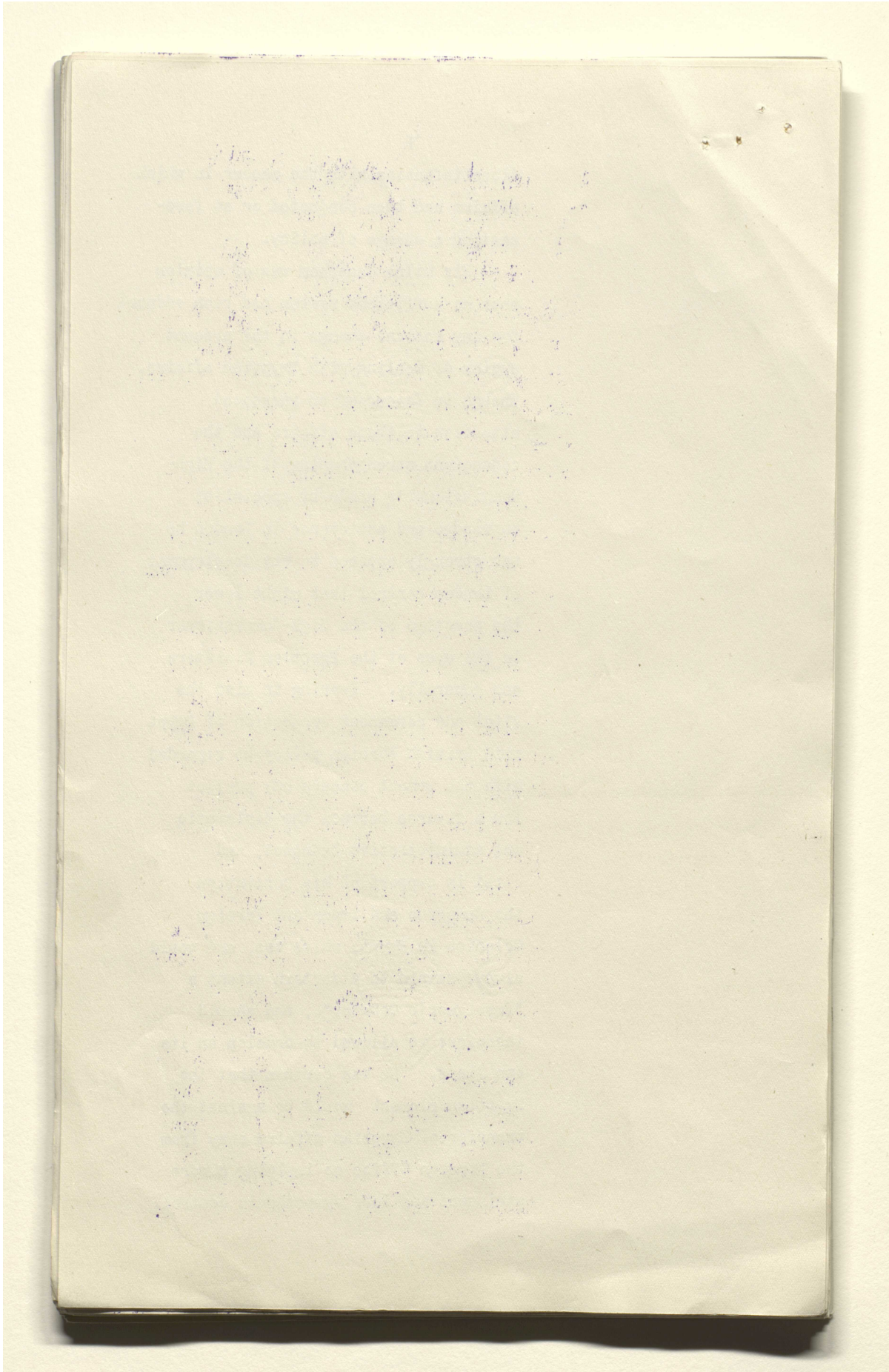


39

dissatisfaction with the manner in which affairs had been conducted or as forecasting a change of policy.

Sir Milne Choetham was of opinion that no sufficient reason had been adduced for any radical change in the present system of dealing with Egyptian affairs. Though in favour of an increased attention to these affairs and the consequent strengthening of the High-Commissioner's hands by specialist knowledge and assistance in London he was strongly opposed to any development of London control that might lower the prestige of the High-Commissioner in the eyes of the Egyptian Ministers and generally. Bearing in mind the vital and permanent connection of Egypt with British Foreign policy he regarded with the utmost concern any project for a divorce between the diplomatic and administrative branches, and cited in support of his contention the numerous and important Foreign Colonies in Egypt, which was, and would always remain to a certain extent a "Foreigner's Country", and should therefore be allowed to develop on its own lines. He was certain that the Egyptian element would be against the transfer of Egyptian affairs away from the Foreign Office as implying a more stringent and less sympathetic control.

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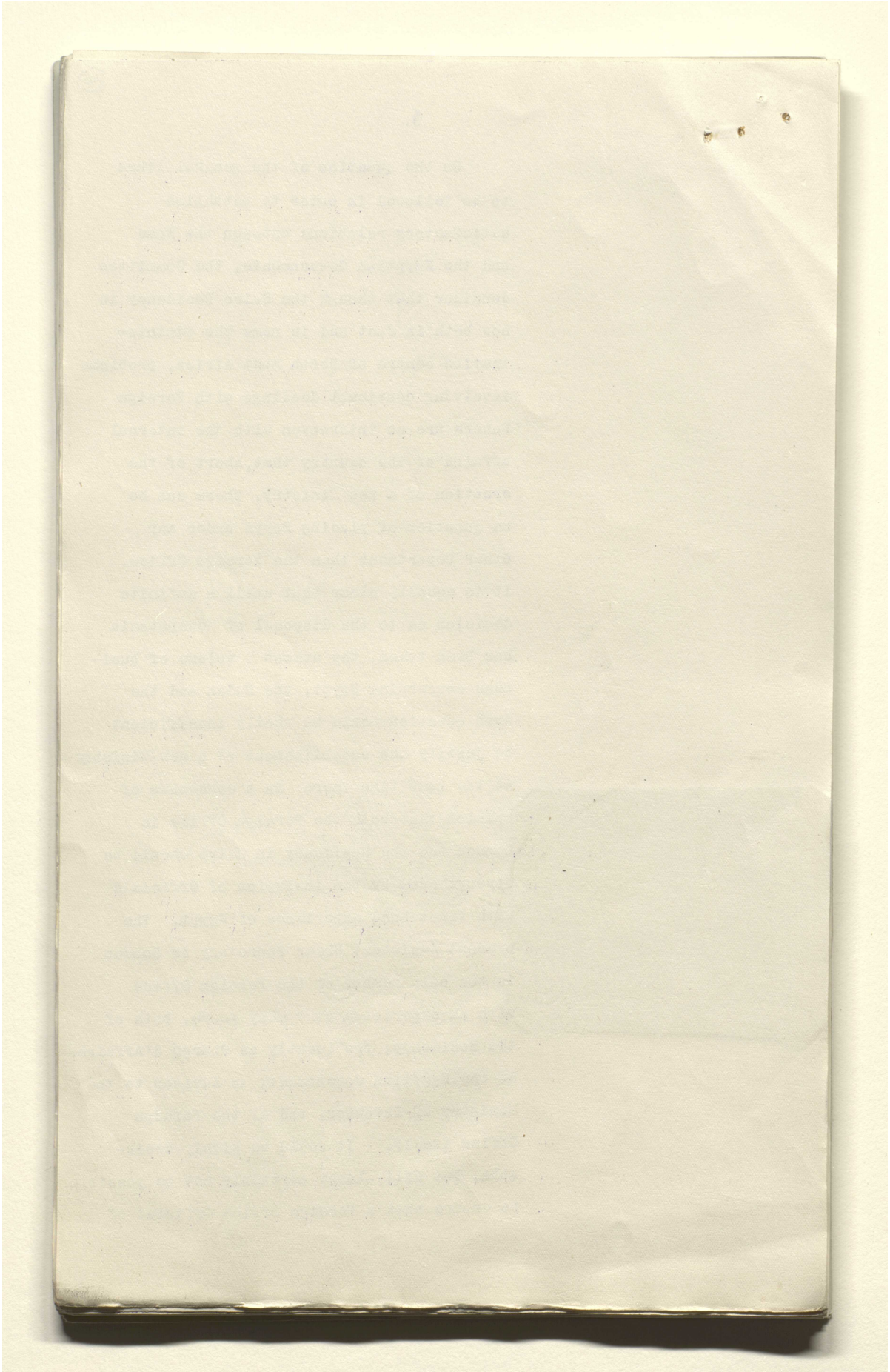
5.

On the question of the general lines to be followed in order to establish satisfactory relations between the Home and the Egyptian Governments, the Committee consider that though the Cairo Residency is now both in fact and in name the administrative centre of North East Africa, problems involving continual dealings with Foreign Powers are so interwoven with the internal affairs of the country that, short of the creation of a new Ministry, there can be no question of placing Egypt under any other Department than the Foreign Office. It is equally clear that until a definite decision as to the disposal of Mesopotamia has been taken, the utmost volume of business concerning Egypt, the Sudan and the Arab question would be wholly insufficient to justify the establishment of a new Ministry. At the same time there is a consensus of opinion that both the Foreign Office in London and the Residency in Cairo should be strengthened by the inclusion of Officials with first hand experience of Egypt. The present Assistant Under Secretary in London is the only member of the Foreign Office with an experience over many years, both of the Residency, frequently as Chargé d'Affaires of the Egyptian Government, as Advisor to the Ministry of Interior, and of the Foreign Office itself. It would be highly desirable, but will almost certainly not be possible to ensure that a Foreign Office Official of

I do not know what this means.
No such suggestion was made.
(Intd.) C.

EAC/4th Minutes p.2.
paras 5 and 6. (Intd.) R.S.

41



Reports and papers of the Egyptian Administration Committee [41r] (81/108)

(41)

-2-

this seniority will always enjoy such experience and qualifications, and indeed if, as seems probable, a Near or Middle Eastern Department is formed it would be too much to expect that he should possess interior first-hand acquaintance with so many and various localities. It is therefore proposed that a certain number of Officials with experience of the inner working of the Egyptian Government itself should be detached or seconded in rotation from Egypt to work in the Foreign Office in the special Department, remaining there for a period not exceeding 3 or at most 4 years and returning to their Ministry in Egypt at the end of that time. It is considered that this system would insure Egyptian problems being handled with up-to-date knowledge and the sympathy resulting from 12 to 15 years work in the country.

