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'Mesopotamia: Papers relating to the future administration of Mesopotamia for the Committee over which I presided, 1917-1919'

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	Mss Eur F112/256
Date(s)	21 Aug 1916-3 Apr 1919 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
Extent and Format	1 file (314 folios)
Copyright for document	Unknown

About this record

File containing correspondence, memoranda and reports relating to the work of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee, collected by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Lord President of the Council, who chaired the Committee.

The papers cover a variety of topics relating to the administration of British-occupied Mesopotamia [Iraq] during and after the First World War, and discussions over the future status and administration of the region, including:

• A proclamation to the people of Baghdad on the occasion of the British occupation • Appointments of civil and political officers, primarily transferred from India, for the administration of Mesopotamia, with the intention of replacing them with ‘suitable Arab personnel’ as soon as practicable • Considerations over whether Mesopotamia should be the responsibility of the Government of India or of the British Government, and how this decision might impact other British agencies in the Gulf • Arrangements for the independent administration of Nejef [An-Najaf], Kerbela [Karbala], and other Shiah [Shia] holy places • Problems caused by the civil administration in Mesopotamia being answerable to the military administration, and the creation of the post of Civil Commissioner after the end of the War • Reports on events in Egypt, the Hejaz, Palestine and Syria, and considerations of how they affect events in Mesopotamia • Proposals from industrialist Lord Inchcape to begin a steamer service on the Tigris that was agreed with the Ottoman Government immediately

prior to the War, and to open a British bank in Baghdad.

- A proclamation to the people of Baghdad on the occasion of the British occupation

- Appointments of civil and political officers, primarily transferred from India, for the administration of Mesopotamia, with the intention of replacing them with ‘suitable Arab personnel’ as soon as practicable

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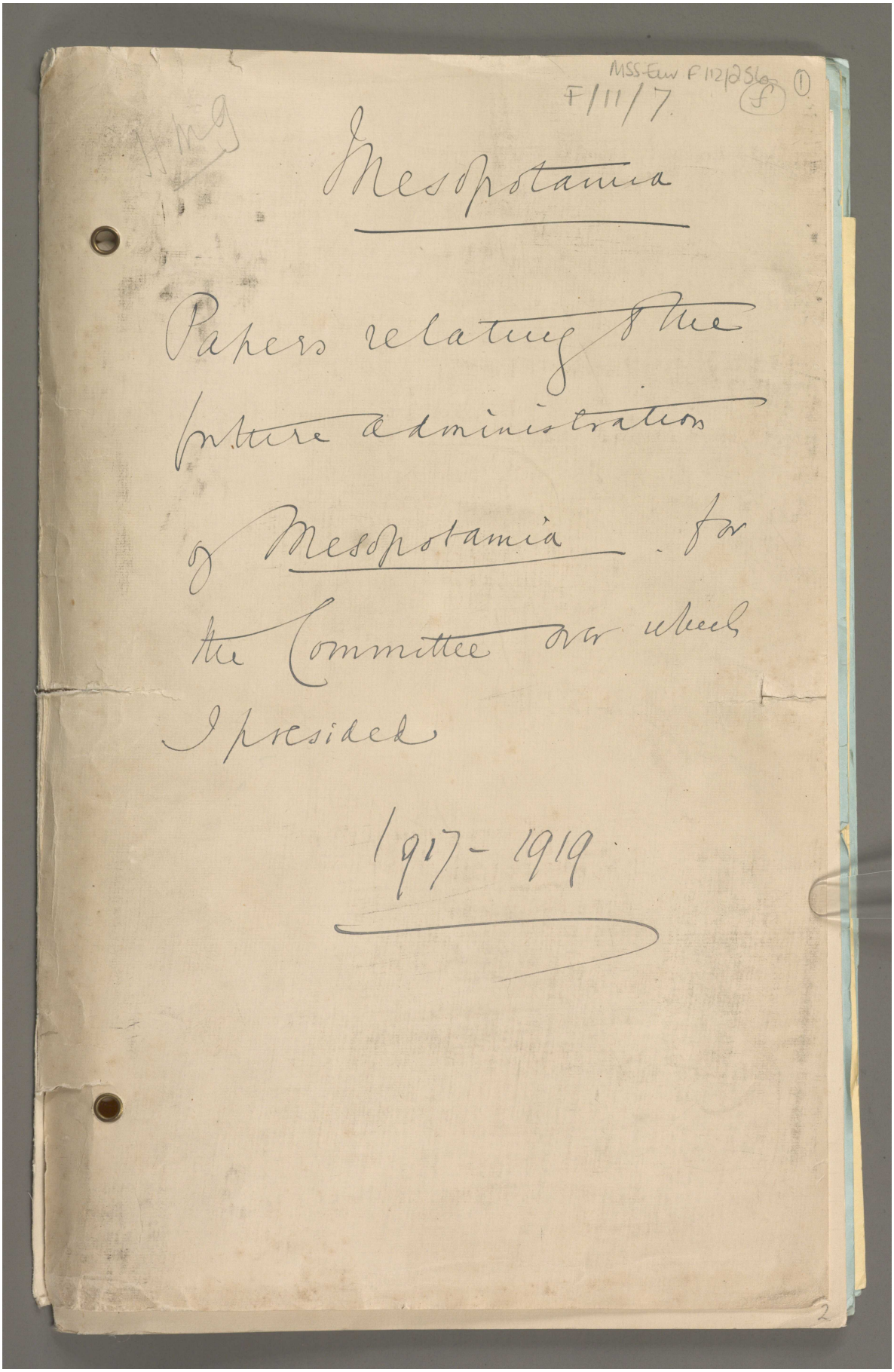
- Reports on events in Egypt, the Hejaz, Palestine and Syria, and considerations of how they affect events in Mesopotamia

- Proposals from industrialist Lord Inchcape to begin a steamer service on the Tigris that was agreed with the Ottoman Government immediately prior to the War, and to open a British bank in Baghdad.

The primary correspondents are: Lord Curzon; Sir Percy Cox, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf; Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude, Commander of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force; Arnold Wilson, Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia; Sir Mark Sykes; Gertrude Bell; Lord Inchcape; the Chief of the Imperial General Staff; the Directorate of Military Intelligence; the India Office; the Foreign Office; and the Government of India.



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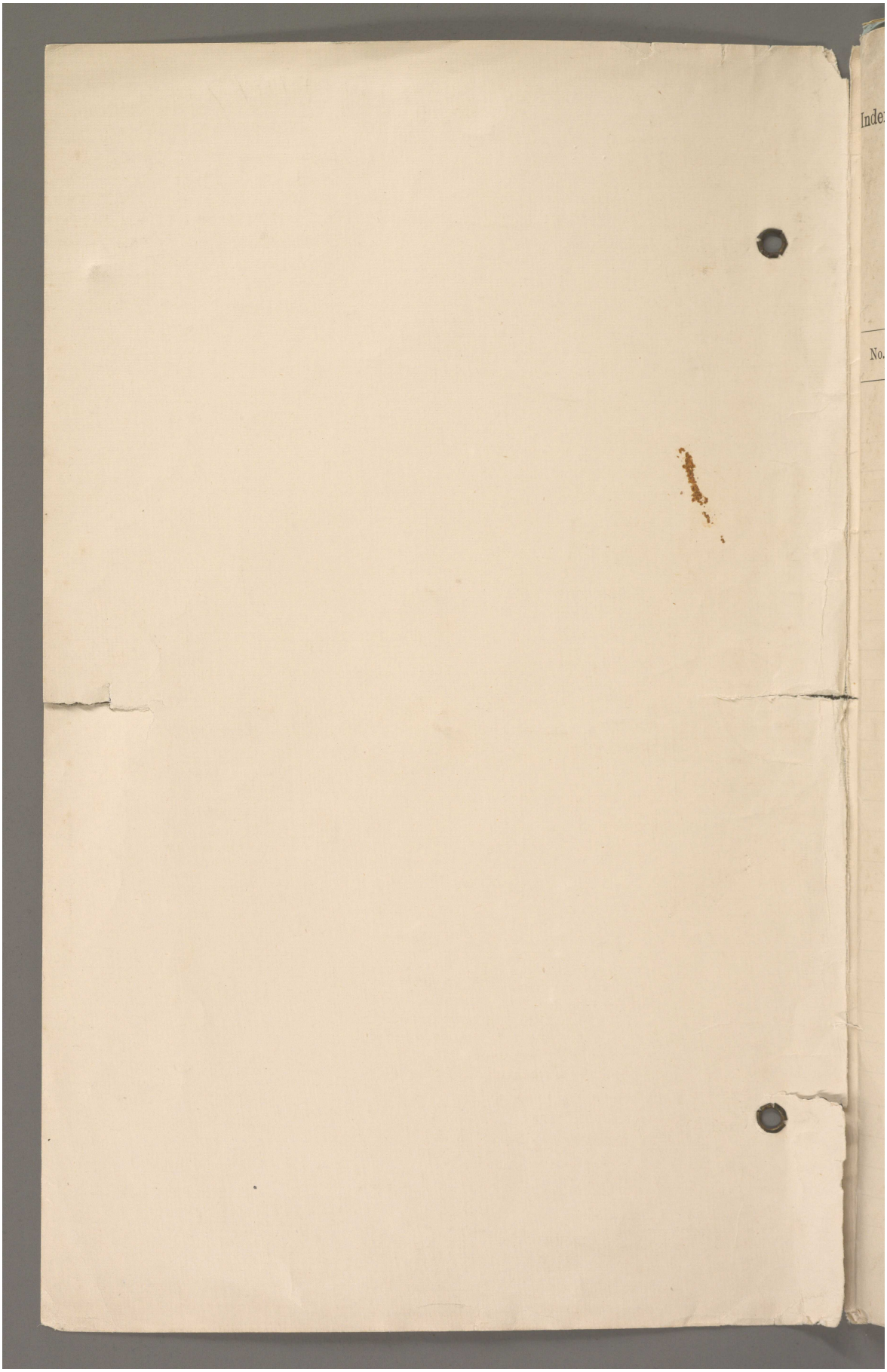

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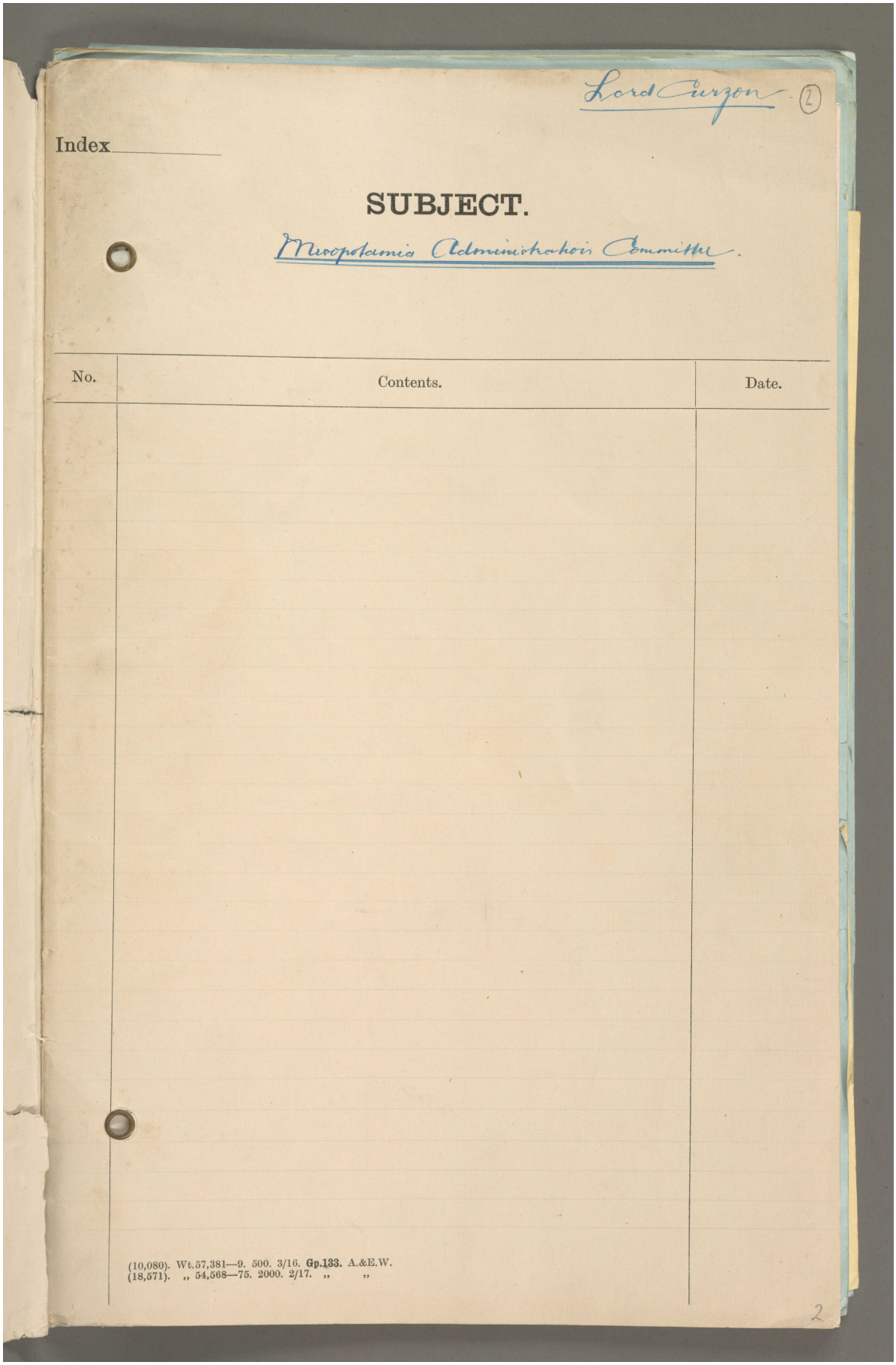

Lord Curzon (2)

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SUBJECT.

Mesopotamia Administration Committee.

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(10,080). Wt.57,381—9. 500. 3/16. Gp.133. A.&E.W.
(18,571). ,, 54,568—75. 2000. 2/17. ,, ,,

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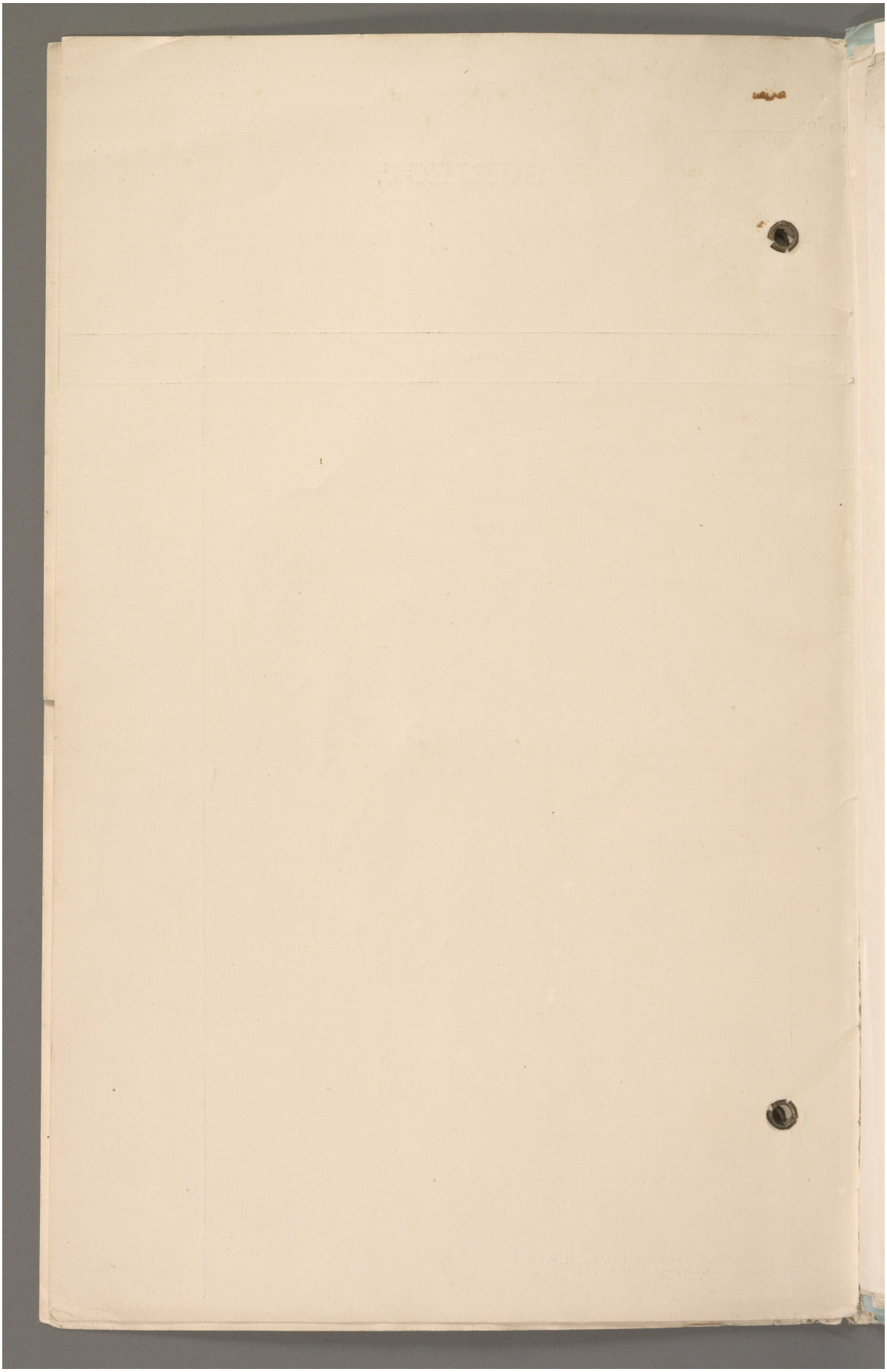

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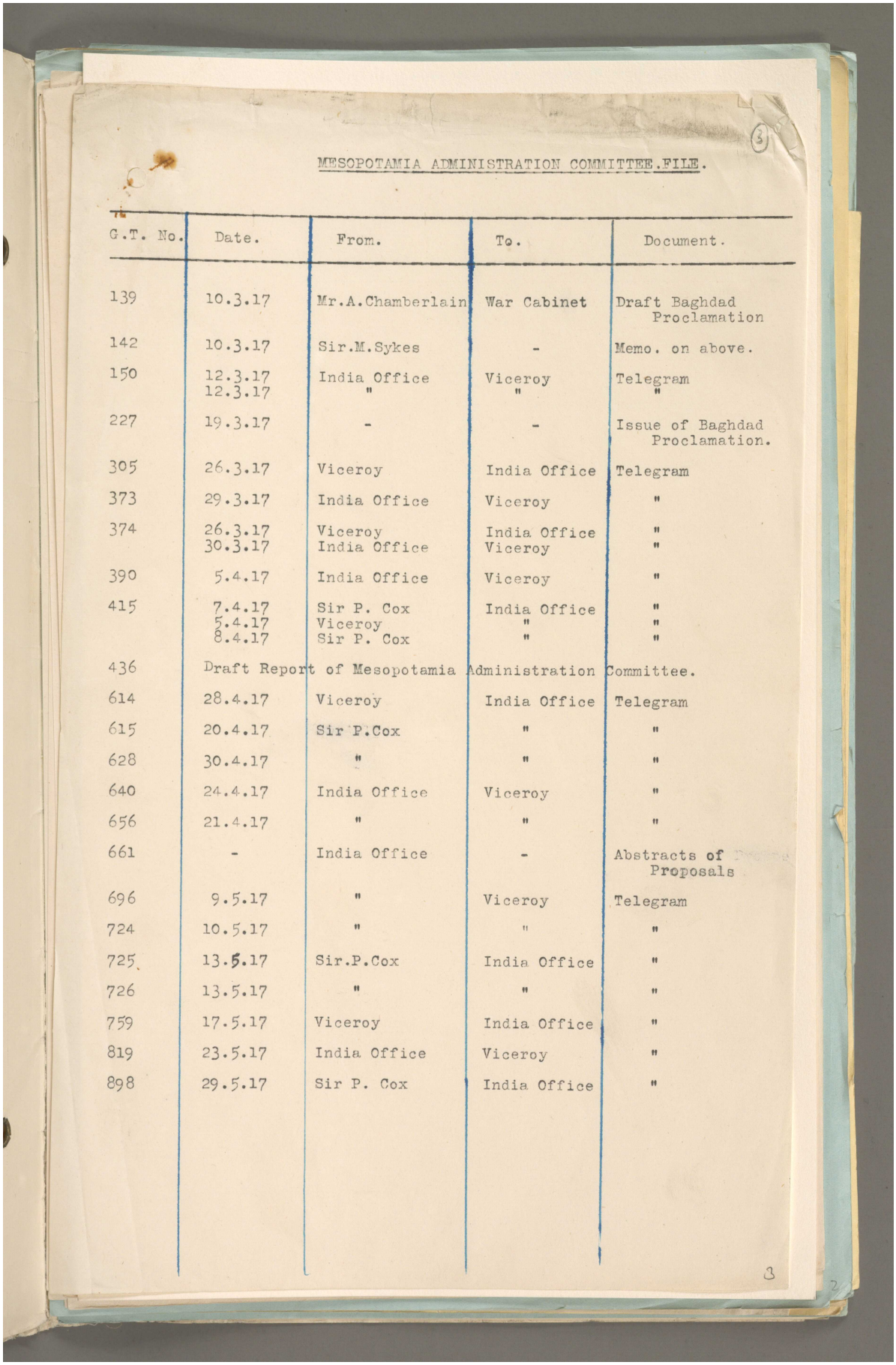

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.FILE.

G.T. No.	Date.	From.	To.	Document.
139	10.3.17	Mr.A.Chamberlain	War Cabinet	Draft Baghdad Proclamation
142	10.3.17	Sir.M.Sykes	-	Memo. on above.
150	12.3.17 12.3.17	India Office "	Viceroy "	Telegram "
227	19.3.17	-	-	Issue of Baghdad Proclamation.
305	26.3.17	Viceroy	India Office	Telegram
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628	30.4.17	"	"	"
640	24.4.17	India Office	Viceroy	"
656	21.4.17	"	"	"
661	-	India Office	-	Abstracts of Proposals
696	9.5.17	"	Viceroy	Telegram
724	10.5.17	"	"	"
725	13.5.17	Sir.P.Cox	India Office	"
726	13.5.17	"	"	"
759	17.5.17	Viceroy	India Office	"
819	23.5.17	India Office	Viceroy	"
898	29.5.17	Sir P. Cox	India Office	"

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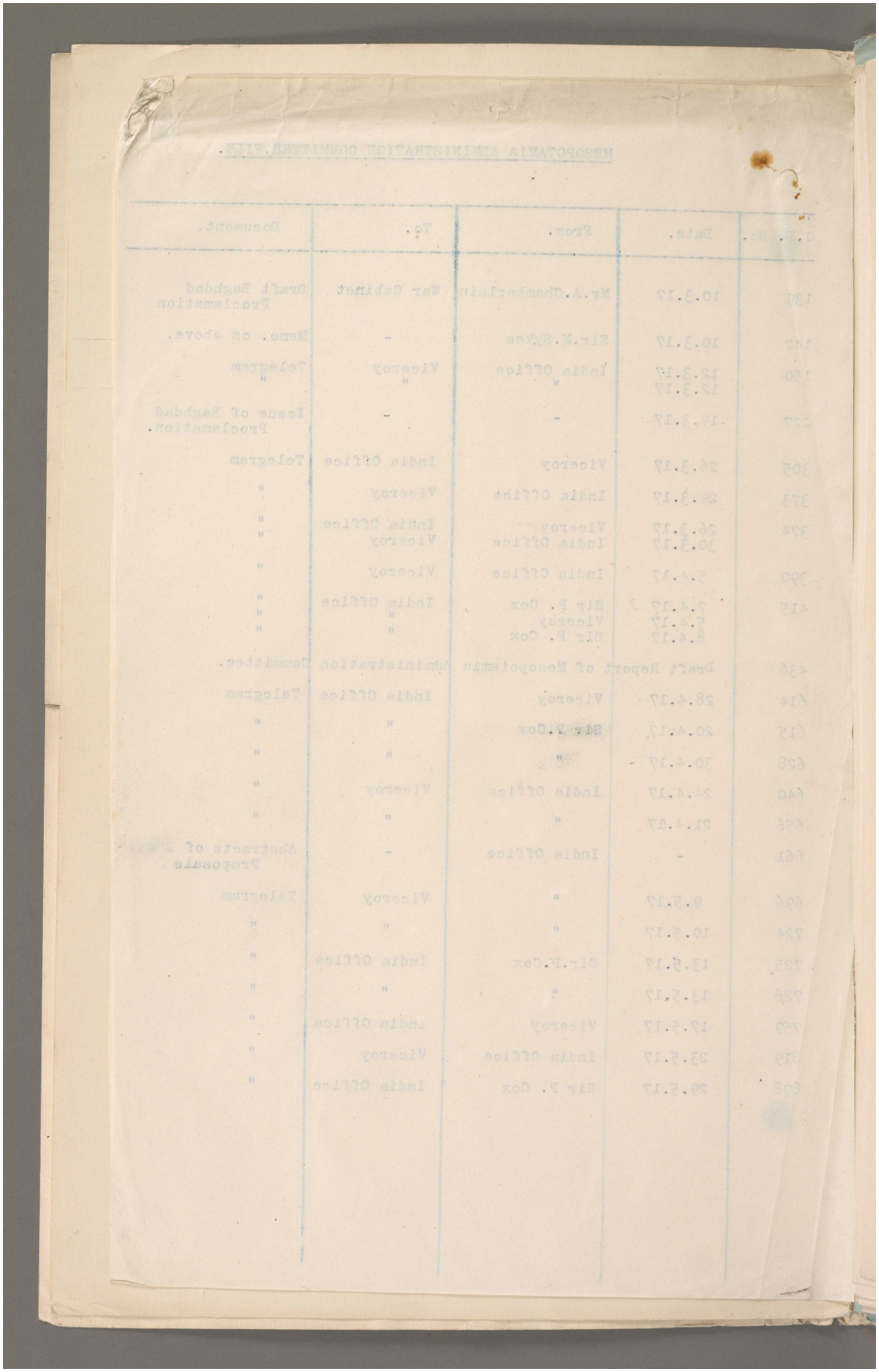

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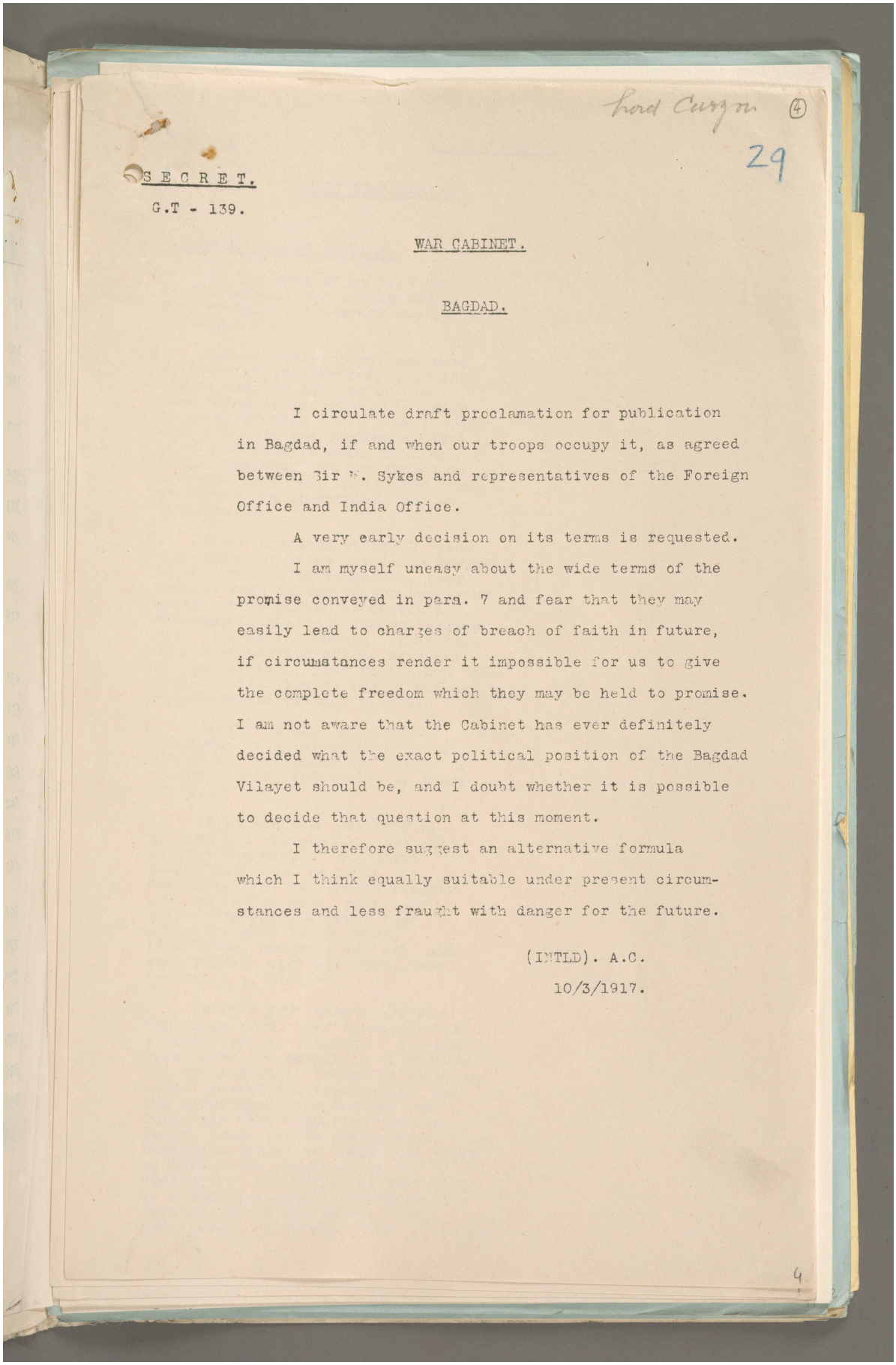

Lord Curzon (4)

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SECRET.

G.T - 139.

WAR CABINET.

BAGDAD.

I circulate draft proclamation for publication in Bagdad, if and when our troops occupy it, as agreed between Sir M. Sykes and representatives of the Foreign Office and India Office.

A very early decision on its terms is requested.

I am myself uneasy about the wide terms of the promise conveyed in para. 7 and fear that they may easily lead to charges of breach of faith in future, if circumstances render it impossible for us to give the complete freedom which they may be held to promise. I am not aware that the Cabinet has ever definitely decided what the exact political position of the Bagdad Vilayet should be, and I doubt whether it is possible to decide that question at this moment.

I therefore suggest an alternative formula which I think equally suitable under present circumstances and less fraught with danger for the future.

(INTLD). A.C.

10/3/1917.

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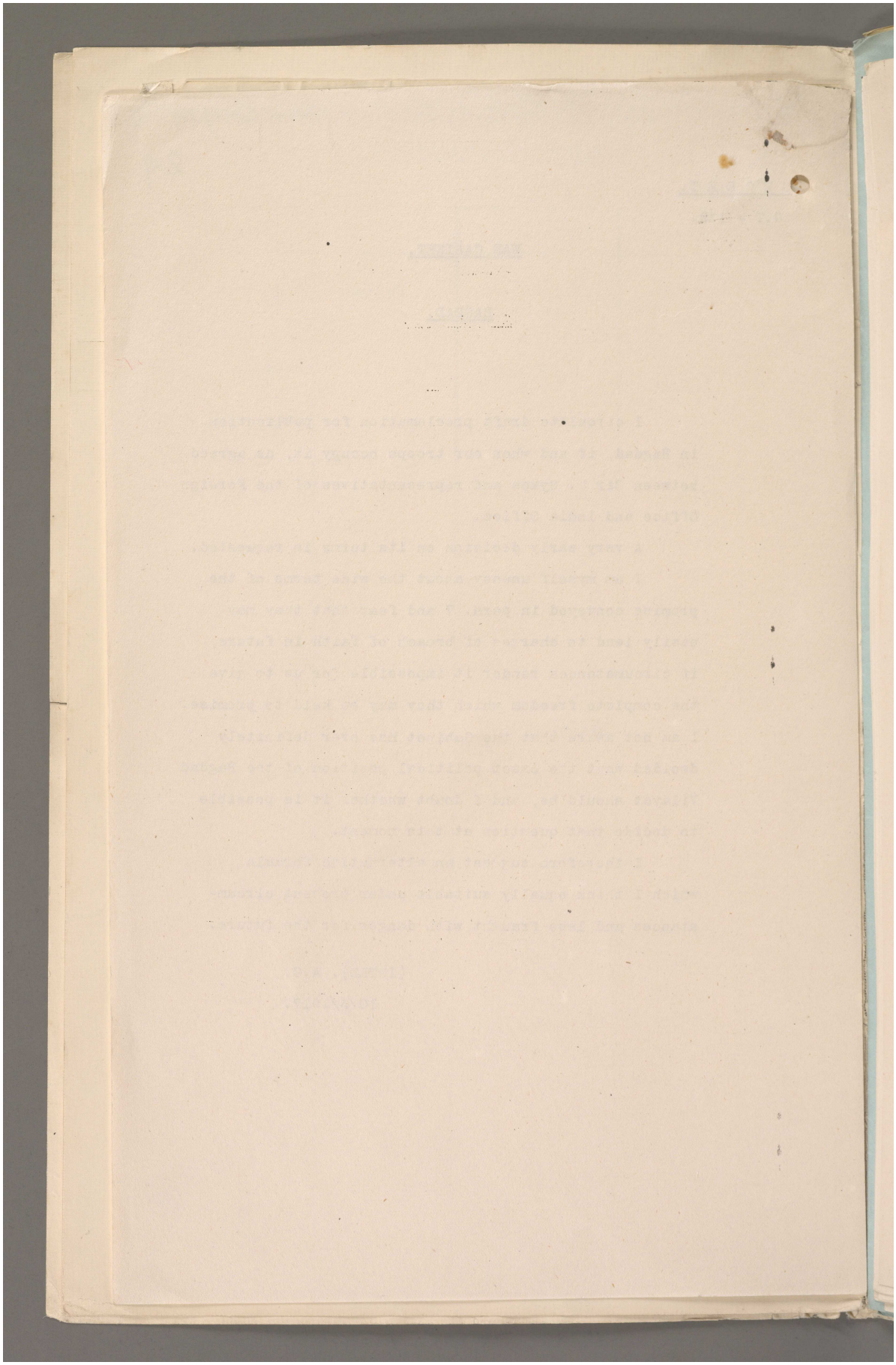

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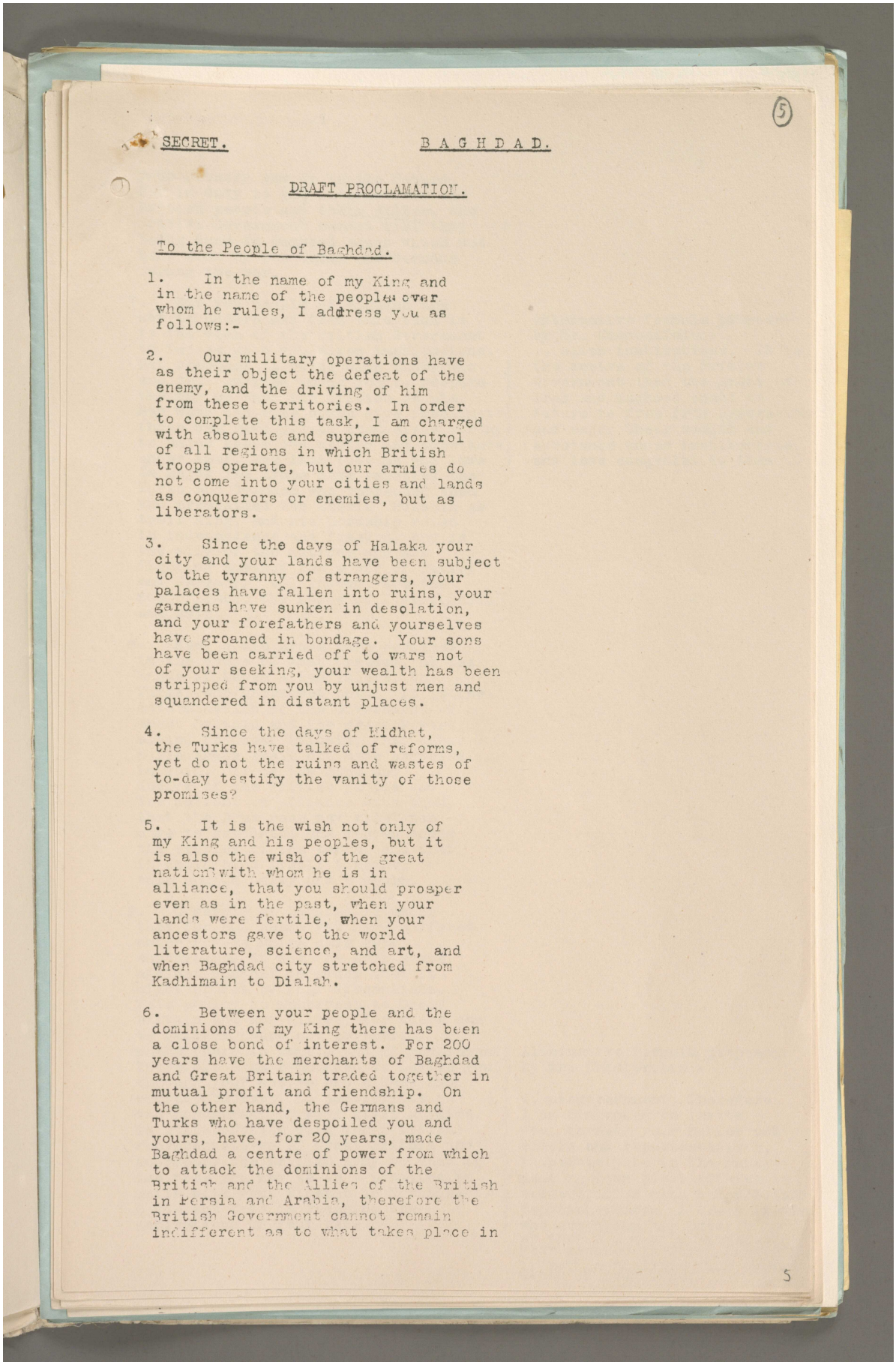

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SECRET. BAGHDAD.

DRAFT PROCLAMATION.

To the People of Baghdad.

1. In the name of my King and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows:-

2. Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate, but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

3. Since the days of Halaka your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunken in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

4. Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises?

5. It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nation with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city stretched from Kadhimain to Dialah.

6. Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks who have despoiled you and yours, have, for 20 years, made Baghdad a centre of power from which to attack the dominions of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia, therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in

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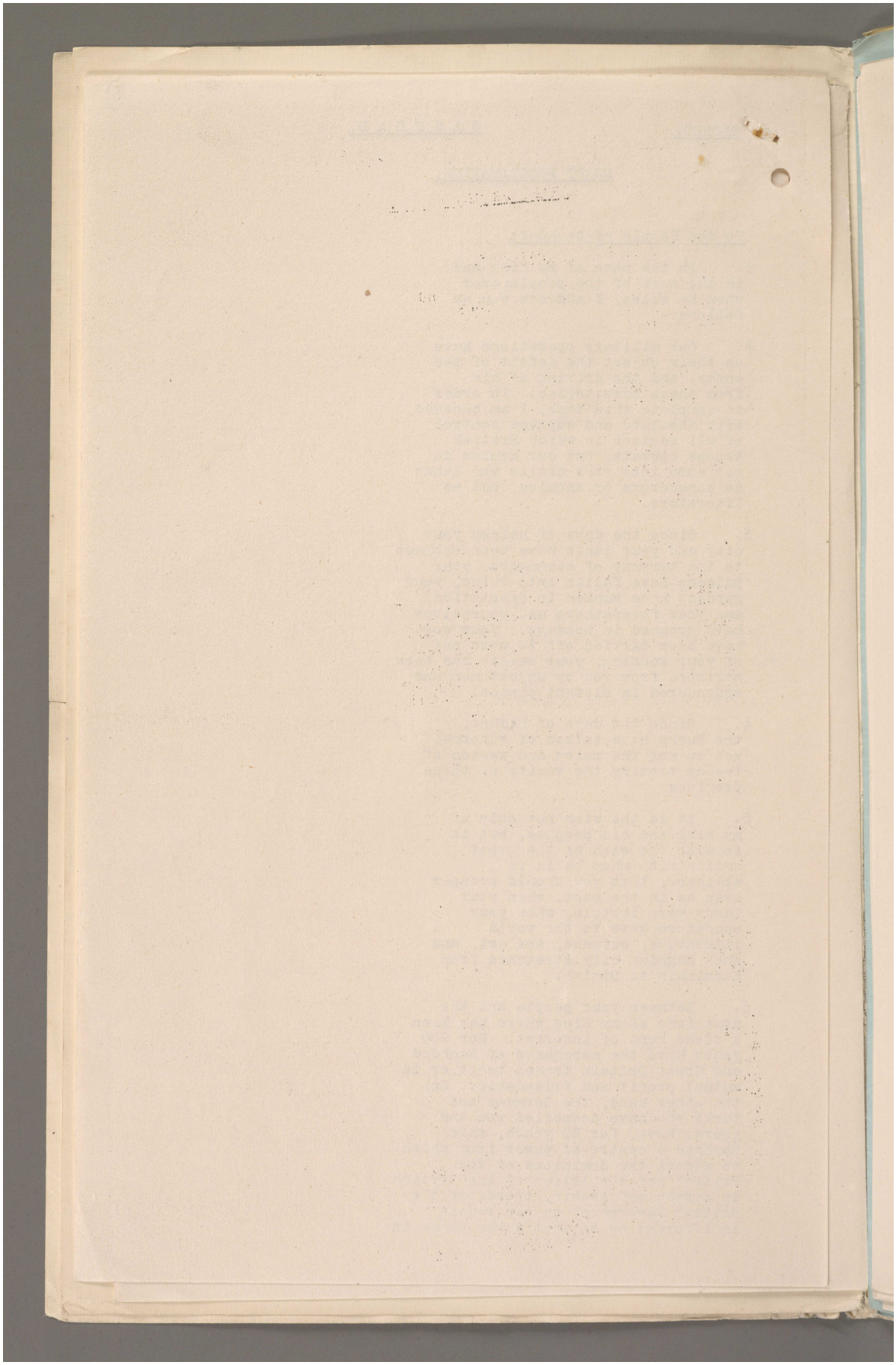

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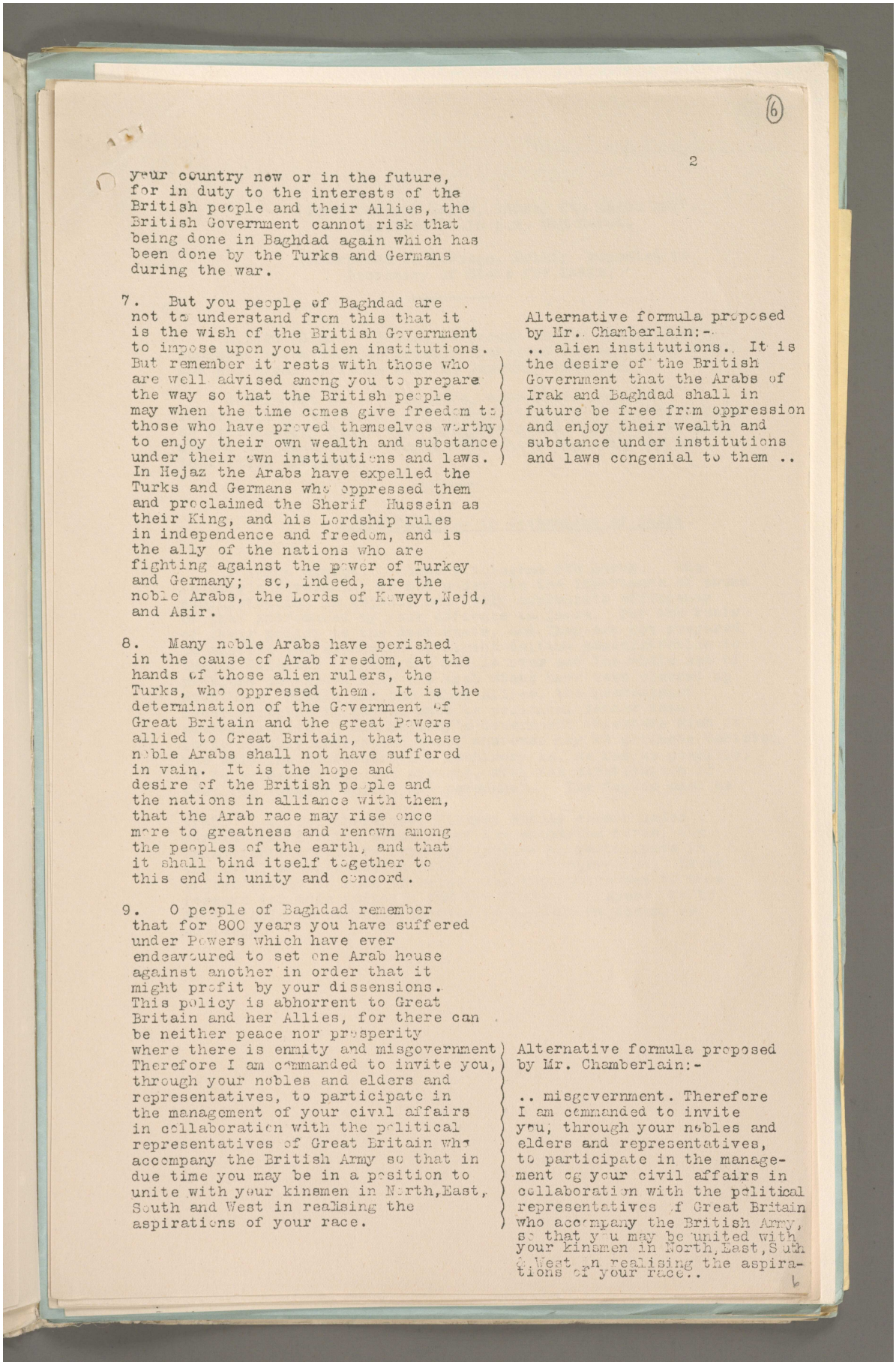


(6)

your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

7. But you people of Baghdad are not to understand from this that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. But remember it rests with those who are well advised among you to prepare the way so that the British people may when the time comes give freedom to those who have proved themselves worthy to enjoy their own wealth and substance under their own institutions and laws. In Hejaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Kaweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

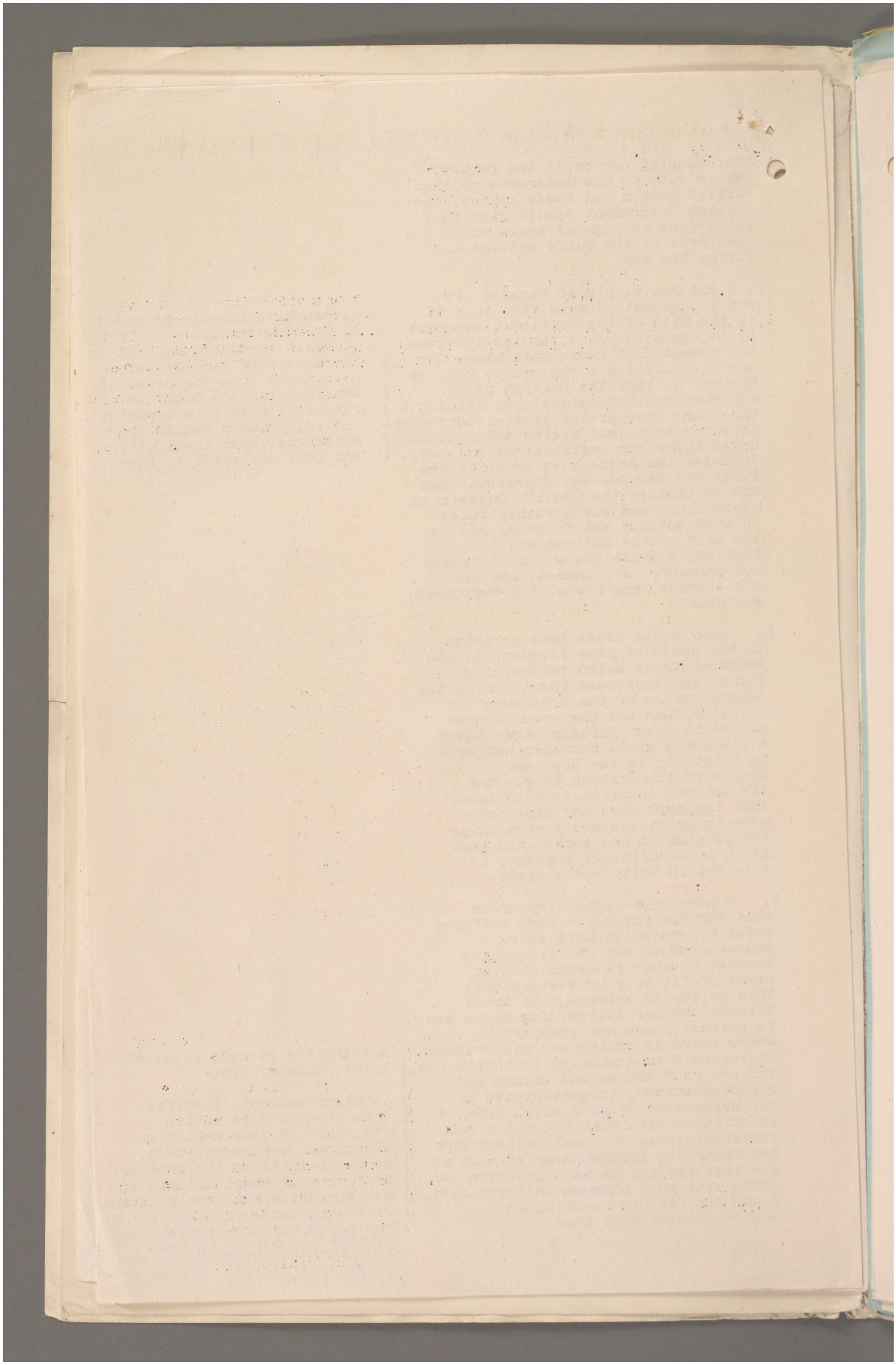
Alternative formula proposed by Mr. Chamberlain:-
.. alien institutions. It is the desire of the British Government that the Arabs of Irak and Baghdad shall in future be free from oppression and enjoy their wealth and substance under institutions and laws congenial to them ..

8. Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them, that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

9. O people of Baghdad remember that for 800 years you have suffered under Powers which have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that it might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army so that in due time you may be in a position to unite with your kinsmen in North, East, South and West in realising the aspirations of your race.

Alternative formula proposed by Mr. Chamberlain:-

.. misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South & West in realising the aspirations of your race..



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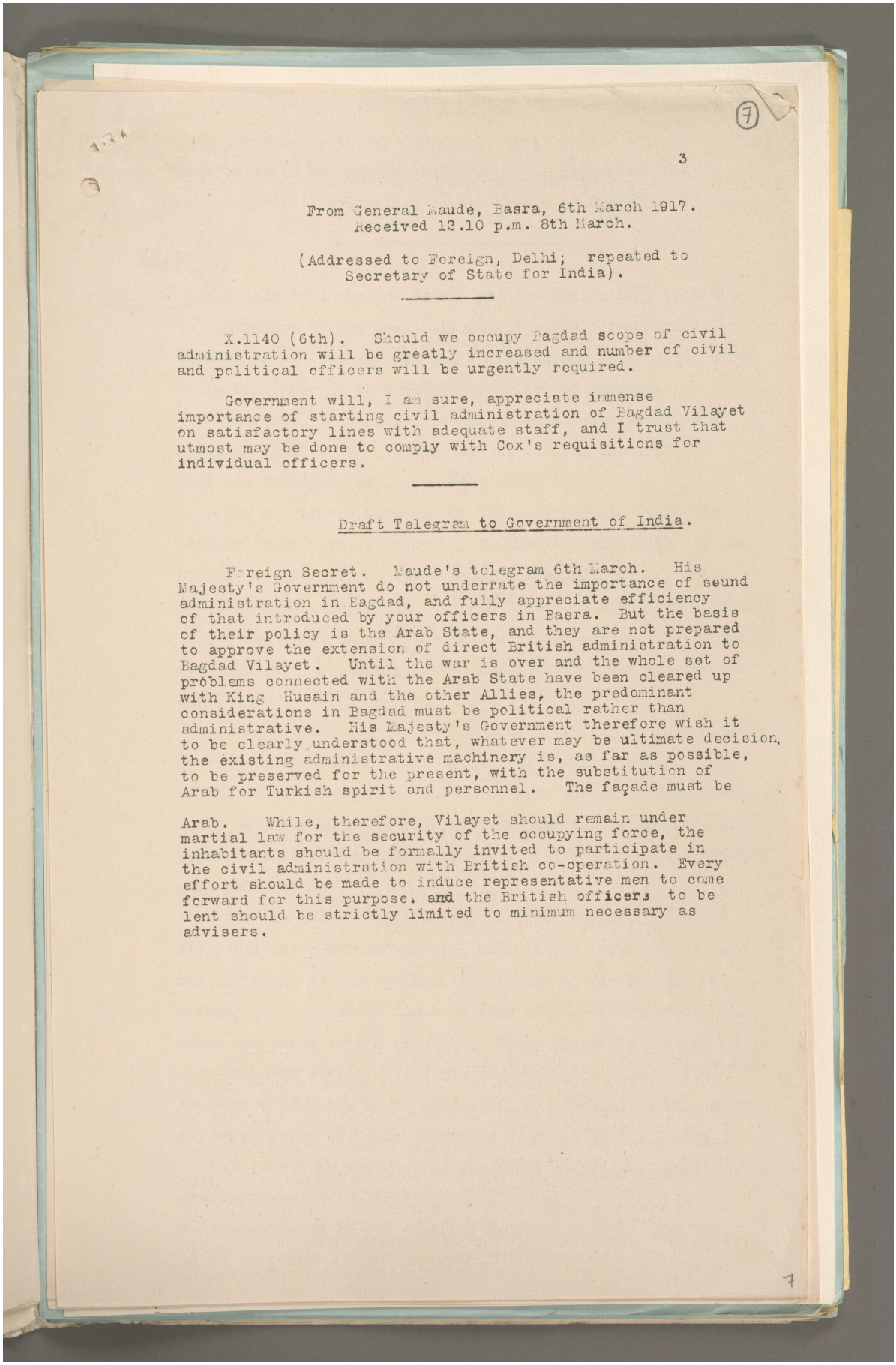

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From General Maude, Basra, 6th March 1917.
Received 12.10 p.m. 8th March.

(Addressed to Foreign, Delhi; repeated to Secretary of State for India).

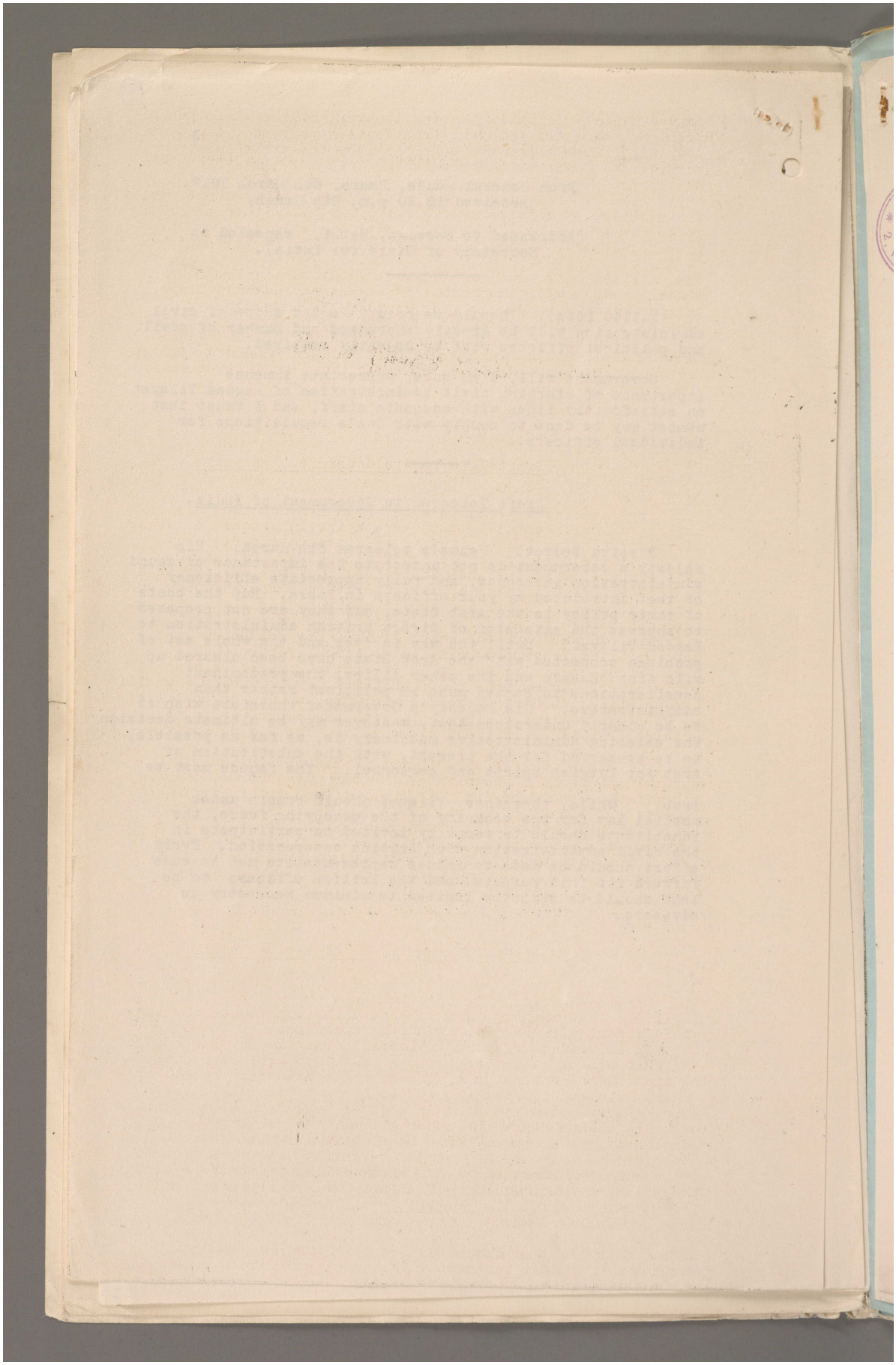
X.1140 (6th). Should we occupy Bagdad scope of civil administration will be greatly increased and number of civil and political officers will be urgently required.

Government will, I am sure, appreciate immense importance of starting civil administration of Bagdad Vilayet on satisfactory lines with adequate staff, and I trust that utmost may be done to comply with Cox's requisitions for individual officers.

Draft Telegram to Government of India.

Foreign Secret. Maude's telegram 6th March. His Majesty's Government do not underrate the importance of sound administration in Bagdad, and fully appreciate efficiency of that introduced by your officers in Basra. But the basis of their policy is the Arab State, and they are not prepared to approve the extension of direct British administration to Bagdad Vilayet. Until the war is over and the whole set of problems connected with the Arab State have been cleared up with King Husain and the other Allies, the predominant considerations in Bagdad must be political rather than administrative. His Majesty's Government therefore wish it to be clearly understood that, whatever may be ultimate decision, the existing administrative machinery is, as far as possible, to be preserved for the present, with the substitution of Arab for Turkish spirit and personnel. The façade must be

Arab. While, therefore, Vilayet should remain under martial law for the security of the occupying force, the inhabitants should be formally invited to participate in the civil administration with British co-operation. Every effort should be made to induce representative men to come forward for this purpose, and the British officers to be lent should be strictly limited to minimum necessary as advisers.



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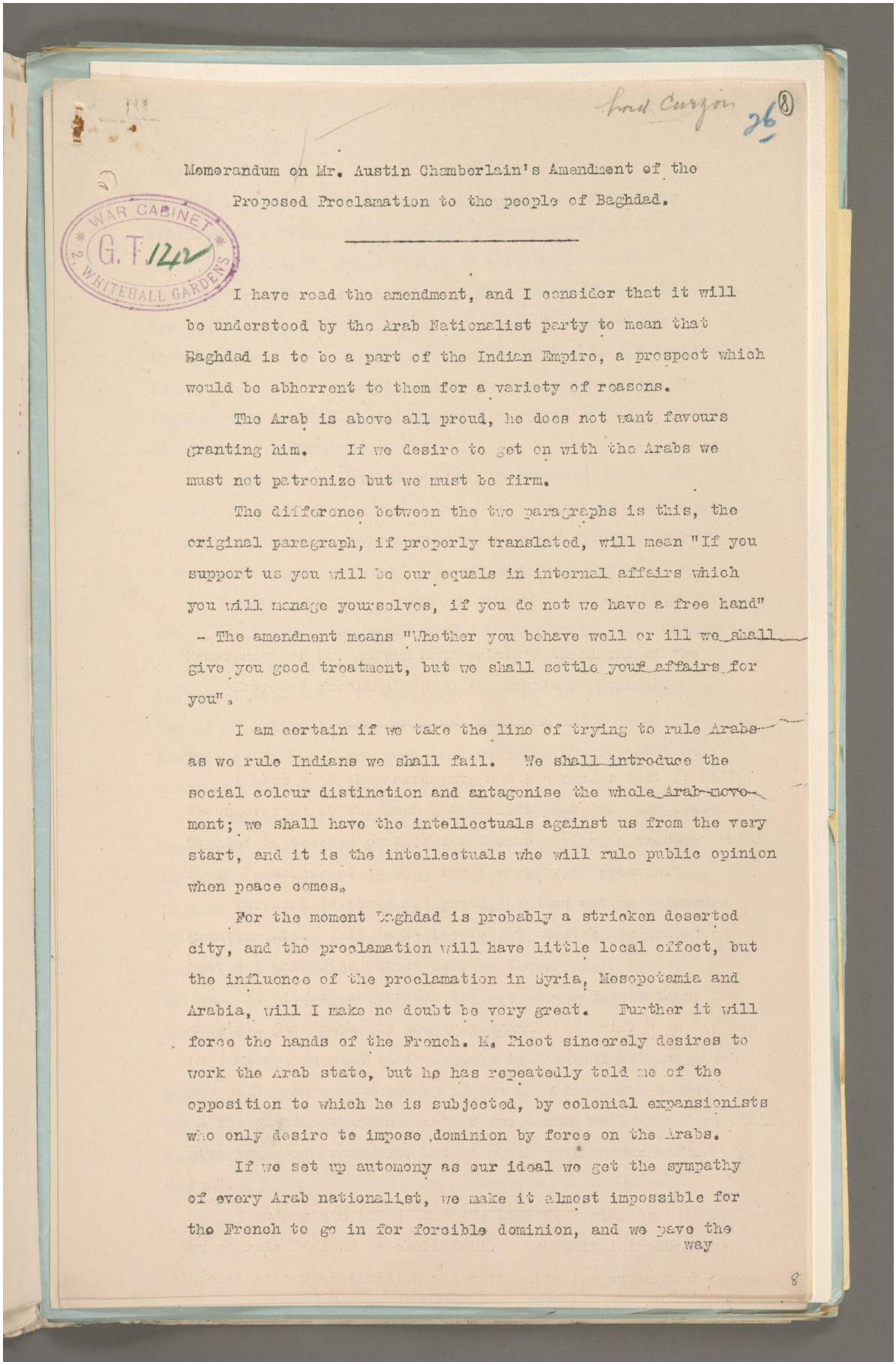

Lord Curzon 26 (8)

Memorandum on Mr. Austin Chamberlain's Amendment of the Proposed Proclamation to the people of Baghdad.

WAR CABINET G.T. 1427 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

I have read the amendment, and I consider that it will be understood by the Arab Nationalist party to mean that Baghdad is to be a part of the Indian Empire, a prospect which would be abhorrent to them for a variety of reasons.

The Arab is above all proud, he does not want favours granting him. If we desire to get on with the Arabs we must not patronize but we must be firm.

The difference between the two paragraphs is this, the original paragraph, if properly translated, will mean "If you support us you will be our equals in internal affairs which you will manage yourselves, if you do not we have a free hand" - The amendment means "Whether you behave well or ill we shall give you good treatment, but we shall settle your affairs for you".

I am certain if we take the line of trying to rule Arabs as we rule Indians we shall fail. We shall introduce the social colour distinction and antagonise the whole Arab movement; we shall have the intellectuals against us from the very start, and it is the intellectuals who will rule public opinion when peace comes.

For the moment Baghdad is probably a stricken deserted city, and the proclamation will have little local effect, but the influence of the proclamation in Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, will I make no doubt be very great. Further it will force the hands of the French. M. Picot sincerely desires to work the Arab state, but he has repeatedly told me of the opposition to which he is subjected, by colonial expansionists who only desire to impose dominion by force on the Arabs.

If we set up autonomy as our ideal we get the sympathy of every Arab nationalist, we make it almost impossible for the French to go in for forcible dominion, and we pave the way

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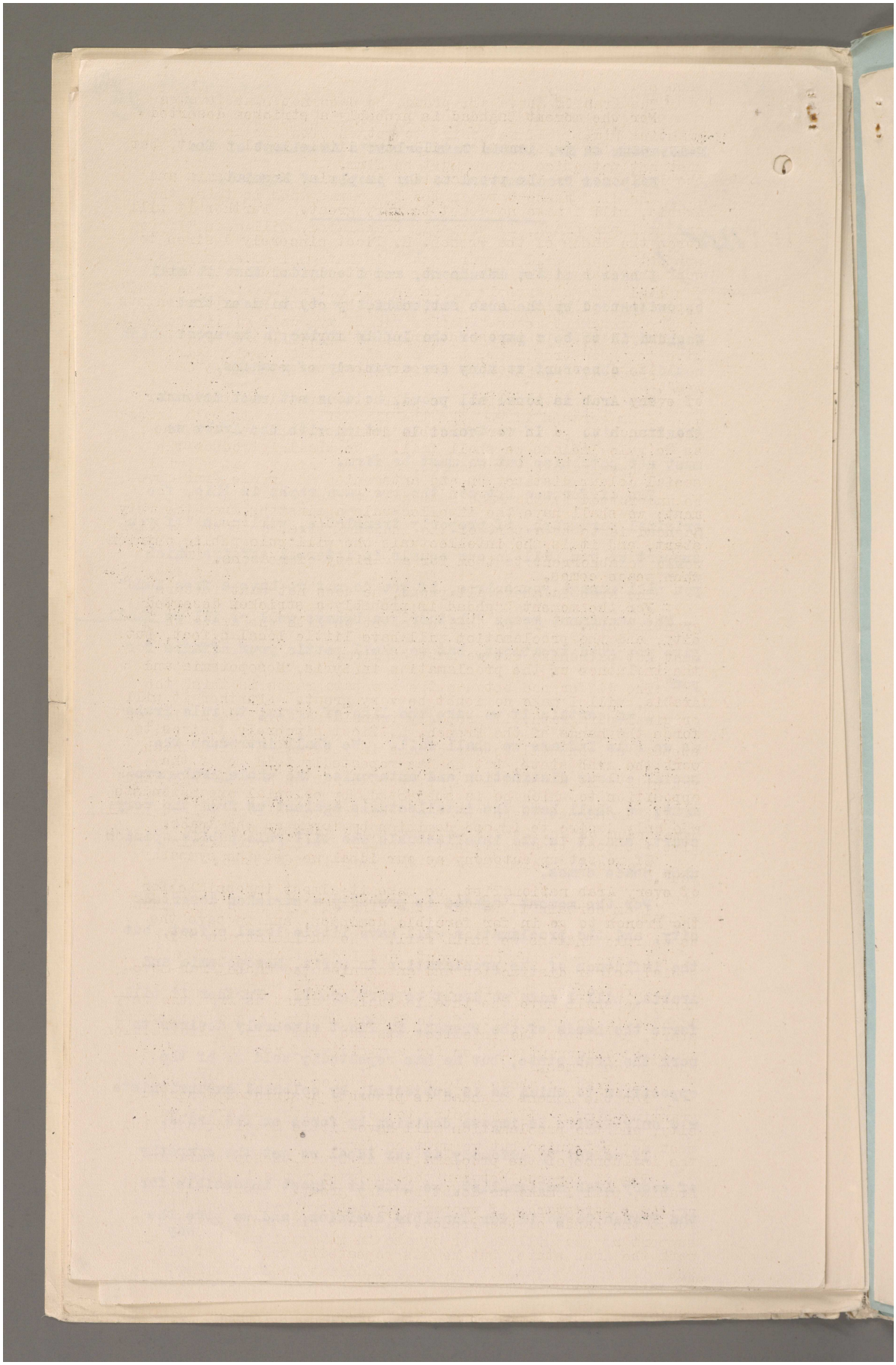

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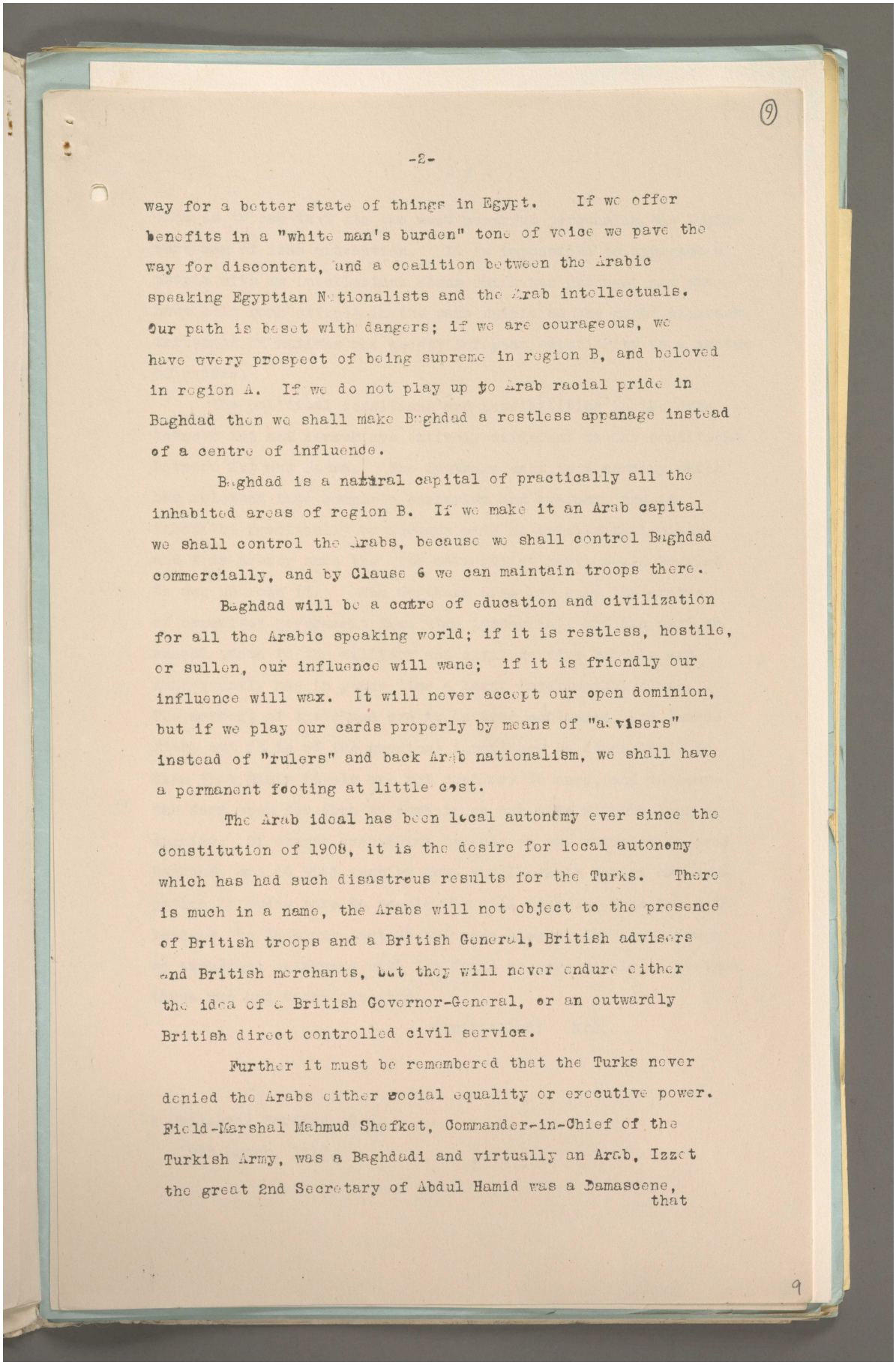

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way for a better state of things in Egypt. If we offer benefits in a "white man's burden" tone of voice we pave the way for discontent, and a coalition between the Arabic speaking Egyptian Nationalists and the Arab intellectuals. Our path is beset with dangers; if we are courageous, we have every prospect of being supreme in region B, and beloved in region A. If we do not play up to Arab racial pride in Baghdad then we shall make Baghdad a restless appanage instead of a centre of influence.

Baghdad is a natural capital of practically all the inhabited areas of region B. If we make it an Arab capital we shall control the Arabs, because we shall control Baghdad commercially, and by Clause 6 we can maintain troops there.

Baghdad will be a centre of education and civilization for all the Arabic speaking world; if it is restless, hostile, or sullen, our influence will wane; if it is friendly our influence will wax. It will never accept our open dominion, but if we play our cards properly by means of "advisers" instead of "rulers" and back Arab nationalism, we shall have a permanent footing at little cost.

The Arab ideal has been local autonomy ever since the constitution of 1908, it is the desire for local autonomy which has had such disastrous results for the Turks. There is much in a name, the Arabs will not object to the presence of British troops and a British General, British advisers and British merchants, but they will never endure either the idea of a British Governor-General, or an outwardly British direct controlled civil service.

Further it must be remembered that the Turks never denied the Arabs either social equality or executive power. Field-Marshal Mahmud Shefket, Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish Army, was a Baghdadi and virtually an Arab, Izzet the great 2nd Secretary of Abdul Hamid was a Damascene, that

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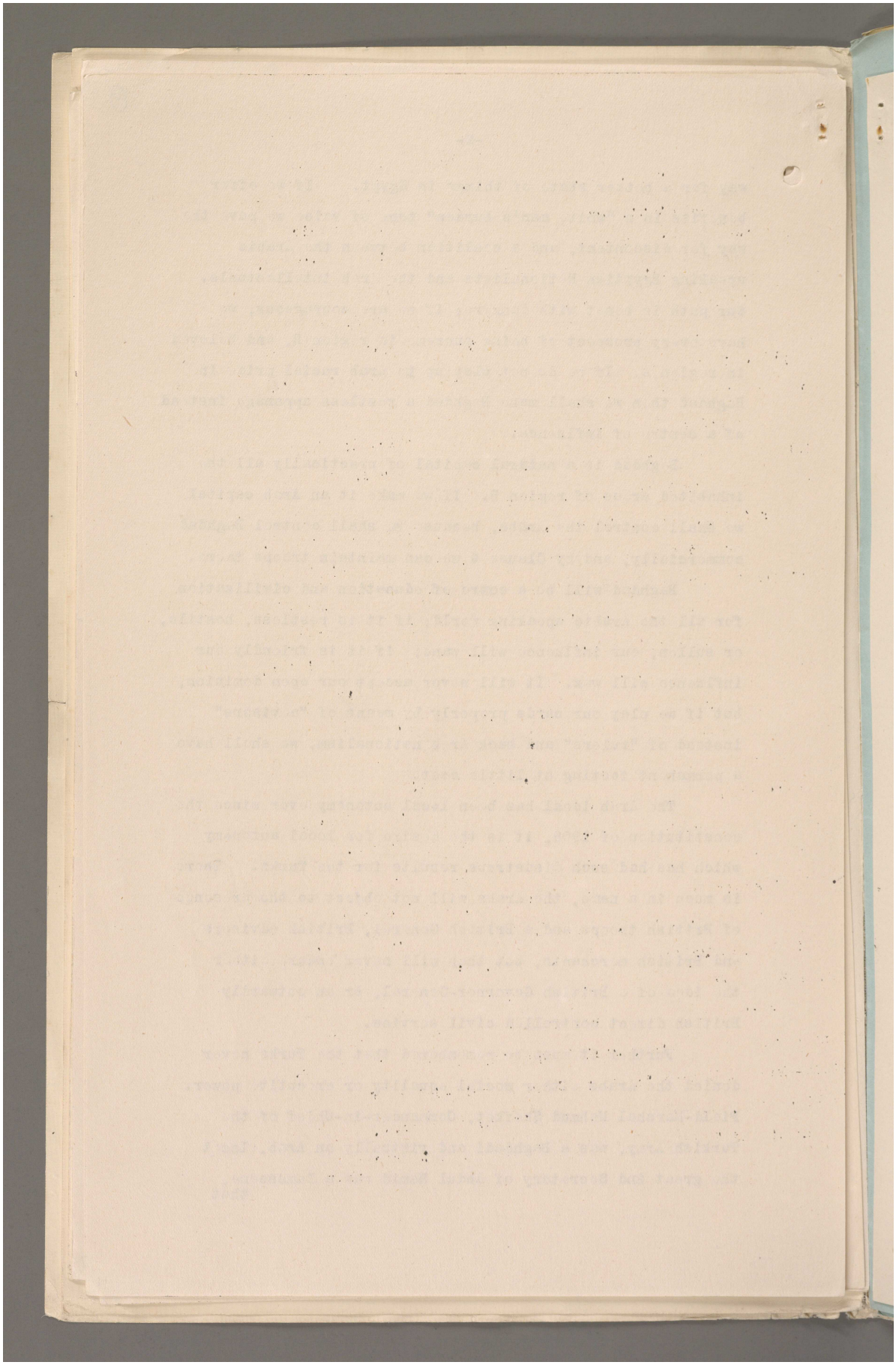

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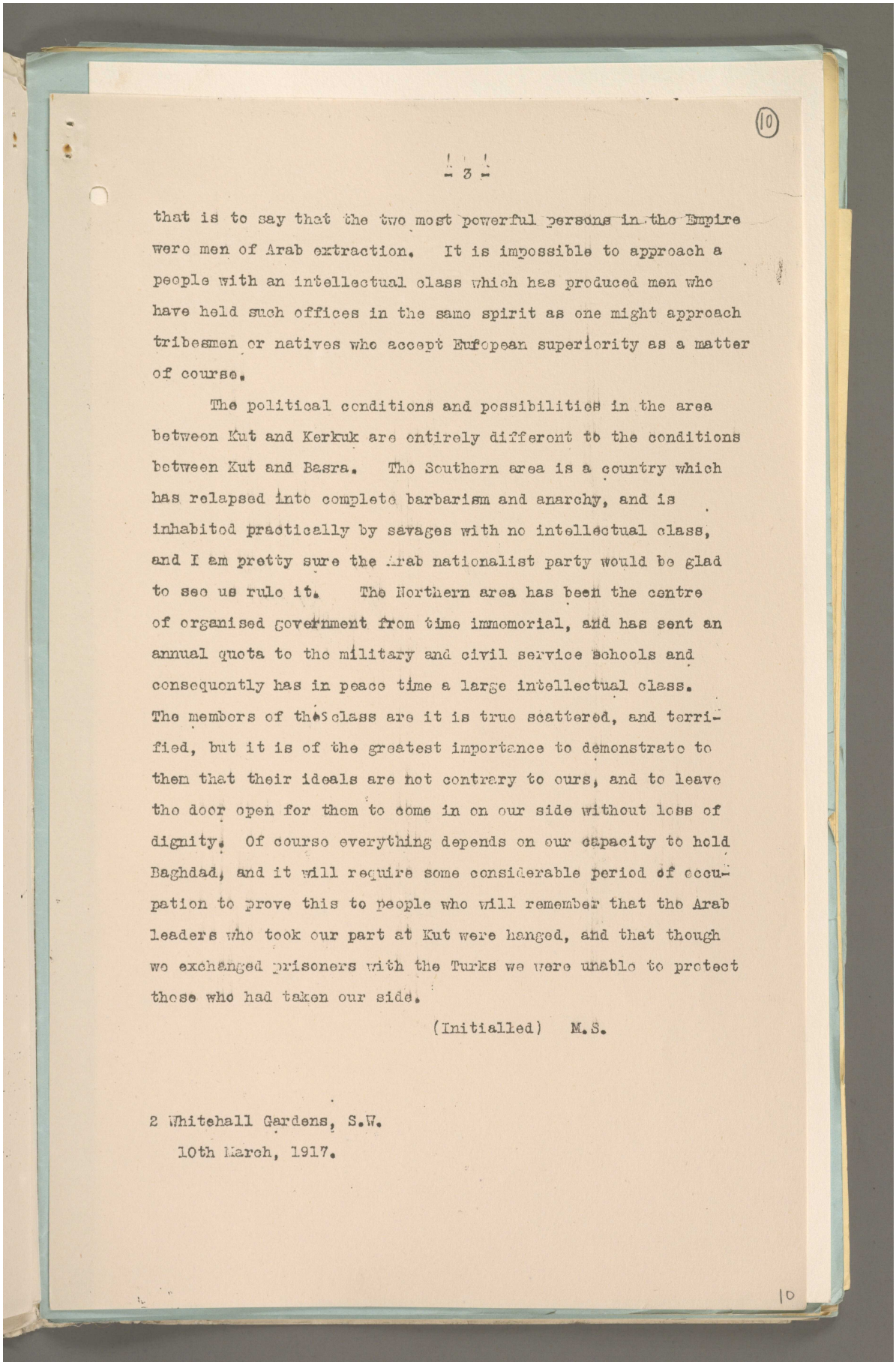

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that is to say that the two most powerful persons in the Empire were men of Arab extraction. It is impossible to approach a people with an intellectual class which has produced men who have held such offices in the same spirit as one might approach tribesmen or natives who accept European superiority as a matter of course.

The political conditions and possibilities in the area between Kut and Kerkuk are entirely different to the conditions between Kut and Basra. The Southern area is a country which has relapsed into complete barbarism and anarchy, and is inhabited practically by savages with no intellectual class, and I am pretty sure the Arab nationalist party would be glad to see us rule it. The Northern area has been the centre of organised government from time immemorial, and has sent an annual quota to the military and civil service schools and consequently has in peace time a large intellectual class. The members of this class are it is true scattered, and terrified, but it is of the greatest importance to demonstrate to them that their ideals are not contrary to ours, and to leave the door open for them to come in on our side without loss of dignity. Of course everything depends on our capacity to hold Baghdad, and it will require some considerable period of occupation to prove this to people who will remember that the Arab leaders who took our part at Kut were hanged, and that though we exchanged prisoners with the Turks we were unable to protect those who had taken our side.

(Initialled) M.S.

2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
10th March, 1917.

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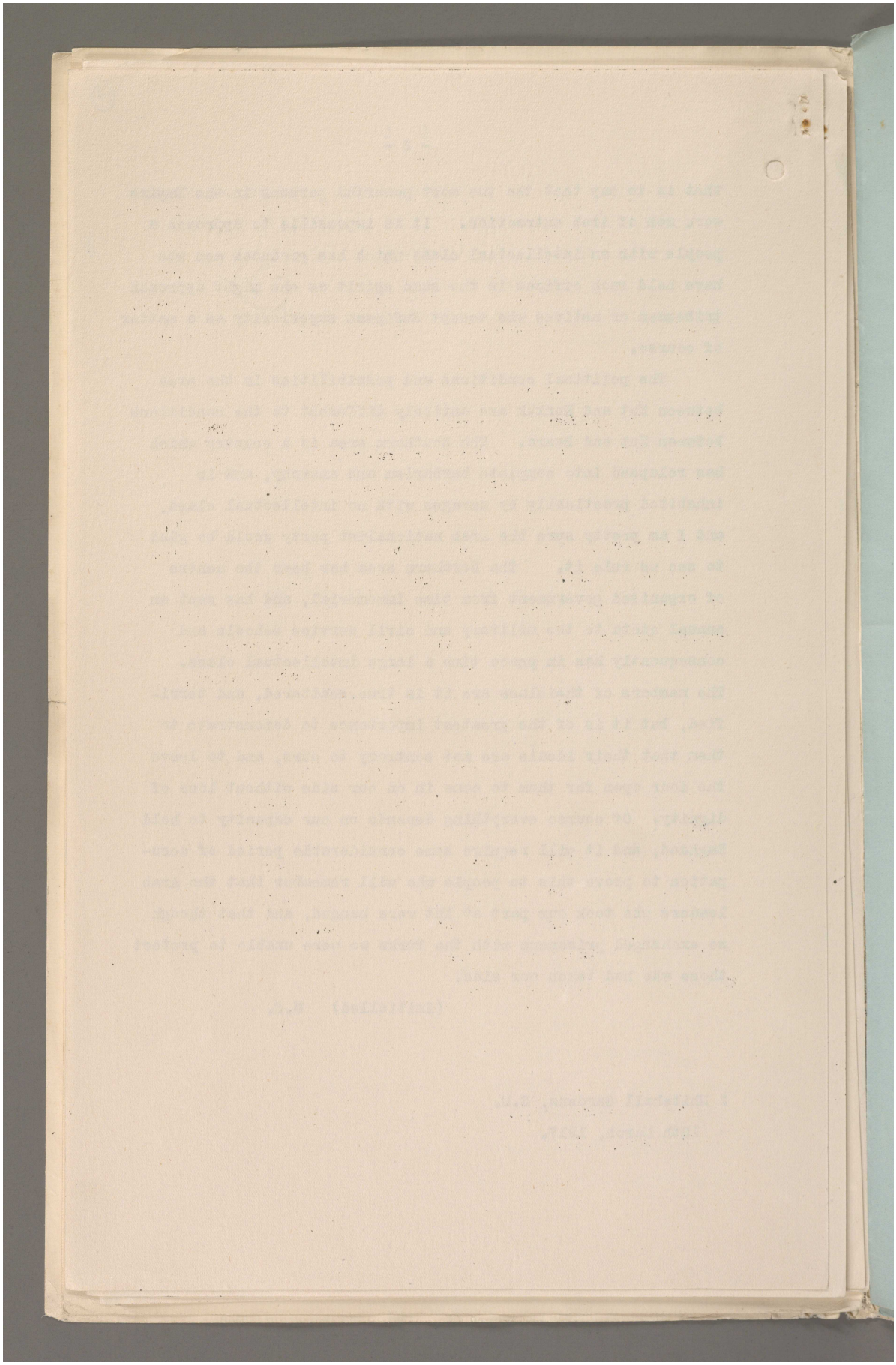

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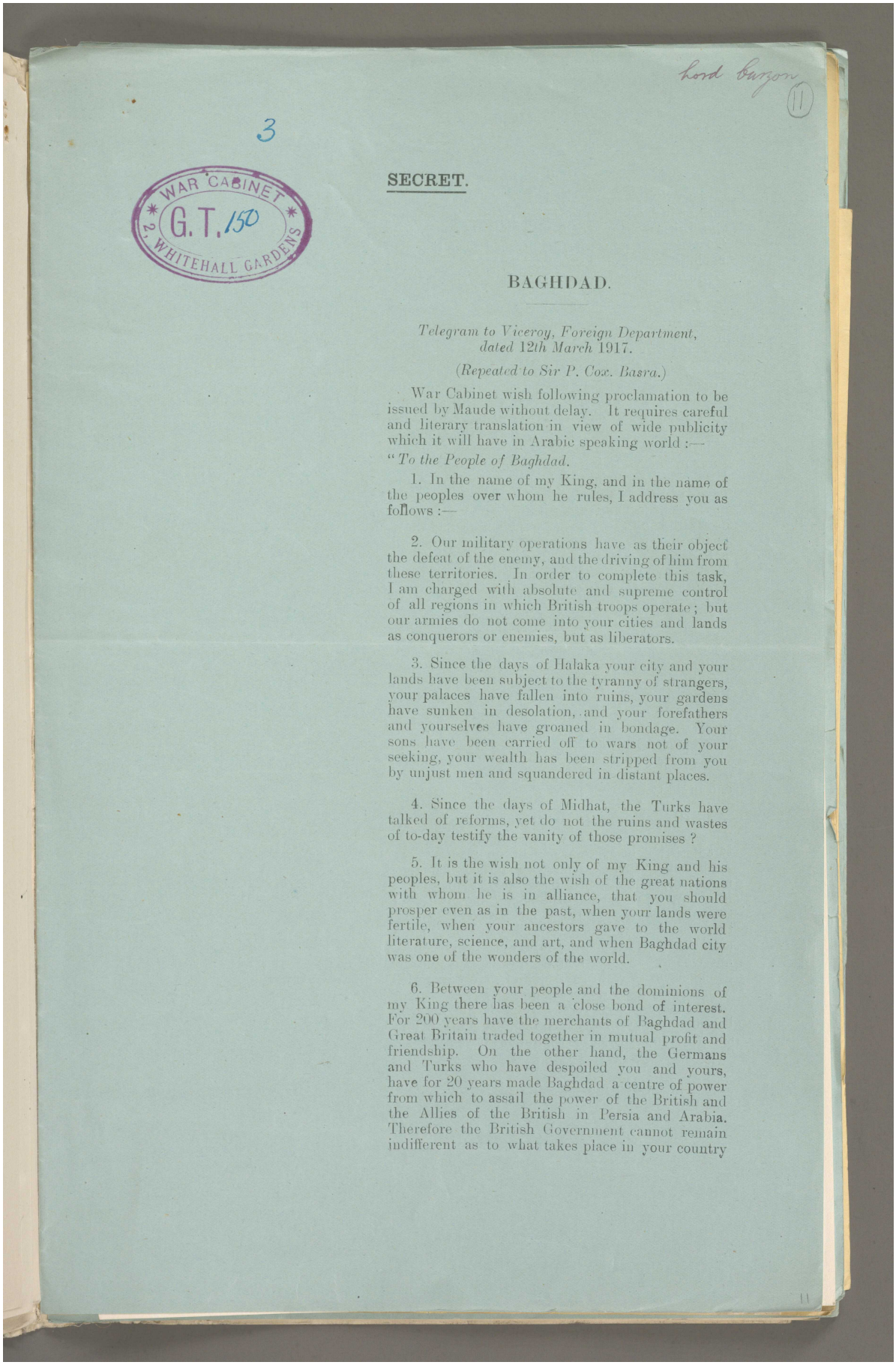

Lord Curzon (11)

3

WAR CABINET G.T. 150 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

SECRET.

BAGHDAD.

Telegram to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 12th March 1917.

(Repeated to Sir P. Cox. Basra.)

War Cabinet wish following proclamation to be issued by Maude without delay. It requires careful and literary translation in view of wide publicity which it will have in Arabic speaking world :—

"*To the People of Baghdad.*

1. In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows :—

2. Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

3. Since the days of Halaka your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunken in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

4. Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises ?

5. It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

6. Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks who have despoiled you and yours, have for 20 years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country

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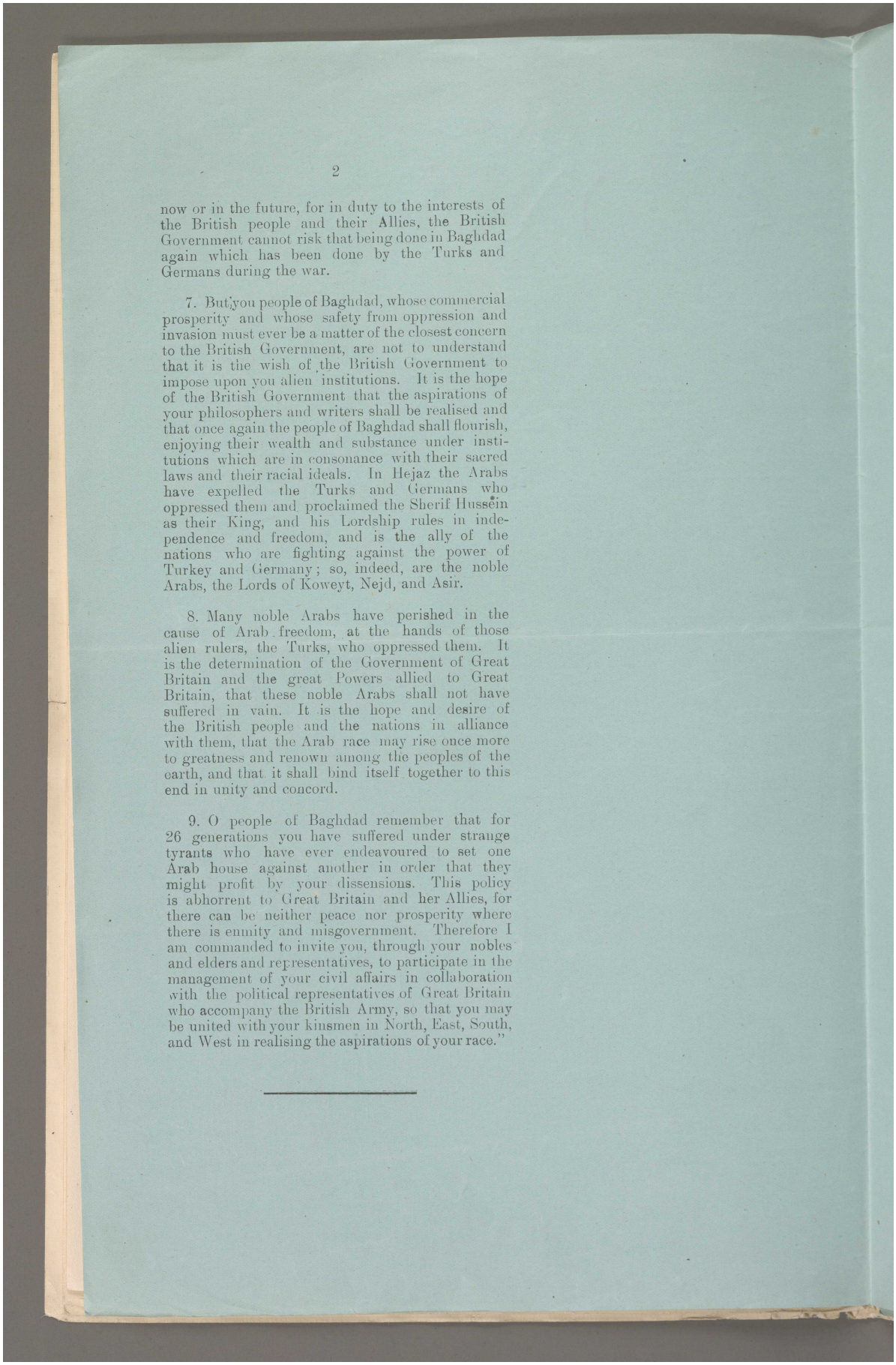

now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

7. But you people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hejaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

8. Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them, that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

9. O people of Baghdad remember that for 26 generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South, and West in realising the aspirations of your race."

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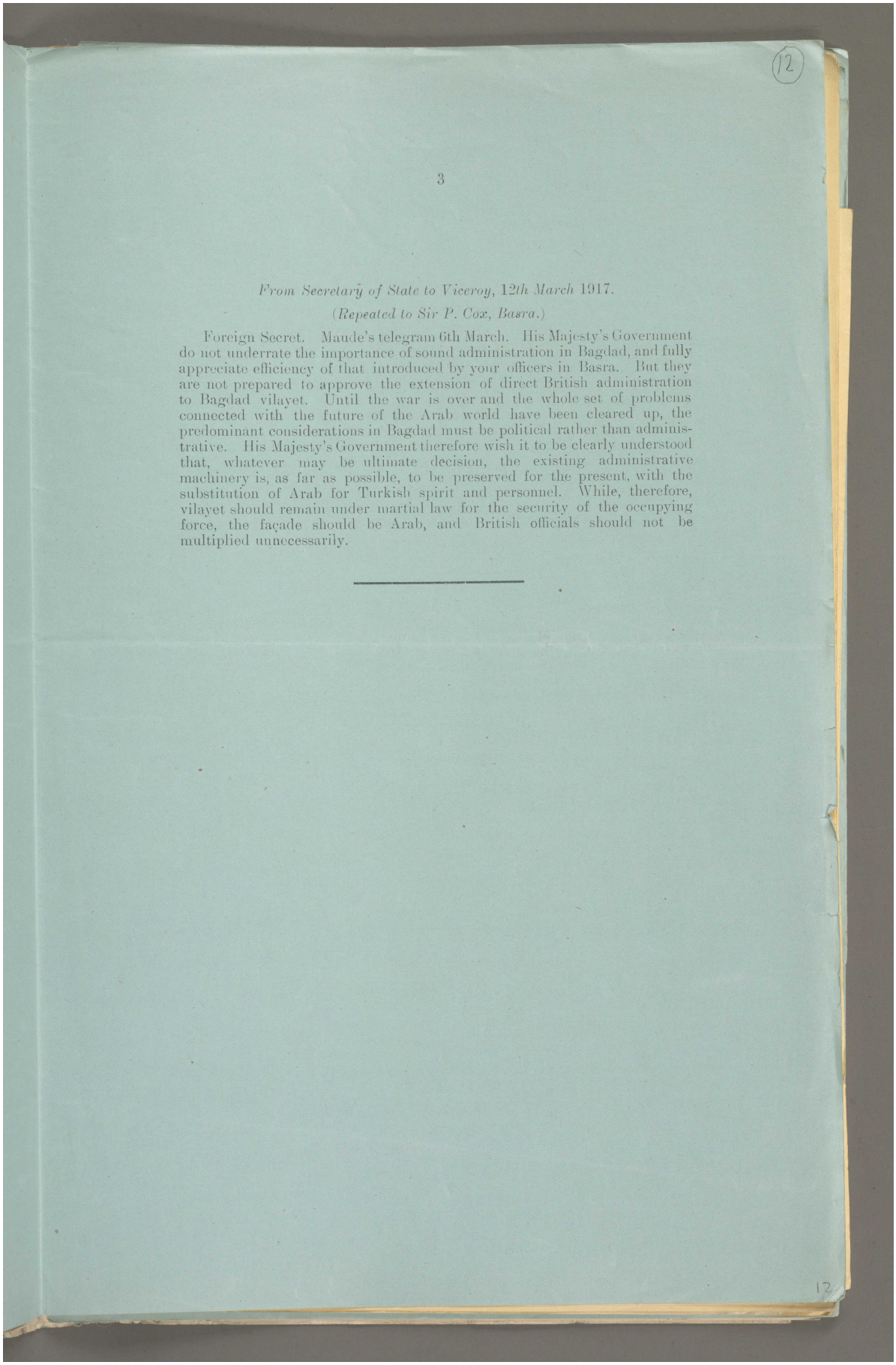

12

3

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, 12th March 1917.

(Repeated to Sir P. Cox, Basra.)

Foreign Secret. Maude's telegram 6th March. His Majesty's Government do not underrate the importance of sound administration in Bagdad, and fully appreciate efficiency of that introduced by your officers in Basra. But they are not prepared to approve the extension of direct British administration to Bagdad vilayet. Until the war is over and the whole set of problems connected with the future of the Arab world have been cleared up, the predominant considerations in Bagdad must be political rather than administrative. His Majesty's Government therefore wish it to be clearly understood that, whatever may be ultimate decision, the existing administrative machinery is, as far as possible, to be preserved for the present, with the substitution of Arab for Turkish spirit and personnel. While, therefore, vilayet should remain under martial law for the security of the occupying force, the façade should be Arab, and British officials should not be multiplied unnecessarily.