The Committee and witnesses are unanimous in desiring to increase the quantity and quality of understanding and assistance extended to the High Commissioner, rather than, by tightening the control upon him from London, to lower his prestige; and it is felt that by placing the specialist staff in the middle or junior ranks of the Department rather than at its head, the risk of doubling the post of High Commissioner Financial Adviser and others by an expert Official of high position and possibly conflicting views would be eliminated.

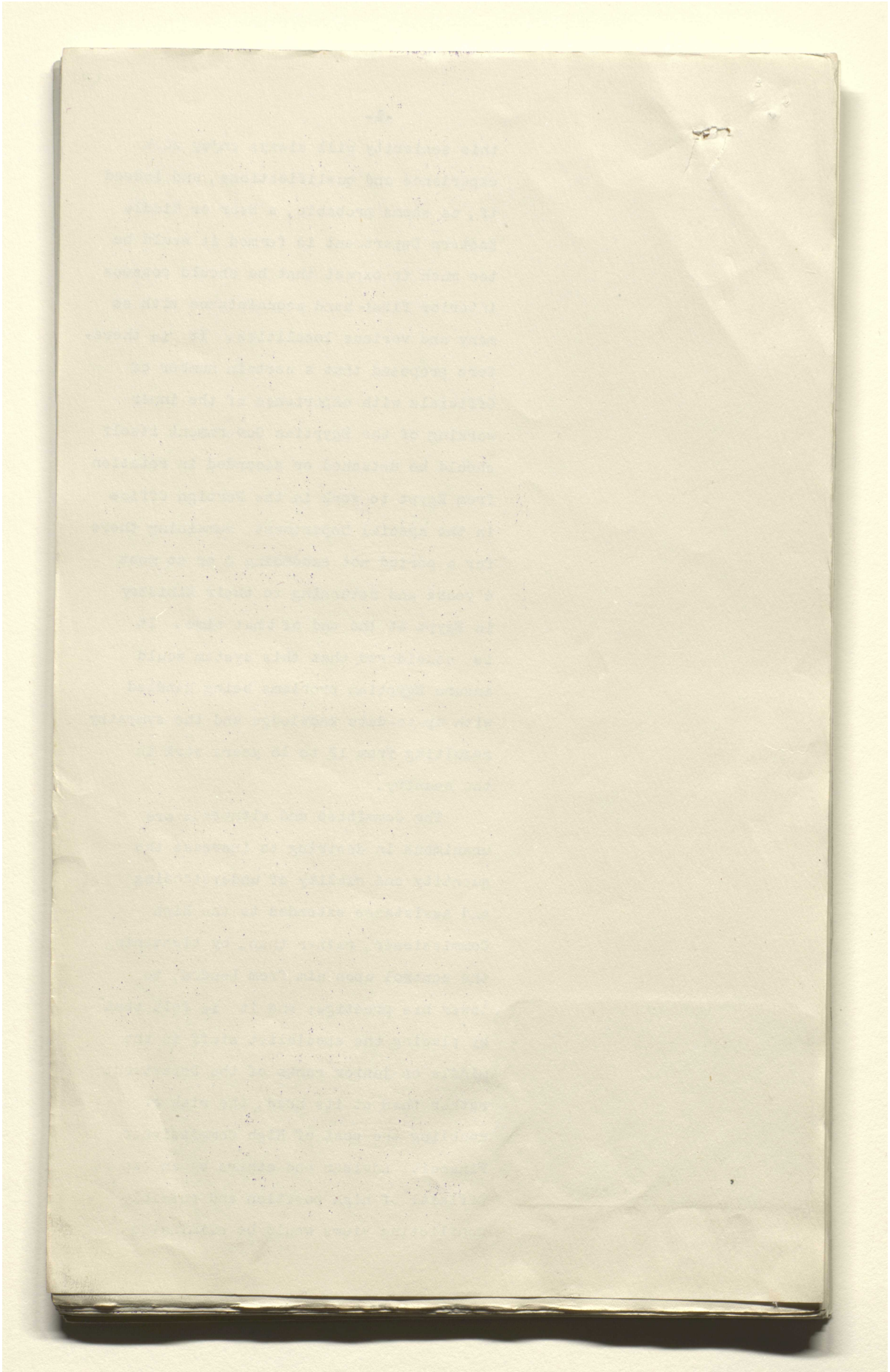
I have no recollection of this and do not know what it refers to.

(Dated) C.

EAC/3rd.Minutes p.2.paras 6 7 8

(Dated) R.B. p.3.para I.

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The Committee, after careful consideration of the arguments put forward, are of opinion:-

1. That the case for an Egyptian Department, to form the nucleus of a possible Near or Middle Eastern Department is proved.

2. That this Department cannot be constituted otherwise than as part of the Foreign Office and under the permanent Under Secretary of State of the Foreign Office.

3. That the Department should, from the beginning, deal with the affairs of Egypt, the Sudan and Arabia including Aden; and with those of Mesopotamia as and when practicable.

4. That the Foreign Office proposal to start the nucleus of the new Department with ^{one} Foreign Office and ^{one} Anglo-Egyptian Official, to be expanded according to requirements, be approved. That the Department should be placed under an Official of the standing of an Assistant Under Secretary of State, responsible to the permanent Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, and assisted by two or more Officials of at least twelve years standing, one from the Foreign Office itself, and one with practical experience of the Government and country of Egypt.

I recall none of this.

(Intd.) C.

EAC/3rd. Mins. p.5. paras 2 & 3

- - - p.2. para 8

- - - p.3. para 3

- - - p.4. paras 1,4,

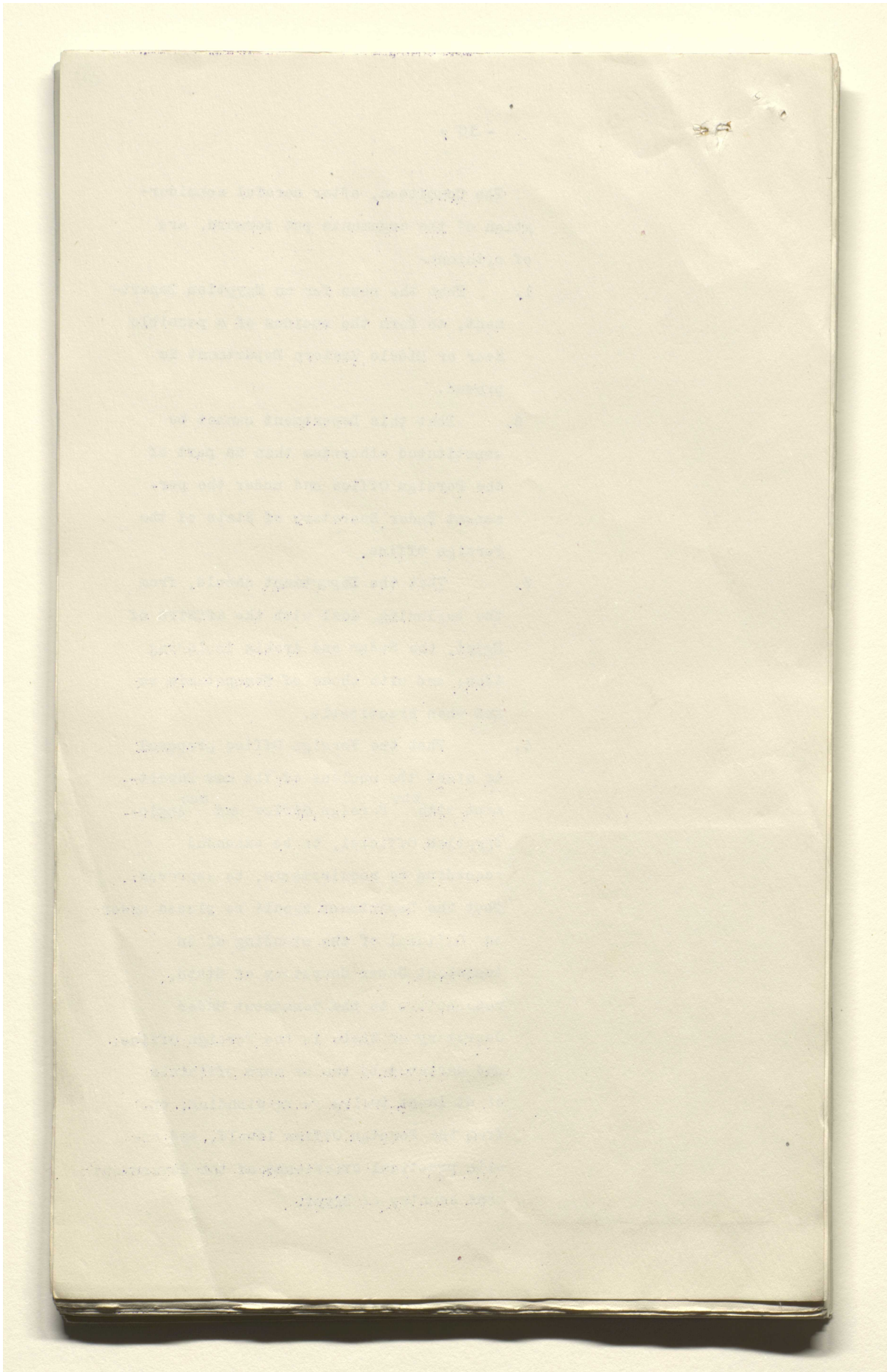
5,8,9,&10

EAC/4th. Mins. p.2. paras 10,

(Intd.) R.S.

11,13,&14.