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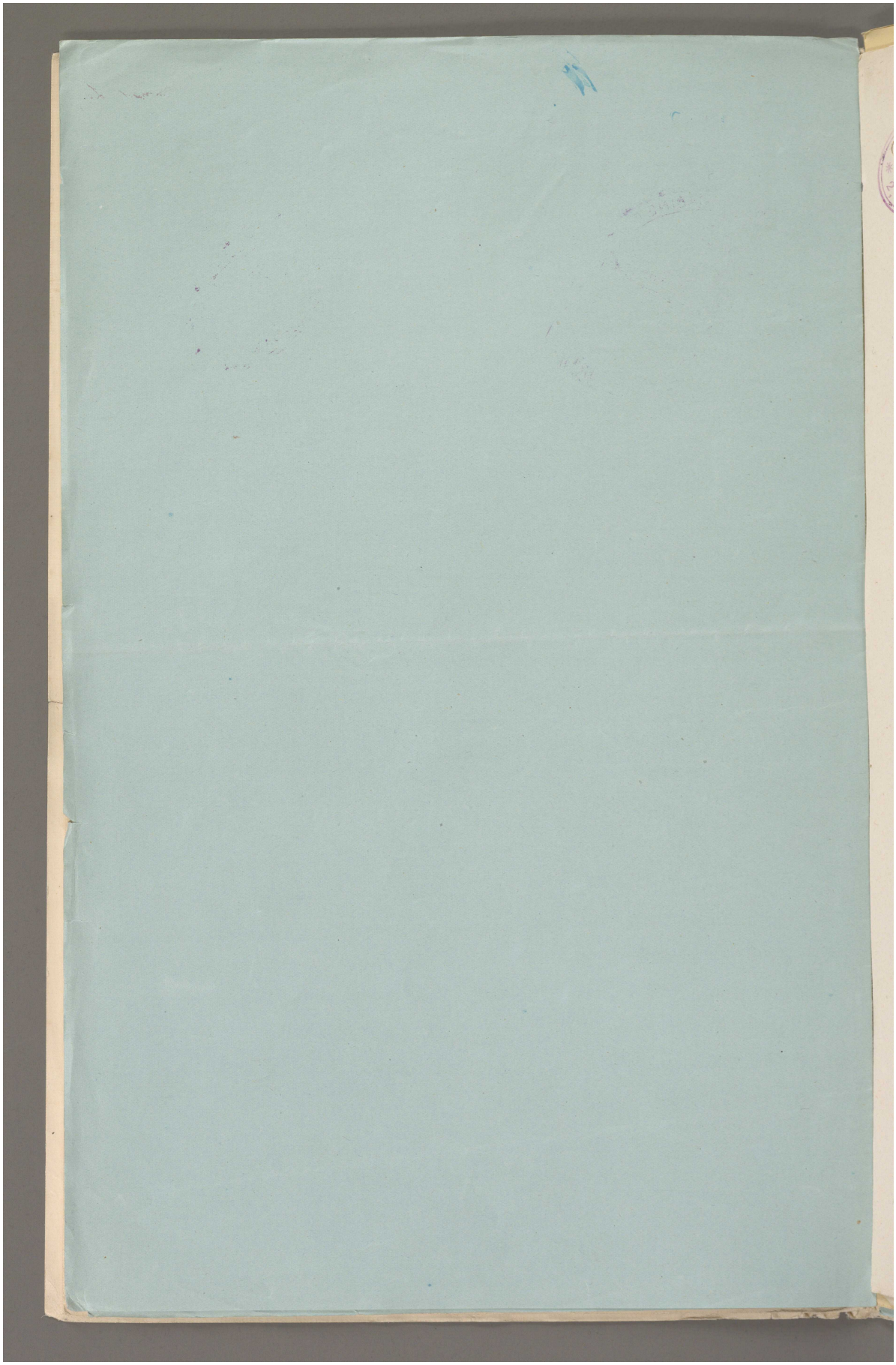

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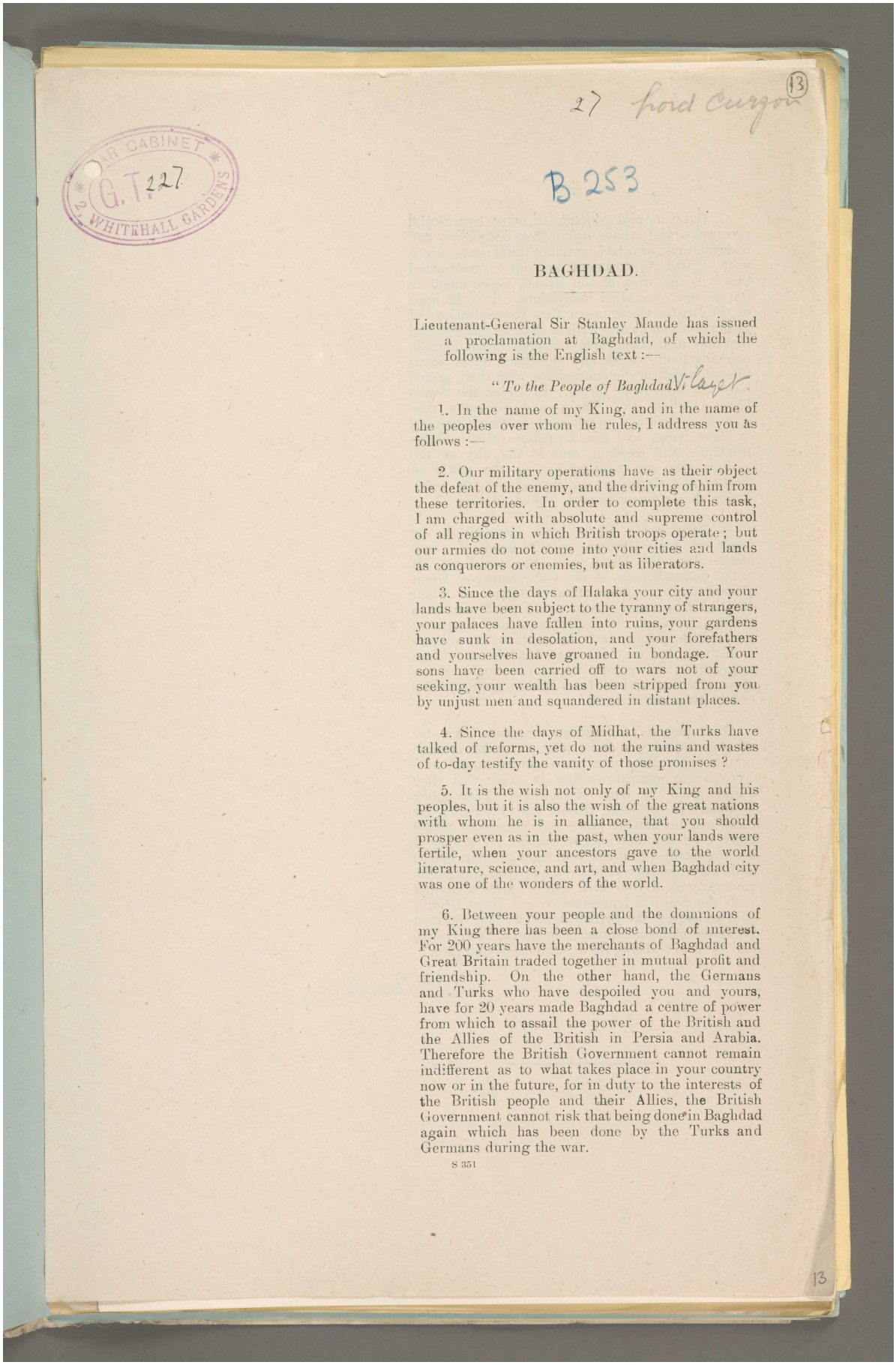

WAR CABINET
G.T.227
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

27 Lord Curzon (13)

B 253

BAGHDAD.

Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude has issued a proclamation at Baghdad, of which the following is the English text :—

"*To the People of Baghdad.*" Vilayet

1. In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows :—

2. Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate ; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

3. Since the days of Halaka your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

4. Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises ?

5. It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

6. Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks who have despoiled you and yours, have for 20 years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

S 351

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7. But you people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hejaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

8. Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them, that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

9. O people of Baghdad remember that for 26 generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South, and West in realising the aspirations of your race."

19th March 1917

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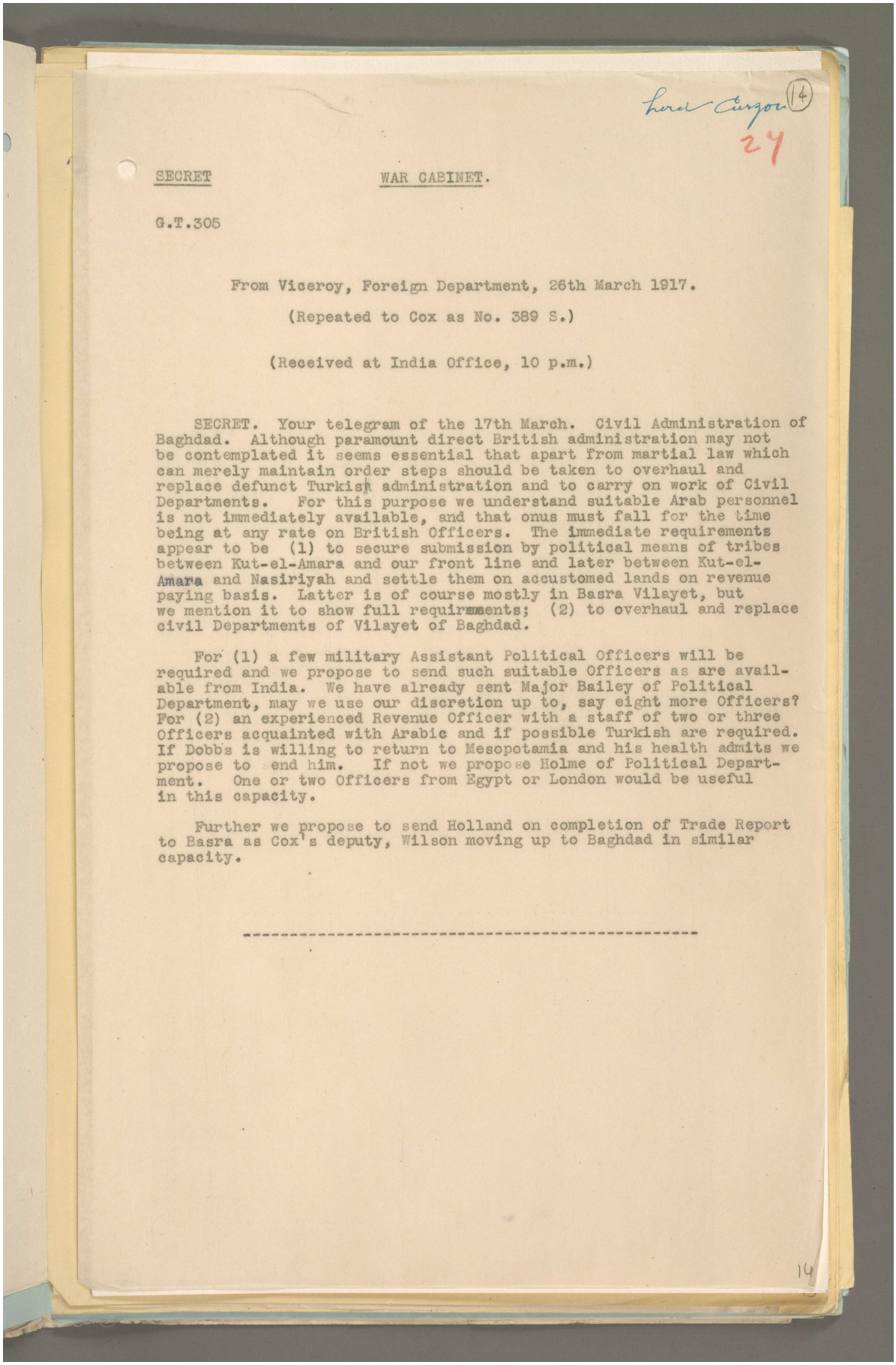

Lord Curzon (14)

27

SECRET WAR CABINET.

G.T.305

From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 26th March 1917.

(Repeated to Cox as No. 389 S.)

(Received at India Office, 10 p.m.)

SECRET. Your telegram of the 17th March. Civil Administration of Baghdad. Although paramount direct British administration may not be contemplated it seems essential that apart from martial law which can merely maintain order steps should be taken to overhaul and replace defunct Turkish administration and to carry on work of Civil Departments. For this purpose we understand suitable Arab personnel is not immediately available, and that onus must fall for the time being at any rate on British Officers. The immediate requirements appear to be (1) to secure submission by political means of tribes between Kut-el-Amara and our front line and later between Kut-el-Amara and Nasiriyah and settle them on accustomed lands on revenue paying basis. Latter is of course mostly in Basra Vilayet, but we mention it to show full requirements; (2) to overhaul and replace civil Departments of Vilayet of Baghdad.

For (1) a few military Assistant Political Officers will be required and we propose to send such suitable Officers as are available from India. We have already sent Major Bailey of Political Department, may we use our discretion up to, say eight more Officers? For (2) an experienced Revenue Officer with a staff of two or three Officers acquainted with Arabic and if possible Turkish are required. If Dobbs is willing to return to Mesopotamia and his health admits we propose to send him. If not we propose Holme of Political Department. One or two Officers from Egypt or London would be useful in this capacity.

Further we propose to send Holland on completion of Trade Report to Basra as Cox's deputy, Wilson moving up to Baghdad in similar capacity.

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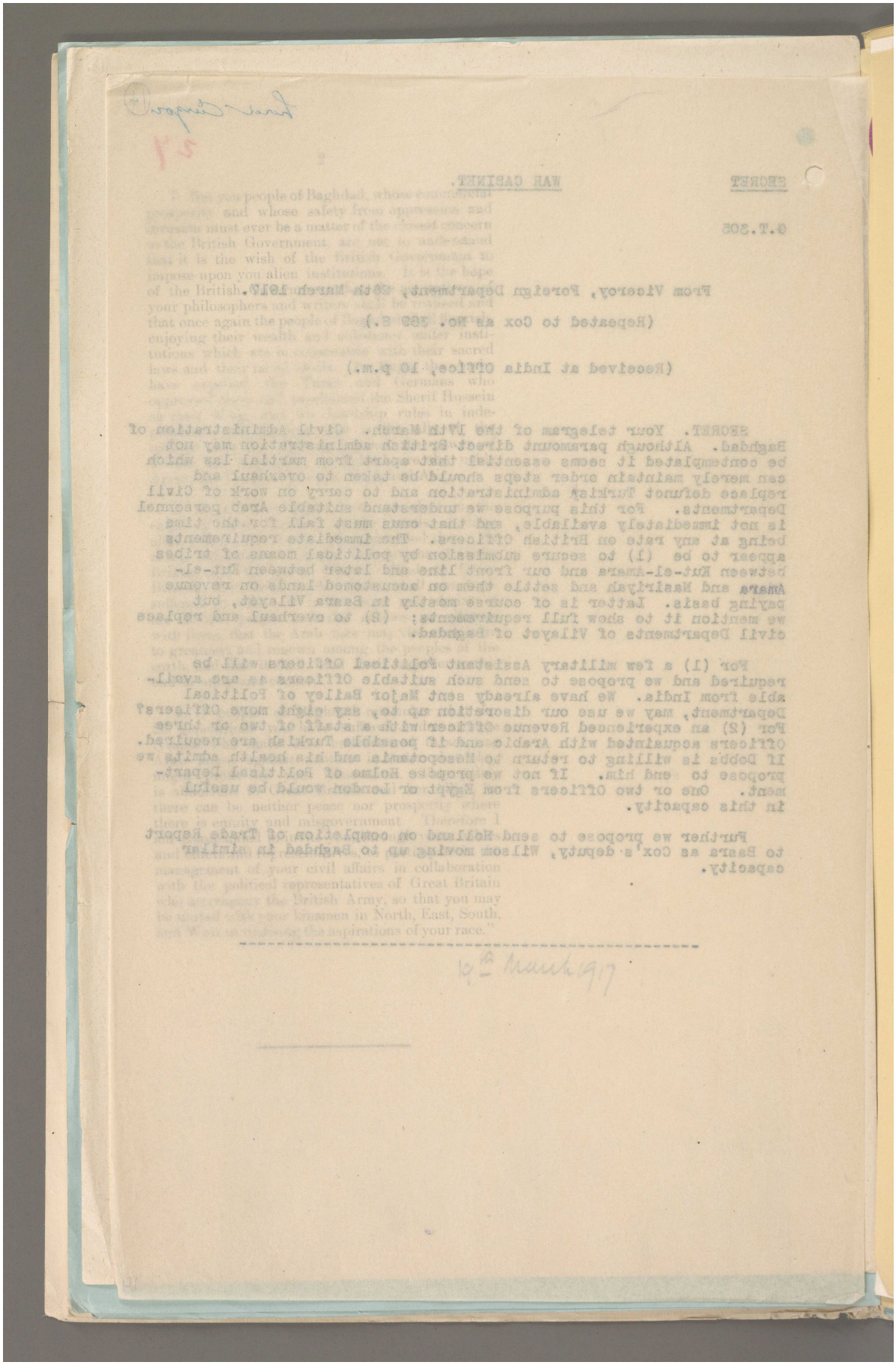

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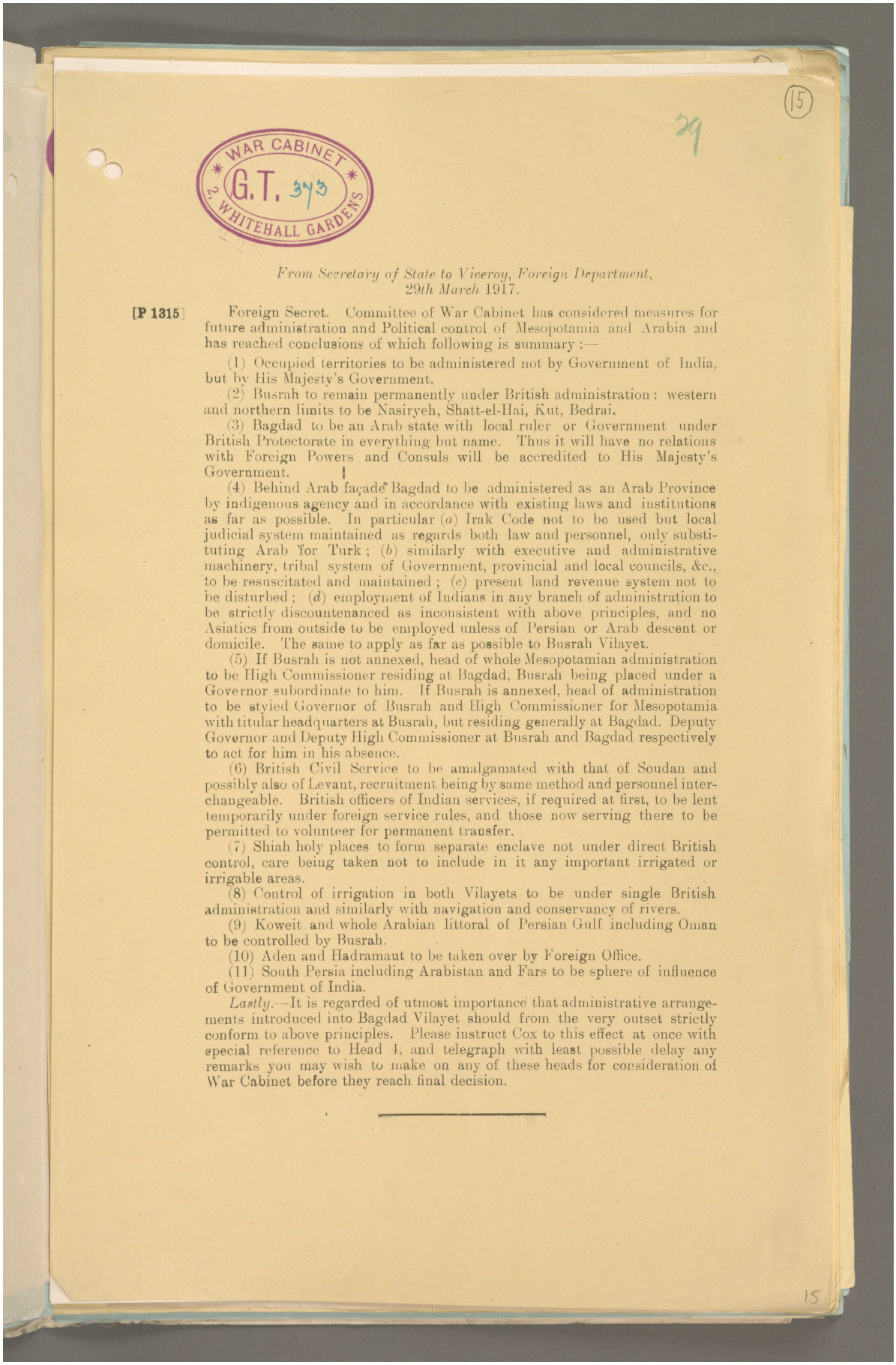

(15)

29

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department,
29th March 1917.

[P 1315] Foreign Secret. Committee of War Cabinet has considered measures for future administration and Political control of Mesopotamia and Arabia and has reached conclusions of which following is summary :—

(1) Occupied territories to be administered not by Government of India, but by His Majesty's Government.

(2) Busrah to remain permanently under British administration : western and northern limits to be Nasiryeh, Shatt-el-Hai, Kut, Bedrai.

(3) Bagdad to be an Arab state with local ruler or Government under British Protectorate in everything but name. Thus it will have no relations with Foreign Powers and Consuls will be accredited to His Majesty's Government.

(4) Behind Arab façade Bagdad to be administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular (*a*) Irak Code not to be used but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk ; (*b*) similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provincial and local councils, &c., to be resuscitated and maintained ; (*c*) present land revenue system not to be disturbed ; (*d*) employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with above principles, and no Asiatics from outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Busrah Vilayet.

(5) If Busrah is not annexed, head of whole Mesopotamian administration to be High Commissioner residing at Bagdad, Busrah being placed under a Governor subordinate to him. If Busrah is annexed, head of administration to be styled Governor of Busrah and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia with titular headquarters at Busrah, but residing generally at Bagdad. Deputy Governor and Deputy High Commissioner at Busrah and Bagdad respectively to act for him in his absence.

(6) British Civil Service to be amalgamated with that of Soudan and possibly also of Levant, recruitment being by same method and personnel interchangeable. British officers of Indian services, if required at first, to be lent temporarily under foreign service rules, and those now serving there to be permitted to volunteer for permanent transfer.

(7) Shiah holy places to form separate enclave not under direct British control, care being taken not to include in it any important irrigated or irrigable areas.

(8) Control of irrigation in both Vilayets to be under single British administration and similarly with navigation and conservancy of rivers.

(9) Koweit and whole Arabian littoral of Persian Gulf including Oman to be controlled by Busrah.

(10) Aden and Hadramaut to be taken over by Foreign Office.

(11) South Persia including Arabistan and Fars to be sphere of influence of Government of India.

Lastly.—It is regarded of utmost importance that administrative arrangements introduced into Bagdad Vilayet should from the very outset strictly conform to above principles. Please instruct Cox to this effect at once with special reference to Head 4, and telegraph with least possible delay any remarks you may wish to make on any of these heads for consideration of War Cabinet before they reach final decision.

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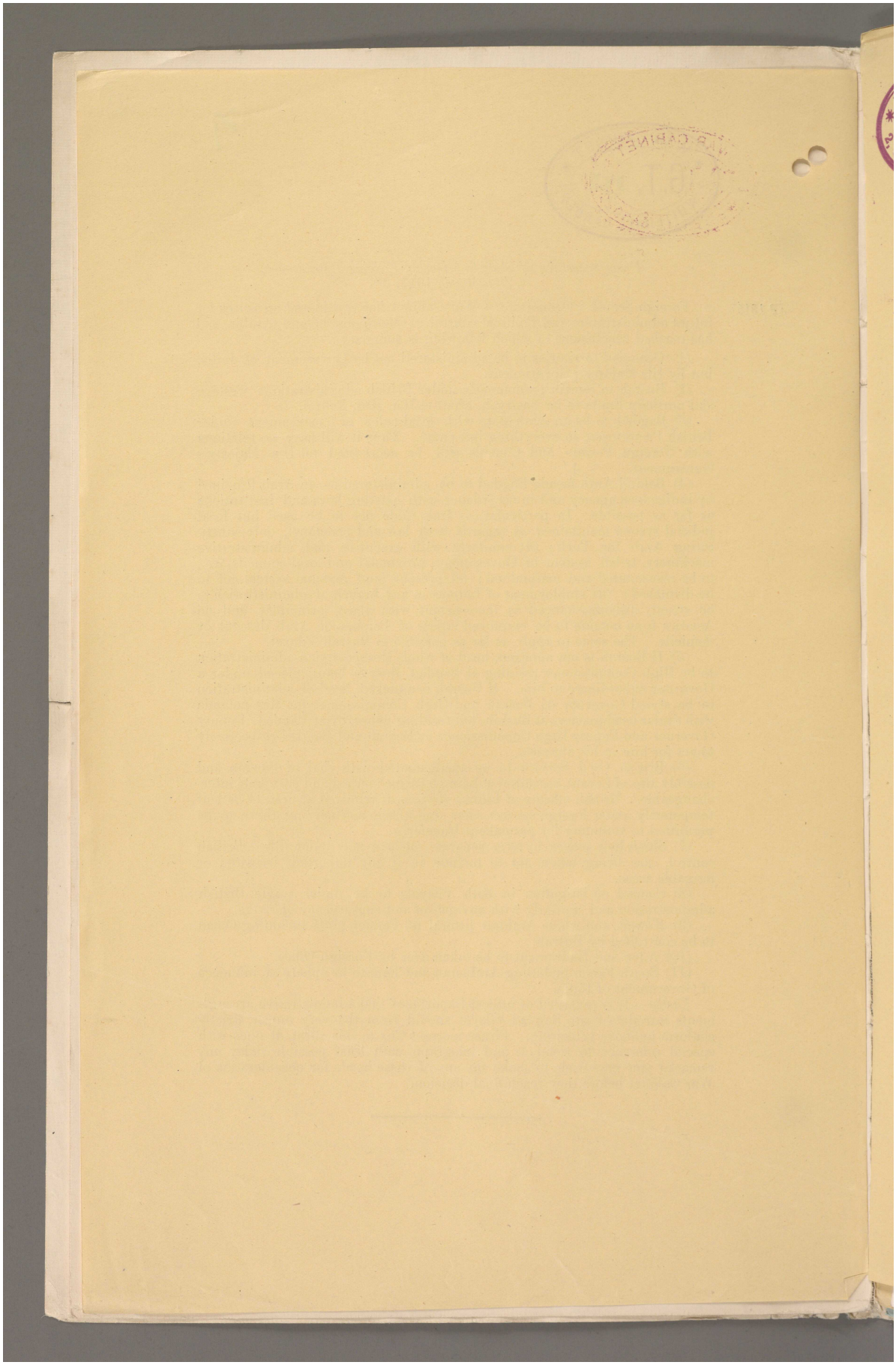

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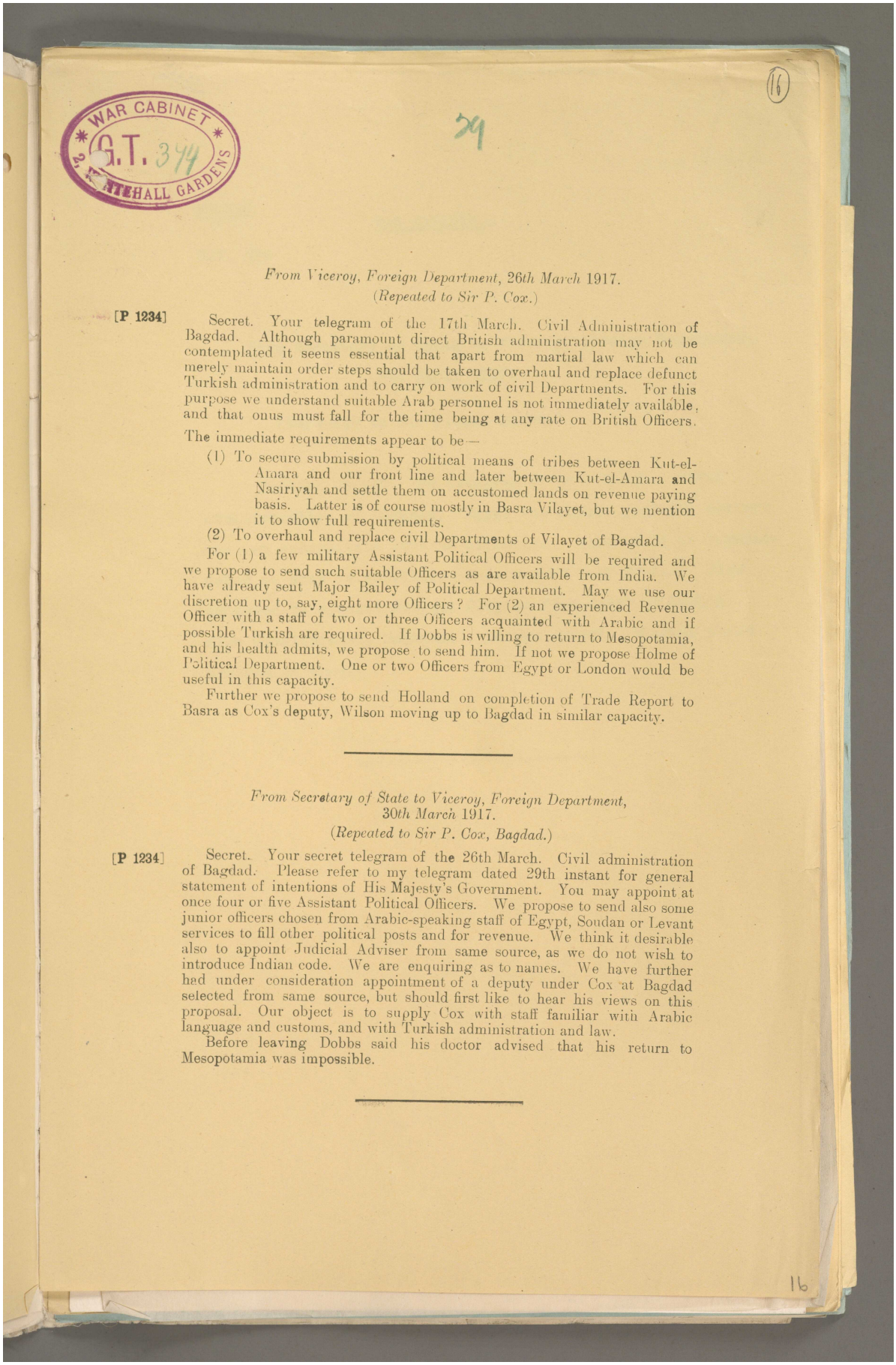

From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 26th March 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox.)

[P 1234] Secret. Your telegram of the 17th March. Civil Administration of Bagdad. Although paramount direct British administration may not be contemplated it seems essential that apart from martial law which can merely maintain order steps should be taken to overhaul and replace defunct Turkish administration and to carry on work of civil Departments. For this purpose we understand suitable Arab personnel is not immediately available, and that onus must fall for the time being at any rate on British Officers.

The immediate requirements appear to be—

(1) To secure submission by political means of tribes between Kut-el-Amara and our front line and later between Kut-el-Amara and Nasiriyah and settle them on accustomed lands on revenue paying basis. Latter is of course mostly in Basra Vilayet, but we mention it to show full requirements.

(2) To overhaul and replace civil Departments of Vilayet of Bagdad.

For (1) a few military Assistant Political Officers will be required and we propose to send such suitable Officers as are available from India. We have already sent Major Bailey of Political Department. May we use our discretion up to, say, eight more Officers? For (2) an experienced Revenue Officer with a staff of two or three Officers acquainted with Arabic and if possible Turkish are required. If Dobbs is willing to return to Mesopotamia, and his health admits, we propose to send him. If not we propose Holme of Political Department. One or two Officers from Egypt or London would be useful in this capacity.

Further we propose to send Holland on completion of Trade Report to Basra as Cox's deputy, Wilson moving up to Bagdad in similar capacity.

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department, 30th March 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox, Bagdad.)

[P 1234] Secret. Your secret telegram of the 26th March. Civil administration of Bagdad. Please refer to my telegram dated 29th instant for general statement of intentions of His Majesty's Government. You may appoint at once four or five Assistant Political Officers. We propose to send also some junior officers chosen from Arabic-speaking staff of Egypt, Soudan or Levant services to fill other political posts and for revenue. We think it desirable also to appoint Judicial Adviser from same source, as we do not wish to introduce Indian code. We are enquiring as to names. We have further had under consideration appointment of a deputy under Cox at Bagdad selected from same source, but should first like to hear his views on this proposal. Our object is to supply Cox with staff familiar with Arabic language and customs, and with Turkish administration and law.

Before leaving Dobbs said his doctor advised that his return to Mesopotamia was impossible.

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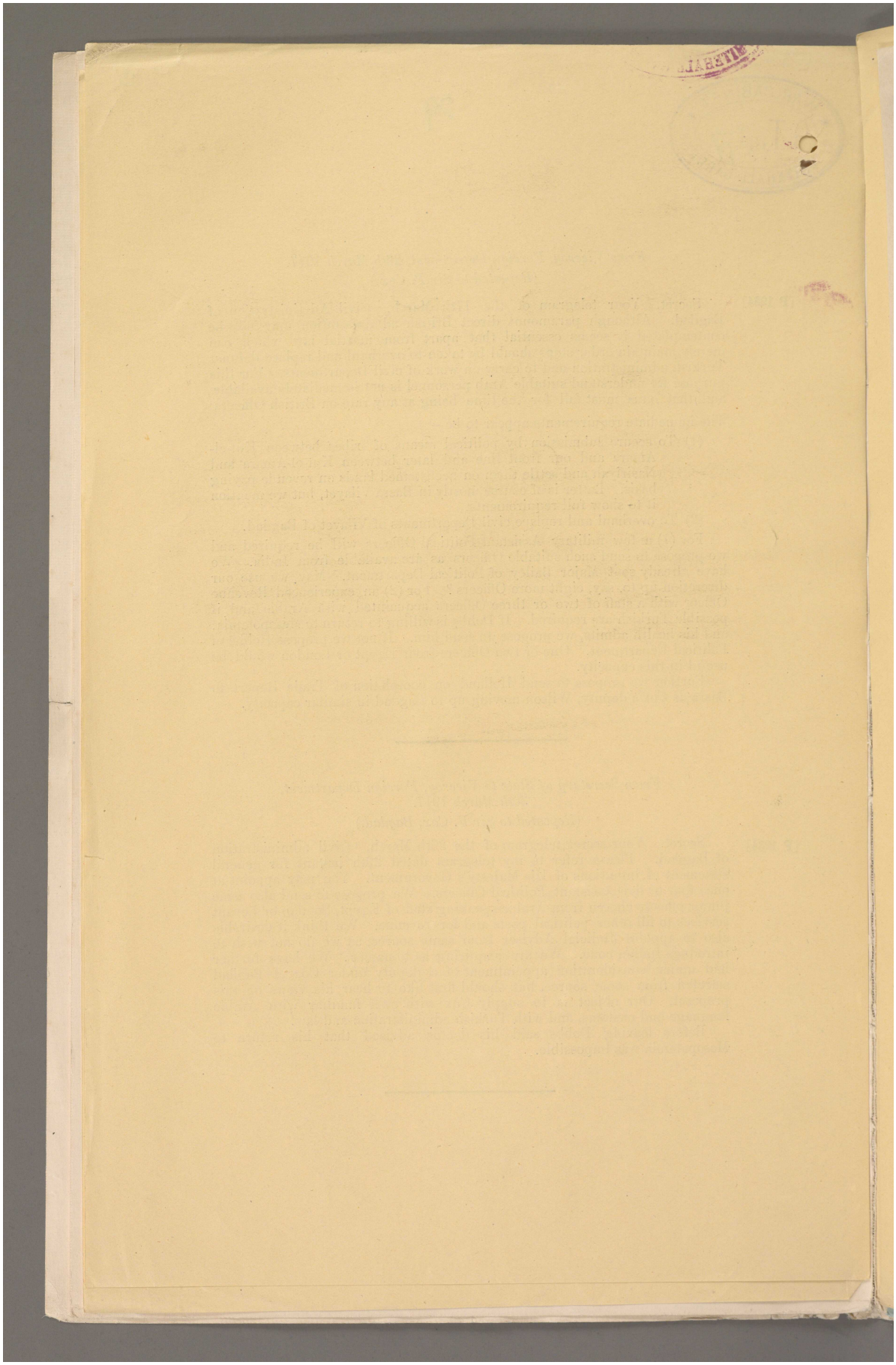

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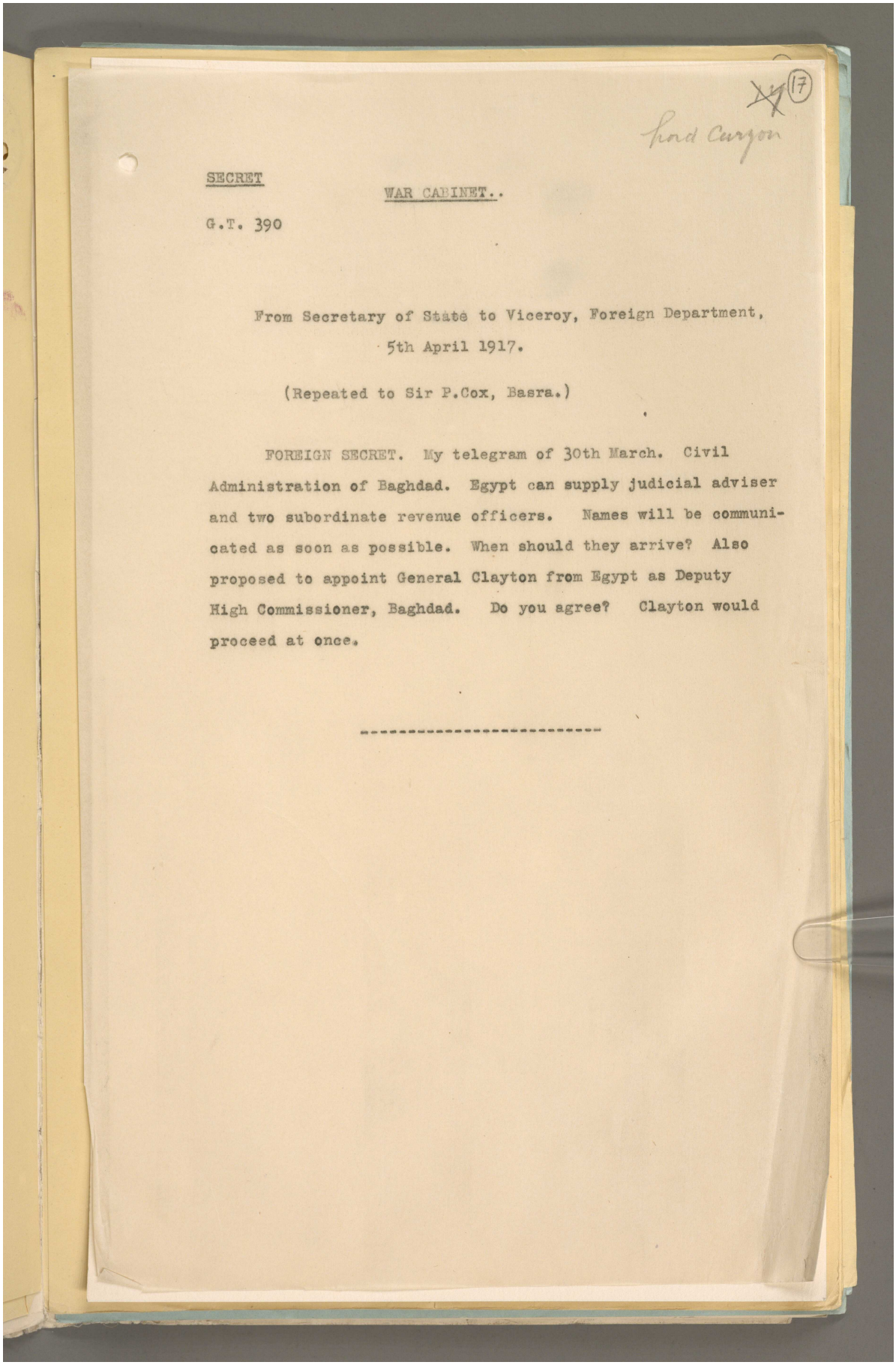


Lord Curzon

(17)

SECRET

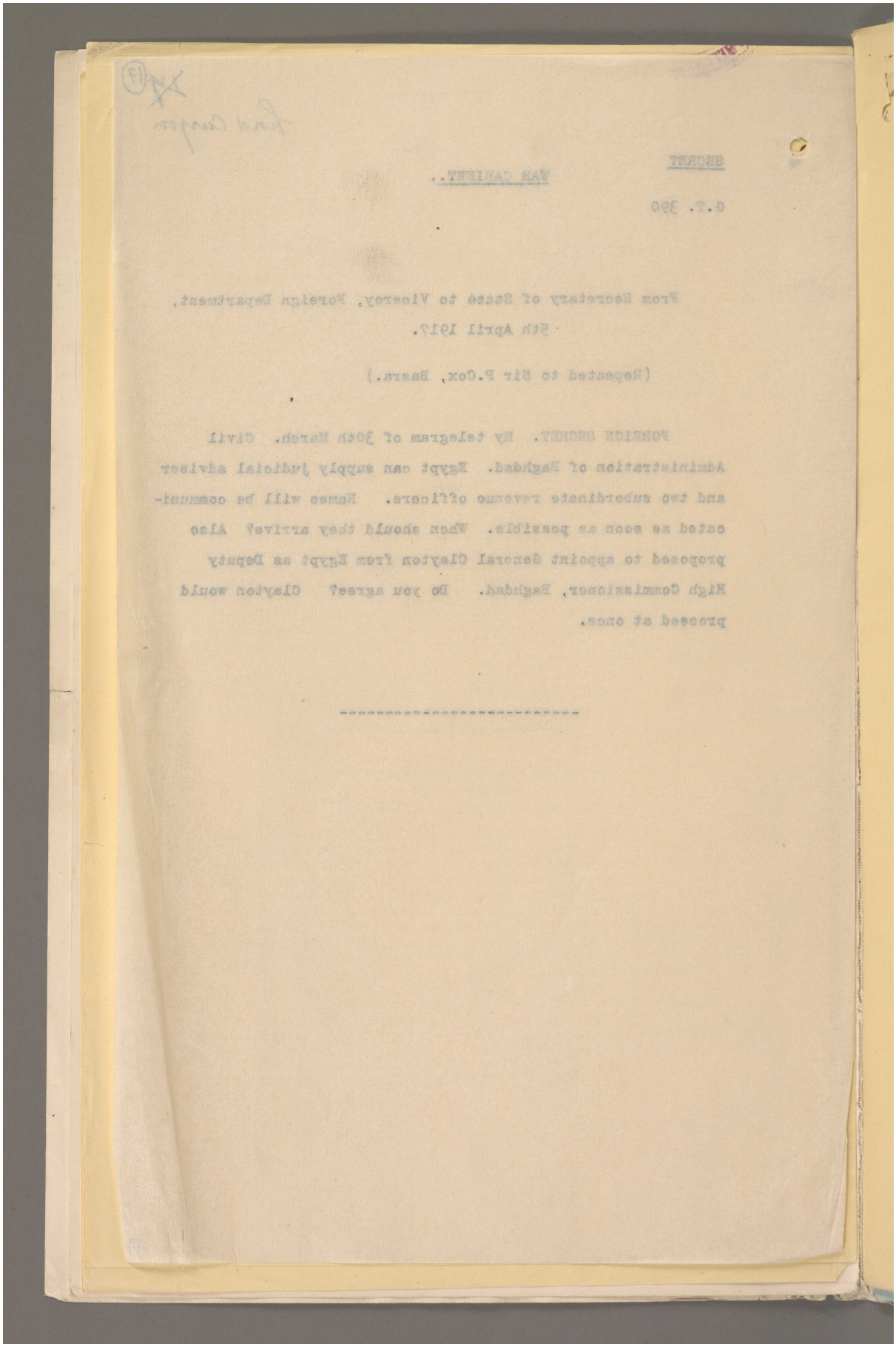
WAR CABINET..

G.T. 390

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department,
5th April 1917.

(Repeated to Sir P.Cox, Basra.)

FOREIGN SECRET. My telegram of 30th March. Civil Administration of Baghdad. Egypt can supply judicial adviser and two subordinate revenue officers. Names will be communicated as soon as possible. When should they arrive? Also proposed to appoint General Clayton from Egypt as Deputy High Commissioner, Baghdad. Do you agree? Clayton would proceed at once.



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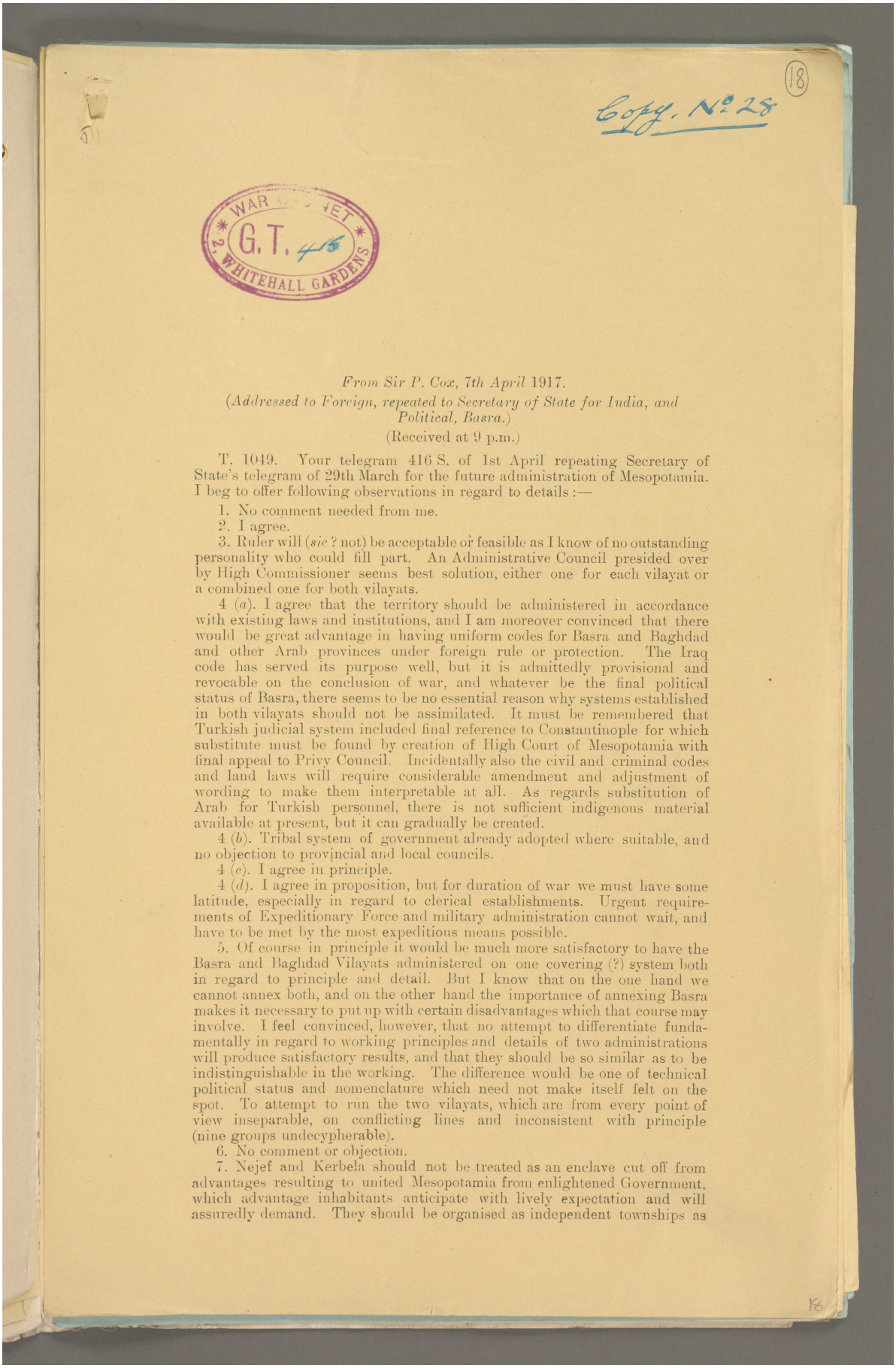

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(18)

WAR CABINET
G.T. 415
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

From Sir P. Cox, 7th April 1917.
(*Addressed to Foreign, repeated to Secretary of State for India, and Political, Basra.*)
(Received at 9 p.m.)

T. 1049. Your telegram 416 S. of 1st April repeating Secretary of State's telegram of 29th March for the future administration of Mesopotamia. I beg to offer following observations in regard to details :—

1. No comment needed from me.
2. I agree.
3. Ruler will (*sic* ? not) be acceptable or feasible as I know of no outstanding personality who could fill part. An Administrative Council presided over by High Commissioner seems best solution, either one for each vilayat or a combined one for both vilayats.
4 (*a*). I agree that the territory should be administered in accordance with existing laws and institutions, and I am moreover convinced that there would be great advantage in having uniform codes for Basra and Baghdad and other Arab provinces under foreign rule or protection. The Iraq code has served its purpose well, but it is admittedly provisional and revocable on the conclusion of war, and whatever be the final political status of Basra, there seems to be no essential reason why systems established in both vilayats should not be assimilated. It must be remembered that Turkish judicial system included final reference to Constantinople for which substitute must be found by creation of High Court of Mesopotamia with final appeal to Privy Council. Incidentally also the civil and criminal codes and land laws will require considerable amendment and adjustment of wording to make them interpretable at all. As regards substitution of Arab for Turkish personnel, there is not sufficient indigenous material available at present, but it can gradually be created.
4 (*b*). Tribal system of government already adopted where suitable, and no objection to provincial and local councils.
4 (*c*). I agree in principle.
4 (*d*). I agree in proposition, but for duration of war we must have some latitude, especially in regard to clerical establishments. Urgent requirements of Expeditionary Force and military administration cannot wait, and have to be met by the most expeditious means possible.
5. Of course in principle it would be much more satisfactory to have the Basra and Baghdad Vilayats administered on one covering (?) system both in regard to principle and detail. But I know that on the one hand we cannot annex both, and on the other hand the importance of annexing Basra makes it necessary to put up with certain disadvantages which that course may involve. I feel convinced, however, that no attempt to differentiate fundamentally in regard to working principles and details of two administrations will produce satisfactory results, and that they should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. The difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature which need not make itself felt on the spot. To attempt to run the two vilayats, which are from every point of view inseparable, on conflicting lines and inconsistent with principle (nine groups undecypherable).
6. No comment or objection.
7. Nejef and Kerbela should not be treated as an enclave cut off from advantages resulting to united Mesopotamia from enlightened Government, which advantage inhabitants anticipate with lively expectation and will assuredly demand. They should be organised as independent townships as

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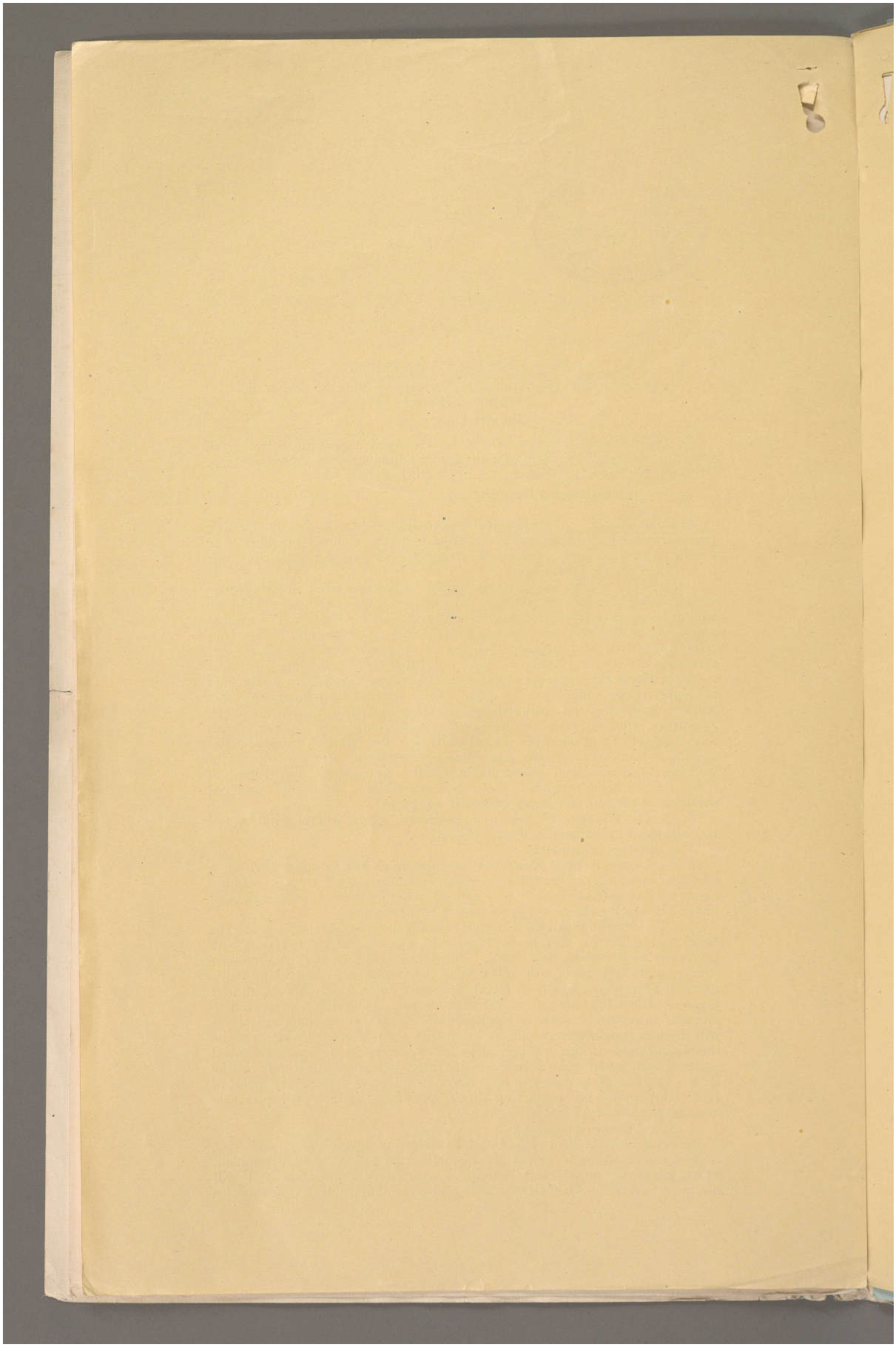

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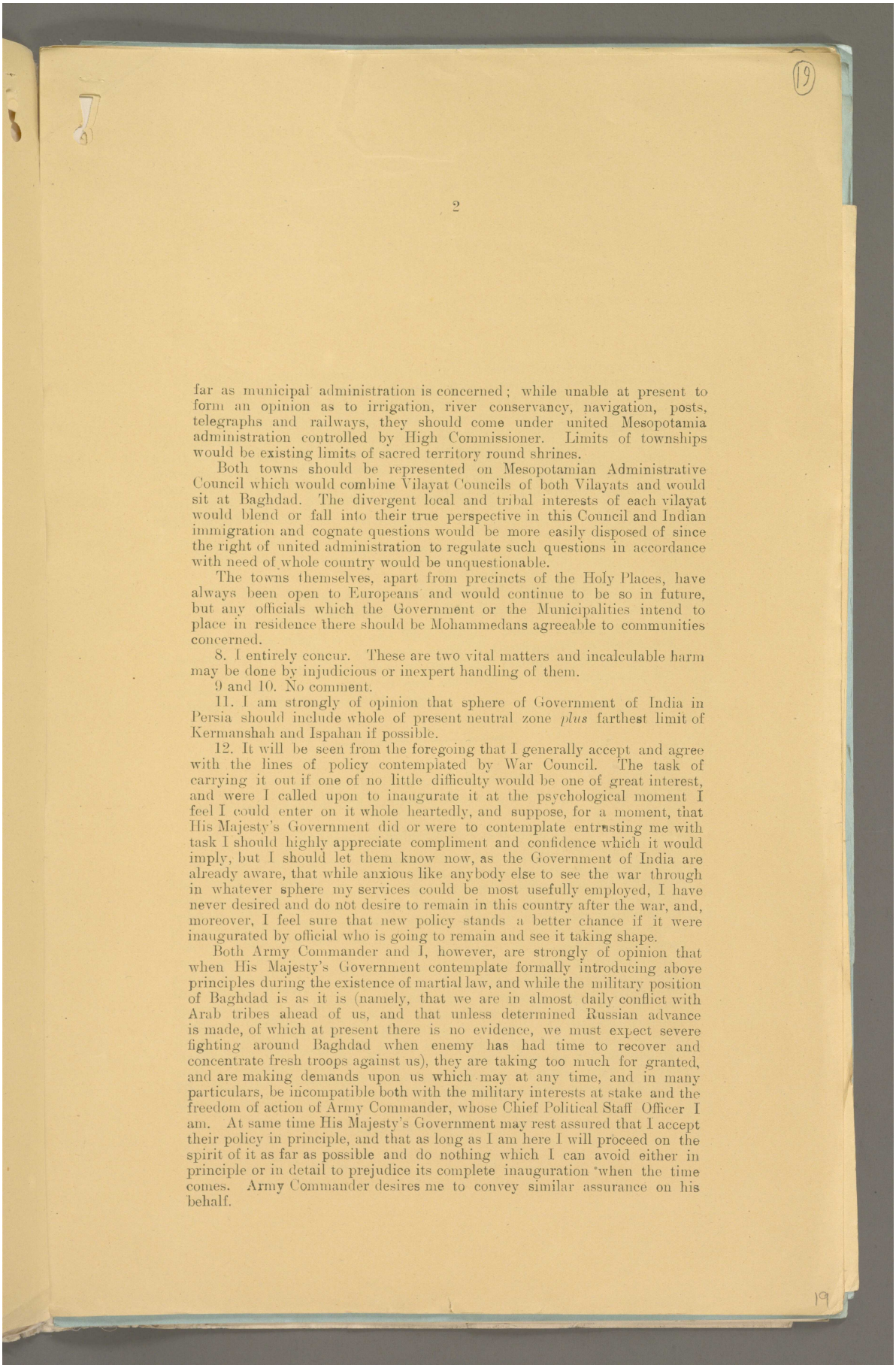

far as municipal administration is concerned; while unable at present to form an opinion as to irrigation, river conservancy, navigation, posts, telegraphs and railways, they should come under united Mesopotamia administration controlled by High Commissioner. Limits of townships would be existing limits of sacred territory round shrines.

Both towns should be represented on Mesopotamian Administrative Council which would combine Vilayat Councils of both Vilayats and would sit at Baghdad. The divergent local and tribal interests of each vilayat would blend or fall into their true perspective in this Council and Indian immigration and cognate questions would be more easily disposed of since the right of united administration to regulate such questions in accordance with need of whole country would be unquestionable.

The towns themselves, apart from precincts of the Holy Places, have always been open to Europeans and would continue to be so in future, but any officials which the Government or the Municipalities intend to place in residence there should be Mohammedans agreeable to communities concerned.

8. I entirely concur. These are two vital matters and incalculable harm may be done by injudicious or inexpert handling of them.

9 and 10. No comment.

11. I am strongly of opinion that sphere of Government of India in Persia should include whole of present neutral zone *plus* farthest limit of Kermanshah and Ispahan if possible.

12. It will be seen from the foregoing that I generally accept and agree with the lines of policy contemplated by War Council. The task of carrying it out if one of no little difficulty would be one of great interest, and were I called upon to inaugurate it at the psychological moment I feel I could enter on it whole heartedly, and suppose, for a moment, that His Majesty's Government did or were to contemplate entrusting me with task I should highly appreciate compliment and confidence which it would imply, but I should let them know now, as the Government of India are already aware, that while anxious like anybody else to see the war through in whatever sphere my services could be most usefully employed, I have never desired and do not desire to remain in this country after the war, and, moreover, I feel sure that new policy stands a better chance if it were inaugurated by official who is going to remain and see it taking shape.

Both Army Commander and I, however, are strongly of opinion that when His Majesty's Government contemplate formally introducing above principles during the existence of martial law, and while the military position of Baghdad is as it is (namely, that we are in almost daily conflict with Arab tribes ahead of us, and that unless determined Russian advance is made, of which at present there is no evidence, we must expect severe fighting around Baghdad when enemy has had time to recover and concentrate fresh troops against us), they are taking too much for granted, and are making demands upon us which may at any time, and in many particulars, be incompatible both with the military interests at stake and the freedom of action of Army Commander, whose Chief Political Staff Officer I am. At same time His Majesty's Government may rest assured that I accept their policy in principle, and that as long as I am here I will proceed on the spirit of it as far as possible and do nothing which I can avoid either in principle or in detail to prejudice its complete inauguration when the time comes. Army Commander desires me to convey similar assurance on his behalf.

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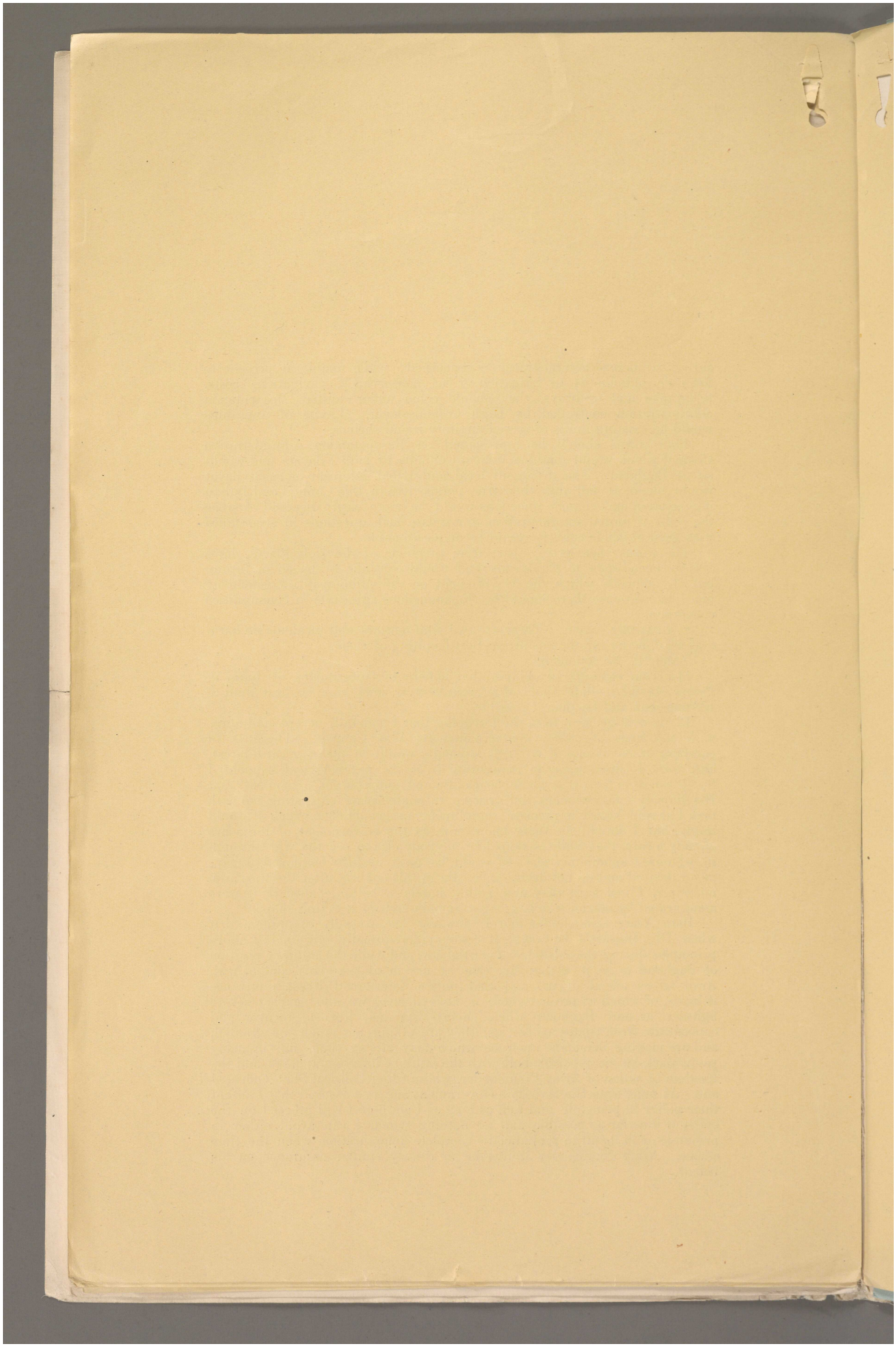

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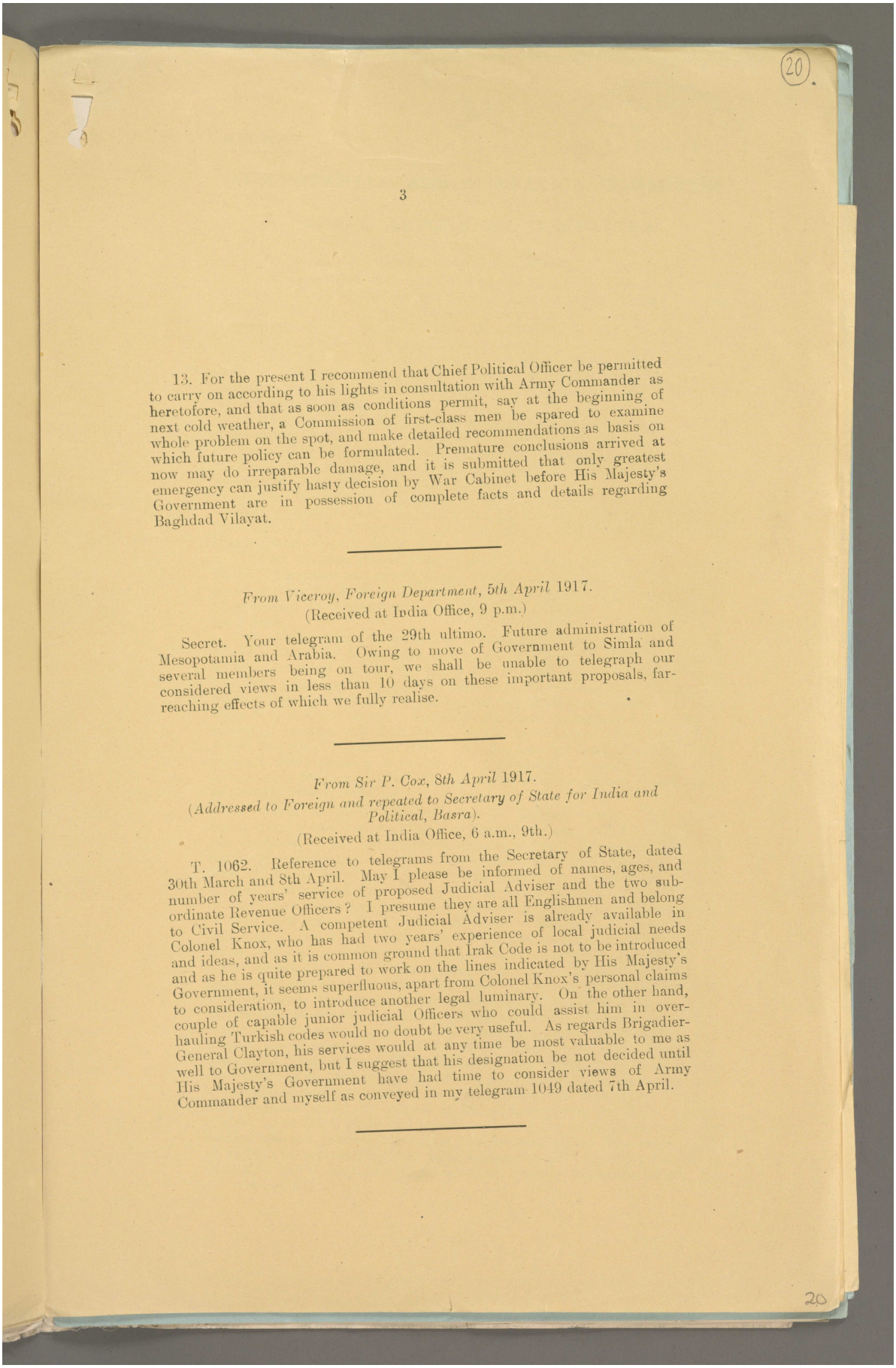


13. For the present I recommend that Chief Political Officer be permitted to carry on according to his lights in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, and that as soon as conditions permit, say at the beginning of next cold weather, a Commission of first-class men be spared to examine whole problem on the spot, and make detailed recommendations as basis on which future policy can be formulated. Premature conclusions arrived at now may do irreparable damage, and it is submitted that only greatest emergency can justify hasty decision by War Cabinet before His Majesty's Government are in possession of complete facts and details regarding Baghdad Vilayat.

From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 5th April 1917.

(Received at India Office, 9 p.m.)

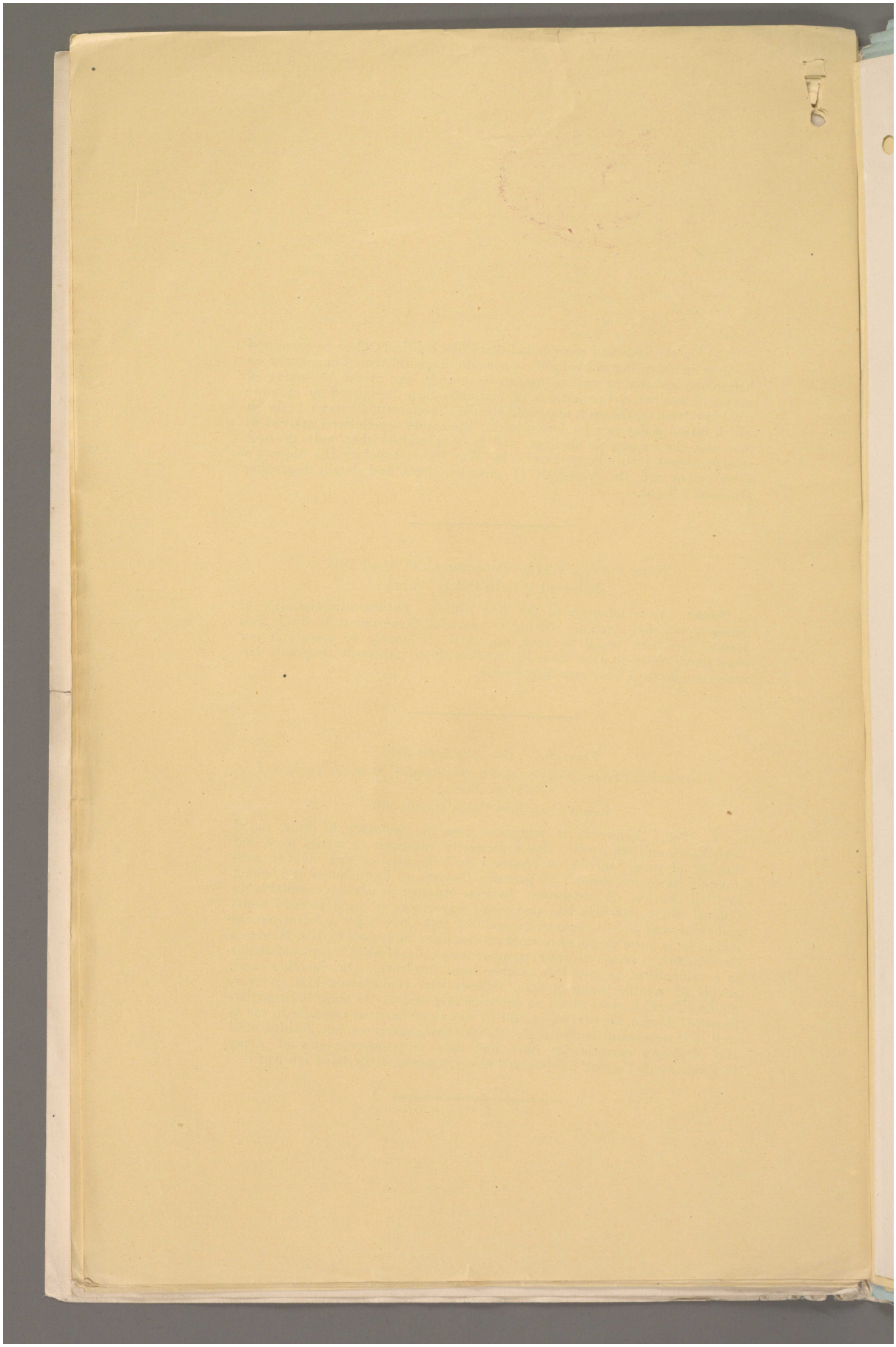
Secret. Your telegram of the 29th ultimo. Future administration of Mesopotamia and Arabia. Owing to move of Government to Simla and several members being on tour, we shall be unable to telegraph our considered views in less than 10 days on these important proposals, far-reaching effects of which we fully realise.

From Sir P. Cox, 8th April 1917.

(Addressed to Foreign and repeated to Secretary of State for India and Political, Basra).

(Received at India Office, 6 a.m., 9th.)

T. 1062. Reference to telegrams from the Secretary of State, dated 30th March and 8th April. May I please be informed of names, ages, and number of years' service of proposed Judicial Adviser and the two sub-ordinate Revenue Officers? I presume they are all Englishmen and belong to Civil Service. A competent Judicial Adviser is already available in Colonel Knox, who has had two years' experience of local judicial needs and ideas, and as it is common ground that Irak Code is not to be introduced and as he is quite prepared to work on the lines indicated by His Majesty's Government, it seems superfluous, apart from Colonel Knox's personal claims to consideration, to introduce another legal luminary. On the other hand, couple of capable junior judicial Officers who could assist him in over-hauling Turkish codes would no doubt be very useful. As regards Brigadier-General Clayton, his services would at any time be most valuable to me as well to Government, but I suggest that his designation be not decided until His Majesty's Government have had time to consider views of Army Commander and myself as conveyed in my telegram 1049 dated 7th April.



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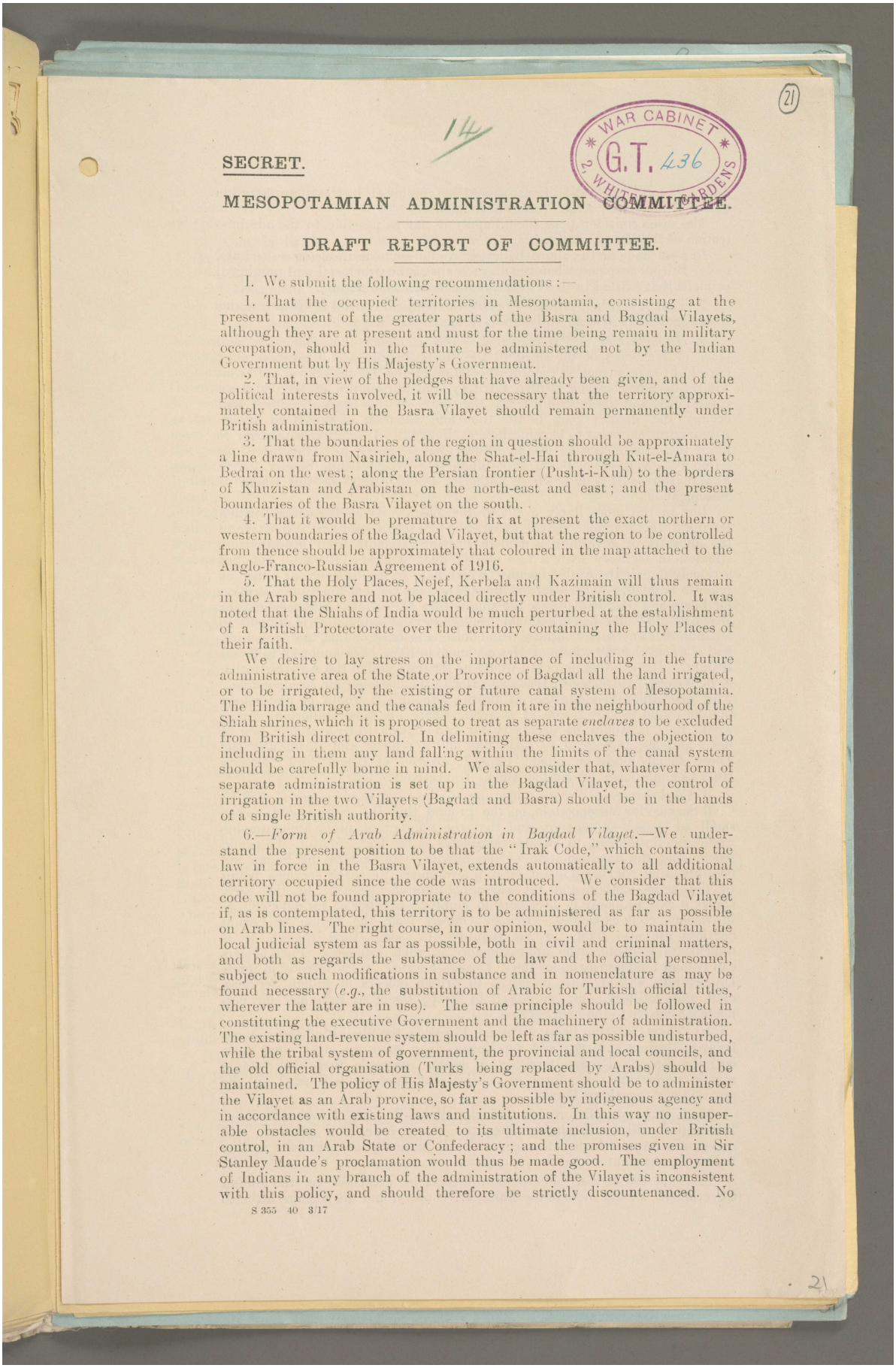

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SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

DRAFT REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

I. We submit the following recommendations :—

1. That the occupied territories in Mesopotamia, consisting at the present moment of the greater parts of the Basra and Bagdad Vilayets, although they are at present and must for the time being remain in military occupation, should in the future be administered not by the Indian Government but by His Majesty's Government.

2. That, in view of the pledges that have already been given, and of the political interests involved, it will be necessary that the territory approximately contained in the Basra Vilayet should remain permanently under British administration.

3. That the boundaries of the region in question should be approximately a line drawn from Nasirieh, along the Shat-el-Hai through Kut-el-Amara to Bedrai on the west; along the Persian frontier (Pusht-i-Kuh) to the borders of Khuzistan and Arabistan on the north-east and east; and the present boundaries of the Basra Vilayet on the south.

4. That it would be premature to fix at present the exact northern or western boundaries of the Bagdad Vilayet, but that the region to be controlled from thence should be approximately that coloured in the map attached to the Anglo-Franco-Russian Agreement of 1916.

5. That the Holy Places, Nejef, Kerbela and Kazimain will thus remain in the Arab sphere and not be placed directly under British control. It was noted that the Shiahs of India would be much perturbed at the establishment of a British Protectorate over the territory containing the Holy Places of their faith.

We desire to lay stress on the importance of including in the future administrative area of the State or Province of Bagdad all the land irrigated, or to be irrigated, by the existing or future canal system of Mesopotamia. The Hindia barrage and the canals fed from it are in the neighbourhood of the Shiah shrines, which it is proposed to treat as separate *enclaves* to be excluded from British direct control. In delimiting these enclaves the objection to including in them any land falling within the limits of the canal system should be carefully borne in mind. We also consider that, whatever form of separate administration is set up in the Bagdad Vilayet, the control of irrigation in the two Vilayets (Bagdad and Basra) should be in the hands of a single British authority.

6.—*Form of Arab Administration in Bagdad Vilayet.*—We understand the present position to be that the "Irak Code," which contains the law in force in the Basra Vilayet, extends automatically to all additional territory occupied since the code was introduced. We consider that this code will not be found appropriate to the conditions of the Bagdad Vilayet if, as is contemplated, this territory is to be administered as far as possible on Arab lines. The right course, in our opinion, would be to maintain the local judicial system as far as possible, both in civil and criminal matters, and both as regards the substance of the law and the official personnel, subject to such modifications in substance and in nomenclature as may be found necessary (*e.g.*, the substitution of Arabic for Turkish official titles, wherever the latter are in use). The same principle should be followed in constituting the executive Government and the machinery of administration. The existing land-revenue system should be left as far as possible undisturbed, while the tribal system of government, the provincial and local councils, and the old official organisation (Turks being replaced by Arabs) should be maintained. The policy of His Majesty's Government should be to administer the Vilayet as an Arab province, so far as possible by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions. In this way no insuperable obstacles would be created to its ultimate inclusion, under British control, in an Arab State or Confederacy; and the promises given in Sir Stanley Maude's proclamation would thus be made good. The employment of Indians in any branch of the administration of the Vilayet is inconsistent with this policy, and should therefore be strictly discountenanced. No

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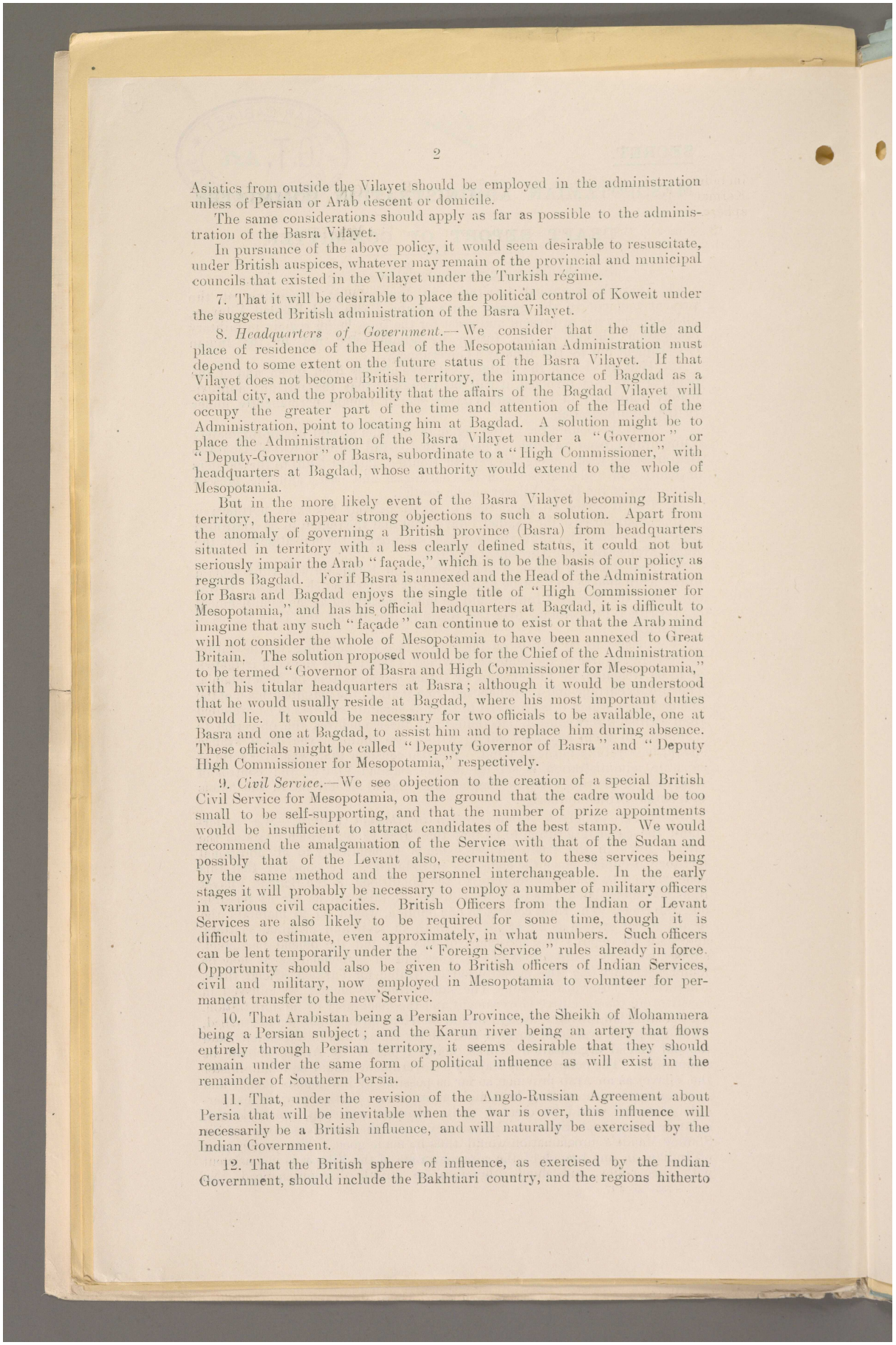

Asiatics from outside the Vilayet should be employed in the administration unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile.

The same considerations should apply as far as possible to the administration of the Basra Vilayet.

In pursuance of the above policy, it would seem desirable to resuscitate, under British auspices, whatever may remain of the provincial and municipal councils that existed in the Vilayet under the Turkish régime.

7. That it will be desirable to place the political control of Koweit under the suggested British administration of the Basra Vilayet.

8. *Headquarters of Government.*—We consider that the title and place of residence of the Head of the Mesopotamian Administration must depend to some extent on the future status of the Basra Vilayet. If that Vilayet does not become British territory, the importance of Bagdad as a capital city, and the probability that the affairs of the Bagdad Vilayet will occupy the greater part of the time and attention of the Head of the Administration, point to locating him at Bagdad. A solution might be to place the Administration of the Basra Vilayet under a "Governor" or "Deputy-Governor" of Basra, subordinate to a "High Commissioner," with headquarters at Bagdad, whose authority would extend to the whole of Mesopotamia.

But in the more likely event of the Basra Vilayet becoming British territory, there appear strong objections to such a solution. Apart from the anomaly of governing a British province (Basra) from headquarters situated in territory with a less clearly defined status, it could not but seriously impair the Arab "façade," which is to be the basis of our policy as regards Bagdad. For if Basra is annexed and the Head of the Administration for Basra and Bagdad enjoys the single title of "High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," and has his official headquarters at Bagdad, it is difficult to imagine that any such "façade" can continue to exist or that the Arab mind will not consider the whole of Mesopotamia to have been annexed to Great Britain. The solution proposed would be for the Chief of the Administration to be termed "Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," with his titular headquarters at Basra; although it would be understood that he would usually reside at Bagdad, where his most important duties would lie. It would be necessary for two officials to be available, one at Basra and one at Bagdad, to assist him and to replace him during absence. These officials might be called "Deputy Governor of Basra" and "Deputy High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," respectively.

9. *Civil Service.*—We see objection to the creation of a special British Civil Service for Mesopotamia, on the ground that the cadre would be too small to be self-supporting, and that the number of prize appointments would be insufficient to attract candidates of the best stamp. We would recommend the amalgamation of the Service with that of the Sudan and possibly that of the Levant also, recruitment to these services being by the same method and the personnel interchangeable. In the early stages it will probably be necessary to employ a number of military officers in various civil capacities. British Officers from the Indian or Levant Services are also likely to be required for some time, though it is difficult to estimate, even approximately, in what numbers. Such officers can be lent temporarily under the "Foreign Service" rules already in force. Opportunity should also be given to British officers of Indian Services, civil and military, now employed in Mesopotamia to volunteer for permanent transfer to the new Service.

10. That Arabistan being a Persian Province, the Sheikh of Mohammera being a Persian subject; and the Karun river being an artery that flows entirely through Persian territory, it seems desirable that they should remain under the same form of political influence as will exist in the remainder of Southern Persia.

11. That, under the revision of the Anglo-Russian Agreement about Persia that will be inevitable when the war is over, this influence will necessarily be a British influence, and will naturally be exercised by the Indian Government.

12. That the British sphere of influence, as exercised by the Indian Government, should include the Bakhtiari country, and the regions hitherto

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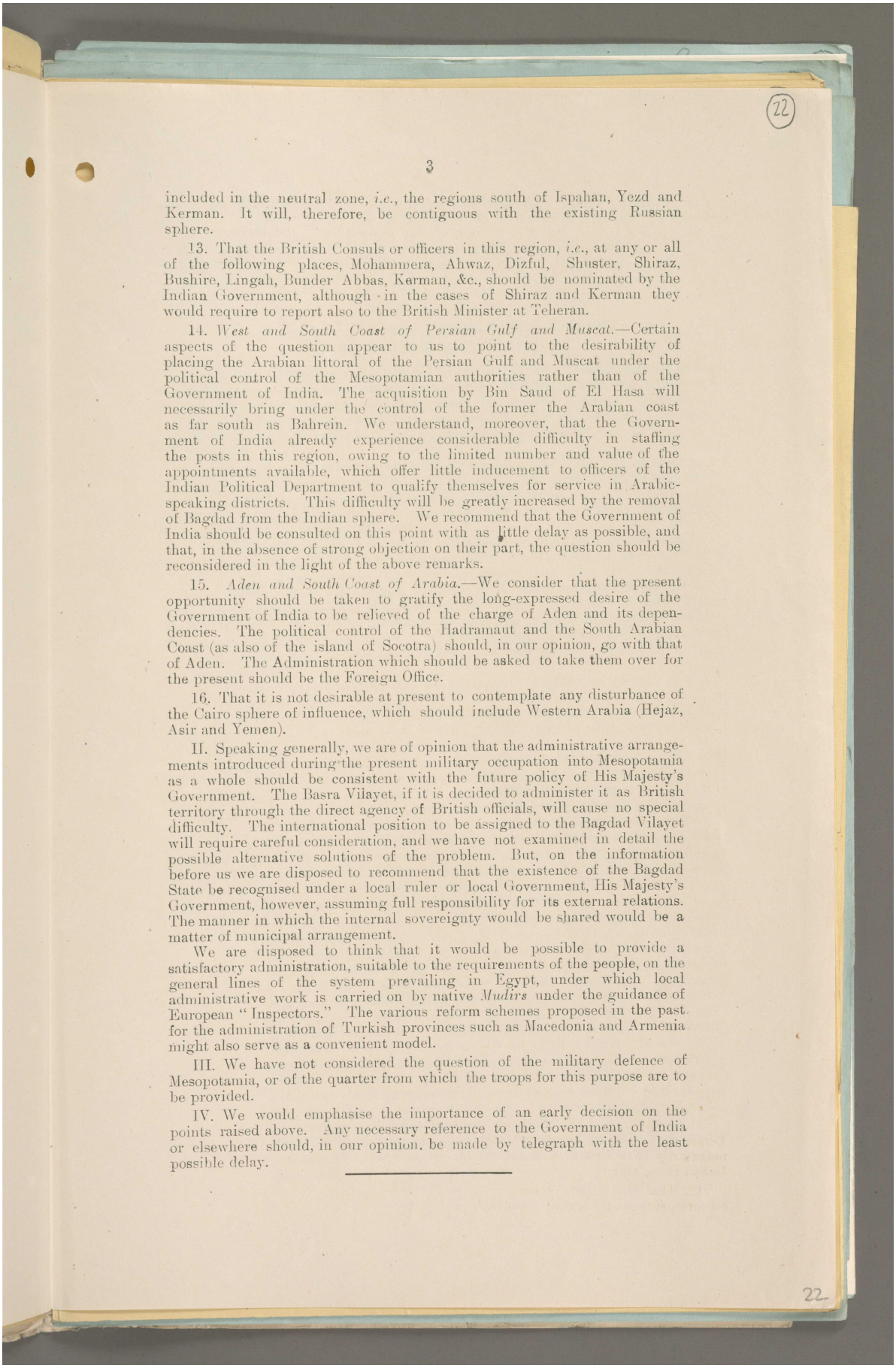

included in the neutral zone, *i.e.*, the regions south of Ispahan, Yezd and Kerman. It will, therefore, be contiguous with the existing Russian sphere.

13. That the British Consuls or officers in this region, *i.e.*, at any or all of the following places, Mohammera, Ahwaz, Dizful, Shuster, Shiraz, Bushire, Lingah, Bunder Abbas, Kerman, &c., should be nominated by the Indian Government, although in the cases of Shiraz and Kerman they would require to report also to the British Minister at Teheran.

14. *West and South Coast of Persian Gulf and Muscat.*—Certain aspects of the question appear to us to point to the desirability of placing the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf and Muscat under the political control of the Mesopotamian authorities rather than of the Government of India. The acquisition by Bin Saud of El Hasa will necessarily bring under the control of the former the Arabian coast as far south as Bahrein. We understand, moreover, that the Government of India already experience considerable difficulty in staffing the posts in this region, owing to the limited number and value of the appointments available, which offer little inducement to officers of the Indian Political Department to qualify themselves for service in Arabic-speaking districts. This difficulty will be greatly increased by the removal of Bagdad from the Indian sphere. We recommend that the Government of India should be consulted on this point with as little delay as possible, and that, in the absence of strong objection on their part, the question should be reconsidered in the light of the above remarks.

15. *Aden and South Coast of Arabia.*—We consider that the present opportunity should be taken to gratify the long-expressed desire of the Government of India to be relieved of the charge of Aden and its dependencies. The political control of the Hadramaut and the South Arabian Coast (as also of the island of Socotra) should, in our opinion, go with that of Aden. The Administration which should be asked to take them over for the present should be the Foreign Office.

16. That it is not desirable at present to contemplate any disturbance of the Cairo sphere of influence, which should include Western Arabia (Hejaz, Asir and Yemen).

II. Speaking generally, we are of opinion that the administrative arrangements introduced during the present military occupation into Mesopotamia as a whole should be consistent with the future policy of His Majesty's Government. The Basra Vilayet, if it is decided to administer it as British territory through the direct agency of British officials, will cause no special difficulty. The international position to be assigned to the Bagdad Vilayet will require careful consideration, and we have not examined in detail the possible alternative solutions of the problem. But, on the information before us we are disposed to recommend that the existence of the Bagdad State be recognised under a local ruler or local Government, His Majesty's Government, however, assuming full responsibility for its external relations. The manner in which the internal sovereignty would be shared would be a matter of municipal arrangement.

We are disposed to think that it would be possible to provide a satisfactory administration, suitable to the requirements of the people, on the general lines of the system prevailing in Egypt, under which local administrative work is carried on by native *Mudirs* under the guidance of European "Inspectors." The various reform schemes proposed in the past for the administration of Turkish provinces such as Macedonia and Armenia might also serve as a convenient model.

III. We have not considered the question of the military defence of Mesopotamia, or of the quarter from which the troops for this purpose are to be provided.

IV. We would emphasise the importance of an early decision on the points raised above. Any necessary reference to the Government of India or elsewhere should, in our opinion, be made by telegraph with the least possible delay.

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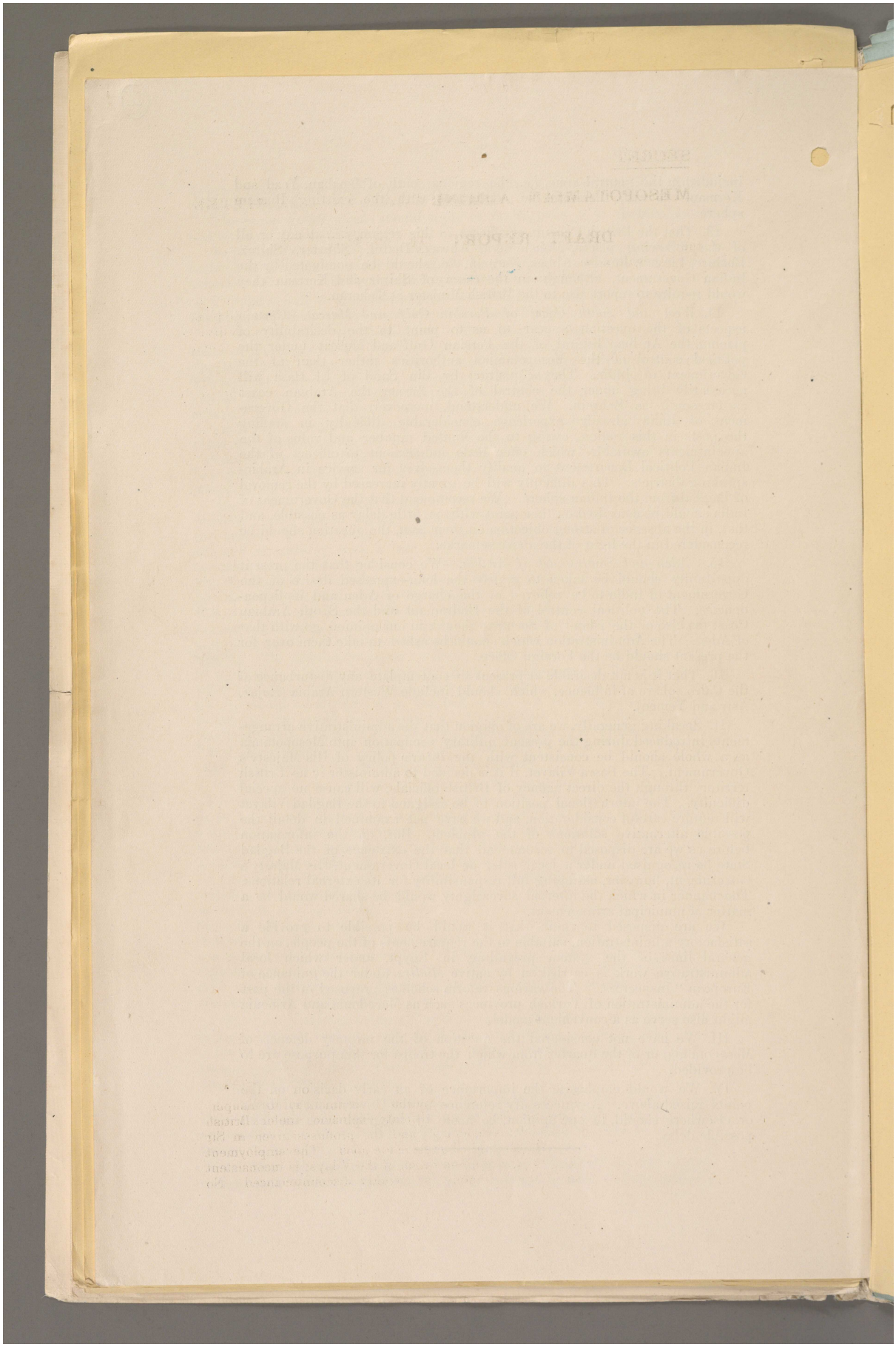

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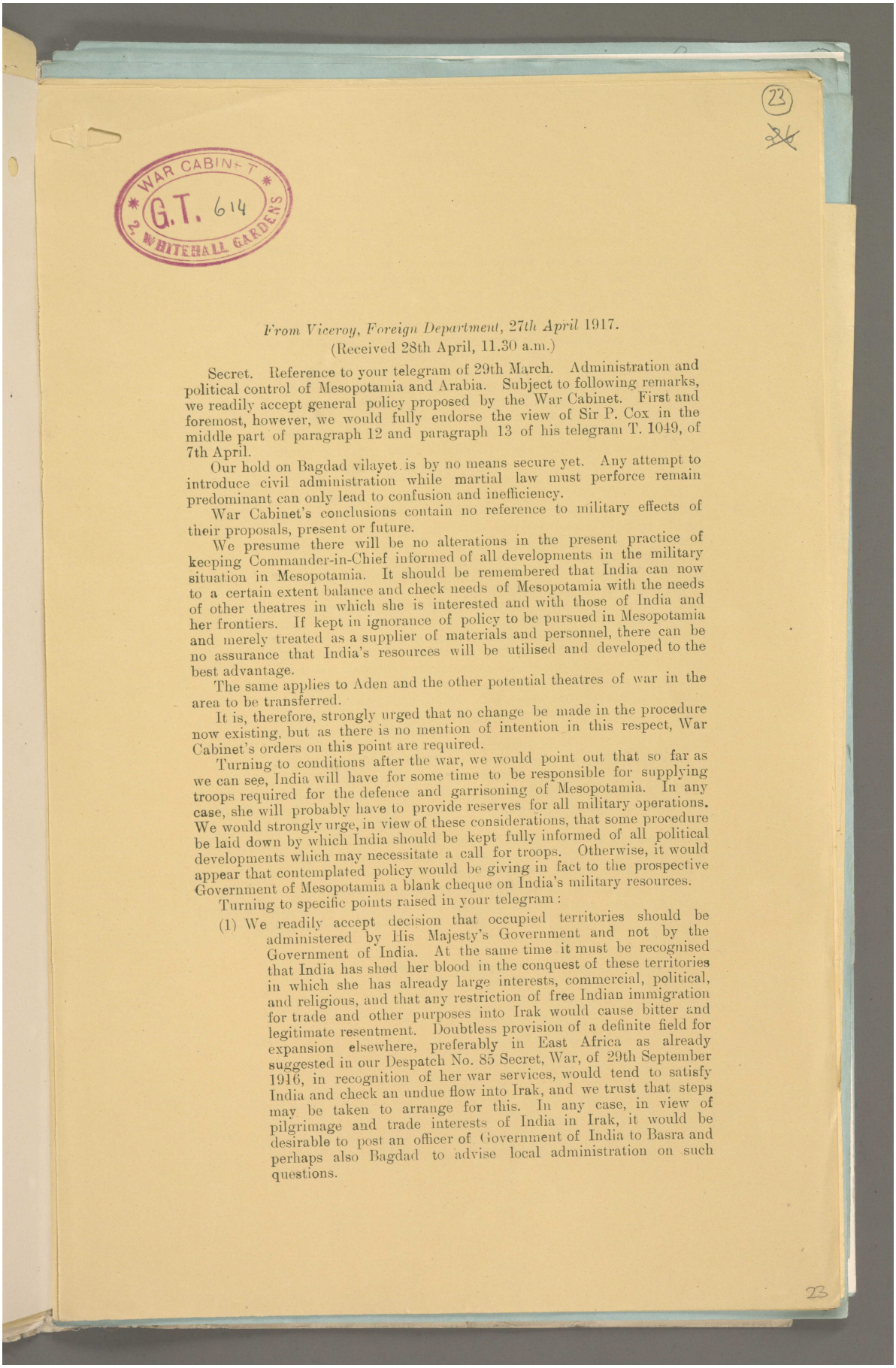


From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 27th April 1917.
(Received 28th April, 11.30 a.m.)

Secret. Reference to your telegram of 29th March. Administration and political control of Mesopotamia and Arabia. Subject to following remarks, we readily accept general policy proposed by the War Cabinet. First and foremost, however, we would fully endorse the view of Sir P. Cox in the middle part of paragraph 12 and paragraph 13 of his telegram T. 1049, of 7th April.

Our hold on Bagdad vilayet is by no means secure yet. Any attempt to introduce civil administration while martial law must perforce remain predominant can only lead to confusion and inefficiency.

War Cabinet's conclusions contain no reference to military effects of their proposals, present or future.

We presume there will be no alterations in the present practice of keeping Commander-in-Chief informed of all developments in the military situation in Mesopotamia. It should be remembered that India can now to a certain extent balance and check needs of Mesopotamia with the needs of other theatres in which she is interested and with those of India and her frontiers. If kept in ignorance of policy to be pursued in Mesopotamia and merely treated as a supplier of materials and personnel, there can be no assurance that India's resources will be utilised and developed to the best advantage.

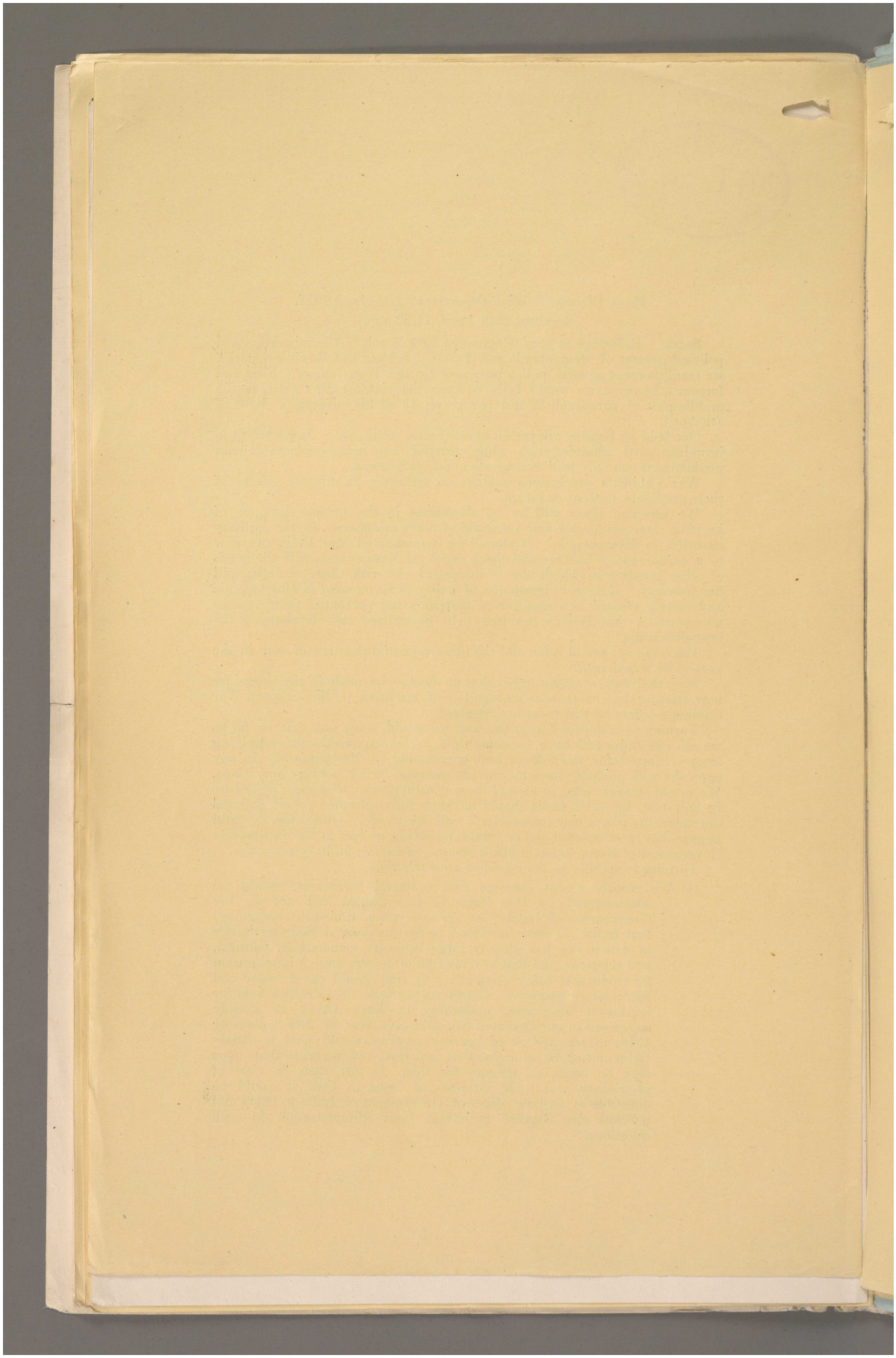
The same applies to Aden and the other potential theatres of war in the area to be transferred.

It is, therefore, strongly urged that no change be made in the procedure now existing, but as there is no mention of intention in this respect, War Cabinet's orders on this point are required.

Turning to conditions after the war, we would point out that so far as we can see, India will have for some time to be responsible for supplying troops required for the defence and garrisoning of Mesopotamia. In any case, she will probably have to provide reserves for all military operations. We would strongly urge, in view of these considerations, that some procedure be laid down by which India should be kept fully informed of all political developments which may necessitate a call for troops. Otherwise, it would appear that contemplated policy would be giving in fact to the prospective Government of Mesopotamia a blank cheque on India's military resources.

Turning to specific points raised in your telegram:

(1) We readily accept decision that occupied territories should be administered by His Majesty's Government and not by the Government of India. At the same time it must be recognised that India has shed her blood in the conquest of these territories in which she has already large interests, commercial, political, and religious, and that any restriction of free Indian immigration for trade and other purposes into Irak would cause bitter and legitimate resentment. Doubtless provision of a definite field for expansion elsewhere, preferably in East Africa as already suggested in our Despatch No. 85 Secret, War, of 29th September 1916, in recognition of her war services, would tend to satisfy India and check an undue flow into Irak, and we trust that steps may be taken to arrange for this. In any case, in view of pilgrimage and trade interests of India in Irak, it would be desirable to post an officer of Government of India to Basra and perhaps also Bagdad to advise local administration on such questions.



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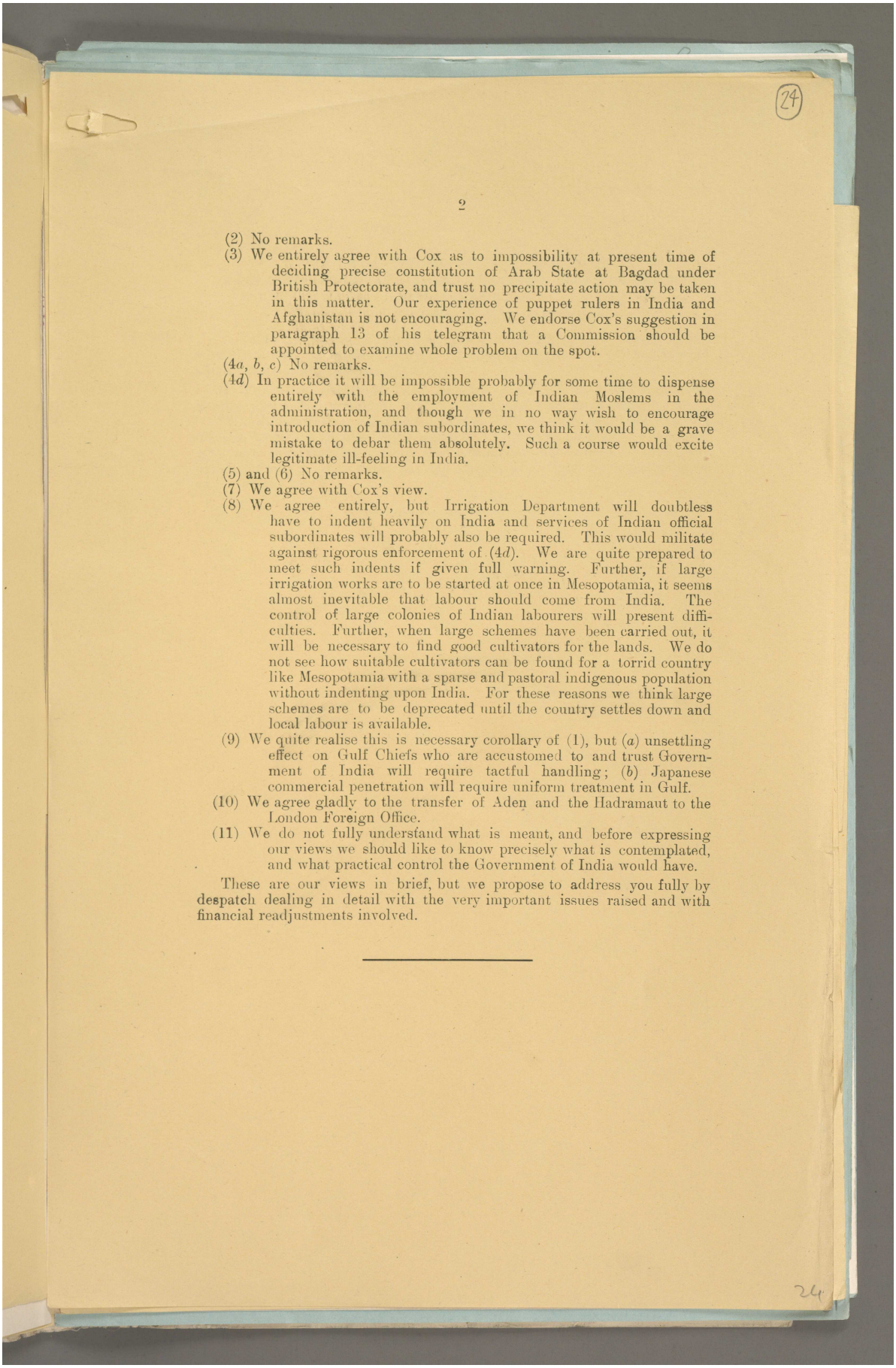

(2) No remarks.
(3) We entirely agree with Cox as to impossibility at present time of deciding precise constitution of Arab State at Bagdad under British Protectorate, and trust no precipitate action may be taken in this matter. Our experience of puppet rulers in India and Afghanistan is not encouraging. We endorse Cox's suggestion in paragraph 13 of his telegram that a Commission should be appointed to examine whole problem on the spot.
(4*a*, *b*, *c*) No remarks.
(4*d*) In practice it will be impossible probably for some time to dispense entirely with the employment of Indian Moslems in the administration, and though we in no way wish to encourage introduction of Indian subordinates, we think it would be a grave mistake to debar them absolutely. Such a course would excite legitimate ill-feeling in India.
(5) and (6) No remarks.
(7) We agree with Cox's view.
(8) We agree entirely, but Irrigation Department will doubtless have to indent heavily on India and services of Indian official subordinates will probably also be required. This would militate against rigorous enforcement of (4*d*). We are quite prepared to meet such indents if given full warning. Further, if large irrigation works are to be started at once in Mesopotamia, it seems almost inevitable that labour should come from India. The control of large colonies of Indian labourers will present difficulties. Further, when large schemes have been carried out, it will be necessary to find good cultivators for the lands. We do not see how suitable cultivators can be found for a torrid country like Mesopotamia with a sparse and pastoral indigenous population without indenting upon India. For these reasons we think large schemes are to be deprecated until the country settles down and local labour is available.
(9) We quite realise this is necessary corollary of (1), but (*a*) unsettling effect on Gulf Chiefs who are accustomed to and trust Government of India will require tactful handling; (*b*) Japanese commercial penetration will require uniform treatment in Gulf.
(10) We agree gladly to the transfer of Aden and the Hadramaut to the London Foreign Office.
(11) We do not fully understand what is meant, and before expressing our views we should like to know precisely what is contemplated, and what practical control the Government of India would have.

These are our views in brief, but we propose to address you fully by despatch dealing in detail with the very important issues raised and with financial readjustments involved.

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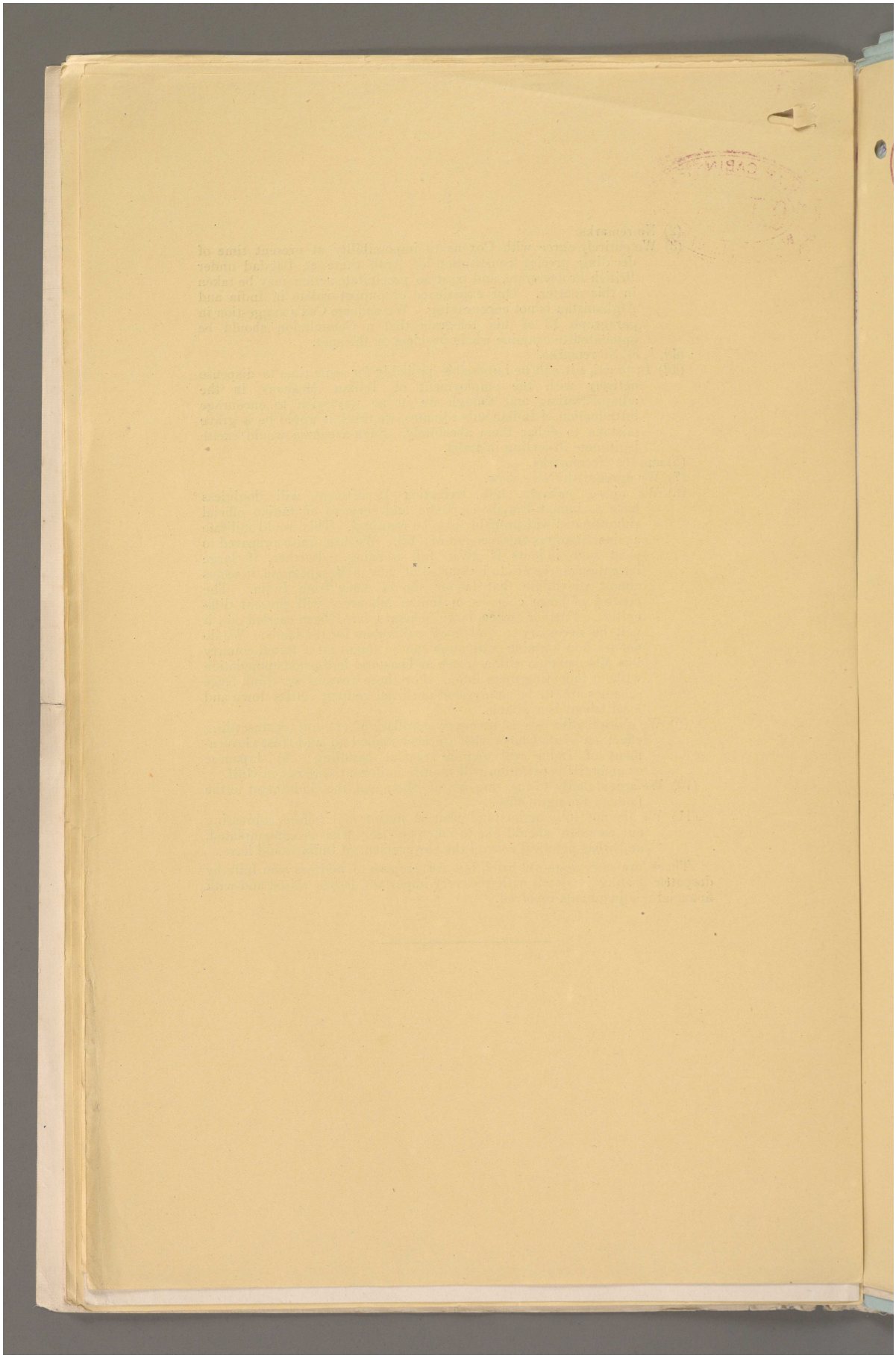

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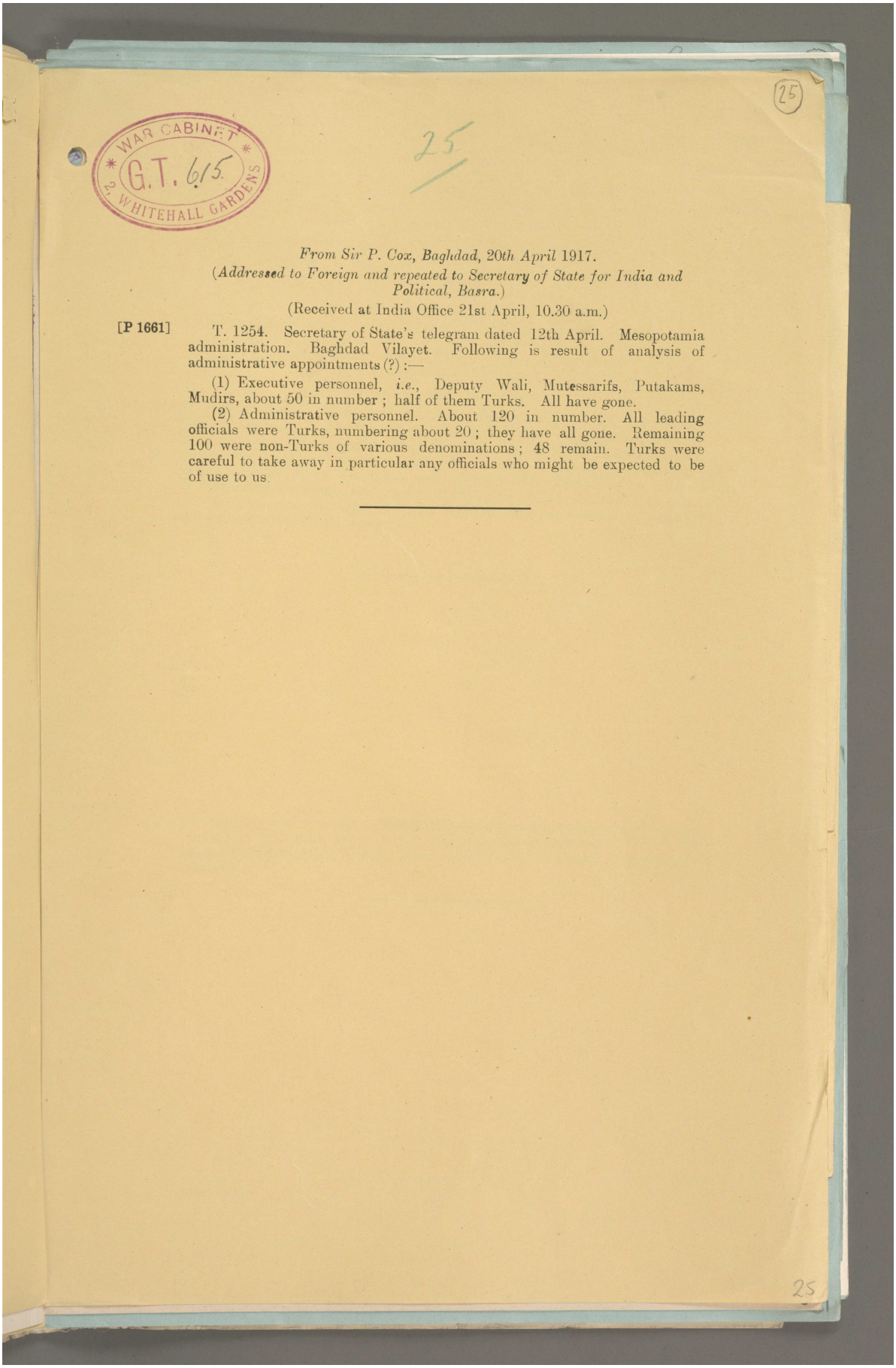

From Sir P. Cox, Baghdad, 20th April 1917.
(Addressed to Foreign and repeated to Secretary of State for India and Political, Basra.)
(Received at India Office 21st April, 10.30 a.m.)

[P 1661] T. 1254. Secretary of State's telegram dated 12th April. Mesopotamia administration. Baghdad Vilayet. Following is result of analysis of administrative appointments (?) :—

(1) Executive personnel, *i.e.*, Deputy Wali, Mutessarifs, Putakams, Mudirs, about 50 in number ; half of them Turks. All have gone.

(2) Administrative personnel. About 120 in number. All leading officials were Turks, numbering about 20 ; they have all gone. Remaining 100 were non-Turks of various denominations ; 48 remain. Turks were careful to take away in particular any officials who might be expected to be of use to us.

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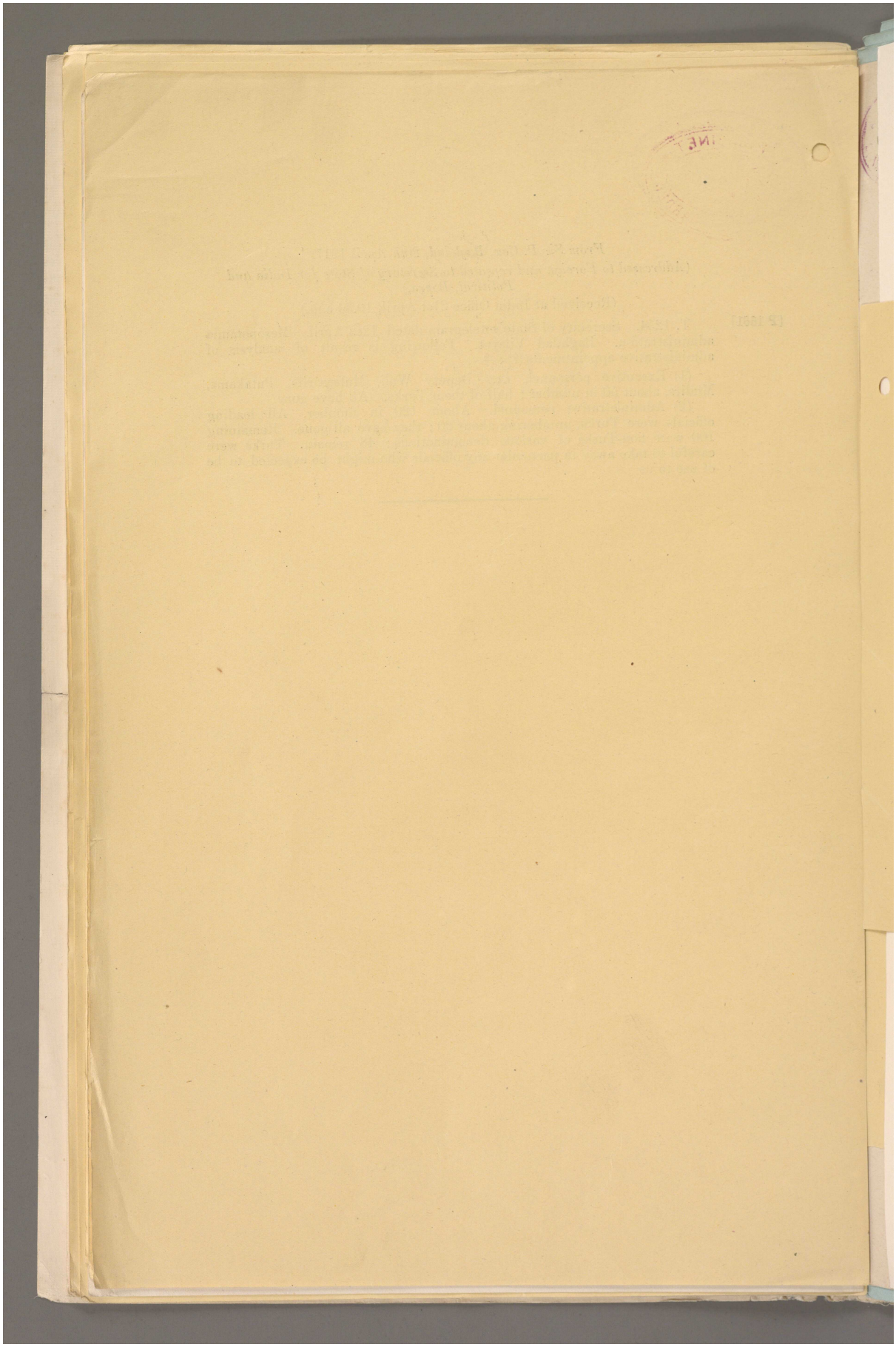

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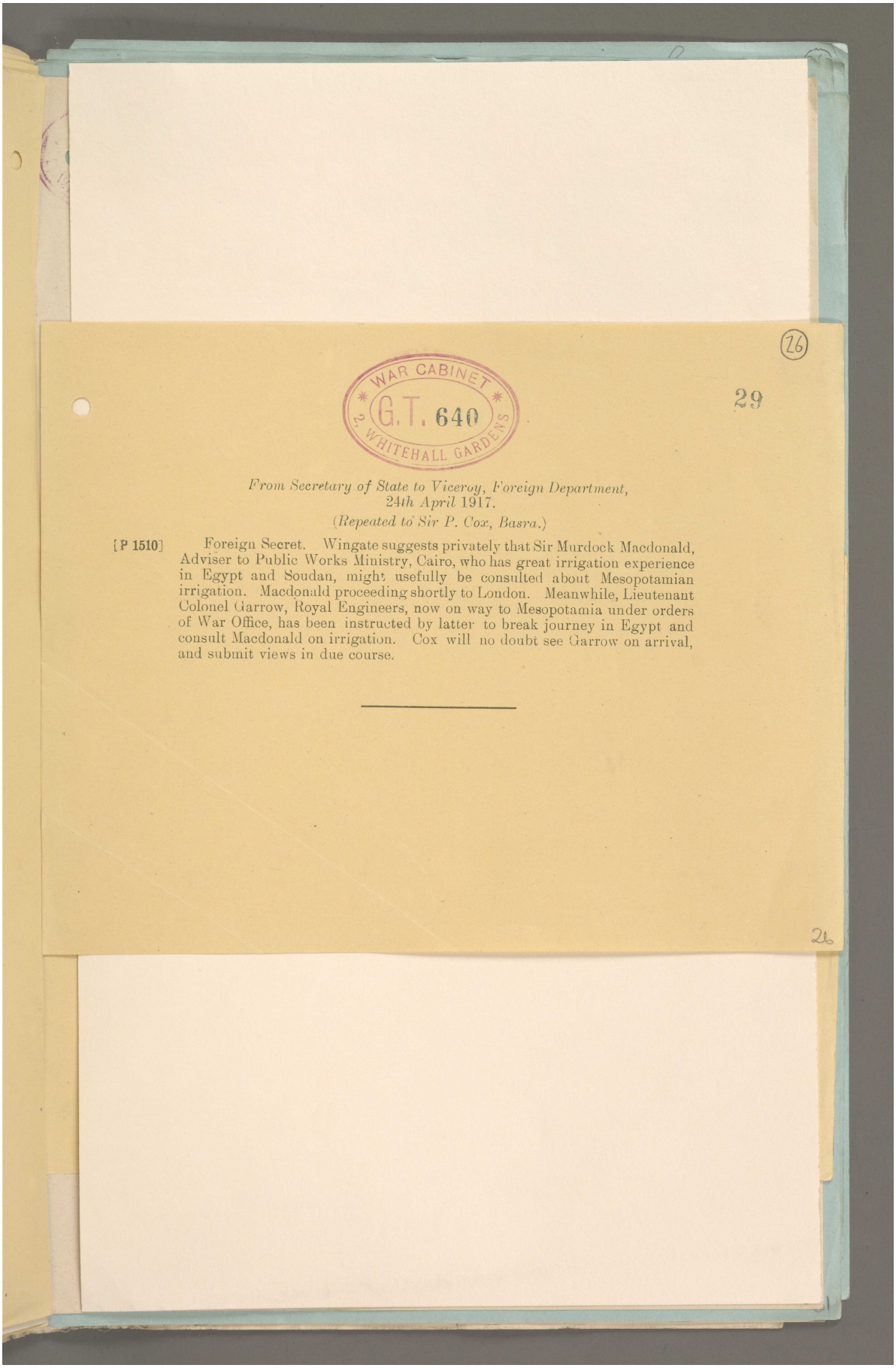

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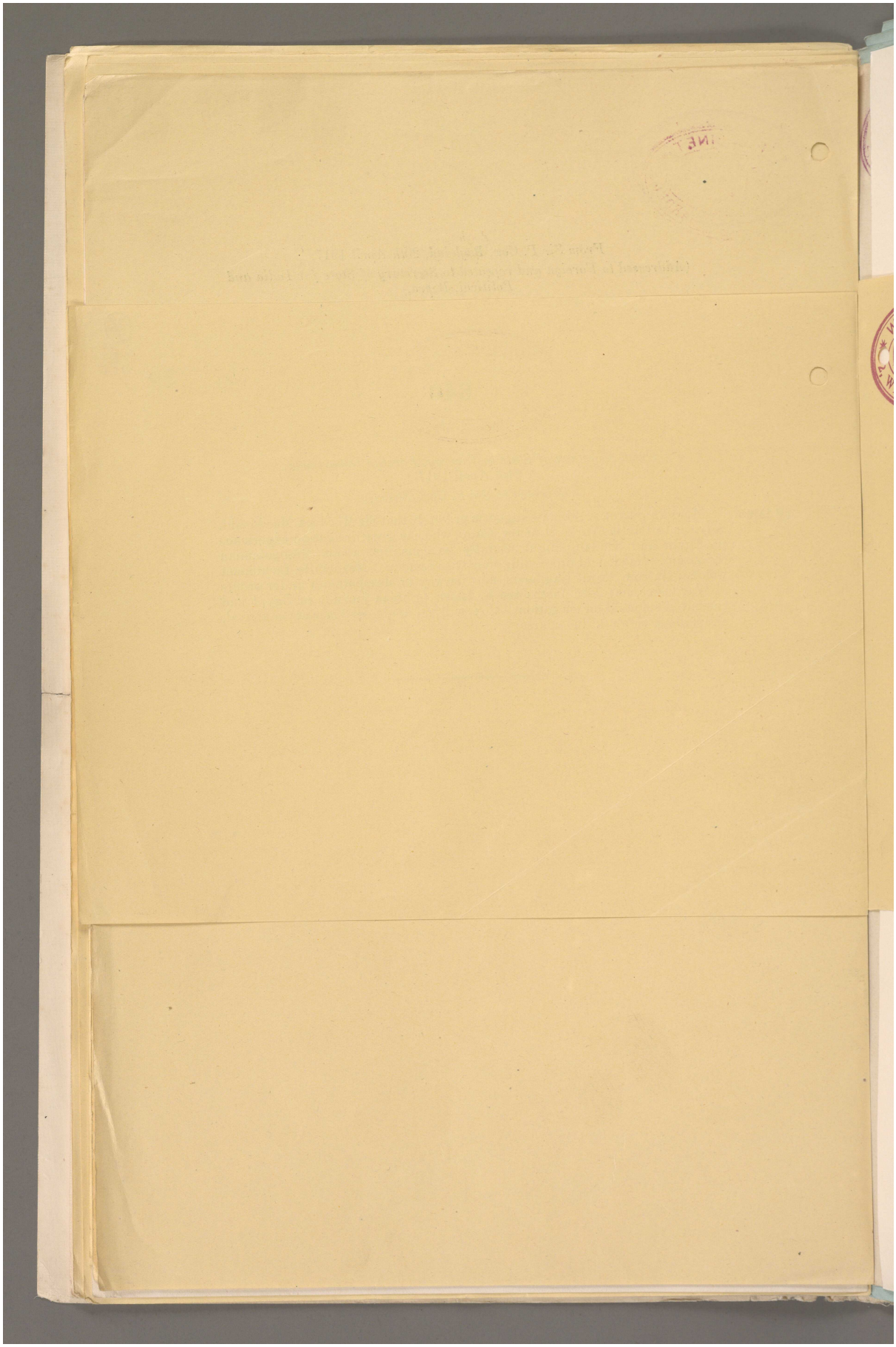
From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department,
24th April 1917.

(Repeated to Sir P. Cox, Basra.)

[P 1510] Foreign Secret. Wingate suggests privately that Sir Murdock Macdonald, Adviser to Public Works Ministry, Cairo, who has great irrigation experience in Egypt and Soudan, might usefully be consulted about Mesopotamian irrigation. Macdonald proceeding shortly to London. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Garrow, Royal Engineers, now on way to Mesopotamia under orders of War Office, has been instructed by latter to break journey in Egypt and consult Macdonald on irrigation. Cox will no doubt see Garrow on arrival, and submit views in due course.



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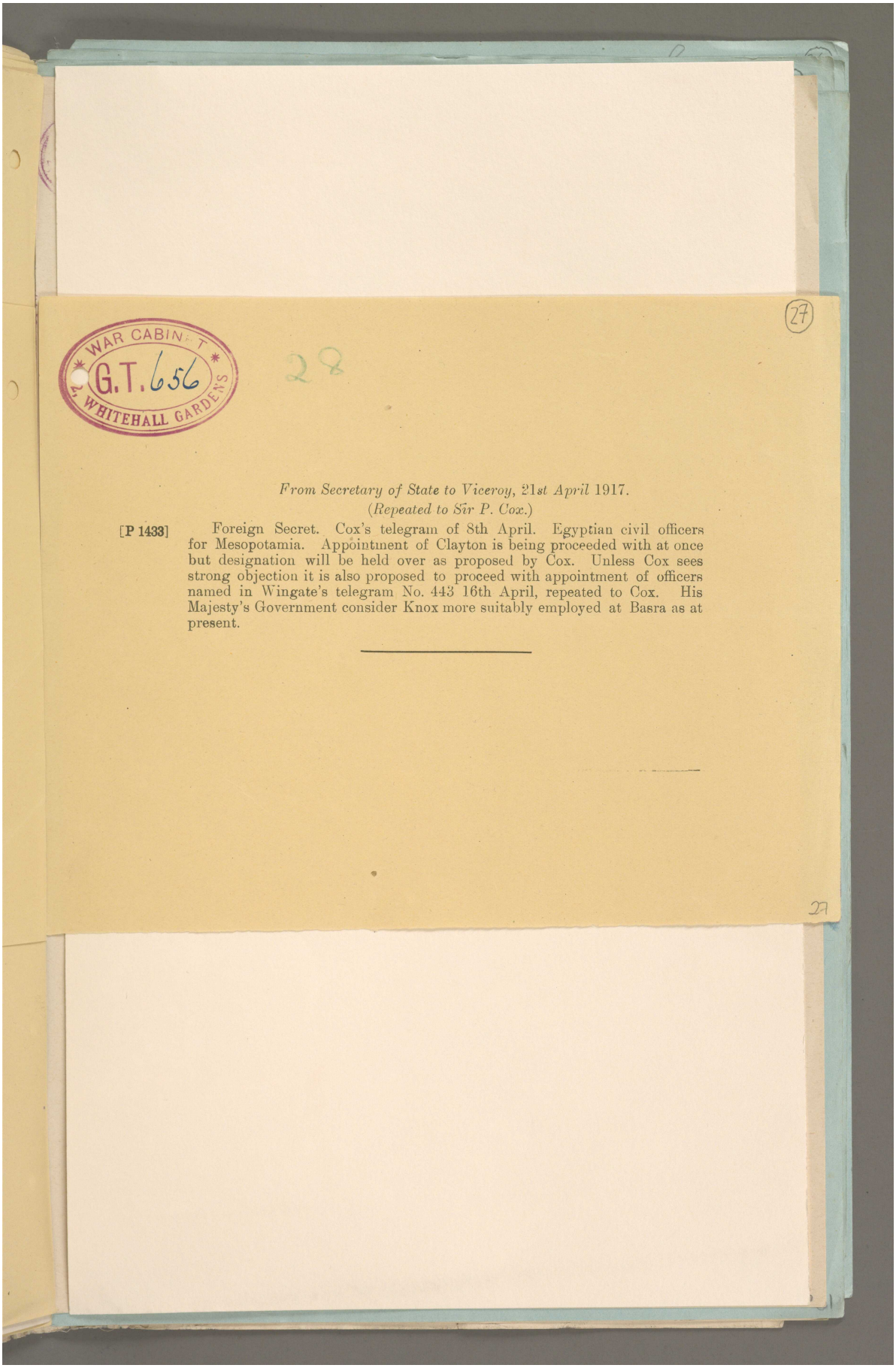

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, 21st April 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox.)

[P 1433] Foreign Secret. Cox's telegram of 8th April. Egyptian civil officers for Mesopotamia. Appointment of Clayton is being proceeded with at once but designation will be held over as proposed by Cox. Unless Cox sees strong objection it is also proposed to proceed with appointment of officers named in Wingate's telegram No. 443 16th April, repeated to Cox. His Majesty's Government consider Knox more suitably employed at Basra as at present.

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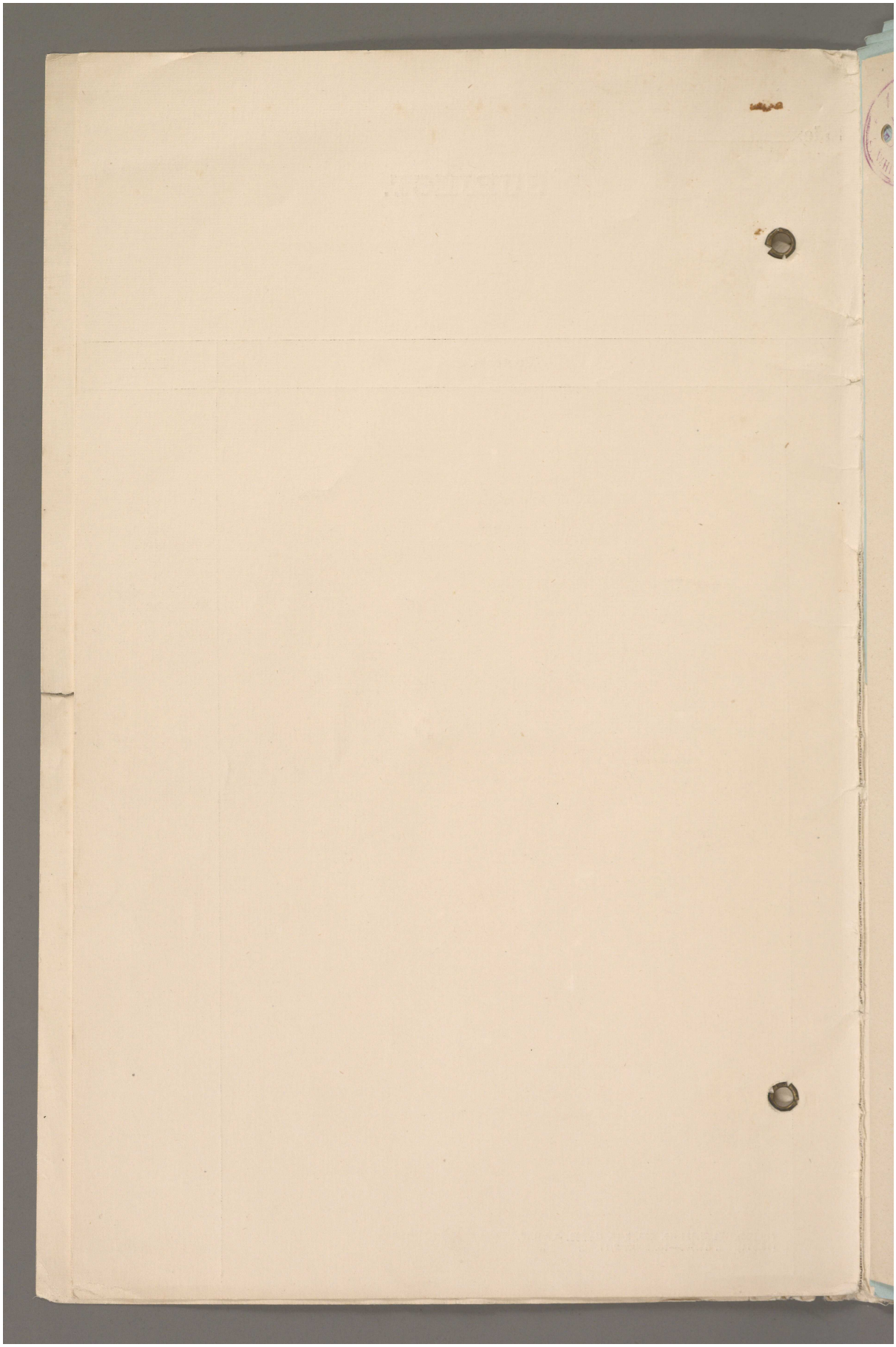

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WHITEHALL GARDENS

(28)

12

Mesopotamia Administration Committee.

For convenience of reference abstracts of (1) the proposals of the War Cabinet Committee; (2) the comments of Sir Percy Cox; and (3) those of the Government of India are printed below in parallel columns.

(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
1. Occupied territories to be administered not by Government of India, but by His Majesty's Government.	1. No comment.	1. Readily accept decision; but India's share in the conquest of these territories, in which her interests, commercial, political, and religious, are already large, must be recognised. Any restriction of free Indian immigration into Irak would cause bitter and legitimate resentment. Provision of a definite field for expansion elsewhere, preferably in East Africa, would tend to satisfy India and check undue flow into Irak; but in any case, in view of Indian pilgrimage and trade interests, desirable to post an officer of Government of India to Basra and perhaps Bagdad to advise local administration on such questions.
2. Basra to remain permanently under British administration: western and northern limits to be Nasiriyeh, Shatt-el-Hai, Kut, Bedrai.	2. Agrees.	2. No remarks.
3. Bagdad to be an Arab state with local ruler or Government under British Protectorate in everything but name. No relations with Foreign Powers; Consuls to be accredited to His Majesty's Government.	3. Ruler not feasible as no outstanding personality to fill part. Proposes an Administrative Council presided over by High Commissioner, either one for each vilayat or a combined one for both vilayats. Combined Council would bring into true perspective divergent interests of each vilayat, and would have unquestionable right to regulate, in accordance with needs of whole country, such questions as Indian immigration and cognate matters.	3. Entirely agree with Sir P. Cox that precise constitution of Arab State at Bagdad under British Protectorate cannot be decided at once. Experience of puppet rulers in India and Afghanistan not encouraging. Endorse Sir P. Cox's suggestion (under head 13) as to appointment of a Commission to examine whole problem on the spot.
4. Behind Arab façade Bagdad to be administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular:—	4.	4.
(*a*) Irak Code not to be used but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk;	(*a*) Agrees that territory should be administered in accordance with existing laws and institutions, and convinced of great advantage of having uniform codes for Basra and Bagdad and other Arab provinces under foreign rule or protection. No essential reason why systems established in both vilayats should not be assimilated. Turkish judicial system included final reference to Constantinople, for which substitute must be found by creation of High Court of Mesopotamia with final appeal	(*a*) No remarks.

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(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	to Privy Council. Civil and criminal codes and land laws require considerable amendment and adjustment of wording to make them interpretable. As regards personnel, sufficient indigenous material not available at present, but can gradually be created.	
(*b*) Similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provincial and local councils, &c., to be resuscitated and maintained;	(*b*) Tribal system of government already adopted where suitable; no objection to provincial and local councils.	(*b*) No remarks.
(*c*) Present land revenue system not to be disturbed;	(*c*) Agrees in principle.	(*c*) No remarks.
(*d*) Employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with above principles, and no Asiatics from outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Basra vilayat.	(*d*) Agrees; but for duration of war must have some latitude, especially in regard to clerical establishments. Urgent requirements of Expeditionary Force and military administration must be met by most expeditious means possible.	(*d*) In practice impossible probably for some time to dispense entirely with Indian Moslems in the administration. No wish to encourage introduction of Indian subordinates, but think it would be a grave mistake to debar them absolutely. Such a course would excite legitimate ill-feeling in India.
5. If Basra is not annexed, head of whole Mesopotamian administration to be High Commissioner residing at Bagdad, Basra being placed under a Governor subordinate to him. If Basra is annexed, head of administration to be styled Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia with titular headquarters at Basra, but residing generally at Bagdad. Deputy Governor and Deputy High Commissioner at Basra and Bagdad respectively to act for him in his absence.	5. Recognises that both vilayats cannot be annexed, and that importance of annexing Basra makes it necessary to put up with certain disadvantages at Bagdad. Is convinced, however, that two administrations should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. Difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature not felt on the spot. Two vilayats from every point of view inseparable, and could not be run on conflicting lines and inconsistent principles without great prejudice to all interests concerned.	5. No remarks.
6. British Civil Service to be amalgamated with that of Soudan and possibly also of Levant, recruitment being by same method and personnel interchangeable. British officers of Indian services, if required at first, to be lent temporarily under foreign service rules; those now serving there to be permitted to volunteer for permanent transfer.	6. No comment or objection.	6. No remarks.
7. Shiah holy places to form a separate enclave not under direct British control, but not to include any important irrigated or irrigable areas.	7. Nejef and Kerbela should not be treated as an enclave cut off from advantages of enlightened Government, which inhabitants expect and will demand. They should be organised as independent townships as regards municipal administration. Unable at present to form an opinion as to irrigation, river conservancy, navigation, posts, telegraphs and railways, which should come under united administration controlled by High Commissioner. Limits of townships would be existing limits of sacred territory round shrines.	7. Agree with Sir P. Cox's view.

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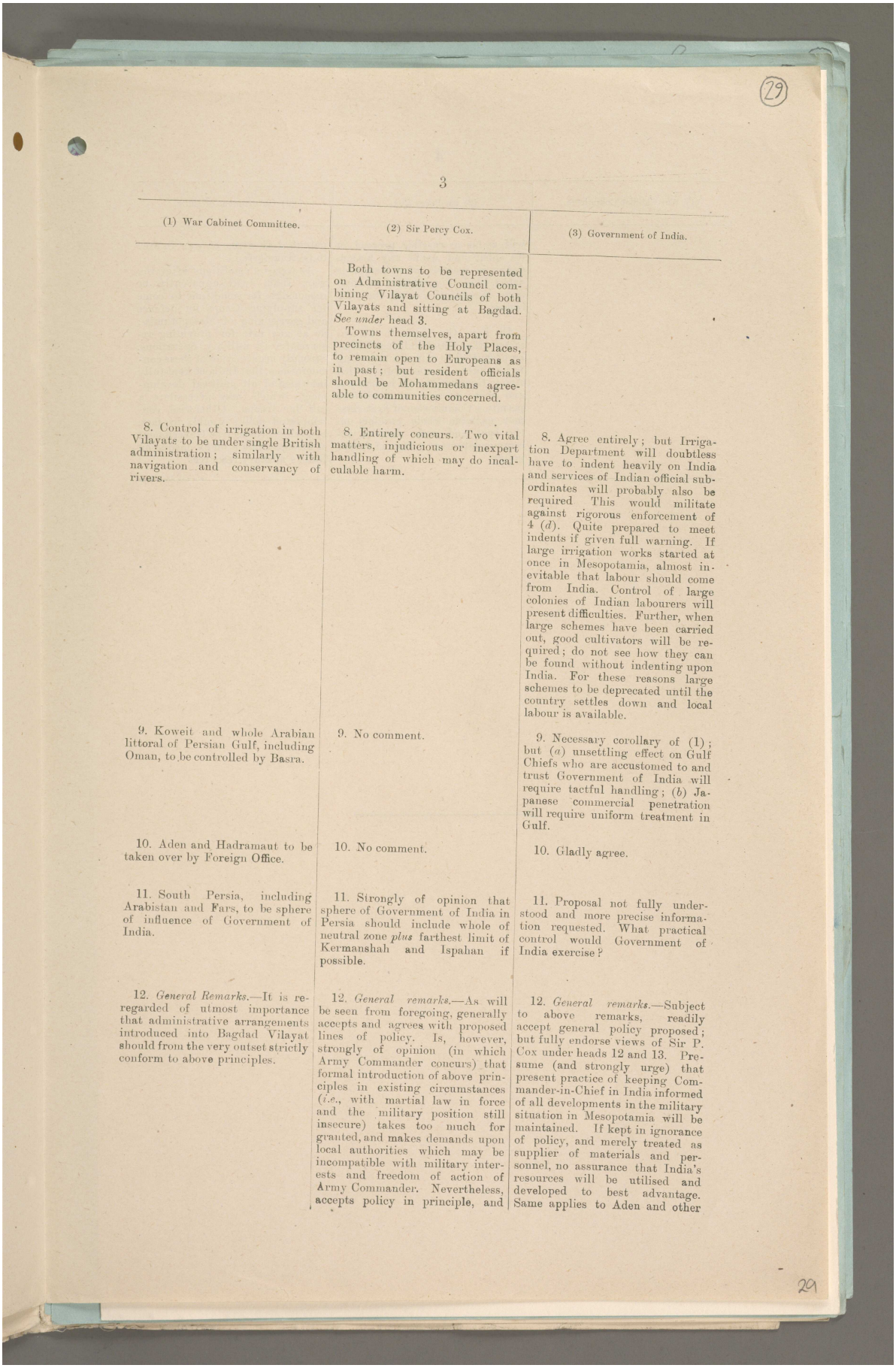

(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	Both towns to be represented on Administrative Council combining Vilayat Councils of both Vilayats and sitting at Bagdad. *See under* head 3. Towns themselves, apart from precincts of the Holy Places, to remain open to Europeans as in past; but resident officials should be Mohammedans agreeable to communities concerned.	
8. Control of irrigation in both Vilayats to be under single British administration; similarly with navigation and conservancy of rivers.	8. Entirely concurs. Two vital matters, injudicious or inexpert handling of which may do incalculable harm.	8. Agree entirely; but Irrigation Department will doubtless have to indent heavily on India and services of Indian official subordinates will probably also be required This would militate against rigorous enforcement of 4 (*d*). Quite prepared to meet indents if given full warning. If large irrigation works started at once in Mesopotamia, almost inevitable that labour should come from India. Control of large colonies of Indian labourers will present difficulties. Further, when large schemes have been carried out, good cultivators will be required; do not see how they can be found without indenting upon India. For these reasons large schemes to be deprecated until the country settles down and local labour is available.
9. Koweit and whole Arabian littoral of Persian Gulf, including Oman, to be controlled by Basra.	9. No comment.	9. Necessary corollary of (1); but (*a*) unsettling effect on Gulf Chiefs who are accustomed to and trust Government of India will require tactful handling; (*b*) Japanese commercial penetration will require uniform treatment in Gulf.
10. Aden and Hadramaut to be taken over by Foreign Office.	10. No comment.	10. Gladly agree.
11. South Persia, including Arabistan and Fars, to be sphere of influence of Government of India.	11. Strongly of opinion that sphere of Government of India in Persia should include whole of neutral zone *plus* farthest limit of Kermanshah and Ispahan if possible.	11. Proposal not fully understood and more precise information requested. What practical control would Government of India exercise?
12. *General Remarks.*—It is regarded of utmost importance that administrative arrangements introduced into Bagdad Vilayat should from the very outset strictly conform to above principles.	12. *General remarks.*—As will be seen from foregoing, generally accepts and agrees with proposed lines of policy. Is, however, strongly of opinion (in which Army Commander concurs) that formal introduction of above principles in existing circumstances (*i.e.*, with martial law in force and the military position still insecure) takes too much for granted, and makes demands upon local authorities which may be incompatible with military interests and freedom of action of Army Commander. Nevertheless, accepts policy in principle, and	12. *General remarks.*—Subject to above remarks, readily accept general policy proposed; but fully endorse views of Sir P. Cox under heads 12 and 13. Presume (and strongly urge) that present practice of keeping Commander-in-Chief in India informed of all developments in the military situation in Mesopotamia will be maintained. If kept in ignorance of policy, and merely treated as supplier of materials and personnel, no assurance that India's resources will be utilised and developed to best advantage. Same applies to Aden and other

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(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	will, as far as possible, proceed in its spirit and avoid any action, either in matters of principle or detail, likely to prejudice its complete inauguration when the time comes. 13. For the present recommends that Chief Political Officer be permitted to carry on according to his lights in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, and that, as soon as conditions permit, a Commission of first-class men examine whole problem on the spot, and make detailed recommendations as a basis of future policy.	potential theatres of war in area to be transferred. As regards conditions after the war, India will apparently be responsible for some time to come for supplying troops for defence and garrisoning of Mesopotamia; or at any rate for providing reserves for all military operations. Strongly urge, in view of these considerations, that India be kept fully informed of all political developments which may necessitate a call for troops. Otherwise, contemplated policy would, in fact, be giving prospective Government of Mesopotamia a blank cheque on India's military resources.

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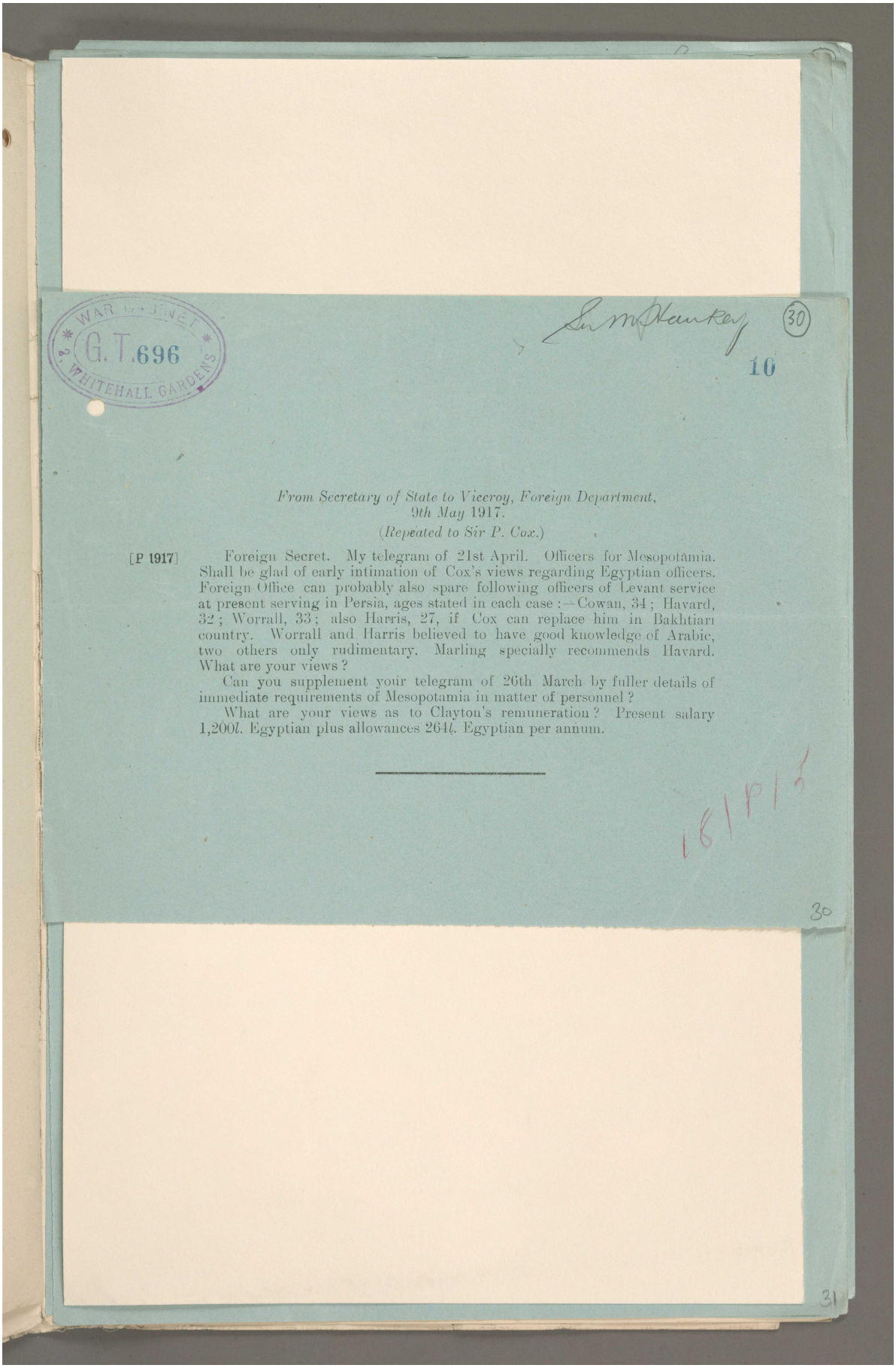

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department,
9th May 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox.)

[P 1917] Foreign Secret. My telegram of 21st April. Officers for Mesopotamia. Shall be glad of early intimation of Cox's views regarding Egyptian officers. Foreign Office can probably also spare following officers of Levant service at present serving in Persia, ages stated in each case :—Cowan, 34; Havard, 32; Worrall, 33; also Harris, 27, if Cox can replace him in Bakhtiari country. Worrall and Harris believed to have good knowledge of Arabic, two others only rudimentary. Marling specially recommends Havard. What are your views?

Can you supplement your telegram of 26th March by fuller details of immediate requirements of Mesopotamia in matter of personnel?

What are your views as to Clayton's remuneration? Present salary 1,200*l.* Egyptian plus allowances 264*l.* Egyptian per annum.

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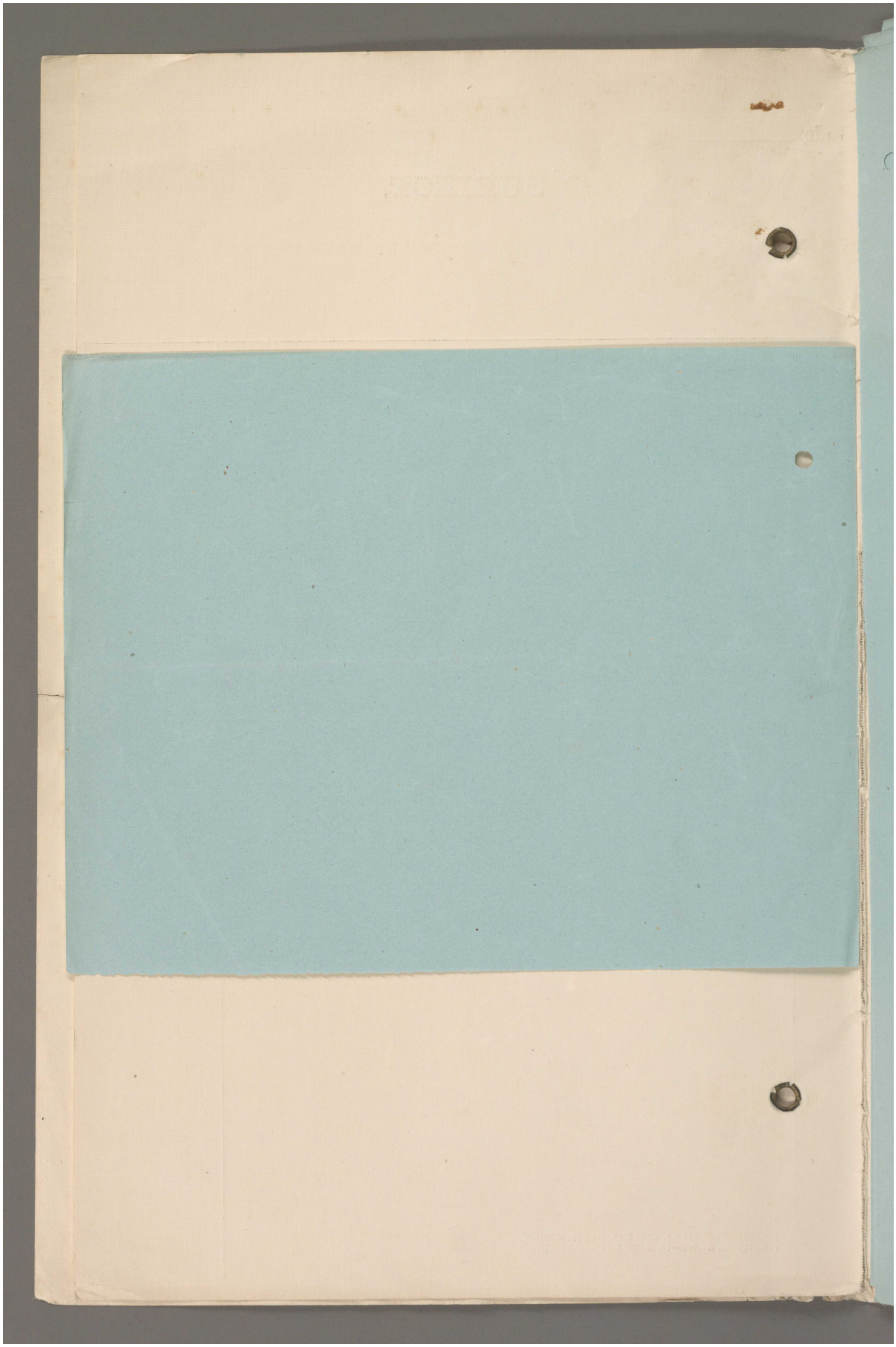

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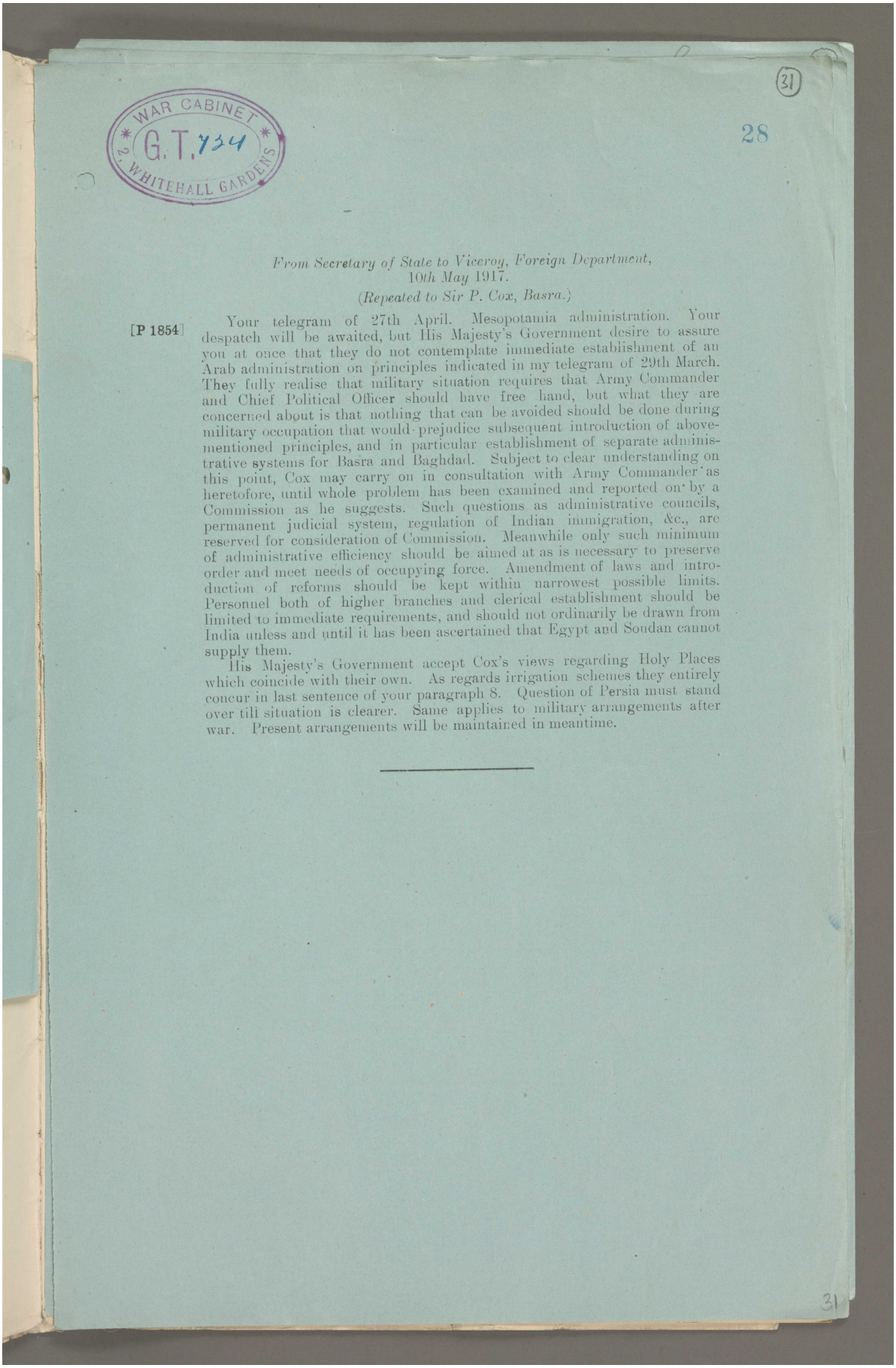

(31)

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From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department,
10th May 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox, Basra.)

[P 1854] Your telegram of 27th April. Mesopotamia administration. Your despatch will be awaited, but His Majesty's Government desire to assure you at once that they do not contemplate immediate establishment of an Arab administration on principles indicated in my telegram of 29th March. They fully realise that military situation requires that Army Commander and Chief Political Officer should have free hand, but what they are concerned about is that nothing that can be avoided should be done during military occupation that would prejudice subsequent introduction of above-mentioned principles, and in particular establishment of separate administrative systems for Basra and Baghdad. Subject to clear understanding on this point, Cox may carry on in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, until whole problem has been examined and reported on by a Commission as he suggests. Such questions as administrative councils, permanent judicial system, regulation of Indian immigration, &c., are reserved for consideration of Commission. Meanwhile only such minimum of administrative efficiency should be aimed at as is necessary to preserve order and meet needs of occupying force. Amendment of laws and introduction of reforms should be kept within narrowest possible limits. Personnel both of higher branches and clerical establishment should be limited to immediate requirements, and should not ordinarily be drawn from India unless and until it has been ascertained that Egypt and Soudan cannot supply them.

His Majesty's Government accept Cox's views regarding Holy Places which coincide with their own. As regards irrigation schemes they entirely concur in last sentence of your paragraph 8. Question of Persia must stand over till situation is clearer. Same applies to military arrangements after war. Present arrangements will be maintained in meantime.

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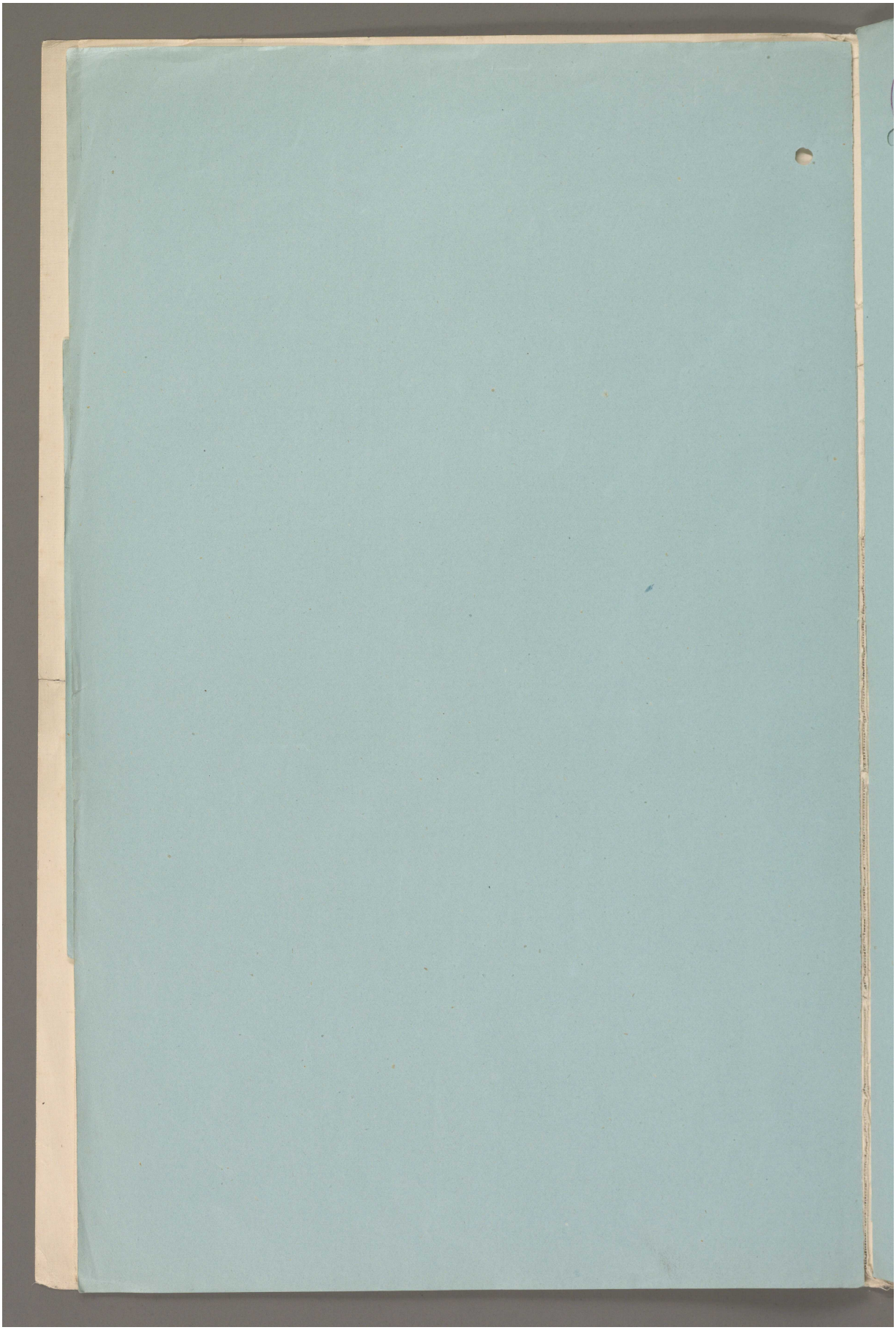

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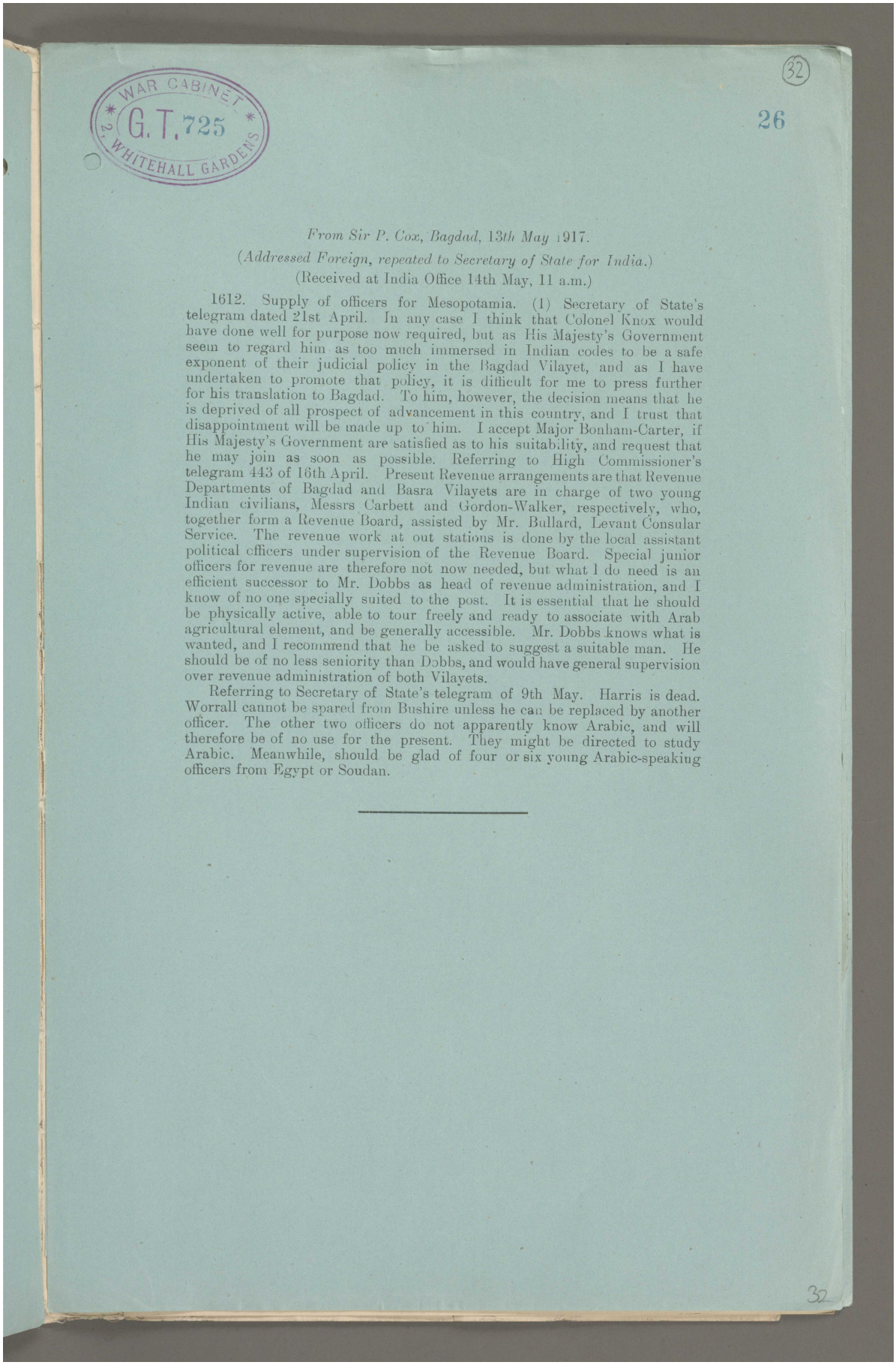

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26

From Sir P. Cox, Bagdad, 13th May 1917.

(Addressed Foreign, repeated to Secretary of State for India.)

(Received at India Office 14th May, 11 a.m.)

1612. Supply of officers for Mesopotamia. (1) Secretary of State's telegram dated 21st April. In any case I think that Colonel Knox would have done well for purpose now required, but as His Majesty's Government seem to regard him as too much immersed in Indian codes to be a safe exponent of their judicial policy in the Bagdad Vilayet, and as I have undertaken to promote that policy, it is difficult for me to press further for his translation to Bagdad. To him, however, the decision means that he is deprived of all prospect of advancement in this country, and I trust that disappointment will be made up to him. I accept Major Bonham-Carter, if His Majesty's Government are satisfied as to his suitability, and request that he may join as soon as possible. Referring to High Commissioner's telegram 443 of 16th April. Present Revenue arrangements are that Revenue Departments of Bagdad and Basra Vilayets are in charge of two young Indian civilians, Messrs Carbett and Gordon-Walker, respectively, who, together form a Revenue Board, assisted by Mr. Bullard, Levant Consular Service. The revenue work at out stations is done by the local assistant political officers under supervision of the Revenue Board. Special junior officers for revenue are therefore not now needed, but what I do need is an efficient successor to Mr. Dobbs as head of revenue administration, and I know of no one specially suited to the post. It is essential that he should be physically active, able to tour freely and ready to associate with Arab agricultural element, and be generally accessible. Mr. Dobbs knows what is wanted, and I recommend that he be asked to suggest a suitable man. He should be of no less seniority than Dobbs, and would have general supervision over revenue administration of both Vilayets.

Referring to Secretary of State's telegram of 9th May. Harris is dead. Worrall cannot be spared from Bushire unless he can be replaced by another officer. The other two officers do not apparently know Arabic, and will therefore be of no use for the present. They might be directed to study Arabic. Meanwhile, should be glad of four or six young Arabic-speaking officers from Egypt or Soudan.

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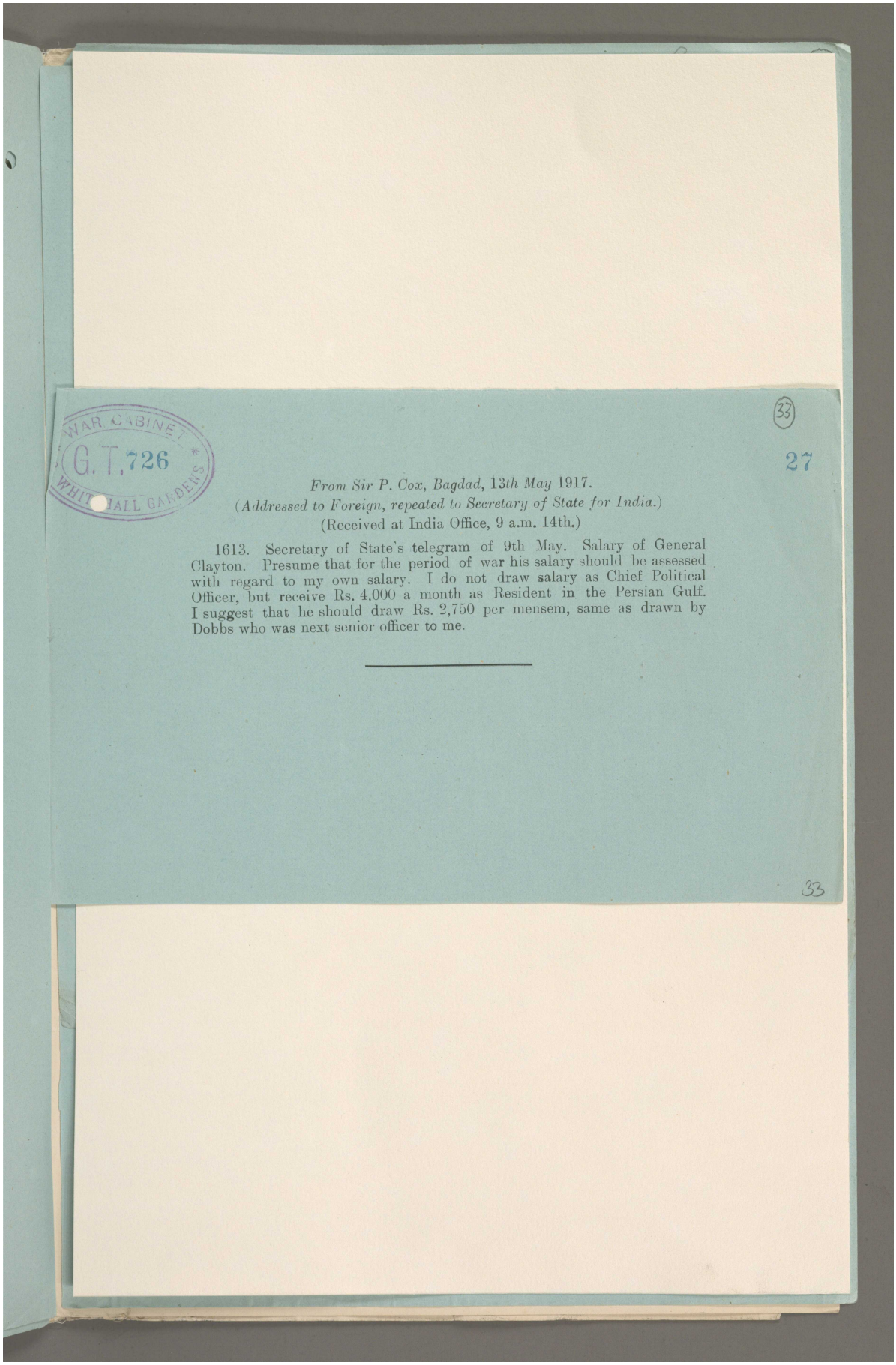

From Sir P. Cox, Bagdad, 13th May 1917.
(Addressed to Foreign, repeated to Secretary of State for India.)
(Received at India Office, 9 a.m. 14th.)

1613. Secretary of State's telegram of 9th May. Salary of General Clayton. Presume that for the period of war his salary should be assessed with regard to my own salary. I do not draw salary as Chief Political Officer, but receive Rs. 4,000 a month as Resident in the Persian Gulf. I suggest that he should draw Rs. 2,750 per mensem, same as drawn by Dobbs who was next senior officer to me.

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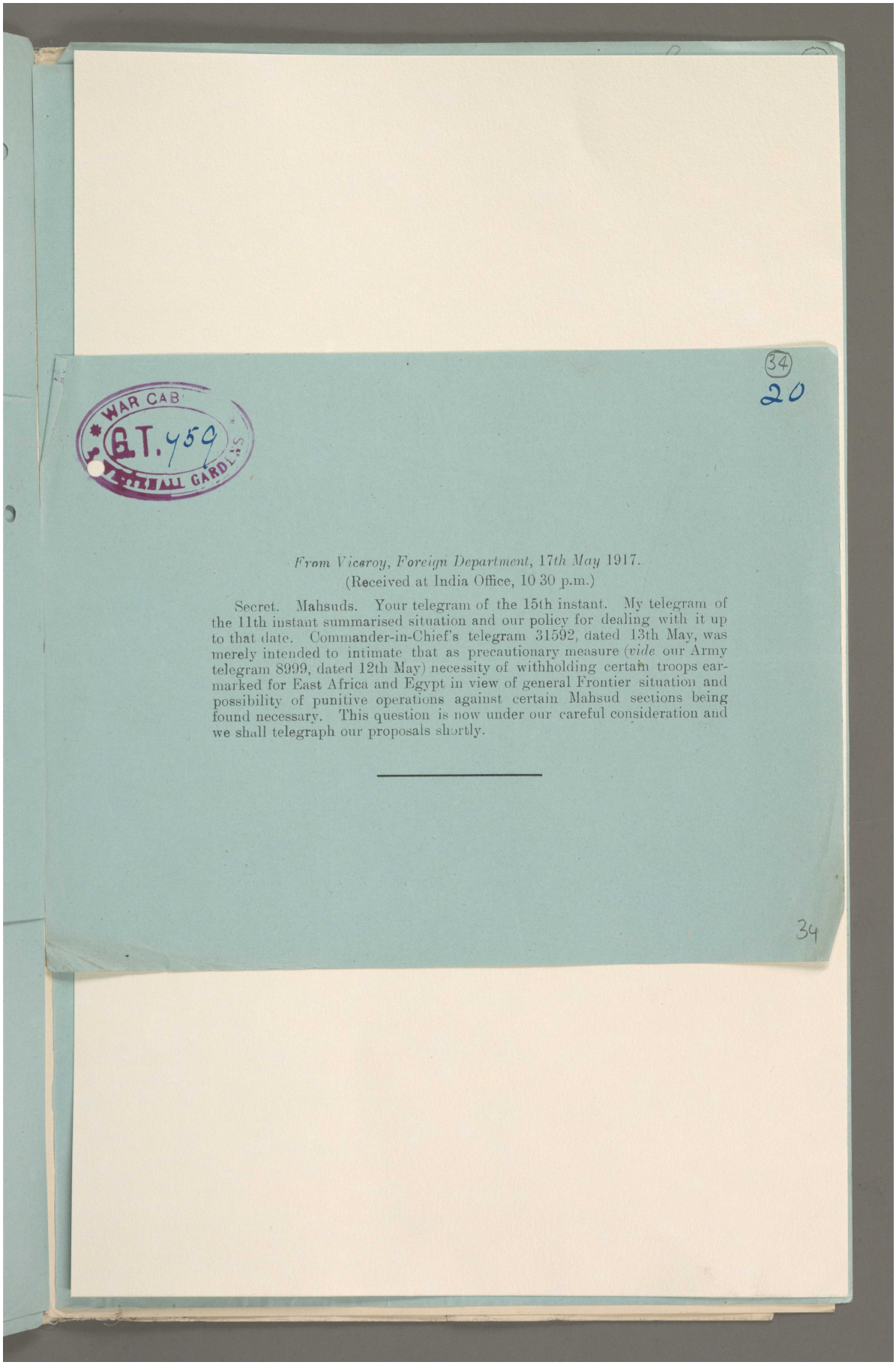

From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 17th May 1917.
(Received at India Office, 10 30 p.m.)

Secret. Mahsuds. Your telegram of the 15th instant. My telegram of the 11th instant summarised situation and our policy for dealing with it up to that date. Commander-in-Chief's telegram 31592, dated 13th May, was merely intended to intimate that as precautionary measure (*vide* our Army telegram 8999, dated 12th May) necessity of withholding certain troops ear-marked for East Africa and Egypt in view of general Frontier situation and possibility of punitive operations against certain Mahsud sections being found necessary. This question is now under our careful consideration and we shall telegraph our proposals shortly.

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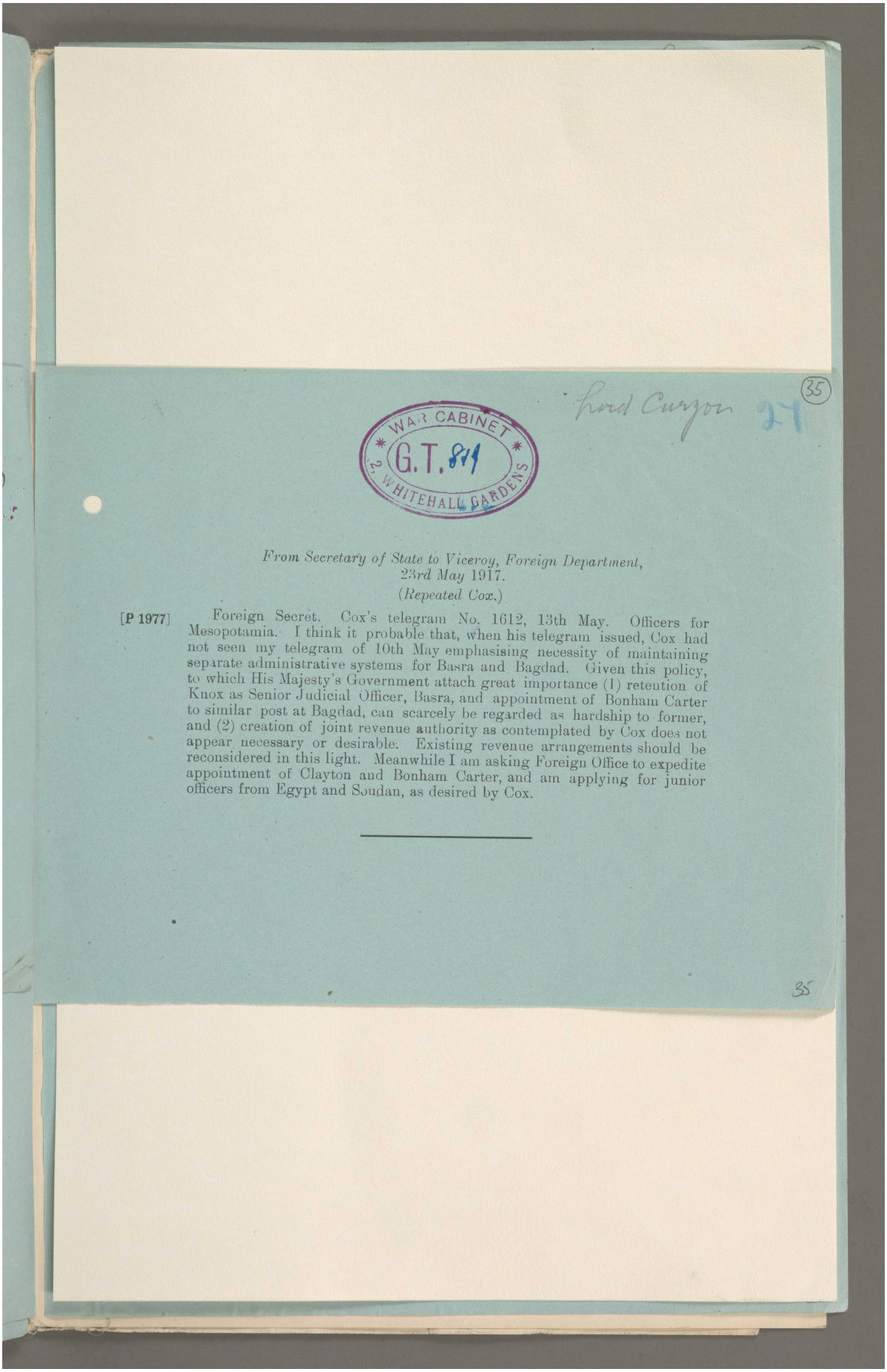

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department,
23rd May 1917.
(Repeated Cox.)

[P 1977] Foreign Secret. Cox's telegram No. 1612, 13th May. Officers for Mesopotamia. I think it probable that, when his telegram issued, Cox had not seen my telegram of 10th May emphasising necessity of maintaining separate administrative systems for Basra and Bagdad. Given this policy, to which His Majesty's Government attach great importance (1) retention of Knox as Senior Judicial Officer, Basra, and appointment of Bonham Carter to similar post at Bagdad, can scarcely be regarded as hardship to former, and (2) creation of joint revenue authority as contemplated by Cox does not appear necessary or desirable. Existing revenue arrangements should be reconsidered in this light. Meanwhile I am asking Foreign Office to expedite appointment of Clayton and Bonham Carter, and am applying for junior officers from Egypt and Soudan, as desired by Cox.

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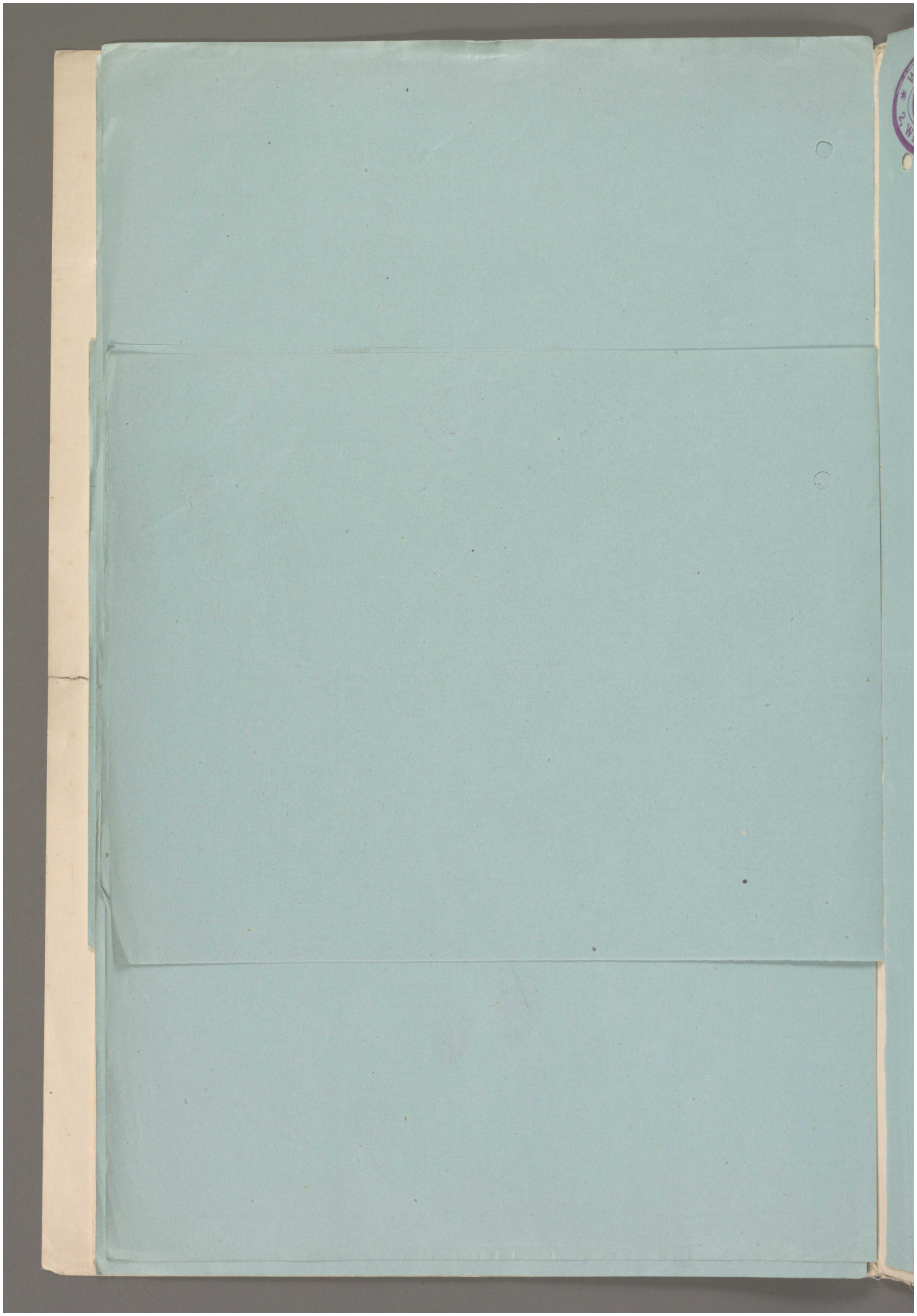

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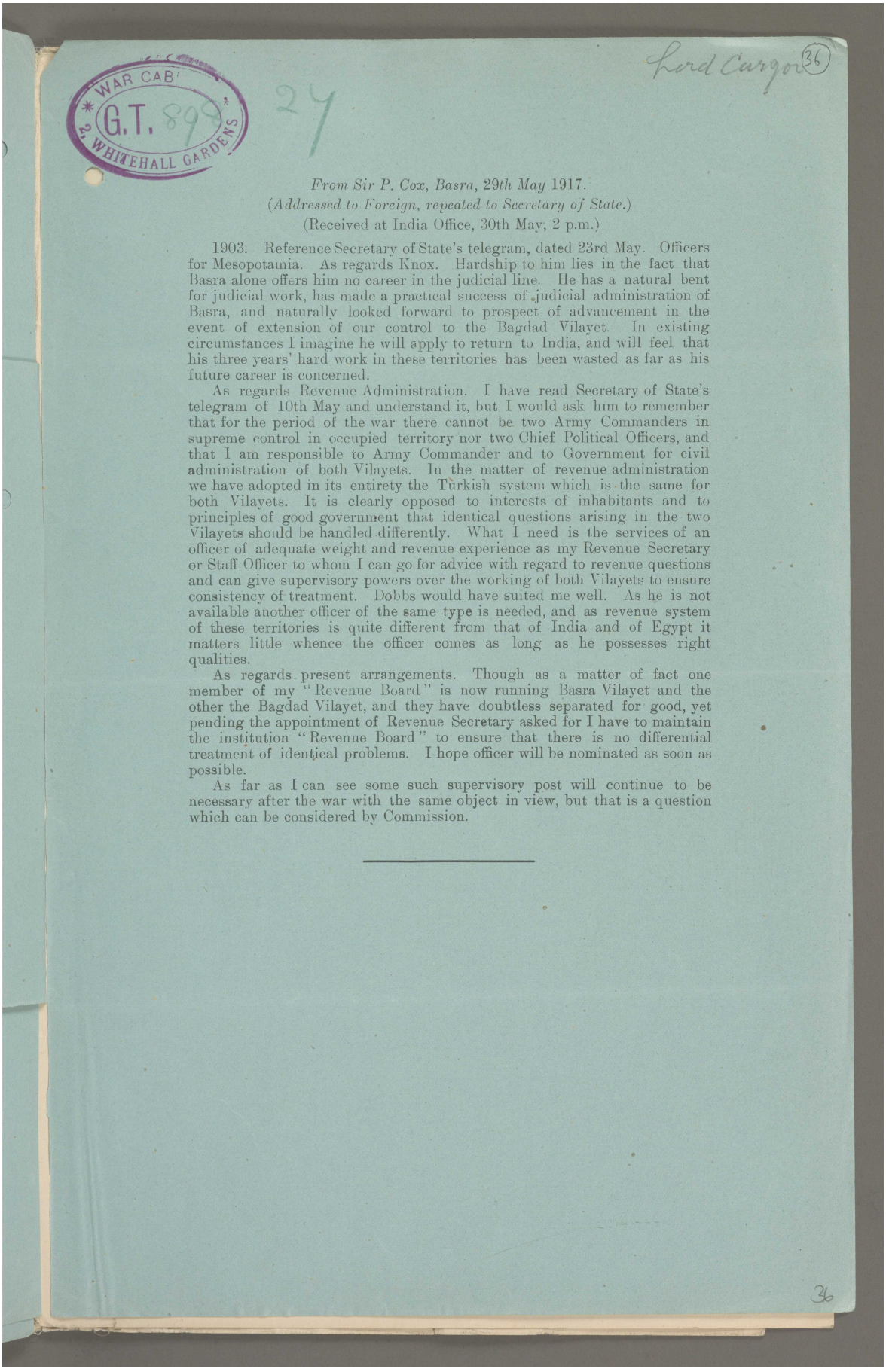

From Sir P. Cox, Basra, 29th May 1917.
(Addressed to Foreign, repeated to Secretary of State.)
(Received at India Office, 30th May, 2 p.m.)

1903. Reference Secretary of State's telegram, dated 23rd May. Officers for Mesopotamia. As regards Knox. Hardship to him lies in the fact that Basra alone offers him no career in the judicial line. He has a natural bent for judicial work, has made a practical success of judicial administration of Basra, and naturally looked forward to prospect of advancement in the event of extension of our control to the Bagdad Vilayet. In existing circumstances I imagine he will apply to return to India, and will feel that his three years' hard work in these territories has been wasted as far as his future career is concerned.

As regards Revenue Administration. I have read Secretary of State's telegram of 10th May and understand it, but I would ask him to remember that for the period of the war there cannot be two Army Commanders in supreme control in occupied territory nor two Chief Political Officers, and that I am responsible to Army Commander and to Government for civil administration of both Vilayets. In the matter of revenue administration we have adopted in its entirety the Turkish system which is the same for both Vilayets. It is clearly opposed to interests of inhabitants and to principles of good government that identical questions arising in the two Vilayets should be handled differently. What I need is the services of an officer of adequate weight and revenue experience as my Revenue Secretary or Staff Officer to whom I can go for advice with regard to revenue questions and can give supervisory powers over the working of both Vilayets to ensure consistency of treatment. Dobbs would have suited me well. As he is not available another officer of the same type is needed, and as revenue system of these territories is quite different from that of India and of Egypt it matters little whence the officer comes as long as he possesses right qualities.

As regards present arrangements. Though as a matter of fact one member of my "Revenue Board" is now running Basra Vilayet and the other the Bagdad Vilayet, and they have doubtless separated for good, yet pending the appointment of Revenue Secretary asked for I have to maintain the institution "Revenue Board" to ensure that there is no differential treatment of identical problems. I hope officer will be nominated as soon as possible.

As far as I can see some such supervisory post will continue to be necessary after the war with the same object in view, but that is a question which can be considered by Commission.

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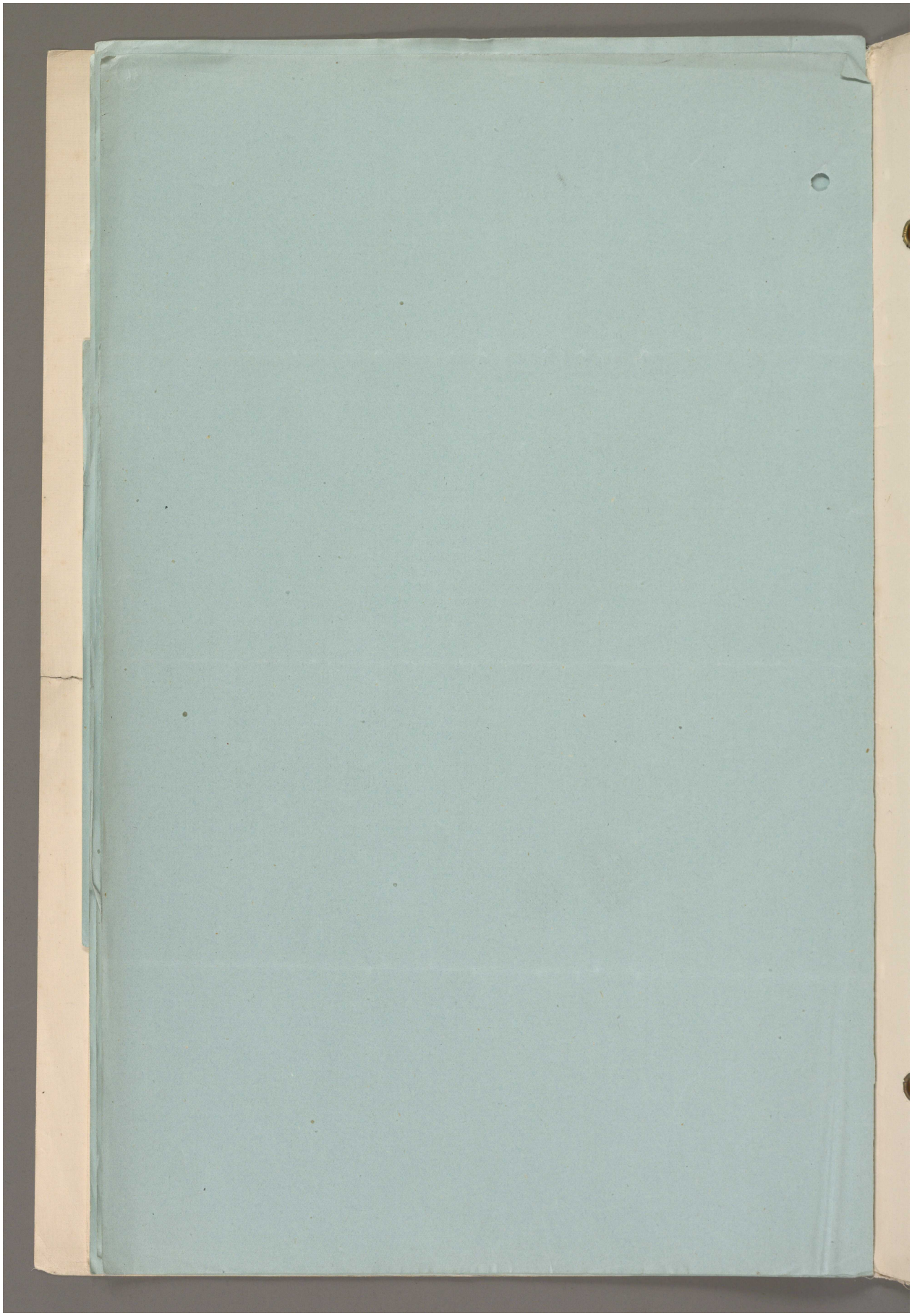

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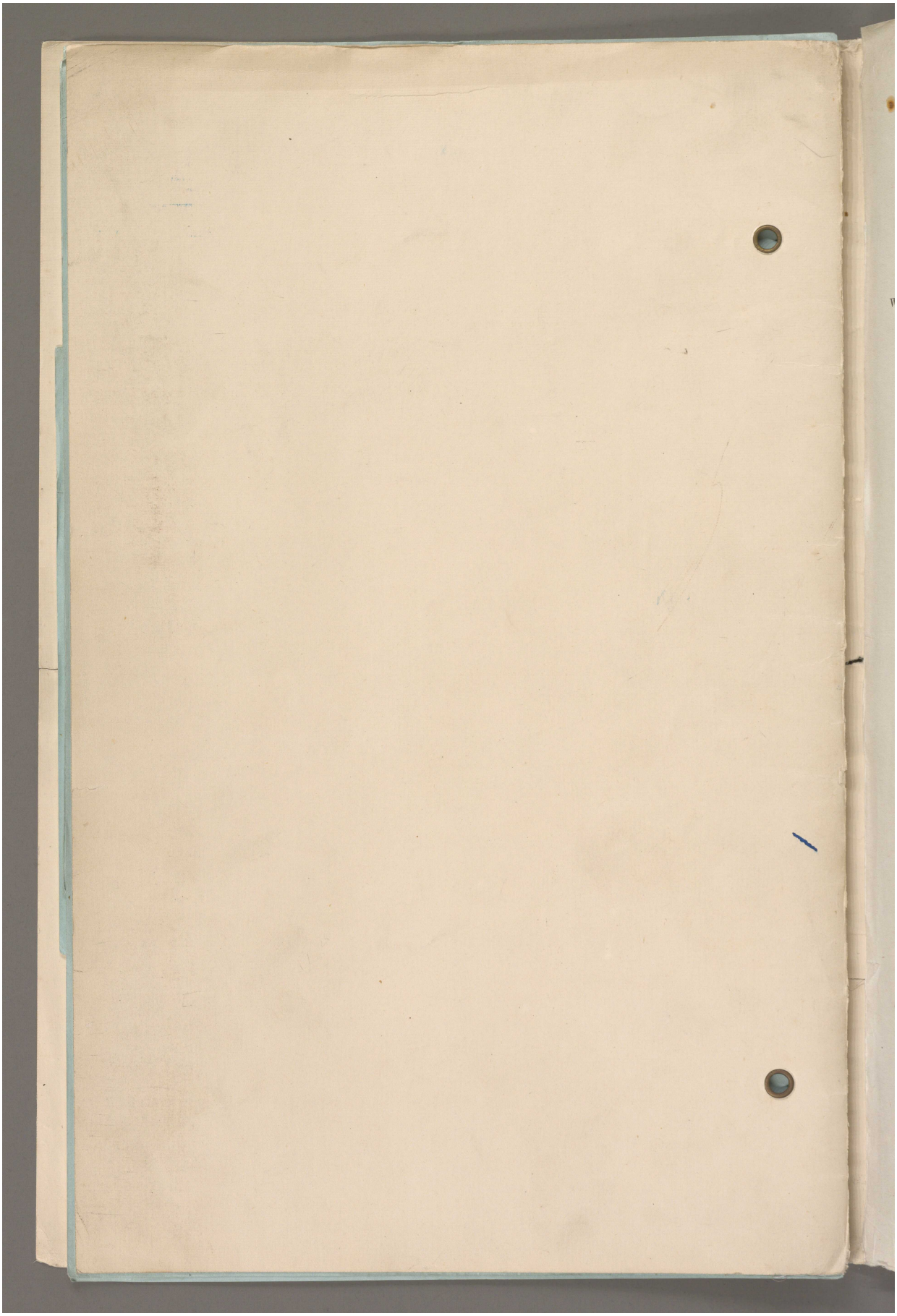

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LORD CURZON.