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Reports and papers of the Egyptian Administration Committee [43r] (85/108)

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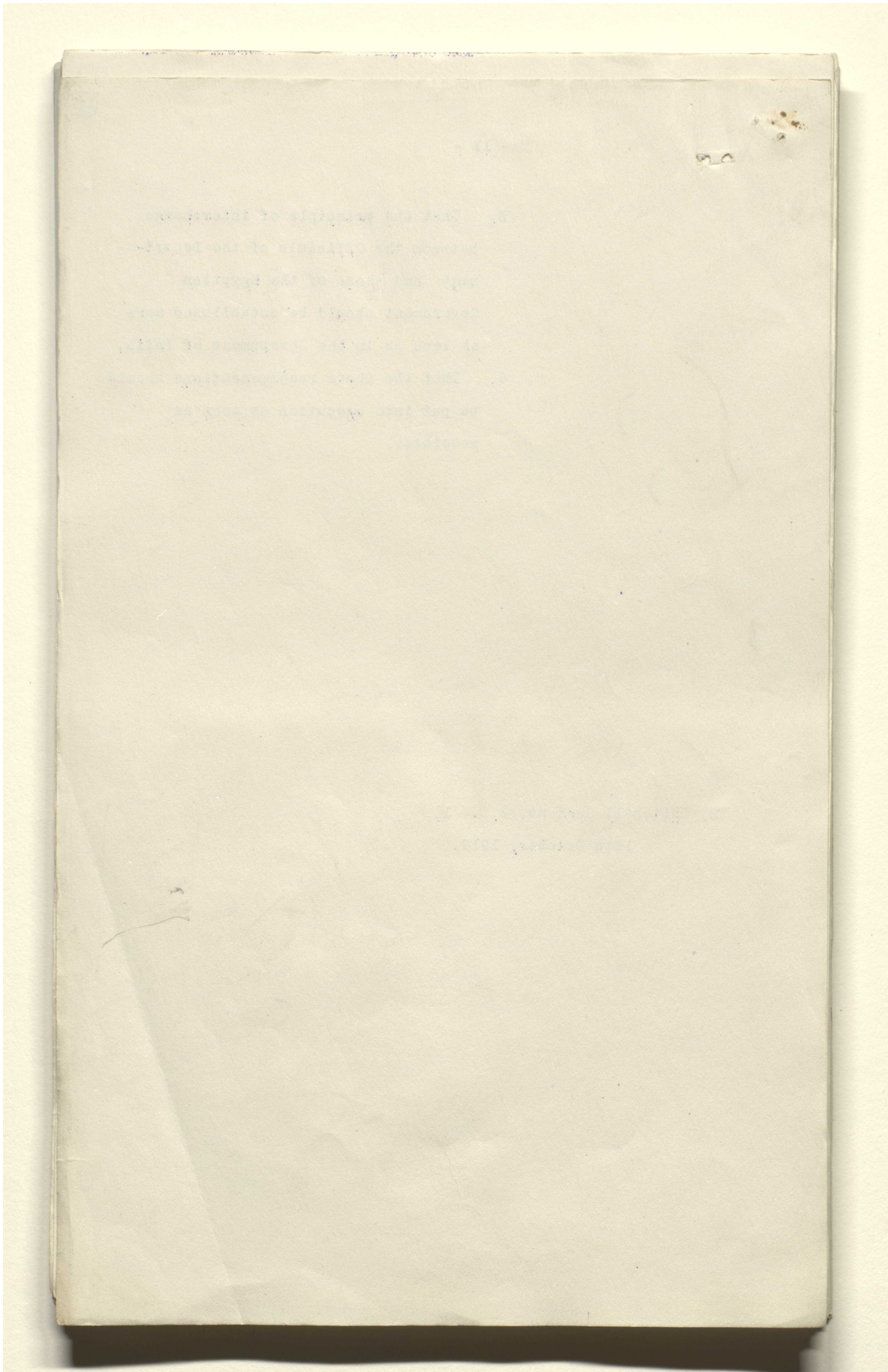
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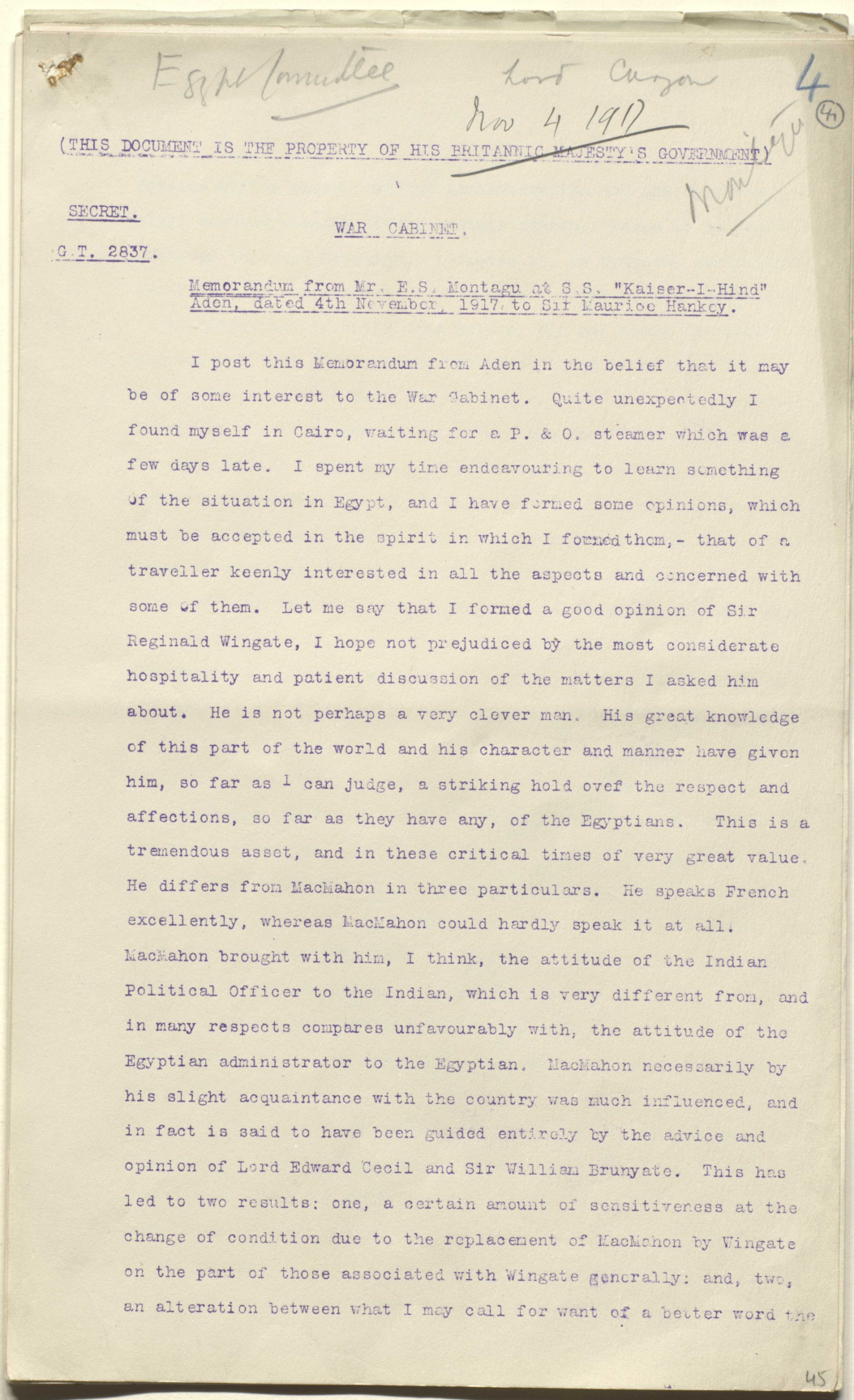
5. That the principle of interchange between the Officials of the Department and those of the Egyptian Government should be established more or less as in the Government of India.
6. That the above recommendations should be put into execution as soon as possible.