SECRET.

12

01/45/149

SITUATION IN MESOPOTAMIA.

W.C. 68.

1. I regret having again to trouble the War Committee with the question of Mesopotamia, but before complying with their directions of the 18th instant to obtain from General Monro his opinion regarding the advisability, or otherwise, of modifying the present dispositions of the Mesopotamia Force, I desire to make quite sure that I correctly understand the policy of His Majesty's Government—in other words, I desire to know, exactly, what the mission of the Mesopotamia Force is. I feel considerable doubt in the matter because I am unable to find that any instructions clearly defining the mission of the force, such as were given to Sir John French in August, 1914, and later to Generals Haig, Murray, Milne and Smuts, have ever been issued. General Haig has been instructed by the Secretary of State for War, representing His Majesty's Government, to co-operate with the French in expelling the enemy from France and Belgium; General Smuts to conquer German South-East Africa; General Murray to defend Egypt, and General Milne to co-operate with General Sarrail in holding the Bulgarians on the Greek frontier. These instructions are open to no misunderstanding and the Generals know exactly what they are expected to do. Similar instructions are needed for the guidance of Generals Monro and Maude, and at the present time they do not exist.

2. On the 30th April last, after the fall of Kut, the following instructions were sent to the Commander-in-Chief, India, for the guidance of Sir Percy Lake, with the approval of the War Committee :—

"At present our policy in Mesopotamia is defensive, and we do not attach any importance to the possession of Kut or to the occupation of Baghdad. It is, of course, impracticable to prescribe policy for a long time ahead. Lake would probably be directed to fall back to Amara, or even to Kurna, if no other considerations were involved, but it is important to minimize and counteract the effect of the fall of Kut and in order to assist the Russians to keep occupied the Turks now opposed to the Tigris Corps. For these reasons Lake should, for the present, maintain as forward a position as can be made secure tactically and be ready to take advantage of any weakening of the Turks on his front, so long as this can be effected without incurring heavy loss, whether caused by the enemy or by unhealthy conditions.

"It is undesirable and impossible to reinforce Lake owing to the conditions in other theatres of war, but he will be kept adequately supplied with drafts and munitions. His forces are superior to those of the enemy, according to our information, and he should therefore have no difficulty in carrying out the above policy until the Turks are strongly reinforced. In that event he should be given full discretion to fall back; at any rate he must be clearly shown that the security of his force is of primary importance, and that neither now nor at any time is he required to maintain a more forward position than he thinks he can hold with reasonable safety."

3. These instructions were only intended to be tentative. The troops are now becoming more efficient; the communications are being gradually improved; a new Commander has just been appointed in Mesopotamia and a new Commander-in-Chief in India. The present is, therefore, an appropriate opportunity for definitely laying down in general but clear terms what the mission of the Mesopotamia Force is. The Commander-in-Chief in India and the General Officer Commanding in Mesopotamia will then be able to consider and state how they propose to carry out their mission. As

O. 1/41/138.

stated in my Memorandum of the 16th instant, the original object of the Expedition, so far as I have been able to ascertain, was the protection of the oil-fields and pipe-lines in the vicinity of the Karun River and the maintenance of our hold on the territories and populations at the head of the Persian Gulf, thus denying hostile access to the Gulf and Southern Persia. This defensive policy was, however, departed from when the Force was ordered to proceed higher up the Tigris and eventually to occupy Baghdad, and instead of being defensive the policy became offensive and one of territorial conquest. Later still, after the fall of Kut, we again reverted to a defensive policy, as shown in paragraph 2.

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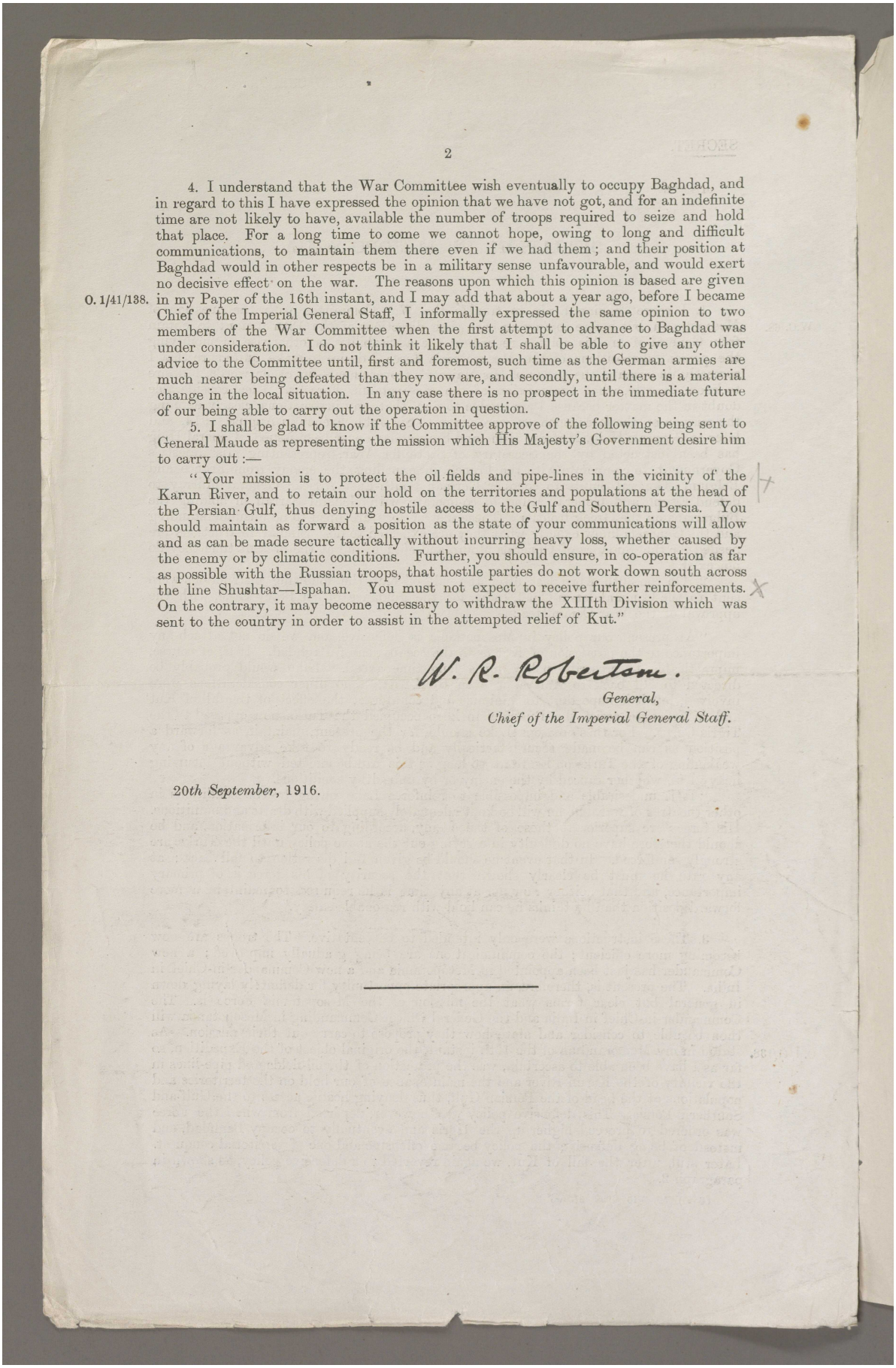

4. I understand that the War Committee wish eventually to occupy Baghdad, and in regard to this I have expressed the opinion that we have not got, and for an indefinite time are not likely to have, available the number of troops required to seize and hold that place. For a long time to come we cannot hope, owing to long and difficult communications, to maintain them there even if we had them; and their position at Baghdad would in other respects be in a military sense unfavourable, and would exert no decisive effect on the war. The reasons upon which this opinion is based are given
O. 1/41/138. in my Paper of the 16th instant, and I may add that about a year ago, before I became Chief of the Imperial General Staff, I informally expressed the same opinion to two members of the War Committee when the first attempt to advance to Baghdad was under consideration. I do not think it likely that I shall be able to give any other advice to the Committee until, first and foremost, such time as the German armies are much nearer being defeated than they now are, and secondly, until there is a material change in the local situation. In any case there is no prospect in the immediate future of our being able to carry out the operation in question.

5. I shall be glad to know if the Committee approve of the following being sent to General Maude as representing the mission which His Majesty's Government desire him to carry out :—

"Your mission is to protect the oil fields and pipe-lines in the vicinity of the Karun River, and to retain our hold on the territories and populations at the head of the Persian Gulf, thus denying hostile access to the Gulf and Southern Persia. You should maintain as forward a position as the state of your communications will allow and as can be made secure tactically without incurring heavy loss, whether caused by the enemy or by climatic conditions. Further, you should ensure, in co-operation as far as possible with the Russian troops, that hostile parties do not work down south across the line Shushtar—Ispahan. You must not expect to receive further reinforcements. On the contrary, it may become necessary to withdraw the XIIIth Division which was sent to the country in order to assist in the attempted relief of Kut."

W. R. Robertson.

General,
Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

20th September, 1916.

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(39)

MR. MONTAGU.

4

SECRET.

O. 1/33/115

PRESENT MILITARY SITUATION IN MESOPOTAMIA.

1. Affairs in Mesopotamia have been stationary for so long that the War Committee may wish to have a statement of the situation as it now is, more especially in view of the recent Turkish successes in north-west Persia against General Baratoff.

2. With regard to the objective of the earlier operations, I understand that General Nixon was authorized to advance to Kut for the purpose of securing control of both ends of the Shatt-el-Hai, and thereby making more safe the occupation of Nasiryeh, which it appeared essential to hold in pursuance of the policy of occupying and controlling effectively the vilayet of Busra. The successful occupation of Kut led to the abortive expedition to Baghdad and to the siege and fall of Kut.

3. On 30th April last, after the fall of Kut, the following instructions were sent to the Commander-in-Chief, India, for the guidance of Sir Percy Lake, with the approval of the War Committee :—

"At present our policy in Mesopotamia is defensive, and we do not attach any importance to the possession of Kut or to the occupation of Baghdad. It is, of course, impracticable to prescribe policy for a long time ahead. Lake would probably be directed to fall back to Amara, or even to Kurna, if no other considerations were involved, but it is important to minimize and counteract the effect of the fall of Kut and in order to assist the Russians to keep occupied the Turks now opposed to the Tigris Corps. For these reasons Lake should, for the present, maintain as forward a position as can be made secure tactically and be ready to take advantage of any weakening of the Turks on his front, so long as this can be effected without incurring heavy loss, whether caused by the enemy or by unhealthy conditions.

"It is undesirable and impossible to reinforce Lake owing to the conditions in other theatres of war, but he will be kept adequately supplied with drafts and munitions. His forces are superior to those of the enemy, according to our information, and he should therefore have no difficulty in carrying out the above policy until the Turks are strongly reinforced. In that event he should be given full discretion to fall back; at any rate he must be clearly shown that the security of his force is of primary importance, and that neither now nor at any time is he required to maintain a more forward position than he thinks he can hold with reasonable safety."

4. The reasons for these instructions were that it was important to neutralize the moral effect of the fall of Kut, and at the same time reduce our commitments in Mesopotamia as much as possible. In my opinion the necessity for retaining our troops opposite Kut still exists, for although the fall of Kut has not reacted unfavourably on our position in Southern Persia and India, and is now ancient history, the recent Turkish successes in Persia would, if followed by a withdrawal on our part in Mesopotamia, undoubtedly increase Turkish prestige, and it might produce a most embarrassing situation in the East. At the same time I desire to make it quite clear that owing to the effect of the climate on the health of the troops, to very defective communications, and to various other causes, the Force is not at present in a good condition, and could not undertake offensive operations except to a very limited extent.

5. We have opposite Kut a force of four divisions and a cavalry brigade, with a strength of 21,000 infantry, 1,500 sabres and 150 guns; this is opposed by a Turkish force of three divisions of about 17,600 infantry, 300 sabres and 64 guns. We have also at and about Nasiryeh 4,700 infantry, 250 sabres and 27 guns, and at Busra a reserve of 3,500 infantry, 600 sabres and 14 guns, the remainder of Force "D" being scattered in posts along the Tigris and Karun Rivers.

6. Owing to the wastage from sickness suffered by young troops in hot weather it has been arranged on the suggestion of the Commander-in-Chief, India, that drafts are not to be sent to join their units until next month when the climate will improve, but the necessary drafts have been earmarked.

The artillery of the Force has been improved by the substitution of modern 4·5-inch howitzers for 5-inch howitzers, and an increase in the number both of 18-pr.

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field guns and of heavy artillery. The Cavalry Brigade and several of the native battalions are being exchanged with fresh units from India and the Commander-in-Chief has been asked to exchange as many British battalions as possible. A second Indian Cavalry Brigade has just reached Busra from France.

By the middle or end of October we hope to have :—

——	Infantry.	Sabres.	Guns.
Vicinity of Kut (Tigris Corps)	37,800	3,500	174
Euphrates Line	9,000	200	30
On Lines of Commmunication	6,000	900	24
Total Force	52,000	4,600	228

7. As regards the question of communications, the Committee is aware that India declined to sanction certain proposals for railway construction, and that in general the operations were allowed in 1915 to develop without proper regard to the vital questions of supply and maintenance. Consequently, in this respect we have, ever since the War Office has been in control, been engaged in a struggle to make up lee-way. Owing, however, to the special difficulties of river navigation in Mesopotamia we have so far been unable to do more than keep pace with the bare necessities of the Force, and make good the continual wastage of river craft. In spite of all that has been done and is being done in this respect it is unlikely that any material progress will be made until the monsoon is over, about the end of September, when it will be possible to despatch craft now collected in India, and the arrangements which are now in hand for the re-erection in Mesopotamia of the craft sent out in sections will have matured. All that it is possible to say, at the present time, is, that it is hoped that the river transport will be on a sound footing by the end of December.

As regards railways, three are now under construction :—

(*a.*) A 2-ft. 6-in. line from Sheikh Saad to the Es Sinn position on the right bank of the Tigris, which is nearing completion, and should be finished not later than the end of this month.

(*b.*) A 2-ft. 6-in. line from Kurna to Amara, which Sir Percy Lake estimates should be open some time between the 15th October and the 15th November.

(*c.*) A metre-gauge line from Busra to Nasiryeh which Sir Percy Lake estimates should be completed in January, 1917.

8. The Turks have succeeded in driving back General Baratoff's Force beyond Hamadan, and they have also been operating successfully against the Grand Duke Nicholas's left wing, and have occupied Mush and Bitlis. The object of these operations may be to remove the Russian threat to the Turkish communications in Mesopotamia and to Baghdad, and then to contain the Russian forces in Persia and in Southern Armenia with detachments when the season of the year is unsuitable for active operations in the hilly country, and transfer thence reinforcements to operate against us on the Tigris at a time when the climatic conditions in Lower Mesopotamia are most favourable. If this is so, and if the Turkish operations against the Russians continue to be successful, it is possible that the force now opposing us on the Tigris may be increased to some 60,000 fighting troops of all arms. It appears improbable that, even if the situation in Armenia and Persia admitted of the concentration of a larger force in Mesopotamia, the Turks would be able to maintain more than this number below Kut. Against such a force the troops mentioned in paragraph 6 should be able to hold their own defensively. If, on the other hand, no such move is made against us our troops can be employed offensively according as the situation may demand.

9. Having gone so far forward as Kut, it seems to me that we cannot, at present at any rate, withdraw, except at the risk of incurring considerable trouble in Persia and perhaps in Afghanistan also.

W. R. Robertson.

Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

War Office,
24th August, 1916.

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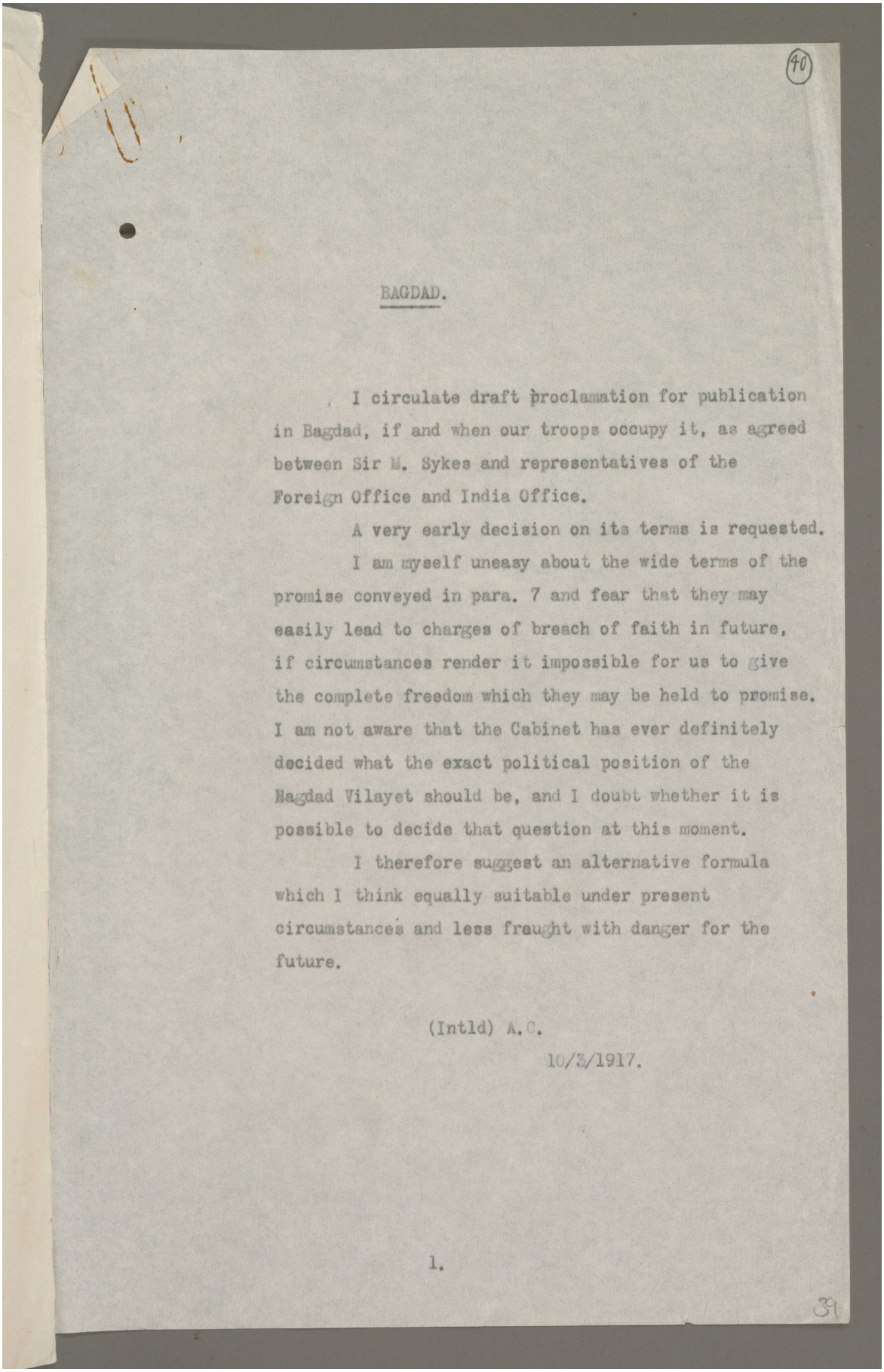

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BAGDAD.

I circulate draft proclamation for publication in Bagdad, if and when our troops occupy it, as agreed between Sir M. Sykes and representatives of the Foreign Office and India Office.

A very early decision on its terms is requested.

I am myself uneasy about the wide terms of the promise conveyed in para. 7 and fear that they may easily lead to charges of breach of faith in future, if circumstances render it impossible for us to give the complete freedom which they may be held to promise. I am not aware that the Cabinet has ever definitely decided what the exact political position of the Bagdad Vilayet should be, and I doubt whether it is possible to decide that question at this moment.

I therefore suggest an alternative formula which I think equally suitable under present circumstances and less fraught with danger for the future.

(Intld) A.C.

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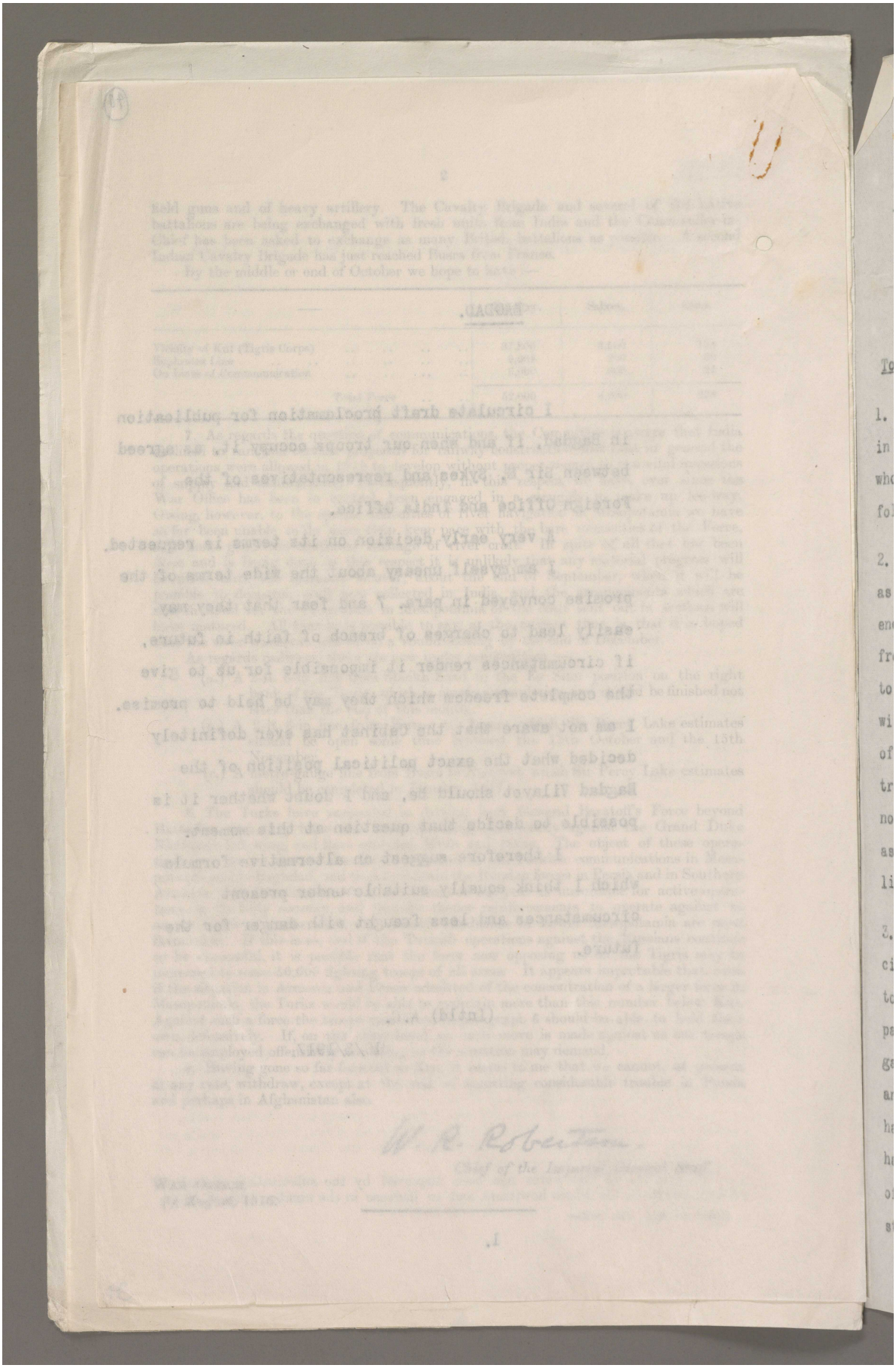

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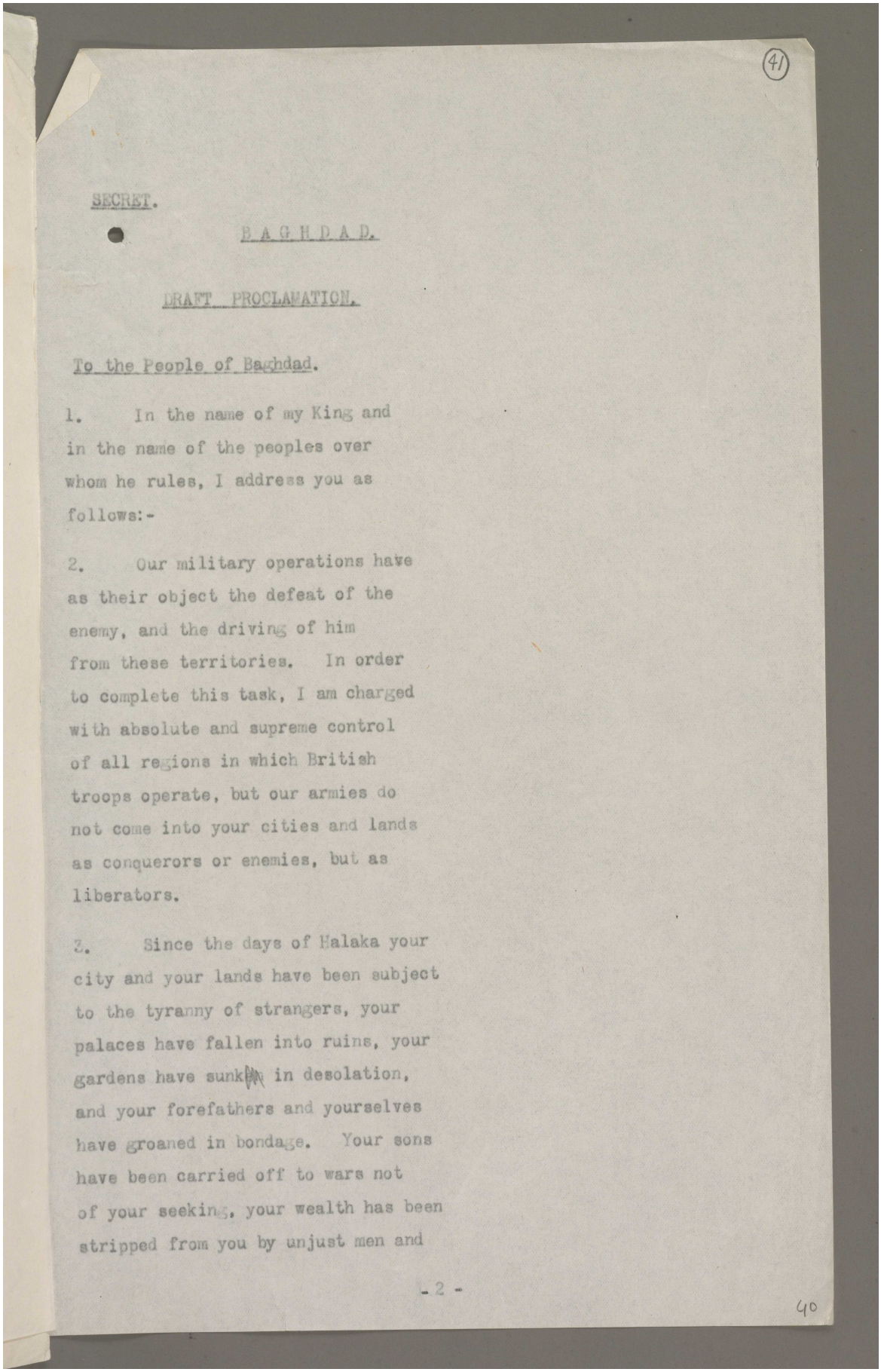

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SECRET.

B A G H D A D.

DRAFT PROCLAMATION.

To the People of Baghdad.

1. In the name of my King and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows:-

2. Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate, but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

3. Since the days of Halaka your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and

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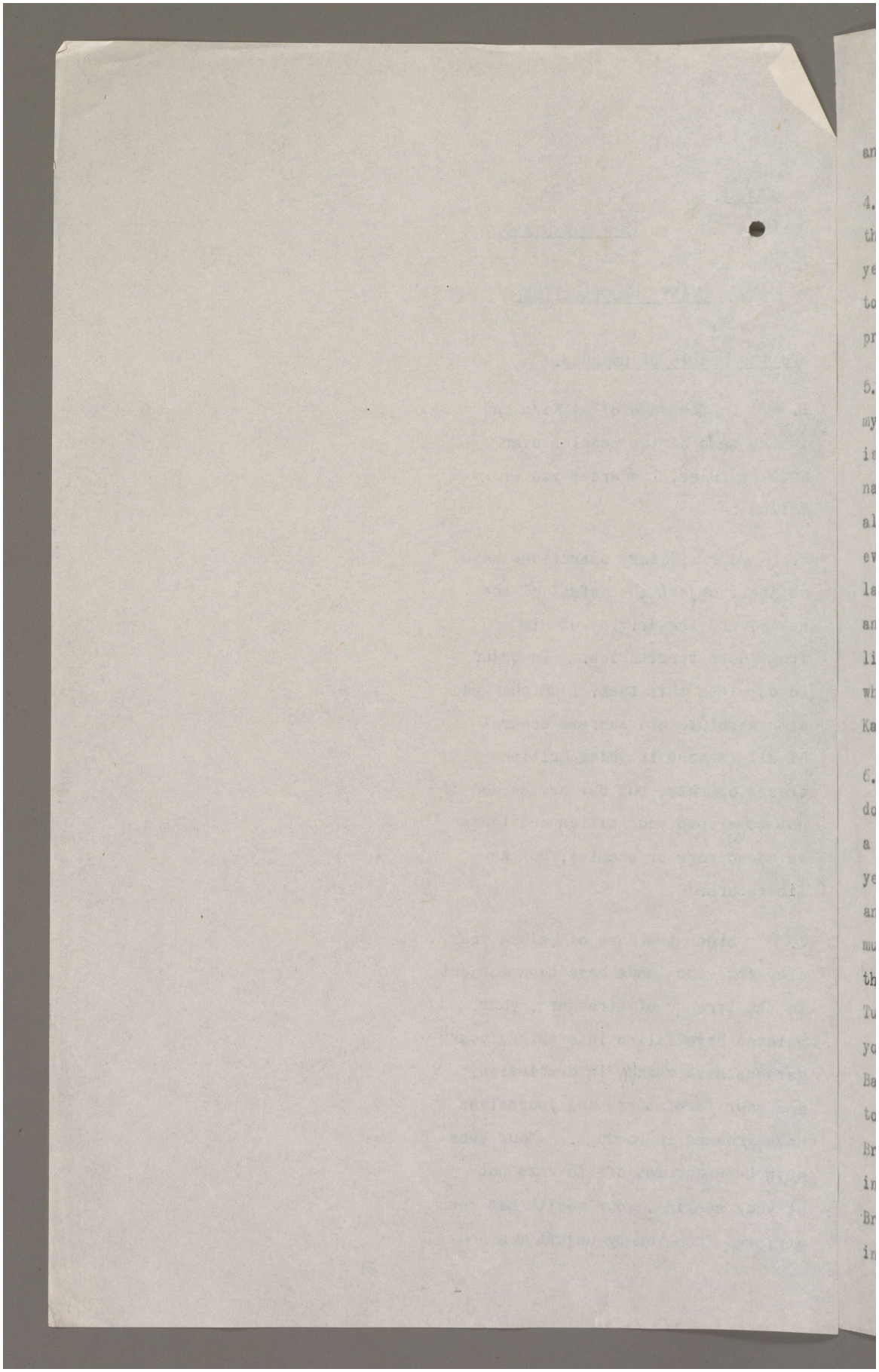

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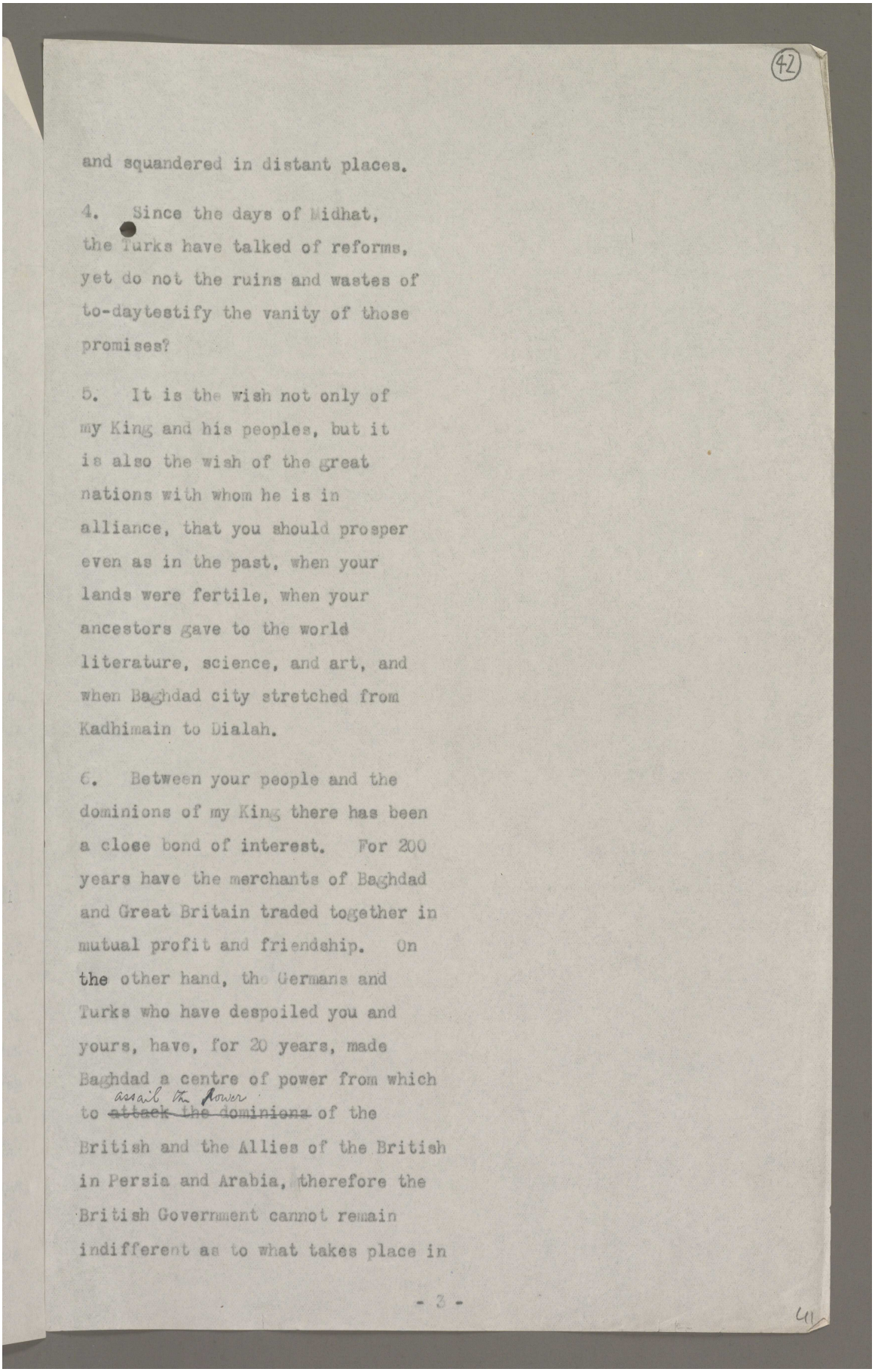

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and squandered in distant places.

4. Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-daytestify the vanity of those promises?

5. It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city stretched from Kadhimain to Dialah.

6. Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks who have despoiled you and yours, have, for 20 years, made Baghdad a centre of power from which to ~~attack the dominions~~ assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia, therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in

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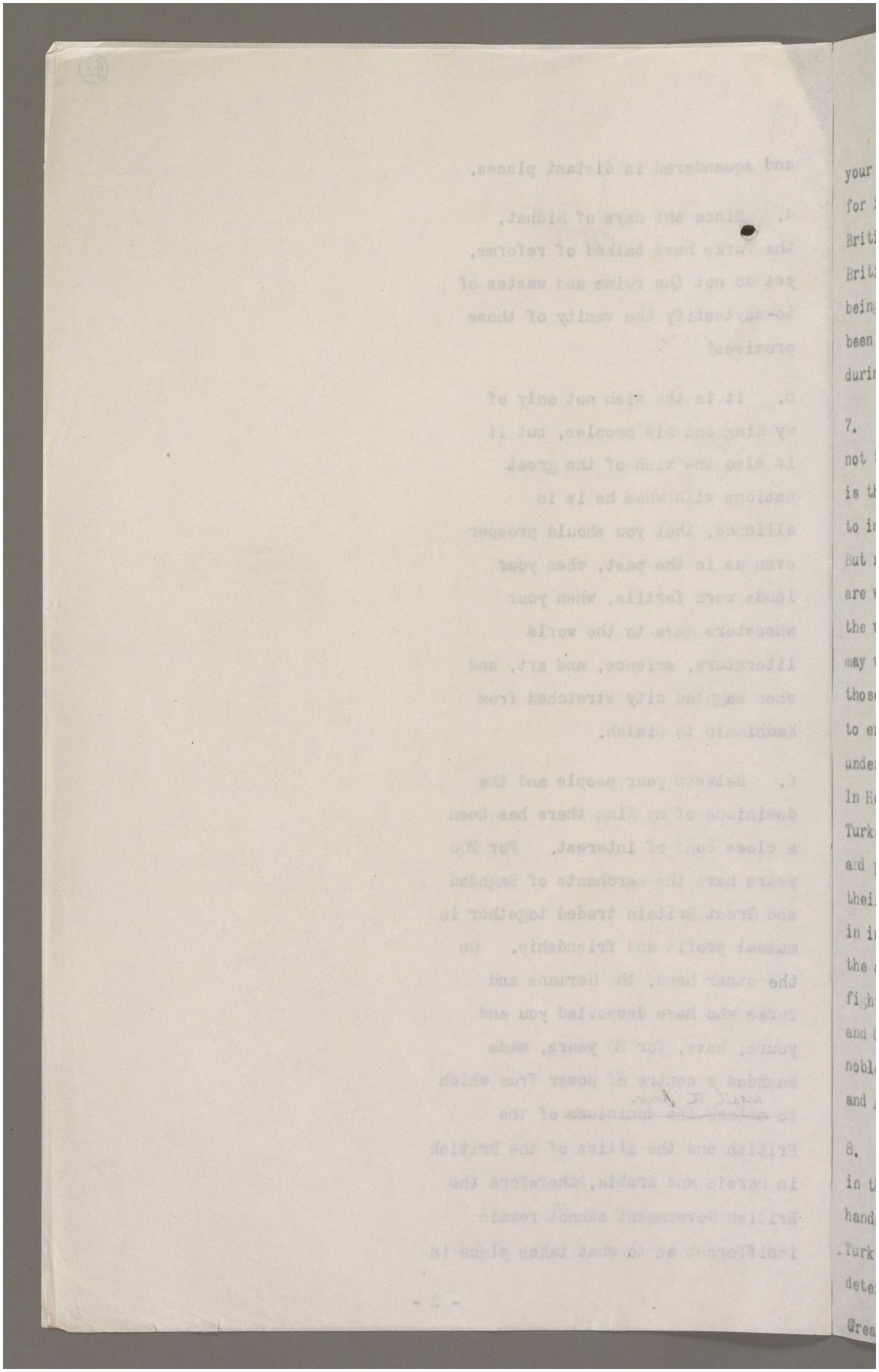

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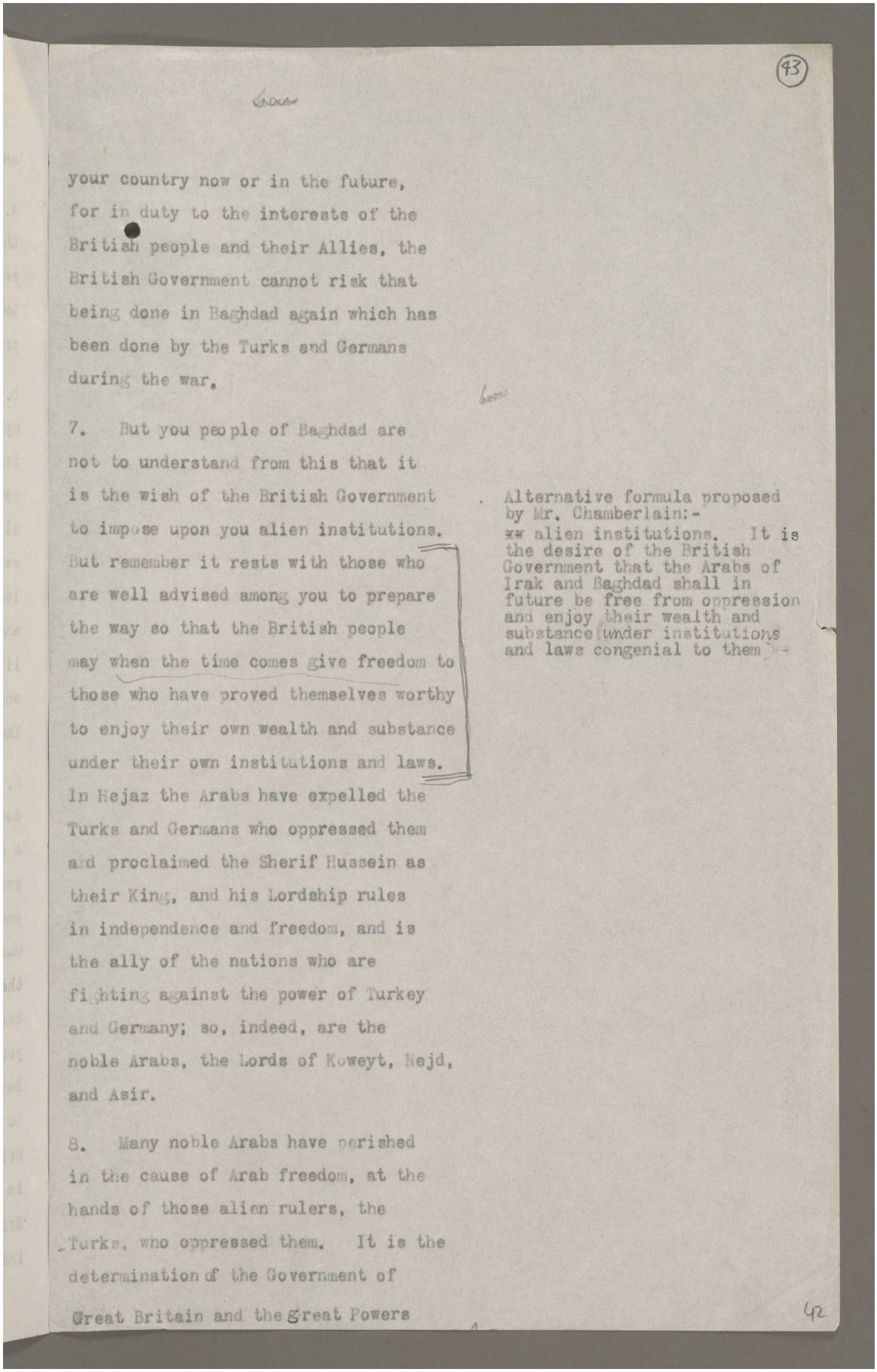

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your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

7. But you people of Baghdad are not to understand from this that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. But remember it rests with those who are well advised among you to prepare the way so that the British people may when the time comes give freedom to those who have proved themselves worthy to enjoy their own wealth and substance under their own institutions and laws. In Hejaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

8. Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers

Alternative formula proposed by Mr. Chamberlain:-
** alien institutions. It is the desire of the British Government that the Arabs of Irak and Baghdad shall in future be free from oppression and enjoy their wealth and substance under institutions and laws congenial to them.-

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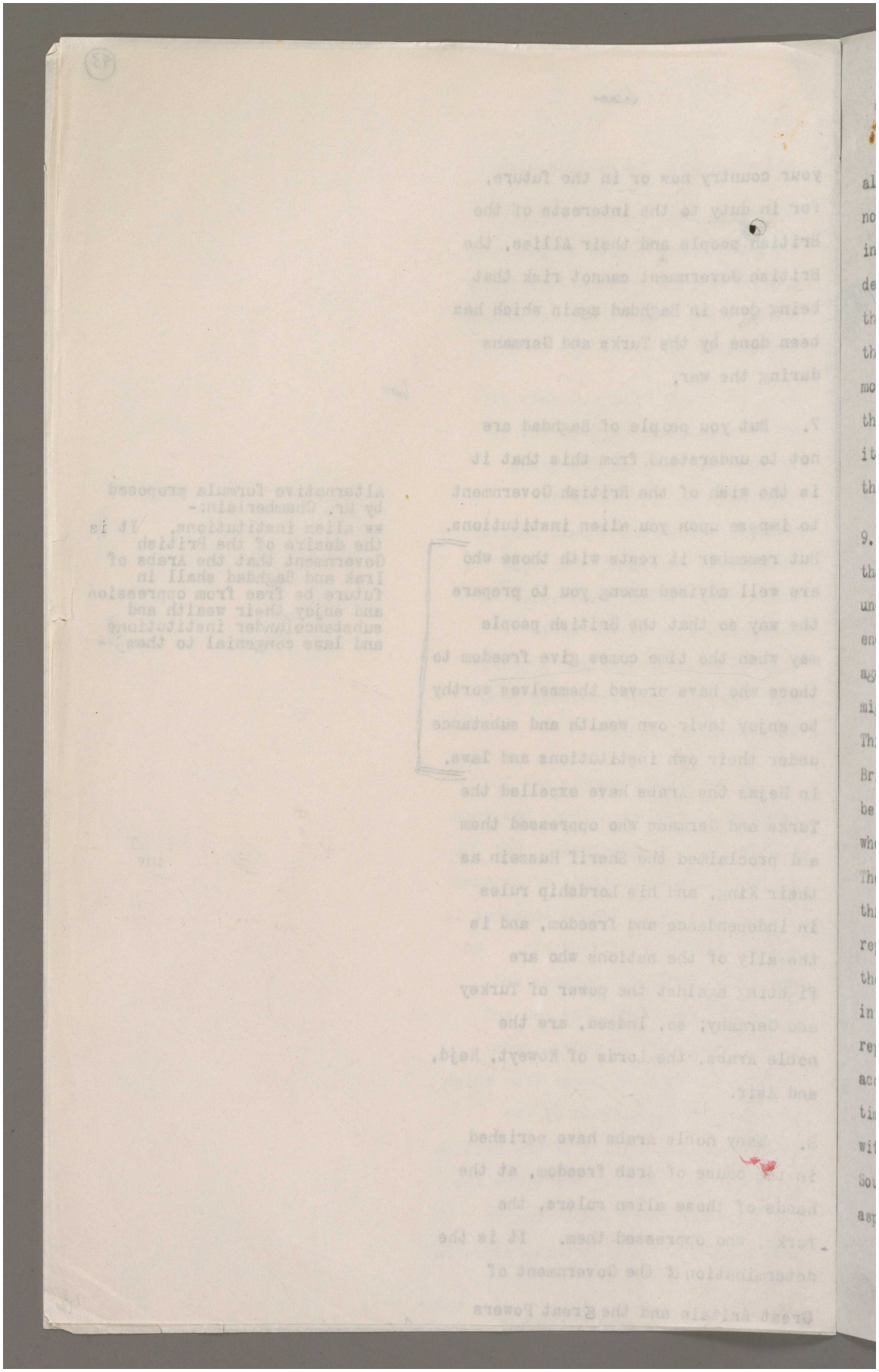

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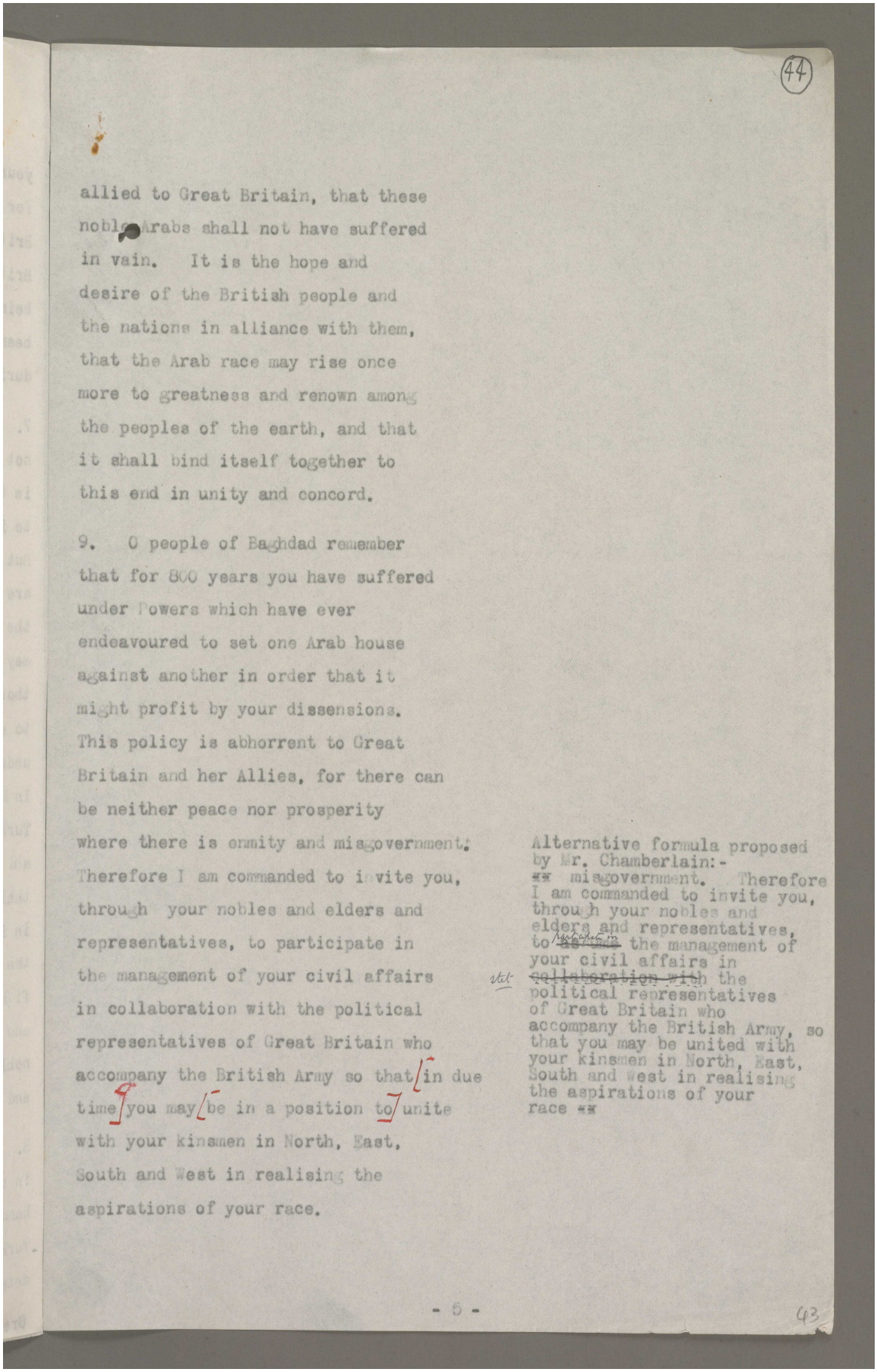

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allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them, that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

9. O people of Baghdad remember that for 800 years you have suffered under Powers which have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that it might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army so that in due time you may be in a position to unite with your kinsmen in North, East, South and West in realising the aspirations of your race.

Alternative formula proposed by Mr. Chamberlain:-
** misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to ~~as that~~ the management of your civil affairs in ~~collaboration with~~ the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South and West in realising the aspirations of your race **

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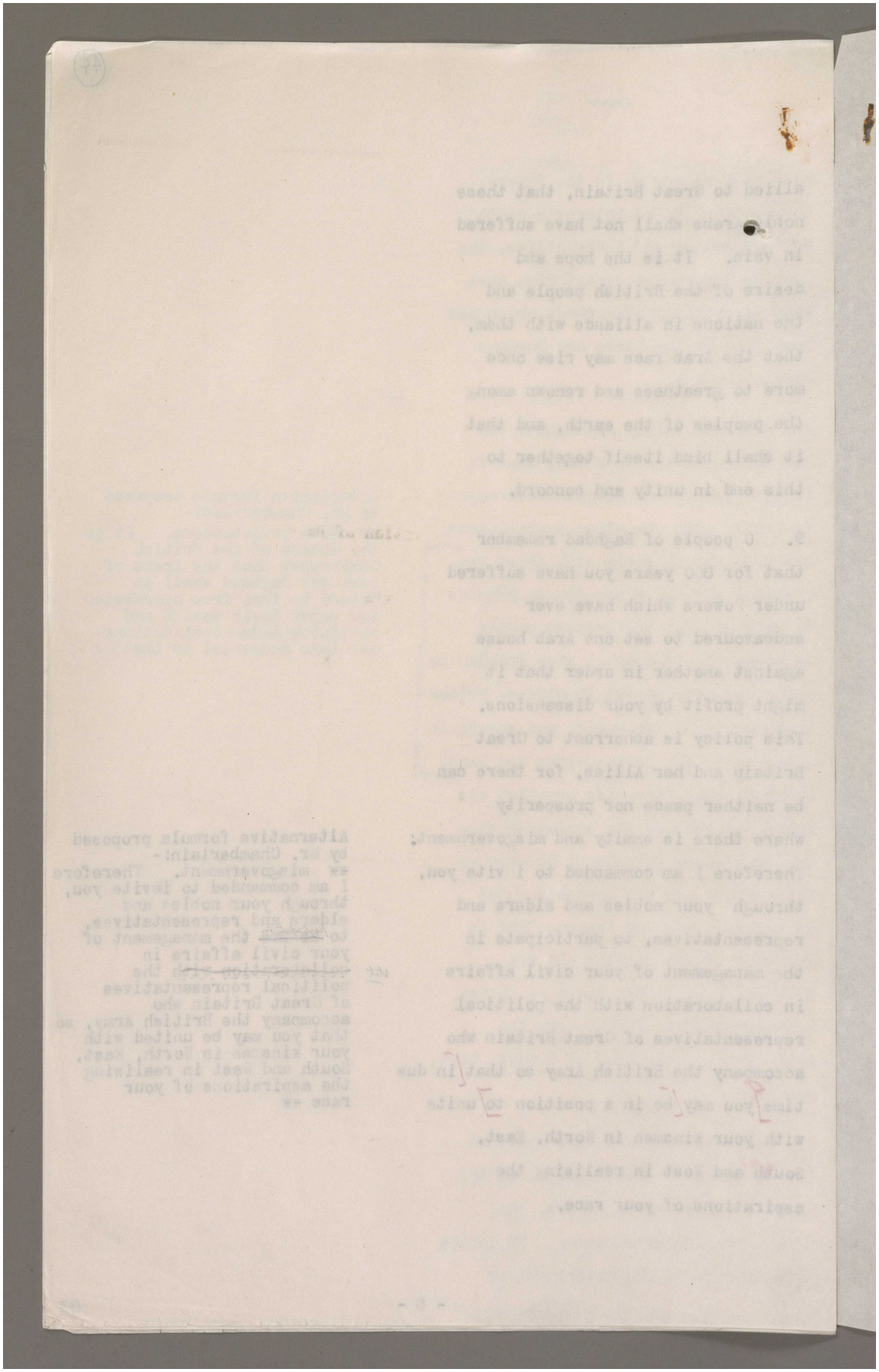

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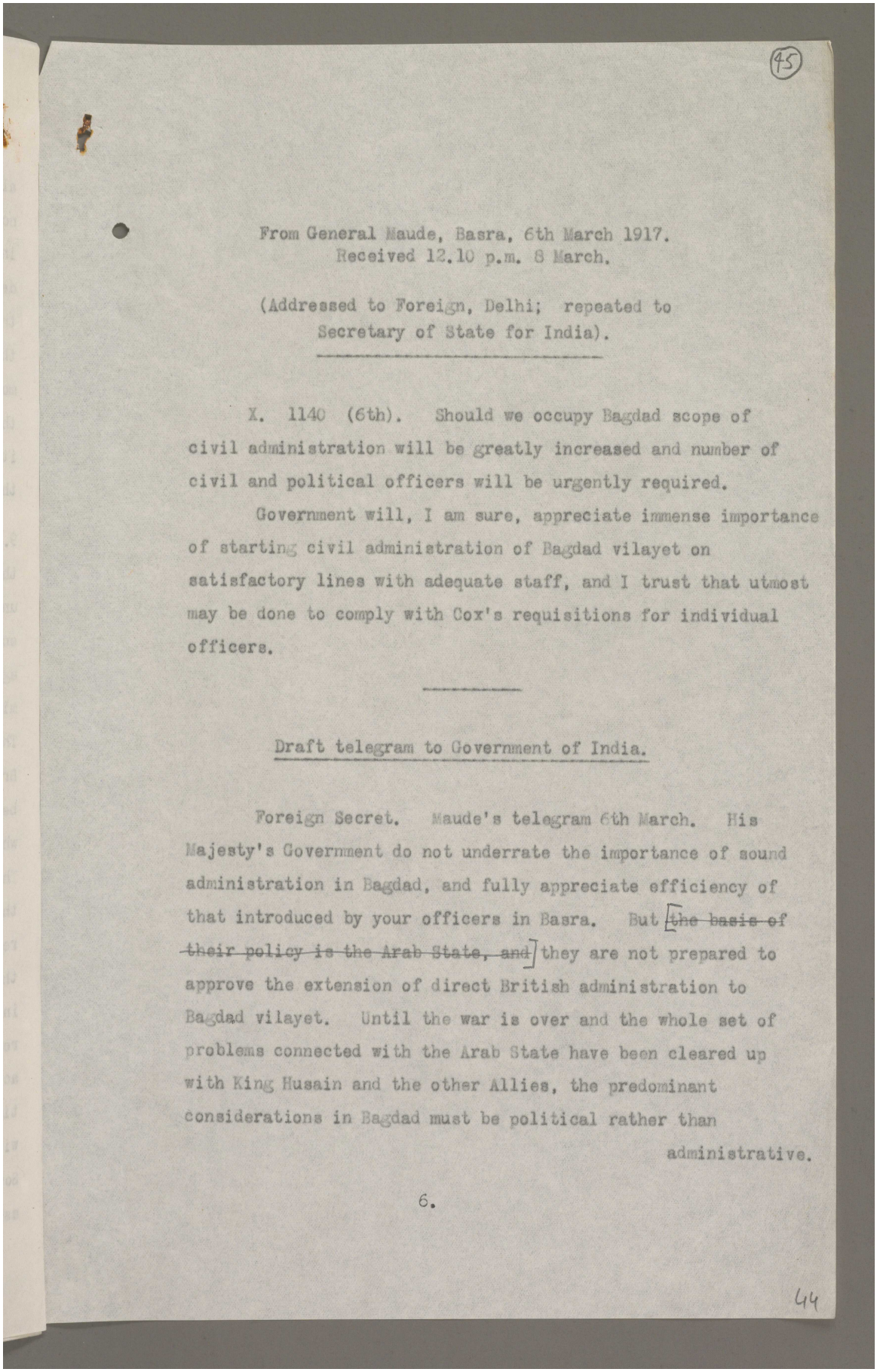

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From General Maude, Basra, 6th March 1917.
Received 12.10 p.m. 8 March.

(Addressed to Foreign, Delhi; repeated to Secretary of State for India).

X. 1140 (6th). Should we occupy Bagdad scope of civil administration will be greatly increased and number of civil and political officers will be urgently required.

Government will, I am sure, appreciate immense importance of starting civil administration of Bagdad vilayet on satisfactory lines with adequate staff, and I trust that utmost may be done to comply with Cox's requisitions for individual officers.

Draft telegram to Government of India.

Foreign Secret. Maude's telegram 6th March. His Majesty's Government do not underrate the importance of sound administration in Bagdad, and fully appreciate efficiency of that introduced by your officers in Basra. But [~~the basis of their policy is the Arab State, and~~] they are not prepared to approve the extension of direct British administration to Bagdad vilayet. Until the war is over and the whole set of problems connected with the Arab State have been cleared up with King Husain and the other Allies, the predominant considerations in Bagdad must be political rather than administrative.

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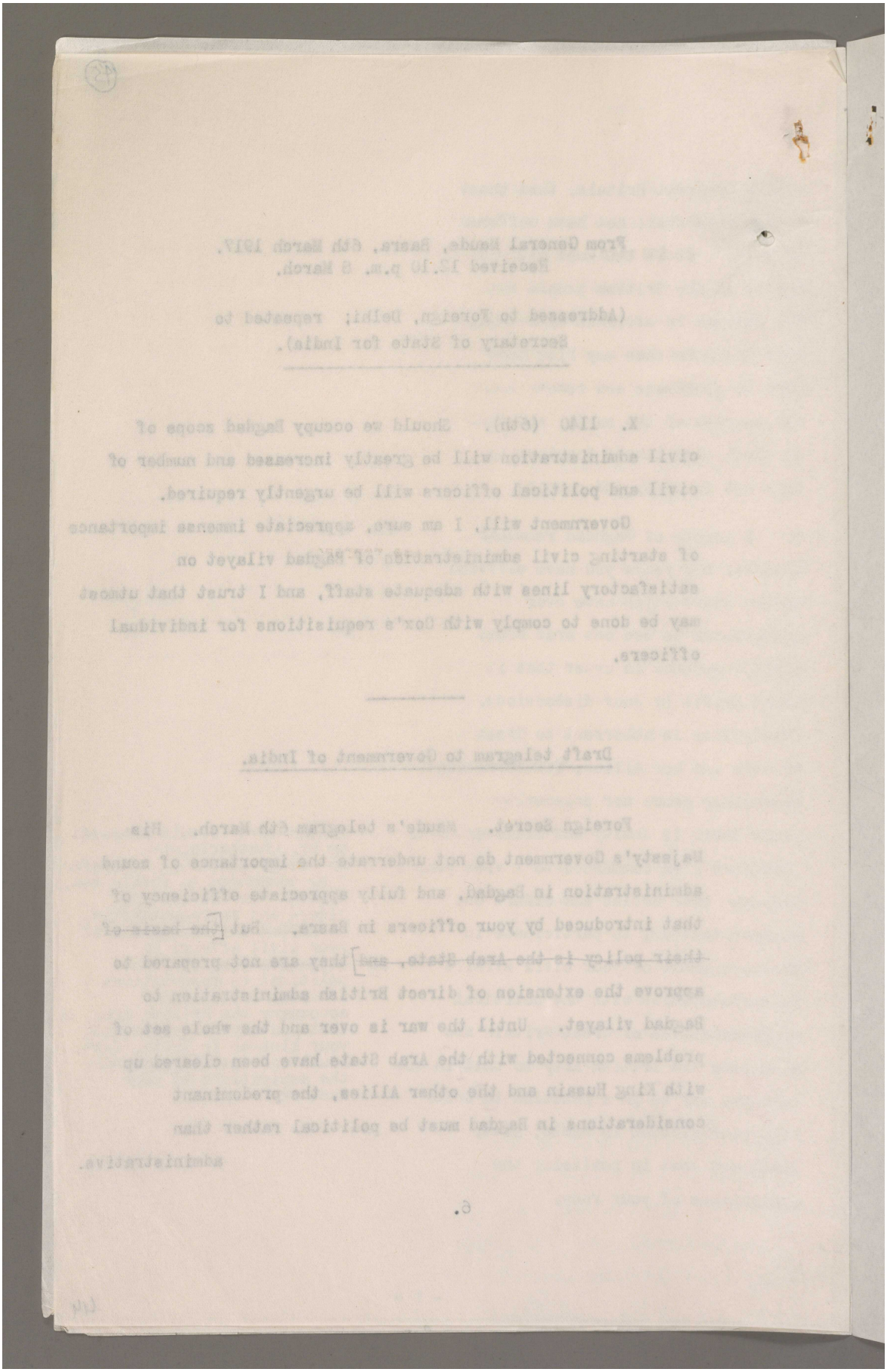

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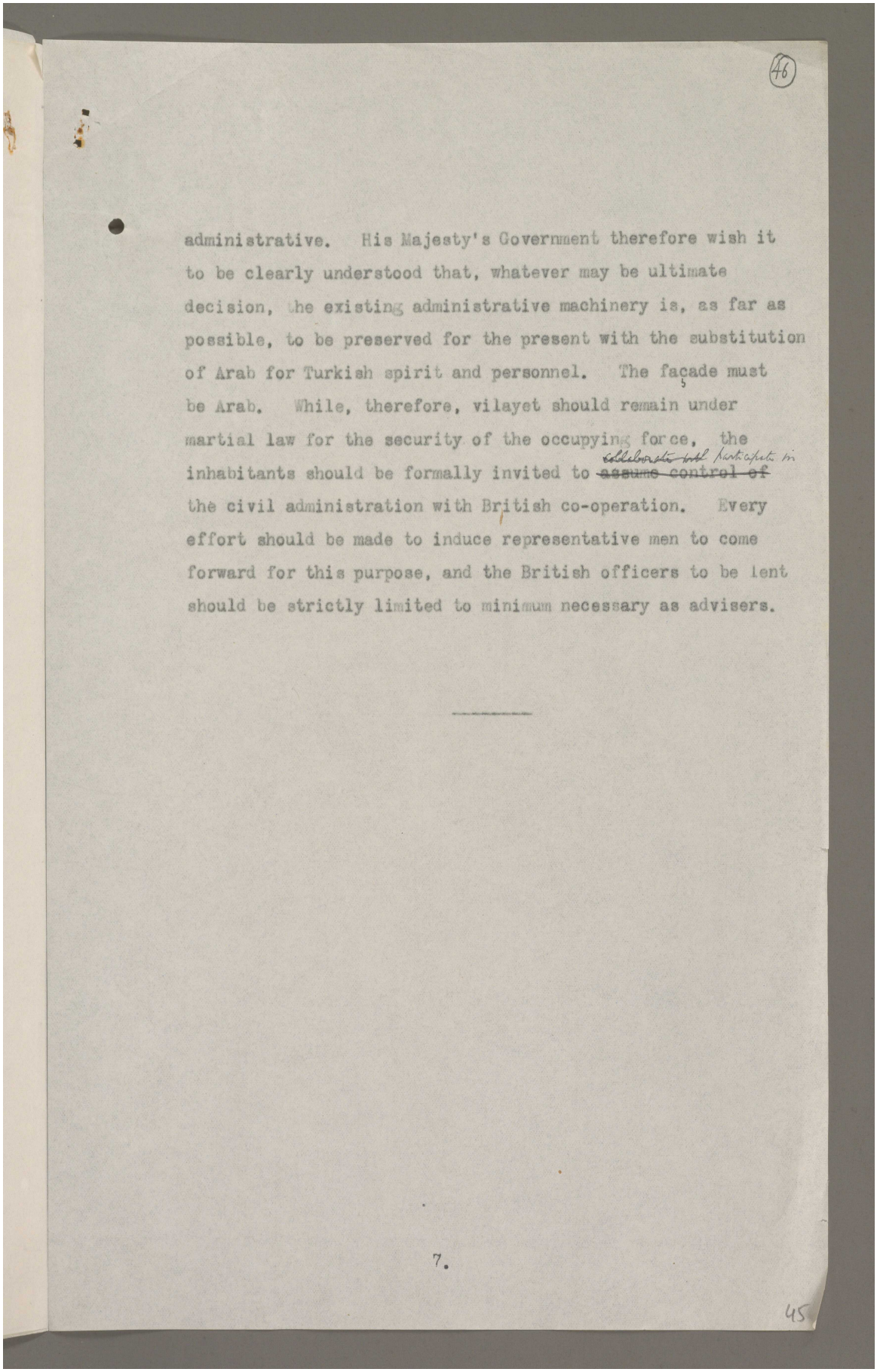

(46)

administrative. His Majesty's Government therefore wish it to be clearly understood that, whatever may be ultimate decision, the existing administrative machinery is, as far as possible, to be preserved for the present with the substitution of Arab for Turkish spirit and personnel. The façade must be Arab. While, therefore, vilayet should remain under martial law for the security of the occupying force, the inhabitants should be formally invited to ~~assume control of~~ participate in the civil administration with British co-operation. Every effort should be made to induce representative men to come forward for this purpose, and the British officers to be lent should be strictly limited to minimum necessary as advisers.

7.

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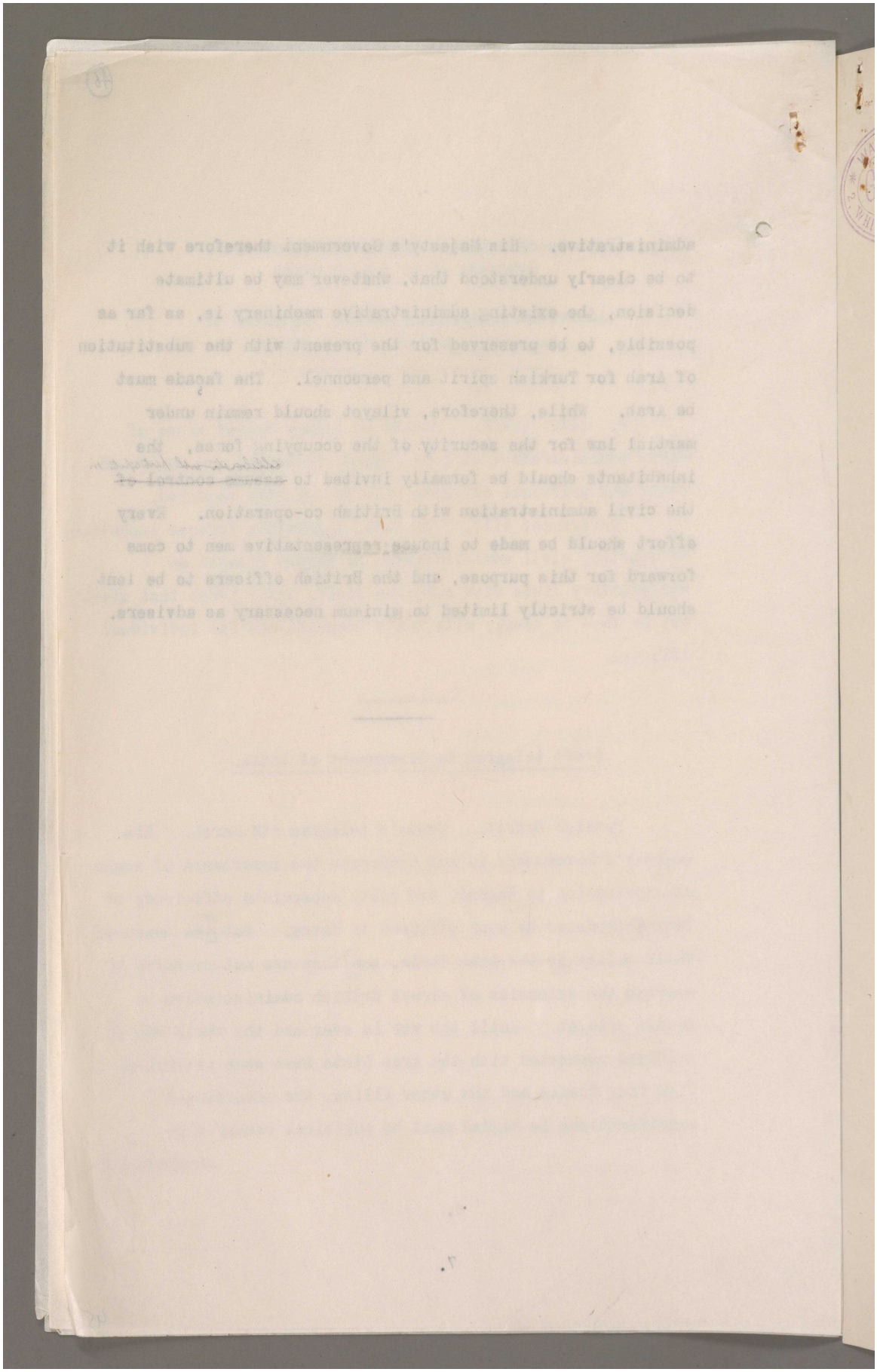

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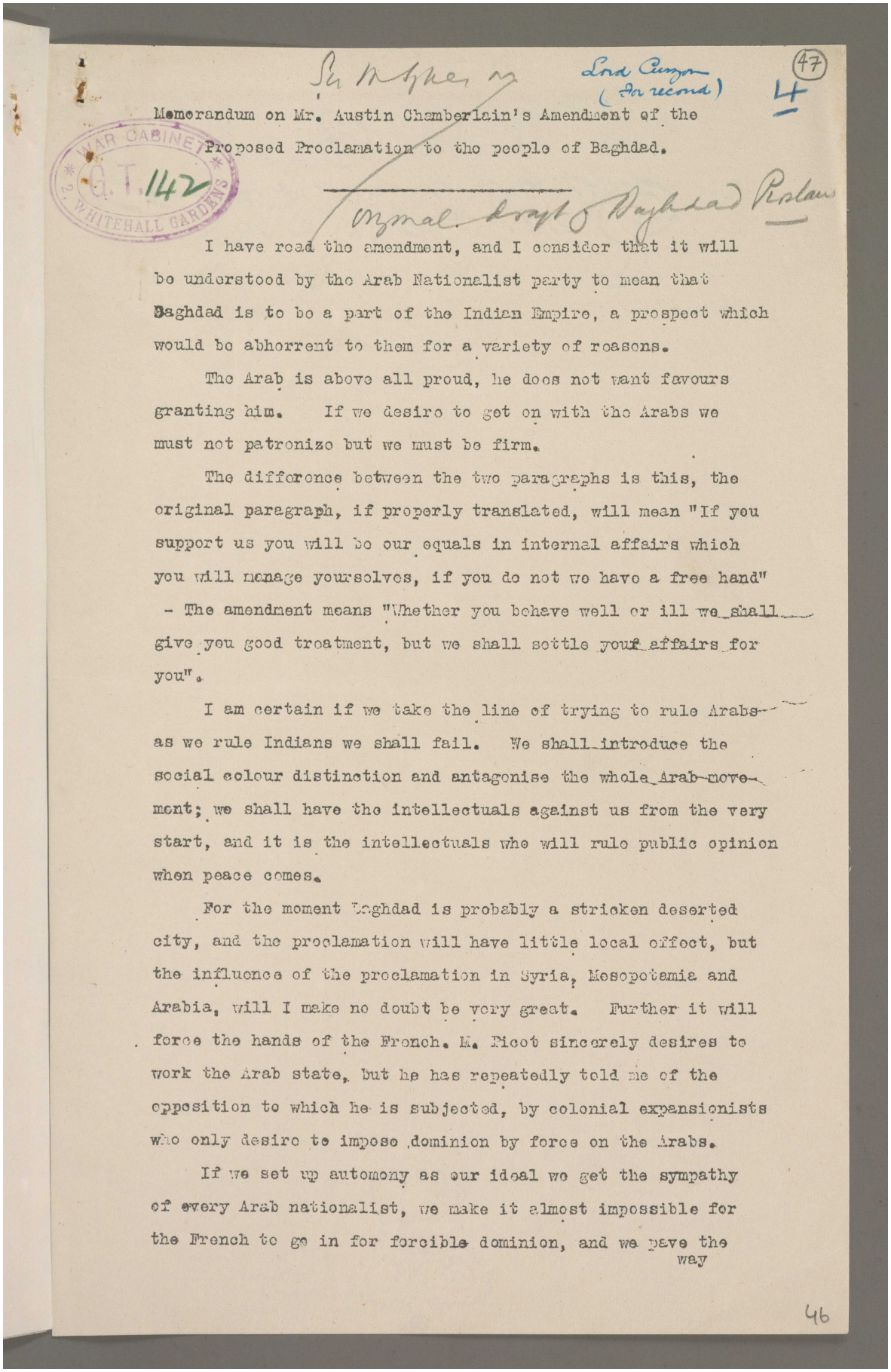

Sir M. Sykes on

Lord Curzon (for record)

(47)

4

Memorandum on Mr. Austin Chamberlain's Amendment of the Proposed Proclamation to the people of Baghdad.

WAR CABINET
G.T. 142
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

Original draft of Baghdad Proclam

I have read the amendment, and I consider that it will be understood by the Arab Nationalist party to mean that Baghdad is to be a part of the Indian Empire, a prospect which would be abhorrent to them for a variety of reasons.

The Arab is above all proud, he does not want favours granting him. If we desire to get on with the Arabs we must not patronize but we must be firm.

The difference between the two paragraphs is this, the original paragraph, if properly translated, will mean "If you support us you will be our equals in internal affairs which you will manage yourselves, if you do not we have a free hand" - The amendment means "Whether you behave well or ill we shall give you good treatment, but we shall settle your affairs for you".

I am certain if we take the line of trying to rule Arabs as we rule Indians we shall fail. We shall introduce the social colour distinction and antagonise the whole Arab movement; we shall have the intellectuals against us from the very start, and it is the intellectuals who will rule public opinion when peace comes.

For the moment Baghdad is probably a stricken deserted city, and the proclamation will have little local effect, but the influence of the proclamation in Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, will I make no doubt be very great. Further it will force the hands of the French. M. Picot sincerely desires to work the Arab state, but he has repeatedly told me of the opposition to which he is subjected, by colonial expansionists who only desire to impose dominion by force on the Arabs.

If we set up automony as our ideal we get the sympathy of every Arab nationalist, we make it almost impossible for the French to go in for forcible dominion, and we pave the way

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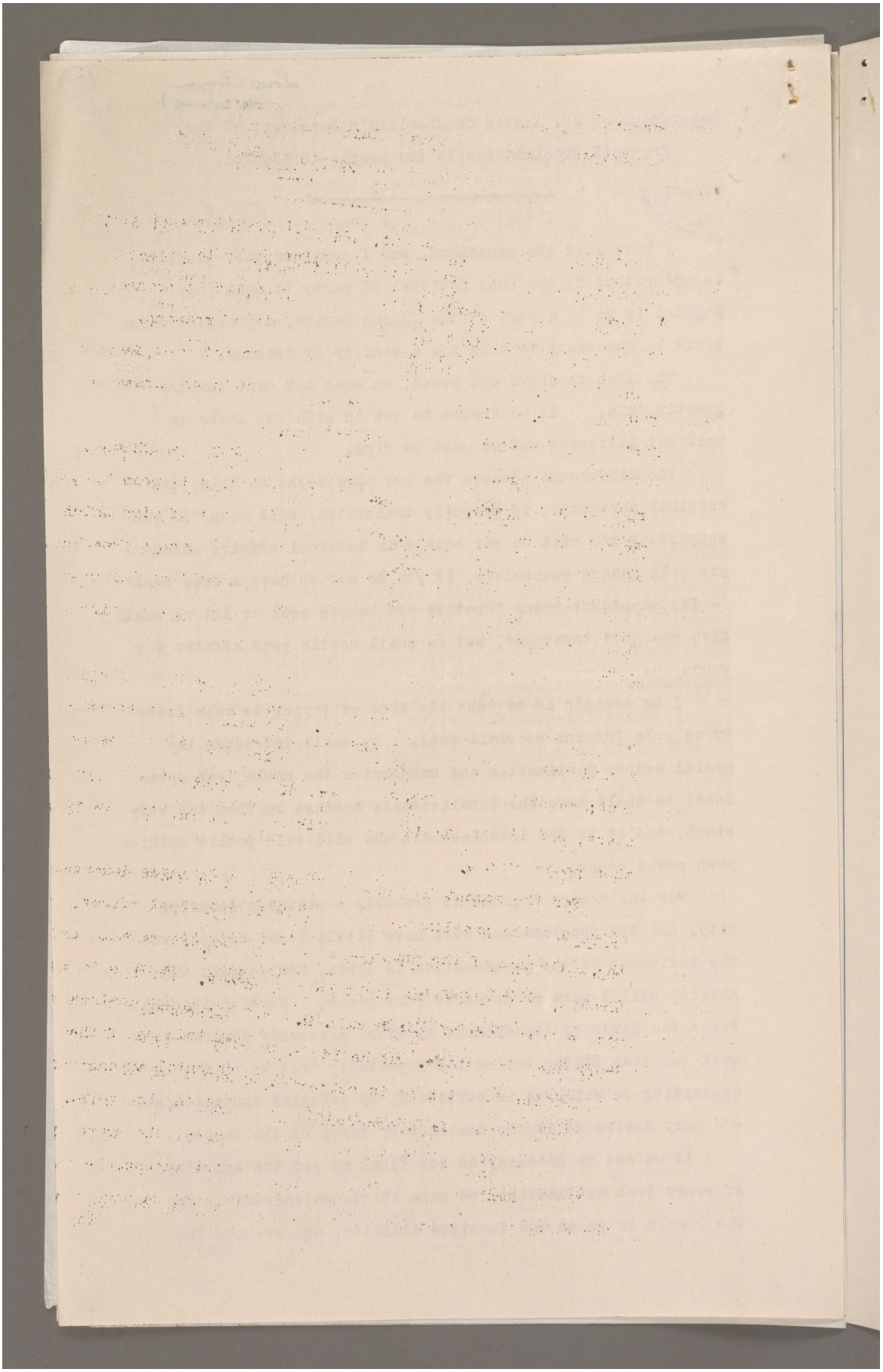

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way for a better state of things in Egypt. If we offer benefits in a "white man's burden" tone of voice we pave the way for discontent, and a coalition between the Arabic speaking Egyptian Nationalists and the Arab intellectuals. Our path is beset with dangers; if we are courageous, we have every prospect of being supreme in region B, and beloved in region A. If we do not play up to Arab racial pride in Baghdad then we shall make Baghdad a restless appanage instead of a centre of influence.

Baghdad is a natural capital of practically all the inhabited areas of region B. If we make it an Arab capital we shall control the Arabs, because we shall control Baghdad commercially, and by Clause 6 we can maintain troops there.

Baghdad will be a centre of education and civilization for all the Arabic speaking world; if it is restless, hostile, or sullen, our influence will wane; if it is friendly our influence will wax. It will never accept our open dominion, but if we play our cards properly by means of "advisers" instead of "rulers" and back Arab nationalism, we shall have a permanent footing at little cost.

The Arab ideal has been local autonomy ever since the constitution of 1908, it is the desire for local autonomy which has had such disastrous results for the Turks. There is much in a name, the Arabs will not object to the presence of British troops and a British General, British advisers and British merchants, but they will never endure either the idea of a British Governor-General, or an outwardly British direct controlled civil service.

Further it must be remembered that the Turks never denied the Arabs either social equality or executive power. Field-Marshal Mahmud Shefket, Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish Army, was a Baghdadi and virtually an Arab, Izzet the great 2nd Secretary of Abdul Hamid was a Damascene, that

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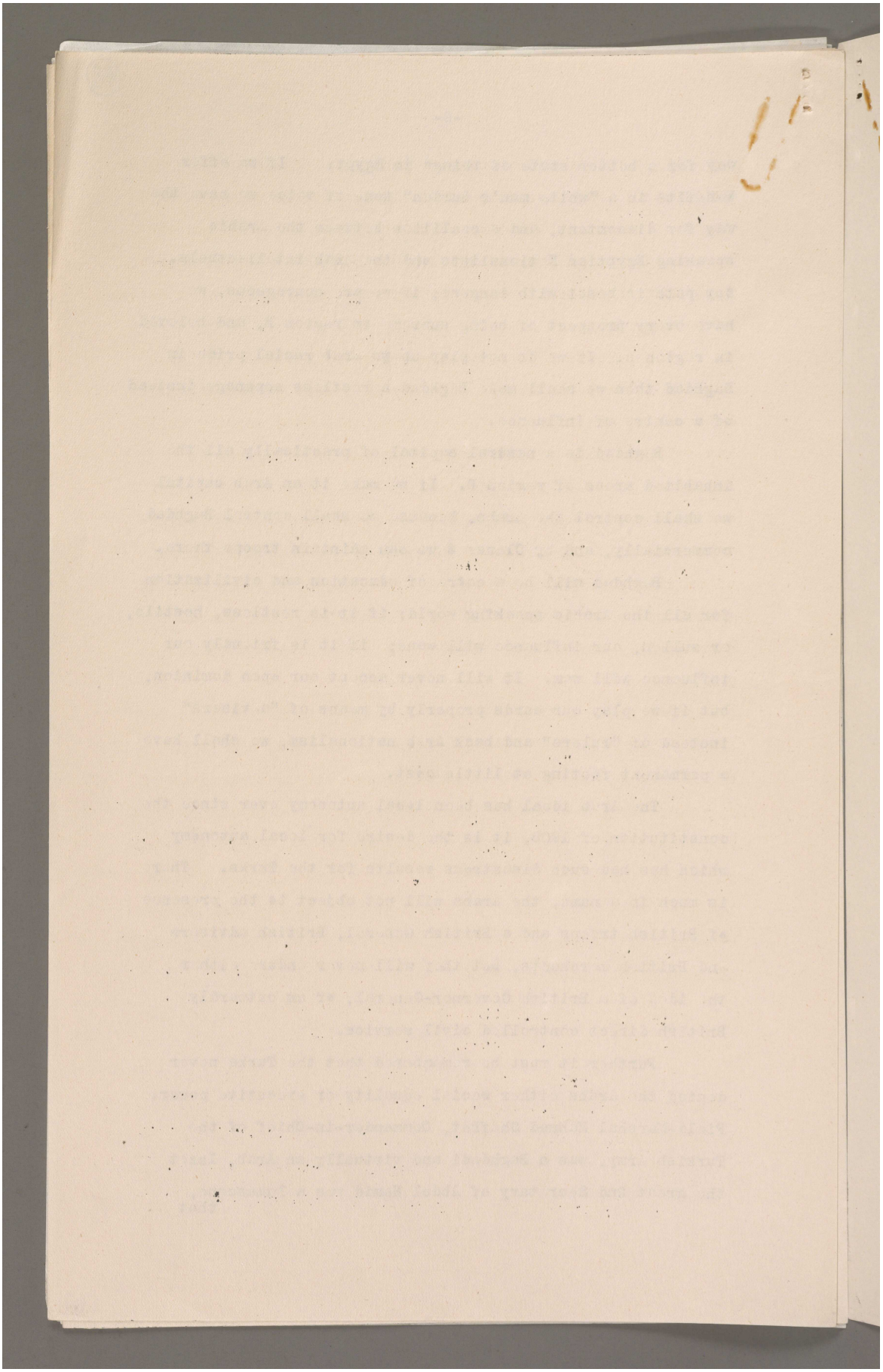

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that is to say that the two most powerful persons in the Empire were men of Arab extraction. It is impossible to approach a people with an intellectual class which has produced men who have held such offices in the same spirit as one might approach tribesmen or natives who accept European superiority as a matter of course.

The political conditions and possibilities in the area between Kut and Kerkuk are entirely different to the conditions between Kut and Basra. The Southern area is a country which has relapsed into complete barbarism and anarchy, and is inhabited practically by savages with no intellectual class, and I am pretty sure the Arab nationalist party would be glad to see us rule it. The Northern area has been the centre of organised government from time immemorial, and has sent an annual quota to the military and civil service schools and consequently has in peace time a large intellectual class. The members of this class are it is true scattered, and terrified, but it is of the greatest importance to demonstrate to them that their ideals are not contrary to ours, and to leave the door open for them to come in on our side without loss of dignity. Of course everything depends on our capacity to hold Baghdad, and it will require some considerable period of occupation to prove this to people who will remember that the Arab leaders who took our part at Kut were hanged, and that though we exchanged prisoners with the Turks we were unable to protect those who had taken our side.

(Initialled) M.S.

2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
10th March, 1917.

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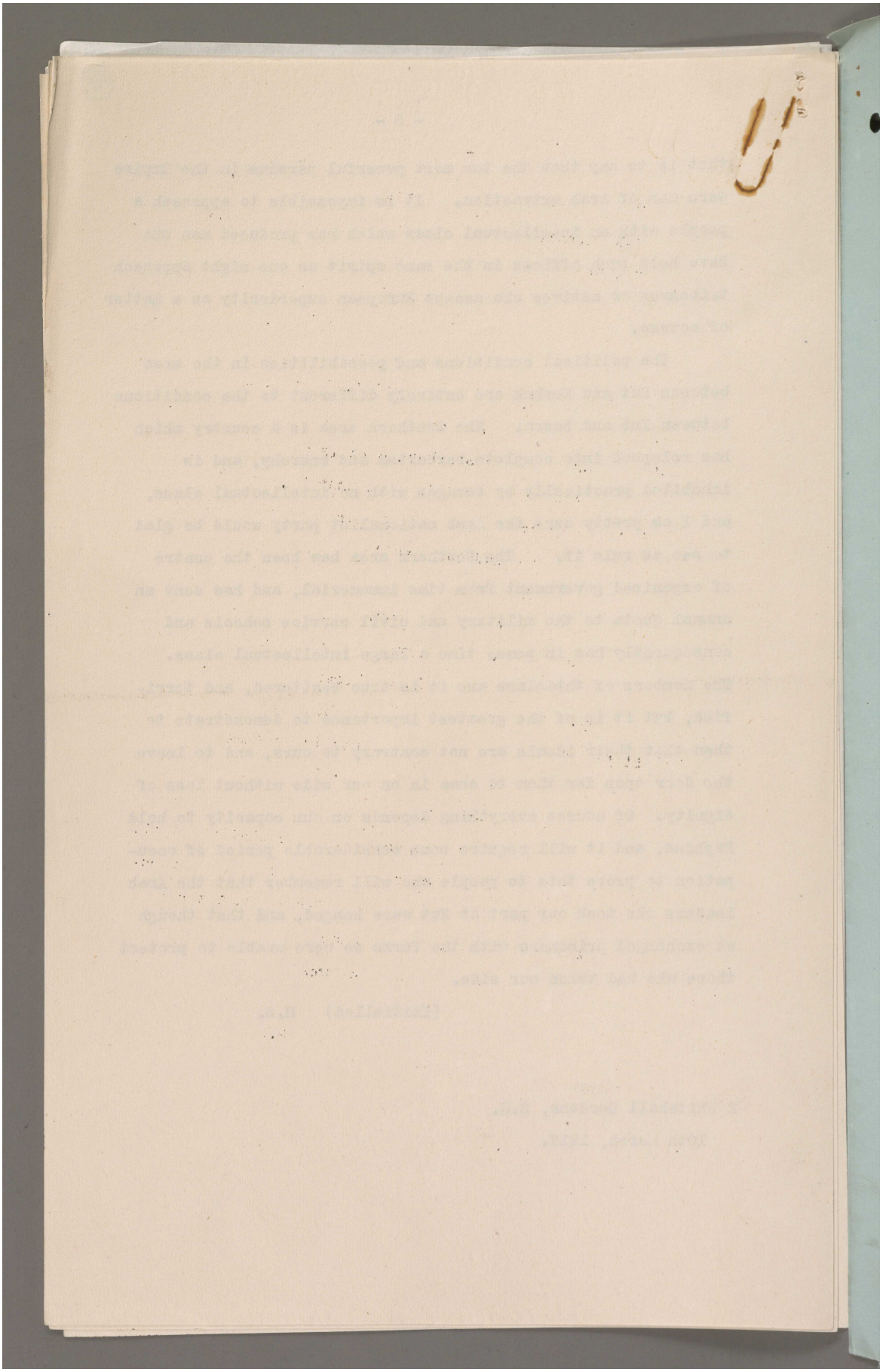

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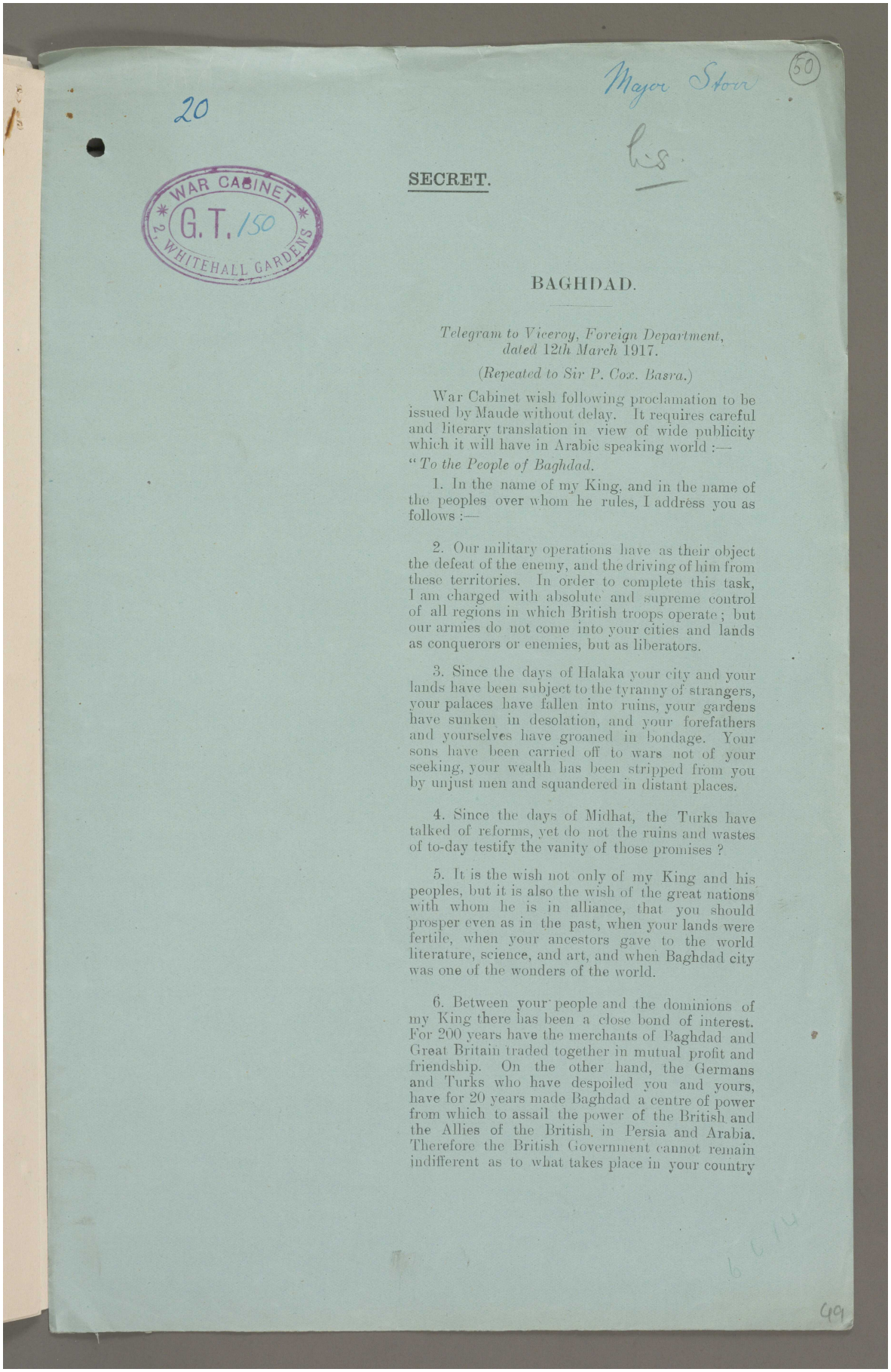

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Major Storr

(50)

WAR CABINET
G.T. 150
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

SECRET.

BAGHDAD.

Telegram to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 12th March 1917.

(Repeated to Sir P. Cox. Basra.)

War Cabinet wish following proclamation to be issued by Maude without delay. It requires careful and literary translation in view of wide publicity which it will have in Arabic speaking world :—

"*To the People of Baghdad.*

1. In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows :—

2. Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

3. Since the days of Halaka your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunken in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

4. Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises ?

5. It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

6. Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks who have despoiled you and yours, have for 20 years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country

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now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

7. But you people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hejaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

8. Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them, that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

9. O people of Baghdad remember that for 26 generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South, and West in realising the aspirations of your race."

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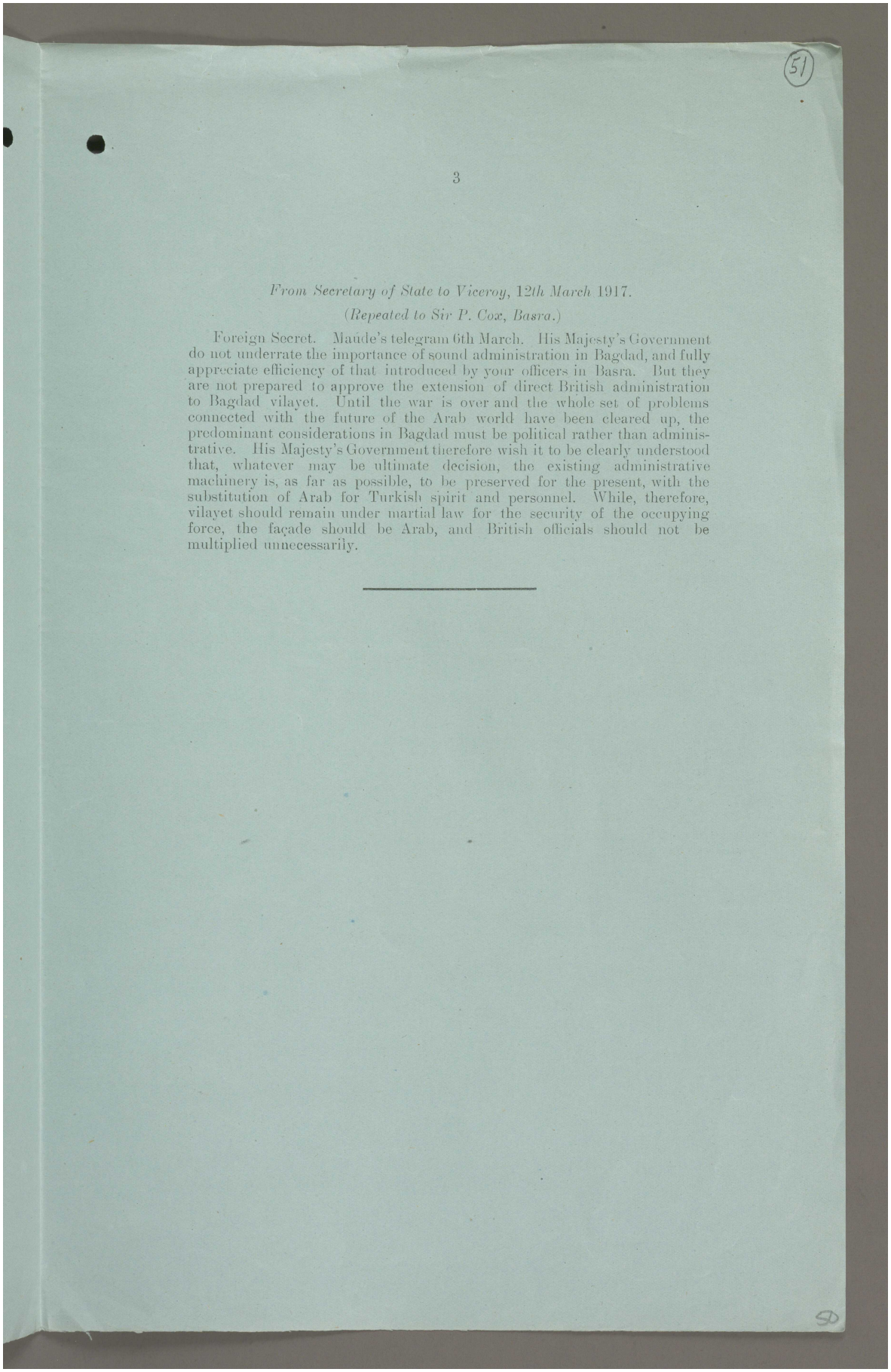

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, 12th March 1917.

(Repeated to Sir P. Cox, Basra.)

Foreign Secret. Maude's telegram 6th March. His Majesty's Government do not underrate the importance of sound administration in Bagdad, and fully appreciate efficiency of that introduced by your officers in Basra. But they are not prepared to approve the extension of direct British administration to Bagdad vilayet. Until the war is over and the whole set of problems connected with the future of the Arab world have been cleared up, the predominant considerations in Bagdad must be political rather than administrative. His Majesty's Government therefore wish it to be clearly understood that, whatever may be ultimate decision, the existing administrative machinery is, as far as possible, to be preserved for the present, with the substitution of Arab for Turkish spirit and personnel. While, therefore, vilayet should remain under martial law for the security of the occupying force, the façade should be Arab, and British officials should not be multiplied unnecessariiy.

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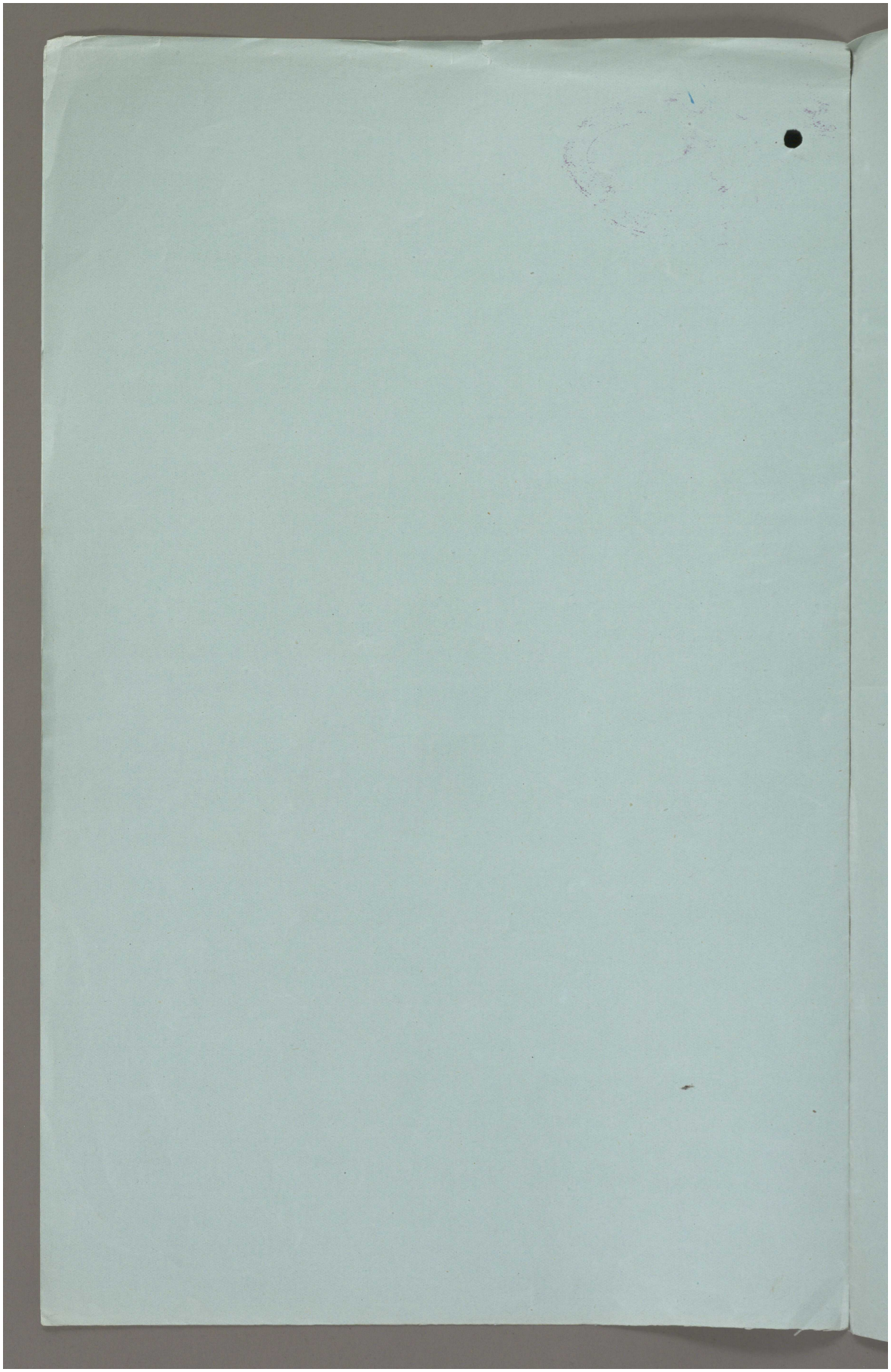

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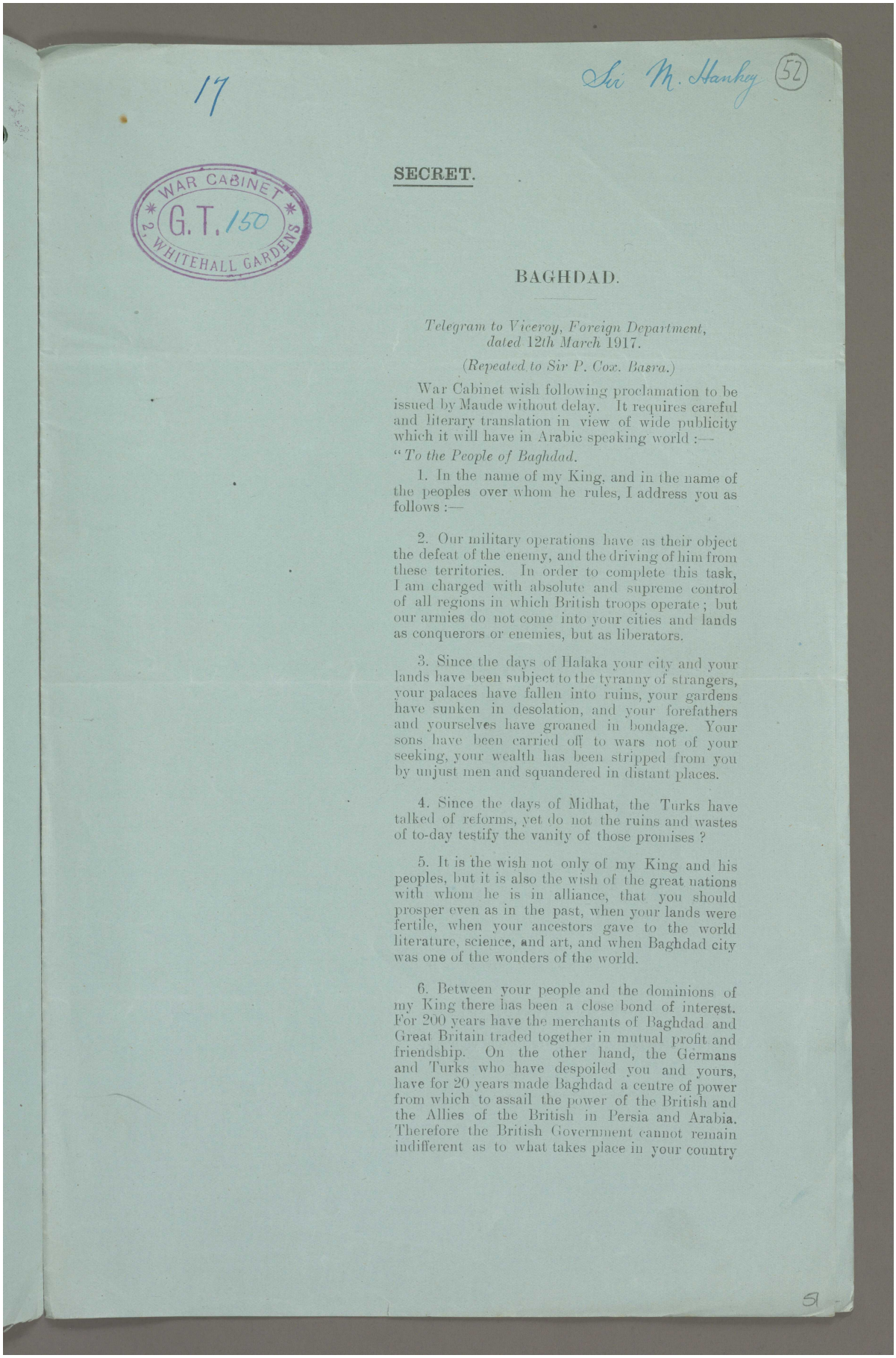

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Sir M. Hankey (52)

WAR CABINET
G.T. 150
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

SECRET.

BAGHDAD.

Telegram to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 12th March 1917.

(Repeated to Sir P. Cox. Basra.)

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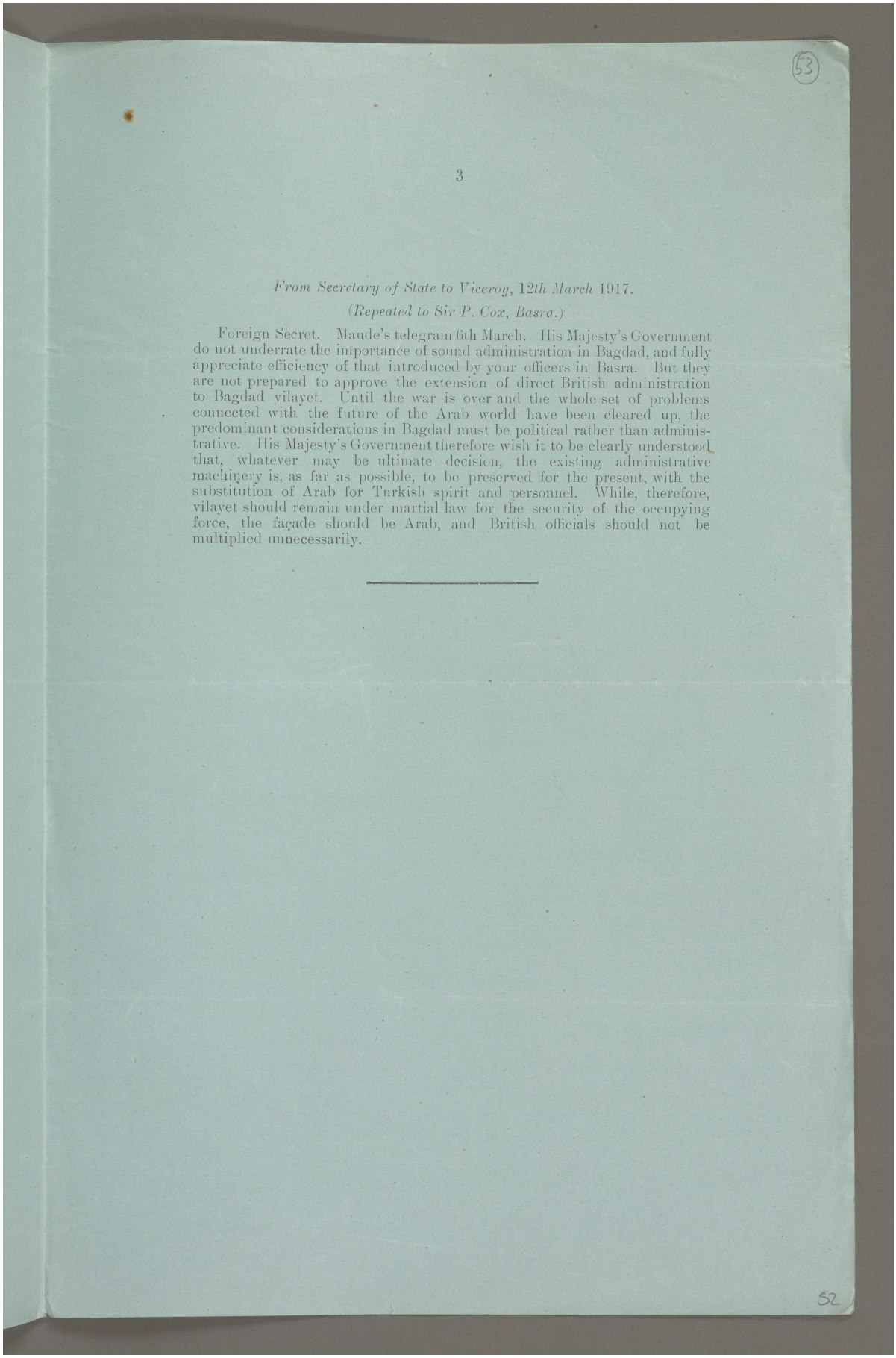

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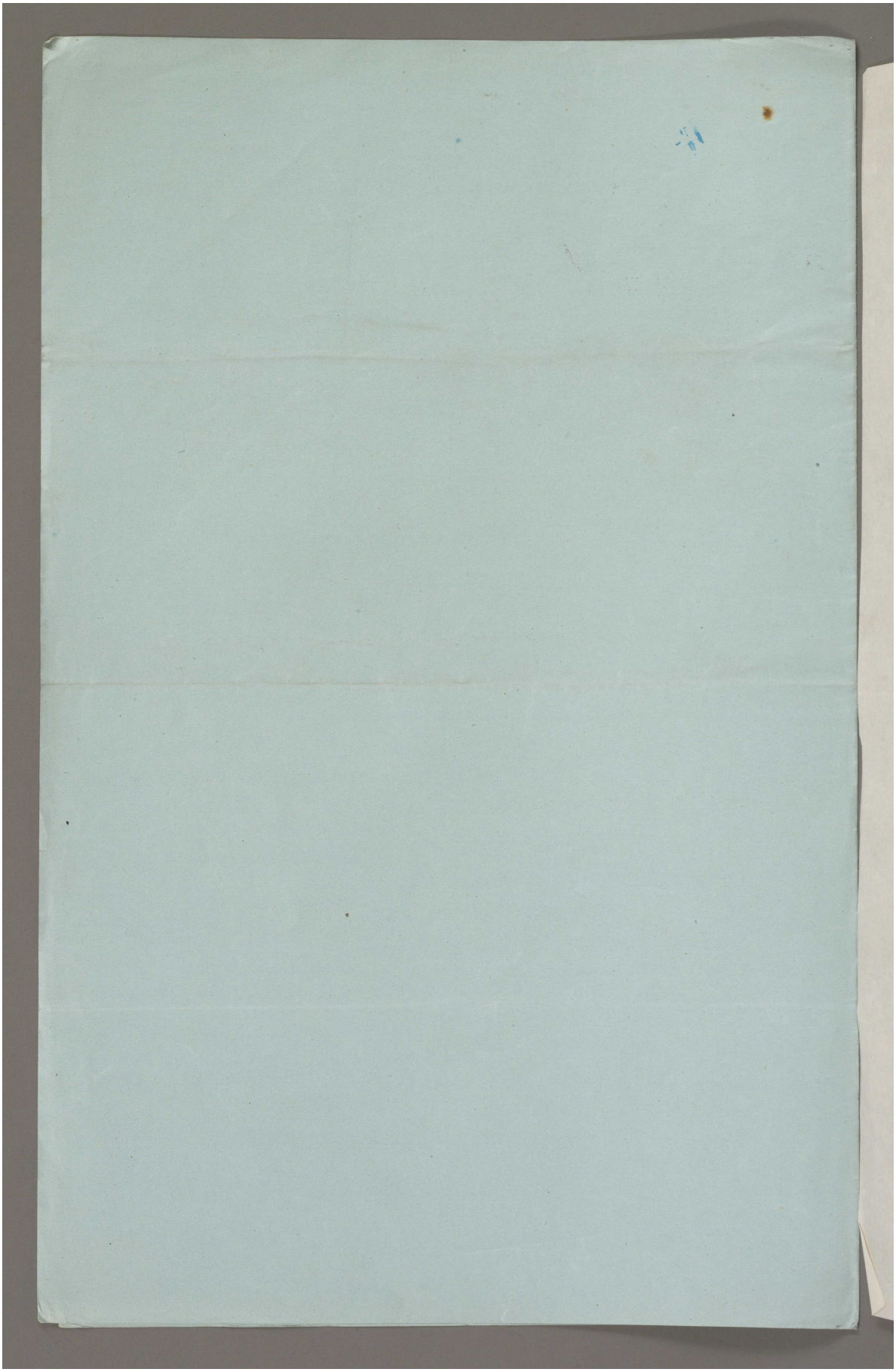

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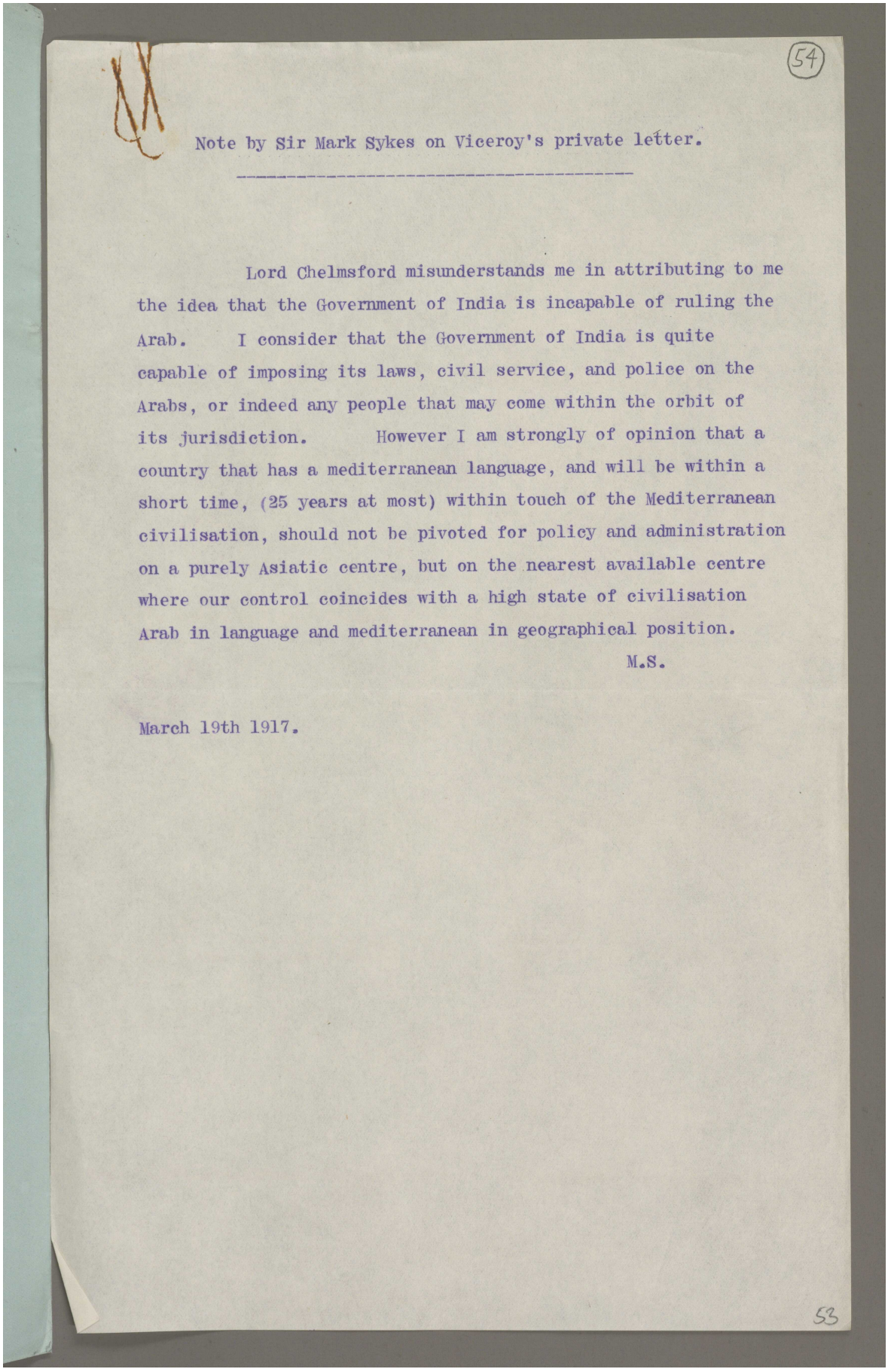

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Note by Sir Mark Sykes on Viceroy's private letter.

Lord Chelmsford misunderstands me in attributing to me the idea that the Government of India is incapable of ruling the Arab. I consider that the Government of India is quite capable of imposing its laws, civil service, and police on the Arabs, or indeed any people that may come within the orbit of its jurisdiction. However I am strongly of opinion that a country that has a mediterranean language, and will be within a short time, (25 years at most) within touch of the Mediterranean civilisation, should not be pivoted for policy and administration on a purely Asiatic centre, but on the nearest available centre where our control coincides with a high state of civilisation Arab in language and mediterranean in geographical position.

M.S.

March 19th 1917.

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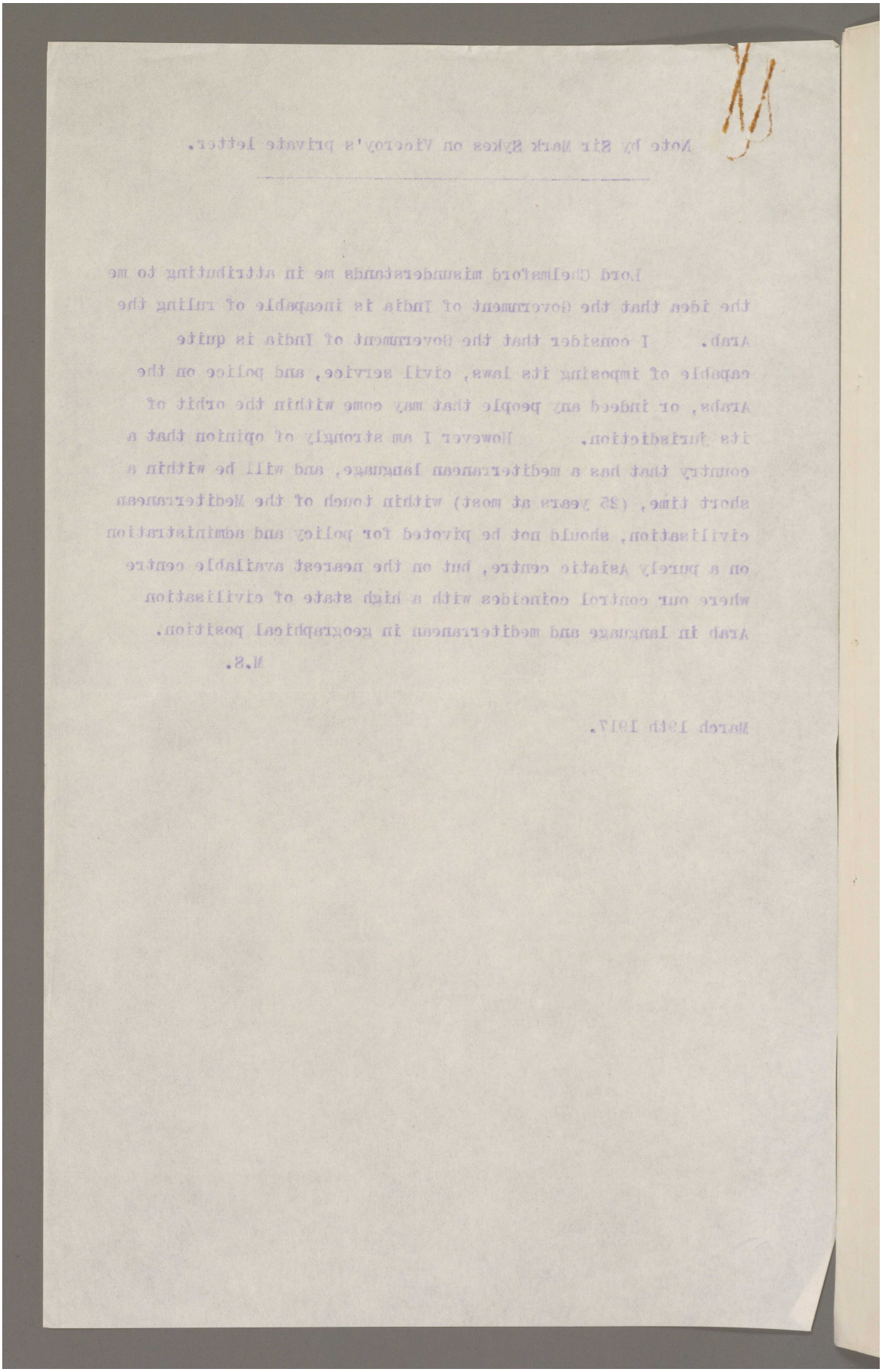

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SECRET. B 246

FUTURE ADMINISTRATION OF MESOPOTAMIA.

EXTRACT FROM LORD CHELMSFORD'S PRIVATE LETTER OF THE 18TH OCTOBER 1916.

In paragraph 13 of your letter of 13th September you ask me for my views with regard to the future administration of Mesopotamia.

This question, as you know, was considered by Hardinge as long ago as February 1915, and you probably have in the India Office a record of his views along with those of Hirtzel and Crewe.

I have very carefully considered these memoranda, but I think perhaps it would be more convenient if I were to summarise the position, as I see it, in my own words.

You say in your letter "I think you must feel that the Government of India already have sufficient responsibility." I entirely agree. We have even in the cognate matter of Persia expressed ourselves strongly against increasing our indirect responsibilities; but I doubt, as in the case of Persia, whether circumstances will not be too strong for us, and whether willy-nilly we shall not be forced to take on the additional responsibility. The question we have to face is, is it practicable to dissociate India from the administration of Mesopotamia?

(*a*) Mesopotamia will for some time to come require a garrison. The troops for this service will, in all probability, be drawn from India and, in the event of any emergency, the reinforcements will almost certainly have to come from her. And if India is to be called upon for military forces for the needs of Mesopotamia, surely the corollary is that India must have a voice in the political affairs of Mesopotamia. She could hardly be asked to hold her forces at the disposal of an Administration over which she had no control.

(*b*) I turn next to India's political position in the Persian Gulf; and though the situation there will be vitally altered by the elimination of the Baghdad Railway menace and the disappearance of Turkey, this much, I think, is certain. Someone will have to control the Gulf; control could scarcely be vested in a new Administration struggling to find its feet, and a dual control, assuming an independent Basrah Administration, is obviously to be deprecated. The control of the Gulf must then remain with India, and, if friction is to be avoided, it seems to me inevitable that India, along with the control of the Gulf, must control Basrah.

(*c*) I pass by the arguments in favour of such a policy based on commercial and religious grounds, and on India's present relations with the Chiefs situated in the Gulf region. These seem to me purely subsidiary to the governing factors mentioned in sub-paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*). I cordially agree with you in disliking the position, but the logic of circumstances seems to be too strong for us.

There remains to be considered the form of administration.

I do not altogether agree with your view that the problems and people of Mesopotamia are too dissimilar from those of India to make direct Indian administration advisable. India has a very varied assortment of races, and a Government that already administers efficiently Burmans and Pathans, Bengalis and Baluchis, Moplahs and Marwaris, can hardly be written down, even by Mark Sykes—for I know this to be his theory—as incapable of ruling the Arab.

The Government of India, moreover, is not rigid in its system of administration, as witness, for example, the differences between the

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administration of the Shan States, the Abors, the North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and the Aden Hinterland. But though I feel constrained to protest against your view that direct Indian administration is *per se* inadvisable, I am not prepared to advise that India should in fact directly administer Mesopotamia.

I should prefer an administration that was in large measure independent, subject only to control by India as regards its external relations and such matters as might involve India in military operations. I am not very familiar with the administration of the Soudan, and unfortunately I speak without the book, as I have no authorities by me to which I can refer, but my impression of its administration is that of a Government practically autonomous, but associated with and controlled as to its main lines of policy by, Egypt.

I contemplate some such administration for Mesopotamia and we have the machinery for it more or less to hand. I enclose a tabular statement[1] from which it can be seen that Sir P. Cox has a great number of officers already working under him, all of whom will thus qualify themselves for service in this region. Hardinge was, I understand, inclined to curtail Cox's demands for men on the ground that he was overstaffed. I would differ from Hardinge's policy in this matter, because I regard it as all important, in view of the future, to train on men to be our future administrators. They cannot be improvised, and if, as we believe, Great Britain will, at the end of the war, take over the Basrah Vilayet and perhaps a more extended region, it is essential that we should have men ready to hand for this purpose. There would be no idea of flooding Mesopotamia with Indian subordinates. We should fill the lower posts, as far as possible, with local men.

[1] Enclosure A.

I am afraid this is a somewhat rough note, but, if you wish, I will have it elaborated and drafted as a despatch. I hope, however, that it is a sufficiently clear reply to your question.

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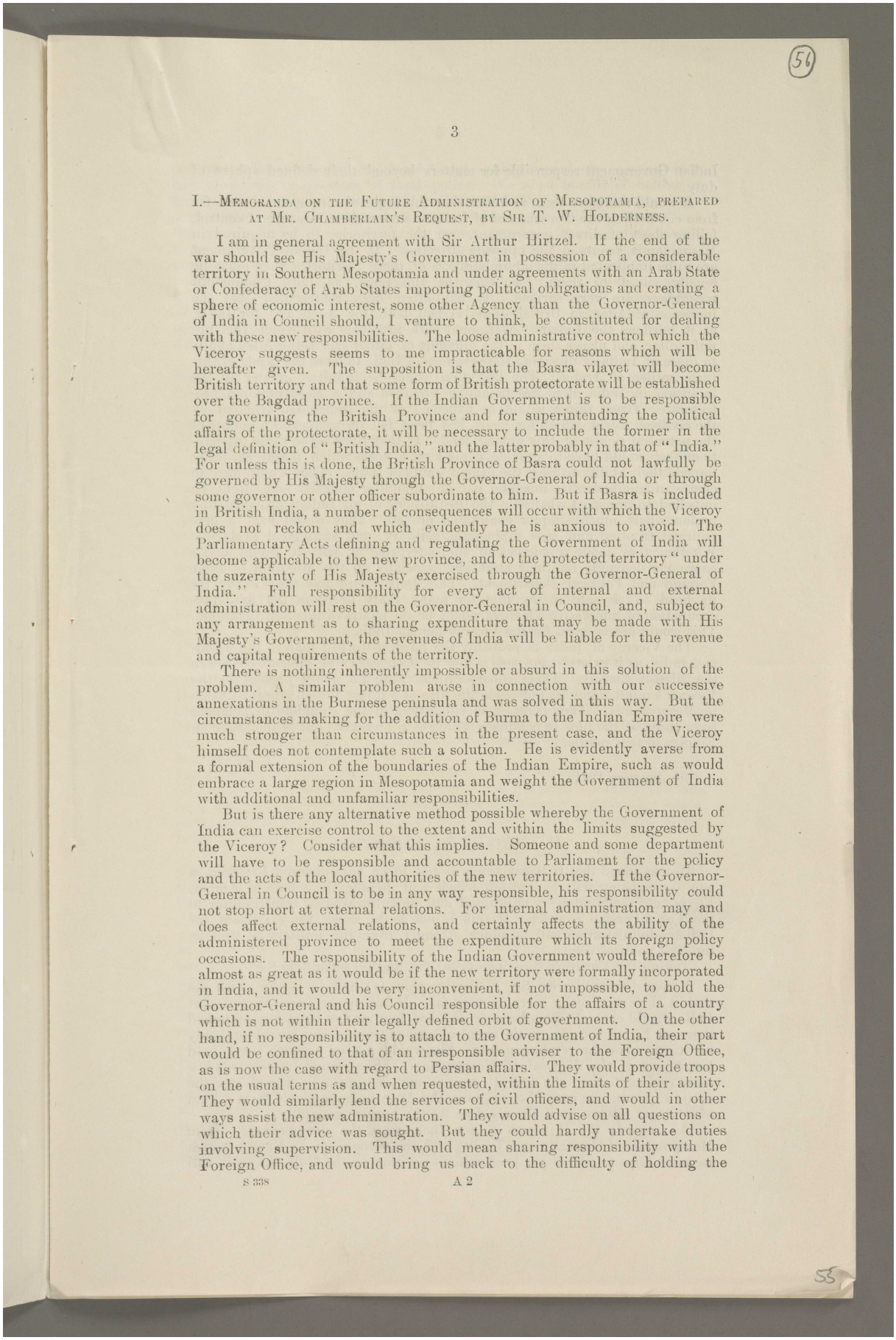

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I.—Memoranda on the Future Administration of Mesopotamia, prepared at Mr. Chamberlain's Request, by Sir T. W. Holderness.

I am in general agreement with Sir Arthur Hirtzel. If the end of the war should see His Majesty's Government in possession of a considerable territory in Southern Mesopotamia and under agreements with an Arab State or Confederacy of Arab States importing political obligations and creating a sphere of economic interest, some other Agency than the Governor-General of India in Council should, I venture to think, be constituted for dealing with these new responsibilities. The loose administrative control which the Viceroy suggests seems to me impracticable for reasons which will be hereafter given. The supposition is that the Basra vilayet will become British territory and that some form of British protectorate will be established over the Bagdad province. If the Indian Government is to be responsible for governing the British Province and for superintending the political affairs of the protectorate, it will be necessary to include the former in the legal definition of "British India," and the latter probably in that of "India." For unless this is done, the British Province of Basra could not lawfully be governed by His Majesty through the Governor-General of India or through some governor or other officer subordinate to him. But if Basra is included in British India, a number of consequences will occur with which the Viceroy does not reckon and which evidently he is anxious to avoid. The Parliamentary Acts defining and regulating the Government of India will become applicable to the new province, and to the protected territory "under the suzerainty of His Majesty exercised through the Governor-General of India." Full responsibility for every act of internal and external administration will rest on the Governor-General in Council, and, subject to any arrangement as to sharing expenditure that may be made with His Majesty's Government, the revenues of India will be liable for the revenue and capital requirements of the territory.

There is nothing inherently impossible or absurd in this solution of the problem. A similar problem arose in connection with our successive annexations in the Burmese peninsula and was solved in this way. But the circumstances making for the addition of Burma to the Indian Empire were much stronger than circumstances in the present case, and the Viceroy himself does not contemplate such a solution. He is evidently averse from a formal extension of the boundaries of the Indian Empire, such as would embrace a large region in Mesopotamia and weight the Government of India with additional and unfamiliar responsibilities.

But is there any alternative method possible whereby the Government of India can exercise control to the extent and within the limits suggested by the Viceroy? Consider what this implies. Someone and some department will have to be responsible and accountable to Parliament for the policy and the acts of the local authorities of the new territories. If the Governor-General in Council is to be in any way responsible, his responsibility could not stop short at external relations. For internal administration may and does affect external relations, and certainly affects the ability of the administered province to meet the expenditure which its foreign policy occasions. The responsibility of the Indian Government would therefore be almost as great as it would be if the new territory were formally incorporated in India, and it would be very inconvenient, if not impossible, to hold the Governor-General and his Council responsible for the affairs of a country which is not within their legally defined orbit of government. On the other hand, if no responsibility is to attach to the Government of India, their part would be confined to that of an irresponsible adviser to the Foreign Office, as is now the case with regard to Persian affairs. They would provide troops on the usual terms as and when requested, within the limits of their ability. They would similarly lend the services of civil officers, and would in other ways assist the new administration. They would advise on all questions on which their advice was sought. But they could hardly undertake duties involving supervision. This would mean sharing responsibility with the Foreign Office, and would bring us back to the difficulty of holding the

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Indian Government responsible for matters beyond their defined sphere of duty.

It would therefore seem to follow that the logic of circumstances, so far from compelling the Government of India to undertake a measure of control, falling short of direct government, over the territories to be acquired in Mesopotamia, points in the opposite direction. If the Indian Government are to be implicated in the administration of these territories, they must be legally seized of them. To this the objections, as Lord Chelmsford recognises, are very serious. It has often been represented that the inclusion of Aden in British India is bad both for Aden and for India, as it burdens the Indian Government with problems with which they are unfamiliar, and places them in the dilemma of either sacrificing Aden affairs to those of India or diverting the revenues of India to meet the needs of this little corner of Arabia. The objection would be infinitely greater to the inclusion in India of a Mesopotamian province and a Mesopotamian protectorate. Great things would be expected of the Indian Government by the civilised world, which for years has been fed on wonderful accounts of the potential riches of this wasted land. If they lived up to these expectations they would have to provide capital on a scale which might seriously impede their ability to meet the urgent wants of India. They would have to create an administrative machine out of unfamiliar material and might be impelled to transport wholesale the institutions of an Indian province to a region where much simpler conditions prevail. They would have a new political frontier and new diplomatic, military, and strategical problems. Whether they made a success of the enterprise or not, it would make enormous demands on their attention, especially on the attention of their Foreign and Political Department. This Department has the Viceroy for its head. It is safe to say that for many years to come the first preoccupation of successive Viceroys would be the affairs of this new dominion. This would not be good for the Viceroy nor for India.

The Viceroy of India is probably the hardest-worked man in the world, and India, as it exists at present, is the most onerous and difficult charge in the British Empire. These considerations were no doubt present in the Viceroy's mind when he put aside the idea of a direct Indian administration in Mesopotamia. They point, it is submitted, to the complete detachment from India of the new Dependency which is to be carved out of the Ottoman Empire in that region.

T. W. H.

9th January 1917.

II.—Notes by Sir A. Hirtzel.

It is assumed that if Mesopotamia is not to be administered by India, a new dependency will be created which will include the whole of Arabia, Egypt, and the Soudan—a unilingual and unicultural area, from Sollum to the Turco-Persian frontier. If this is *not* to be done, the argument for Indian administration will be much stronger, from the military as well as the civil point of view.

Taking the Viceroy's three points (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*) separately :—

I have discussed with Sir E. Barrow point (*a*), and he agrees with me that it does not really carry us very far. It has never been argued that India should control China because she has four or five battalions stationed there, or Egypt because, in the event of serious trouble, she would probably be drawn upon for reinforcements. She would not in a strict sense hold her forces at the disposal of Mesopotamia. She would merely raise *x* more regiments than she does at present, and Mesopotamia would pay the entire expense. In case of emergency, the Army in India would form a kind of strategic reserve, as it already does for the Empire generally.

As regards (*b*), it seems to me that, with the disappearance from Mesopotamia of Germany and Turkey and the recognition by Russia (which we must hope to get) of our predominant position in the Gulf, the Gulf will

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be eliminated from the region of "high policy," and its control will become merely a question of local police. We must beware of making a fetish of it. In future there should be little to do except keep the slave and arms traffic under, and suppress attempts at piracy on the Arab coast. The less we interfere with the Sheikhs the better—we have been tending lately to do so a little too much. On the Persian side it will be many years before any large problems come into existence. The questions of an international nature that will require unity of control are questions like the pearl fishery—to keep out interlopers—and lighting and buoyage. The Basra administration ought to be quite capable of dealing with these—indeed, the most important part of the latter (Koweit and the approaches to the Shat-el-Arab) falls automatically within its sphere.

If Mesopotamia and Arabia are kept separate from India, the "Political Resident, Persian Gulf" will cease to have much *raison d'être*; the affairs of the Gulf ports will be sufficiently attended to by the local consular officers, and what His Majesty's Minister, Tehran, has sometimes regarded as a vexatious anomaly will have been got rid of. On this point I am in agreement with Lieutenant-Colonel O'Connor as regards the future.

The separation of Mesopotamia and Arabia from India will leave the Government of India free to attend to what is their natural sphere, Southern Persia. Lord Chelmsford is surely right in thinking that they will have willy-nilly to take on additional responsibility there. It is their natural sphere for reasons that have long been recognised—historical, ethnological, and geographical. The years succeeding the war will almost certainly be years of great internal activity in India, and Government will be fully occupied in dealing with it. To assume additional responsibility both in Persia and Mesopotamia will surely be impracticable. Lord Chelmsford, recognising this, proposes that Indian responsibility for Mesopotamia should be reduced to a minimum. As to this, please see below. The more natural course, it appears to me, is to discard it altogether, and concentrate on Persia.

(*c*) The considerations mentioned under this head are, as the Viceroy says, subsidiary; and I do not think they are of great weight in themselves. It is not clear to me why Indian administration should necessarily be a commercial advantage. From the religious point of view there are the Oudh bequest and a certain amount of Shiah pilgrimage to be considered. As regards relations with the Gulf Sheikhs, undoubtedly continuity is desirable. But policy will presumably remain the same. I do not know how much India counts for as a political conception to any except the bigger men (Mohammerah, Koweit, Bin Saud, Muscat); but, generally speaking, I should have said that it is the Political Agent and His Majesty's ships that count most, and that so long as they are there it matters little whether the power behind them is the Government of India or some other.

It is quite true that the Government of India, as the Viceroy says, rule a very mixed assortment of races; but none of them is quite analogous to the Arab, and the problems which they present are not quite analogous to that presented by the task of ruling not only Arabs but a section only of the Arab world. The task of governing Bengalis (which, to judge from the condition of Bengal during the last 10 or 12 years, is not easy) would surely be much more difficult if their politico-religious centre of gravity lay in some region outside India and the greater part of the Bengali-speaking people were under (say) the Colonial Office. As for capability of ruling the Arab, it is difficult to say *a priori*. But I believe that the Turks have generally been unwilling to have advisers and officials from India, *because they treated them as if they were Indians*. The Arabs are not likely to feel less strongly.

The Government of India may not be rigid in its system of administration. But the number of Indian Acts already applied to Mesopotamia (*see* pp. 22–23 of the Irak Code) indicates a tendency to rapid systematisation which is not of very good omen. And with it must come—sooner rather than later—all the Indian mechanism. The Arabs may endure the white man—that remains to be seen—but it is surely doubtful if they will endure the Indian; and if the Government of India administer Irak the Indian public will certainly look upon the country as their preserve.

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This seems to me to be one of the main objections to Indian administration and to be likely to make the kind of loose control which Lord Chelmsford contemplates difficult to realise in practice. The Imperial Legislative Council will not allow it; and especially when it is a question of spending Indian money on Mesopotamia (which will be necessary for some years, and for which, by the way, legislation in Parliament will presumably be required), it may be anticipated that the control will be greatly stiffened and the demand for interference in details of administration will be increased.

Moreover, as I said in my memorandum of 14th March 1915, the Power which detaches from Turkey regions with the history and the potentialities of Mesopotamia makes itself morally responsible to humanity and civilisation for their reclamation and development. Whatever system of administration we set up there we cannot, it is submitted, leave it to its own devices.

A good deal might be said as to the actual difficulties in the way of administration from India. But as Lord Chelmsford has referred to *personnel*, I will mention one point in connection with that. Unless Mesopotamia is to be very closely administered by a large British staff (which is not desirable in itself), the Service will be too small to be self-contained. It will therefore presumably be recruited by loan from India. But this will mean that it will be exposed to all the vicissitudes of transfers, &c., necessitated by purely departmental considerations in India. As, for example, now—when Mr. Dobbs has begun to acquire a considerable amount of experience, and has done valuable work, as Revenue Commissioner at Basra, he is diverted, on return from leave, to Baluchistan. Moreover, the system on which the postings are arranged in the Foreign and Political Department is apparently that of encouraging interchangeability. That is, no doubt, very convenient departmentally; but it could not be good for a country like Mesopotamia to be administered by a constant stream of inexperienced officers (however able) from the whole vast region covered by the Foreign and Political Department.

A. H.

30th December 1916.

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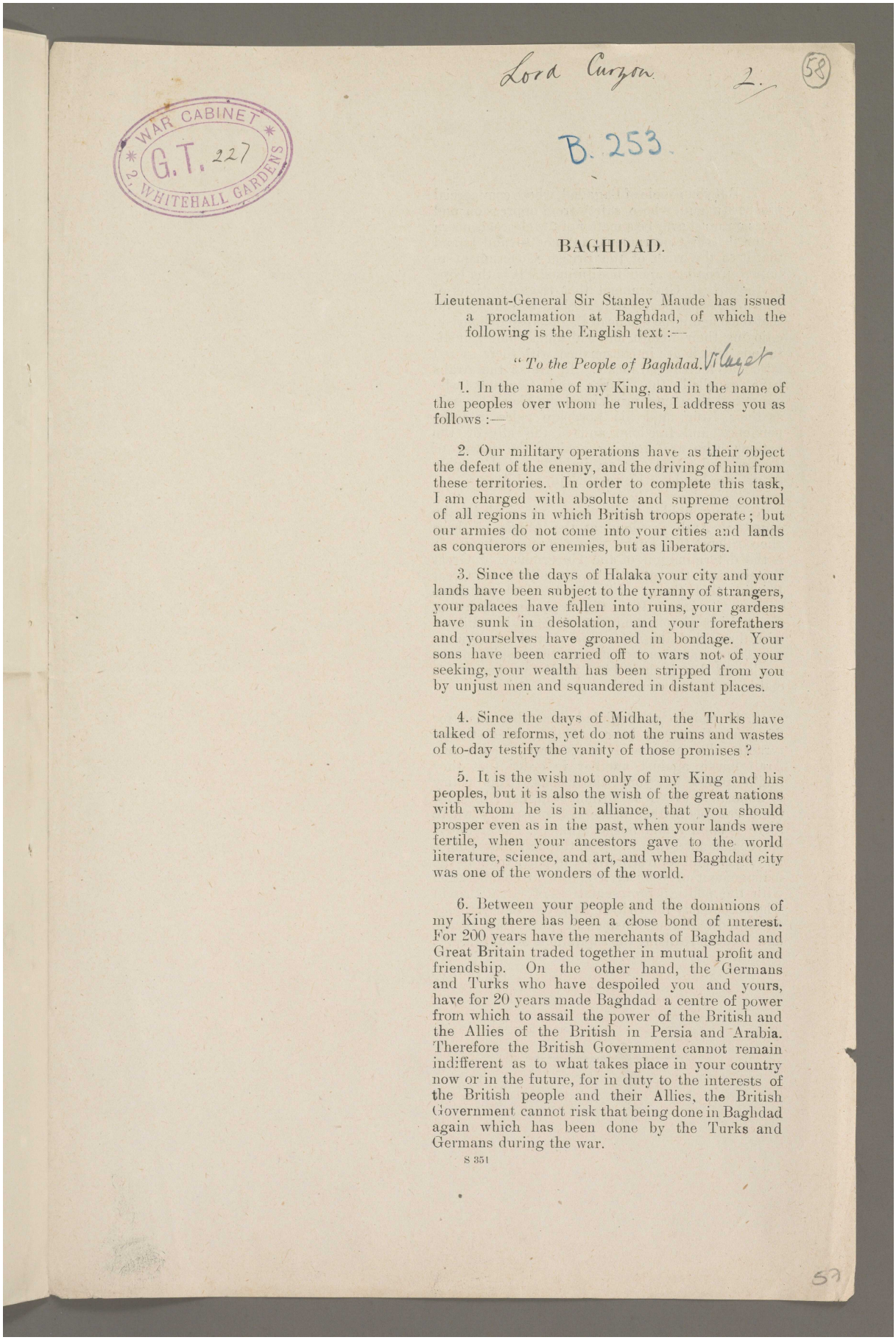

Lord Curzon 2. (58)

WAR CABINET
G.T. 227
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

B. 253.

BAGHDAD.

Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude has issued a proclamation at Baghdad, of which the following is the English text :—

"*To the People of Baghdad.*

1. In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows :—

2. Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate ; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

3. Since the days of Halaka your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

4. Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises ?

5. It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

6. Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks who have despoiled you and yours, have for 20 years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

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7. But you people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hejaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

8. Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them, that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

9. O people of Baghdad remember that for 26 generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South, and West in realising the aspirations of your race."

19th March 1917.

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SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Report of Sub-Committee appointed under paragraph 17 of the Minutes of 21st March 1917.

1. We have been directed to investigate the details of the division of work between the Indian and Mesopotamian services, and the sources of recruitment for the latter. In order to carry out these directions, we have found it necessary to consider *seriatim* the "provisional recommendations" embodied in the Minutes of the 21st March 1917. We submit the following remarks:—

Recommendations Nos. 1, 2, *and* 3.—No observations.

Nos. 4 *and* 6—*Limits of Bagdad Vilayet: Question of the Holy Places.*—We desire to lay stress on the importance of including in the future administrative area of the State or Province of Bagdad all the land irrigated, or to be irrigated, by the existing or future canal system of Mesopotamia. The Hindia barrage and the canals fed from it are in the neighbourhood of the Shia shrines, which it is proposed to treat as separate *enclaves* to be excluded from British direct control. In delimiting these enclaves the objection to including in them any land falling within the limits of the canal system should be carefully borne in mind. We also consider that, whatever form of separate administration is set up in the Bagdad Vilayet, the control of irrigation in the two Vilayets (Bagdad and Basra) should be in the hands of a single authority.

No. 5.—*Form of Arab Administration in Bagdad Vilayet.*—We understand the present position to be that the "Irak Code," which contains the law in force in the Basra Vilayet, extends automatically to all additional territory occupied since the Code was introduced. We consider that this code will not be found appropriate to the conditions of the Bagdad Vilayet if, as is contemplated, this territory is to be administered as far as possible on Arab lines. The right course, in our opinion, would be to maintain the local judicial system as far as possible, both in civil and criminal matters, and both as regards the substance of the law and the official personnel, subject to such modifications in substance and in nomenclature as may be found necessary (*e.g.*, the substitution of Arabic for Turkish official titles, wherever the latter are in use). The same principle should be followed in constituting the executive Government and the machinery of administration. The existing land-revenue system should be left as far as possible undisturbed, while the tribal system of government, the provincial and local councils, and the old official organisation (Turks being replaced by Arabs) should be maintained. The policy of His Majesty's Government should be to administer the Vilayet as an Arab province, so far as possible by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions. In this way no insuperable obstacles would be created to its ultimate inclusion, under British control, in an Arab State or Confederacy, should this policy mature; and the promises given in Sir Stanley Maude's proclamation would thus be made good. The employment of Indians in any branch of the administration of the Vilayet is inconsistent with this policy, and should therefore be strictly discountenanced. No Asiatics from outside the Vilayet should be employed in the administration unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile.

In pursuance of this policy, it would seem desirable to resuscitate, under British auspices, whatever may remain of the provincial and municipal councils that existed in the Vilayet under the Turkish régime.

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No. 6.—*See* under No. 4.

No. 7.—No observations.

No. 8. *Headquarters of Government.*—We consider that the title and place of residence of the Head of the Mesopotamia Administration must depend to some extent on the future status of the Basra Vilayet. If that Vilayet does not become British territory, the importance of Bagdad as a capital city, and the probability that the affairs of the Bagdad Vilayet will occupy the greater part of the time and attention of the Head of the Administration, point to locating him at Bagdad. A solution might be to place the Administration of the Basra Vilayet under a "Governor," or "Deputy-Governor" of Basra, subordinate to a "High Commissioner," with headquarters at Bagdad, whose authority would extend to the whole of Mesopotamia.

But in the more likely event of the Basra Vilayet becoming British territory, there appear strong objections to such a solution. Apart from the anomaly of governing a British province, Basra, from headquarters situated in territory with a less clearly defined status, it could not but seriously impair the Arab "façade," which is to be the basis of our policy as regards Bagdad. For if Basra is annexed and the Head of the Administration for Basra and Bagdad enjoys the single title of "High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," and has his official headquarters at Bagdad, it is difficult to imagine that any such "façade" can continue to exist or that the Arab mind will not consider the whole of Mesopotamia to have been annexed to Great Britain. The solution proposed would be for the Chief of the Administration to be termed "Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," with his titular headquarters at Basra; although it would be understood that he would usually reside at Bagdad, where his most important duties would lie. It would be necessary for two officials to be available, one at Basra and one at Bagdad, to assist him and to replace him during absence. These officials might be called "Deputy Governor of Basra" and "Deputy High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," respectively.

No. 9. Civil Service.—We see objection to the creation of a special Civil Service for Mesopotamia, on the ground that the cadre would be too small to be self-supporting, and that the number of prize appointments would be insufficient to attract candidates of the best stamp. We would recommend the amalgamation of the Service with that of the Sudan, recruitment to both services being by the same method and the personnel interchangeable. ~~Amalgamation with the Egyptian Civil Service might follow later.~~ In the early stages it will probably be necessary to employ a number of military officers in various civil capacities. Officers from the Indian Services are also likely to be required, though it is difficult to estimate, even approximately, in what numbers. Such officers can be lent temporarily under the "Foreign Service" rules already in force. Opportunity should also be given to Indian Officers, Civil and Military, now employed in Mesopotamia to volunteer for permanent transfer to the new Service.

Nos. 10–13.—No observations.

No. 14. West and South Coast of Persian Gulf.—Certain aspects of the question appear to us to point to the desirability of placing the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf under the political control of the Mesopotamian authorities rather than of the Government of India. The acquisition by Bin Saud of El Hasa will necessarily bring under the control of the former the Arabian coast as far south as Bahrein. We understand, moreover, that the Government of India already experience considerable difficulty in staffing the posts in this region, owing to the limited number and value of the appointments available, which offer little inducement to officers of the Indian Political Department to qualify themselves for service in Arabic-speaking districts. This difficulty will be greatly increased by the removal of Bagdad from the Indian sphere. We recommend that the Government of India should be consulted on this point with as little delay as possible, and that, in the absence of strong objection on their part, the question should be reconsidered in the light of the above remarks.

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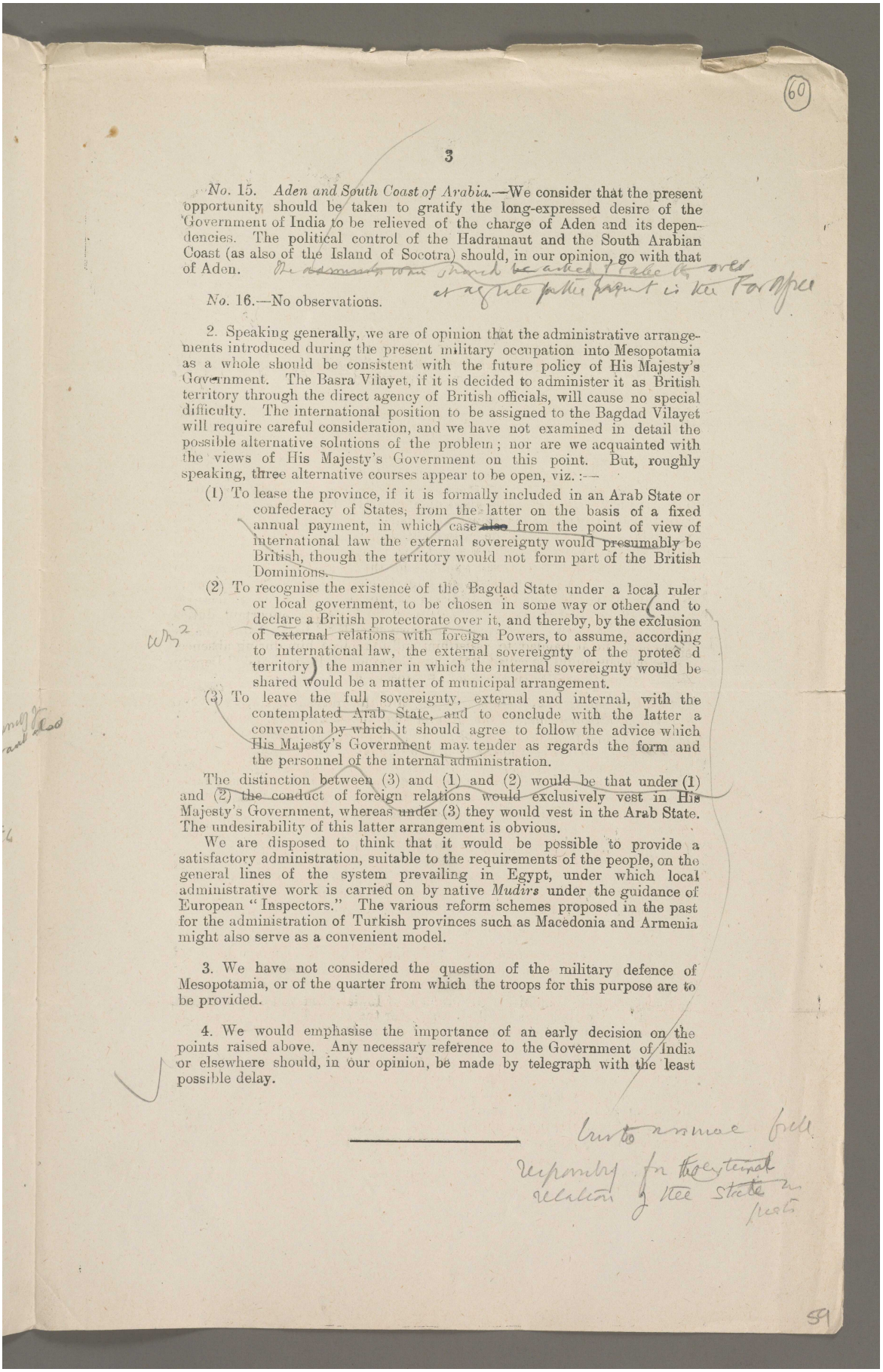


No. 15. *Aden and South Coast of Arabia.*—We consider that the present opportunity should be taken to gratify the long-expressed desire of the Government of India to be relieved of the charge of Aden and its dependencies. The political control of the Hadramaut and the South Arabian Coast (as also of the Island of Socotra) should, in our opinion, go with that of Aden.

No. 16.—No observations.

2. Speaking generally, we are of opinion that the administrative arrangements introduced during the present military occupation into Mesopotamia as a whole should be consistent with the future policy of His Majesty's Government. The Basra Vilayet, if it is decided to administer it as British territory through the direct agency of British officials, will cause no special difficulty. The international position to be assigned to the Bagdad Vilayet will require careful consideration, and we have not examined in detail the possible alternative solutions of the problem; nor are we acquainted with the views of His Majesty's Government on this point. But, roughly speaking, three alternative courses appear to be open, viz.:—

(1) To lease the province, if it is formally included in an Arab State or confederacy of States, from the latter on the basis of a fixed annual payment, in which case also from the point of view of international law the external sovereignty would presumably be British, though the territory would not form part of the British Dominions.

(2) To recognise the existence of the Bagdad State under a local ruler or local government, to be chosen in some way or other, and to declare a British protectorate over it, and thereby, by the exclusion of external relations with foreign Powers, to assume, according to international law, the external sovereignty of the protected territory; the manner in which the internal sovereignty would be shared would be a matter of municipal arrangement.

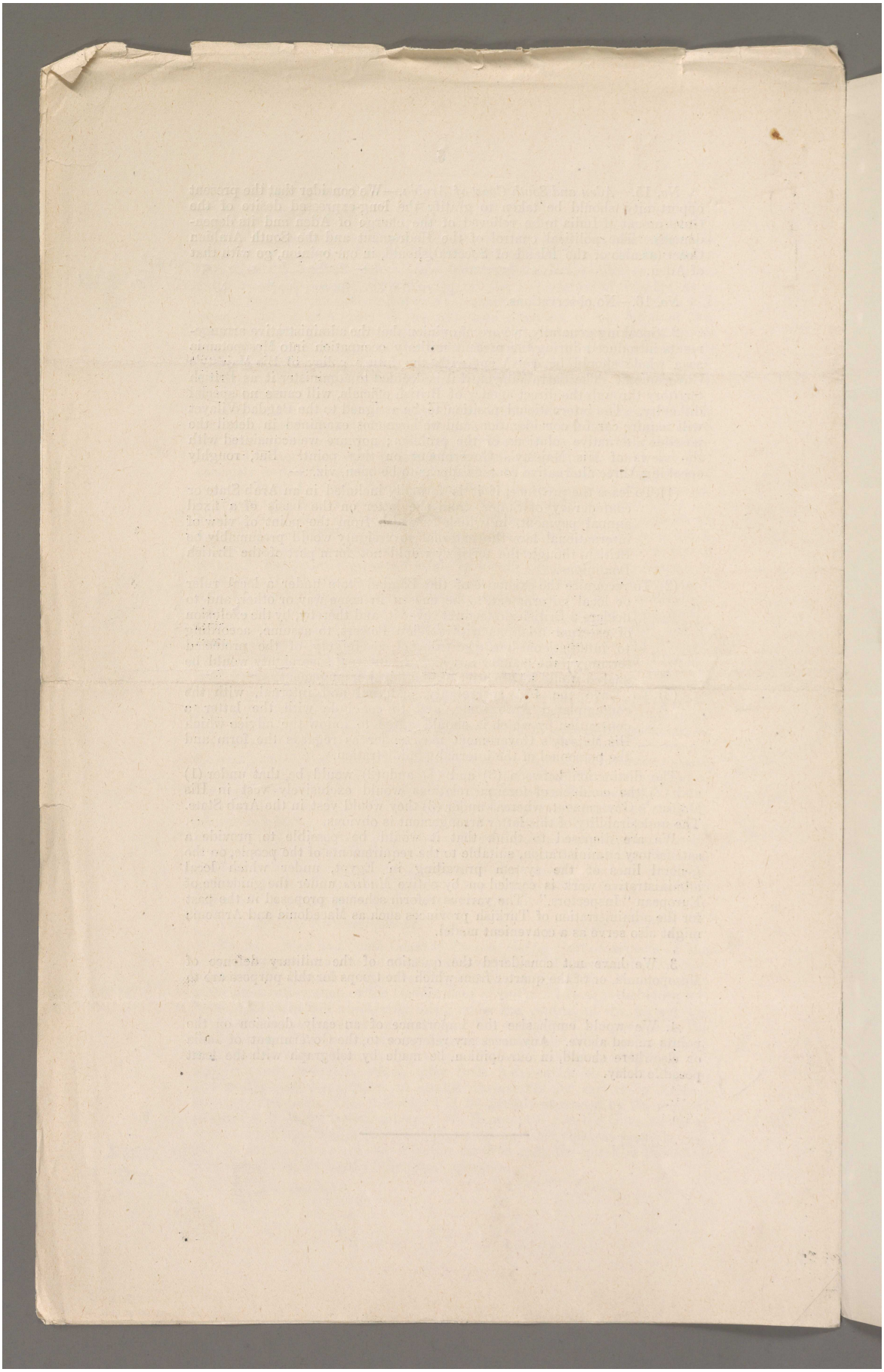
(3) To leave the full sovereignty, external and internal, with the contemplated Arab State, and to conclude with the latter a convention by which it should agree to follow the advice which His Majesty's Government may tender as regards the form and the personnel of the internal administration.

The distinction between (3) and (1) and (2) would be that under (1) and (2) the conduct of foreign relations would exclusively vest in His Majesty's Government, whereas under (3) they would vest in the Arab State. The undesirability of this latter arrangement is obvious.

We are disposed to think that it would be possible to provide a satisfactory administration, suitable to the requirements of the people, on the general lines of the system prevailing in Egypt, under which local administrative work is carried on by native *Mudirs* under the guidance of European "Inspectors." The various reform schemes proposed in the past for the administration of Turkish provinces such as Macedonia and Armenia might also serve as a convenient model.

3. We have not considered the question of the military defence of Mesopotamia, or of the quarter from which the troops for this purpose are to be provided.

4. We would emphasise the importance of an early decision on the points raised above. Any necessary reference to the Government of India or elsewhere should, in our opinion, be made by telegraph with the least possible delay.



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SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Report of Sub-Committee appointed under paragraph 17 of the Minutes of 21st March 1917.

1. We have been directed to investigate the details of the division of work between the Indian and Mesopotamian services, and the sources of recruitment for the latter. In order to carry out these directions, we have found it necessary to consider *seriatim* the "provisional recommendations" embodied in the Minutes of the 21st March 1917. We submit the following remarks:—

Recommendations Nos. 1, 2, *and* 3.—No observations.

Nos. 4 *and* 6—*Limits of Bagdad Vilayet: question of the Holy Places.*—We desire to lay stress on the importance of including in the future administrative area of the State or Province of Bagdad all the land irrigated, or to be irrigated, by the existing or future canal system of Mesopotamia. The Hindia barrage and the canals fed from it are in the neighbourhood of the Shia shrines, which it is proposed to treat as separate *enclaves* to be excluded from British direct control. In delimiting these enclaves the objection to including in them any land falling within the limits of the canal system should be carefully borne in mind. We also consider that, whatever form of separate administration is set up in the Bagdad Vilayet, the control of irrigation in the two Vilayets (Bagdad and Basra) should be in the hands of a single authority.

No. 5.—*Form of Arab Administration in Bagdad Vilayet.*—We understand the present position to be that the "Irak Code," which contains the law in force in the Basra Vilayet, extends automatically to all additional territory occupied since the code was introduced. We consider that this code will not be found appropriate to the conditions of the Bagdad Vilayet if, as is contemplated, this territory is to be administered as far as possible on Arab lines. The right course, in our opinion, would be to maintain the local judicial system as far as possible, both in civil and criminal matters, and both as regards the substance of the law and the official personnel, subject to such modifications in substance and in nomenclature as may be found necessary (*e.g.*, the substitution of Arabic for Turkish official titles, wherever the latter are in use). The same principle should be followed in constituting the executive Government and the machinery of administration. The existing land-revenue system should be left as far as possible undisturbed, while the tribal system of government, the provincial and local councils, and the old official organisation (Turks being replaced by Arabs) should be maintained. The policy of His Majesty's Government should be to administer the Vilayet as an Arab province, so far as possible by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions. In this way no insuperable obstacles would be created to its ultimate inclusion, under British control, in an Arab State or Confederacy; and the promises given in Sir Stanley Maude's proclamation would thus be made good. The employment of Indians in any branch of the administration of the Vilayet is inconsistent with this policy, and should therefore be strictly discountenanced. No Asiatics from outside the Vilayet should be employed in the administration unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile.

In pursuance of the above policy, it would seem desirable to resuscitate, under British auspices, whatever may remain of the provincial and municipal councils that existed in the Vilayet under the Turkish régime.

No. 6.—*See* under No. 4.

No. 7.—No observations.

No. 8. *Headquarters of Government.*—We consider that the title and place of residence of the Head of the Mesopotamian Administration must

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depend to some extent on the future status of the Basra Vilayet. If that Vilayet does not become British territory, the importance of Bagdad as a capital city, and the probability that the affairs of the Bagdad Vilayet will occupy the greater part of the time and attention of the Head of the Administration, point to locating him at Bagdad. A solution might be to place the Administration of the Basra Vilayet under a "Governor" or "Deputy-Governor" of Basra, subordinate to a "High Commissioner," with headquarters at Bagdad, whose authority would extend to the whole of Mesopotamia.

But in the more likely event of the Basra Vilayet becoming British territory, there appear strong objections to such a solution. Apart from the anomaly of governing a British province (Basra) from headquarters situated in territory with a less clearly defined status, it could not but seriously impair the Arab "façade," which is to be the basis of our policy as regards Bagdad. For if Basra is annexed and the Head of the Administration for Basra and Bagdad enjoys the single title of "High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," and has his official headquarters at Bagdad, it is difficult to imagine that any such "façade" can continue to exist or that the Arab mind will not consider the whole of Mesopotamia to have been annexed to Great Britain. The solution proposed would be for the Chief of the Administration to be termed "Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," with his titular headquarters at Basra; although it would be understood that he would usually reside at Bagdad, where his most important duties would lie. It would be necessary for two officials to be available, one at Basra and one at Bagdad, to assist him and to replace him during absence. These officials might be called "Deputy Governor of Basra" and "Deputy High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," respectively.

No. 9. Civil Service.—We see objection to the creation of a special Civil Service for Mesopotamia, on the ground that the cadre would be too small to be self-supporting, and that the number of prize appointments would be insufficient to attract candidates of the best stamp. We would recommend the amalgamation of the Service with that of the Sudan, recruitment to both services being by the same method and the personnel interchangeable. Amalgamation with the Egyptian Civil Service might follow later. In the early stages it will probably be necessary to employ a number of military officers in various civil capacities. Officers from the Indian Services are also likely to be required, though it is difficult to estimate, even approximately, in what numbers. Such officers can be lent temporarily under the "Foreign Service" rules already in force. Opportunity should also be given to Indian officers, civil and military, now employed in Mesopotamia to volunteer for permanent transfer to the new Service.

Nos. 10–13.—No observations.

No. 14. West and South Coast of Persian Gulf.—Certain aspects of the question appear to us to point to the desirability of placing the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf under the political control of the Mesopotamian authorities rather than of the Government of India. The acquisition by Bin Saud of El Hasa will necessarily bring under the control of the former the Arabian coast as far south as Bahrein. We understand, moreover, that the Government of India already experience considerable difficulty in staffing the posts in this region, owing to the limited number and value of the appointments available, which offer little inducement to officers of the Indian Political Department to qualify themselves for service in Arabic-speaking districts. This difficulty will be greatly increased by the removal of Bagdad from the Indian sphere. We recommend that the Government of India should be consulted on this point with as little delay as possible, and that, in the absence of strong objection on their part, the question should be reconsidered in the light of the above remarks.

No. 15. Aden and South Coast of Arabia.—We consider that the present opportunity should be taken to gratify the long-expressed desire of the Government of India to be relieved of the charge of Aden and its dependencies. The political control of the Hadramaut and the South Arabian Coast (as also of the island of Socotra) should, in our opinion, go with that of Aden.

No. 16.—No observations.

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2. Speaking generally, we are of opinion that the administrative arrangements introduced during the present military occupation into Mesopotamia as a whole should be consistent with the future policy of His Majesty's Government. The Basra Vilayet, if it is decided to administer it as British territory through the direct agency of British officials, will cause no special difficulty. The international position to be assigned to the Bagdad Vilayet will require careful consideration, and we have not examined in detail the possible alternative solutions of the problem; nor are we acquainted with the views of His Majesty's Government on this point. But, roughly speaking, three alternative courses appear to be open, viz.:—

(1) To lease the province, if it is formally included in an Arab State or confederacy of States, from the latter on the basis of a fixed annual payment, in which case, from the point of view of international law, the external sovereignty would presumably be British, though the territory would not form part of the British Dominions.

(2) To recognise the existence of the Bagdad State under a local ruler or local government, and to declare a British protectorate over it; and thereby, by the exclusion of external relations with foreign Powers, to assume, according to international law, the external sovereignty of the protected territory. The manner in which the internal sovereignty would be shared would be a matter of municipal arrangement.

(3) To leave the full sovereignty, external and internal, with the contemplated Arab State, and to conclude with the latter a convention by which it should agree to follow the advice which His Majesty's Government may tender as regards the form and the personnel of the internal administration.

The distinction between (3), and (1) and (2), would be that under (1) and (2) the conduct of foreign relations would exclusively vest in His Majesty's Government, whereas under (3) they would vest in the Arab State. The undesirability of this latter arrangement is obvious.

We are disposed to think that it would be possible to provide a satisfactory administration, suitable to the requirements of the people, on the general lines of the system prevailing in Egypt, under which local administrative work is carried on by native *Mudirs* under the guidance of European "Inspectors." The various reform schemes proposed in the past for the administration of Turkish provinces such as Macedonia and Armenia might also serve as a convenient model.

3. We have not considered the question of the military defence of Mesopotamia, or of the quarter from which the troops for this purpose are to be provided.

4. We would emphasise the importance of an early decision on the points raised above. Any necessary reference to the Government of India or elsewhere should, in our opinion, be made by telegraph with the least possible delay.

T. W. Holderness.
Mark Sykes.
A. Henry McMahon.
A. Hirtzel.
R. Graham.
George R. Clerk.

J. E. Shuckburgh,
Secretary,
27th March 1917.

[Appendix

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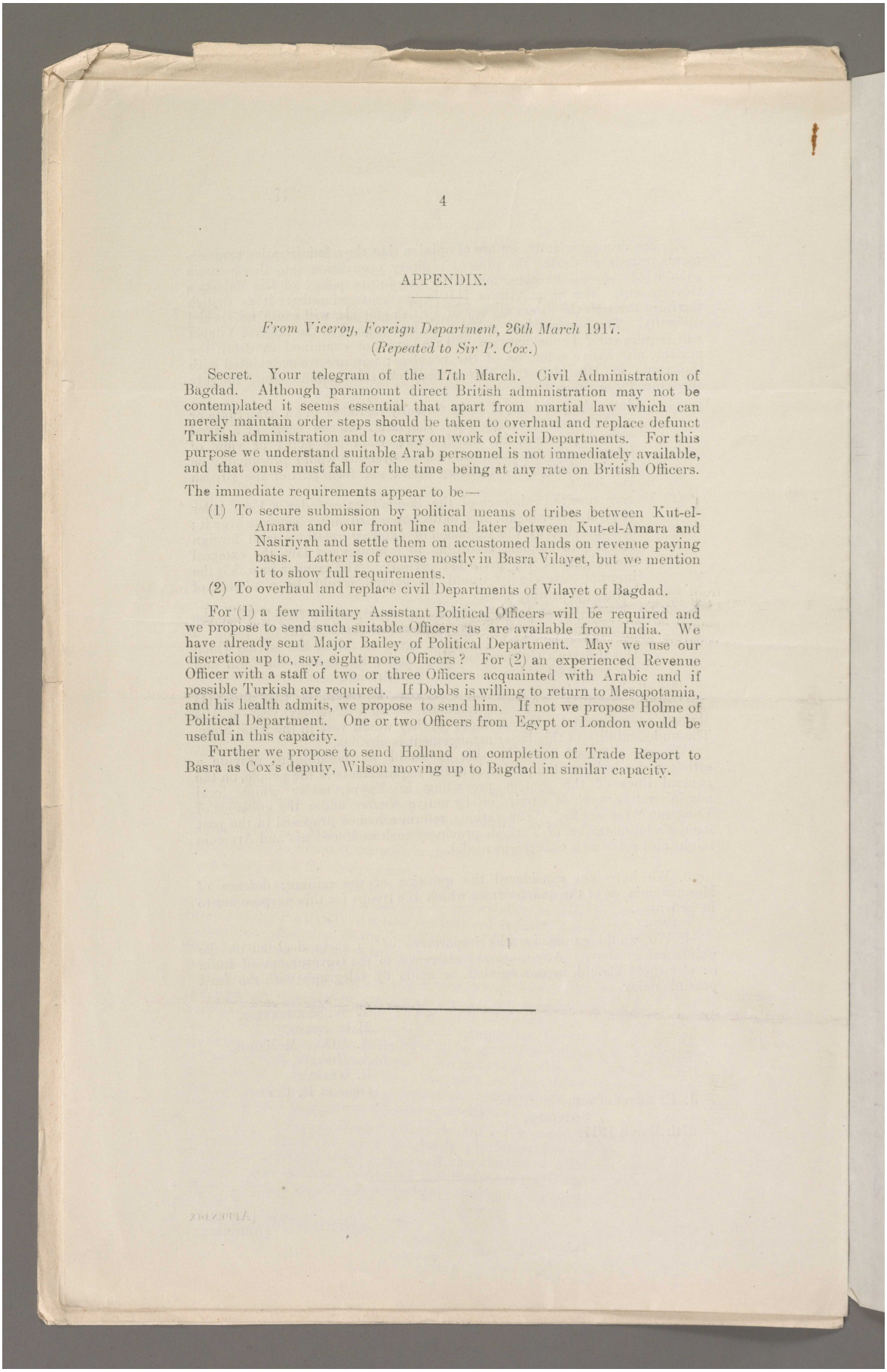

APPENDIX.

From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 26th March 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox.)

Secret. Your telegram of the 17th March. Civil Administration of Bagdad. Although paramount direct British administration may not be contemplated it seems essential that apart from martial law which can merely maintain order steps should be taken to overhaul and replace defunct Turkish administration and to carry on work of civil Departments. For this purpose we understand suitable Arab personnel is not immediately available, and that onus must fall for the time being at any rate on British Officers.

The immediate requirements appear to be—

(1) To secure submission by political means of tribes between Kut-el-Amara and our front line and later between Kut-el-Amara and Nasiriyah and settle them on accustomed lands on revenue paying basis. Latter is of course mostly in Basra Vilayet, but we mention it to show full requirements.

(2) To overhaul and replace civil Departments of Vilayet of Bagdad.

For (1) a few military Assistant Political Officers will be required and we propose to send such suitable Officers as are available from India. We have already sent Major Bailey of Political Department. May we use our discretion up to, say, eight more Officers? For (2) an experienced Revenue Officer with a staff of two or three Officers acquainted with Arabic and if possible Turkish are required. If Dobbs is willing to return to Mesopotamia, and his health admits, we propose to send him. If not we propose Holme of Political Department. One or two Officers from Egypt or London would be useful in this capacity.

Further we propose to send Holland on completion of Trade Report to Basra as Cox's deputy, Wilson moving up to Bagdad in similar capacity.

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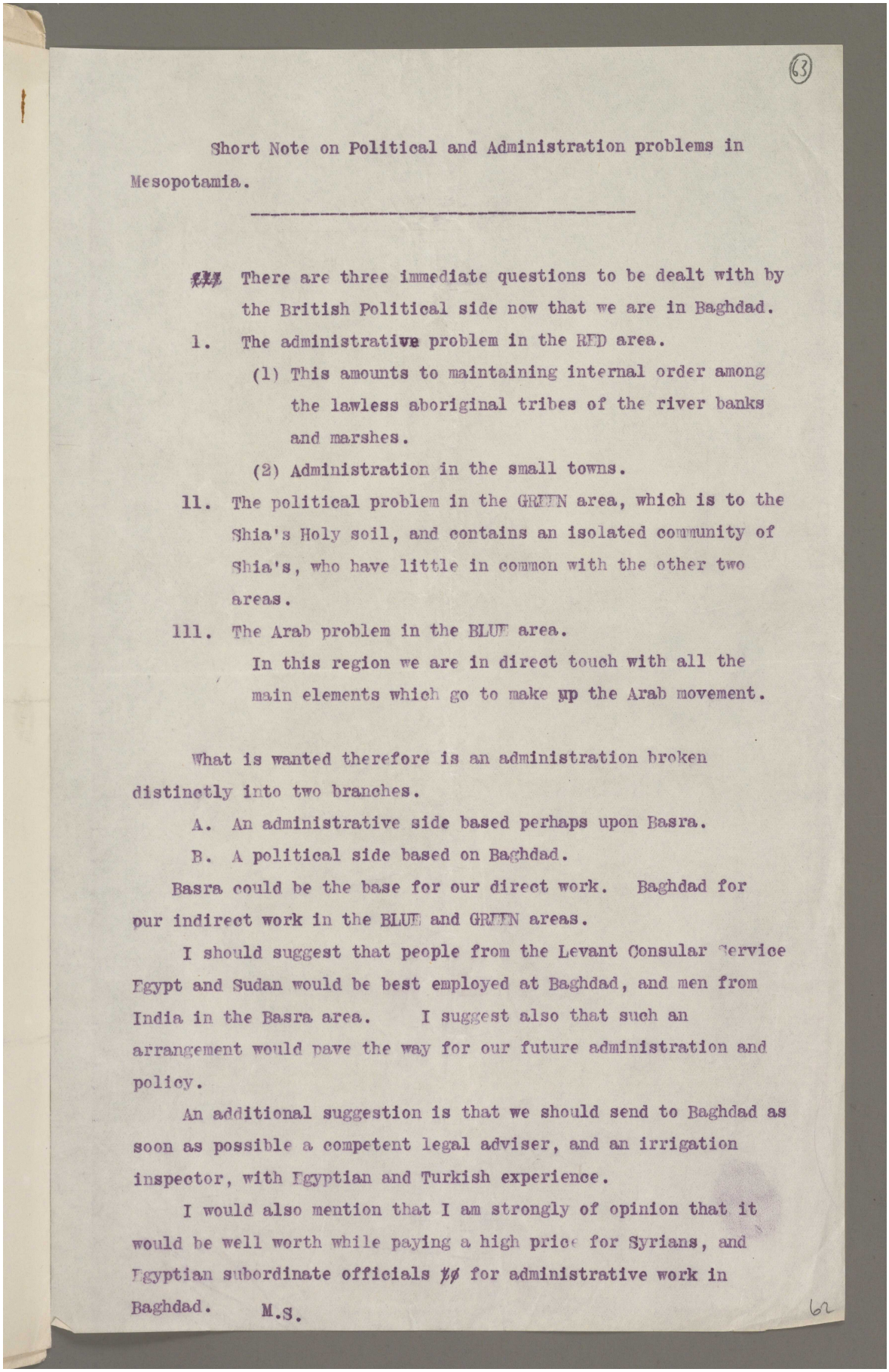

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Short Note on Political and Administration problems in Mesopotamia.

There are three immediate questions to be dealt with by the British Political side now that we are in Baghdad.

I. The administrative problem in the RED area.

(1) This amounts to maintaining internal order among the lawless aboriginal tribes of the river banks and marshes.

(2) Administration in the small towns.

II. The political problem in the GREEN area, which is to the Shia's Holy soil, and contains an isolated community of Shia's, who have little in common with the other two areas.

III. The Arab problem in the BLUE area.

In this region we are in direct touch with all the main elements which go to make up the Arab movement.

What is wanted therefore is an administration broken distinctly into two branches.

A. An administrative side based perhaps upon Basra.

B. A political side based on Baghdad.

Basra could be the base for our direct work. Baghdad for our indirect work in the BLUE and GREEN areas.

I should suggest that people from the Levant Consular Service Egypt and Sudan would be best employed at Baghdad, and men from India in the Basra area. I suggest also that such an arrangement would pave the way for our future administration and policy.

An additional suggestion is that we should send to Baghdad as soon as possible a competent legal adviser, and an irrigation inspector, with Egyptian and Turkish experience.

I would also mention that I am strongly of opinion that it would be well worth while paying a high price for Syrians, and Egyptian subordinate officials for administrative work in Baghdad. M.S.

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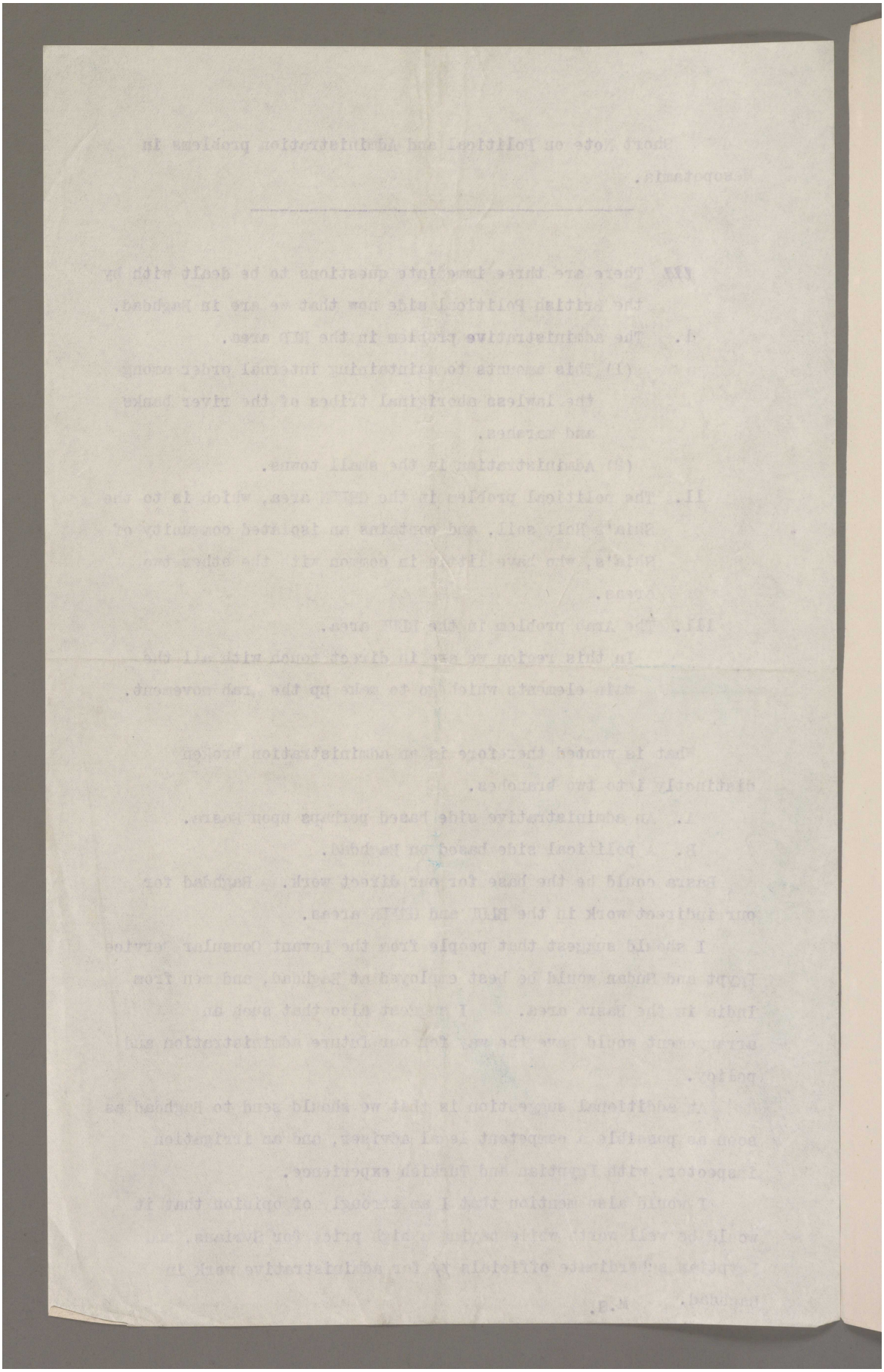

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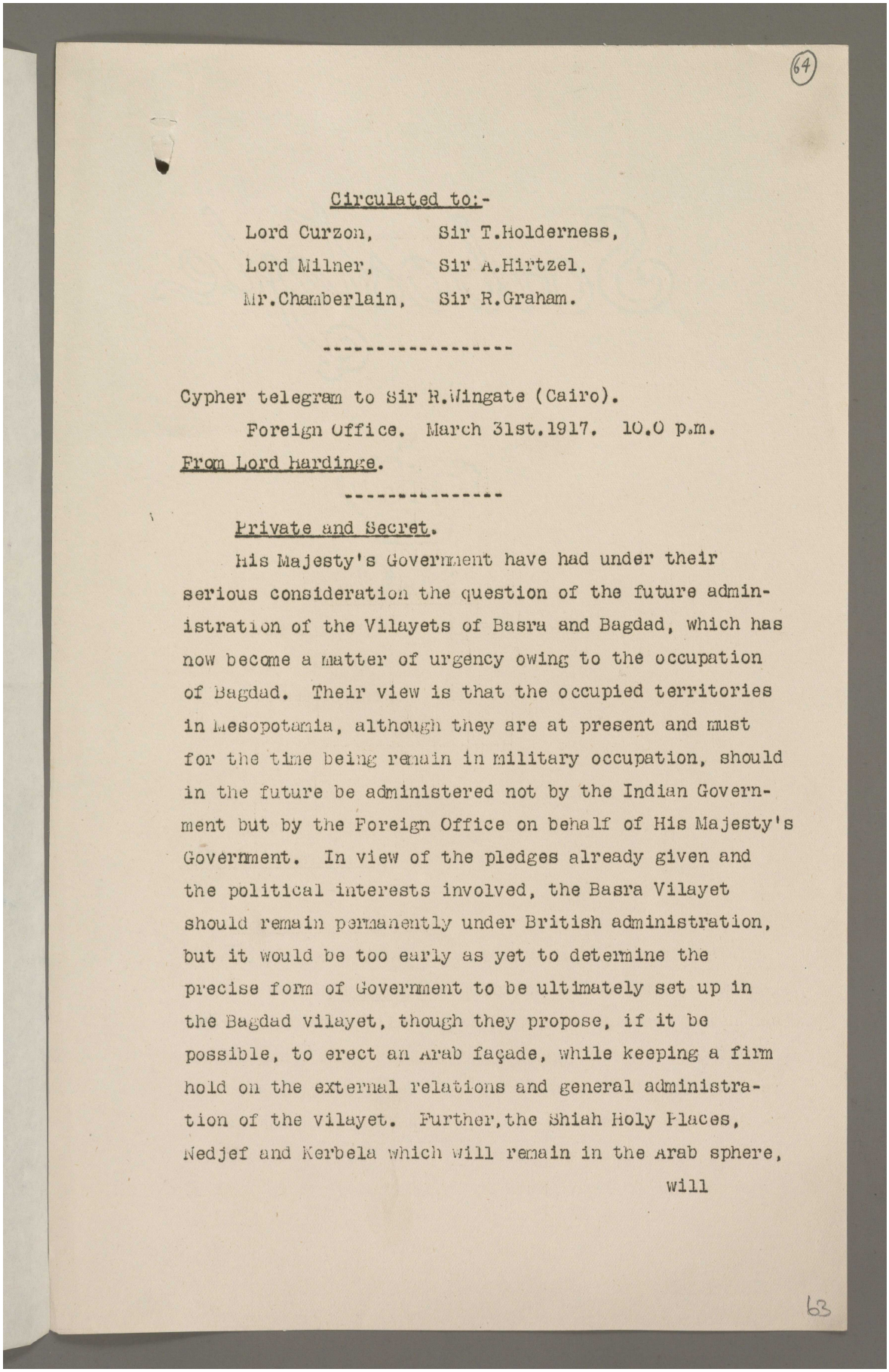

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Circulated to:-

Lord Curzon, Sir T.Holderness,
Lord Milner, Sir A.Hirtzel,
Mr.Chamberlain, Sir R.Graham.

Cypher telegram to Sir R.Wingate (Cairo).

Foreign Office. March 31st.1917. 10.0 p.m.

From Lord Hardinge.

Private and Secret.

His Majesty's Government have had under their serious consideration the question of the future administration of the Vilayets of Basra and Bagdad, which has now become a matter of urgency owing to the occupation of Bagdad. Their view is that the occupied territories in Mesopotamia, although they are at present and must for the time being remain in military occupation, should in the future be administered not by the Indian Government but by the Foreign Office on behalf of His Majesty's Government. In view of the pledges already given and the political interests involved, the Basra Vilayet should remain permanently under British administration, but it would be too early as yet to determine the precise form of Government to be ultimately set up in the Bagdad vilayet, though they propose, if it be possible, to erect an Arab façade, while keeping a firm hold on the external relations and general administration of the vilayet. Further, the Shiah Holy Places, Nedjef and Kerbela which will remain in the Arab sphere,

will

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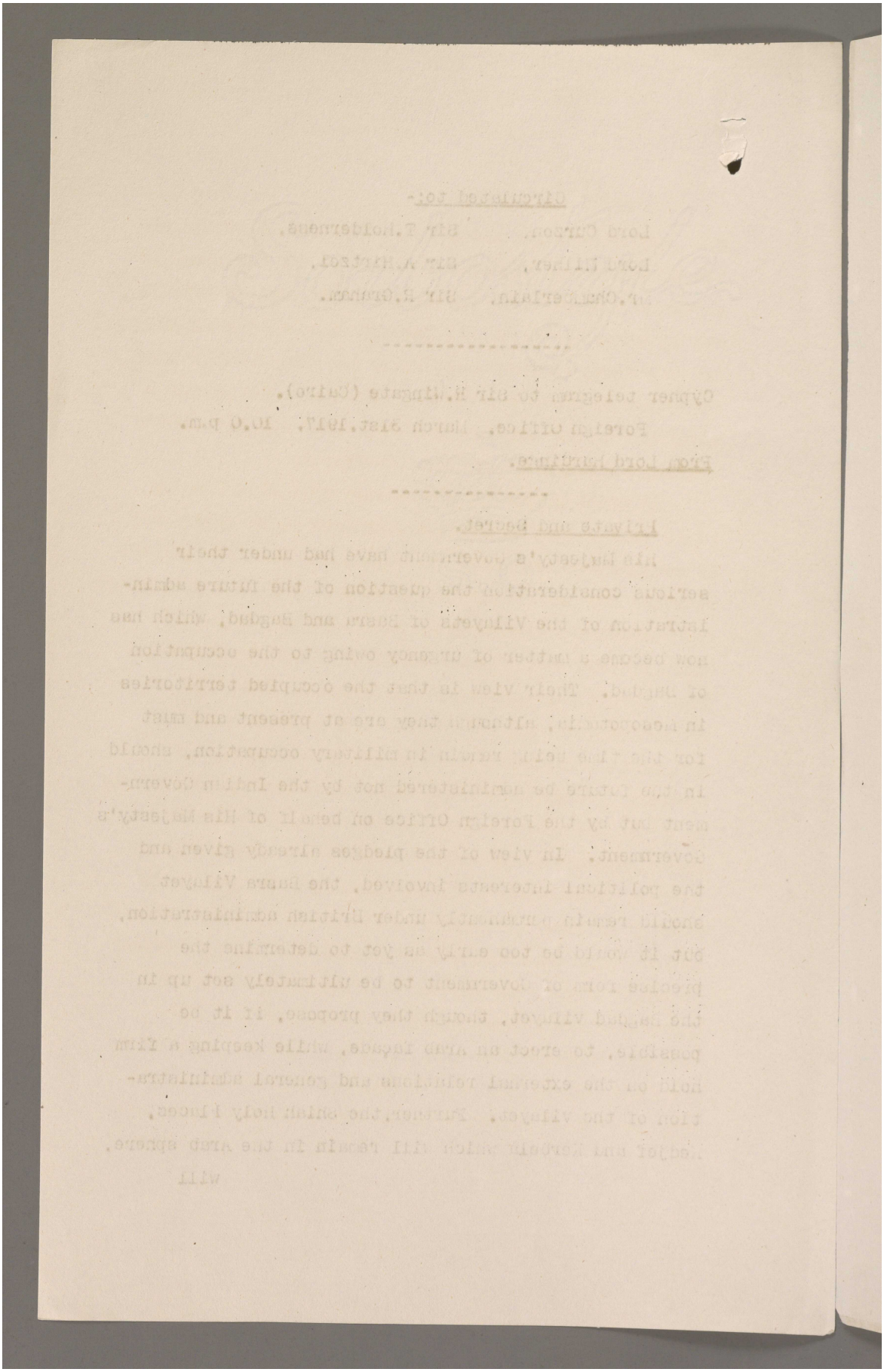

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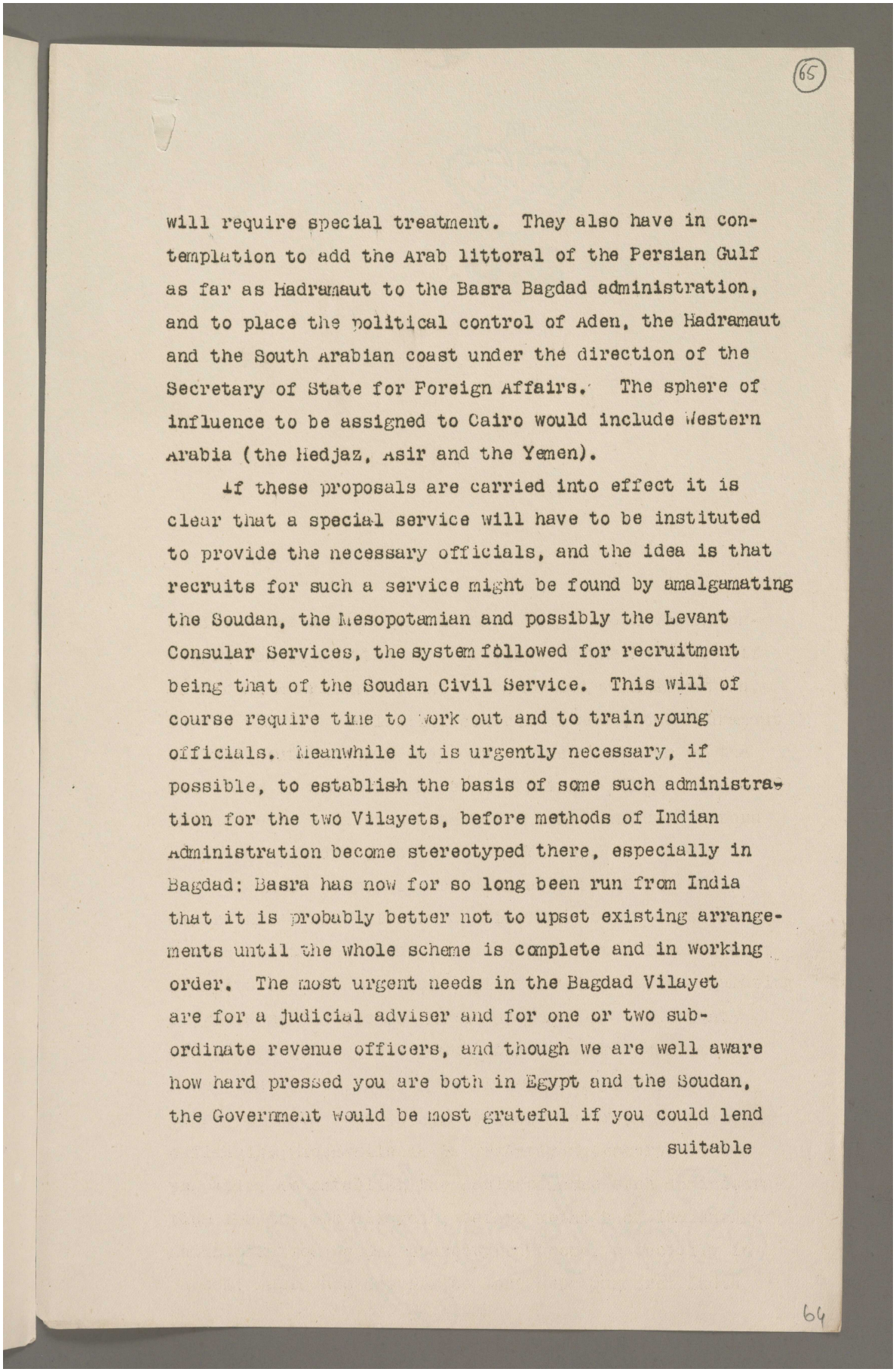

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will require special treatment. They also have in contemplation to add the Arab littoral of the Persian Gulf as far as Hadramaut to the Basra Bagdad administration, and to place the political control of Aden, the Hadramaut and the South Arabian coast under the direction of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The sphere of influence to be assigned to Cairo would include Western Arabia (the Hedjaz, Asir and the Yemen).