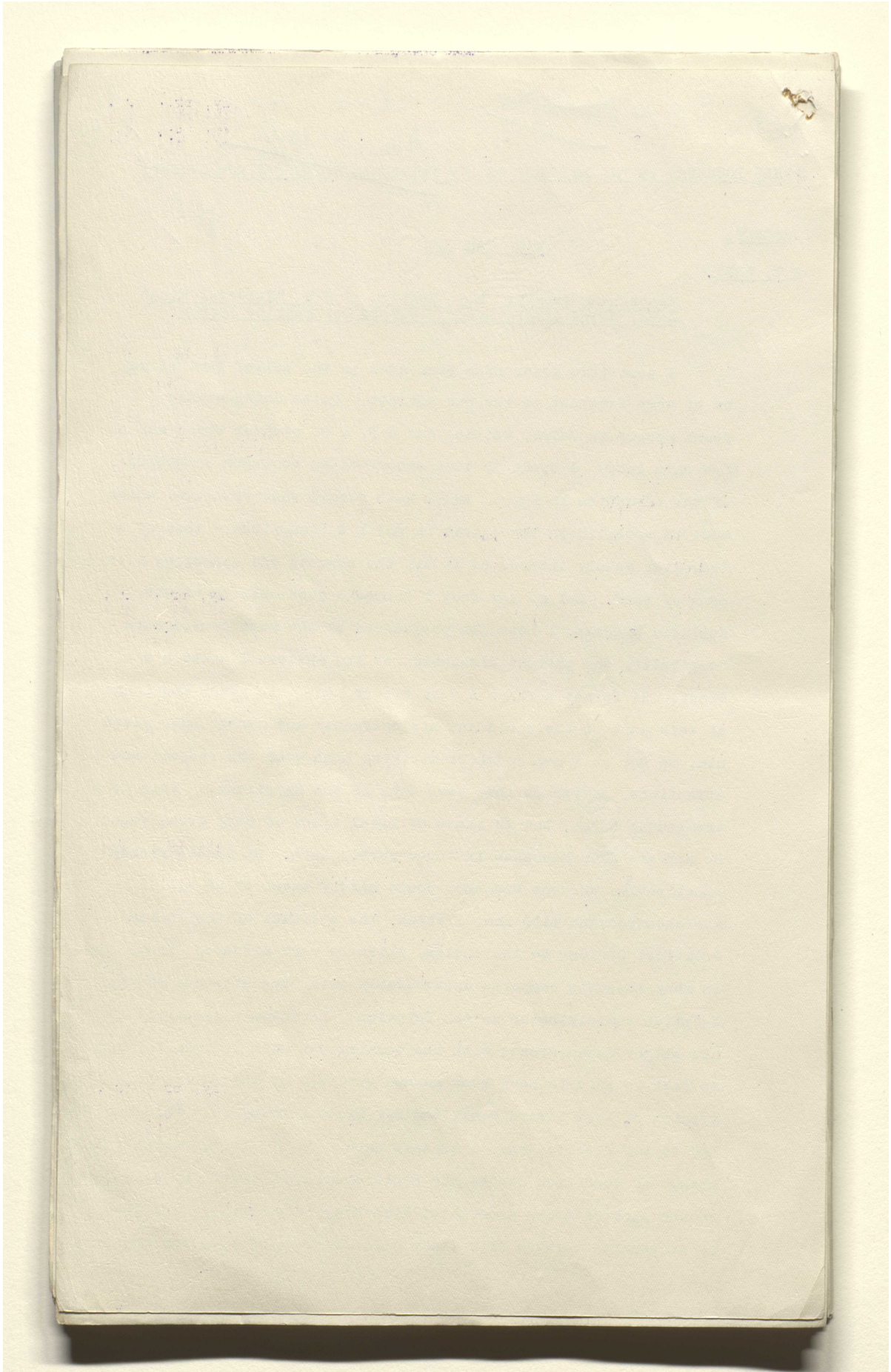
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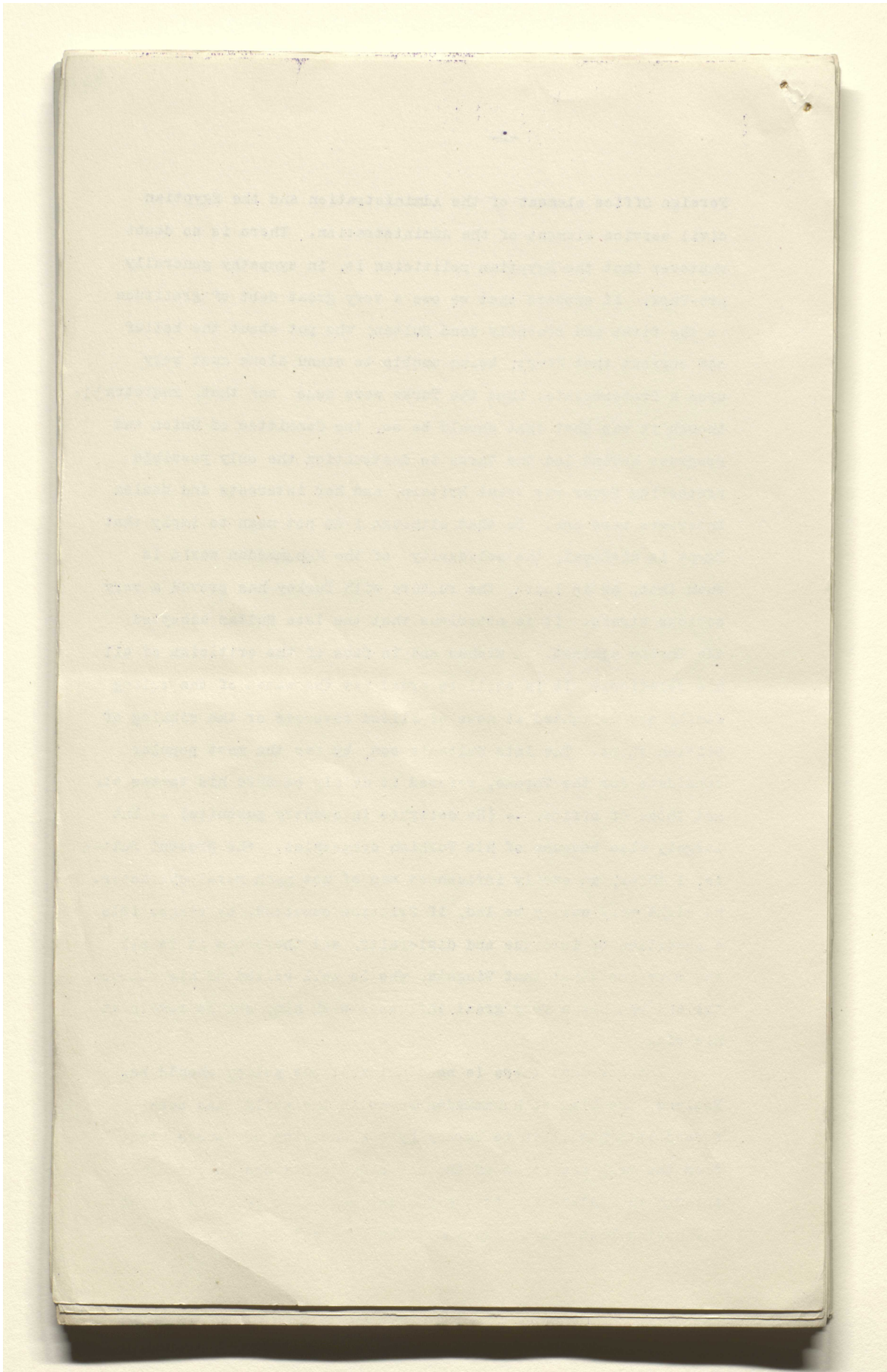
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Foreign Office element of the Administration and the Egyptian civil service element of the Administration. There is no doubt whatever that the Egyptian politician is, in sympathy generally pro-Turk. It appears that we owe a very great debt of gratitude to the first and recently dead Sultan, who put about the belief now current that Egypt, being unable to stand alone must rely upon a Protectorate; that the Turks were done and that, regrettable though it was that that should be so, the Committee of Union and Progress having led the Turks to destruction the only possible protecting Power was Great Britain, and her interests and Moslem interests were one. So that although I do not mean to imply that Egypt is disloyal, the solidarity of the Mohammedan world is such that, as in India, the rupture with Turkey has proved a very serious strain. It is notorious that the late Sultan accepted the Throne against his wishes and in face of the criticism of all his relations. It is still recorded how the women of the ruling family are delighted at news of Allied reverses or the sinking of British ships. The late Sultan's son, by far the most popular candidate for the Throne, refused it mainly because his tastes are not those of office, -- (He delights in country pursuits) -- but largely also because of his Turkish sympathies. The present Sultan is, I think, an easily influenced man of not much moral character. He might very easily be led, if friction occurred, by stages into a condition of intrigue and disloyalty, and therefore it is all the more important that Wingate, who is well seized of his character and who has a very great influence with him, should remain at his side.

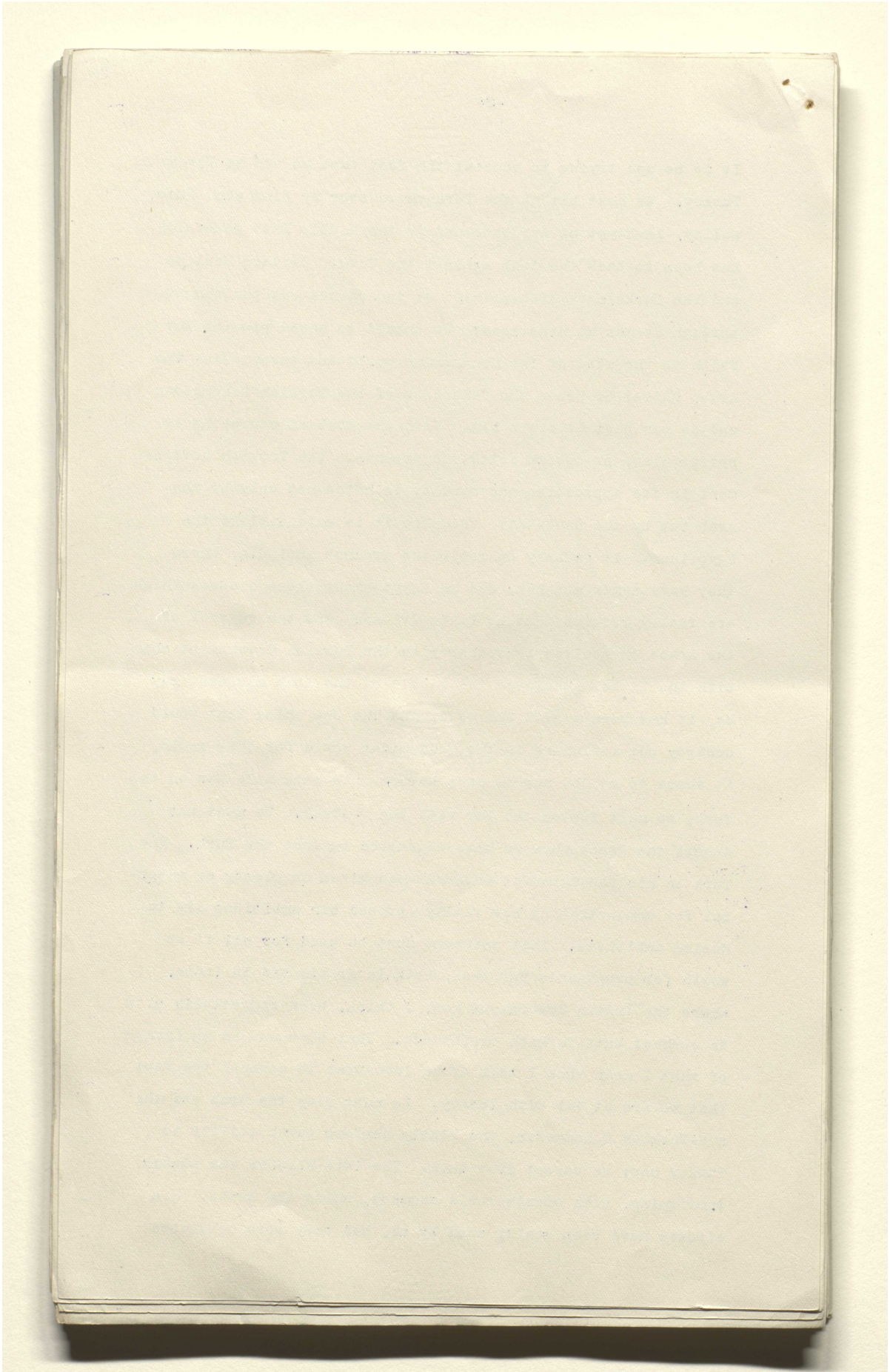
I think that there is no doubt what our policy should be. England, the biggest Mohammedan Power in the world, has been forced into hostility to Turkey by a succession of causes right from the very beginning of the new order of things in Turkey through the Balkan War to the present condition of affairs, yet War having been made there must be War, and War only.

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It is no use trying to conceal the fact that we are at War with Turkey. We must hit at the Turk where ever we find him. Our policy, in Egypt at any rate and in the Middle East generally, has been to back the Arab against the Turk. Certain Moslems and (the Turks) have disappointed us and earned our punishment through German machinations. We should go ahead pinning our faith to the rest of the Mohammedan world and encouraging the Arab, whilst we prove the falseness of the Turkish Mohammedan and do our best to crush him. With the Arab of course he is not popular, except on religious grounds. The Turkish government in its oppression and cruelty is hated not only by the Arab but by the Soudanese, who also it is said dislike the Egyptians. It is only on religious grounds in India, where they have never met him, and in Egypt among those classes which are really Turkish that he finds friends, and the quarrel of the Arabs themselves is rather with the Turkish Government than with the Turks. Whatever the result of the Arab movement may be, it has been a good War move, and the one thing that would destroy our influence in the Mohammedan world for ever would, it seems to me, be now to swap horses. We have made War on the Turk; we must finish the War with the Turk. We must not desert the Arabs whom we have organised against the Turk. The Turk in his Pan-Turanian movement has given us plenty of material for demonstrating how really opposed his ambitions are to Moslem ambitions. That movement must be used for all it is worth for propaganda purposes, both in Arabia and in India, where the Indian Government has, I think, been regrettably slow to conduct anti-Turkish propaganda. That slowness is an example of what I mean when I talk of an endeavour to conceal the fact that we are at War with Turkey. We must play the Arab and the non-Turkish Mohammedan, and flatly confess our hostility to Turkey now; we cannot draw back. The late Khedive was always intriguing, with considerable success, among the Arabs. His efforts have been really used by us, but they were conducted



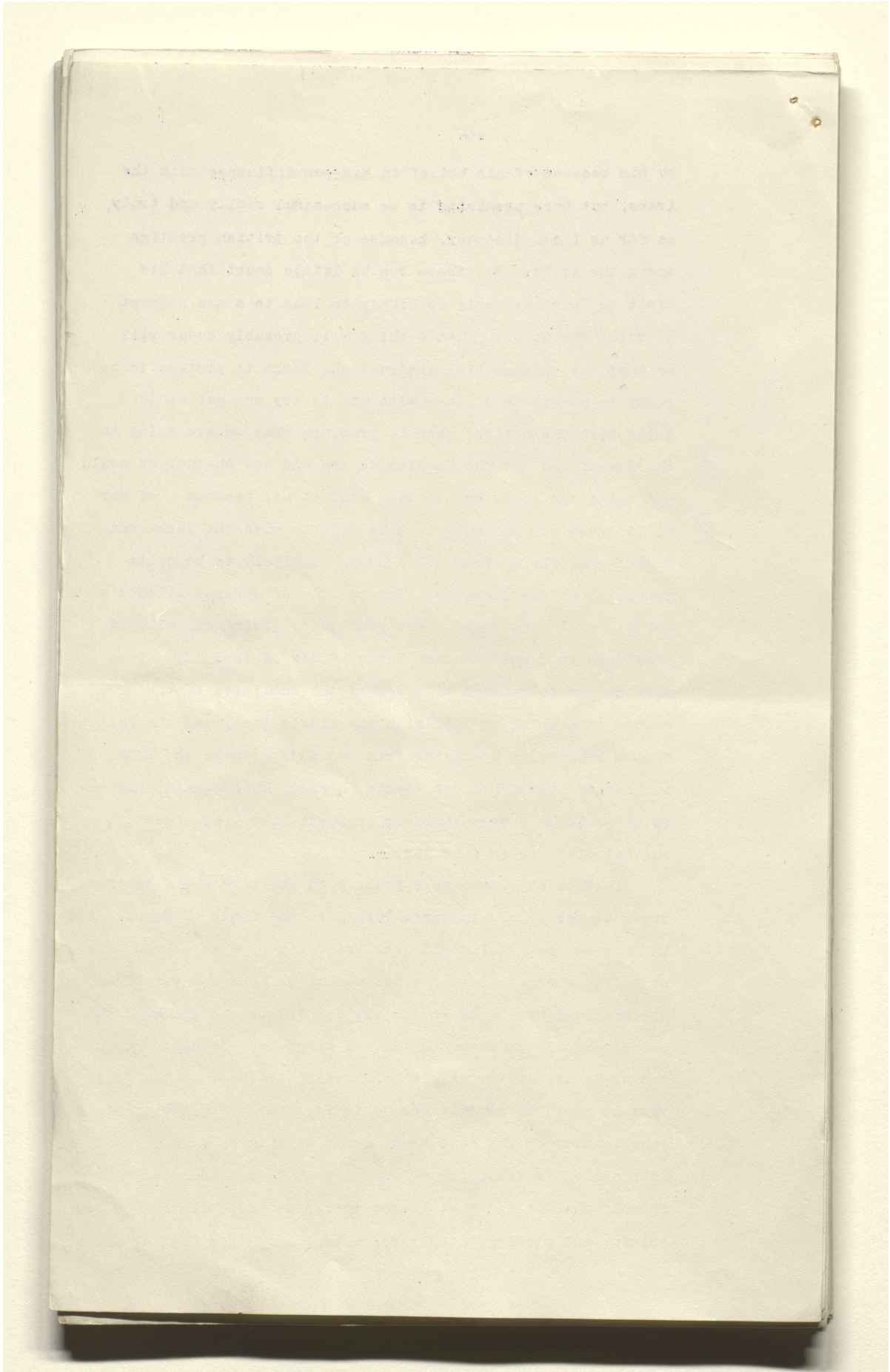
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by him because of his belief in his own influence with the Arabs, but were promising to be successful really and truly, so far as I can discover, because of the British prestige among the Arabs. But there can be little doubt that his visit to Constantinople is likely to lead to a new attempt to rally the Arabs. What I think will probably occur will be that the Germans will instruct the Turks to pretend to be ready to negotiate a peace with us; to try and get us to dally with the notion; then to proclaim what we are doing to the Arabs, and get the Khedive to try and see whether he could not raise the Arabs on his side against us, because of our willingness now suddenly to make friends with the Turk - and astute game which, from all I hear, is likely to be quite important and interesting. The results of General Allenby's efforts will effect this move perhaps by giving our alleged readiness to conciliate the Turks an air of veracity. I am sure no one in England will forget the smallness of the forces with which we deal with the Middle East, and the fact that a Mohammedan up-rising from the Sudan, where the Turk is loathed, through Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Afghanistan would be a very alarming prospect likely to upset all our calculations in this War.

Another objection to a Peace with the Turk would be the grave danger of a Germanised Turkey on the flank of Egypt. And in this connection I would urge the Cabinet, even at the risk of asking them to re-read a few sentences from the very full statements I have made on the subject before, to remember the dangers resultant from Zionism. I am not now going to repeat the arguments of the unsuitability of Palestine; of the fact that it would be serious for us to interfere with its existing inhabitants; of the fact that, in my opinion it is far more absurd to discuss Pan-Judaism than to consider our old friend Pan-Islamism; but I want to repeat that Zionism had its origin, and still is mainly recruited, among the Central Powers

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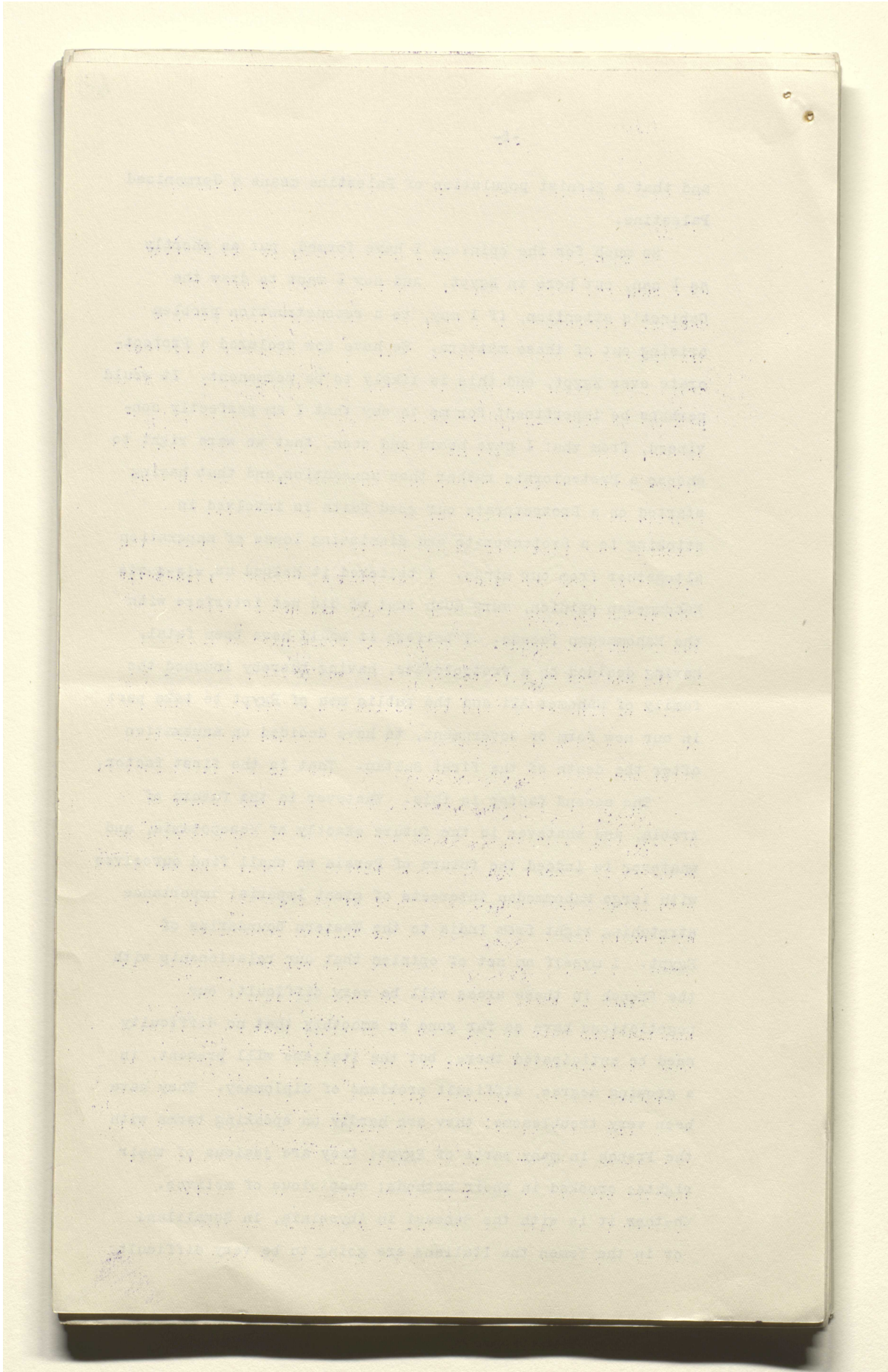
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and that a Zionist population of Palestine means a Germanised Palestine.