If these proposals are carried into effect it is clear that a special service will have to be instituted to provide the necessary officials, and the idea is that recruits for such a service might be found by amalgamating the Soudan, the Mesopotamian and possibly the Levant Consular Services, the system followed for recruitment being that of the Soudan Civil Service. This will of course require time to work out and to train young officials. Meanwhile it is urgently necessary, if possible, to establish the basis of some such administration for the two Vilayets, before methods of Indian Administration become stereotyped there, especially in Bagdad: Basra has now for so long been run from India that it is probably better not to upset existing arrangements until the whole scheme is complete and in working order. The most urgent needs in the Bagdad Vilayet are for a judicial adviser and for one or two subordinate revenue officers, and though we are well aware how hard pressed you are both in Egypt and the Soudan, the Government would be most grateful if you could lend

suitable

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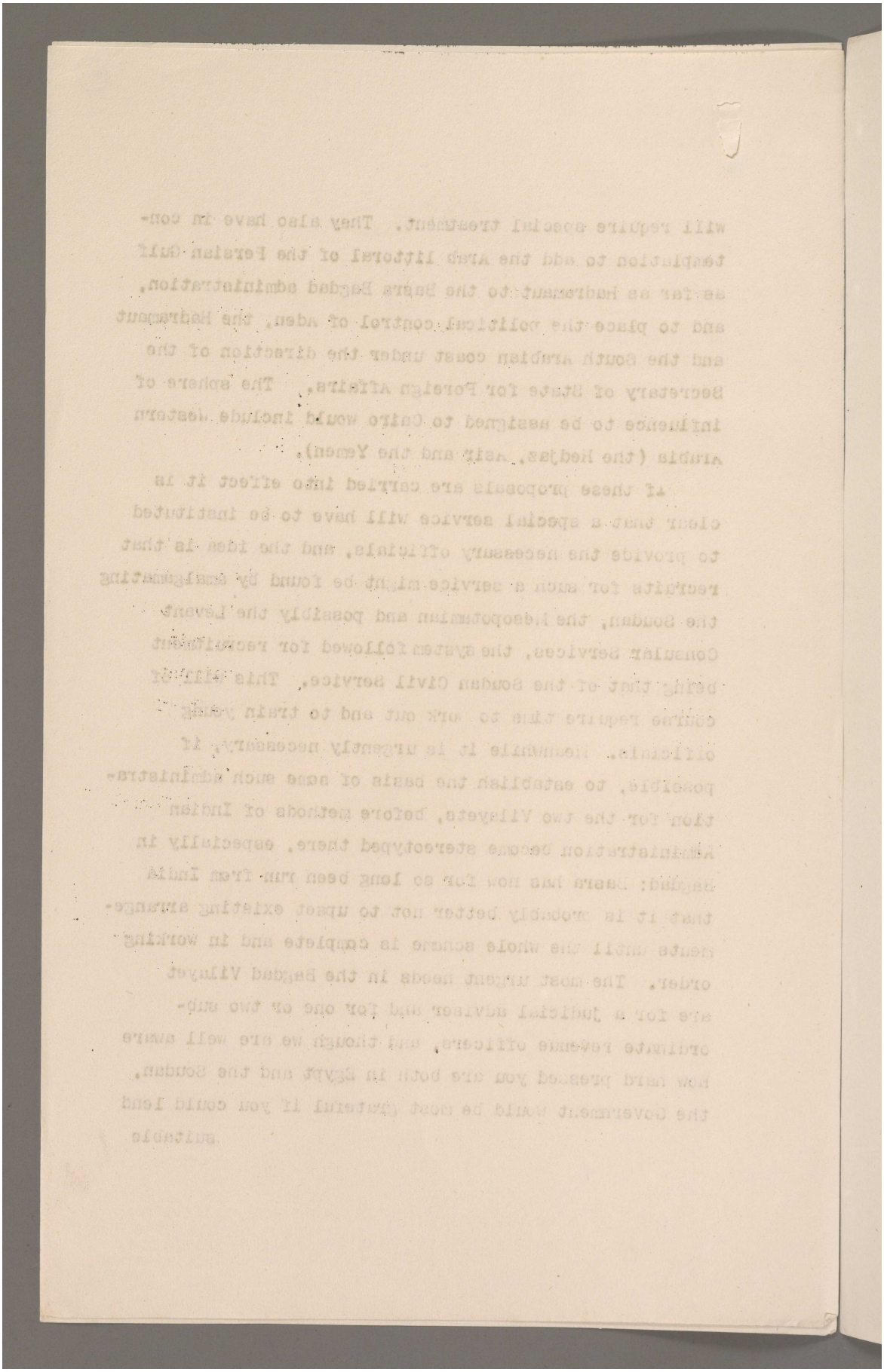

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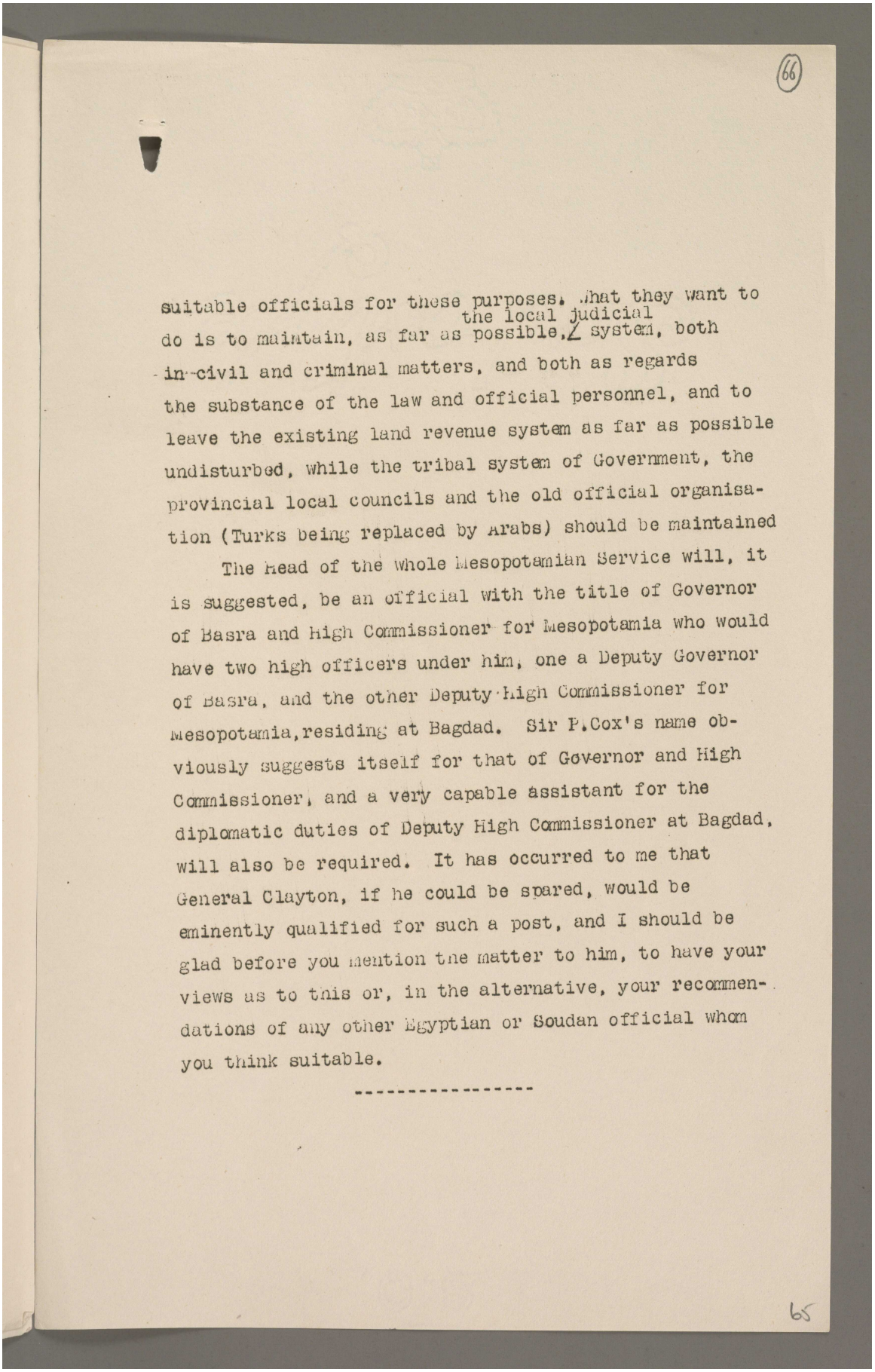

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suitable officials for these purposes. What they want to do is to maintain, as far as possible, the local judicial system, both in civil and criminal matters, and both as regards the substance of the law and official personnel, and to leave the existing land revenue system as far as possible undisturbed, while the tribal system of Government, the provincial local councils and the old official organisation (Turks being replaced by Arabs) should be maintained

The Head of the Whole Mesopotamian Service will, it is suggested, be an official with the title of Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia who would have two high officers under him, one a Deputy Governor of Basra, and the other Deputy High Commissioner for Mesopotamia, residing at Bagdad. Sir P.Cox's name obviously suggests itself for that of Governor and High Commissioner, and a very capable assistant for the diplomatic duties of Deputy High Commissioner at Bagdad, will also be required. It has occurred to me that General Clayton, if he could be spared, would be eminently qualified for such a post, and I should be glad before you mention the matter to him, to have your views as to this or, in the alternative, your recommendations of any other Egyptian or Soudan official whom you think suitable.

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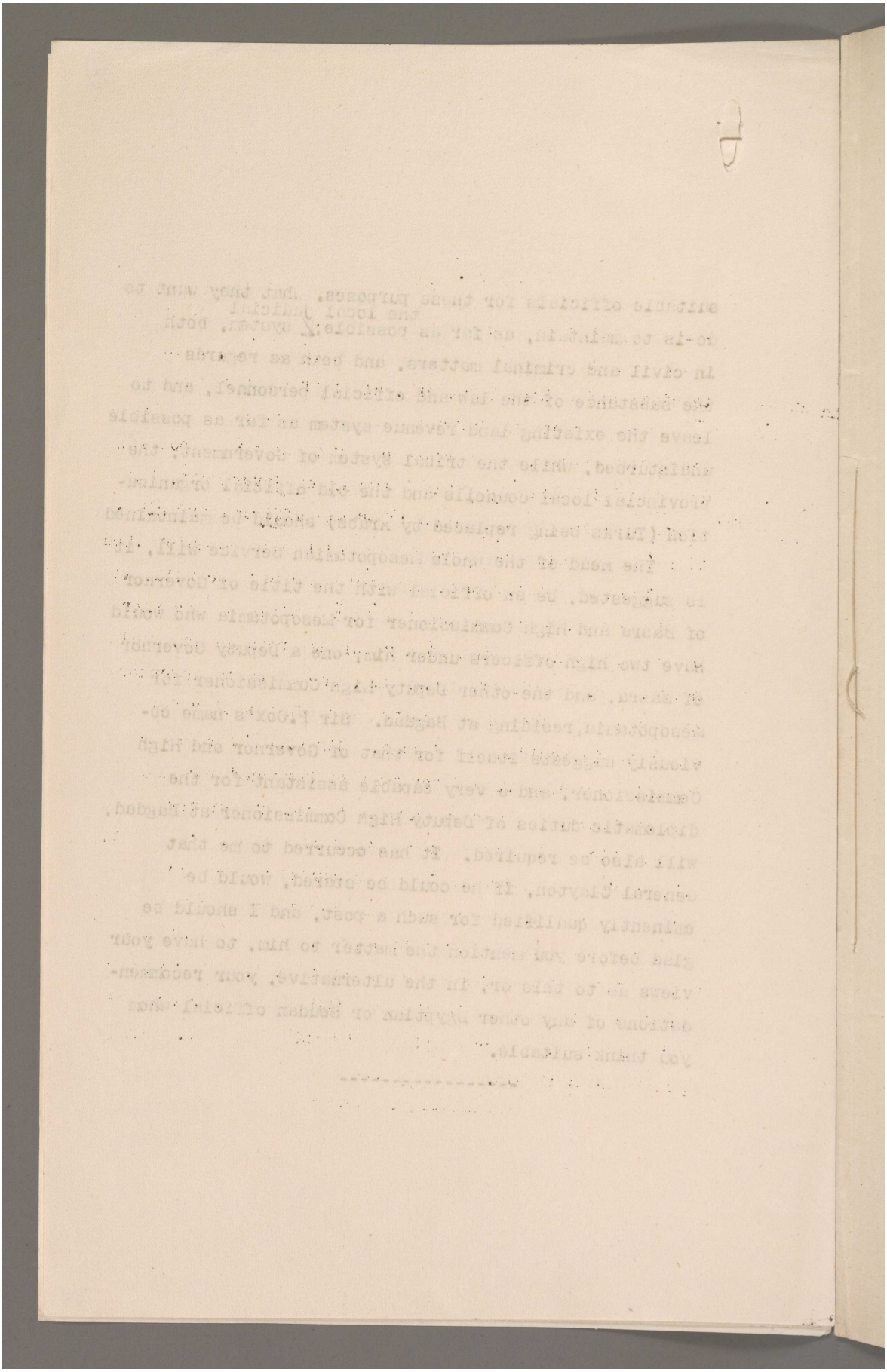

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Mesopotamia

(67)

Mesopotamia Administration Committee.

From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 26th March 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox.)

[P 1234] Secret. Your telegram of the 17th March. Civil Administration of Bagdad. Although paramount direct British administration may not be contemplated it seems essential that apart from martial law which can merely maintain order steps should be taken to overhaul and replace defunct Turkish administration and to carry on work of civil Departments. For this purpose we understand suitable Arab personnel is not immediately available, and that onus must fall for the time being at any rate on British Officers.

The immediate requirements appear to be—

(1) To secure submission by political means of tribes between Kut-el-Amara and our front line and later between Kut-el-Amara and Nasiriyah and settle them on accustomed lands on revenue paying basis. Latter is of course mostly in Basra Vilayet, but we mention it to show full requirements.

(2) To overhaul and replace civil Departments of Vilayet of Bagdad.

For (1) a few military Assistant Political Officers will be required and we propose to send such suitable Officers as are available from India. We have already sent Major Bailey of Political Department. May we use our discretion up to, say, eight more Officers? For (2) an experienced Revenue Officer with a staff of two or three Officers acquainted with Arabic and if possible Turkish are required. If Dobbs is willing to return to Mesopotamia, and his health admits, we propose to send him. If not we propose Holme of Political Department. One or two Officers from Egypt or London would be useful in this capacity.

Further we propose to send Holland on completion of Trade Report to Basra as Cox's deputy, Wilson moving up to Bagdad in similar capacity.

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department, 29th March 1917.

[P 1315] Foreign Secret. Committee of War Cabinet has considered measures for future administration and Political control of Mesopotamia and Arabia, and has reached conclusions of which following is summary:—

(1) Occupied territories to be administered not by Government of India, but by His Majesty's Government.

(2) Basra to remain permanently under British administration: western and northern limits to be Nasiryeh, Shatt-el-Hai, Kut, Bedrai.

(3) Bagdad to be an Arab state with local ruler or Government under British Protectorate in everything but name. Thus it will have no relations with Foreign Powers, and Consuls will be accredited to His Majesty's Government.

(4) Behind Arab façade Bagdad to be administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular (*a*) Irak Code not to be used, but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk; (*b*) similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provincial and local councils, &c., to be resuscitated and maintained; (*c*) present land revenue system not to be disturbed; (*d*) employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with above principles, and no Asiatics from outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Basra Vilayet.

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(5) If Basra is not annexed, head of whole Mesopotamian administration to be High Commissioner residing at Bagdad, Basra being placed under a Governor subordinate to him. If Basra is annexed, head of administration to be styled Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia with titular headquarters at Basra, but residing generally at Bagdad. Deputy Governor and Deputy High Commissioner at Basra and Bagdad respectively to act for him in his absence.

(6) British Civil Service to be amalgamated with that of Soudan and possibly also of Levant, recruitment being by same method and personnel interchangeable. British officers of Indian services, if required at first, to be lent temporarily under foreign service rules, and those now serving there to be permitted to volunteer for permanent transfer.

(7) Shiah holy places to form separate enclave not under direct British control, care being taken not to include in it any important irrigated or irrigable areas.

(8) Control of irrigation in both Vilayets to be under single British administration and similarly with navigation and conservancy of rivers.

(9) Koweit and whole Arabian littoral of Persian Gulf including Oman to be controlled by Basra.

(10) Aden and Hadramaut to be taken over by Foreign Office.

(11) South Persia including Arabistan and Fars to be sphere of influence of Government of India.

Lastly—It is regarded of utmost importance that administrative arrangements introduced into Bagdad Vilayet should from the very outset strictly conform to above principles. Please instruct Cox to this effect at once with special reference to Head 4, and telegraph with least possible delay any remarks you may wish to make on any of these heads for consideration of War Cabinet before they reach final decision.

From Sir P. Cox, 7th April 1917.

(Addressed to Government of India, repeated to Secretary of State for India, and Political, Basra.)

[P 1434] T. 1049. Your telegram 416 S. of 1st April repeating Secretary of State's telegram of 29th March for the future administration of Mesopotamia. I beg to offer following observations in regard to details :—

1. No comment needed from me.

2. I agree.

3. Ruler will (*sic* ? not) be acceptable or feasible as I know of no outstanding personality who could fill part. An Administrative Council presided over by High Commissioner seems best solution, either one for each vilayat or a combined one for both vilayats.

4 (*a*). I agree that the territory should be administered in accordance with existing laws and institutions, and I am moreover convinced that there would be great advantage in having uniform codes for Basra and Baghdad and other Arab provinces under foreign rule or protection. The Iraq code has served its purpose well, but it is admittedly provisional and revocable on the conclusion of war, and whatever be the final political status of Basra, there seems to be no essential reason why systems established in both vilayats should not be assimilated. It must be remembered that Turkish judicial system included final reference to Constantinople for which substitute must be found by creation of High Court of Mesopotamia with final appeal to Privy Council. Incidentally also the civil and criminal codes and land laws will require considerable amendment and adjustment of wording to make them interpretable at all. As regards substitution of Arab for Turkish personnel, there is not sufficient indigenous material available at present, but it can gradually be created.

4 (*b*). Tribal system of government already adopted where suitable, and no objection to provincial and local councils.

4 (*c*). I agree in principle.

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4 (*d*). I agree in proposition, but for duration of war we must have some latitude, especially in regard to clerical establishments. Urgent requirements of Expeditionary Force and military administration cannot wait, and have to be met by the most expeditious means possible.

5. Of course in principle it would be much more satisfactory to have the Basra and Baghdad Vilayats administered on one cohering (?) system both in regard to principle and detail. But I know that on the one hand we cannot annex both, and on the other hand the importance of annexing Basra makes it necessary to put up with certain disadvantages which that course may involve. I feel convinced, however, that no attempt to differentiate fundamentally in regard to working principles and details of two administrations will produce satisfactory results, and that they should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. The difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature which need not make itself felt on the spot. To attempt to run the two vilayats, which are from every point of view inseparable, on conflicting lines and inconsistent principles would, I am sure, result in great prejudice to all interests concerned.

6. No comment or objection.

7. Nejef and Kerbela should not be treated as an enclave cut off from advantages resulting to united Mesopotamia from enlightened Government, which advantage inhabitants anticipate with lively expectation and will assuredly demand. They should be organised as independent townships as far as municipal administration is concerned; while unable at present to form an opinion as to irrigation, river conservancy, navigation, posts, telegraphs and railways, they should come under united Mesopotamia administration controlled by High Commissioner. Limits of townships would be existing limits of sacred territory round shrines.

Both towns should be represented on Mesopotamian Administrative Council which would combine Vilayat Councils of both Vilayats and would sit at Baghdad. The divergent local and tribal interests of each vilayat would blend or fall into their true perspective in this Council and Indian immigration and cognate questions would be more easily disposed of since the right of united administration to regulate such questions in accordance with need of whole country would be unquestionable.

The towns themselves, apart from precincts of the Holy Places, have always been open to Europeans and would continue to be so in future, but any officials which the Government or the Municipalities intend to place in residence there should be Mohammedans agreeable to communities concerned.

8. I entirely concur. These are two vital matters and incalculable harm may be done by injudicious or inexpert handling of them.

9 and 10. No comment.

11. I am strongly of opinion that sphere of Government of India in Persia should include whole of present neutral zone *plus* farthest limit of Kermanshah and Ispahan if possible.

12. It will be seen from the foregoing that I generally accept and agree with the lines of policy contemplated by War Council. The task of carrying it out if one of no little difficulty would be one of great interest, and were I called upon to inaugurate it at the psychological moment I feel I could enter on it whole-heartedly, and suppose for a moment that His Majesty's Government did or were to contemplate entrusting me with task I should highly appreciate compliment and confidence which it would imply, but I should let them know now, as the Government of India are already aware, that while anxious like anybody else to see the war through in whatever sphere my services could be most usefully employed, I have never desired and do not desire to remain in this country after the war, and, moreover, I feel sure that new policy stands a better chance if it were inaugurated by official who is going to remain and see it taking shape.

Both Army Commander and I, however, are strongly of opinion that when His Majesty's Government contemplate formally introducing above principles during the existence of martial law, and while the military position of Baghdad is as it is (namely, that we are in almost daily conflict with Arab tribes ahead of us, and that unless determined Russian advance is made, of which at present there is no evidence, we must expect severe

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fighting around Baghdad when enemy has had time to recover and concentrate fresh troops against us), they are taking too much for granted, and are making demands upon us which may at any time, and in many particulars, be incompatible both with the military interests at stake and the freedom of action of Army Commander, whose Chief Political Staff Officer I am. At same time His Majesty's Government may rest assured that I accept their policy in principle, and that as long as I am here I will proceed on the spirit of it as far as possible and do nothing which I can avoid either in principle or in detail to prejudice its complete inauguration when the time comes. Army Commander desires me to convey similar assurance on his behalf.

13. For the present I recommend that Chief Political Officer be permitted to carry on according to his lights in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, and that as soon as conditions permit, say at the beginning of next cold weather, a Commission of first-class men be spared to examine whole problem on the spot, and make detailed recommendations as basis on which future policy can be formulated. Premature conclusions arrived at now may do irreparable damage, and it is submitted that only greatest emergency can justify hasty decision by War Cabinet before His Majesty's Government are in possession of complete facts and details regarding Baghdad Vilayat.

From Sir P. Cox, 8th April 1917.

(Addressed to Foreign and repeated to Secretary of State for India and Political, Basra.)

(Received at India Office, 6 a.m., 9th.)

[P 1433] T. 1062. Reference to telegrams from the Secretary of State, dated 30th March and 8th April. May I please be informed of names, ages, and number of years' service of proposed Judicial Adviser and the two subordinate Revenue Officers? I presume they are all Englishmen and belong to Civil Service. A competent Judicial Adviser is already available in Colonel Knox, who has had two years' experience of local judicial needs and ideas, and as it is common ground that Irak Code is not to be introduced and as he is quite prepared to work on the lines indicated by His Majesty's Government, it seems superfluous, apart from Colonel Knox's personal claims to consideration, to introduce another legal luminary. On the other hand, couple of capable junior judicial Officers who could assist him in overhauling Turkish codes would no doubt be very useful. As regards Brigadier-General Clayton, his services would at any time be most valuable to me as well as to Government, but I suggest that his designation be not decided until His Majesty's Government have had time to consider views of Army Commander and myself as conveyed in my telegram 1049 dated 7th April.

Draft of proposed telegram to Viceroy.

(To be repeated to Sir P. Cox.)

Cox's telegram of 7th April. Mesopotamia administration. His Majesty's Government did not contemplate immediate establishment of an Arab administration on principles indicated in their telegram of 29th March. They fully realise that military situation requires that Army Commander and Chief Political Officer should have free hand, but what they are concerned about is that nothing that can be avoided should be done during military occupation that would make introduction of above-mentioned

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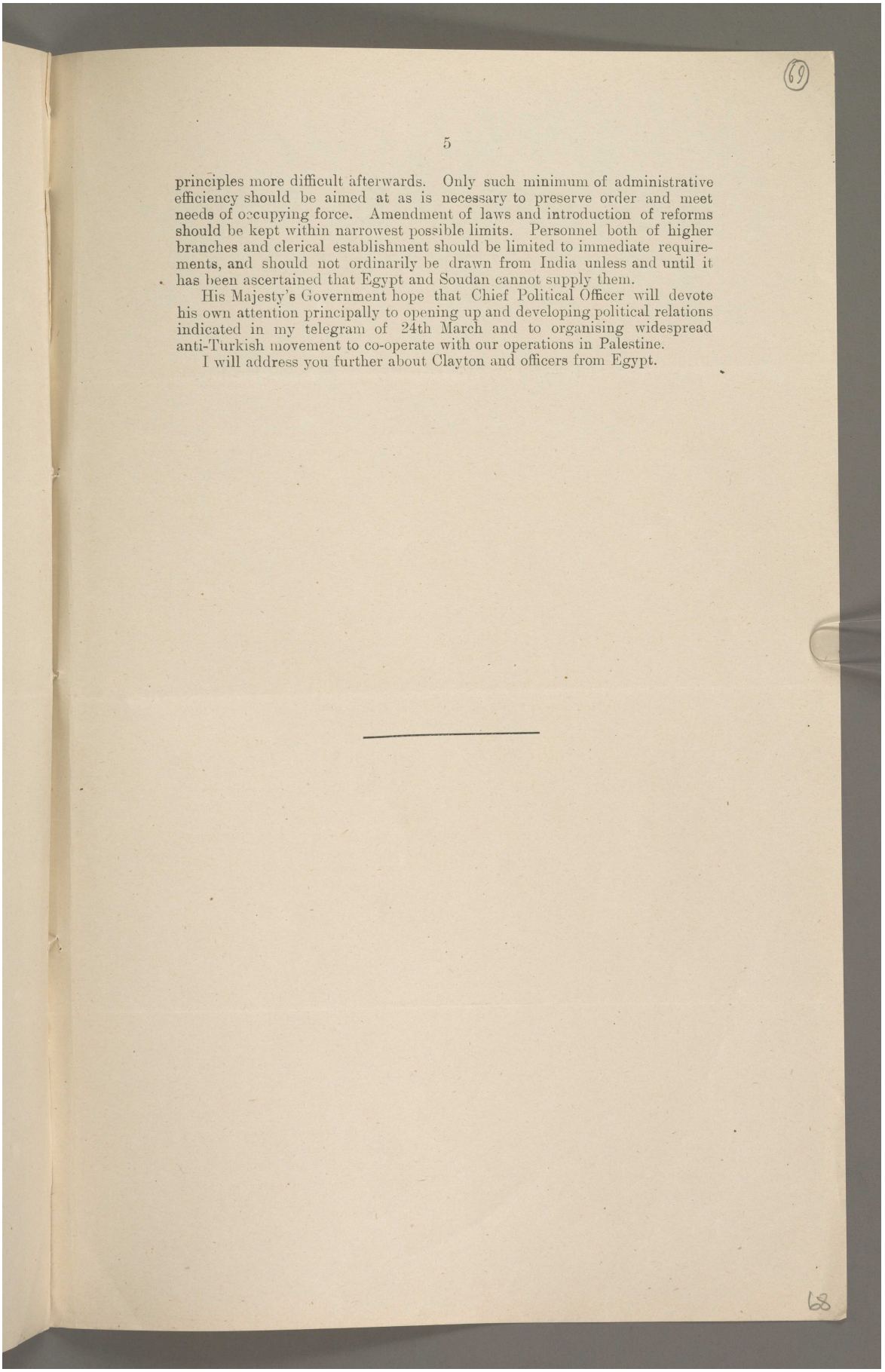

principles more difficult afterwards. Only such minimum of administrative efficiency should be aimed at as is necessary to preserve order and meet needs of occupying force. Amendment of laws and introduction of reforms should be kept within narrowest possible limits. Personnel both of higher branches and clerical establishment should be limited to immediate requirements, and should not ordinarily be drawn from India unless and until it has been ascertained that Egypt and Soudan cannot supply them.

His Majesty's Government hope that Chief Political Officer will devote his own attention principally to opening up and developing political relations indicated in my telegram of 24th March and to organising widespread anti-Turkish movement to co-operate with our operations in Palestine.

I will address you further about Clayton and officers from Egypt.

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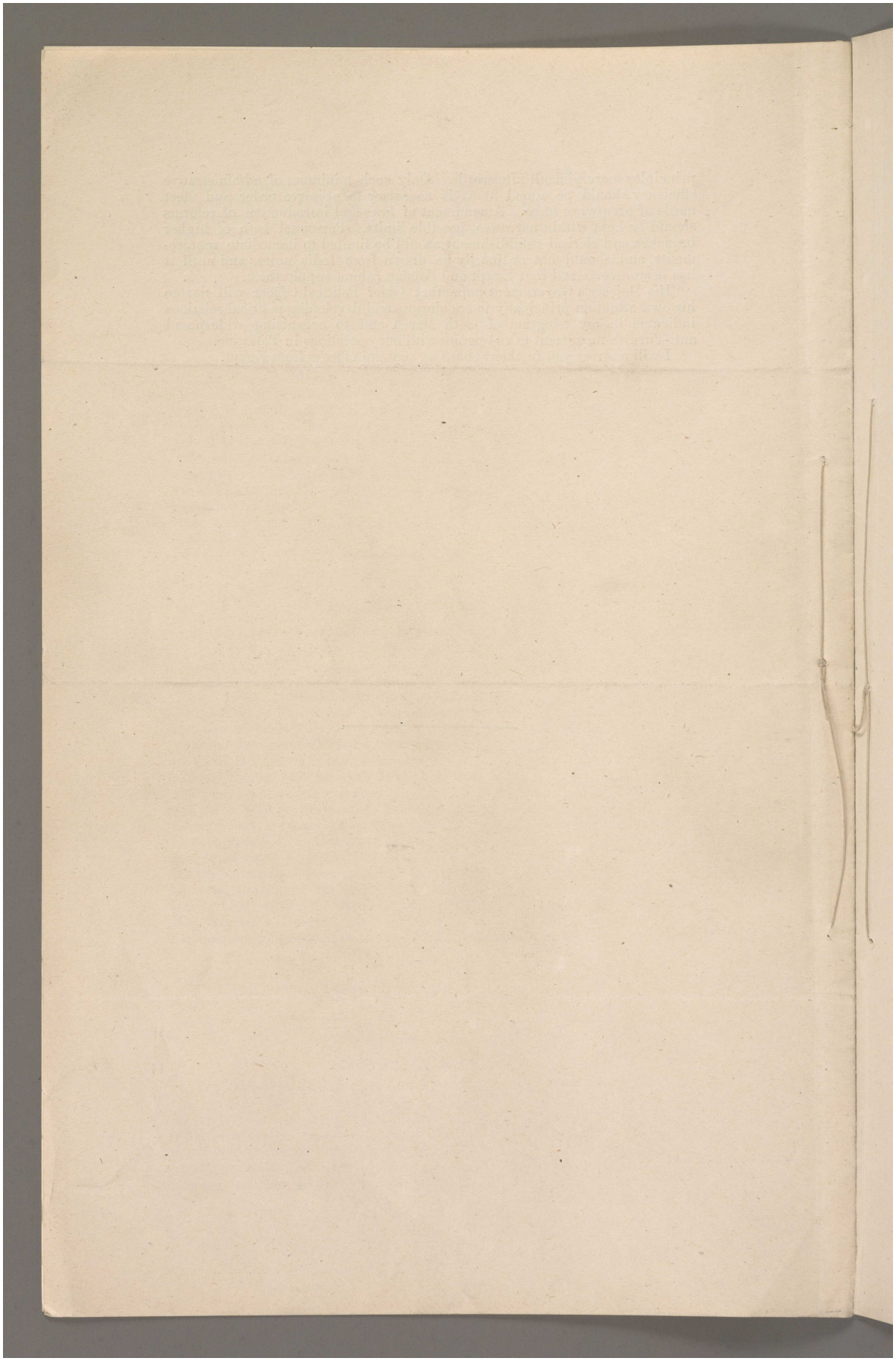

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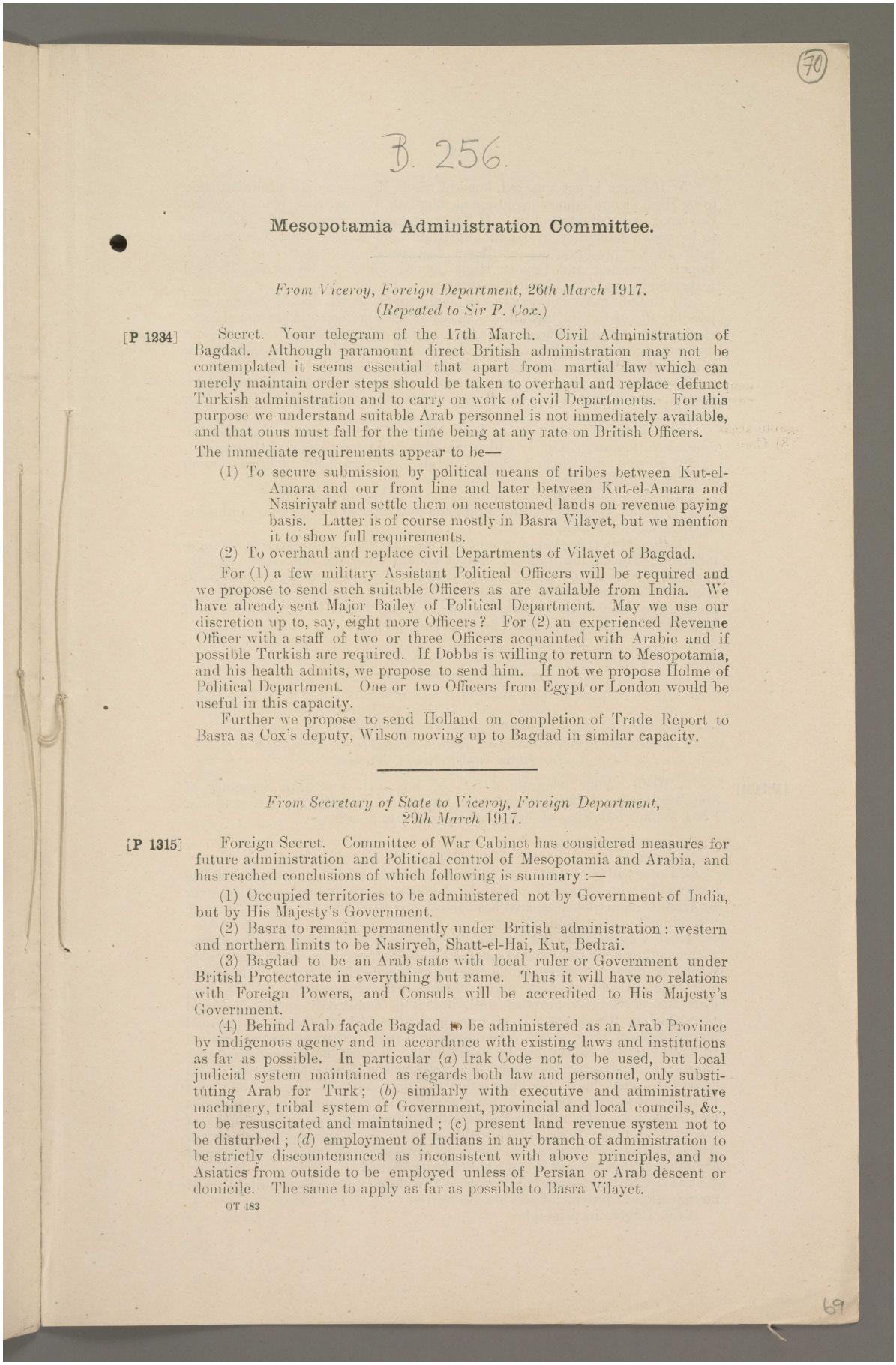

(70)

B. 256.

Mesopotamia Administration Committee.

From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 26th March 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox.)

[P 1234] Secret. Your telegram of the 17th March. Civil Administration of Bagdad. Although paramount direct British administration may not be contemplated it seems essential that apart from martial law which can merely maintain order steps should be taken to overhaul and replace defunct Turkish administration and to carry on work of civil Departments. For this purpose we understand suitable Arab personnel is not immediately available, and that onus must fall for the time being at any rate on British Officers.

The immediate requirements appear to be—

(1) To secure submission by political means of tribes between Kut-el-Amara and our front line and later between Kut-el-Amara and Nasiriyah and settle them on accustomed lands on revenue paying basis. Latter is of course mostly in Basra Vilayet, but we mention it to show full requirements.

(2) To overhaul and replace civil Departments of Vilayet of Bagdad.

For (1) a few military Assistant Political Officers will be required and we propose to send such suitable Officers as are available from India. We have already sent Major Bailey of Political Department. May we use our discretion up to, say, eight more Officers? For (2) an experienced Revenue Officer with a staff of two or three Officers acquainted with Arabic and if possible Turkish are required. If Dobbs is willing to return to Mesopotamia, and his health admits, we propose to send him. If not we propose Holme of Political Department. One or two Officers from Egypt or London would be useful in this capacity.

Further we propose to send Holland on completion of Trade Report to Basra as Cox's deputy, Wilson moving up to Bagdad in similar capacity.

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department, 29th March 1917.

[P 1315] Foreign Secret. Committee of War Cabinet has considered measures for future administration and Political control of Mesopotamia and Arabia, and has reached conclusions of which following is summary :—

(1) Occupied territories to be administered not by Government of India, but by His Majesty's Government.

(2) Basra to remain permanently under British administration : western and northern limits to be Nasiryeh, Shatt-el-Hai, Kut, Bedrai.

(3) Bagdad to be an Arab state with local ruler or Government under British Protectorate in everything but name. Thus it will have no relations with Foreign Powers, and Consuls will be accredited to His Majesty's Government.

(4) Behind Arab façade Bagdad to be administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular (*a*) Irak Code not to be used, but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk; (*b*) similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provincial and local councils, &c., to be resuscitated and maintained; (*c*) present land revenue system not to be disturbed; (*d*) employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with above principles, and no Asiatics from outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Basra Vilayet.

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(5) If Basra is not annexed, head of whole Mesopotamian administration to be High Commissioner residing at Bagdad, Basra being placed under a Governor subordinate to him. If Basra is annexed, head of administration to be styled Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia with titular headquarters at Basra, but residing generally at Bagdad. Deputy Governor and Deputy High Commissioner at Basra and Bagdad respectively to act for him in his absence.

(6) British Civil Service to be amalgamated with that of Soudan and possibly also of Levant, recruitment being by same method and personnel interchangeable. British officers of Indian services, if required at first, to be lent temporarily under foreign service rules, and those now serving there to be permitted to volunteer for permanent transfer.

(7) Shiah holy places to form separate enclave not under direct British control, care being taken not to include in it any important irrigated or irrigable areas.

(8) Control of irrigation in both Vilayets to be under single British administration and similarly with navigation and conservancy of rivers.

(9) Koweit and whole Arabian littoral of Persian Gulf including Oman to be controlled by Basra.

(10) Aden and Hadramaut to be taken over by Foreign Office.

(11) South Persia including Arabistan and Fars to be sphere of influence of Government of India.

Lastly—It is regarded of utmost importance that administrative arrangements introduced into Bagdad Vilayet should from the very outset strictly conform to above principles. Please instruct Cox to this effect at once with special reference to Head 4, and telegraph with least possible delay any remarks you may wish to make on any of these heads for consideration of War Cabinet before they reach final decision.

From Sir P. Cox, 7th April 1917.
(Addressed to Government of India, repeated to Secretary of State for India, and Political, Basra.)

[P 1434] T. 1049. Your telegram 416 S. of 1st April repeating Secretary of State's telegram of 29th March for the future administration of Mesopotamia. I beg to offer following observations in regard to details :—

1. No comment needed from me.
2. I agree.
3. Ruler will (*sic* ? not) be acceptable or feasible as I know of no outstanding personality who could fill part. An Administrative Council presided over by High Commissioner seems best solution, either one for each vilayat or a combined one for both vilayats.

4 (*a*). I agree that the territory should be administered in accordance with existing laws and institutions, and I am moreover convinced that there would be great advantage in having uniform codes for Basra and Baghdad and other Arab provinces under foreign rule or protection. The Iraq code has served its purpose well, but it is admittedly provisional and revocable on the conclusion of war, and whatever be the final political status of Basra, there seems to be no essential reason why systems established in both vilayats should not be assimilated. It must be remembered that Turkish judicial system included final reference to Constantinople for which substitute must be found by creation of High Court of Mesopotamia with final appeal to Privy Council. Incidentally also the civil and criminal codes and land laws will require considerable amendment and adjustment of wording to make them interpretable at all. As regards substitution of Arab for Turkish personnel, there is not sufficient indigenous material available at present, but it can gradually be created.

4 (*b*). Tribal system of government already adopted where suitable, and no objection to provincial and local councils.

4 (*c*). I agree in principle.

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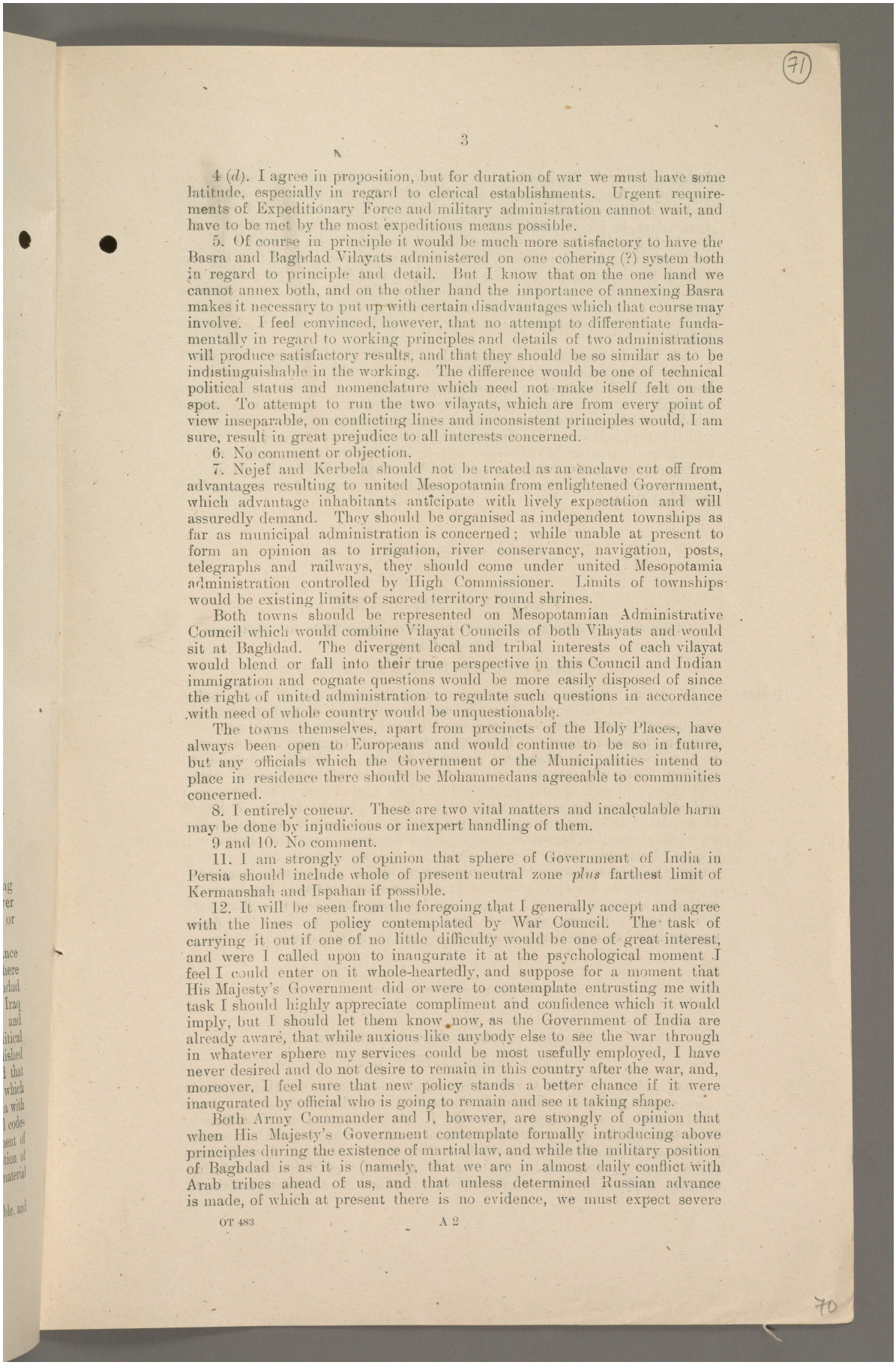

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4 (*d*). I agree in proposition, but for duration of war we must have some latitude, especially in regard to clerical establishments. Urgent requirements of Expeditionary Force and military administration cannot wait, and have to be met by the most expeditious means possible.

5. Of course in principle it would be much more satisfactory to have the Basra and Baghdad Vilayats administered on one cohering (?) system both in regard to principle and detail. But I know that on the one hand we cannot annex both, and on the other hand the importance of annexing Basra makes it necessary to put up with certain disadvantages which that course may involve. I feel convinced, however, that no attempt to differentiate fundamentally in regard to working principles and details of two administrations will produce satisfactory results, and that they should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. The difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature which need not make itself felt on the spot. To attempt to run the two vilayats, which are from every point of view inseparable, on conflicting lines and inconsistent principles would, I am sure, result in great prejudice to all interests concerned.

6. No comment or objection.

7. Nejef and Kerbela should not be treated as an enclave cut off from advantages resulting to united Mesopotamia from enlightened Government, which advantage inhabitants anticipate with lively expectation and will assuredly demand. They should be organised as independent townships as far as municipal administration is concerned; while unable at present to form an opinion as to irrigation, river conservancy, navigation, posts, telegraphs and railways, they should come under united Mesopotamia administration controlled by High Commissioner. Limits of townships would be existing limits of sacred territory round shrines.

Both towns should be represented on Mesopotamian Administrative Council which would combine Vilayat Councils of both Vilayats and would sit at Baghdad. The divergent local and tribal interests of each vilayat would blend or fall into their true perspective in this Council and Indian immigration and cognate questions would be more easily disposed of since the right of united administration to regulate such questions in accordance with need of whole country would be unquestionable.

The towns themselves, apart from precincts of the Holy Places, have always been open to Europeans and would continue to be so in future, but any officials which the Government or the Municipalities intend to place in residence there should be Mohammedans agreeable to communities concerned.

8. I entirely concur. These are two vital matters and incalculable harm may be done by injudicious or inexpert handling of them.

9 and 10. No comment.

11. I am strongly of opinion that sphere of Government of India in Persia should include whole of present neutral zone *plus* farthest limit of Kermanshah and Ispahan if possible.

12. It will be seen from the foregoing that I generally accept and agree with the lines of policy contemplated by War Council. The task of carrying it out if one of no little difficulty would be one of great interest, and were I called upon to inaugurate it at the psychological moment I feel I could enter on it whole-heartedly, and suppose for a moment that His Majesty's Government did or were to contemplate entrusting me with task I should highly appreciate compliment and confidence which it would imply, but I should let them know now, as the Government of India are already aware, that while anxious like anybody else to see the war through in whatever sphere my services could be most usefully employed, I have never desired and do not desire to remain in this country after the war, and, moreover, I feel sure that new policy stands a better chance if it were inaugurated by official who is going to remain and see it taking shape.

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fighting around Baghdad when enemy has had time to recover and concentrate fresh troops against us), they are taking too much for granted, and are making demands upon us which may at any time, and in many particulars, be incompatible both with the military interests at stake and the freedom of action of Army Commander, whose Chief Political Staff Officer I am. At same time His Majesty's Government may rest assured that I accept their policy in principle, and that as long as I am here I will proceed on the spirit of it as far as possible and do nothing which I can avoid either in principle or in detail to prejudice its complete inauguration when the time comes. Army Commander desires me to convey similar assurance on his behalf.

13. For the present I recommend that Chief Political Officer be permitted to carry on according to his lights in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, and that as soon as conditions permit, say at the beginning of next cold weather, a Commission of first-class men be spared to examine whole problem on the spot, and make detailed recommendations as basis on which future policy can be formulated. Premature conclusions arrived at now may do irreparable damage, and it is submitted that only greatest emergency can justify hasty decision by War Cabinet before His Majesty's Government are in possession of complete facts and details regarding Baghdad Vilayat.

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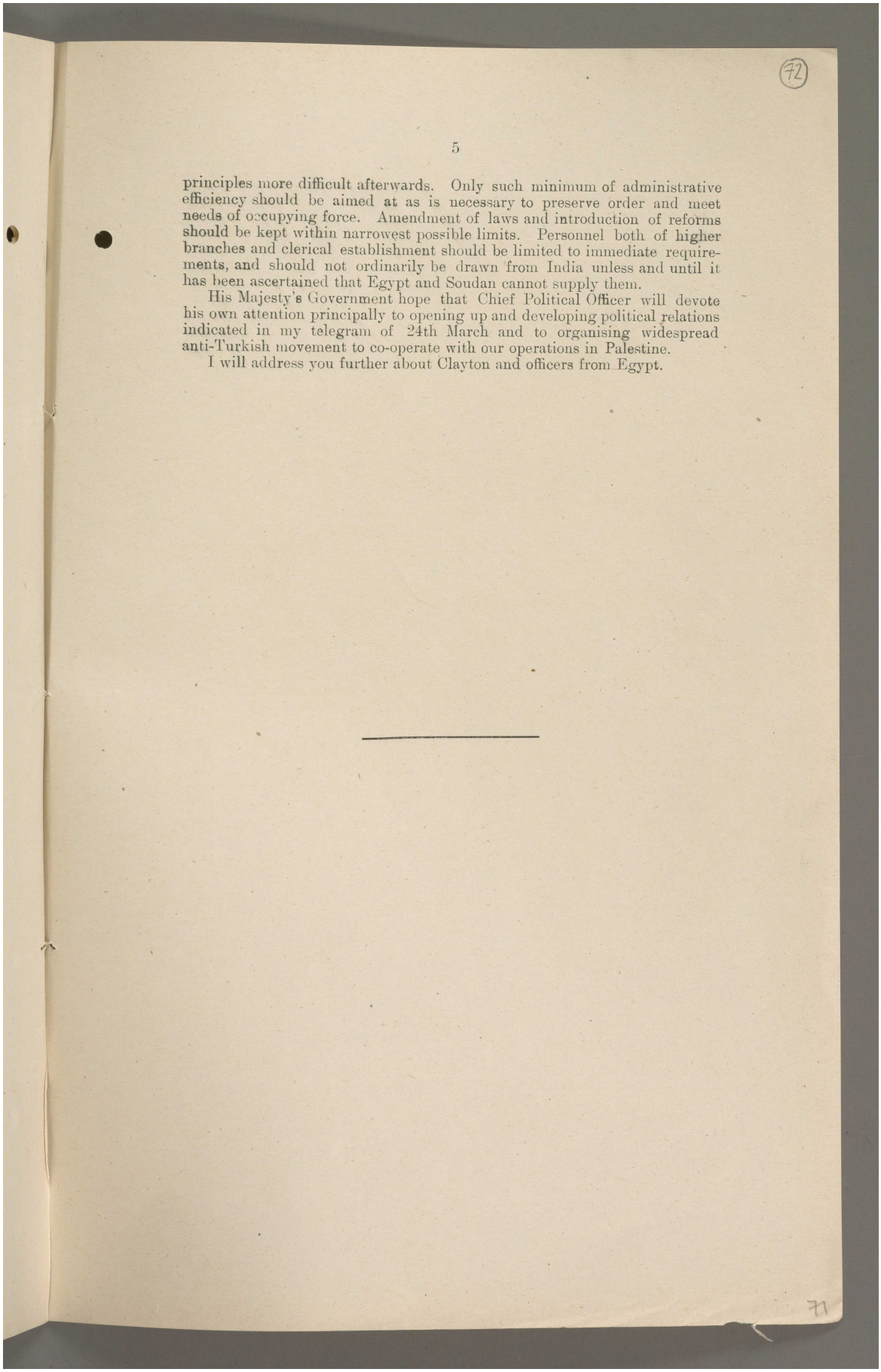

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His Majesty's Government hope that Chief Political Officer will devote his own attention principally to opening up and developing political relations indicated in my telegram of 24th March and to organising widespread anti-Turkish movement to co-operate with our operations in Palestine.

I will address you further about Clayton and officers from Egypt.

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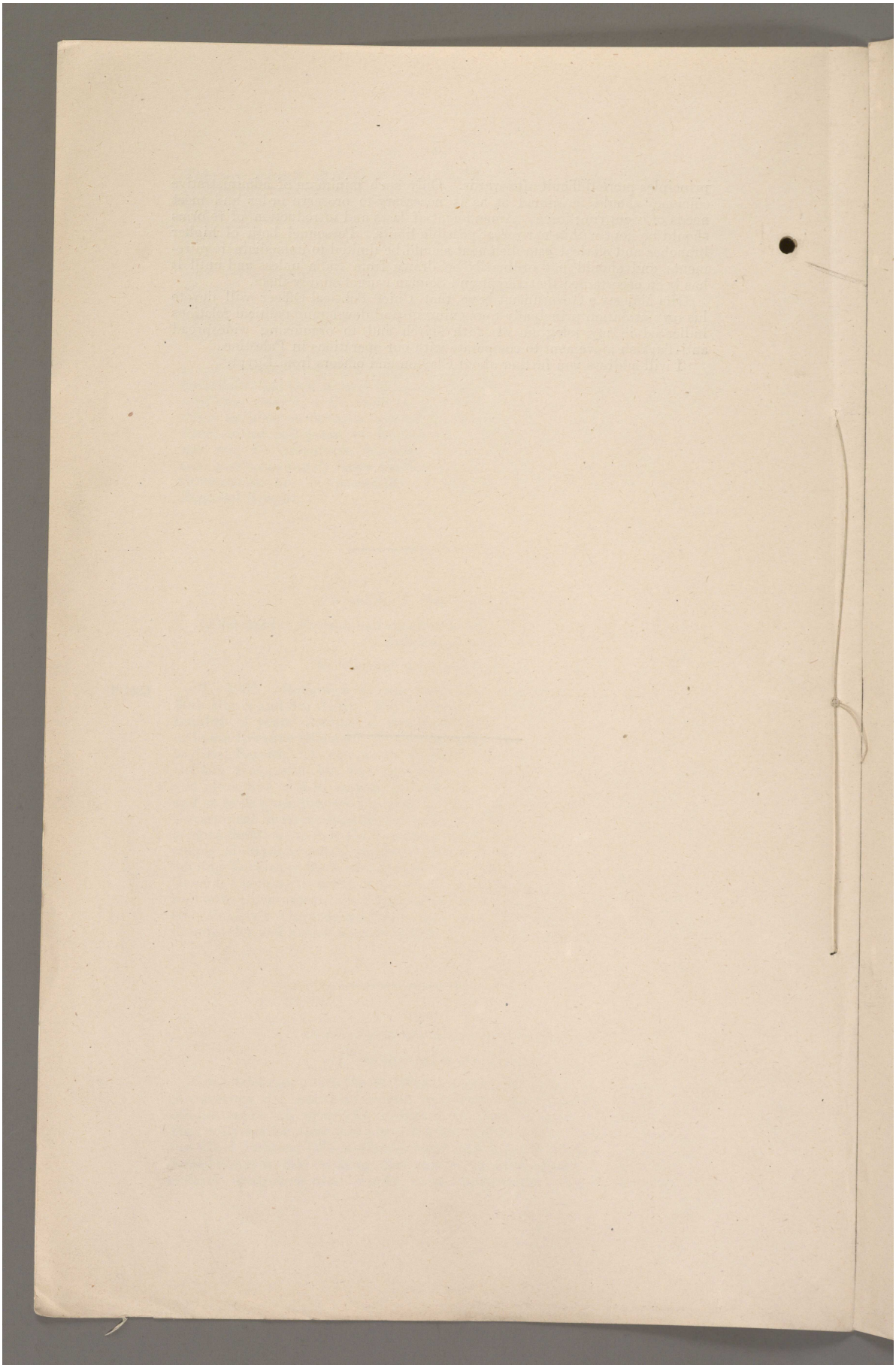

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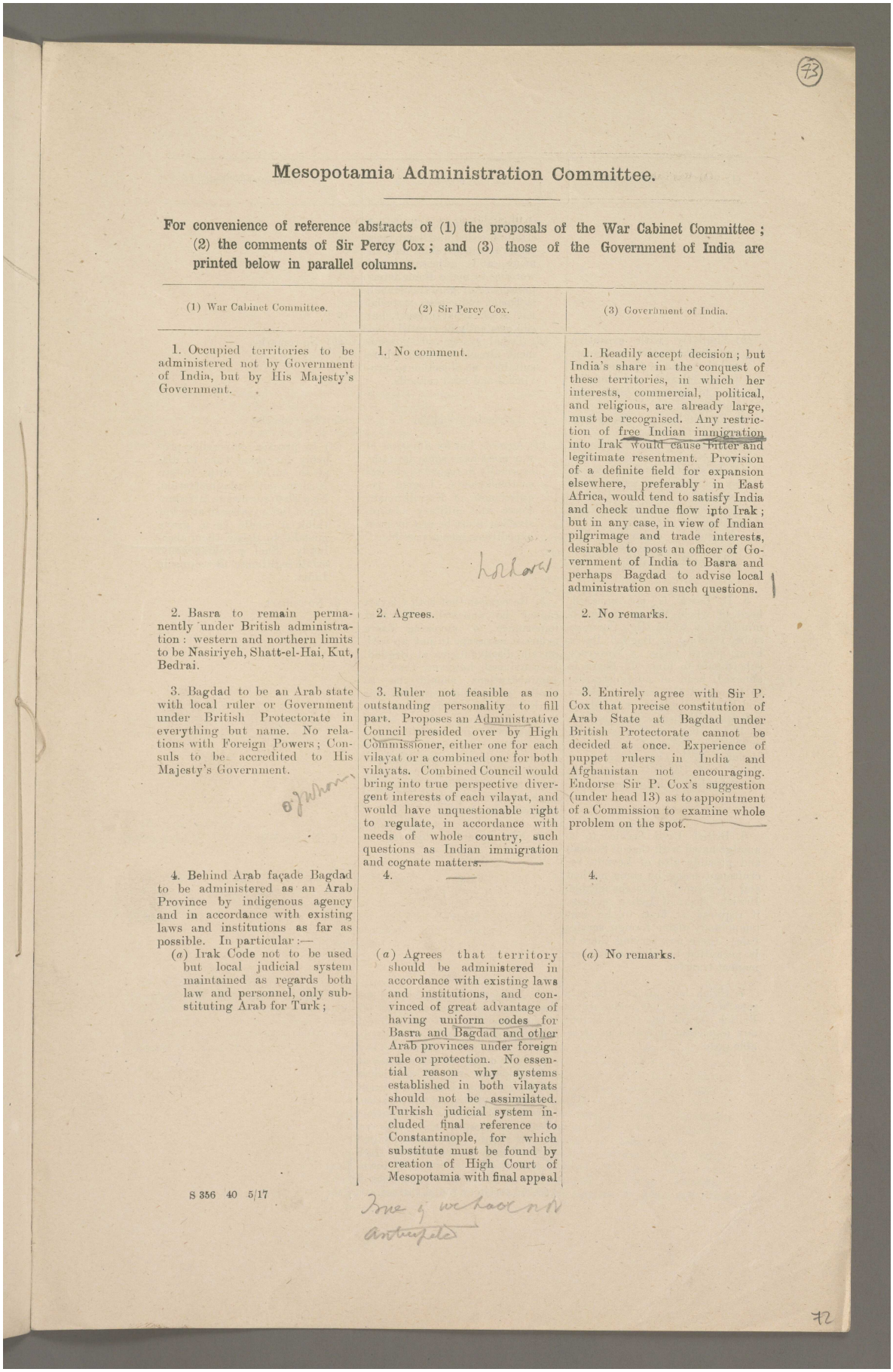

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Mesopotamia Administration Committee.

For convenience of reference abstracts of (1) the proposals of the War Cabinet Committee; (2) the comments of Sir Percy Cox; and (3) those of the Government of India are printed below in parallel columns.

(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
1. Occupied territories to be administered not by Government of India, but by His Majesty's Government.	1. No comment.	1. Readily accept decision; but India's share in the conquest of these territories, in which her interests, commercial, political, and religious, are already large, must be recognised. Any restriction of free Indian immigration into Irak would cause bitter and legitimate resentment. Provision of a definite field for expansion elsewhere, preferably in East Africa, would tend to satisfy India and check undue flow into Irak; but in any case, in view of Indian pilgrimage and trade interests, desirable to post an officer of Government of India to Basra and perhaps Bagdad to advise local administration on such questions.
2. Basra to remain permanently under British administration: western and northern limits to be Nasiriyeh, Shatt-el-Hai, Kut, Bedrai.	2. Agrees.	2. No remarks.
3. Bagdad to be an Arab state with local ruler or Government under British Protectorate in everything but name. No relations with Foreign Powers; Consuls to be accredited to His Majesty's Government.	3. Ruler not feasible as no outstanding personality to fill part. Proposes an Administrative Council presided over by High Commissioner, either one for each vilayat or a combined one for both vilayats. Combined Council would bring into true perspective divergent interests of each vilayat, and would have unquestionable right to regulate, in accordance with needs of whole country, such questions as Indian immigration and cognate matters.	3. Entirely agree with Sir P. Cox that precise constitution of Arab State at Bagdad under British Protectorate cannot be decided at once. Experience of puppet rulers in India and Afghanistan not encouraging. Endorse Sir P. Cox's suggestion (under head 13) as to appointment of a Commission to examine whole problem on the spot.
4. Behind Arab façade Bagdad to be administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular:—	4.	4.
(*a*) Irak Code not to be used but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk;	(*a*) Agrees that territory should be administered in accordance with existing laws and institutions, and convinced of great advantage of having uniform codes for Basra and Bagdad and other Arab provinces under foreign rule or protection. No essential reason why systems established in both vilayats should not be assimilated. Turkish judicial system included final reference to Constantinople, for which substitute must be found by creation of High Court of Mesopotamia with final appeal	(*a*) No remarks.

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(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	to Privy Council. Civil and criminal codes and land laws require considerable amendment and adjustment of wording to make them interpretable. As regards personnel, sufficient indigenous material not available at present, but can gradually be created.	
(*b*) Similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provincial and local councils, &c., to be resuscitated and maintained;	(*b*) Tribal system of government already adopted where suitable; no objection to provincial and local councils.	(*b*) No remarks.
(*c*) Present land revenue system not to be disturbed;	(*c*) Agrees in principle.	(*c*) No remarks.
(*d*) Employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with above principles, and no Asiatics from outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Basra vilayat.	(*d*) Agrees; but for duration of war must have some latitude, especially in regard to clerical establishments. Urgent requirements of Expeditionary Force and military administration must be met by most expeditious means possible.	(*d*) In practice impossible probably for some time to dispense entirely with Indian Moslems in the administration. No wish to encourage introduction of Indian subordinates, but think it would be a grave mistake to debar them absolutely. Such a course would excite legitimate ill-feeling in India.
5. If Basra is not annexed, head of whole Mesopotamian administration to be High Commissioner residing at Bagdad, Basra being placed under a Governor subordinate to him. If Basra is annexed, head of administration to be styled Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia with titular headquarters at Basra, but residing generally at Bagdad. Deputy Governor and Deputy High Commissioner at Basra and Bagdad respectively to act for him in his absence.	5. Recognises that both vilayats cannot be annexed, and that importance of annexing Basra makes it necessary to put up with certain disadvantages at Bagdad. Is convinced, however, that two administrations should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. Difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature not felt on the spot. Two vilayats from every point of view inseparable, and could not be run on conflicting lines and inconsistent principles without great prejudice to all interests concerned.	5. No remarks.
6. British Civil Service to be amalgamated with that of Soudan and possibly also of Levant, recruitment being by same method and personnel interchangeable. British officers of Indian services, if required at first, to be lent temporarily under foreign service rules; those now serving there to be permitted to volunteer for permanent transfer.	6. No comment or objection.	6. No remarks.
7. Shiah holy places to form a separate enclave not under direct British control, but not to include any important irrigated or irrigable areas.	7. Nejef and Kerbela should not be treated as an enclave cut off from advantages of enlightened Government, which inhabitants expect and will demand. They should be organised as independent townships as regards municipal administration. Unable at present to form an opinion as to irrigation, river conservancy, navigation, posts, telegraphs and railways, which should come under united administration controlled by High Commissioner. Limits of townships would be existing limits of sacred territory round shrines.	7. Agree with Sir P. Cox's view.

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(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	Both towns to be represented on Administrative Council combining Vilayat Councils of both Vilayats and sitting at Bagdad. *See under* head 3. Towns themselves, apart from precincts of the Holy Places, to remain open to Europeans as in past; but resident officials should be Mohammedans agreeable to communities concerned.	
8. Control of irrigation in both Vilayats to be under single British administration; similarly with navigation and conservancy of rivers.	8. Entirely concurs. Two vital matters, injudicious or inexpert handling of which may do incalculable harm.	8. Agree entirely; but Irrigation Department will doubtless have to indent heavily on India and services of Indian official subordinates will probably also be required. This would militate against rigorous enforcement of 4 (*d*). Quite prepared to meet indents if given full warning. If large irrigation works started at once in Mesopotamia, almost inevitable that labour should come from India. Control of large colonies of Indian labourers will present difficulties. Further, when large schemes have been carried out, good cultivators will be required; do not see how they can be found without indenting upon India. For these reasons large schemes to be deprecated until the country settles down and local labour is available.
9. Koweit and whole Arabian littoral of Persian Gulf, including Oman, to be controlled by Basra.	9. No comment.	9. Necessary corollary of (1); but (*a*) unsettling effect on Gulf Chiefs who are accustomed to and trust Government of India will require tactful handling; (*b*) Japanese commercial penetration will require uniform treatment in Gulf.
10. Aden and Hadramaut to be taken over by Foreign Office.	10. No comment.	10. Gladly agree.
11. South Persia, including Arabistan and Fars, to be sphere of influence of Government of India.	11. Strongly of opinion that sphere of Government of India in Persia should include whole of neutral zone *plus* farthest limit of Kermanshah and Ispahan if possible.	11. Proposal not fully understood and more precise information requested. What practical control would Government of India exercise?
12. *General Remarks.*—It is regarded of utmost importance that administrative arrangements introduced into Bagdad Vilayat should from the very outset strictly conform to above principles.	12. *General remarks.*—As will be seen from foregoing, generally accepts and agrees with proposed lines of policy. Is, however, strongly of opinion (in which Army Commander concurs) that formal introduction of above principles in existing circumstances (*i.e.*, with martial law in force and the military position still insecure) takes too much for granted, and makes demands upon local authorities which may be incompatible with military interests and freedom of action of Army Commander. Nevertheless, accepts policy in principle, and	12. *General remarks.*—Subject to above remarks, readily accept general policy proposed; but fully endorse views of Sir P. Cox under heads 12 and 13. Presume (and strongly urge) that present practice of keeping Commander-in-Chief in India informed of all developments in the military situation in Mesopotamia will be maintained. If kept in ignorance of policy, and merely treated as supplier of materials and personnel, no assurance that India's resources will be utilised and developed to best advantage. Same applies to Aden and other

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(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	will, as far as possible, proceed in its spirit and avoid any action, either in matters of principle or detail, likely to prejudice its complete inauguration when the time comes. 13. For the present recommends that Chief Political Officer be permitted to carry on according to his lights in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, and that, as soon as conditions permit, a Commission of first-class men examine whole problem on the spot, and make detailed recommendations as a basis of future policy.	potential theatres of war in area to be transferred. As regards conditions after the war, India will apparently be responsible for some time to come for supplying troops for defence and garrisoning of Mesopotamia; or at any rate for providing reserves for all military operations. Strongly urge, in view of these considerations, that India be kept fully informed of all political developments which may necessitate a call for troops. Otherwise, contemplated policy would, in fact, be giving prospective Government of Mesopotamia a blank cheque on India's military resources.

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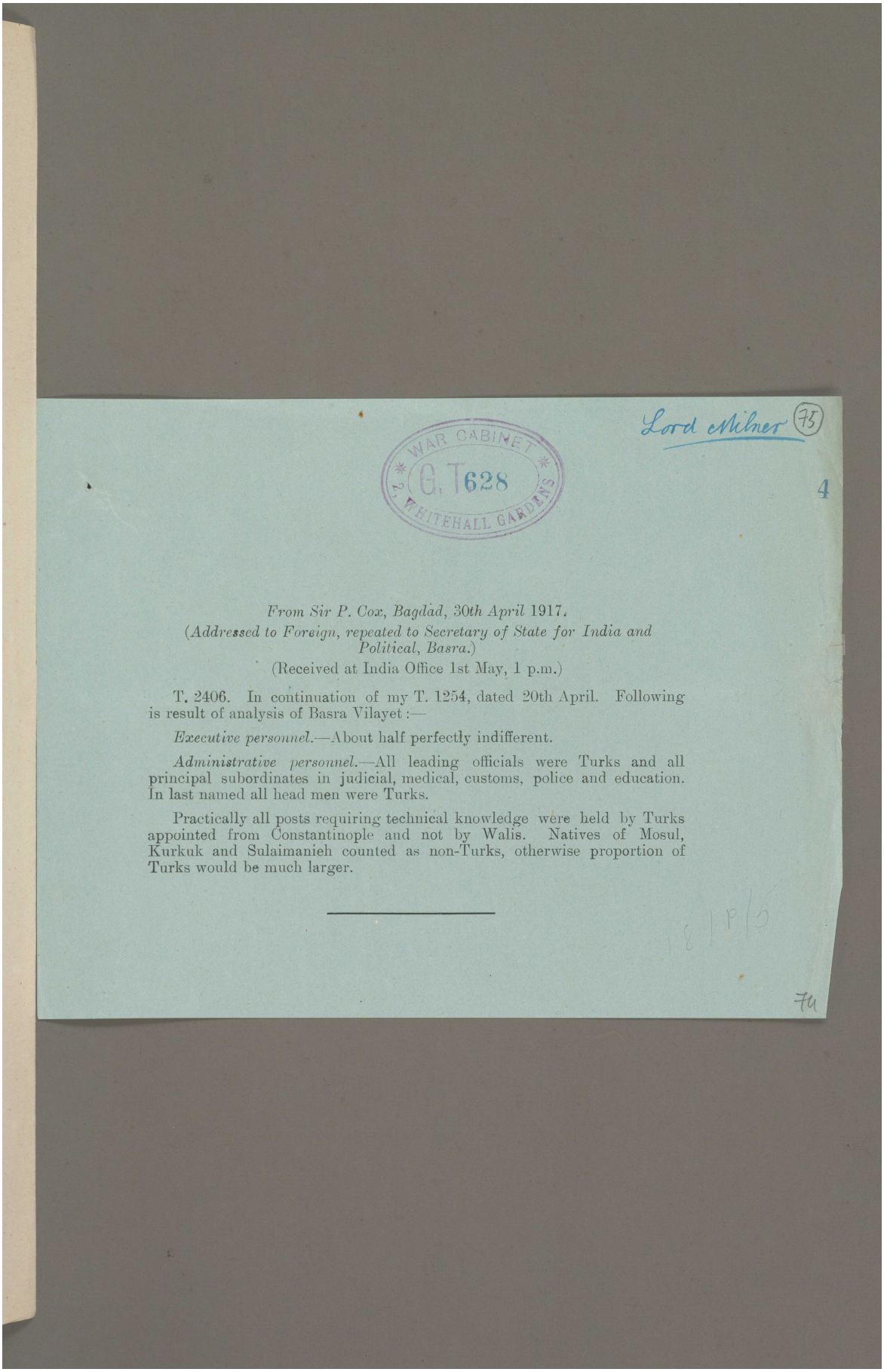


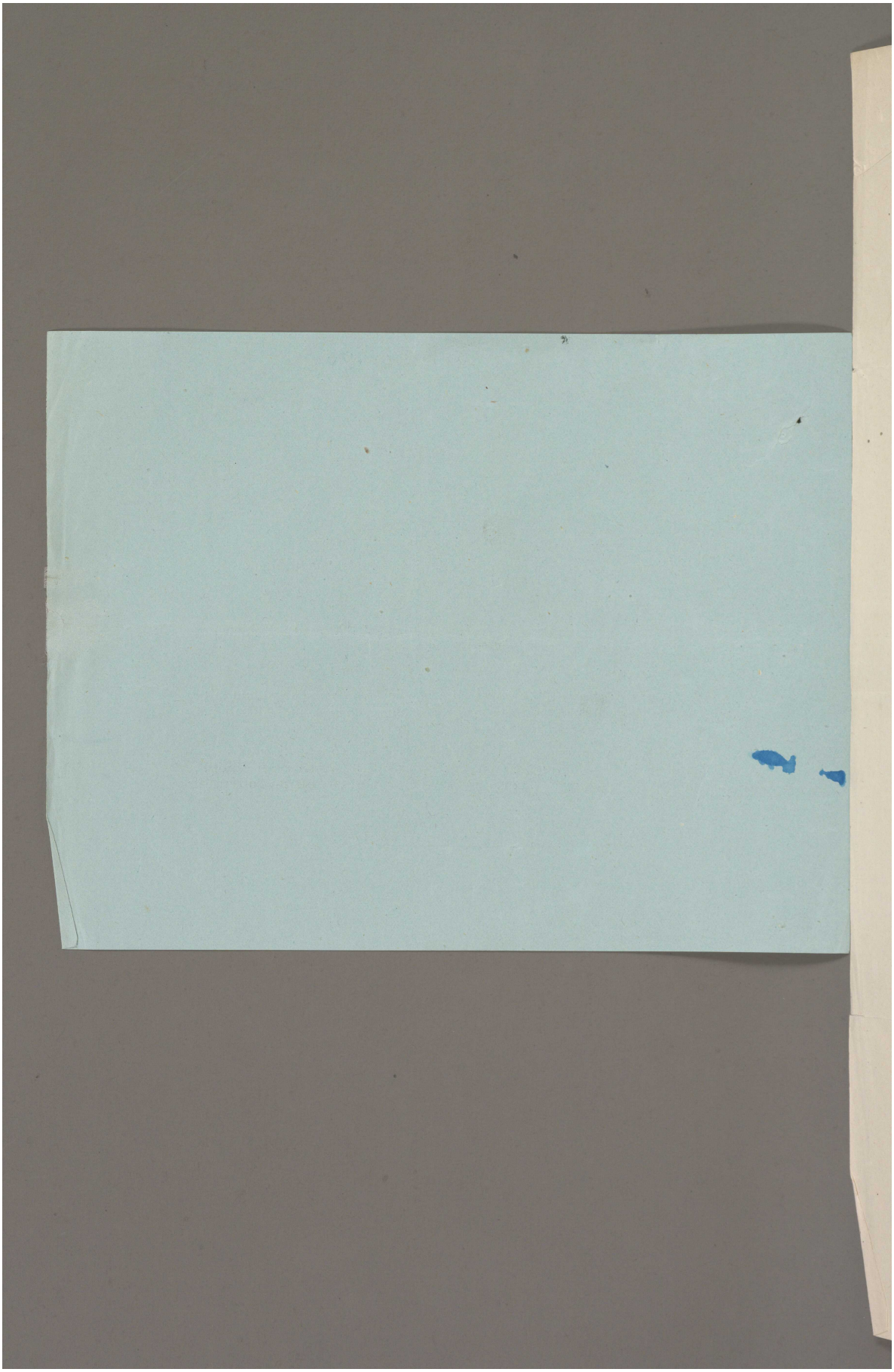
From Sir P. Cox, Bagdad, 30th April 1917.
(Addressed to Foreign, repeated to Secretary of State for India and Political, Basra.)
(Received at India Office 1st May, 1 p.m.)

T. 2406. In continuation of my T. 1254, dated 20th April. Following is result of analysis of Basra Vilayet:—

Executive personnel.—About half perfectly indifferent.

Administrative personnel.—All leading officials were Turks and all principal subordinates in judicial, medical, customs, police and education. In last named all head men were Turks.

Practically all posts requiring technical knowledge were held by Turks appointed from Constantinople and not by Walis. Natives of Mosul, Kurkuk and Sulaimanieh counted as non-Turks, otherwise proportion of Turks would be much larger.



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SECRET.

B. 260.

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Note by Sir James Meston, K.C.S.I., on the future system of government at Baghdad.

In the report of Lord Curzon's Committee which was accepted by the Imperial War Cabinet at one of its last meetings, there are references to the future of Mesopotamia "under British control," and to the desirability of "an Arab State or congeries of States under the protection of Great Britain." I do not know whether these expressions are intended to define with precision the future method of government in the Baghdad vilayat, and more especially over the Holy Places of Islam in that area—Kerbala, Najaf, &c. On the assumption, however, that the exact degree of British control is not yet finally decided, I suggest that it would be well to ascertain the feeling of our Mahomedan fellow-subjects on the point. This would, of course, be done through the administrations immediately concerned, particularly the Government of India. In this note I merely put forward my own reading of the Moslem mind of India on the subject.

My reason for writing is my belief that any protectorate by a Christian Power or group of Powers over the Moslem shrines in Arabia would acutely offend the deepest sentiments of our Mahomedan population. This is just as true of Mecca and Medina as it is of the shrines near Baghdad. But I understand that the British Government has defined its own relations with the Sharif of Mecca, now King of Hedjaz; and I therefore refrain from alluding to that side of the question, except where it is inextricably associated with Mesopotamian affairs.

All good Moslems are at one in reverencing Mecca, Medina, and the adjacent tract of country (the Hedjaz) in Central Arabia. The Shiah sect of Mahomedans reverence also, and with special devotion, the shrines at Kerbala, Najaf, &c., near Baghdad. The historical reasons for this are well known; what I wish to impress is that Shiah sentiment in the matter deserves special consideration. The Shiah sect, besides being dominant in Persia, forms a substantial element in our Indian Mahomedans, and has been conspicuously friendly and loyal. In India, when the Sharif of Mecca's assertion of independence was first made known, an attempt was begun to organize an agitation against him and his claims. The Shiahs took no part in this outcry, although they disliked the Sharif's action for several of the reasons propounded by the Sunni agitators. The Shiahs have all along been very unhappy about our campaign in Mesopotamia, and hate the idea of bloodshed in their holy land round Baghdad; but they have never raised a voice in protest. They have withstood all suggestions for a Jihad (or Holy War), and have justified their opposition on strong theological grounds. They have no feeling against the Caliphate passing away from the Sultan of Turkey. In a word, they have been perfectly staunch to the British Government, and have never listened to any temptation to embarrass us.

The strength of the feeling which was manifested in India against the Sharif—and which caused some astonishment outside India—was partly due to ignorance of the true position, but was also largely based on two objections deeply rooted in the Mahomedan mind. They loathed the possibility of war on the sacred soil of the Hedjaz, particularly if Christian forces should be involved; and they believed that the Sharif would be a puppet in the hands of the Christian Powers. The first sentiment is intelligible to us all; the second is based on an important tenet of Mahomedan faith, and the same

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tenet is applicable to the future of the shrines near Baghdad. It may briefly be thus explained.

The sanctity of the Holy Places is contingent on their being in the custody of a Mahomedan authority or Power competent to protect them against violation. Their guardian would in time become, I fancy, the *ex officio* Caliph; and if he is unable (whether as Caliph or otherwise) to defend them by the sword of Islam alone, his failure will *ipso facto* mean the appearance of the last Imam, chaos, forcible conversion of the whole earth to Mahomedanism—in brief, what we should call the end of the world. It is thus unthinkable to the Mahomedan mind that the impotence of Moslem guardianship should be confessed by the establishment of a Christian protectorate or suzerainty over either the Hedjaz or the Shiah shrines in Mesopotamia.

What would happen in practice if Great Britain and its Allies did decide on such a protectorate, I cannot pretend to prophecy. The end of the world probably would not come; but among our Moslem population an unrest and resentment would be engendered which no prudent Government would provoke except under very grave necessity. An extra-friendly Mahomedan here and there would be glad at heart to see the shrines under honest and capable supervision such as we could ensure; an acquaintance of mine actually dared to say so in a pamphlet which he wrote on the entrance of Turkey into the war; but he was met with a storm of obloquy, and it is clear that the Mahomedan world generally would not tolerate the suggestion. I have just happened upon a strong corroboration of this view in a quotation from an address by the late Lord Cromer. While expressing some delicacy in giving a definite opinion on a purely theological issue, he wrote:—

> "It is held that the due exercise of the spiritual power cannot be ensured unless the Khalif is placed in a position of assured political independence. Hence, although possibly the substitution of some Khalif other than the Sultan of Turkey might be effected without any great shock to Moslem opinion and sentiment, the recognition of a Khalif who could directly or indirectly be brought under non-Moslem influences would be strongly resented."

In a matter of this sort it is easier to be critical than suggestive. It is possible, however, that the King of the Hedjaz may provide a way out. The Crown of Arabia might be acknowledged in the treaties of peace as an independent Power, and given the ultimate sovereignty of Baghdad, subject to any terms on which the British Government and the Sharif may separately agree as to the actual form of administration. Many who know Arabia doubt whether the new kingdom will hold together for more than a few years, but it could be made to serve our purpose for the time, and the problems arising from its disintegration will come on us when we have more leisure to deal with them. For the moment, what I wish to suggest is that the assertion of any form of control, protection or suzerainty by Great Britain or her Allies over the Holy (Mahomedan) Places near Baghdad should be postponed until Moslem feeling is ascertained.

JAS. MESTON.

21st May 1917.

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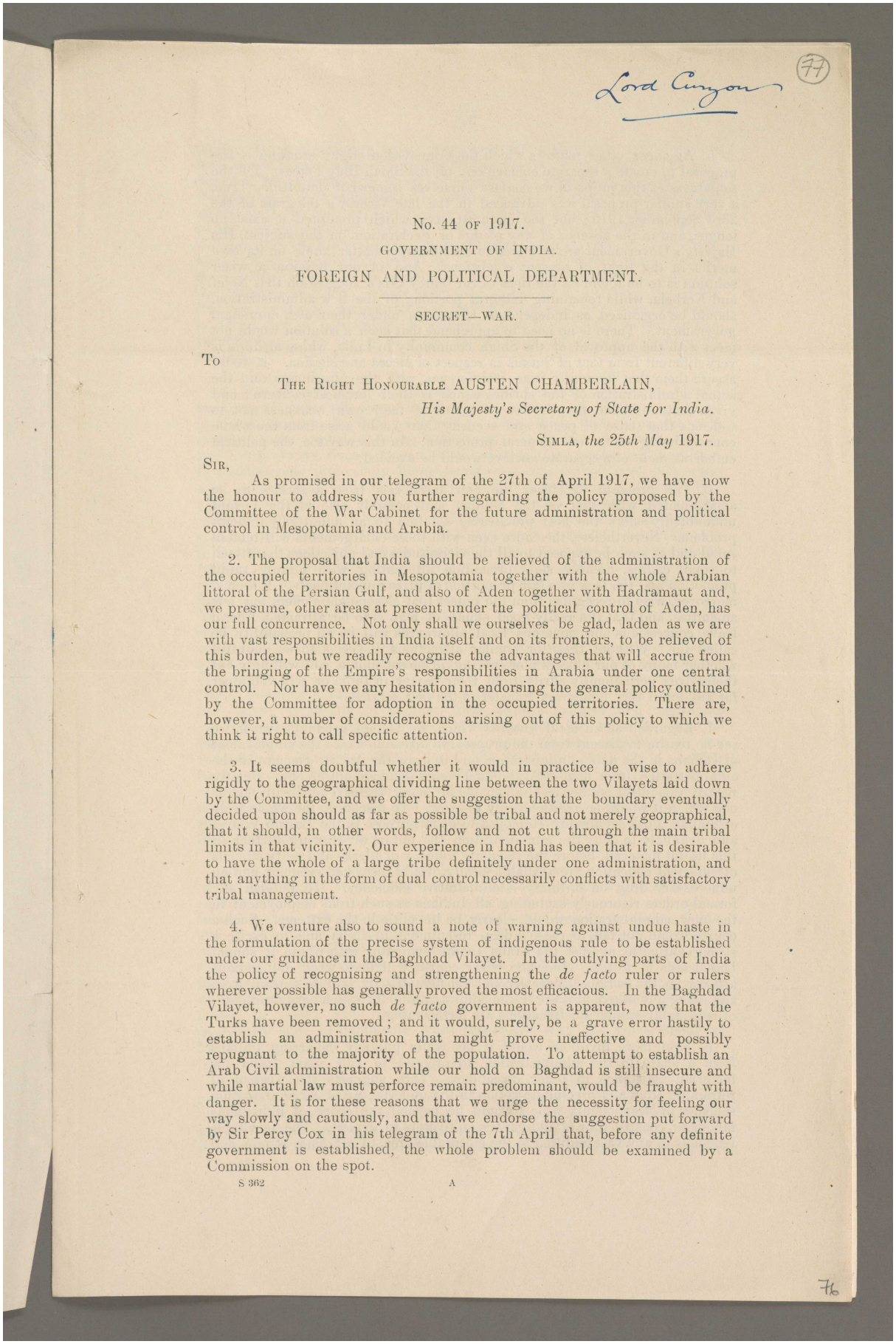

Lord Curzon (77)

No. 44 of 1917.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

FOREIGN AND POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.

SECRET—WAR.

To

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN,

His Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

SIMLA, *the 25th May* 1917.

SIR,

As promised in our telegram of the 27th of April 1917, we have now the honour to address you further regarding the policy proposed by the Committee of the War Cabinet for the future administration and political control in Mesopotamia and Arabia.

2. The proposal that India should be relieved of the administration of the occupied territories in Mesopotamia together with the whole Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf, and also of Aden together with Hadramaut and, we presume, other areas at present under the political control of Aden, has our full concurrence. Not only shall we ourselves be glad, laden as we are with vast responsibilities in India itself and on its frontiers, to be relieved of this burden, but we readily recognise the advantages that will accrue from the bringing of the Empire's responsibilities in Arabia under one central control. Nor have we any hesitation in endorsing the general policy outlined by the Committee for adoption in the occupied territories. There are, however, a number of considerations arising out of this policy to which we think it right to call specific attention.

3. It seems doubtful whether it would in practice be wise to adhere rigidly to the geographical dividing line between the two Vilayets laid down by the Committee, and we offer the suggestion that the boundary eventually decided upon should as far as possible be tribal and not merely geopraphical, that it should, in other words, follow and not cut through the main tribal limits in that vicinity. Our experience in India has been that it is desirable to have the whole of a large tribe definitely under one administration, and that anything in the form of dual control necessarily conflicts with satisfactory tribal management.

4. We venture also to sound a note of warning against undue haste in the formulation of the precise system of indigenous rule to be established under our guidance in the Baghdad Vilayet. In the outlying parts of India the policy of recognising and strengthening the *de facto* ruler or rulers wherever possible has generally proved the most efficacious. In the Baghdad Vilayet, however, no such *de facto* government is apparent, now that the Turks have been removed; and it would, surely, be a grave error hastily to establish an administration that might prove ineffective and possibly repugnant to the majority of the population. To attempt to establish an Arab Civil administration while our hold on Baghdad is still insecure and while martial law must perforce remain predominant, would be fraught with danger. It is for these reasons that we urge the necessity for feeling our way slowly and cautiously, and that we endorse the suggestion put forward by Sir Percy Cox in his telegram of the 7th April that, before any definite government is established, the whole problem should be examined by a Commission on the spot.

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5. Amongst other matters which the Commission might examine is the proposal to create a separate enclave out of the Shiah Holy Places. Of the soundness of this proposal we confess ourselves somewhat doubtful. True, a very similar proposal was advanced in the late Viceroy's telegram of the 23rd September 1915; but the circumstances which prompted it exist no longer, and in the absence of any pledge or declaration on the subject, His Majesty's Government are now free to consider the matter anew on its own merits in the light of present conditions. And in our opinion a wiser solution is to be found on the lines of Sir Percy Cox's suggestion that Nejef and Kerbela, while remaining integral portions of the new administration, should be organized as independent townships under their own municipal government. There is no need to apprehend that such a solution would not meet with the approval of the Shiah community in India, whose attitude is very different from that of Sunnis in respect of Mecca and Medina. It would assure them that immunity from interference with the pilgrimage and the actual administration of the shrines which is their foremost concern; and given that assurance, they are too conscious of their own weakness not to welcome that sense of peace and security that would arise from the whole country being under our general protection. In this way too, the political embarrassment of a separate enclave would be avoided.

6. The proposal to officer the new territories from a service to be amalgamated with that of the Soudan and possibly also of the Levant undoubtedly offers the best practicable solution to an admittedly difficult problem. Nevertheless, the cadre even with these enlargements will remain small and as such be exposed to all the vicissitudes and objections that attach to small cadres, notably slow promotion alternating with unduly rapid promotion and the lack of a fair proportion of prize appointments. It seems, moreover, wise to recognise from the outset that Mesopotamia offers but few amenities, and that if a really good stamp of man is to be attracted, liberal leave concessions and generous local allowances will in all probability be called for. Without these or similar attractions it seems to us doubtful whether many of our officers now serving in Mesopotamia will willingly cut themselves permanently adrift from their career in India or will volunteer for any but a very temporary transfer to the new service.

7. Regarded as an ideal towards which we should gradually work, we see no reason to dissent from the proposal to discountenance the employment of Indians in the new administration and to draw the Asiatic element in the administration from men of Arab and Persian domicile or descent. But we regard this ideal neither as one capable of being realised forthwith nor as one which it would be politic openly to avow. To discharge the whole body of Indian Moslems already employed to good purpose in the Basrah Vilayet and definitely to deny the administration the option of drawing further on this useful material, before the requisite number of clerks and petty officials of sufficient education are available locally, would seem bad economy and an unnecessary drag on ordinary administrative efficiency. To publish any formal orders rigorously excluding all Indians as such from employment in the new administration would clearly be impolitic in the extreme. Such a course would not fail to rouse a deep resentment in India and to excite a strong antipathy against the Arabs, Indian sympathy with whom it should be our aim to foster. Much the wiser course will be to weed out Indians already in the service gradually and unostentatiously, and to refrain from admitting any others to posts in the administration for which local candidates of reasonably similar qualifications are forthcoming.

8. Even more invidious would it be, while publicly debarring Indians from a share in the administration, to proceed to call upon India for material assistance in other directions. This suggests the wisdom of refraining from any precipitate action in the undertaking of large irrigation schemes in Mesopotamia which would be beyond the scope of indigenous labour to construct, or of indigenous cultivators to exploit. The inevitable tendency of any vast addition to the culturable area to act as a strong and

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rapid solvent of existing tribal organisms and institutions will doubtless receive due consideration before any large schemes are initiated. The only aspect of the problem with which we ourselves are concerned, is to emphasise the possibility of the administration finding itself faced, however much against its will, with the necessity for drawing on Indian labour and Indian cultivators to carry out its schemes. Not only would this militate against the principles laid down by the Committee, but it would raise a fresh crop of difficulties, not the least among which would be the invidious necessity for debarring Hindus from a share in the advantages offered in this holy land of Islam to their Moslem brethren. At the same time, in the actual carrying out of its schemes the future administration of Mesopotamia may, of course, rely upon us to render any assistance, as regards both British officers and Indian subordinates, which it may be within the power of our Irrigation Department to render.

9. We are not blind to the fact that the decision that India should be divorced from all share in the administration of Mesopotamia will in many quarters in India necessarily cause deep disappointment and in some, not improbably, strong resentment. India has long been bound, and must always remain bound, to Mesopotamia by strong religious ties. Her commercial interests in Mesopotamia were considerable even before the war, and now that India has shed her blood in the conquest of Mesopotamia a large section of her population is looking forward consciously or unconsciously not merely to a very material development of those interests, but to securing in Mesopotamia a definite field for employment and expansion. It is clearly imperative that on the one hand nothing that can be avoided should be done to embitter this disappointment, and on the other that we should do everything in our power to mitigate it by compensations elsewhere. Any form of restriction on the free and natural emigration of Indians into Mesopotamia, whether for pilgrimage or trade or other lawful purposes, would inevitably arouse a storm of resentment far stronger, and we may add far more legitimate, than any resentment evoked by the restrictions imposed on their entry into the Dominions, and would be calculated to raise the cry that India had been used as a catspaw for the conquest of Mesopotamia. Partly therefore to divert emigration as far as possible into other channels, and partly to satisfy in another form India's natural and legitimate expectations, we strongly urge that a definite field for expansion may be found elsewhere. Such a field as we have already suggested in our Despatch No. 85 (Secret—War), dated 29th September 1916, would possibly be found most suitably in East Africa, and if German East Africa is to remain a British possession we earnestly hope that arrangements may be made not only to allow the free entry of Indians into it but to afford them special facilities for the establishment of settlements and the acquisition of land on reasonable terms.

10. It should, we think, be made clear that if India is to have no share in the administration of Mesopotamia, the trade which has for so long existed between the two countries shall not suffer by the separation. Indian traders will naturally wish for an "open door" into Mesopotamia, and, if this cannot be assured to them, we assume that the treatment accorded to Indian trade and industry will be at least as favourable as that received by any other portion of the British Empire. Further, in the interests of Indian traders and artisans, as also of Indian pilgrims, it would be desirable that an officer of the Government of India should be posted to Basra, and perhaps also to Baghdad, to advise the local authorities and communicate when necessary with the Government of India.

11. The administrative changes in the Gulf and at Aden now in contemplation, will certainly cause some uneasiness at the outset to the Sheikhs of Koweit, Bahrein, and Katr, the Sultan of Maskat and Bin Saud, and in a lesser degree to the Arab chieftains under the control of Aden. But an opportunity will doubtless be afforded us to explain the matter

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to them in suitable terms through our officers, and there seems no reason for apprehension that any uneasiness they may feel at the change will be otherwise than transitory.

12. A more important consideration is the need for ensuring that the division of the Persian Gulf into an Arabian and a Persian sphere, each under a separate control, will involve no loss of co-ordination in our Persian Gulf policy. These are two main aspects in which this consideration presses itself insistently to notice. There is first the possibility, indeed the probability of a serious attempt on the part of Japan to secure a commercial and thereby a political foothold in the Gulf. With the disappearance of Turkey from the Gulf, and with it the elimination of German ambitions, coupled with that better understanding with Russia to which we may perhaps look forward, the Persian Gulf might have been expected to drop out finally from the region of high politics. Japan's designs in this direction, however, of which we have had more than one indication, threaten to introduce a new element into the case, which, unless carefully handled from the outset on both sides of the Gulf in strict accordance with one uniform policy, may lead on to far-reaching consequences. In the second place, there is the imperative need for perfect co-ordination of policy on both sides of the Gulf and in both spheres on land, with regard to the arms traffic, which, though dead for the moment, is likely to revive in a more threatening shape after the war, when all the belligerent powers will find themselves in possession of large stocks of surplus arms of which they would gladly dispose. And in general, it will doubtless be recognised that it is essential for us to be kept fully informed of all important developments not only in the Gulf but also in Mesopotamia and the other areas now to be transferred from our administration, in order that we may be able to gauge the political situation in the Middle East.

13. As regards Southern Persia we are quite ready to accept an extension of our responsibilities, provided our position is clearly defined. For we are very conscious of the awkwardness and general inadequacy of the existing arrangements under which the Government of India has, as it were, been for many years past but a fifth wheel in the Persian coach, exercising responsibility without authority, and providing troops without an adequate voice in the direction of the policy. We beg therefore that before a final decision is made, we may be informed what the exact status of the Government of India is to be in the extended sphere to be assigned to them.

14. Finally, we will deal briefly with the more important financial aspects of the case. We must postulate that, as the Government of India are to have no share in the eventual administration of Mesopotamia, they will not be called upon to make any contribution whatever towards either the civil or military expenditure of Irak. We must similarly postulate that the Government of India will be relieved of all expenditure now borne by them in the Agencies on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf which it is proposed to transfer to the authority administering the Basrah Vilayet.

We also consider that, when once the control of Aden and its appanages is transferred to the Foreign Office, the whole charges, both civil and military, of these areas should be borne by His Majesty's Government. We have not overlooked the fact that Lord Curzon's Government, in their Despatch No. 66 (Secret) of the 14th May 1903, offered, in consideration of being relieved of the Administration of Aden, to continue a contribution of 77,000*l.* a year to His Majesty's Government, *i.e.*, the average cost of the Aden Administration *minus* 100,000*l.* contributed by His Majesty's Government. This offer appears, however, to have been prompted mainly by a desire to be rid of Aden in circumstances quite different from those at present under discussion, and we do not consider that, having regard to the interests of the Indian taxpayer, we should now be justified in repeating it. If India is to be absolved from all administrative responsibility at Aden, she cannot, in our opinion, equitably be called upon to bear any share of the cost.

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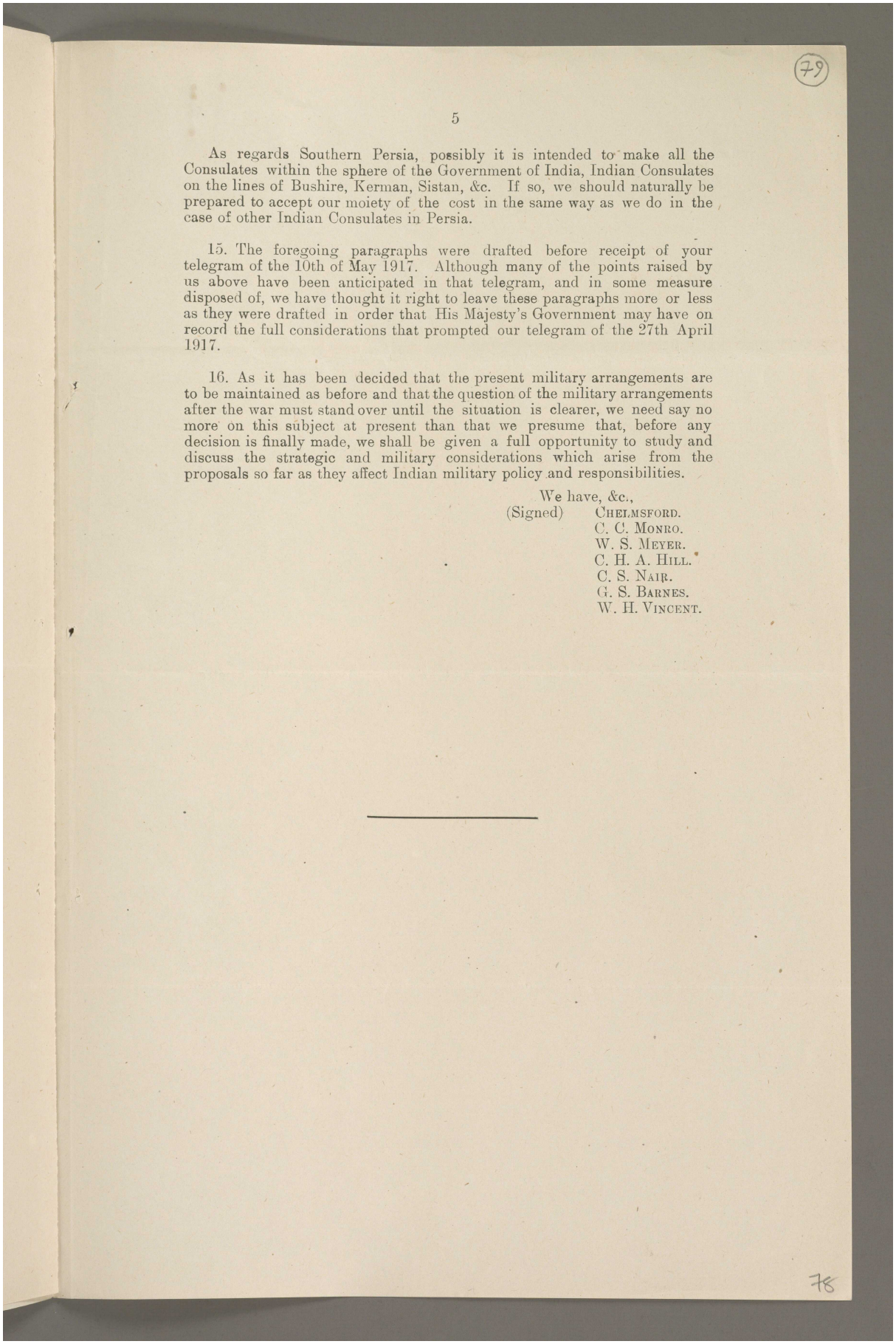

As regards Southern Persia, possibly it is intended to make all the Consulates within the sphere of the Government of India, Indian Consulates on the lines of Bushire, Kerman, Sistan, &c. If so, we should naturally be prepared to accept our moiety of the cost in the same way as we do in the case of other Indian Consulates in Persia.

15. The foregoing paragraphs were drafted before receipt of your telegram of the 10th of May 1917. Although many of the points raised by us above have been anticipated in that telegram, and in some measure disposed of, we have thought it right to leave these paragraphs more or less as they were drafted in order that His Majesty's Government may have on record the full considerations that prompted our telegram of the 27th April 1917.

16. As it has been decided that the present military arrangements are to be maintained as before and that the question of the military arrangements after the war must stand over until the situation is clearer, we need say no more on this subject at present than that we presume that, before any decision is finally made, we shall be given a full opportunity to study and discuss the strategic and military considerations which arise from the proposals so far as they affect Indian military policy and responsibilities.

We have, &c.,
(Signed) CHELMSFORD.
C. C. MONRO.
W. S. MEYER.
C. H. A. HILL.
C. S. NAIR.
G. S. BARNES.
W. H. VINCENT.

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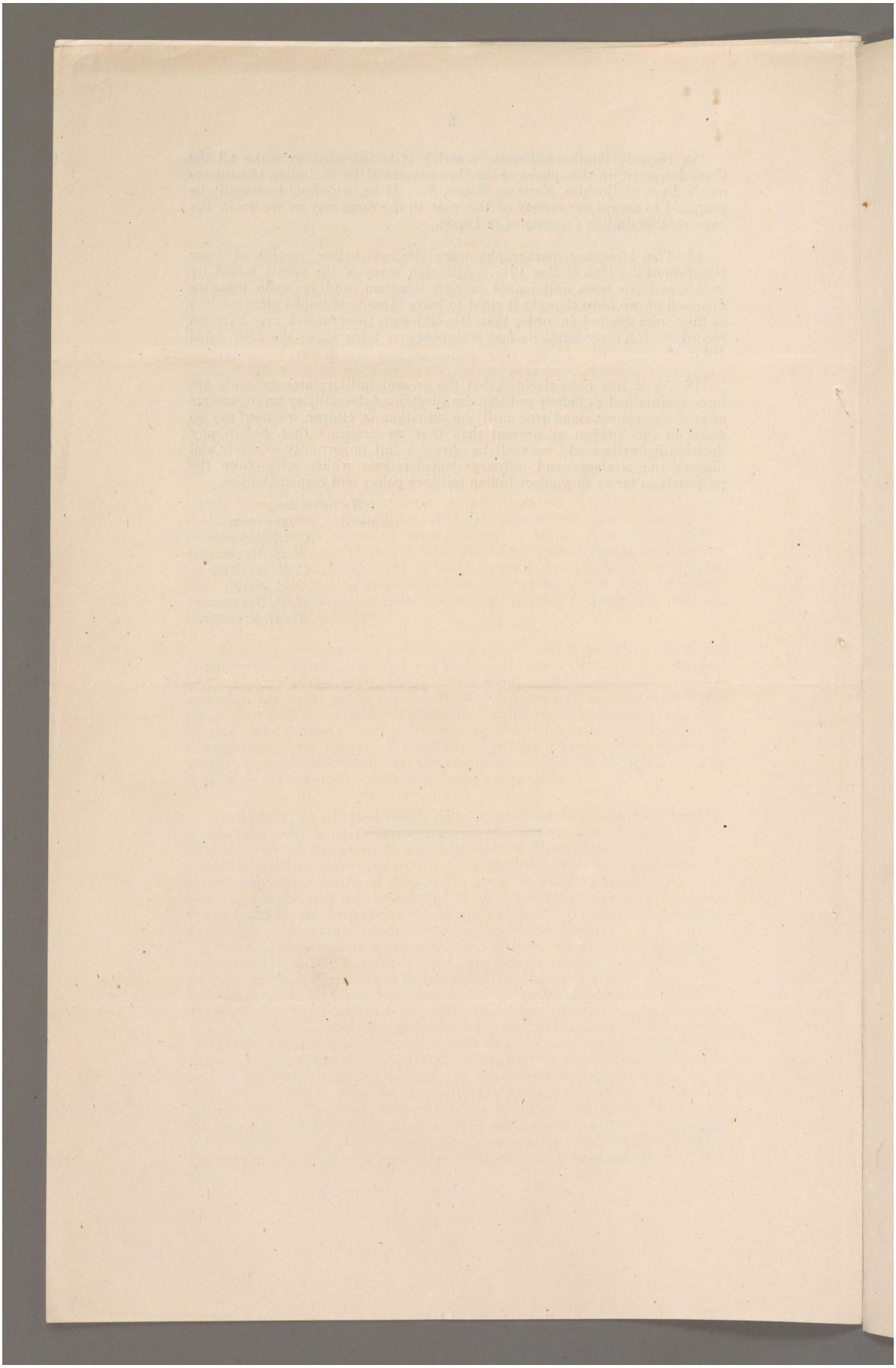

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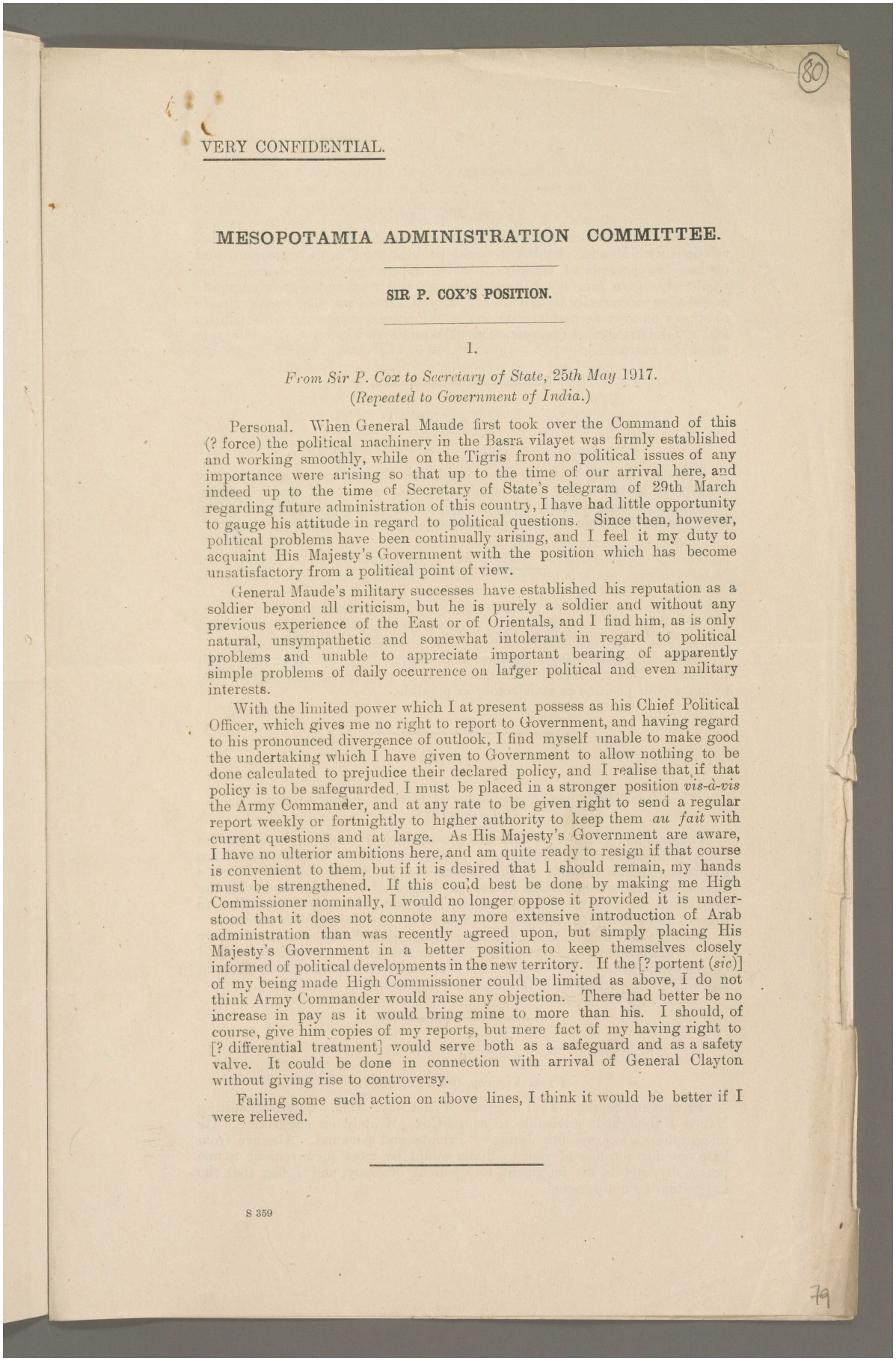

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VERY CONFIDENTIAL.