So much for the opinions I have formed, put as shortly as I can, out here in Egypt. And now I want to draw the Cabinet's attention, if I may, to a reconstruction problem arising out of these matters. We have now declared a Protectorate over Egypt, and this is likely to be permanent. It would perhaps be impertinent for me to say that I am perfectly convinced, from what I have heard and seen, that we were right to choose a Protectorate rather than annexation, and that having started on a Protectorate our good faith is involved in sticking to a Protectorate and dismissing ideas of annexation altogether from our minds. I believed it helped us, vis-a-vis Mahomedan opinion, very much that we did not interfere with the Mahomedan facade. I believe it would have been fatal, having decided on a Protectorate, having thereby induced the family of Mahomet Ali and the public men of Egypt to take part in our new form of Government, to have decided on annexation after the death of the first Sultan. That is the first factor.

The second factor is this. Whatever is the future of Arabia, and whatever is the future exactly of Mesopotamia, and whatever is indeed the future of Persia we shall find ourselves with large Mahomedan interests of great Imperial importance stretching right from India to the Western boundaries of Egypt. I myself am not of opinion that our relationship with the French in these areas will be very difficult; our negotiations have so far gone so smoothly that no difficulty need be anticipated there; but the Italians will present, in a growing degree, difficult problems of diplomacy. They have been very troublesome; they are hardly on speaking terms with the French in many parts of Egypt; they are jealous of their rights; crooked in their methods; suspicious of motives. Whether it is with the Senousi in Abyssinia, in Somaliland or in the Yemen the Italians are going to be very difficult,

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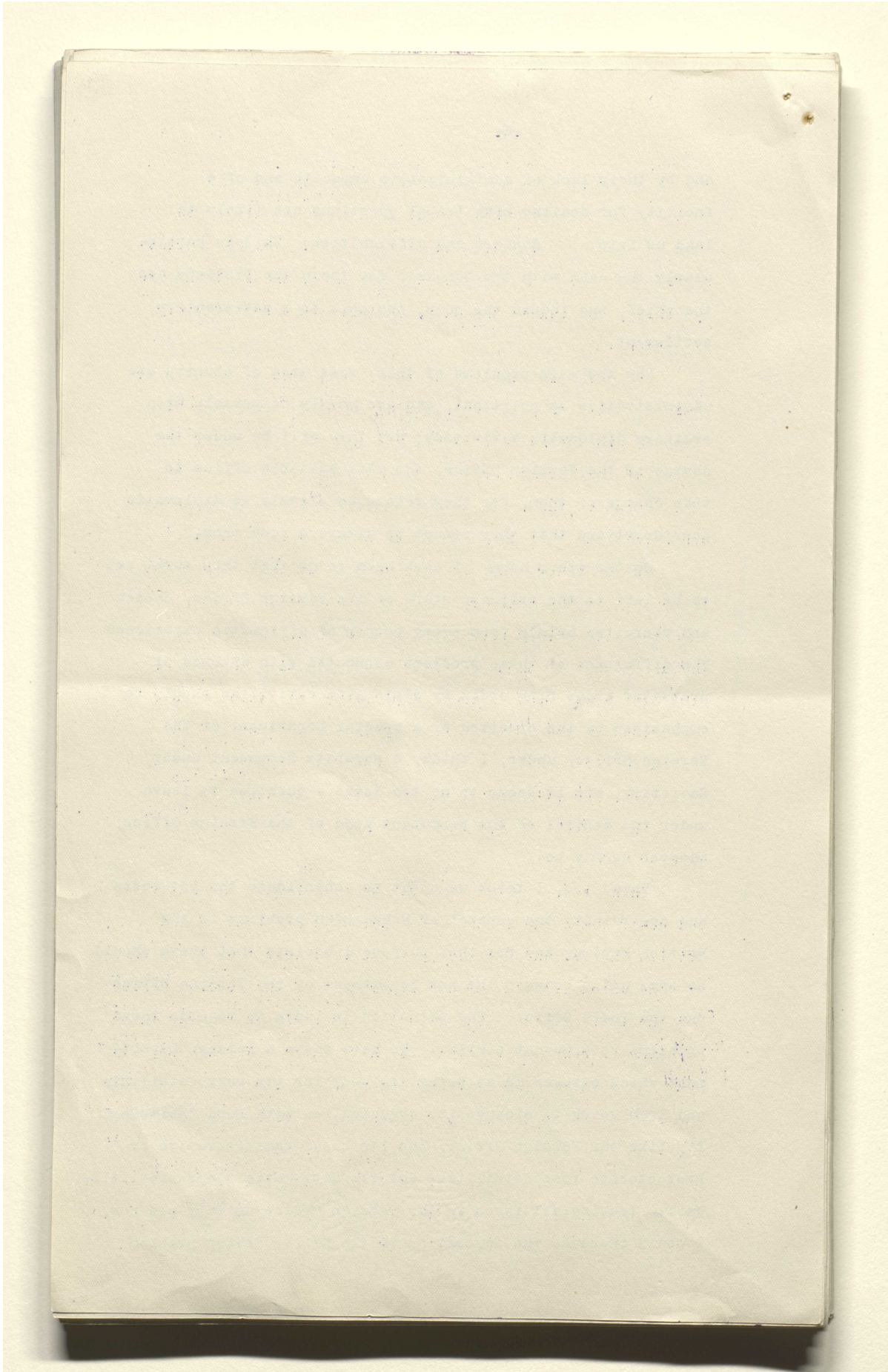
and by their lack of administrative capacity and of a facility for dealing with tribal questions are likely to land us into dangers and difficulties. This is particularly the case with the Senousi, for there the Italians are the chief, and indeed the only, obstacle to a satisfactory settlement.

Now the main problems of this vast area of country are administrative or political, and are hardly comparable with ordinary diplomatic activities; yet they will be under the charge of the Foreign Office, the most suitable Office to take charge of them, for they relate so closely to diplomatic considerations that they cannot be divorced from them.

On the other hand, it does seem to me that they ought not to be left to the ordinary staff of the Foreign Office, chosen and recruited mainly from among people of diplomatic experience. The difference of these problems connected with annexed or protected areas from ordinary diplomatic activities should be emphasised by the creation of a special Department of the Foreign Office, under, I think, a separate Permanent Under Secretary, for it seems to me too large a question to leave under the control of the permanent head of the Foreign Office, whoever he may be.

Then, too, I think we ought to consolidate the interests and co-ordinate the control of Mohammedan problems in the British Empire, and for that purpose I believe that there should be some union between the new Department of the Foreign Office and the India Office. The situation in India as regards these problems is somewhat similar. We have there a Foreign Department which strikes me as being too weak for its responsibilities and I am going to discuss its organisation with Lord Chelmsford. It, like our Foreign Office, has its quasi-administrative or Protectorate responsibilities and its diplomatic responsibilities. While leaving all these in the Foreign Office as they are now, I would increase the separation of the Native States problem

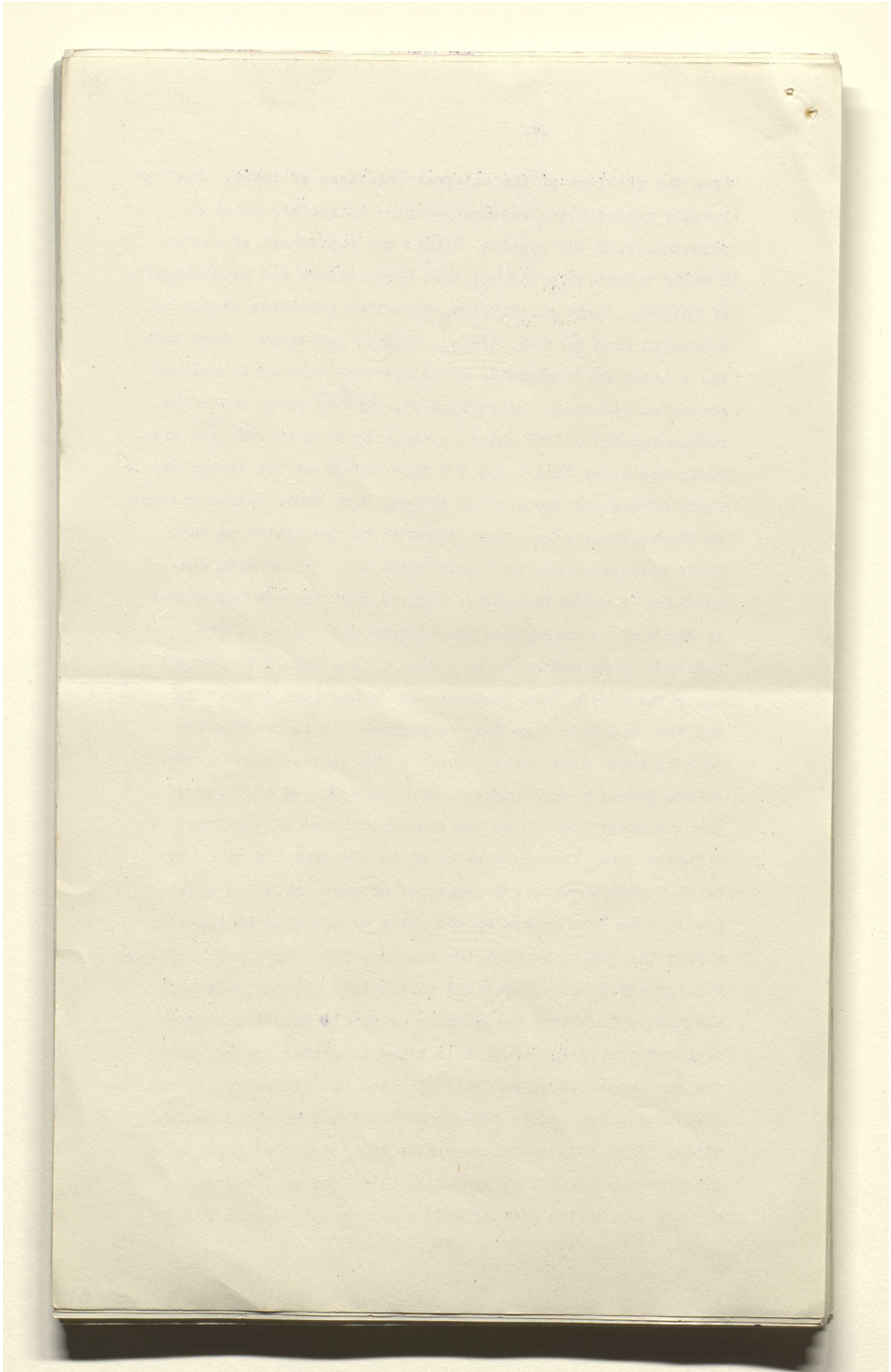
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from the problems of the external relations of India. Further I would separate the western problems of India's external relations from the eastern, within the Department of course. I would tentatively suggest that negotiations and consideration of Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Mongolian questions should be separated from Persian, Afghan, Arabian questions. Thus then the British Foreign Office would approach this great British protected Mohammedan world from its ^{Western} Eastern side, while the Indian Foreign Office would approach it from the ^{Eastern} Western side. Is it not clear that these two Departments of the State, the India Office and the Foreign Office, with their common interest in the Mohammedan question, ought to be associated so that their activities may be co-ordinated and conform with one another? I would therefore, suggest that the new Department of the Foreign Office and the Western Department of the Indian Foreign Office which I contemplate should be brought under the Middle East Committee which has been devised for the War, and should be made permanent. It is perhaps too much to hope that there will ^{always} be a Minister without portfolio of the position and interests and knowledge of Lord Curzon; but a Committee at which the Moslem problems of the India Office and the Moslem problems of the Foreign Office could be discussed together; a Committee at whose meetings such problems as were common to the whole area should be considered; a Committee which would bring Indian experience and policy and Foreign Office experience and policy into harmony with one another; a Committee which would go far to ensure a common trend of policy in relation to other countries interested in the same matters; a Committee like the Middle East Committee should be a permanent feature of British Imperial Organisation. This would be another step in the cure of Departmentalism in the British organisation. The Foreign Office has already arranged a sort of co-ordination between the Board of

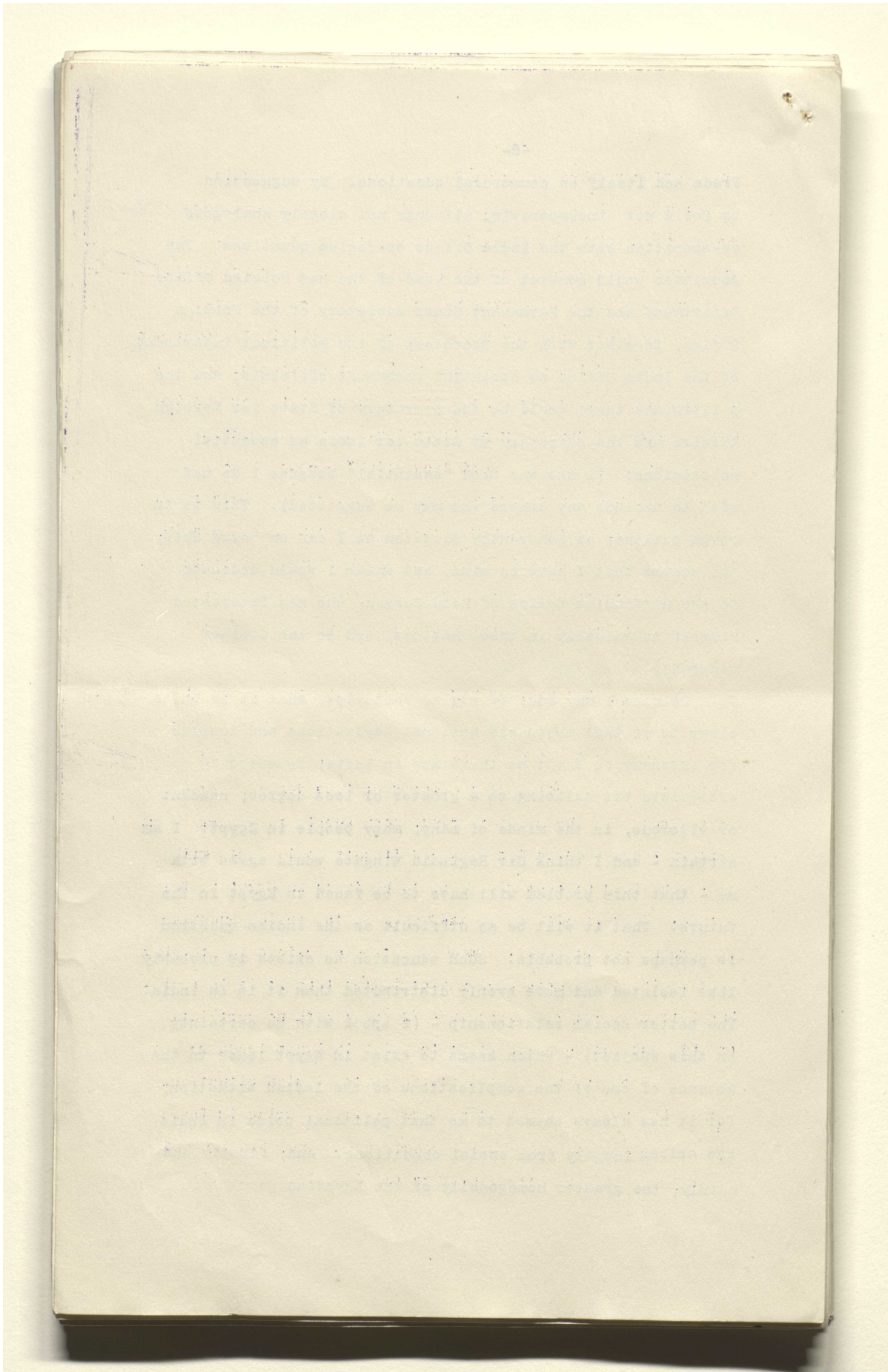
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Trade and itself on commercial questions. My suggestion is for a not incomparable, although not closely analogous co-operation with the India Office on Moslem questions. The Committee would consist of the head of the new Foreign Office Department and the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, together with the Secretary of the Political Department of the India Office as essential permanent officials; and the politicians there would be the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for India as essential politicians. (I use the word "essential" because I do not wish to exclude any others who may be suggested). This is in rough outline, as coherently dictated as I can on board ship, the scheme that I have in mind, and which I would dedicate to the particular notice of Lord Curzon, who has interested himself so valuably in these matters, and to the Cabinet generally.

Perhaps I may add, by way of postscript, that it is quite clear to me that there are national aspirations and desires for autonomy in Egypt as there are in India, fomented by extremists but existing to a greater or less degree, nascent or vigorous, in the minds of many, many people in Egypt. I am certain - and I think Sir Reginald Wingate would agree with me - that this problem will have to be faced in Egypt in the future. That it will be as difficult as the Indian question is perhaps not probable. Such education as exists is probably less isolated and more evenly distributed than it is in India. The better social relationship - (I speak with no certainty on this subject) - which seems to exist in Egypt leads to the absence of one of the complications of the Indian situation, for it has always seemed to me that political pride in India has arisen largely from social conditions. And, finally and mainly, the greater homogeneity of the Egyptian population



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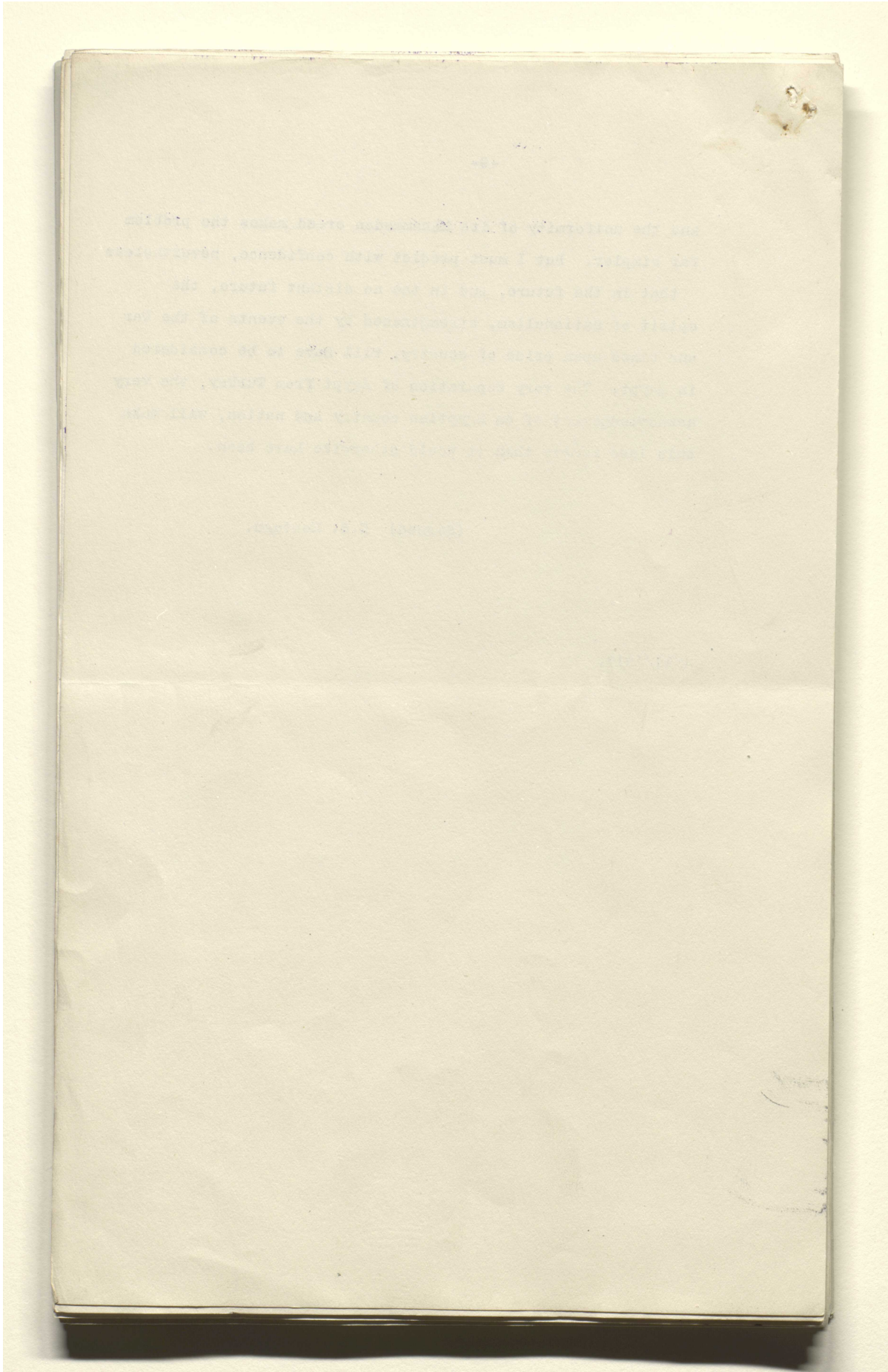
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and the uniformity of its Mohammedan creed makes the problem far simpler. But I must predict with confidence, nevertheless that in the future, and in the no distant future, the spirit of nationalism, strengthened by the events of the War and based upon pride of country, will have to be considered in Egypt. The very separation of Egypt from Turkey, the very acknowledgement of an Egyptian country and nation, will make this less remote than it would otherwise have been.