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

SIR P. COX'S POSITION.

1.

From Sir P. Cox to Secretary of State, 25th May 1917.
(Repeated to Government of India.)

Personal. When General Maude first took over the Command of this (? force) the political machinery in the Basra vilayet was firmly established and working smoothly, while on the Tigris front no political issues of any importance were arising so that up to the time of our arrival here, and indeed up to the time of Secretary of State's telegram of 29th March regarding future administration of this country, I have had little opportunity to gauge his attitude in regard to political questions. Since then, however, political problems have been continually arising, and I feel it my duty to acquaint His Majesty's Government with the position which has become unsatisfactory from a political point of view.

General Maude's military successes have established his reputation as a soldier beyond all criticism, but he is purely a soldier and without any previous experience of the East or of Orientals, and I find him, as is only natural, unsympathetic and somewhat intolerant in regard to political problems and unable to appreciate important bearing of apparently simple problems of daily occurrence on larger political and even military interests.

With the limited power which I at present possess as his Chief Political Officer, which gives me no right to report to Government, and having regard to his pronounced divergence of outlook, I find myself unable to make good the undertaking which I have given to Government to allow nothing to be done calculated to prejudice their declared policy, and I realise that if that policy is to be safeguarded, I must be placed in a stronger position *vis-à-vis* the Army Commander, and at any rate to be given right to send a regular report weekly or fortnightly to higher authority to keep them *au fait* with current questions and at large. As His Majesty's Government are aware, I have no ulterior ambitions here, and am quite ready to resign if that course is convenient to them, but if it is desired that I should remain, my hands must be strengthened. If this could best be done by making me High Commissioner nominally, I would no longer oppose it provided it is understood that it does not connote any more extensive introduction of Arab administration than was recently agreed upon, but simply placing His Majesty's Government in a better position to keep themselves closely informed of political developments in the new territory. If the [? portent (*sic*)] of my being made High Commissioner could be limited as above, I do not think Army Commander would raise any objection. There had better be no increase in pay as it would bring mine to more than his. I should, of course, give him copies of my reports, but mere fact of my having right to [? differential treatment] would serve both as a safeguard and as a safety valve. It could be done in connection with arrival of General Clayton without giving rise to controversy.

Failing some such action on above lines, I think it would be better if I were relieved.

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2.

From Viceroy, 29th May 1917.

Private. Reference Cox's personal telegram of 25th May regarding his relations with Maude. I think it would be best for Cox to come here and explain his grounds of complaint which appear somewhat vague. This would also give him much needed change and rest and *modus operandi* might thus more easily be arrived at. If you agree I propose to ask Maude to allow Cox to come here at once to discuss matters connected with politics and administration of Mesopotamia. Meantime orders on Cox's telegram should be postponed.

3.

From Secretary of State to Viceroy, 31st May 1917.

Private. Your private telegram dated 29th May. Cox. I agree to your consulting Maude. How long would Cox be absent? If Maude agrees, what arrangements are proposed for Cox's work while away? Please let me know result of reference to Maude and await my final decision.

4.

From Secretary of State to Sir P. Cox, 1st June 1917.

Personal. Your telegram dated 25th May. Disposal of question will take time. But you may be sure that it will be considered with every desire to make your position as satisfactory as possible.

5.

From Mr. Storrs (Basra) to Sir R. Graham, Foreign Office, 3rd June 1917.

Personal and Private. I have had opportunity of studying in detail the actual political situation in Bagdad. Consider you ought to know that owing to unsympathetic attitude of the Military to the Chief Political Officer's advice and recommendations we are in danger of losing ground with the population, on the whole very friendly disposed, with grave prejudice to present and subsequent policy as enunciated by His Majesty' Government.

Prestige of Chief Political Officer is very high throughout the country and anything done to strengthen his hand would tend to strengthen our hold on the sympathies of the best and most powerful elements, without being in any way incompatible with the necessary supremacy of the Military.

6.

From Viceroy, 9th June 1917.

Private and Secret. Your telegram of 31st May. Cox. Before consulting Maude I thought it advisable to sound Cox privately on suggestion. He telegraphs as follows, 5th June:—"Private and personal. Absence from here now for purpose of visit to Simla would be most inconvenient to me personally, and in my judgment inexpedient officially, and I beg that the suggestion be not pursued.

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"From personal point of view. I am in best of health and hope to remain so if I stay where I am. Even if I were only to stay at Simla the inside of a week, I could not be back in less than six weeks, and that after a punishing journey through the Gulf in worst part of the hot weather, and with the prospect of great accumulation of work to cope with on return.

"Officially. Important Sheikhs are here or are expected with whom negotiations are in progress, and difficult political issues frequently arise, which it is not fair to leave a junior officer to deal with. Position is simply this: In case of present Army Commander it is doubtful whether the status and functions of the Chief Civil Official are sufficient to ensure that the civil and political interests of the State in these territories, present and future, are sufficiently safeguarded. You therefore propose to take Chief Civil Official away for a couple of months, leaving the strings in the hands of some young officer with no weight at all. A good deal of harm might be done, and in any case I should find my position all the more unsatisfactory on my return.

"If you desire fuller information, I suggest my sending you a liaison officer for a visit. We have recently had a visit from Storrs, liaison officer from Egypt, with beneficial results.

"I do not wish to complain or enter into controversy over past issues, but to safeguard the future. General Clayton, who will soon be arriving as my deputy, will bring with him a detached point of view which will be a source of strength to me, and it would seem a natural course for His Majesty's Government to inform us in connection with his arrival or independently that they need to be kept up to date in regard to political and administrative developments, and would like a fortnightly progress report. Army Commander could hardly object to that. The question of my personal status is quite a secondary one, and I beg that it may not prejudice main issue.

"If your suggestion regarding my coming to Simla is made with knowledge of India Office, I beg that this may be repeated to them."

No particular advantage would be gained from liaison officer. Suggestion that you should call for fortnightly progress report would seem to meet the case for the time being.

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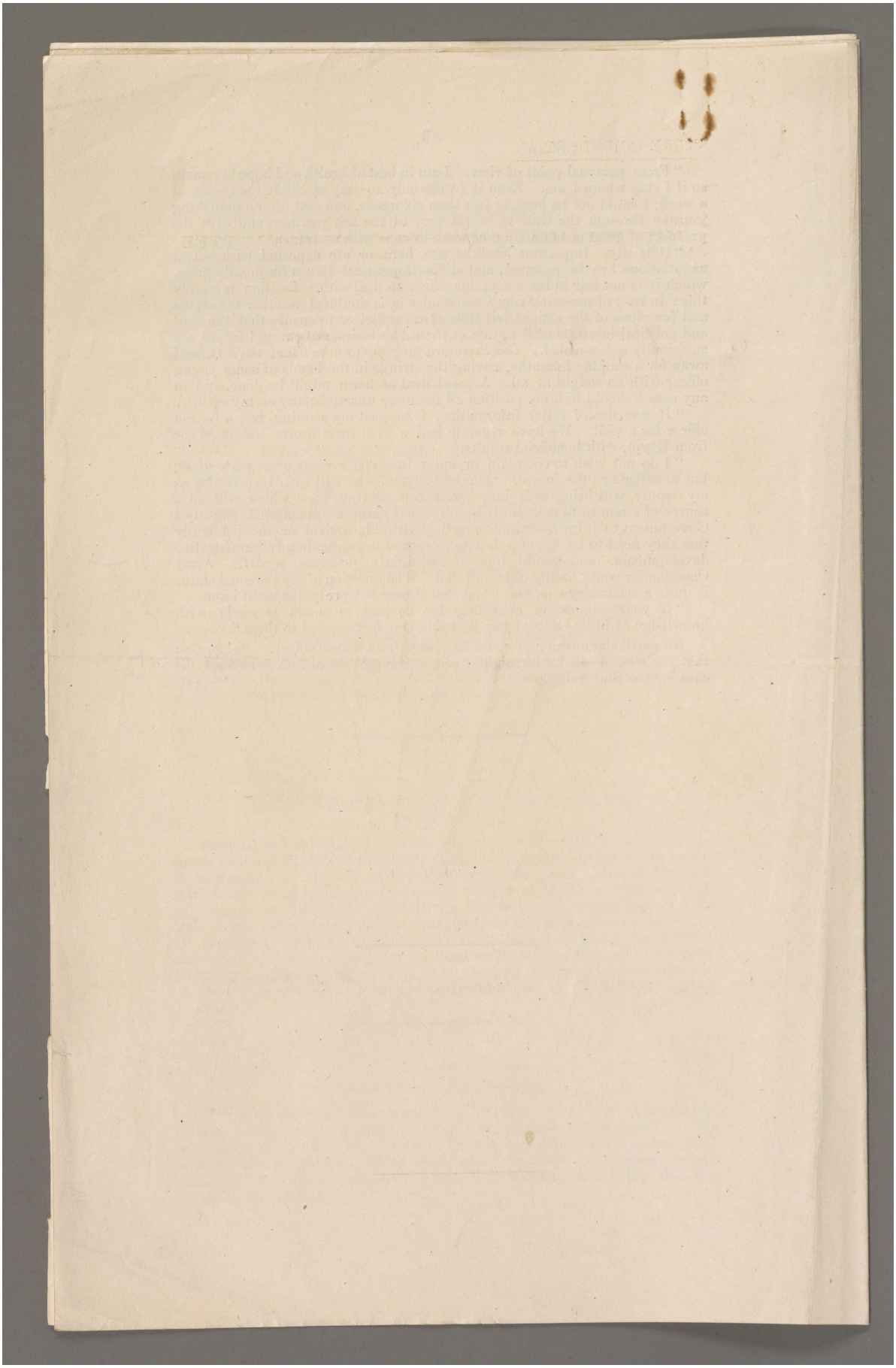

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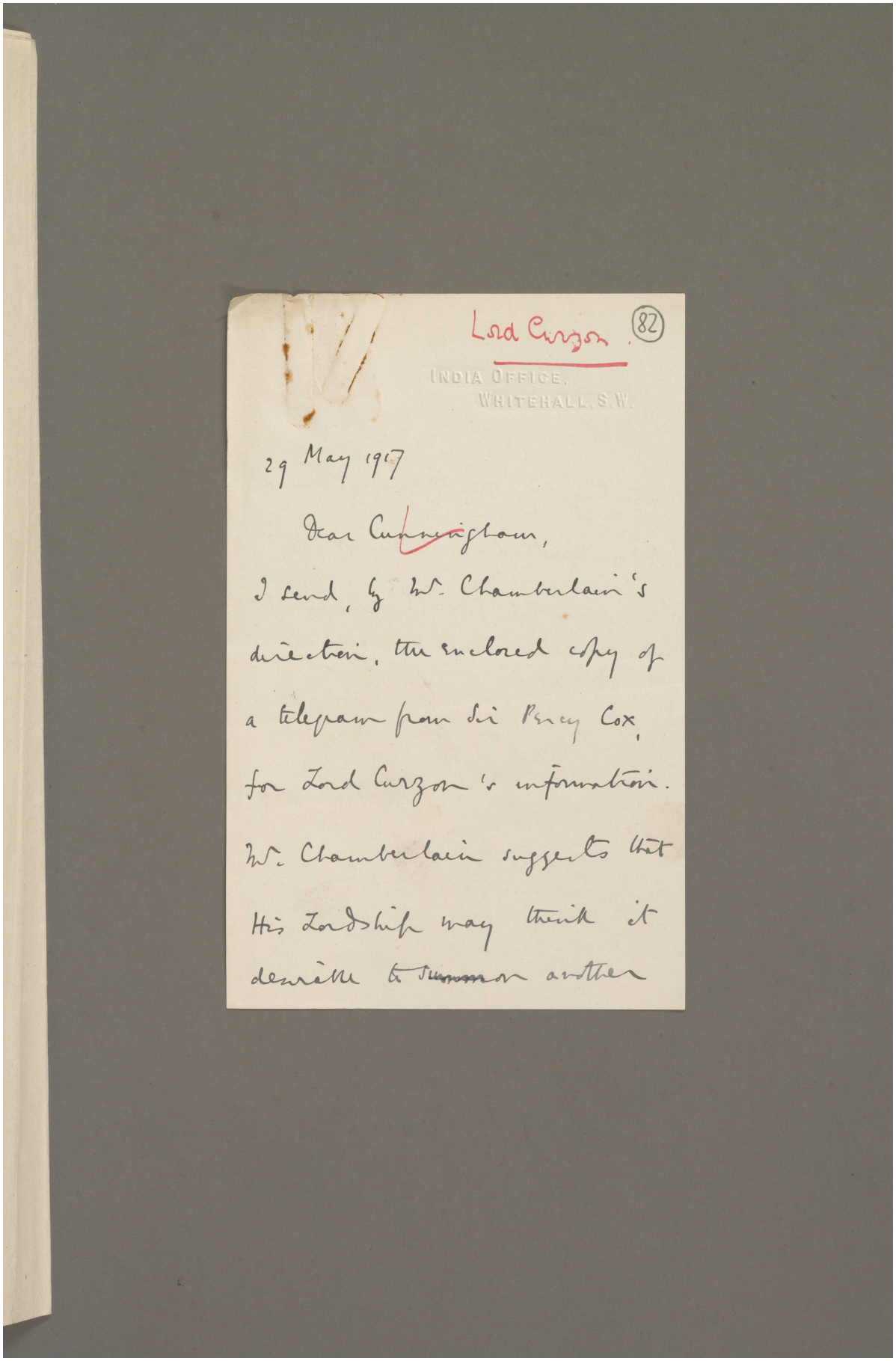


Lord Curzon (82)

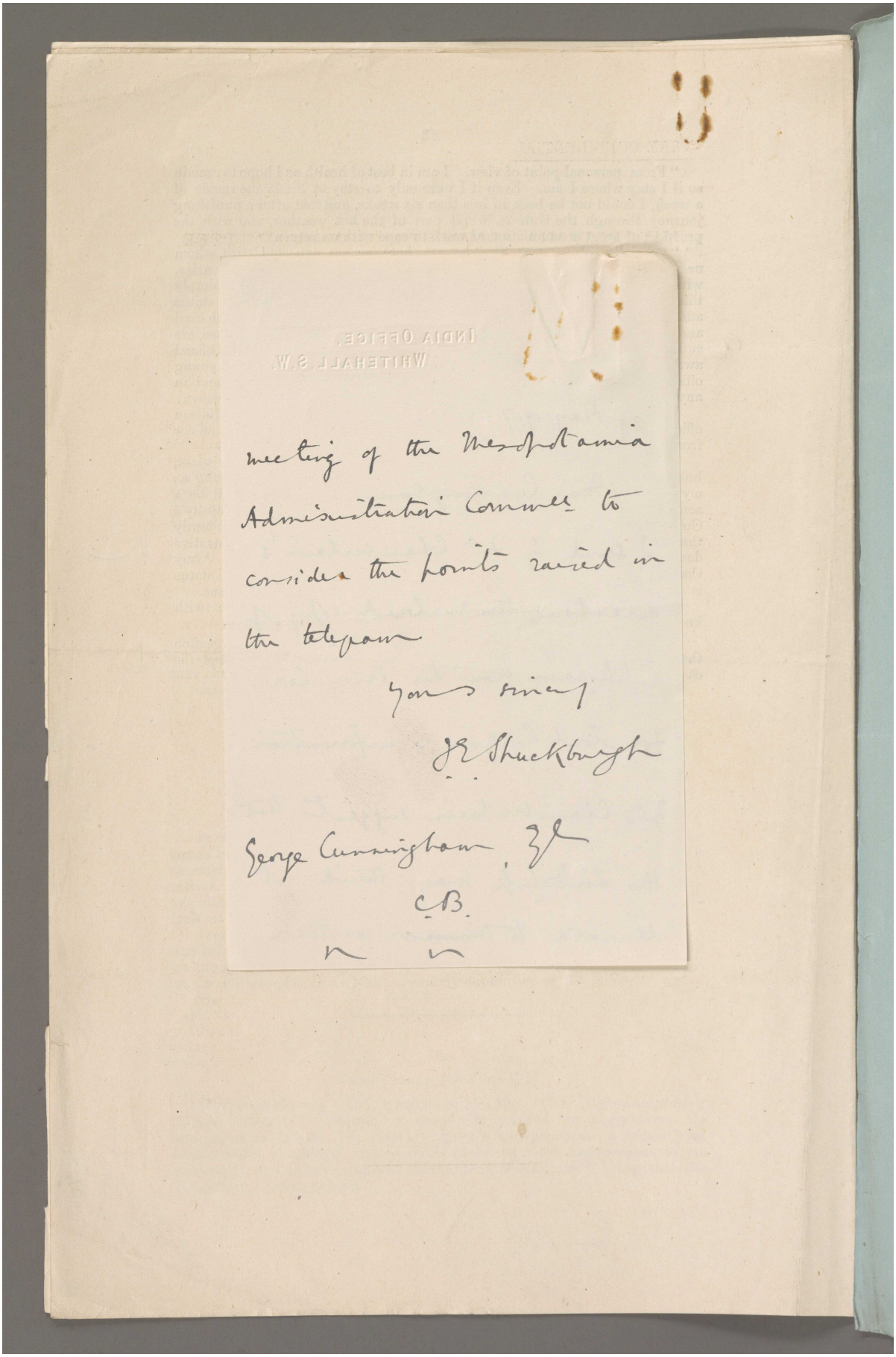
INDIA OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, S.W.

29 May 1917

Dear Cunningham,

I send, by Mr. Chamberlain's direction, the enclosed copy of a telegram from Sir Percy Cox, for Lord Curzon's information.

Mr. Chamberlain suggests that His Lordship may think it desirable to summon another



meeting of the Mesopotamia
Administration Committee to
consider the points raised in
the telegram

Yours sincerely
J E Shuckburgh

George Cunningham, Esq
C.B.

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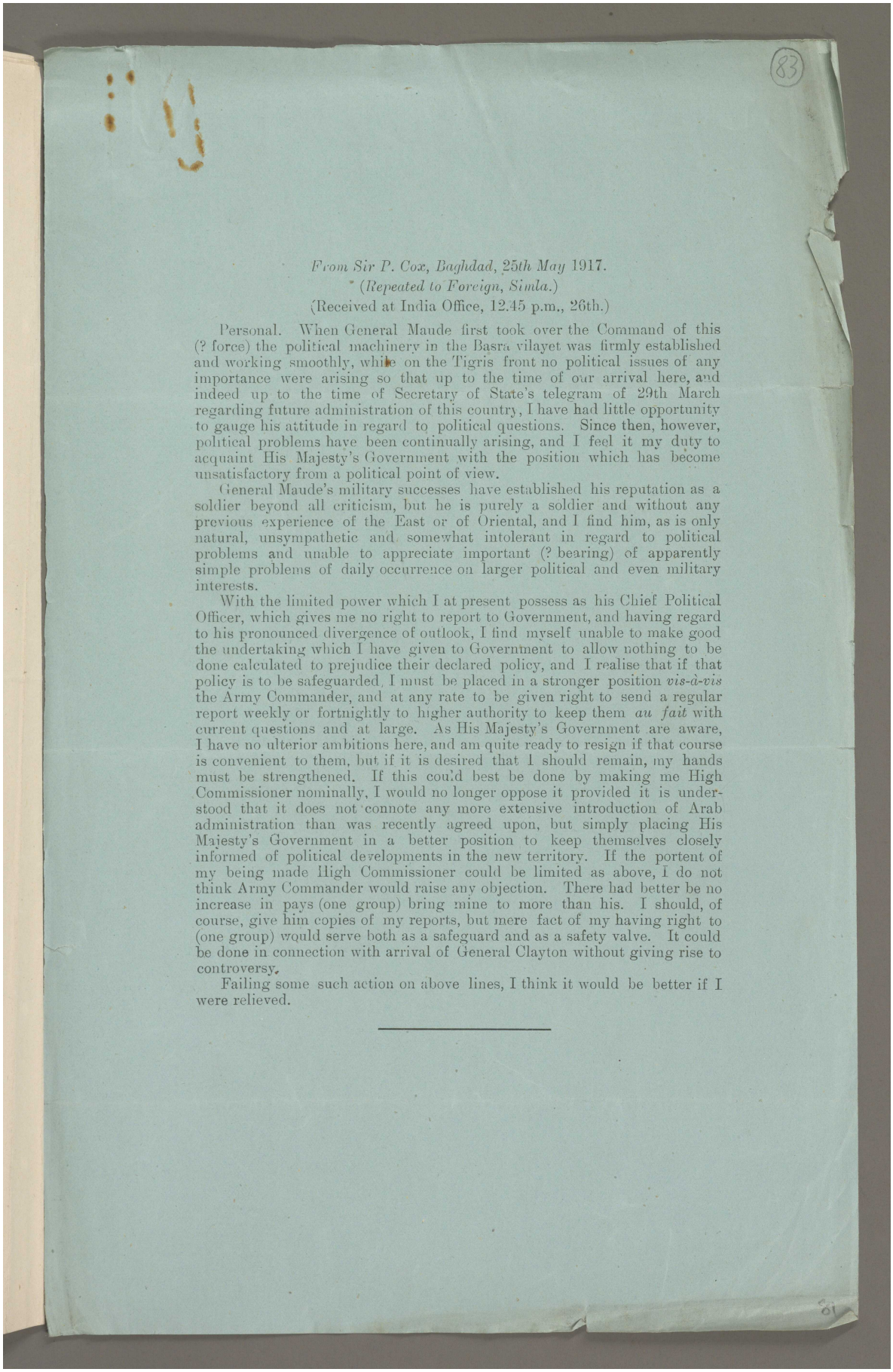

83

From Sir P. Cox, Baghdad, 25th May 1917.
(Repeated to Foreign, Simla.)
(Received at India Office, 12.45 p.m., 26th.)

Personal. When General Maude first took over the Command of this (? force) the political machinery in the Basra vilayet was firmly established and working smoothly, while on the Tigris front no political issues of any importance were arising so that up to the time of our arrival here, and indeed up to the time of Secretary of State's telegram of 29th March regarding future administration of this country, I have had little opportunity to gauge his attitude in regard to political questions. Since then, however, political problems have been continually arising, and I feel it my duty to acquaint His Majesty's Government with the position which has become unsatisfactory from a political point of view.

General Maude's military successes have established his reputation as a soldier beyond all criticism, but he is purely a soldier and without any previous experience of the East or of Oriental, and I find him, as is only natural, unsympathetic and somewhat intolerant in regard to political problems and unable to appreciate important (? bearing) of apparently simple problems of daily occurrence on larger political and even military interests.

With the limited power which I at present possess as his Chief Political Officer, which gives me no right to report to Government, and having regard to his pronounced divergence of outlook, I find myself unable to make good the undertaking which I have given to Government to allow nothing to be done calculated to prejudice their declared policy, and I realise that if that policy is to be safeguarded, I must be placed in a stronger position *vis-à-vis* the Army Commander, and at any rate to be given right to send a regular report weekly or fortnightly to higher authority to keep them *au fait* with current questions and at large. As His Majesty's Government are aware, I have no ulterior ambitions here, and am quite ready to resign if that course is convenient to them, but if it is desired that I should remain, my hands must be strengthened. If this could best be done by making me High Commissioner nominally, I would no longer oppose it provided it is understood that it does not connote any more extensive introduction of Arab administration than was recently agreed upon, but simply placing His Majesty's Government in a better position to keep themselves closely informed of political developments in the new territory. If the portent of my being made High Commissioner could be limited as above, I do not think Army Commander would raise any objection. There had better be no increase in pays (one group) bring mine to more than his. I should, of course, give him copies of my reports, but mere fact of my having right to (one group) would serve both as a safeguard and as a safety valve. It could be done in connection with arrival of General Clayton without giving rise to controversy.

Failing some such action on above lines, I think it would be better if I were relieved.

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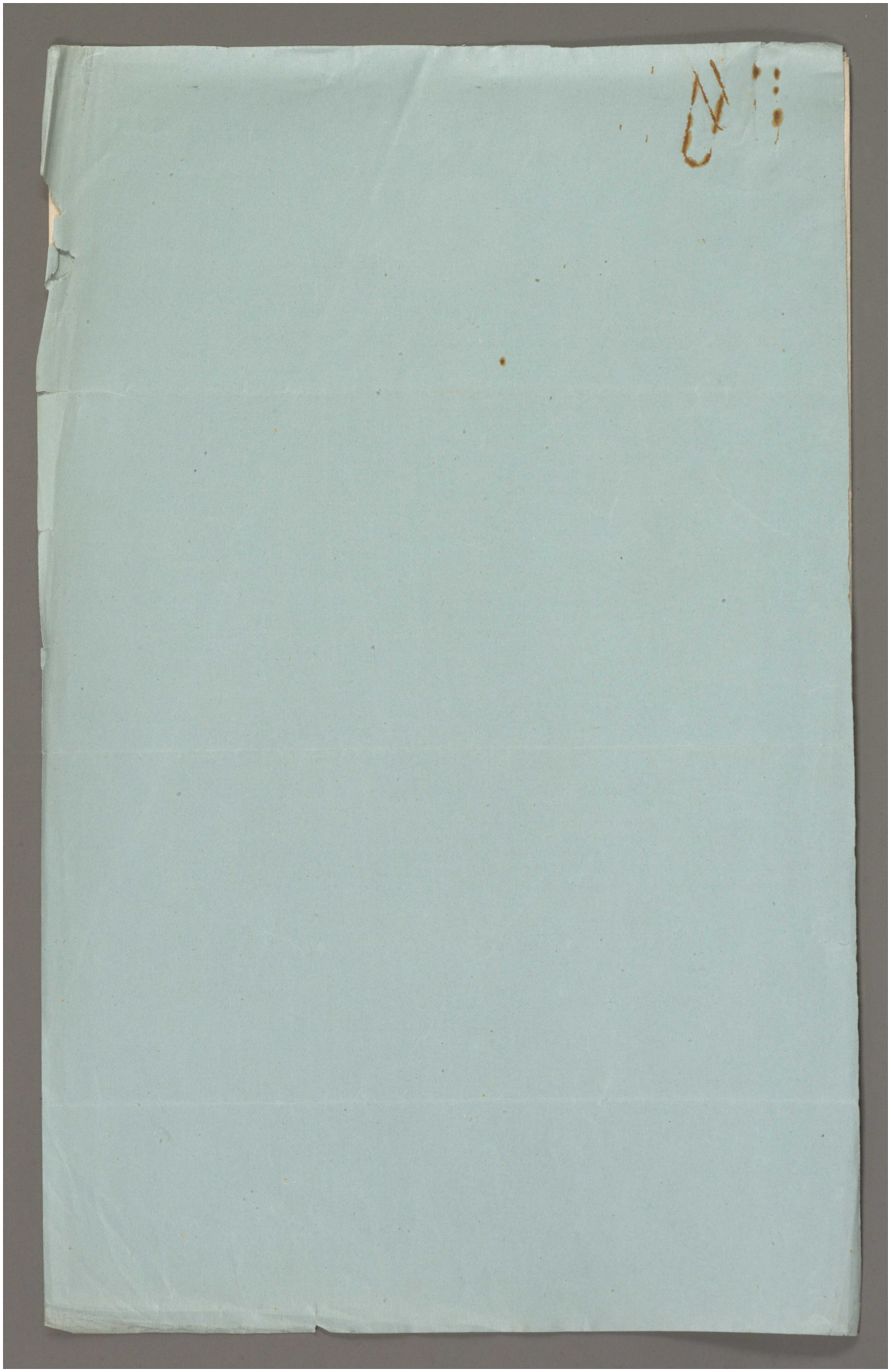

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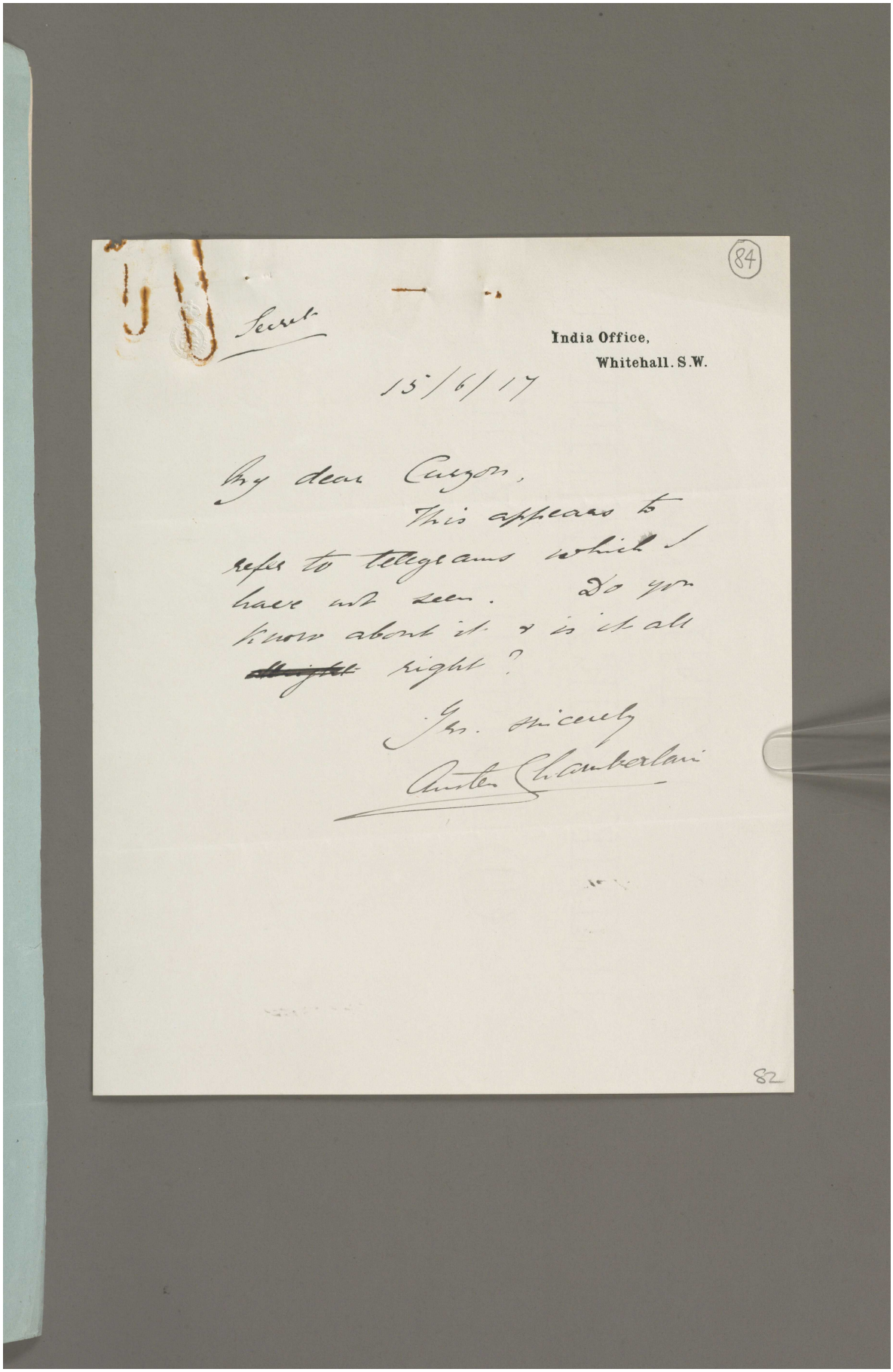

(84)

Secret

India Office,
Whitehall. S.W.

15/6/17

My dear Curzon,

This appears to refer to telegrams which I have not seen. Do you know about it & is it all ~~alright~~ right?

Yrs. sincerely
Austen Chamberlain

82

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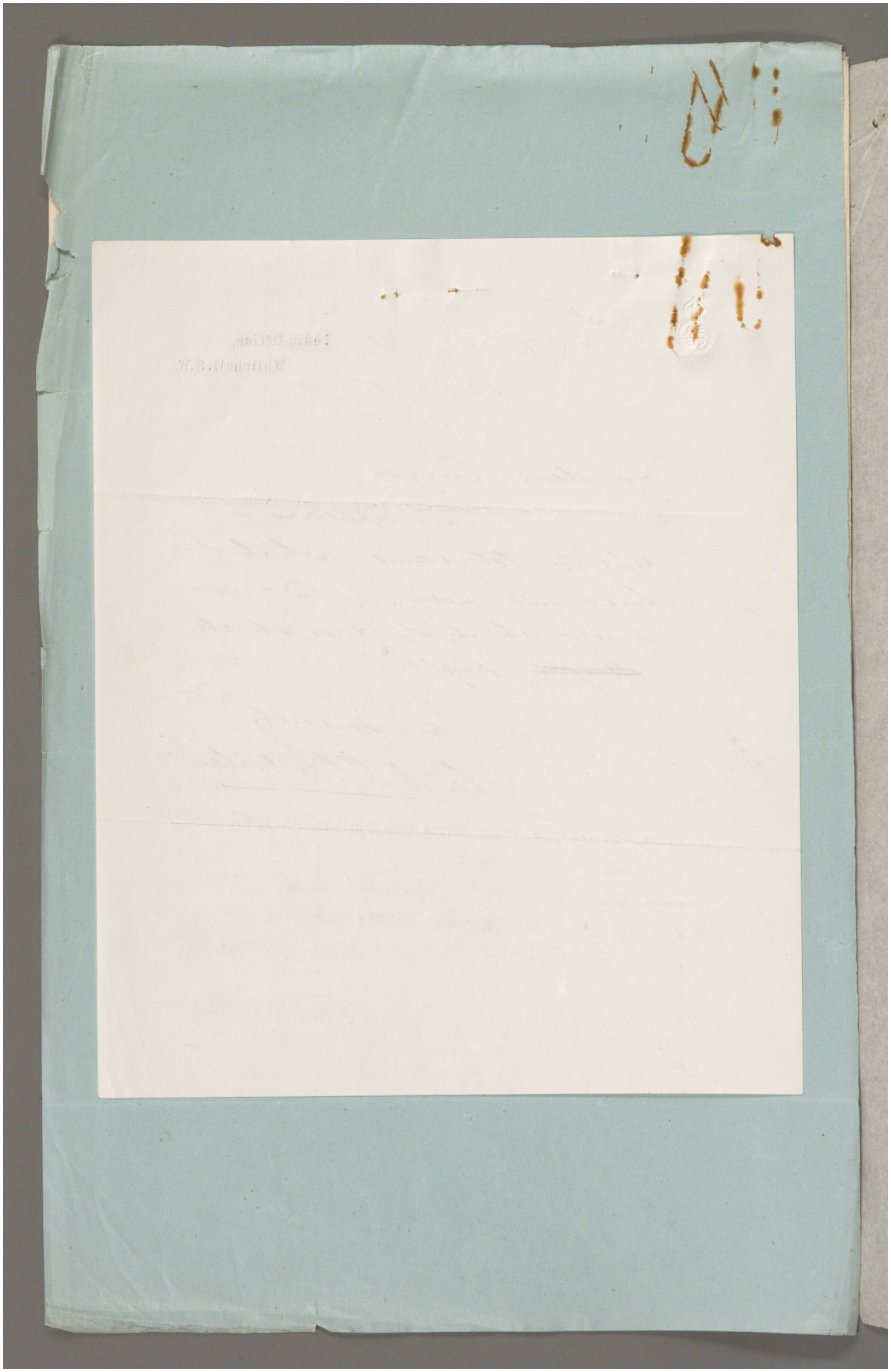

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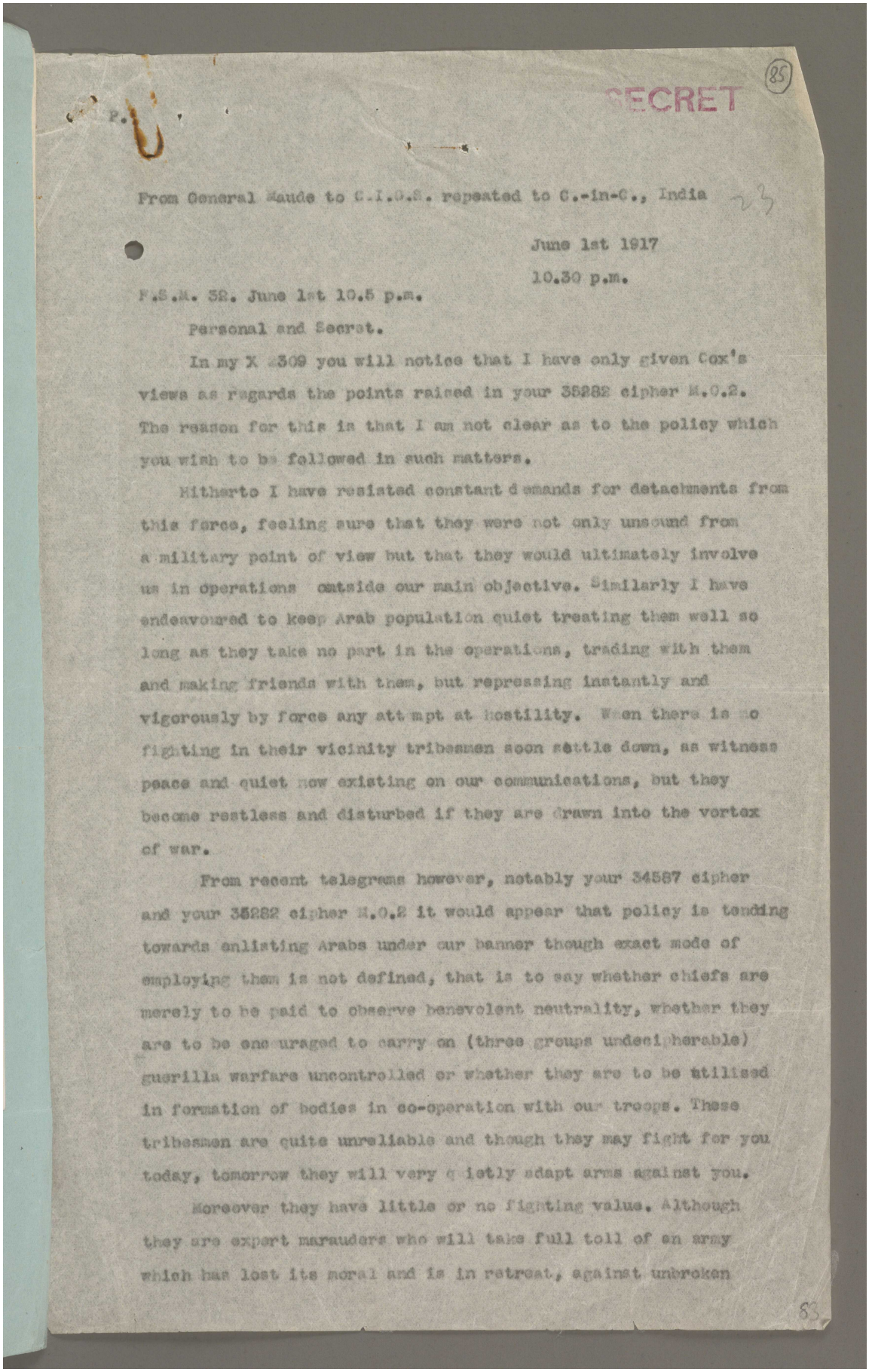


SECRET

(85)

From General Maude to C.I.G.S. repeated to C.-in-C., India

June 1st 1917

10.30 p.m.

F.S.M. 52. June 1st 10.5 p.m.

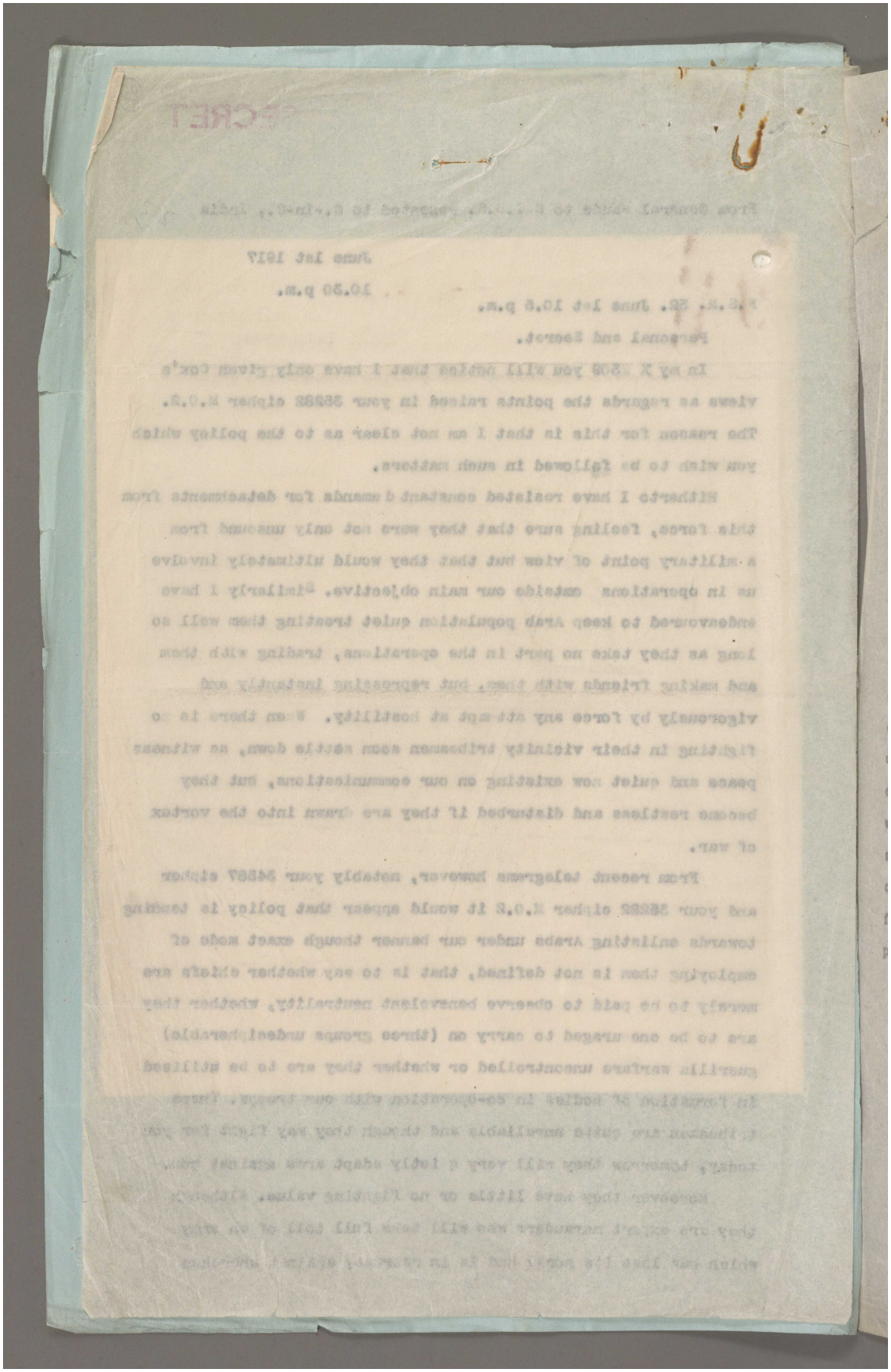
Personal and Secret.

In my X 4309 you will notice that I have only given Cox's views as regards the points raised in your 35282 cipher M.O.2. The reason for this is that I am not clear as to the policy which you wish to be followed in such matters.

Hitherto I have resisted constant demands for detachments from this force, feeling sure that they were not only unsound from a military point of view but that they would ultimately involve us in operations outside our main objective. Similarly I have endeavoured to keep Arab population quiet treating them well so long as they take no part in the operations, trading with them and making friends with them, but repressing instantly and vigorously by force any attempt at hostility. When there is no fighting in their vicinity tribesmen soon settle down, as witness peace and quiet now existing on our communications, but they become restless and disturbed if they are drawn into the vortex of war.

From recent telegrams however, notably your 34587 cipher and your 35282 cipher M.O.2 it would appear that policy is tending towards enlisting Arabs under our banner though exact mode of employing them is not defined, that is to say whether chiefs are merely to be paid to observe benevolent neutrality, whether they are to be encouraged to carry on (three groups undecipherable) guerilla warfare uncontrolled or whether they are to be utilised in formation of bodies in co-operation with our troops. These tribesmen are quite unreliable and though they may fight for you today, tomorrow they will very quietly adapt arms against you.

Moreover they have little or no fighting value. Although they are expert marauders who will take full toll of an army which has lost its moral and is in retreat, against unbroken



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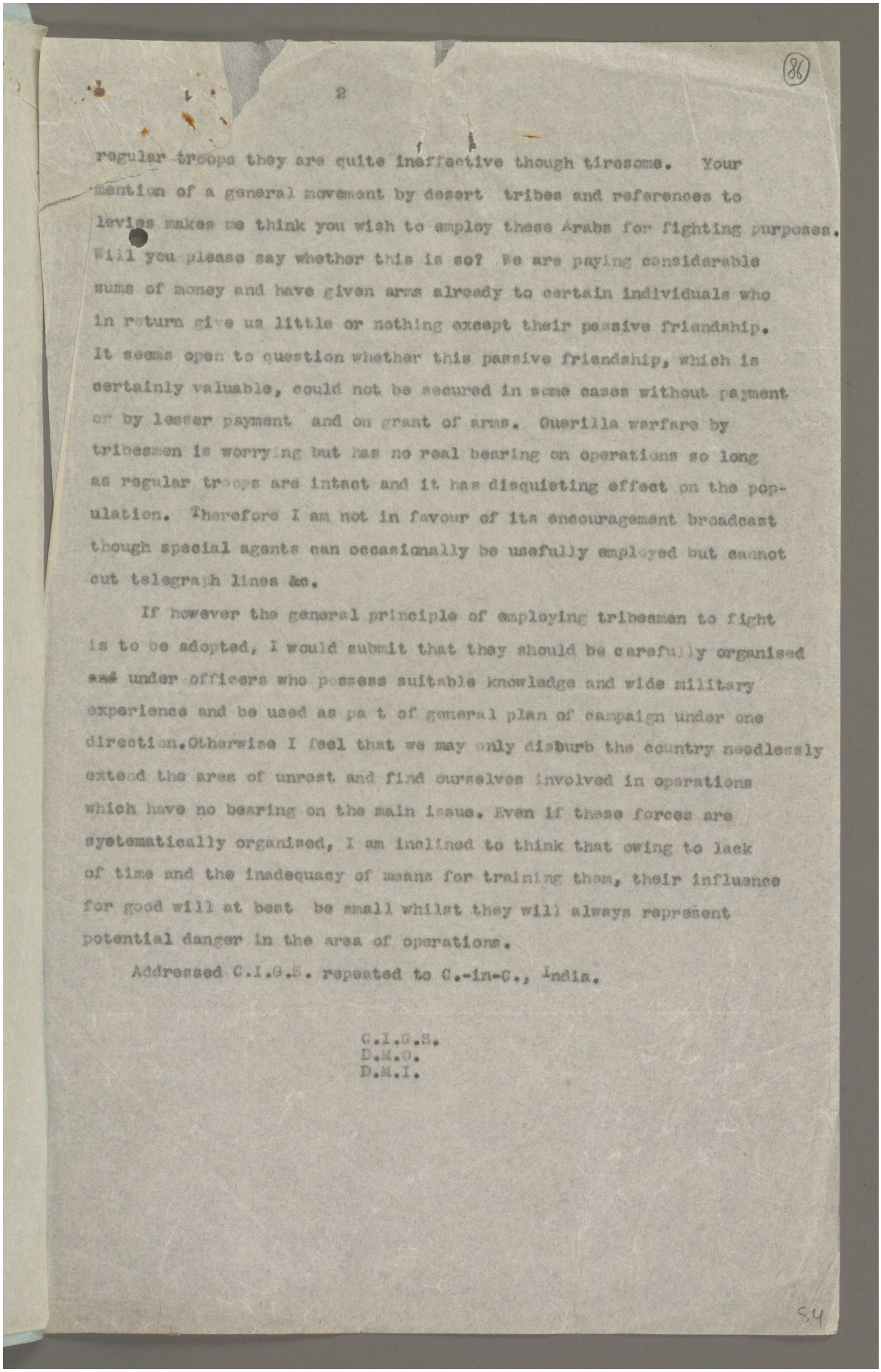


(86)

2

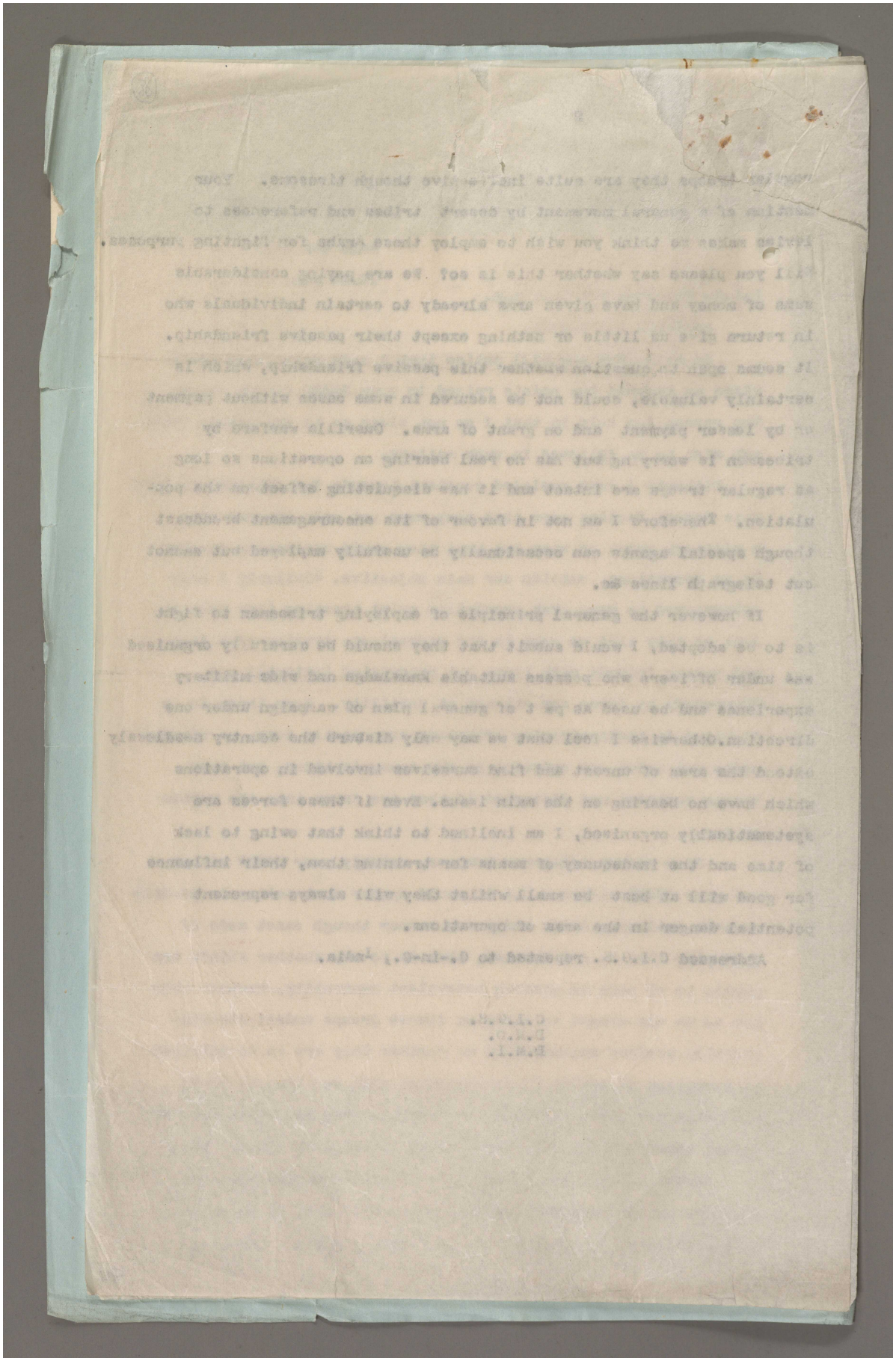
regular troops they are quite ineffective though tiresome. Your mention of a general movement by desert tribes and references to levies makes me think you wish to employ these Arabs for fighting purposes. Will you please say whether this is so? We are paying considerable sums of money and have given arms already to certain individuals who in return give us little or nothing except their passive friendship. It seems open to question whether this passive friendship, which is certainly valuable, could not be secured in some cases without payment or by lesser payment and on grant of arms. Guerilla warfare by tribesmen is worrying but has no real bearing on operations so long as regular troops are intact and it has disquieting effect on the population. Therefore I am not in favour of its encouragement broadcast though special agents can occasionally be usefully employed but cannot cut telegraph lines &c.

If however the general principle of employing tribesmen to fight is to be adopted, I would submit that they should be carefully organised and under officers who possess suitable knowledge and wide military experience and be used as part of general plan of campaign under one direction. Otherwise I feel that we may only disturb the country needlessly extend the area of unrest and find ourselves involved in operations which have no bearing on the main issue. Even if these forces are systematically organised, I am inclined to think that owing to lack of time and the inadequacy of means for training them, their influence for good will at best be small whilst they will always represent potential danger in the area of operations.

Addressed C.I.G.S. repeated to C.-in-C., India.

C.I.G.S.
D.M.O.
D.M.I.

84



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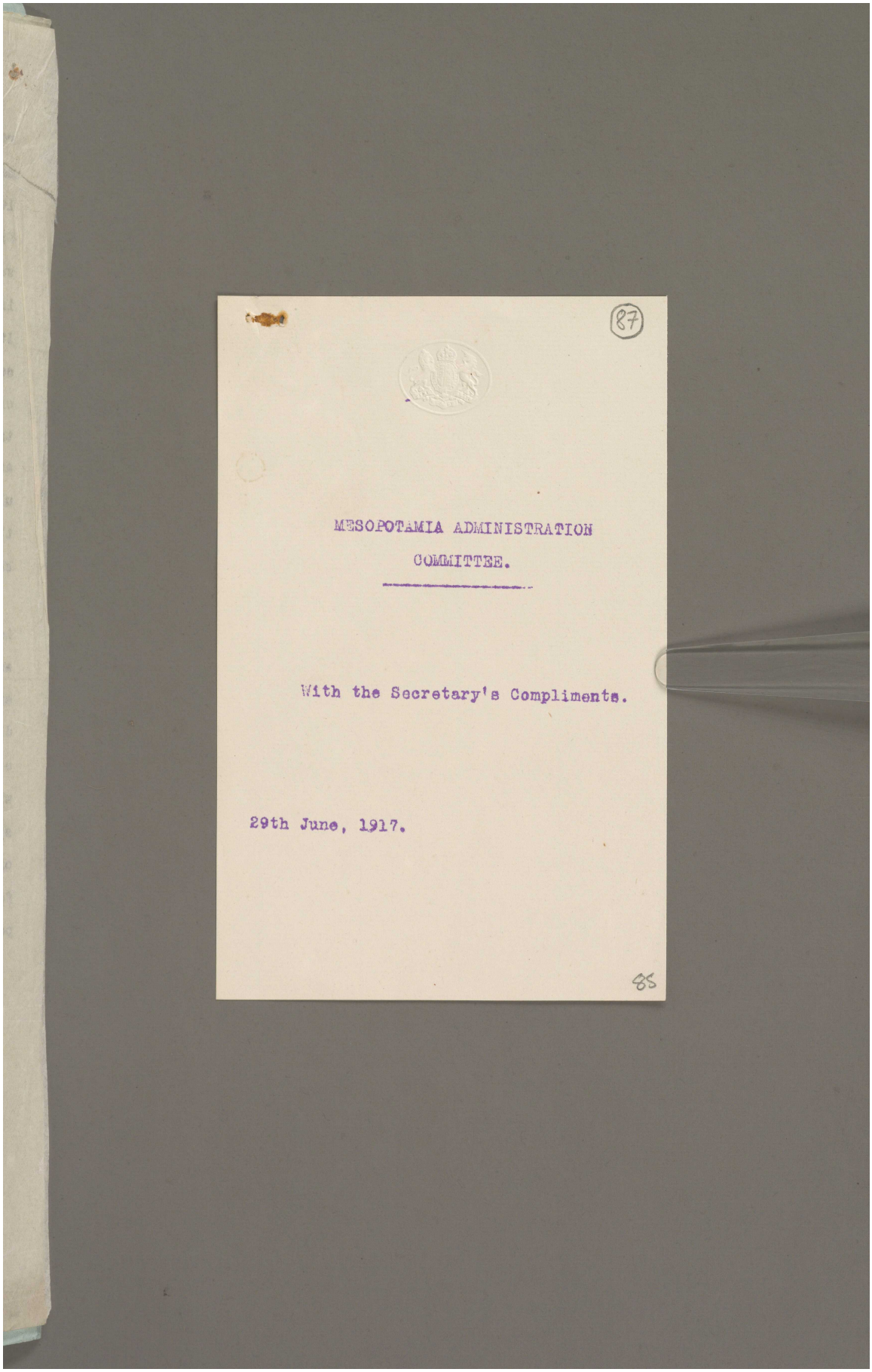

87

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE.

With the Secretary's Compliments.

29th June, 1917.

85

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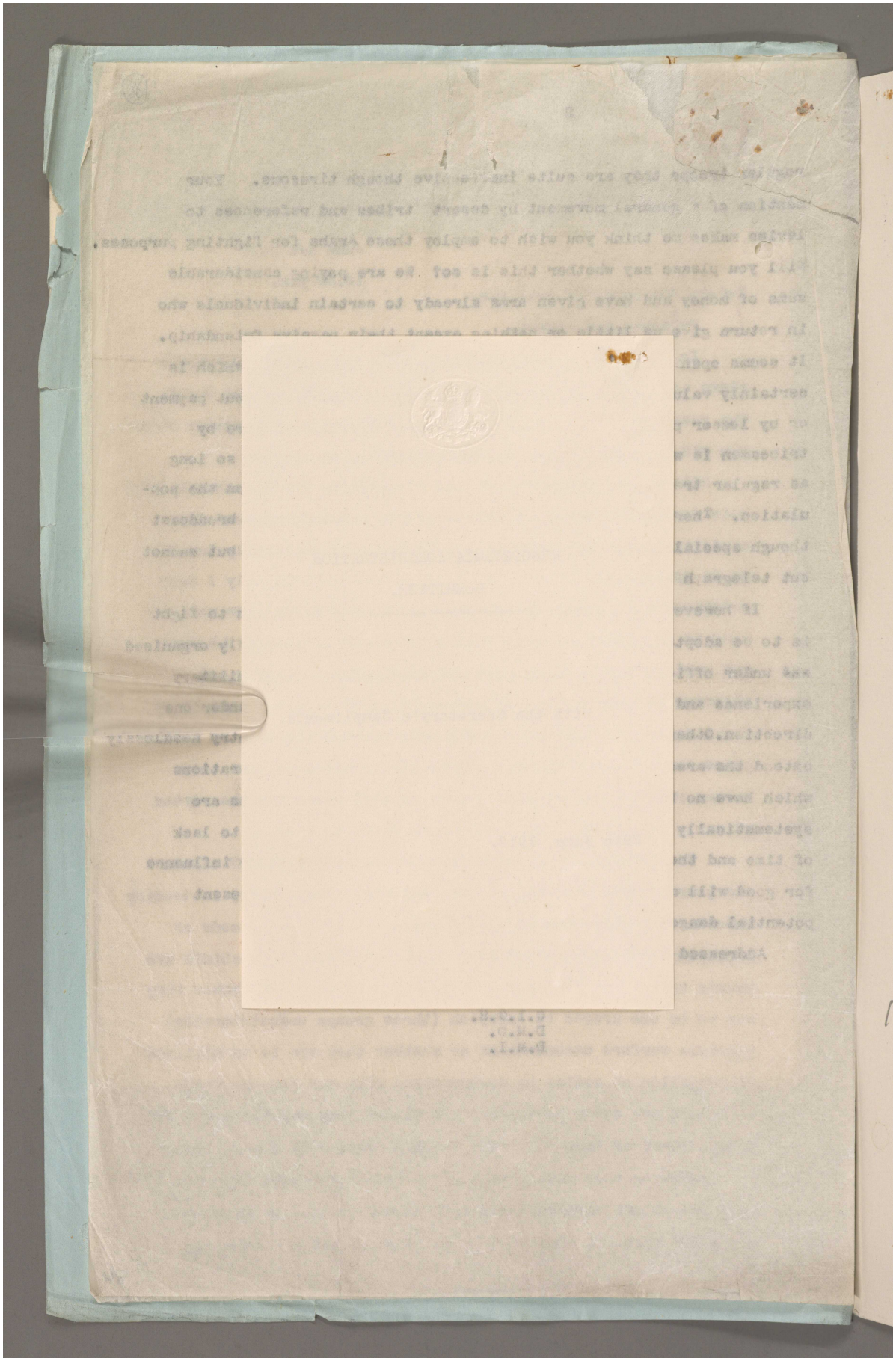

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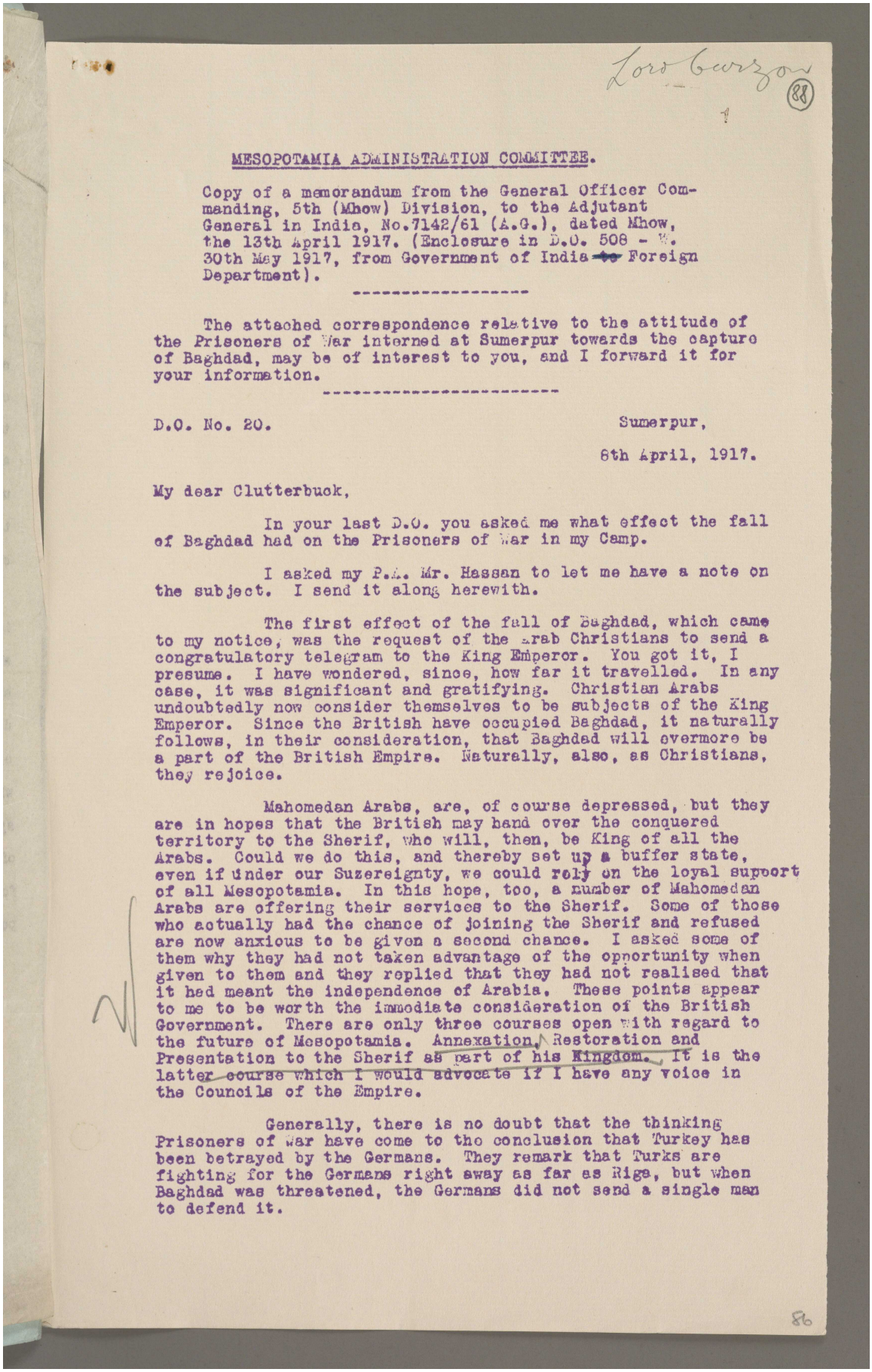

Lord Curzon (88)

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Copy of a memorandum from the General Officer Commanding, 5th (Mhow) Division, to the Adjutant General in India, No.7142/61 (A.G.), dated Mhow, the 13th April 1917. (Enclosure in D.O. 508 - W. 30th May 1917, from Government of India ~~to~~ Foreign Department).

The attached correspondence relative to the attitude of the Prisoners of War interned at Sumerpur towards the capture of Baghdad, may be of interest to you, and I forward it for your information.

D.O. No. 20.

Sumerpur,

6th April, 1917.

My dear Clutterbuck,

In your last D.O. you asked me what effect the fall of Baghdad had on the Prisoners of War in my Camp.

I asked my P.A. Mr. Hassan to let me have a note on the subject. I send it along herewith.

The first effect of the fall of Baghdad, which came to my notice, was the request of the Arab Christians to send a congratulatory telegram to the King Emperor. You got it, I presume. I have wondered, since, how far it travelled. In any case, it was significant and gratifying. Christian Arabs undoubtedly now consider themselves to be subjects of the King Emperor. Since the British have occupied Baghdad, it naturally follows, in their consideration, that Baghdad will evermore be a part of the British Empire. Naturally, also, as Christians, they rejoice.

Mahomedan Arabs, are, of course depressed, but they are in hopes that the British may hand over the conquered territory to the Sherif, who will, then, be King of all the Arabs. Could we do this, and thereby set up a buffer state, even if under our Suzereignty, we could rely on the loyal support of all Mesopotamia. In this hope, too, a number of Mahomedan Arabs are offering their services to the Sherif. Some of those who actually had the chance of joining the Sherif and refused are now anxious to be given a second chance. I asked some of them why they had not taken advantage of the opportunity when given to them and they replied that they had not realised that it had meant the independence of Arabia. These points appear to me to be worth the immediate consideration of the British Government. There are only three courses open with regard to the future of Mesopotamia. Annexation, Restoration and Presentation to the Sherif as part of his Kingdom. It is the latter course which I would advocate if I have any voice in the Councils of the Empire.

Generally, there is no doubt that the thinking Prisoners of War have come to the conclusion that Turkey has been betrayed by the Germans. They remark that Turks are fighting for the Germans right away as far as Riga, but when Baghdad was threatened, the Germans did not send a single man to defend it.

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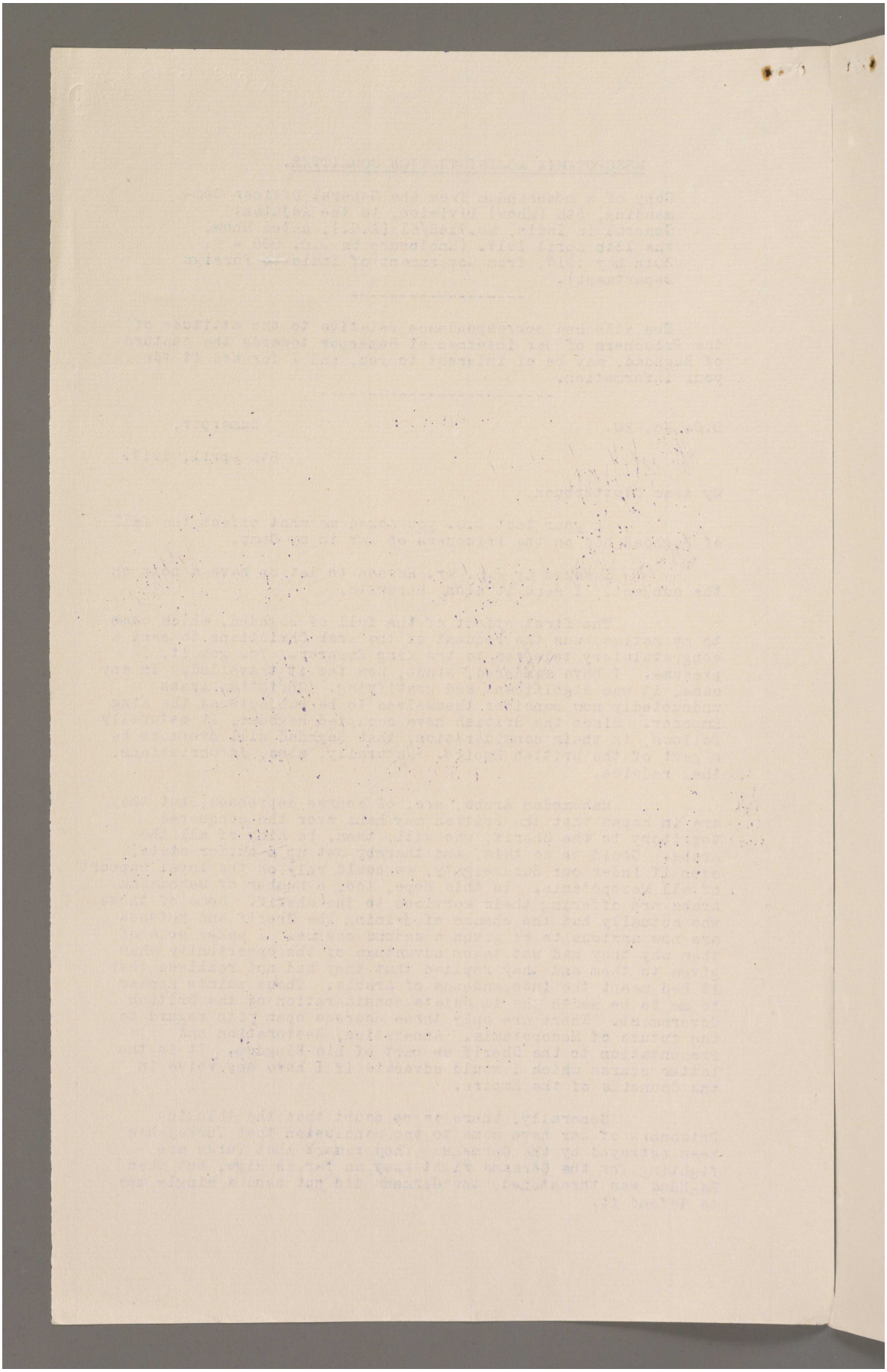

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I have already got some Prisoners of War from Baghdad, and they speak very highly of the treatment accorded to them by the British, and especially the officers. The stories I have heard of the treatment of the British on their way from Kut as far as Mosul are not as bad as I had surmised. The Indian Sepoys came in for actual blows when they lagged behind, but the British suffered chiefly from neglect and want of provisions. For the latter there seems to have been no "bundobast" whatever on the march, and, when they came across a field of corn, they consumed it. What happened to them beyond Mosul I can find out nothing.

A large number of Prisoners of War are now working on the new barracks, and they realise that there is a considerable increase in the number of Prisoners to be expected in the near future. Our numbers are, in fact, increasing rapidly, and are now very near 4000.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) H.M.HALLIDAY.

Major C.H.Clutterbuck, I.A.
D.A.Q.M.G. 5th (Mhow) Division.

Prisoners of War Camp,
Sumerpur.

5th April, 1917.

To
Lieutenant-Colonel H.M.Halliday, I.A.,
Commandant, Prisoners of War Camp, Sumerpur.

Sir,

With reference to the effect produced by the fall of Baghdad on the Prisoners of War interned in the Camp under your Command, I have the honour to report the following:-

1. The news of the fall of Baghdad came as a surprise. It first caused great depression in the Camp and for a time most of the Prisoners of War, especially the Civilians, looked quite sad and dejected.

2. Of all the Prisoners of War who received the news with delight were the pro-Arab party and the Shias who come from Kerbela, Najef, Hillah and Kadhemein.

3. The fall of Baghdad has aroused in the Prisoners of War, both combatant and non-combatant, an interest in the Revolt of the Sherif of Mecca. A question which I am often asked is "Are the Allies going to annex Mesopotamia and Syria to the Hedjaz?" Some Prisoners go so far as to state that the Allies have promised the Moslem world of such annexation to the Dominion of the Sherif. Their reason for such supposition, they say, is that some of the Holy Moslem Shrines are located in Mesopotamia.

4. The majority of the Civilian ex-officials are now happy but they do not dare express their joy fearing their pro-Turk fellows.

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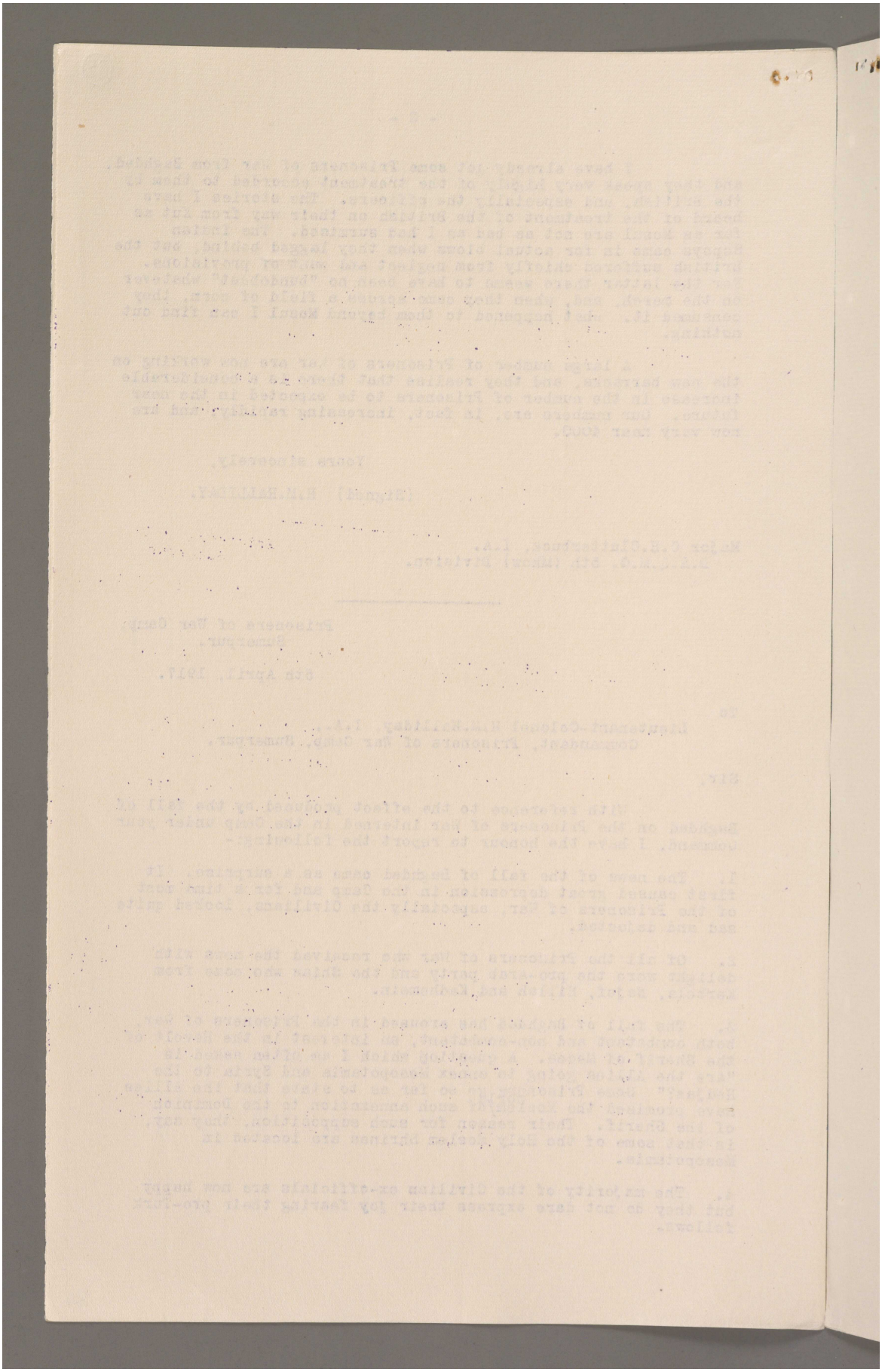

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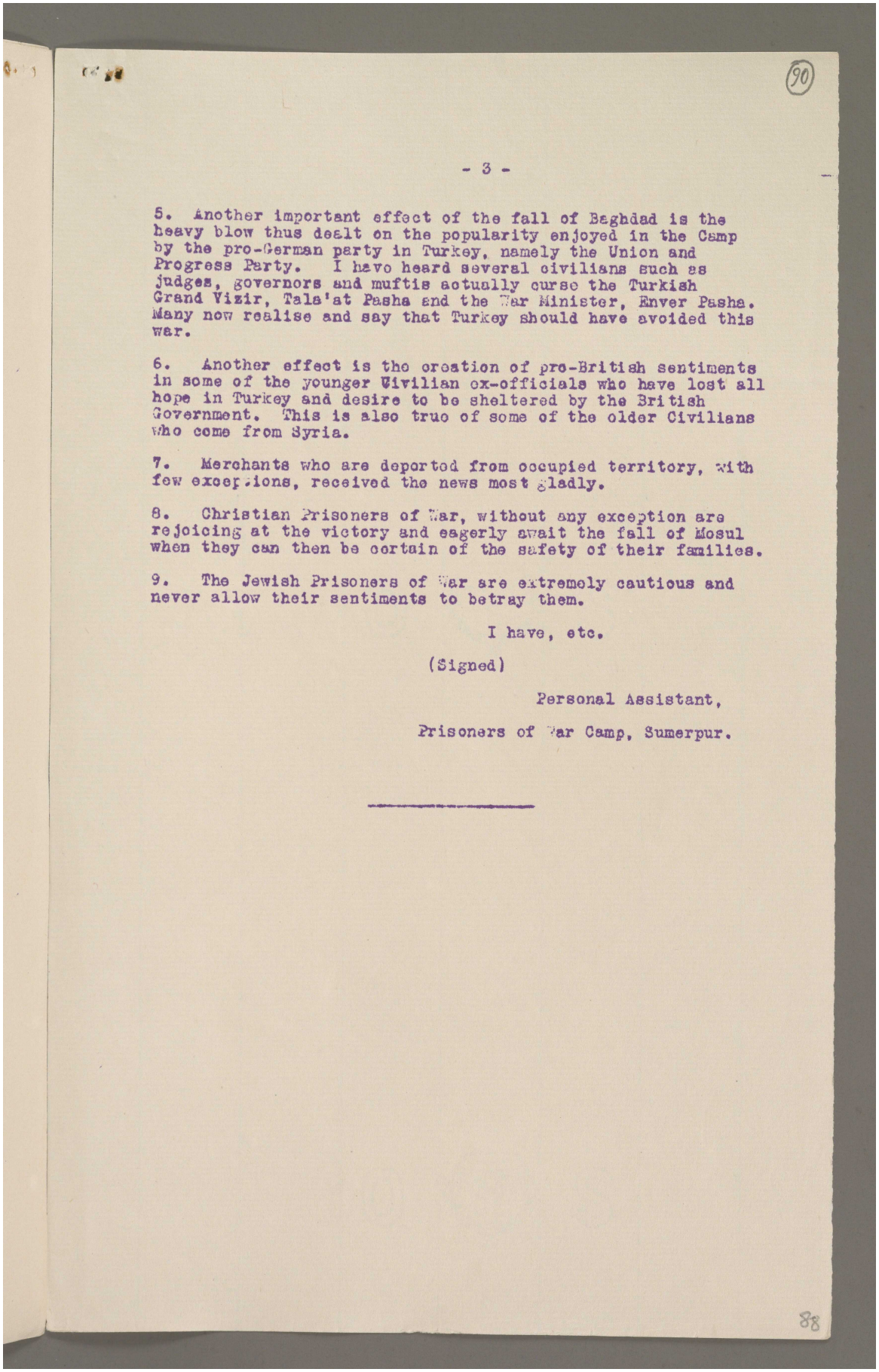


(90)

5. Another important effect of the fall of Baghdad is the heavy blow thus dealt on the popularity enjoyed in the Camp by the pro-German party in Turkey, namely the Union and Progress Party. I have heard several civilians such as judges, governors and muftis actually curse the Turkish Grand Vizir, Tala'at Pasha and the War Minister, Enver Pasha. Many now realise and say that Turkey should have avoided this war.

6. Another effect is the creation of pro-British sentiments in some of the younger Civilian ex-officials who have lost all hope in Turkey and desire to be sheltered by the British Government. This is also true of some of the older Civilians who come from Syria.

7. Merchants who are deported from occupied territory, with few exceptions, received the news most gladly.

8. Christian Prisoners of War, without any exception are rejoicing at the victory and eagerly await the fall of Mosul when they can then be certain of the safety of their families.

9. The Jewish Prisoners of War are extremely cautious and never allow their sentiments to betray them.

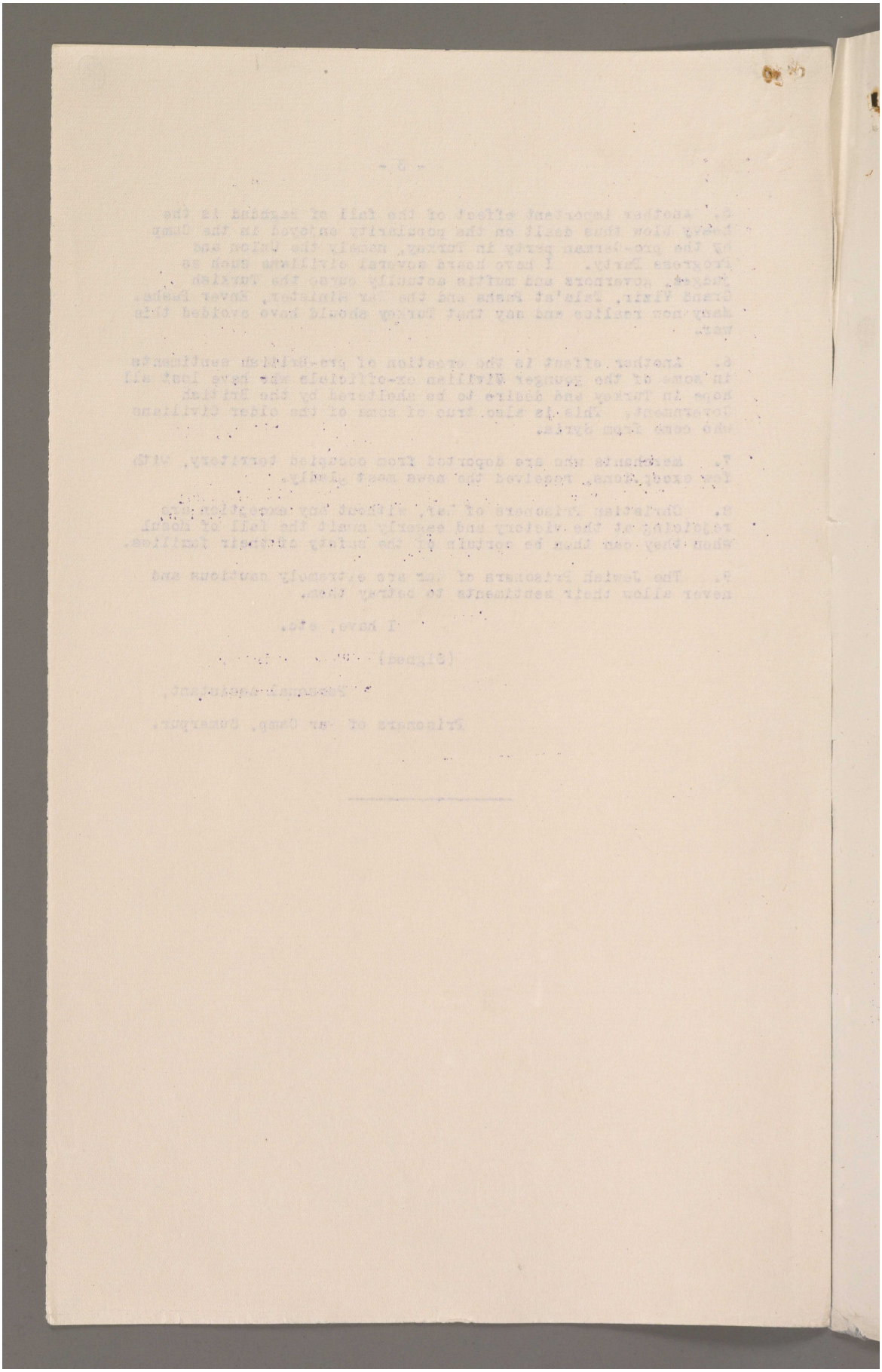
I have, etc.

(Signed)

Personal Assistant,

Prisoners of War Camp, Sumerpur.

88



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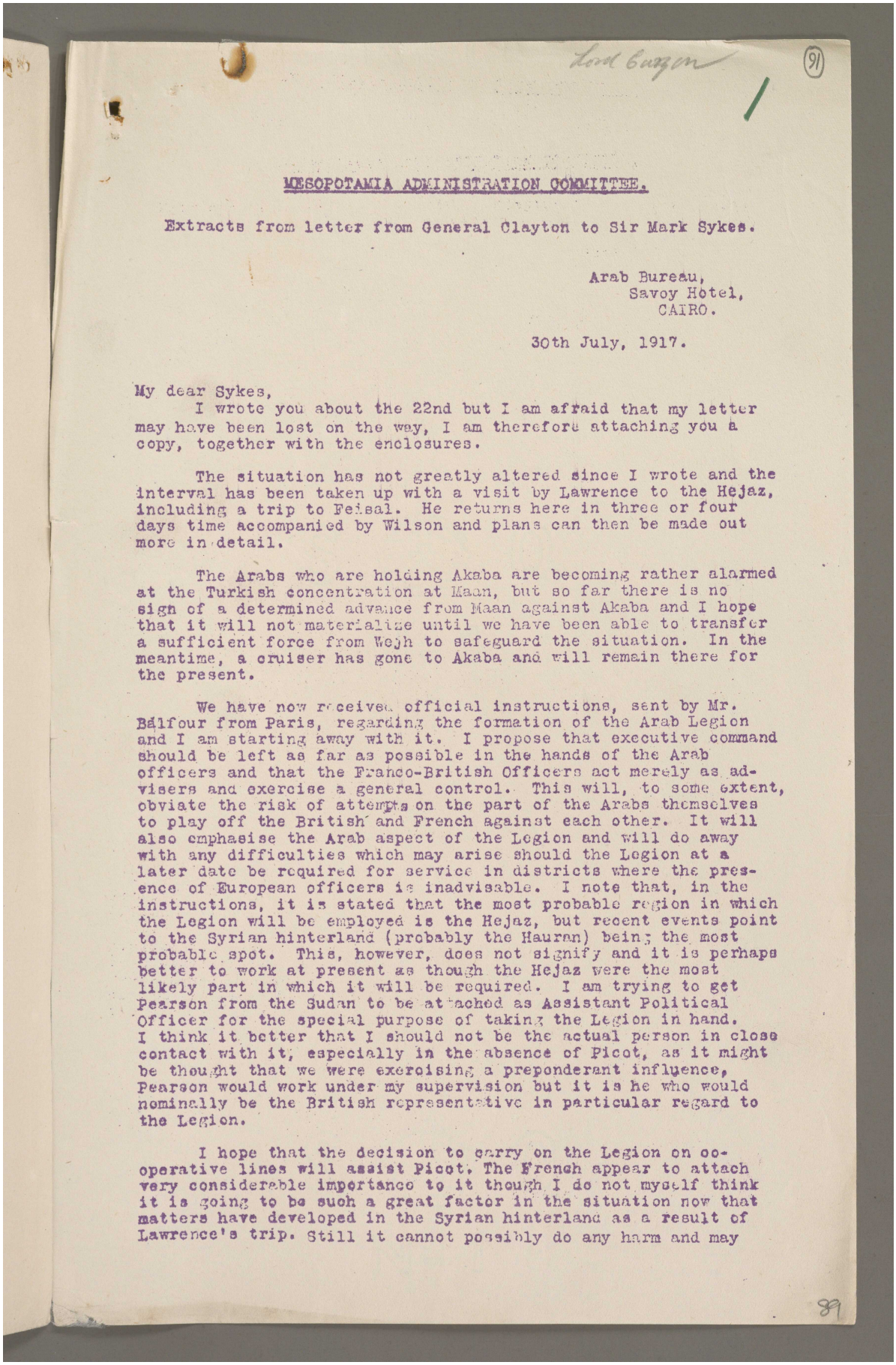

Lord Curzon

(91)

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Extracts from letter from General Clayton to Sir Mark Sykes.

Arab Bureau,
Savoy Hotel,
CAIRO.

30th July, 1917.

My dear Sykes,

I wrote you about the 22nd but I am afraid that my letter may have been lost on the way, I am therefore attaching you a copy, together with the enclosures.

The situation has not greatly altered since I wrote and the interval has been taken up with a visit by Lawrence to the Hejaz, including a trip to Feisal. He returns here in three or four days time accompanied by Wilson and plans can then be made out more in detail.

The Arabs who are holding Akaba are becoming rather alarmed at the Turkish concentration at Maan, but so far there is no sign of a determined advance from Maan against Akaba and I hope that it will not materialize until we have been able to transfer a sufficient force from Wejh to safeguard the situation. In the meantime, a cruiser has gone to Akaba and will remain there for the present.

We have now received official instructions, sent by Mr. Balfour from Paris, regarding the formation of the Arab Legion and I am starting away with it. I propose that executive command should be left as far as possible in the hands of the Arab officers and that the Franco-British Officers act merely as advisers and exercise a general control. This will, to some extent, obviate the risk of attempts on the part of the Arabs themselves to play off the British and French against each other. It will also emphasise the Arab aspect of the Legion and will do away with any difficulties which may arise should the Legion at a later date be required for service in districts where the presence of European officers is inadvisable. I note that, in the instructions, it is stated that the most probable region in which the Legion will be employed is the Hejaz, but recent events point to the Syrian hinterland (probably the Hauran) being the most probable spot. This, however, does not signify and it is perhaps better to work at present as though the Hejaz were the most likely part in which it will be required. I am trying to get Pearson from the Sudan to be attached as Assistant Political Officer for the special purpose of taking the Legion in hand. I think it better that I should not be the actual person in close contact with it, especially in the absence of Picot, as it might be thought that we were exercising a preponderant influence, Pearson would work under my supervision but it is he who would nominally be the British representative in particular regard to the Legion.

I hope that the decision to carry on the Legion on co-operative lines will assist Picot. The French appear to attach very considerable importance to it though I do not myself think it is going to be such a great factor in the situation now that matters have developed in the Syrian hinterland as a result of Lawrence's trip. Still it cannot possibly do any harm and may

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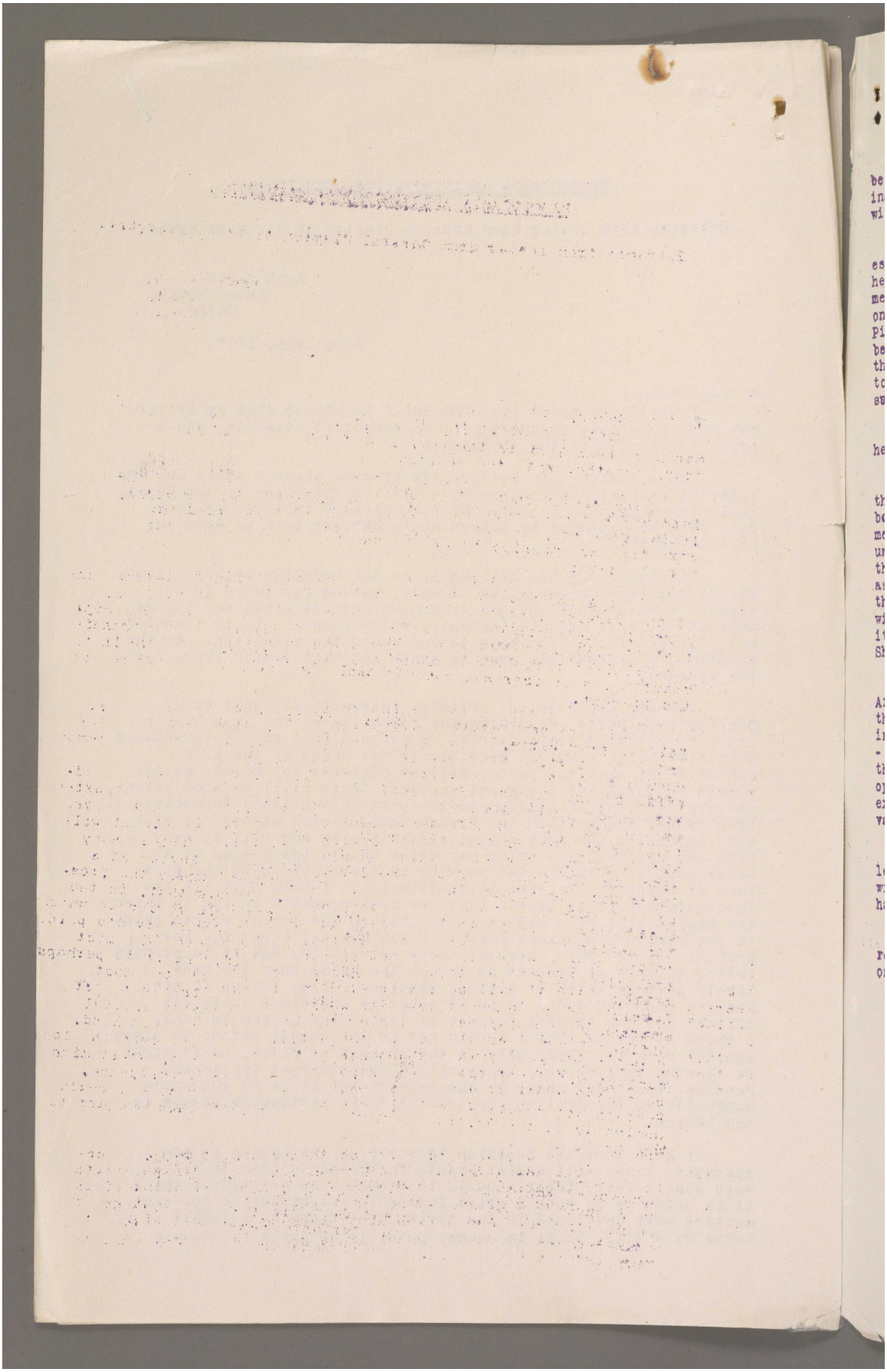

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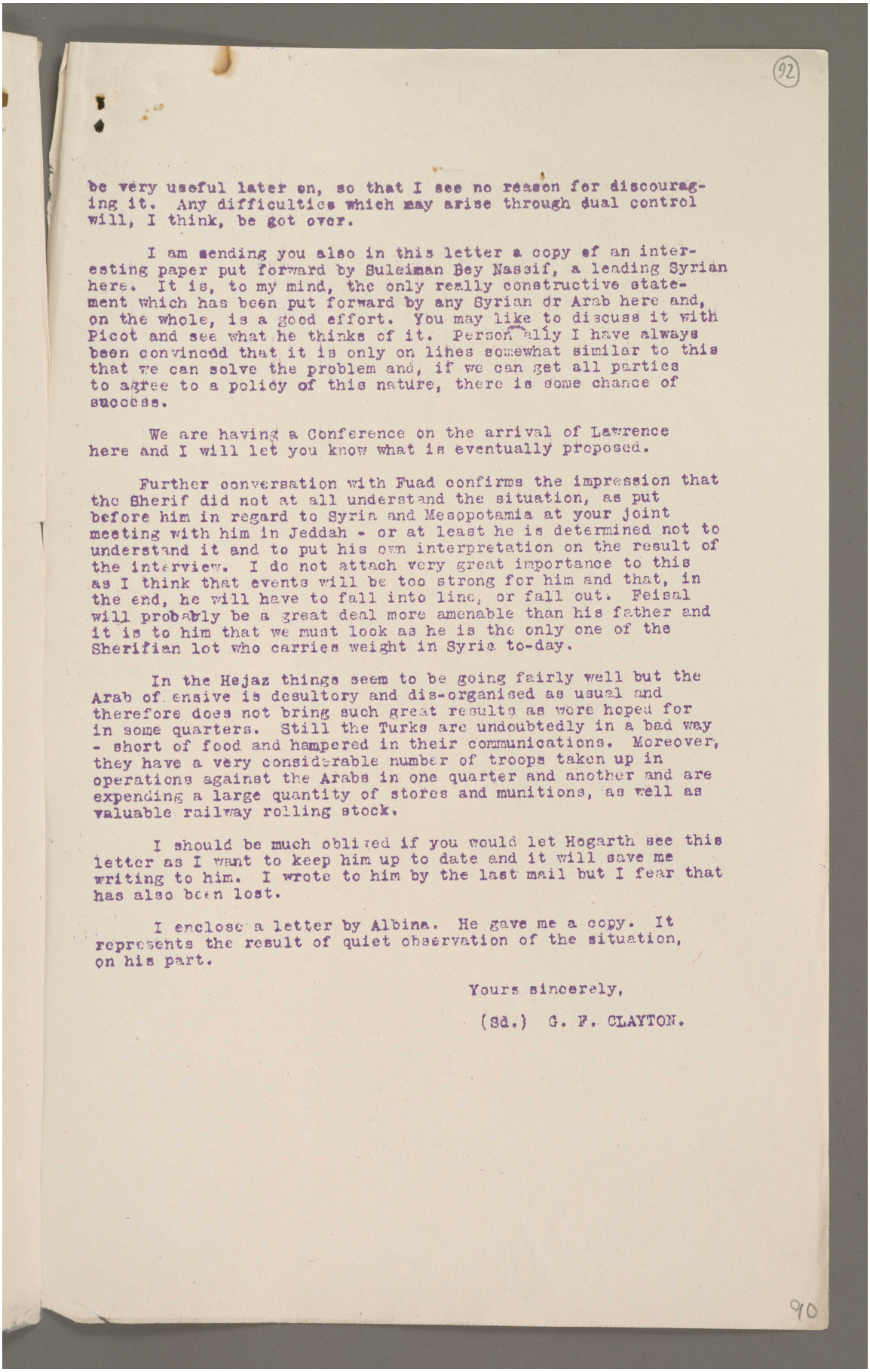

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be very useful later on, so that I see no reason for discouraging it. Any difficulties which may arise through dual control will, I think, be got over.