(Signed) E.S. Montagu.

4/11/1917.

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Lord Curzon

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S E C R E T.

E.A.C.1.

10

EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

(Extract from letter dated 28th September
1917 from Lord Edward Cecil to Lord Curzon)

When I came to think over what you said about the composition of the new Department, I came to the conclusion I was wrong.

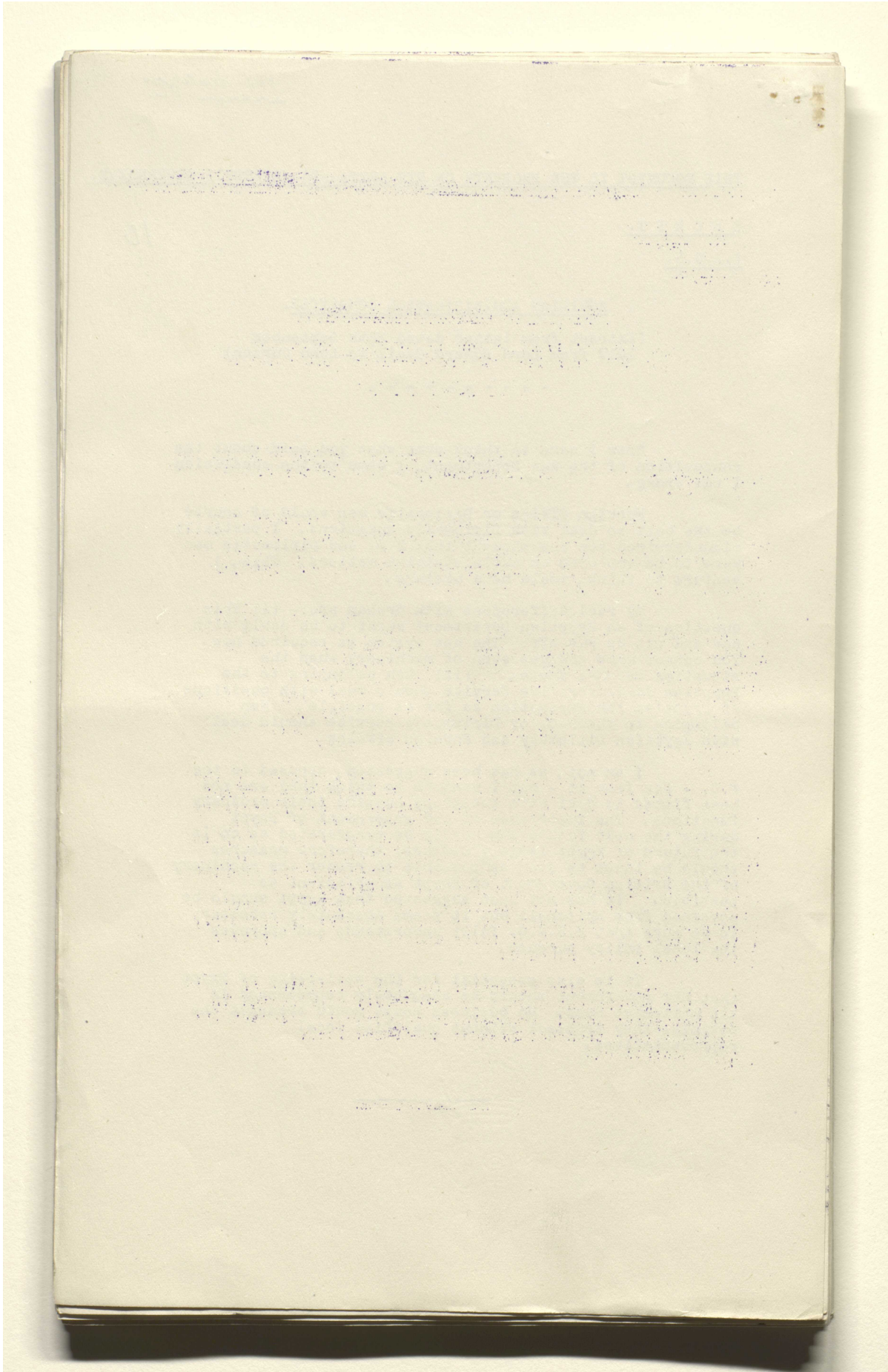
Foreign Office or Diplomatic men would of course be the best to deal with Diplomatic questions. I partially misunderstood you and thought that F.O. and Diplomatic men were to be employed on Administrative matters. This, I venture to think, would be a mistake.

My real differences with Graham are:- (i) This question of an Egyptian Department ought to be dealt with now and not be put off. The new system is required now. You cannot make changes even of machinery when the situation becomes acute. (ii) Men belonging to the Egyptian Administrative Service should deal with questions of Egyptian Administration as far as possible. Men belonging to the F.O. or Diplomatic Service should deal with Egyptian Diplomacy and Foreign affairs.

I am not, as has been suggested, opposed to the F.O. - far from it - but I venture to think they are not best fitted to deal with questions outside their ordinary functions. The importance of our government of Egypt during the near future can hardly be exaggerated as on it the future of Egypt largely depends; therefore measures should be taken as soon as possible to render the machinery of the British Government of Egypt as efficient as possible. It has not been suggested that Egypt should be governed from Whitehall but it seems absolutely necessary to be sure that H.B.M.C. fully understands and approves the local policy pursued.

It is also essential for the well-being of Egypt that her government should be adequately represented in all matters at Home. No business house would transact the business they transact without qualified local representatives.

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Lord Curzon.

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Printed for the War Cabinet. March 1918.

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REPORT OF THE EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

(This Report was written by Lord Curzon, and adopted by the Committee.)

THE appointment by the War Cabinet of a Committee to consider the future conduct of Egyptian administration in this country arose out of a Paper, submitted by Lord Edward Cecil, proposing the immediate creation of a separate Department or Ministry in London, distinct from the Foreign Office both in its location, staff, and traditions, though nominally under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. This Department was advocated on the ground that the affairs of Egypt had already become, and with the close of the war would in an ever-increasing degree continue to be, administrative rather than political; and that, as such, they required treatment by experts with special experience such as the Foreign Office staff could not, except in rare and accidental circumstances, provide. It was contemplated that such a Department might, if the close of the war left both Aden, Arabia, and possibly Mesopotamia either in British hands or under a British Protectorate, expand into an entirely new organisation which might be divorced from the Foreign Office altogether.

These proposals were supported in evidence by Sir H. McMahon, but were contested in printed memoranda submitted by Sir R. Graham and Lord Hardinge, and in oral evidence by Sir M. Cheetham.

Mr. Storrs wrote a draft report which, while correctly interpreting the general sense of the evidence and the broad deductions to be drawn from the enquiry, appeared to import into the proceedings of the Committee an undue proportion of the evidence itself, and to be more precise and definite than was justified by what had actually taken place.

Lord Milner subsequently wrote a note in which he placed himself, on the whole, definitely on the side of Lord Edward Cecil.

At a still later date, a note by Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, who had stopped in Egypt on his way out to India, was circulated to the War Cabinet, in which he adumbrated, as the future solution of this Eastern problem, the perpetuation of something like the present Middle East Committee, providing for the due co-ordination of the Home with the Indian points of view.

In these circumstances it is not easy to construct a report which will do full justice to all these varying views, or succeed in fusing them into a harmonious whole.

Nevertheless, there was, I think, a sufficient preponderance of opinion in favour of certain propositions to justify an effort to place them on record, both for immediate use and possibly for ulterior action.

1. There was a general agreement that, should the war result in placing the administrative control of Mesopotamia and Arabia in British hands, there would require to be a new Department in the Home Government to deal specifically with these problems, together with those of Aden, Egypt, and the Sudan. What form it should take, whether it should or should not be a Department of the Foreign Office, it was unnecessary and would be premature to decide; though the preponderance of opinion was clearly opposed to any complete divorce from the Foreign Office.

2. A second alternative, which might present itself at the close of the war, would be the administration by the British Government of Egypt, including the Sudan and Aden, together with the political relations of the Hejaz, assuming this kingdom to survive, but without Mesopotamia and Arabia in its broadest sense, assuming the two latter not to pass into the British sphere. For such a contingency, again, the creation of a new organisation might very likely be required.

3. Palestine, which had not then been successfully invaded, was not mentioned. But whatever the form of future political control, whether British or international,

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the representation of Palestinian interests, whether it was or was not supervised from Cairo, would also fall under the charge of the same body, Department, or organisation in London.

4. There remained the case of Egypt during the war, that is, until such period as the solution of the larger problems should have assumed a much clearer and more definite shape. It was felt that the association of administration with diplomacy in Egypt was, and must continue for some time to be, so close that it was out of the question at this juncture to remove Egyptian affairs from the Foreign Office. Fortunately the latter is peculiarly fortunate in possessing at the present time an Assistant Under-Secretary, Sir R. Graham, with exceptional Egyptian experience; and there was a general *consensus* that it would be a great mistake not to profit by his services as the Assistant Under-Secretary responsible for Egyptian affairs, assisted, as he no doubt would be, by a British official of special Egyptian experience.

5. Either now or as soon as the increase of business demanded, it was thought desirable that this Department should be strengthened by the addition of a limited number of officials from the Anglo-Egyptian Service, selected because of their special familiarity with the administrative problems of Egypt, to which country they would revert after a few years' service in the Foreign Office, thus maintaining a constant flow not only of fresh blood but of recent experience. The diplomatic side of the work would be performed by Foreign Office clerks or officials similarly assigned for the purpose. In this way would be constituted a separate department of the Foreign Office capable of expansion, when circumstances required, either into a larger and better-equipped body still under the Secretary of State, or into the more independent organisation which was the ideal of some of the witnesses.

(Initialled) C. OF K.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
February 20, 1918.