I am sending you also in this letter a copy of an interesting paper put forward by Suleiman Bey Nassif, a leading Syrian here. It is, to my mind, the only really constructive statement which has been put forward by any Syrian or Arab here and, on the whole, is a good effort. You may like to discuss it with Picot and see what he thinks of it. Personally I have always been convinced that it is only on lines somewhat similar to this that we can solve the problem and, if we can get all parties to agree to a policy of this nature, there is some chance of success.

We are having a Conference on the arrival of Lawrence here and I will let you know what is eventually proposed.

Further conversation with Fuad confirms the impression that the Sherif did not at all understand the situation, as put before him in regard to Syria and Mesopotamia at your joint meeting with him in Jeddah - or at least he is determined not to understand it and to put his own interpretation on the result of the interview. I do not attach very great importance to this as I think that events will be too strong for him and that, in the end, he will have to fall into line, or fall out. Feisal will probably be a great deal more amenable than his father and it is to him that we must look as he is the only one of the Sherifian lot who carries weight in Syria to-day.

In the Hejaz things seem to be going fairly well but the Arab offensive is desultory and dis-organised as usual and therefore does not bring such great results as were hoped for in some quarters. Still the Turks are undoubtedly in a bad way - short of food and hampered in their communications. Moreover, they have a very considerable number of troops taken up in operations against the Arabs in one quarter and another and are expending a large quantity of stores and munitions, as well as valuable railway rolling stock.

I should be much obliged if you would let Hogarth see this letter as I want to keep him up to date and it will save me writing to him. I wrote to him by the last mail but I fear that has also been lost.

I enclose a letter by Albina. He gave me a copy. It represents the result of quiet observation of the situation, on his part.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) G. F. CLAYTON.

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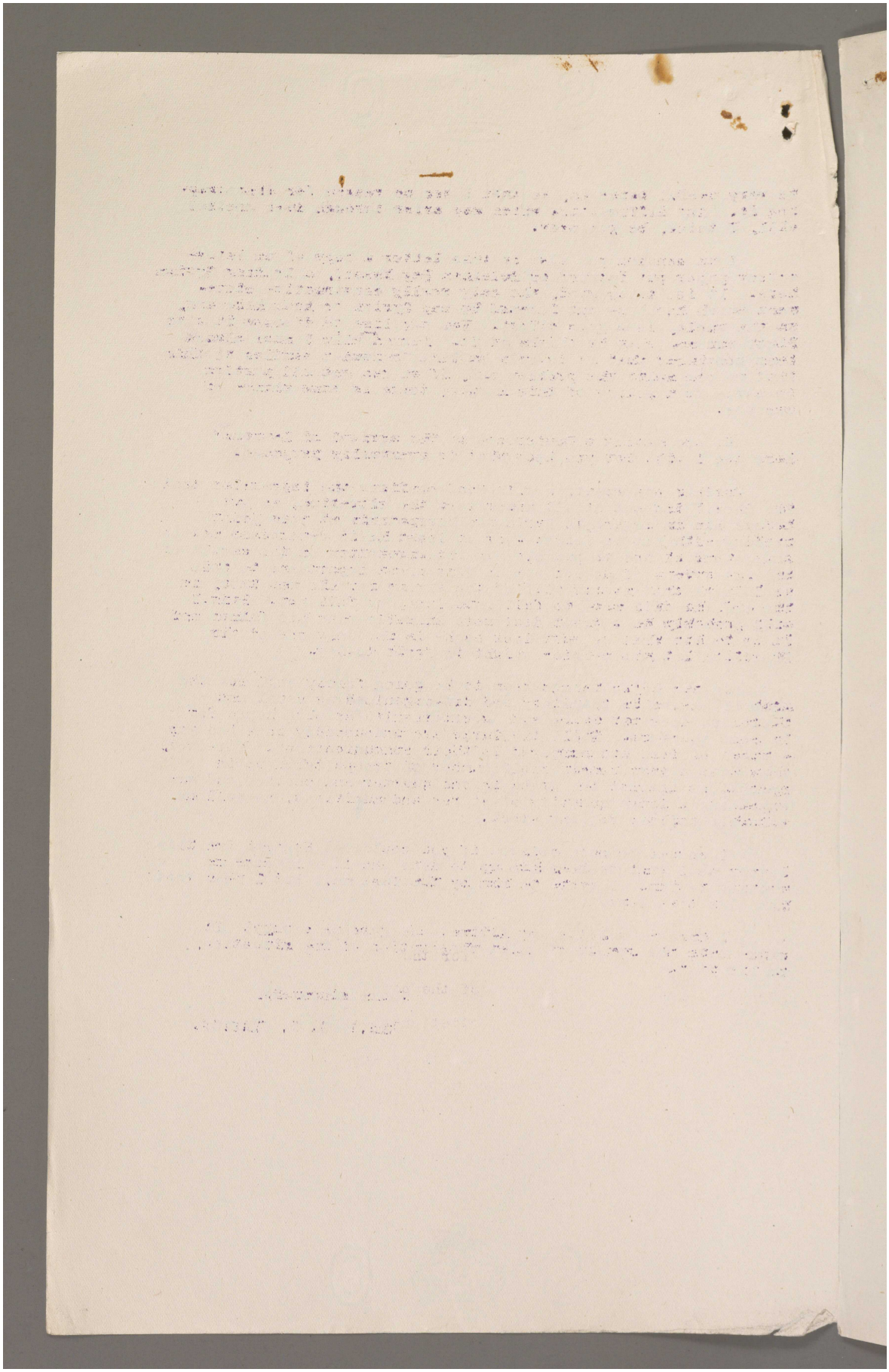

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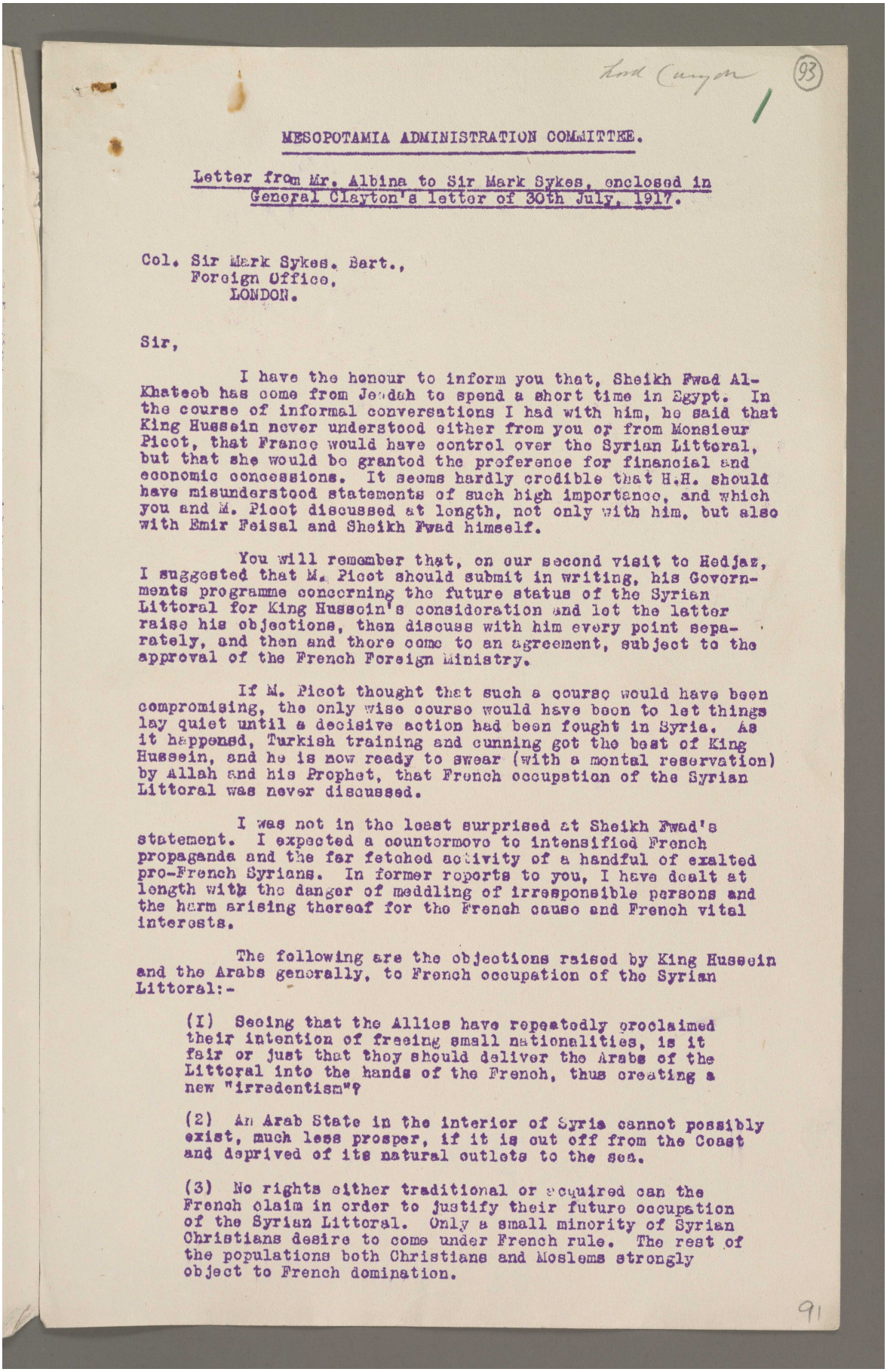

Lord Curzon (93)

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Letter from Mr. Albina to Sir Mark Sykes, enclosed in General Clayton's letter of 30th July, 1917.

Col. Sir Mark Sykes, Bart.,
Foreign Office,
LONDON.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that, Sheikh Fwad Al-Khateeb has come from Jeddah to spend a short time in Egypt. In the course of informal conversations I had with him, he said that King Hussein never understood either from you or from Monsieur Picot, that France would have control over the Syrian Littoral, but that she would be granted the preference for financial and economic concessions. It seems hardly credible that H.H. should have misunderstood statements of such high importance, and which you and M. Picot discussed at length, not only with him, but also with Emir Feisal and Sheikh Fwad himself.

You will remember that, on our second visit to Hedjaz, I suggested that M. Picot should submit in writing, his Governments programme concerning the future status of the Syrian Littoral for King Hussein's consideration and let the latter raise his objections, then discuss with him every point separately, and then and there come to an agreement, subject to the approval of the French Foreign Ministry.

If M. Picot thought that such a course would have been compromising, the only wise course would have been to let things lay quiet until a decisive action had been fought in Syria. As it happened, Turkish training and cunning got the best of King Hussein, and he is now ready to swear (with a mental reservation) by Allah and his Prophet, that French occupation of the Syrian Littoral was never discussed.

I was not in the least surprised at Sheikh Fwad's statement. I expected a countermove to intensified French propaganda and the far fetched activity of a handful of exalted pro-French Syrians. In former reports to you, I have dealt at length with the danger of meddling of irresponsible persons and the harm arising thereof for the French cause and French vital interests.

The following are the objections raised by King Hussein and the Arabs generally, to French occupation of the Syrian Littoral:-

(1) Seeing that the Allies have repeatedly proclaimed their intention of freeing small nationalities, is it fair or just that they should deliver the Arabs of the Littoral into the hands of the French, thus creating a new "irredentism"?

(2) An Arab State in the interior of Syria cannot possibly exist, much less prosper, if it is cut off from the Coast and deprived of its natural outlets to the sea.

(3) No rights either traditional or acquired can the French claim in order to justify their future occupation of the Syrian Littoral. Only a small minority of Syrian Christians desire to come under French rule. The rest of the populations both Christians and Moslems strongly object to French domination.

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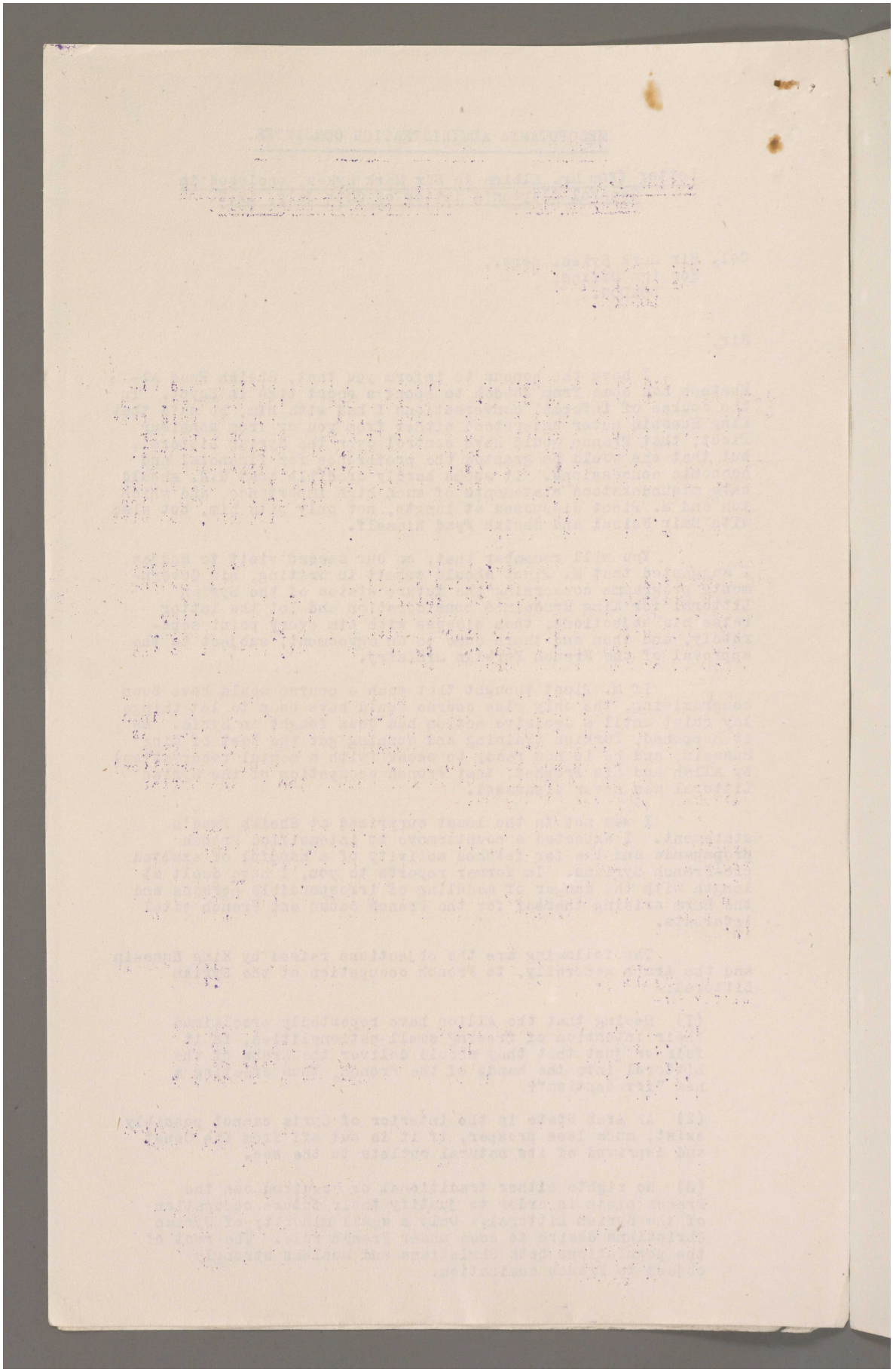

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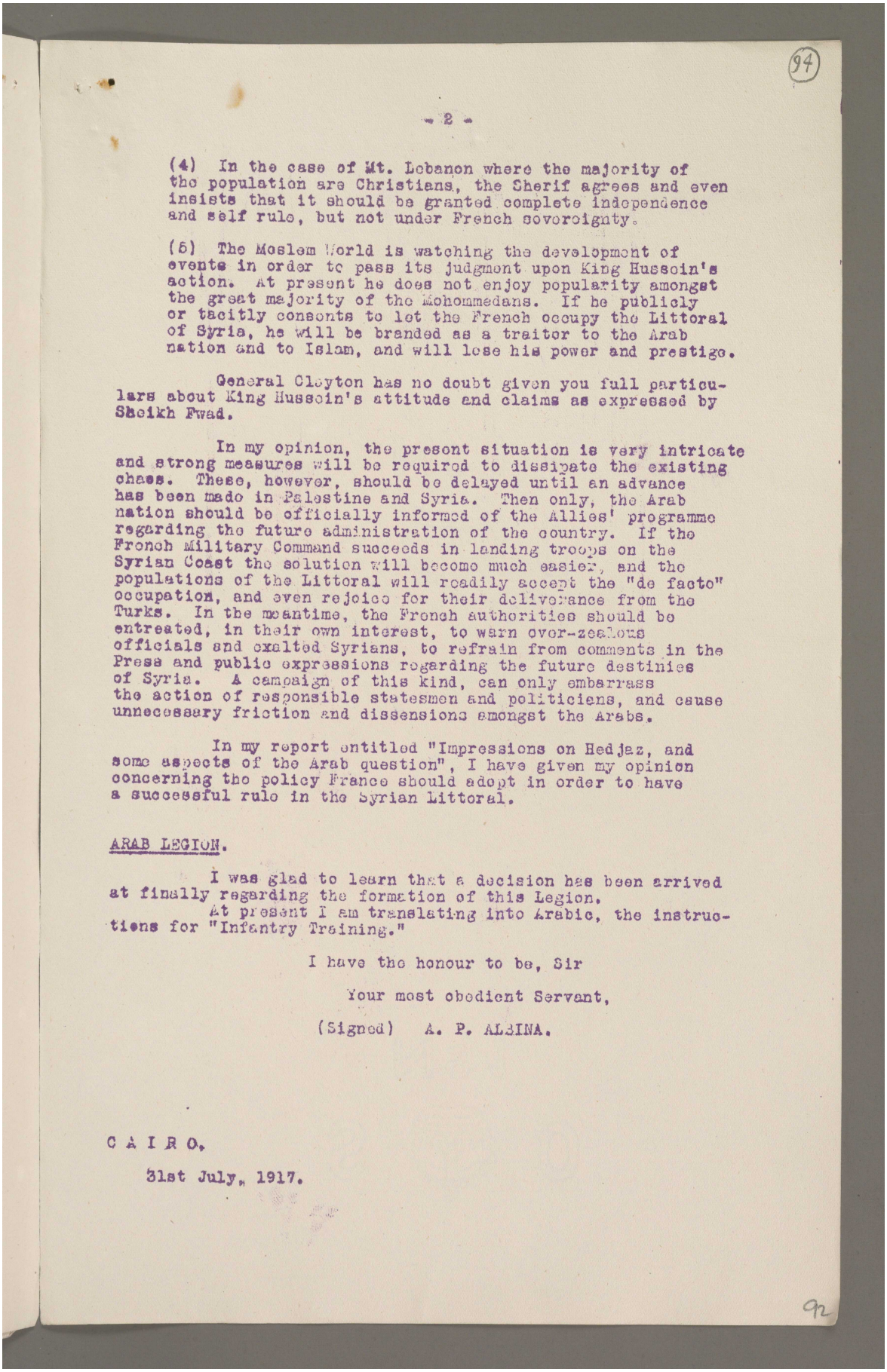

(4) In the case of Mt. Lebanon where the majority of the population are Christians, the Sherif agrees and even insists that it should be granted complete independence and self rule, but not under French sovereignty.

(5) The Moslem World is watching the development of events in order to pass its judgment upon King Hussein's action. At present he does not enjoy popularity amongst the great majority of the Mohommedans. If he publicly or tacitly consents to let the French occupy the Littoral of Syria, he will be branded as a traitor to the Arab nation and to Islam, and will lose his power and prestige.

General Clayton has no doubt given you full particulars about King Hussein's attitude and claims as expressed by Sheikh Fwad.

In my opinion, the present situation is very intricate and strong measures will be required to dissipate the existing chaos. These, however, should be delayed until an advance has been made in Palestine and Syria. Then only, the Arab nation should be officially informed of the Allies' programme regarding the future administration of the country. If the French Military Command succeeds in landing troops on the Syrian Coast the solution will become much easier, and the populations of the Littoral will readily accept the "de facto" occupation, and even rejoice for their deliverance from the Turks. In the meantime, the French authorities should be entreated, in their own interest, to warn over-zealous officials and exalted Syrians, to refrain from comments in the Press and public expressions regarding the future destinies of Syria. A campaign of this kind, can only embarrass the action of responsible statesmen and politicians, and cause unnecessary friction and dissensions amongst the Arabs.

In my report entitled "Impressions on Hedjaz, and some aspects of the Arab question", I have given my opinion concerning the policy France should adopt in order to have a successful rule in the Syrian Littoral.

ARAB LEGION.

I was glad to learn that a decision has been arrived at finally regarding the formation of this Legion.
At present I am translating into Arabic, the instructions for "Infantry Training."

I have the honour to be, Sir

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) A. P. ALDINA.

C A I R O,

31st July, 1917.

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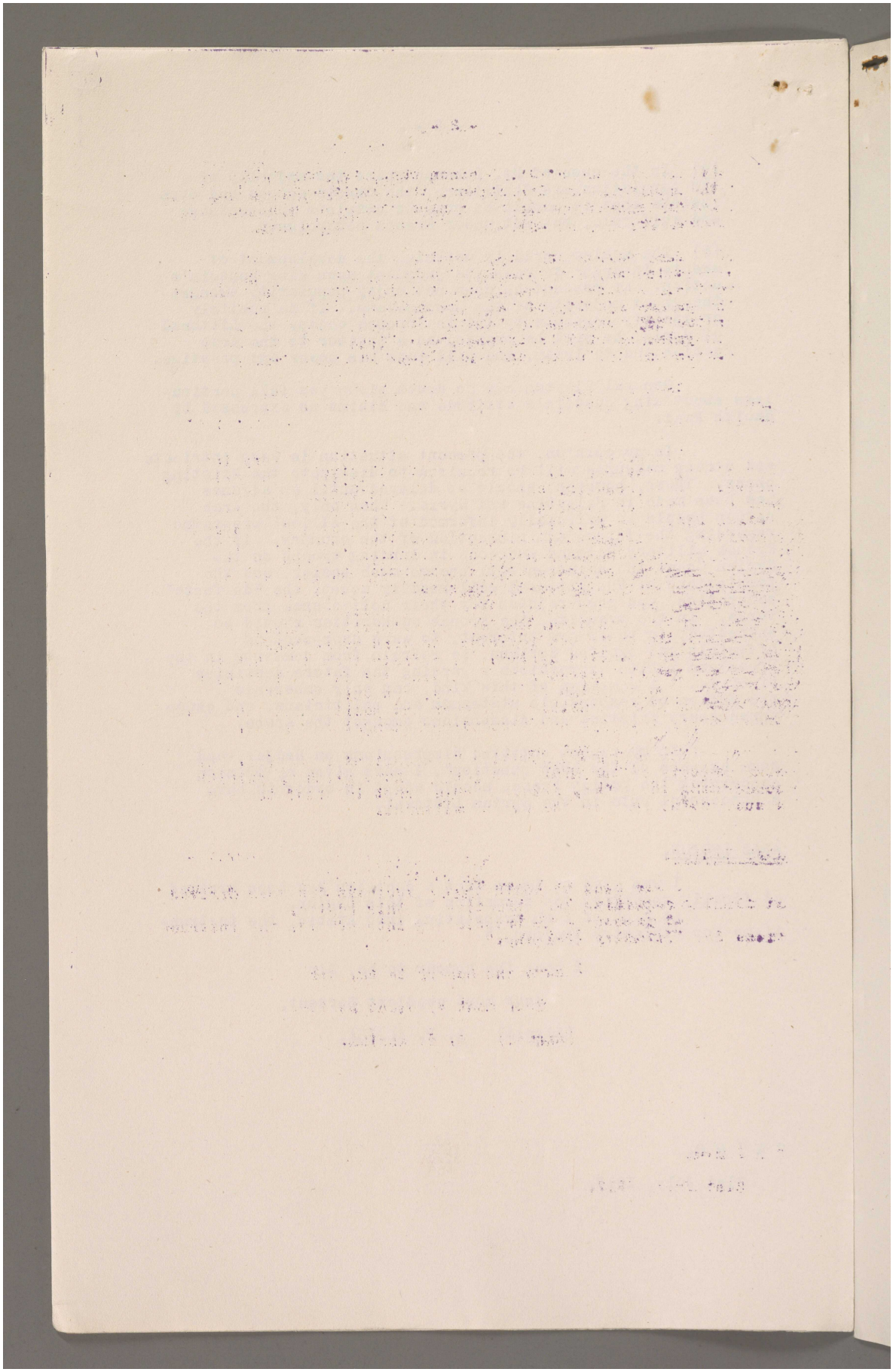

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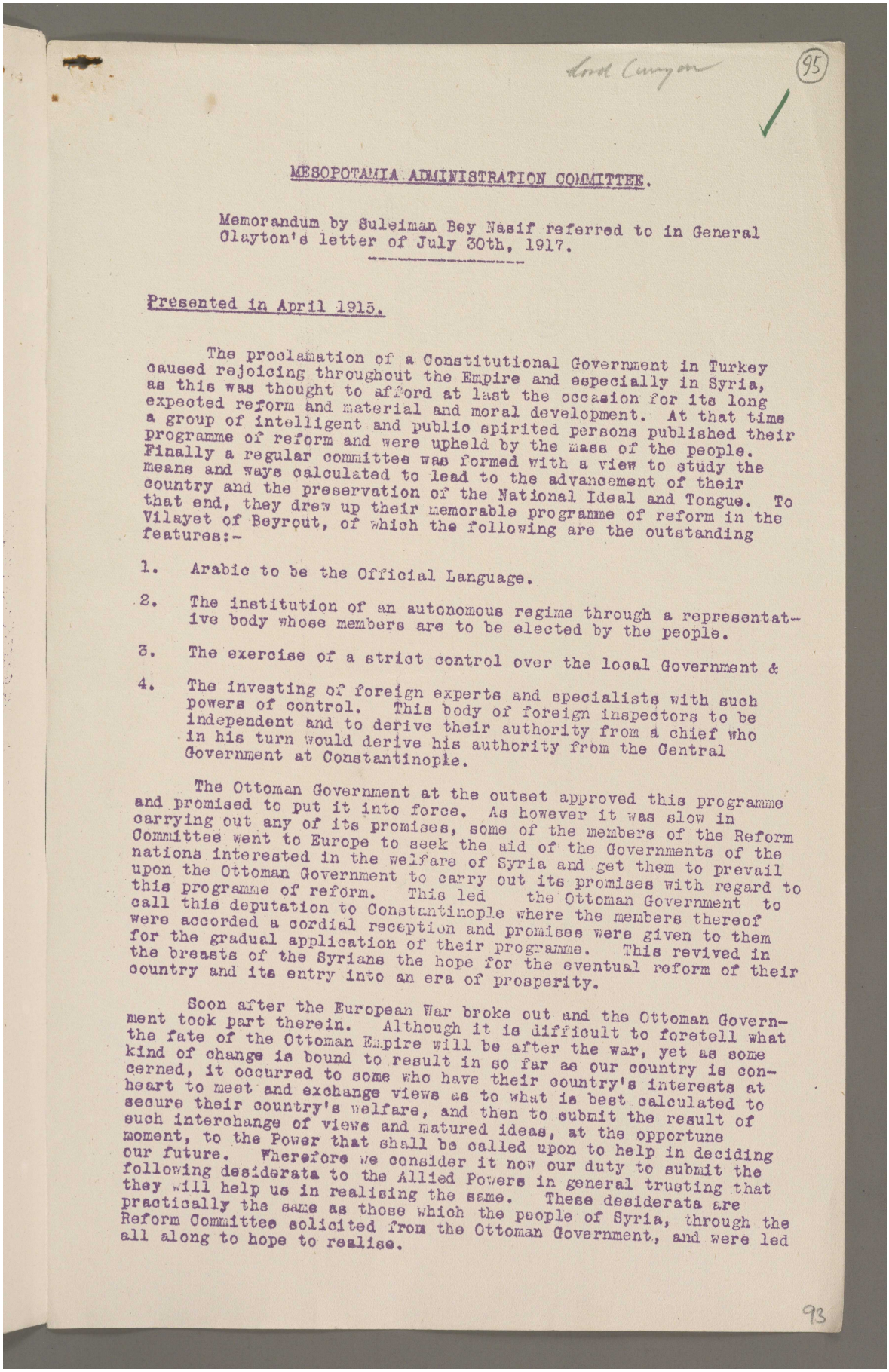

Lord Curzon

(95)

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Memorandum by Suleiman Bey Nasif referred to in General Clayton's letter of July 30th, 1917.

Presented in April 1915.

The proclamation of a Constitutional Government in Turkey caused rejoicing throughout the Empire and especially in Syria, as this was thought to afford at last the occasion for its long expected reform and material and moral development. At that time a group of intelligent and public spirited persons published their programme of reform and were upheld by the mass of the people. Finally a regular committee was formed with a view to study the means and ways calculated to lead to the advancement of their country and the preservation of the National Ideal and Tongue. To that end, they drew up their memorable programme of reform in the Vilayet of Beyrout, of which the following are the outstanding features:-

1. Arabic to be the Official Language.

2. The institution of an autonomous regime through a representative body whose members are to be elected by the people.

3. The exercise of a strict control over the local Government &

4. The investing of foreign experts and specialists with such powers of control. This body of foreign inspectors to be independent and to derive their authority from a chief who in his turn would derive his authority from the Central Government at Constantinople.

The Ottoman Government at the outset approved this programme and promised to put it into force. As however it was slow in carrying out any of its promises, some of the members of the Reform Committee went to Europe to seek the aid of the Governments of the nations interested in the welfare of Syria and get them to prevail upon the Ottoman Government to carry out its promises with regard to this programme of reform. This led the Ottoman Government to call this deputation to Constantinople where the members thereof were accorded a cordial reception and promises were given to them for the gradual application of their programme. This revived in the breasts of the Syrians the hope for the eventual reform of their country and its entry into an era of prosperity.

Soon after the European War broke out and the Ottoman Government took part therein. Although it is difficult to foretell what the fate of the Ottoman Empire will be after the war, yet as some kind of change is bound to result in so far as our country is concerned, it occurred to some who have their country's interests at heart to meet and exchange views as to what is best calculated to secure their country's welfare, and then to submit the result of such interchange of views and matured ideas, at the opportune moment, to the Power that shall be called upon to help in deciding our future. Therefore we consider it now our duty to submit the following desiderata to the Allied Powers in general trusting that they will help us in realising the same. These desiderata are practically the same as those which the people of Syria, through the Reform Committee solicited from the Ottoman Government, and were led all along to hope to realise.

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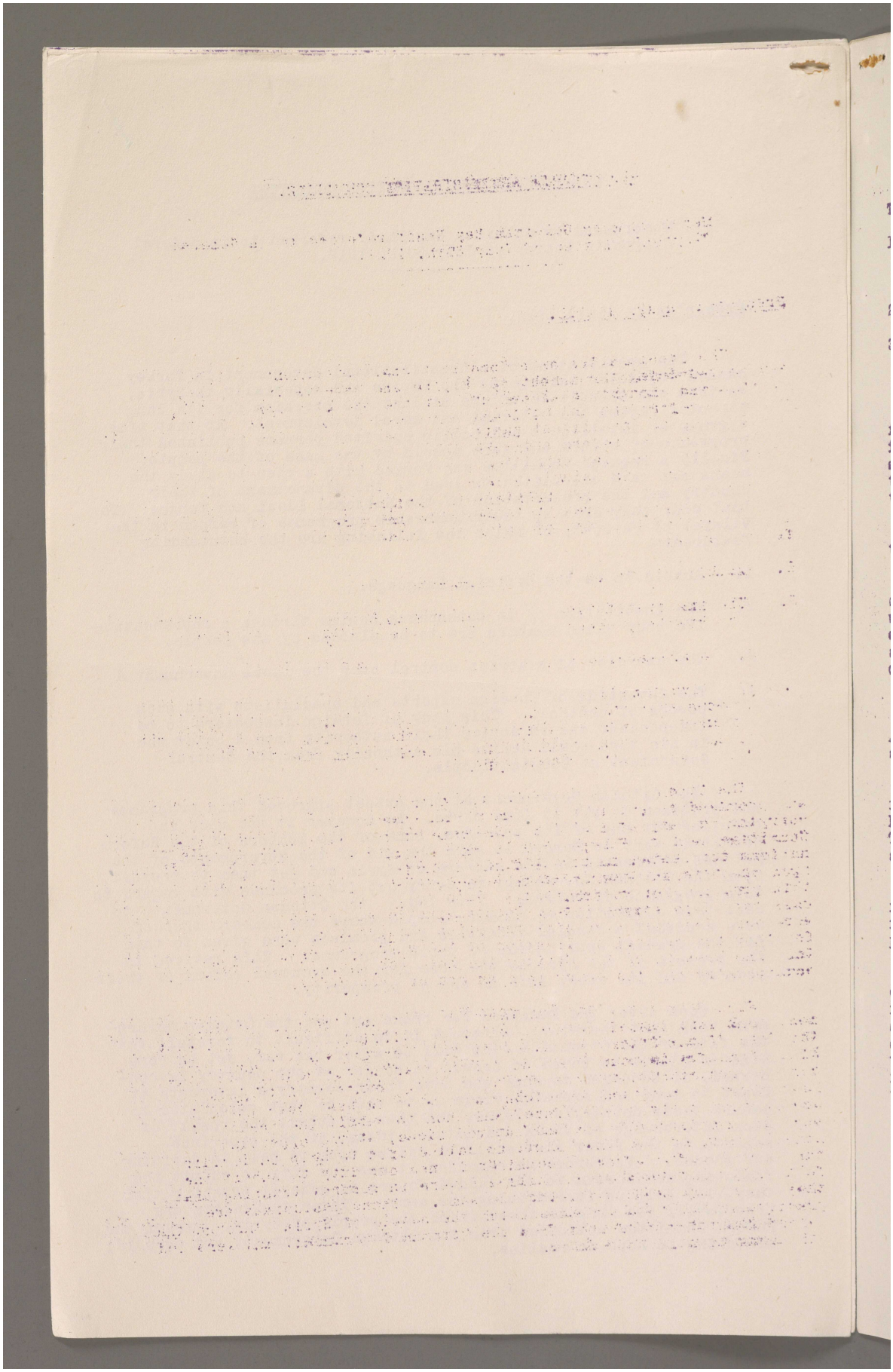

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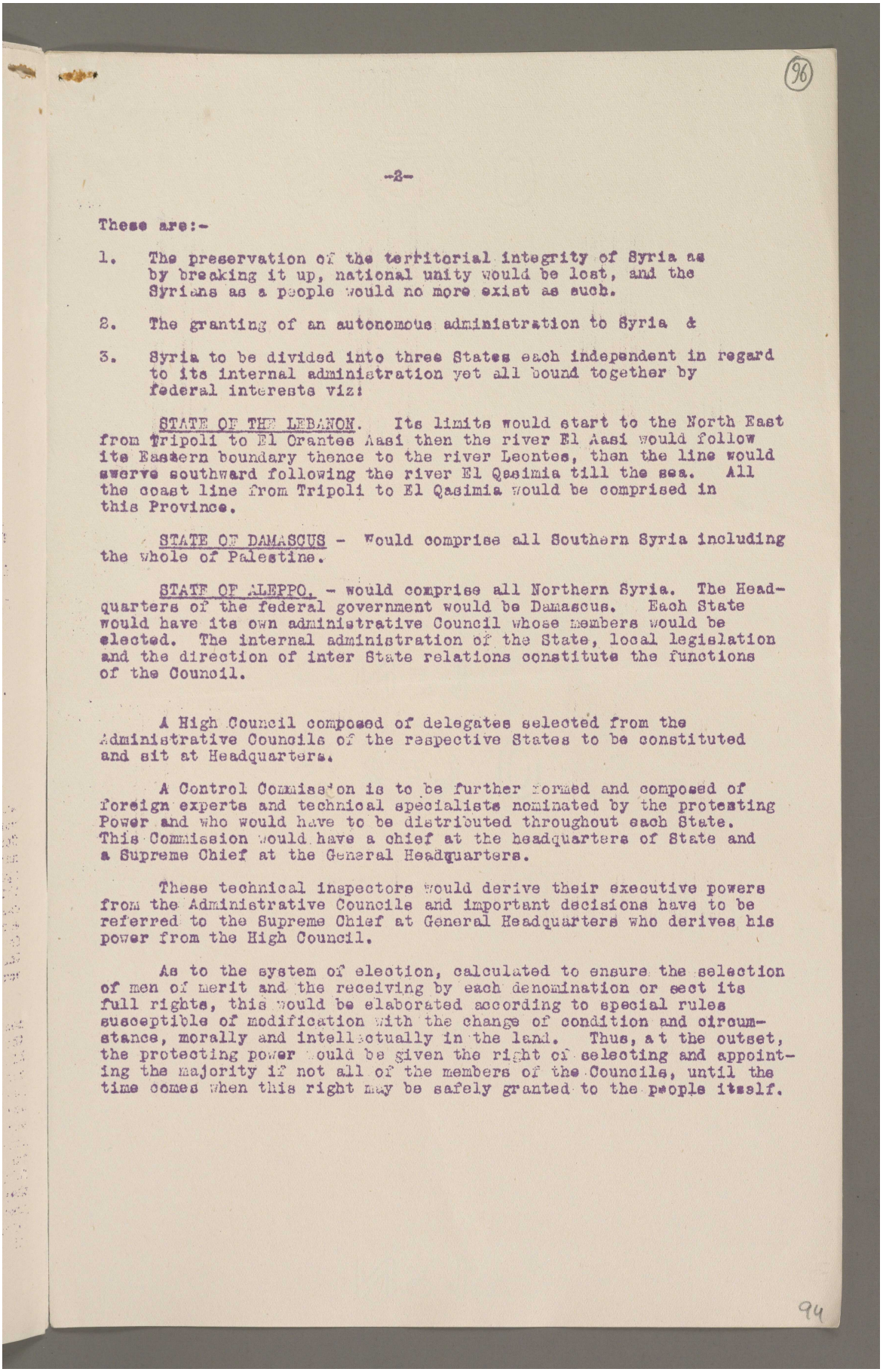

These are:-

1. The preservation of the territorial integrity of Syria as by breaking it up, national unity would be lost, and the Syrians as a people would no more exist as such.

2. The granting of an autonomous administration to Syria &

3. Syria to be divided into three States each independent in regard to its internal administration yet all bound together by federal interests viz:

STATE OF THE LEBANON. Its limits would start to the North East from Tripoli to El Orantes Aasi then the river El Aasi would follow its Eastern boundary thence to the river Leontes, then the line would swerve southward following the river El Qasimia till the sea. All the coast line from Tripoli to El Qasimia would be comprised in this Province.

STATE OF DAMASCUS - Would comprise all Southern Syria including the whole of Palestine.

STATE OF ALEPPO. - would comprise all Northern Syria. The Headquarters of the federal government would be Damascus. Each State would have its own administrative Council whose members would be elected. The internal administration of the State, local legislation and the direction of inter State relations constitute the functions of the Council.

A High Council composed of delegates selected from the Administrative Councils of the respective States to be constituted and sit at Headquarters.

A Control Commission is to be further formed and composed of foreign experts and technical specialists nominated by the protecting Power and who would have to be distributed throughout each State. This Commission would have a chief at the headquarters of State and a Supreme Chief at the General Headquarters.

These technical inspectors would derive their executive powers from the Administrative Councils and important decisions have to be referred to the Supreme Chief at General Headquarters who derives his power from the High Council.

As to the system of election, calculated to ensure the selection of men of merit and the receiving by each denomination or sect its full rights, this would be elaborated according to special rules susceptible of modification with the change of condition and circumstance, morally and intellectually in the land. Thus, at the outset, the protecting power would be given the right of selecting and appointing the majority if not all of the members of the Councils, until the time comes when this right may be safely granted to the people itself.

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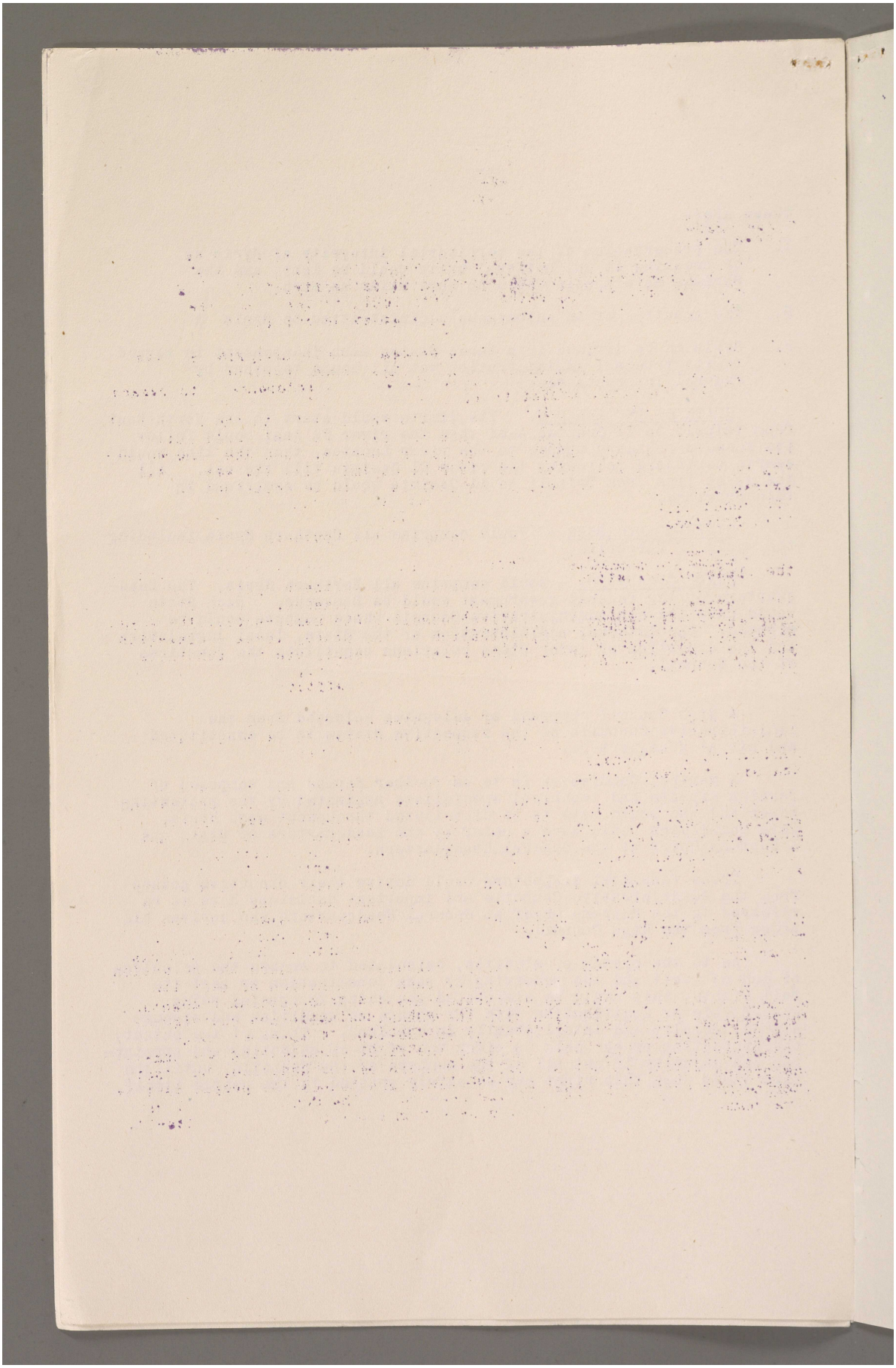

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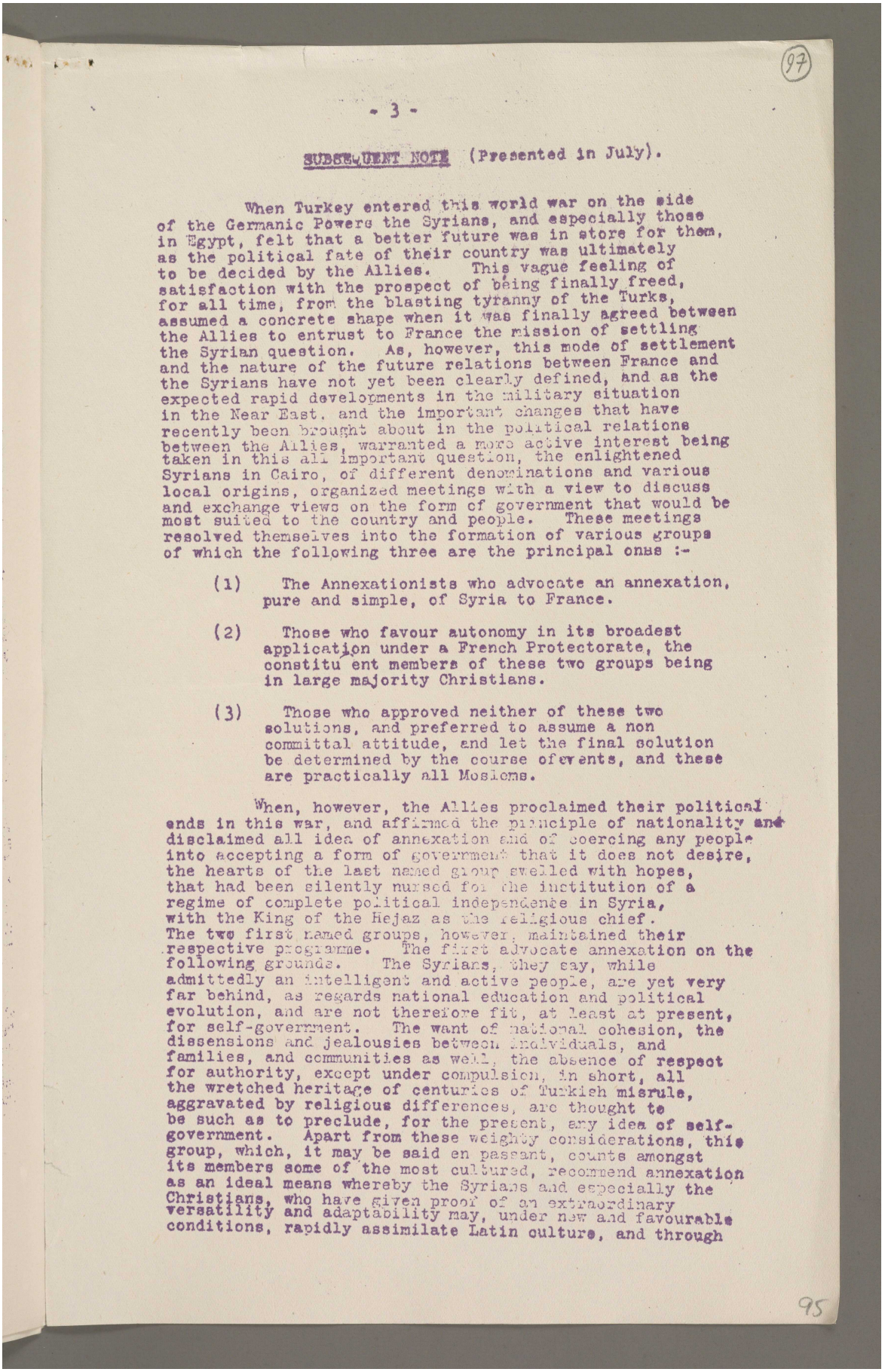

SUBSEQUENT NOTE (Presented in July).

When Turkey entered this world war on the side of the Germanic Powers the Syrians, and especially those in Egypt, felt that a better future was in store for them, as the political fate of their country was ultimately to be decided by the Allies. This vague feeling of satisfaction with the prospect of being finally freed, for all time, from the blasting tyranny of the Turks, assumed a concrete shape when it was finally agreed between the Allies to entrust to France the mission of settling the Syrian question. As, however, this mode of settlement and the nature of the future relations between France and the Syrians have not yet been clearly defined, and as the expected rapid developments in the military situation in the Near East, and the important changes that have recently been brought about in the political relations between the Allies, warranted a more active interest being taken in this all important question, the enlightened Syrians in Cairo, of different denominations and various local origins, organized meetings with a view to discuss and exchange views on the form of government that would be most suited to the country and people. These meetings resolved themselves into the formation of various groups of which the following three are the principal ones :-

(1) The Annexationists who advocate an annexation, pure and simple, of Syria to France.

(2) Those who favour autonomy in its broadest application under a French Protectorate, the constitu ent members of these two groups being in large majority Christians.

(3) Those who approved neither of these two solutions, and preferred to assume a non committal attitude, and let the final solution be determined by the course of events, and these are practically all Moslems.

When, however, the Allies proclaimed their political ends in this war, and affirmed the principle of nationality and disclaimed all idea of annexation and of coercing any people into accepting a form of government that it does not desire, the hearts of the last named group swelled with hopes, that had been silently nursed for the institution of a regime of complete political independence in Syria, with the King of the Hejaz as the religious chief. The two first named groups, however, maintained their respective programme. The first advocate annexation on the following grounds. The Syrians, they say, while admittedly an intelligent and active people, are yet very far behind, as regards national education and political evolution, and are not therefore fit, at least at present, for self-government. The want of national cohesion, the dissensions and jealousies between individuals, and families, and communities as well, the absence of respect for authority, except under compulsion, in short, all the wretched heritage of centuries of Turkish misrule, aggravated by religious differences, are thought to be such as to preclude, for the present, any idea of self-government. Apart from these weighty considerations, this group, which, it may be said en passant, counts amongst its members some of the most cultured, recommend annexation as an ideal means whereby the Syrians and especially the Christians, who have given proof of an extraordinary versatility and adaptability may, under new and favourable conditions, rapidly assimilate Latin culture, and through

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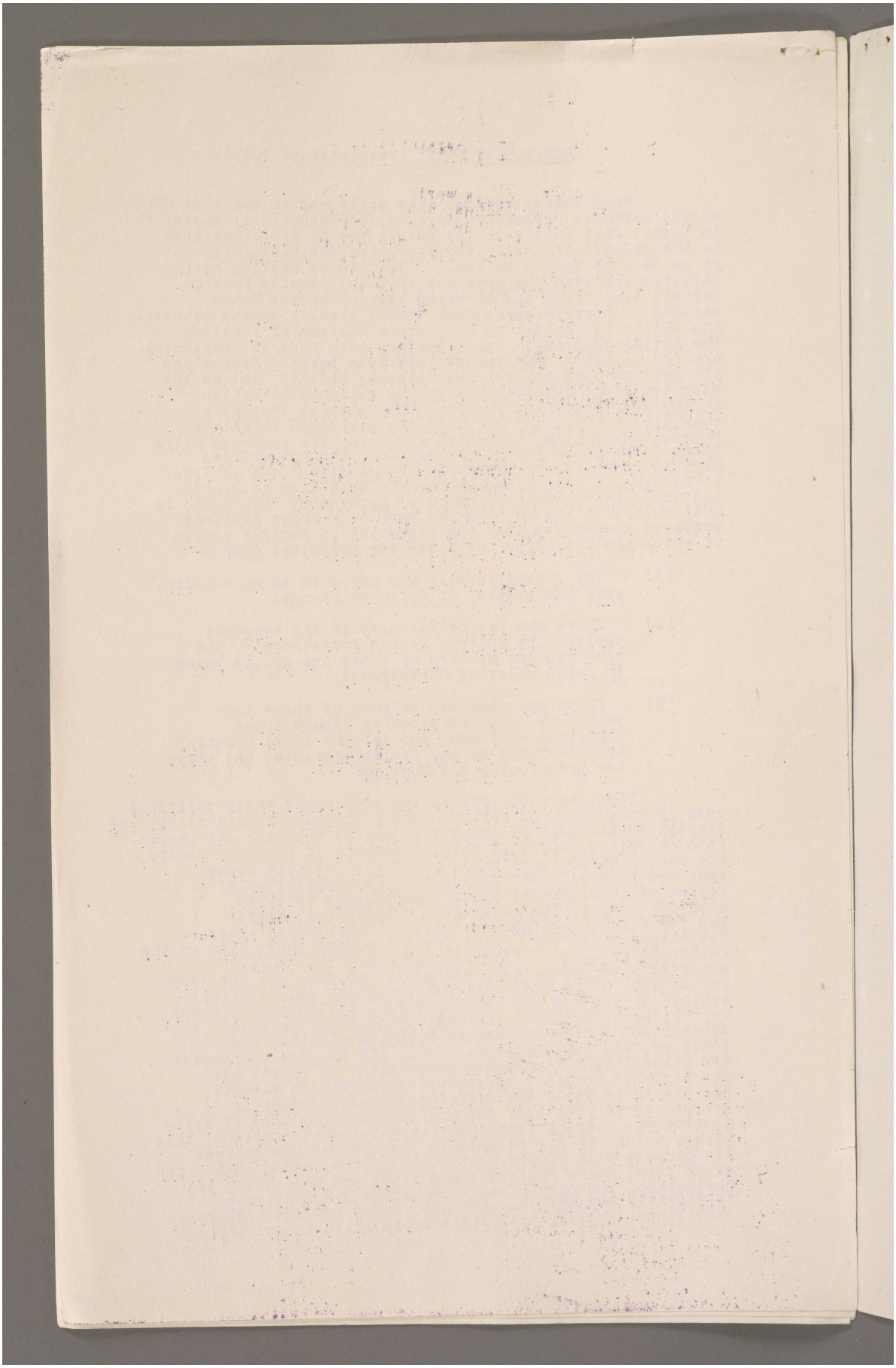

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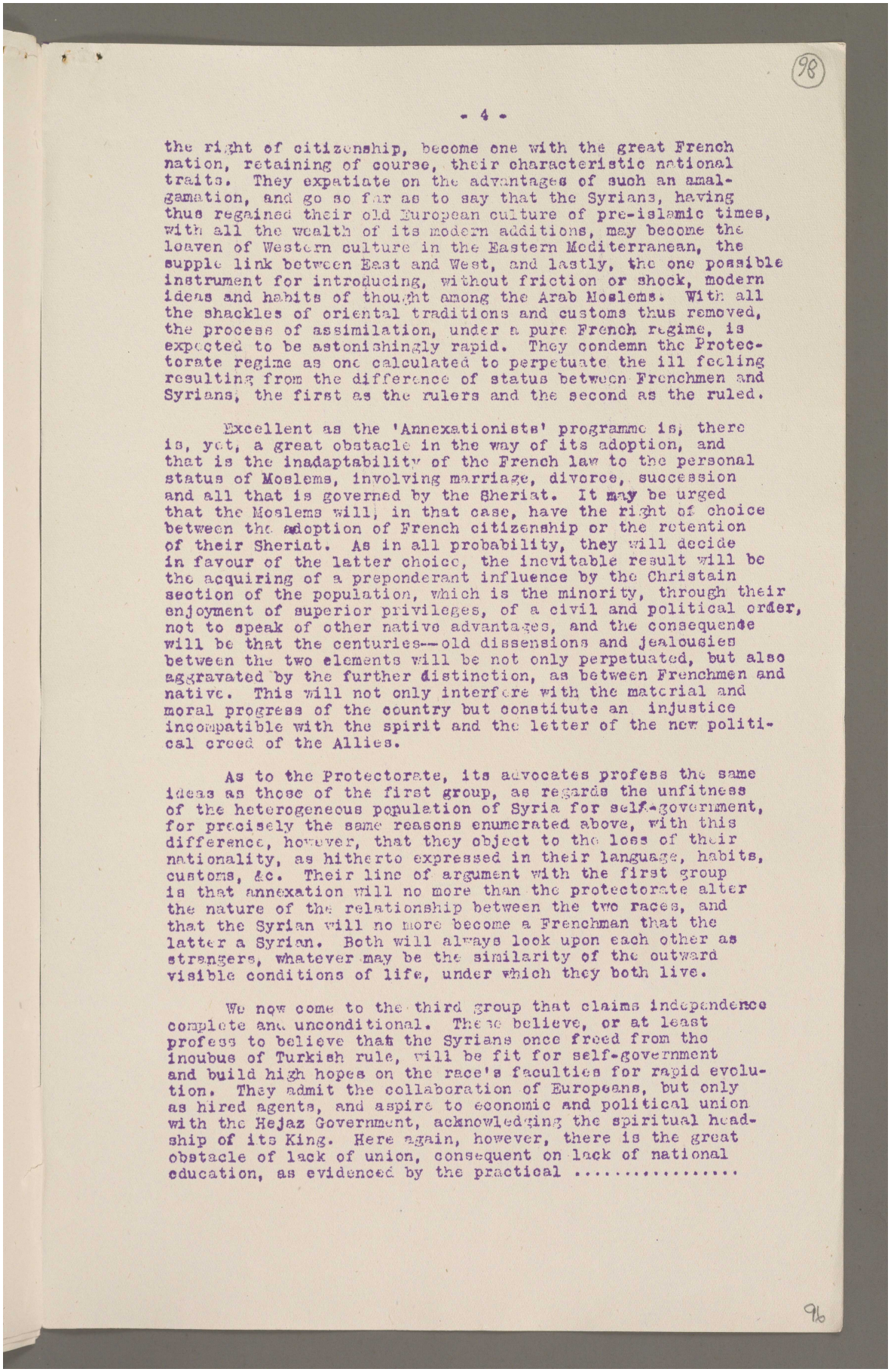

the right of citizenship, become one with the great French nation, retaining of course, their characteristic national traits. They expatiate on the advantages of such an amalgamation, and go so far as to say that the Syrians, having thus regained their old European culture of pre-islamic times, with all the wealth of its modern additions, may become the leaven of Western culture in the Eastern Mediterranean, the supple link between East and West, and lastly, the one possible instrument for introducing, without friction or shock, modern ideas and habits of thought among the Arab Moslems. With all the shackles of oriental traditions and customs thus removed, the process of assimilation, under a pure French regime, is expected to be astonishingly rapid. They condemn the Protectorate regime as one calculated to perpetuate the ill feeling resulting from the difference of status between Frenchmen and Syrians, the first as the rulers and the second as the ruled.

Excellent as the 'Annexationists' programme is, there is, yet, a great obstacle in the way of its adoption, and that is the inadaptability of the French law to the personal status of Moslems, involving marriage, divorce, succession and all that is governed by the Sheriat. It may be urged that the Moslems will, in that case, have the right of choice between the adoption of French citizenship or the retention of their Sheriat. As in all probability, they will decide in favour of the latter choice, the inevitable result will be the acquiring of a preponderant influence by the Christain section of the population, which is the minority, through their enjoyment of superior privileges, of a civil and political order, not to speak of other native advantages, and the consequence will be that the centuries--old dissensions and jealousies between the two elements will be not only perpetuated, but also aggravated by the further distinction, as between Frenchmen and native. This will not only interfere with the material and moral progress of the country but constitute an injustice incompatible with the spirit and the letter of the new political creed of the Allies.

As to the Protectorate, its advocates profess the same ideas as those of the first group, as regards the unfitness of the heterogeneous population of Syria for self-government, for precisely the same reasons enumerated above, with this difference, however, that they object to the loss of their nationality, as hitherto expressed in their language, habits, customs, &c. Their line of argument with the first group is that annexation will no more than the protectorate alter the nature of the relationship between the two races, and that the Syrian will no more become a Frenchman that the latter a Syrian. Both will always look upon each other as strangers, whatever may be the similarity of the outward visible conditions of life, under which they both live.

We now come to the third group that claims independence complete and unconditional. These believe, or at least profess to believe that the Syrians once freed from the incubus of Turkish rule, will be fit for self-government and build high hopes on the race's faculties for rapid evolution. They admit the collaboration of Europeans, but only as hired agents, and aspire to economic and political union with the Hejaz Government, acknowledging the spiritual headship of its King. Here again, however, there is the great obstacle of lack of union, consequent on lack of national education, as evidenced by the practical .....

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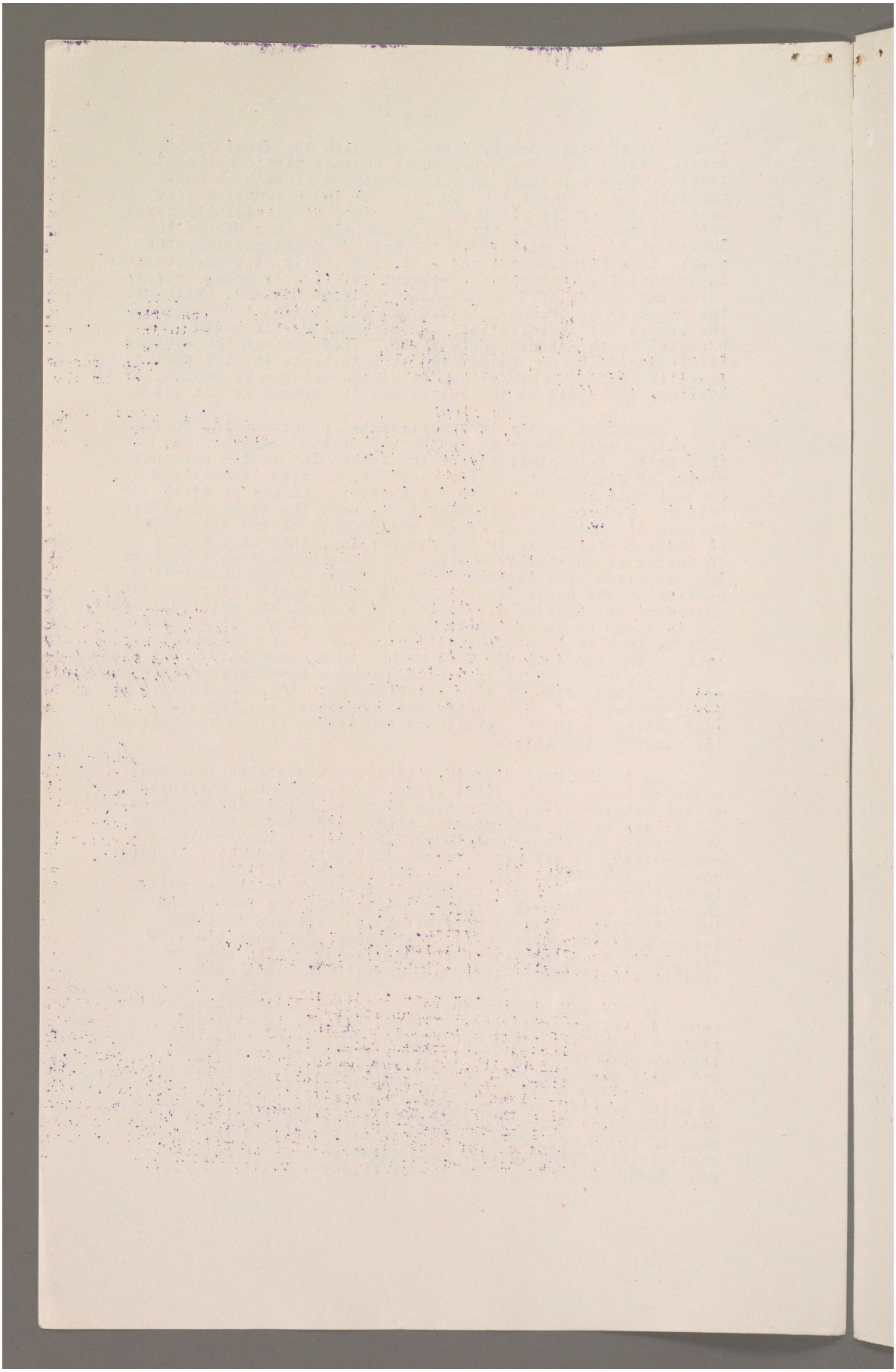

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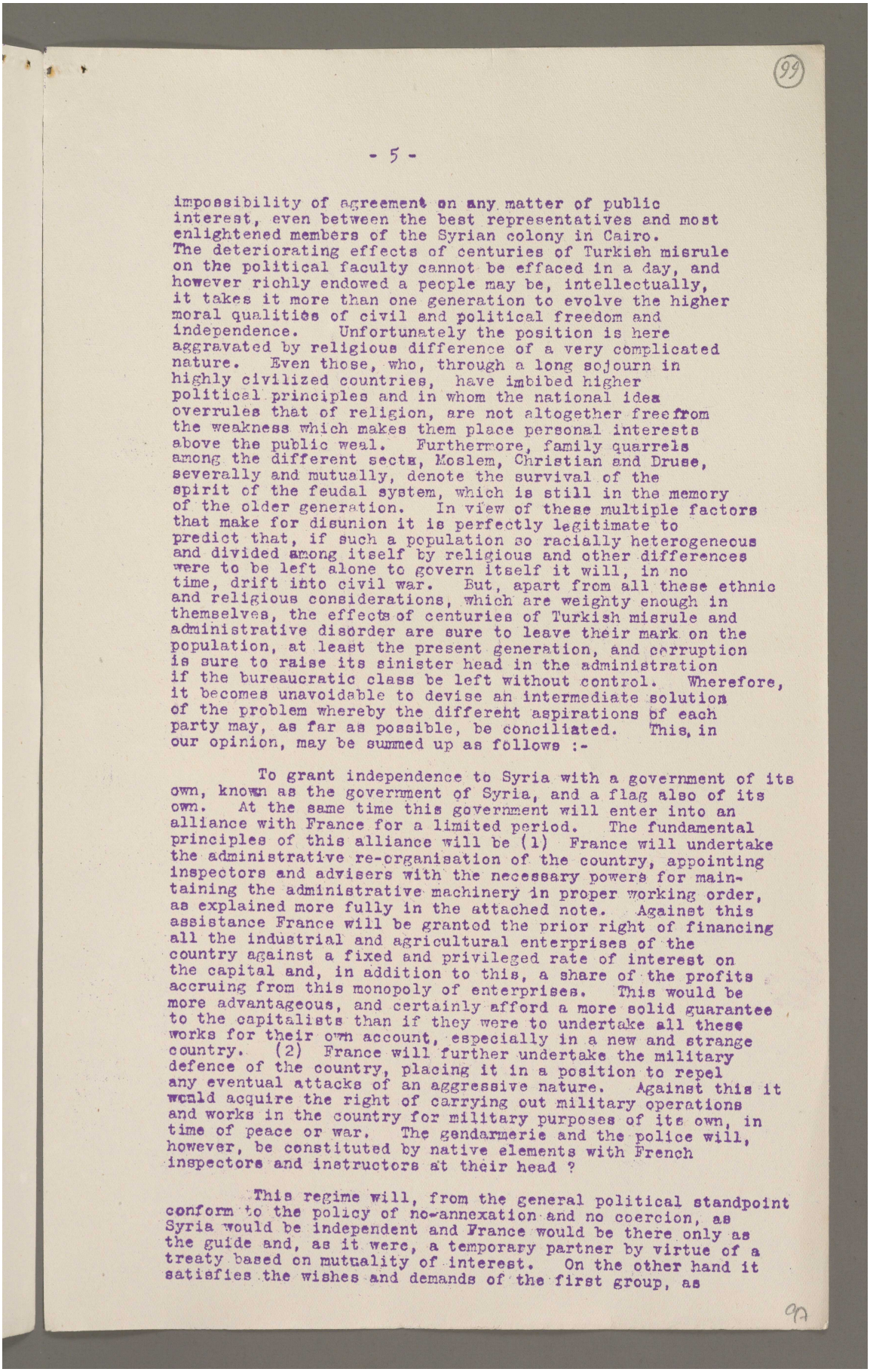

impossibility of agreement on any matter of public interest, even between the best representatives and most enlightened members of the Syrian colony in Cairo. The deteriorating effects of centuries of Turkish misrule on the political faculty cannot be effaced in a day, and however richly endowed a people may be, intellectually, it takes it more than one generation to evolve the higher moral qualities of civil and political freedom and independence. Unfortunately the position is here aggravated by religious difference of a very complicated nature. Even those, who, through a long sojourn in highly civilized countries, have imbibed higher political principles and in whom the national idea overrules that of religion, are not altogether free from the weakness which makes them place personal interests above the public weal. Furthermore, family quarrels among the different sects, Moslem, Christian and Druse, severally and mutually, denote the survival of the spirit of the feudal system, which is still in the memory of the older generation. In view of these multiple factors that make for disunion it is perfectly legitimate to predict that, if such a population so racially heterogeneous and divided among itself by religious and other differences were to be left alone to govern itself it will, in no time, drift into civil war. But, apart from all these ethnic and religious considerations, which are weighty enough in themselves, the effects of centuries of Turkish misrule and administrative disorder are sure to leave their mark on the population, at least the present generation, and corruption is sure to raise its sinister head in the administration if the bureaucratic class be left without control. Wherefore, it becomes unavoidable to devise an intermediate solution of the problem whereby the different aspirations of each party may, as far as possible, be conciliated. This, in our opinion, may be summed up as follows :-

To grant independence to Syria with a government of its own, known as the government of Syria, and a flag also of its own. At the same time this government will enter into an alliance with France for a limited period. The fundamental principles of this alliance will be (1) France will undertake the administrative re-organisation of the country, appointing inspectors and advisers with the necessary powers for maintaining the administrative machinery in proper working order, as explained more fully in the attached note. Against this assistance France will be granted the prior right of financing all the industrial and agricultural enterprises of the country against a fixed and privileged rate of interest on the capital and, in addition to this, a share of the profits accruing from this monopoly of enterprises. This would be more advantageous, and certainly afford a more solid guarantee to the capitalists than if they were to undertake all these works for their own account, especially in a new and strange country. (2) France will further undertake the military defence of the country, placing it in a position to repel any eventual attacks of an aggressive nature. Against this it would acquire the right of carrying out military operations and works in the country for military purposes of its own, in time of peace or war. The gendarmerie and the police will, however, be constituted by native elements with French inspectors and instructors at their head ?

This regime will, from the general political standpoint conform to the policy of no-annexation and no coercion, as Syria would be independent and France would be there only as the guide and, as it were, a temporary partner by virtue of a treaty based on mutuality of interest. On the other hand it satisfies the wishes and demands of the first group, as

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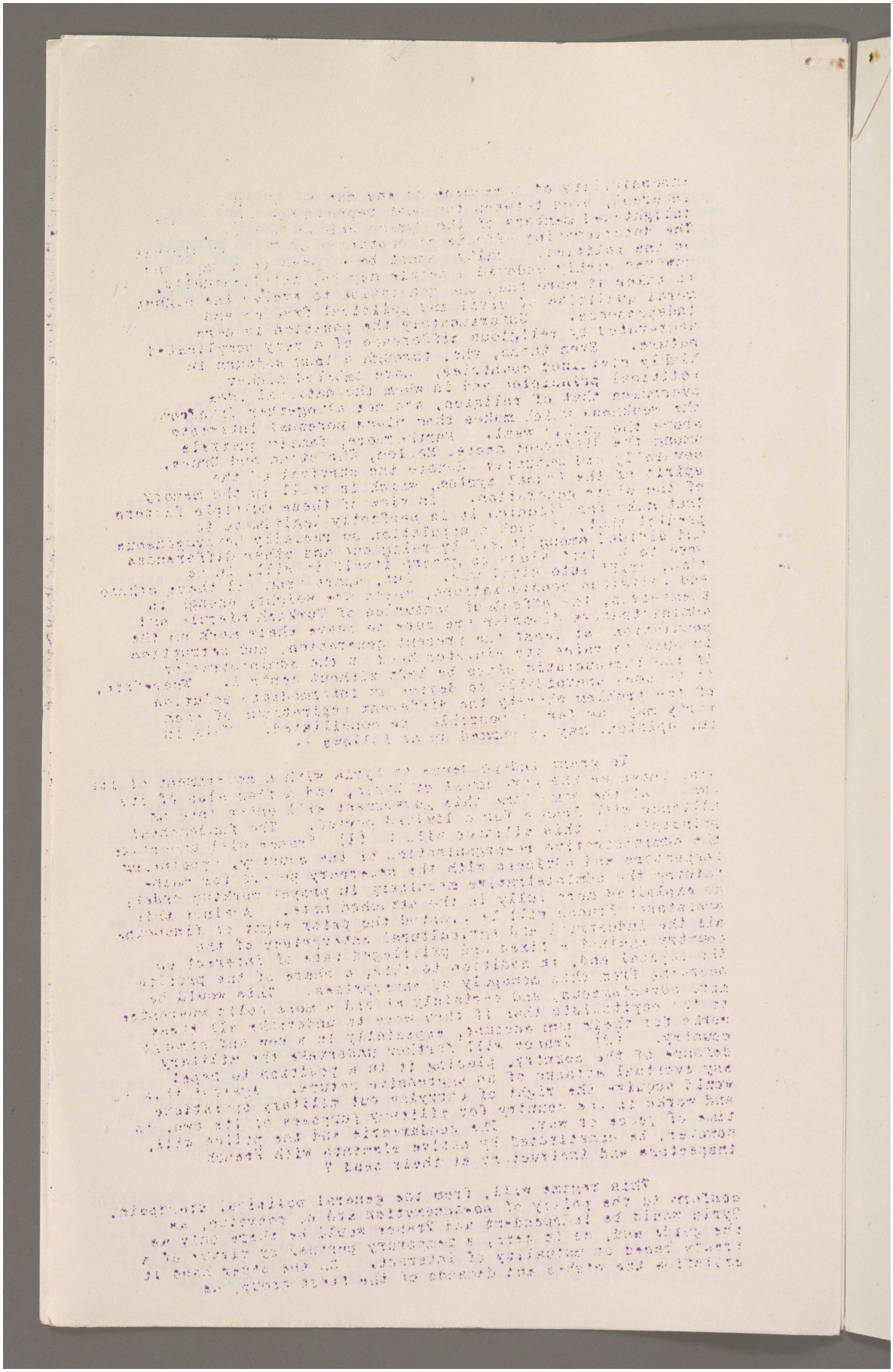

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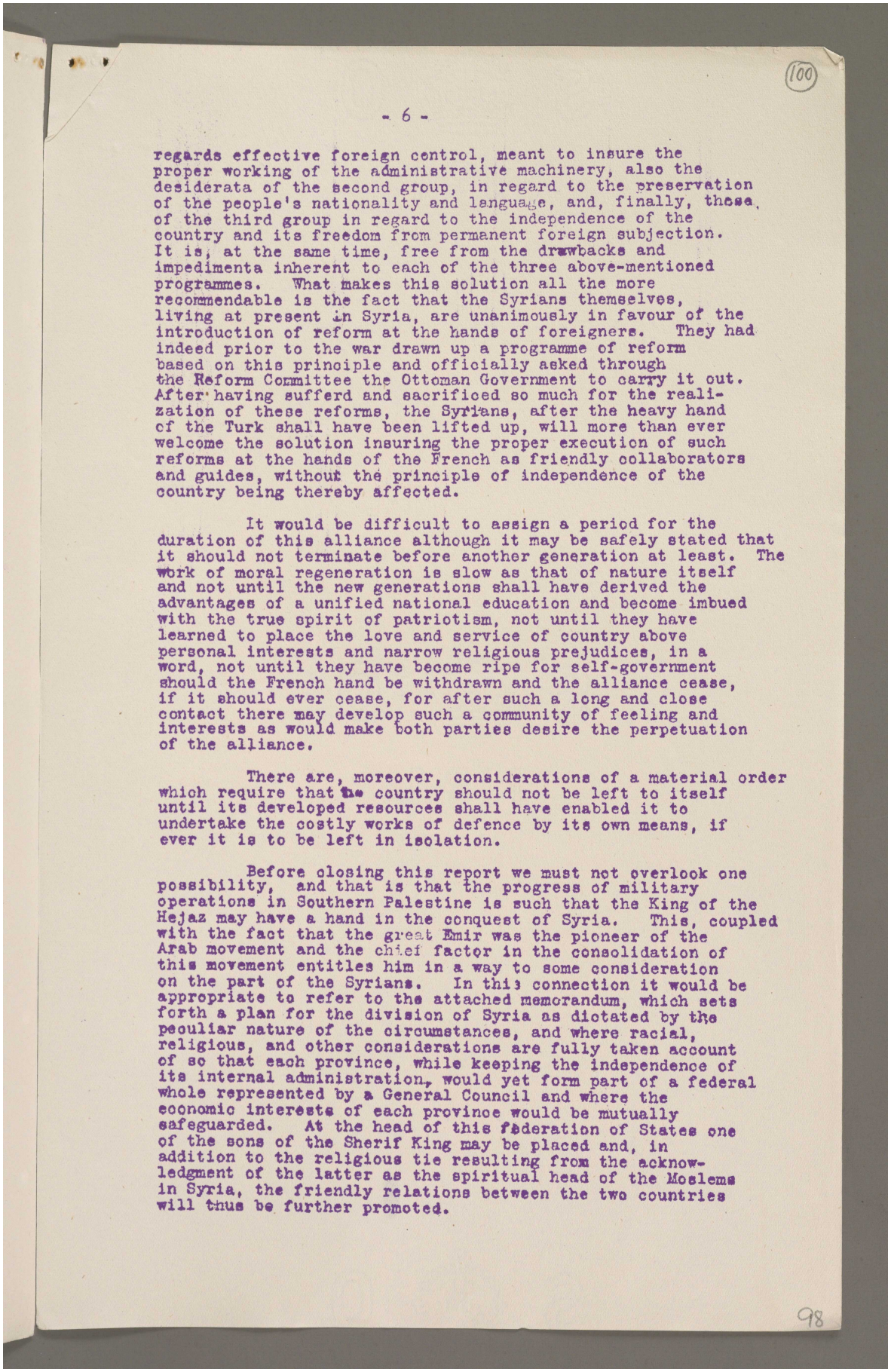

regards effective foreign control, meant to insure the proper working of the administrative machinery, also the desiderata of the second group, in regard to the preservation of the people's nationality and language, and, finally, those of the third group in regard to the independence of the country and its freedom from permanent foreign subjection. It is, at the same time, free from the drawbacks and impedimenta inherent to each of the three above-mentioned programmes. What makes this solution all the more recommendable is the fact that the Syrians themselves, living at present in Syria, are unanimously in favour of the introduction of reform at the hands of foreigners. They had indeed prior to the war drawn up a programme of reform based on this principle and officially asked through the Reform Committee the Ottoman Government to carry it out. After having sufferd and sacrificed so much for the realization of these reforms, the Syrians, after the heavy hand of the Turk shall have been lifted up, will more than ever welcome the solution insuring the proper execution of such reforms at the hands of the French as friendly collaborators and guides, without the principle of independence of the country being thereby affected.

It would be difficult to assign a period for the duration of this alliance although it may be safely stated that it should not terminate before another generation at least. The work of moral regeneration is slow as that of nature itself and not until the new generations shall have derived the advantages of a unified national education and become imbued with the true spirit of patriotism, not until they have learned to place the love and service of country above personal interests and narrow religious prejudices, in a word, not until they have become ripe for self-government should the French hand be withdrawn and the alliance cease, if it should ever cease, for after such a long and close contact there may develop such a community of feeling and interests as would make both parties desire the perpetuation of the alliance.

There are, moreover, considerations of a material order which require that the country should not be left to itself until its developed resources shall have enabled it to undertake the costly works of defence by its own means, if ever it is to be left in isolation.

Before closing this report we must not overlook one possibility, and that is that the progress of military operations in Southern Palestine is such that the King of the Hejaz may have a hand in the conquest of Syria. This, coupled with the fact that the great Emir was the pioneer of the Arab movement and the chief factor in the consolidation of this movement entitles him in a way to some consideration on the part of the Syrians. In this connection it would be appropriate to refer to the attached memorandum, which sets forth a plan for the division of Syria as dictated by the peculiar nature of the circumstances, and where racial, religious, and other considerations are fully taken account of so that each province, while keeping the independence of its internal administration, would yet form part of a federal whole represented by a General Council and where the economic interests of each province would be mutually safeguarded. At the head of this federation of States one of the sons of the Sherif King may be placed and, in addition to the religious tie resulting from the acknowledgment of the latter as the spiritual head of the Moslems in Syria, the friendly relations between the two countries will thus be further promoted.

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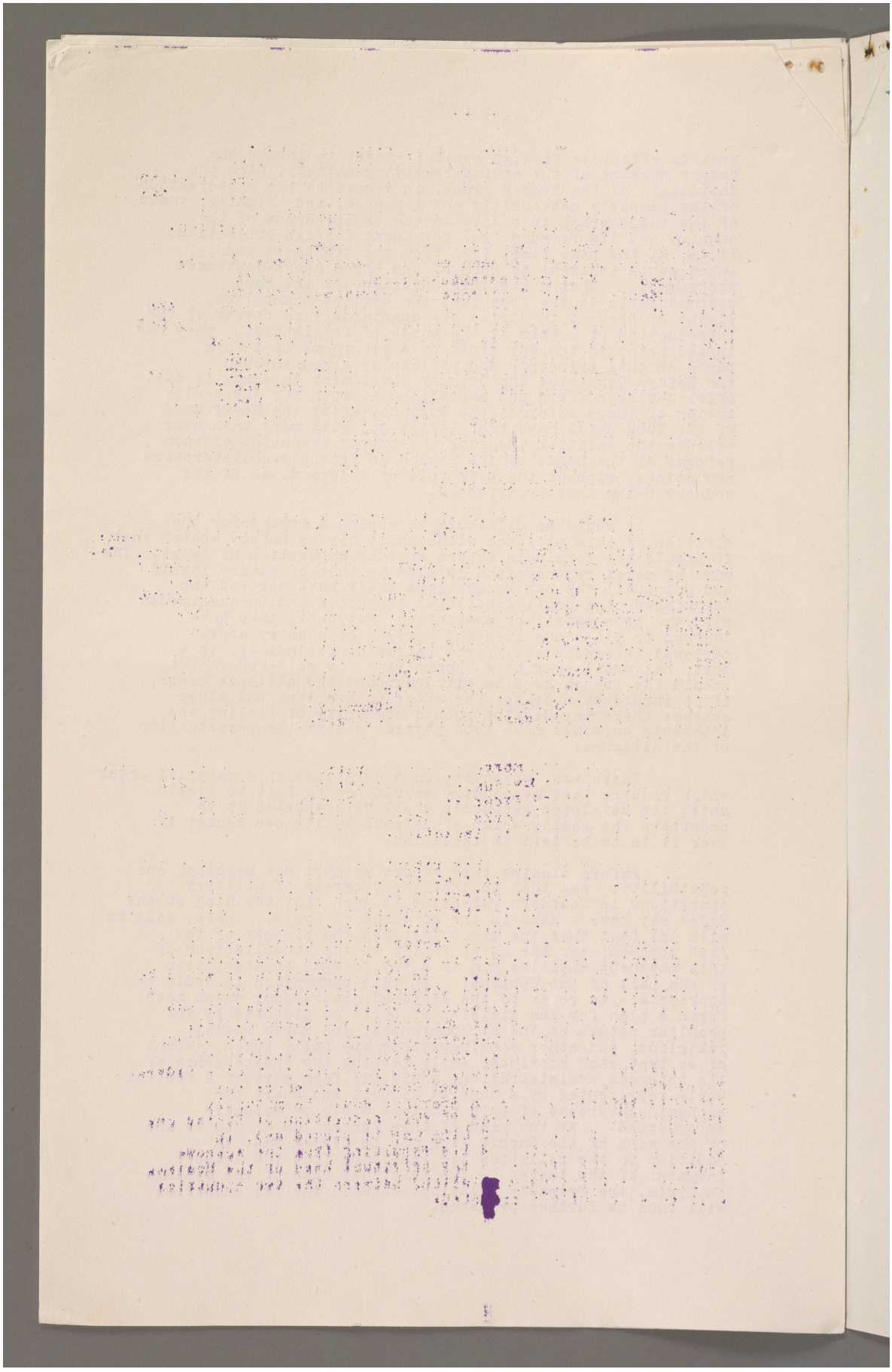

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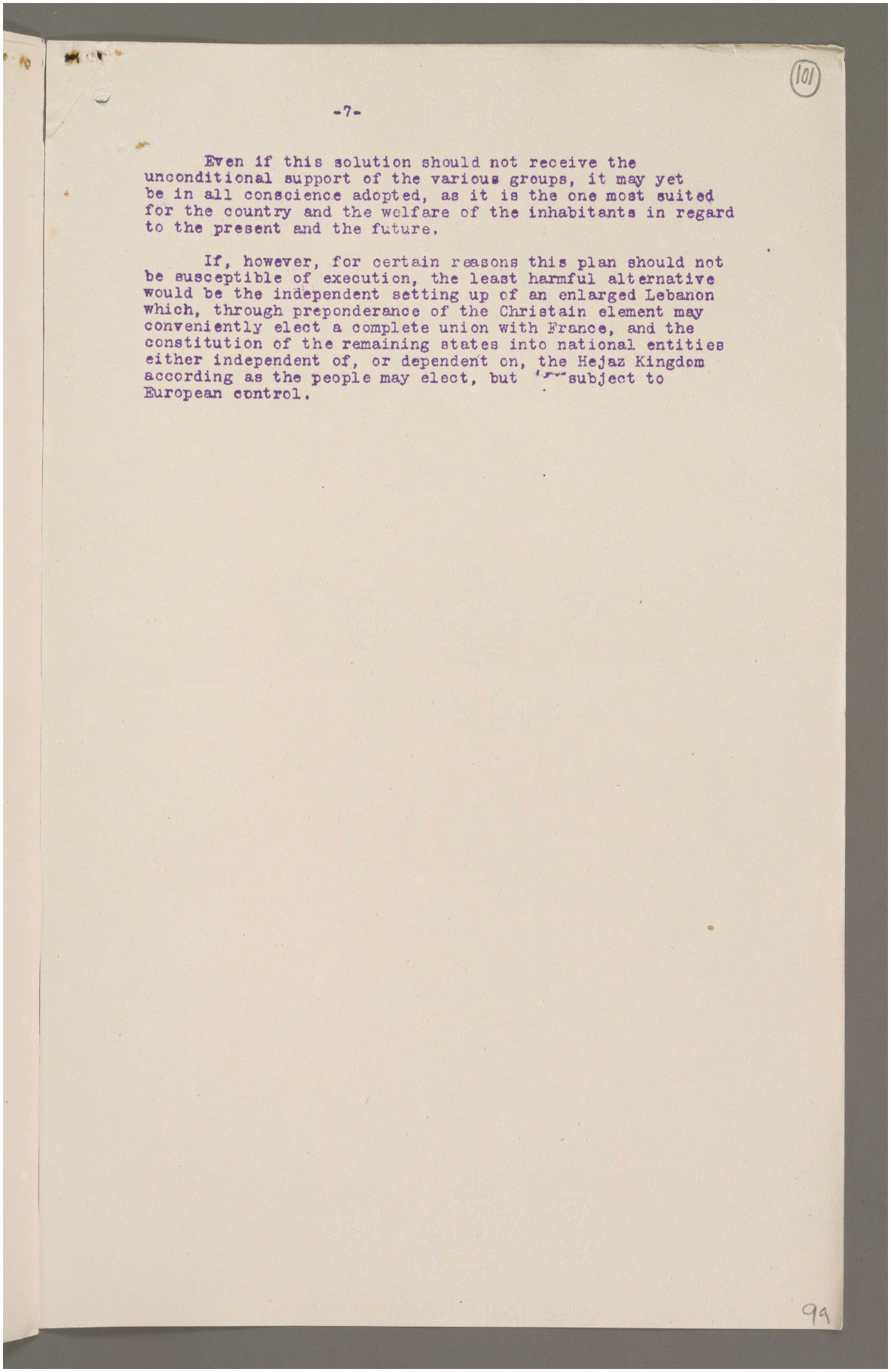

(101)

Even if this solution should not receive the unconditional support of the various groups, it may yet be in all conscience adopted, as it is the one most suited for the country and the welfare of the inhabitants in regard to the present and the future.

If, however, for certain reasons this plan should not be susceptible of execution, the least harmful alternative would be the independent setting up of an enlarged Lebanon which, through preponderance of the Christain element may conveniently elect a complete union with France, and the constitution of the remaining states into national entities either independent of, or dependent on, the Hejaz Kingdom according as the people may elect, but subject to European control.

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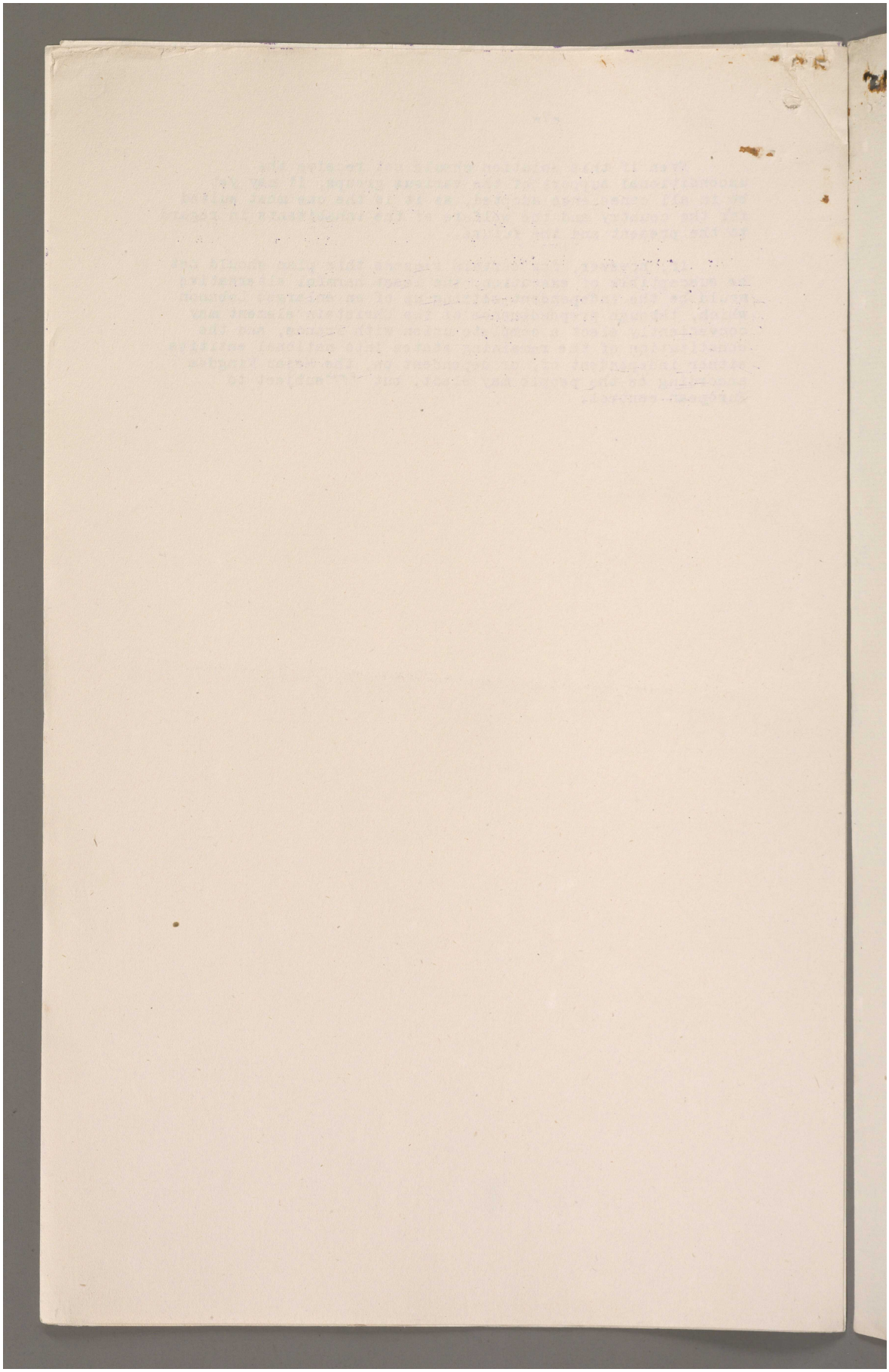

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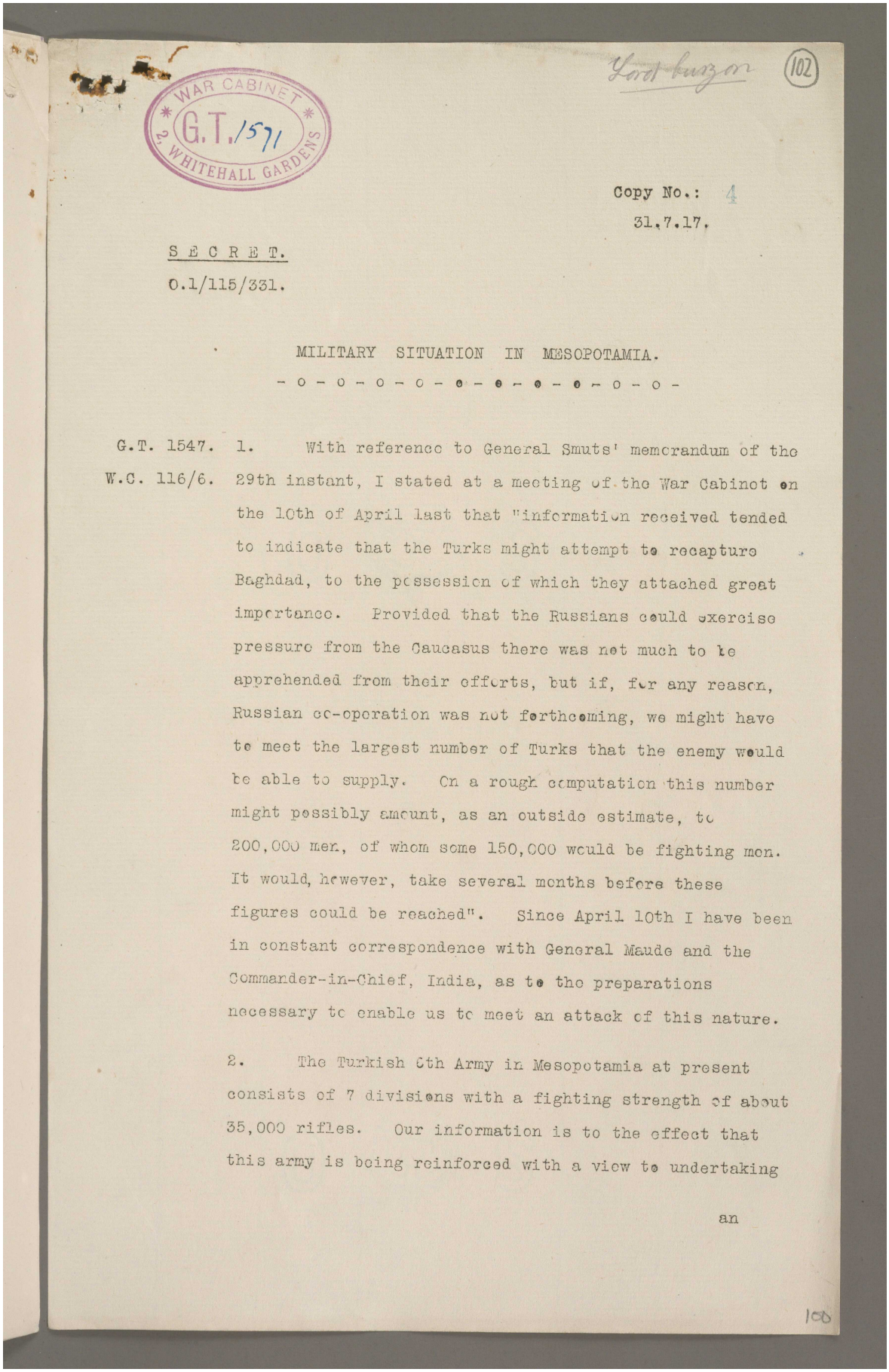

WAR CABINET
G.T./571
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

Lord Curzon (102)

Copy No.: 4
31.7.17.

SECRET.
O.1/115/331.

MILITARY SITUATION IN MESOPOTAMIA.

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G.T. 1547. W.C. 116/6.

1. With reference to General Smuts' memorandum of the 29th instant, I stated at a meeting of the War Cabinet on the 10th of April last that "information received tended to indicate that the Turks might attempt to recapture Baghdad, to the possession of which they attached great importance. Provided that the Russians could exercise pressure from the Caucasus there was not much to be apprehended from their efforts, but if, for any reason, Russian co-operation was not forthcoming, we might have to meet the largest number of Turks that the enemy would be able to supply. On a rough computation this number might possibly amount, as an outside estimate, to 200,000 men, of whom some 150,000 would be fighting men. It would, however, take several months before these figures could be reached". Since April 10th I have been in constant correspondence with General Maude and the Commander-in-Chief, India, as to the preparations necessary to enable us to meet an attack of this nature.

2. The Turkish 6th Army in Mesopotamia at present consists of 7 divisions with a fighting strength of about 35,000 rifles. Our information is to the effect that this army is being reinforced with a view to undertaking

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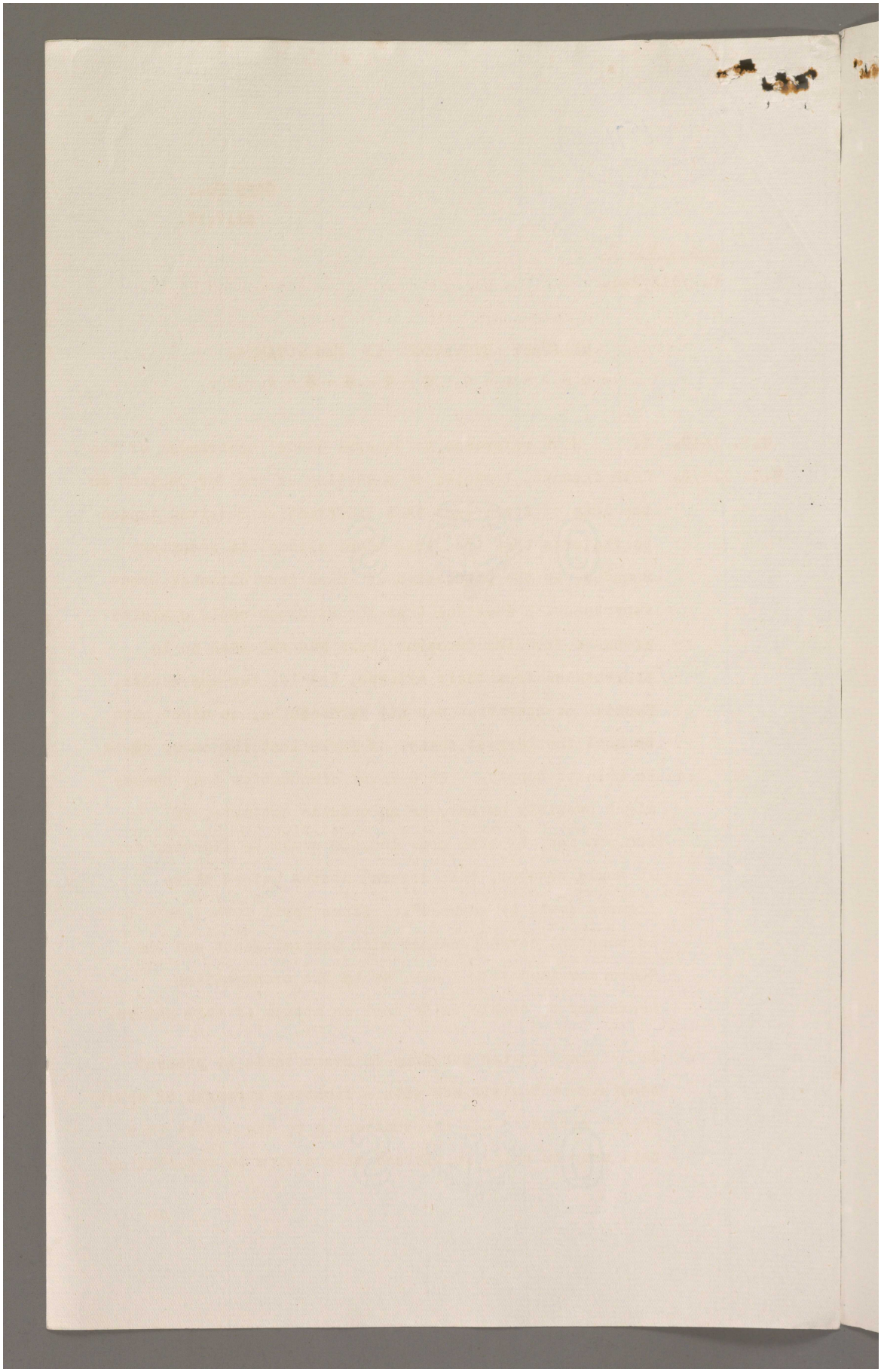

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an offensive in the early autumn under command of Field-Marshal von Falkenhayn with a view to the recapture of Baghdad, but I may say at once that we attach no credibility to the Foreign Office telegram received last week, emanating from Berne, that as many as 300,000 to 400,000 troops, of whom 160,000 might be Germans, will be employed. Such a force could not be supplied by the enemy in the Baghdad Vilayet until his railway has been extended. At present his railhead is about 100 miles from Mosul, which itself is about 150 miles from Samarrah. Further, we do not estimate that the Turks have more than about 500,000 men in all theatres, and although German machine-guns and artillery, and German officers have been sent to help the Turks, and more may be sent, we do not conceive it probable that many, if any, German divisions can or will be sent.

3. From the various telegrams circulated the War Cabinet will have observed that for some time past the Turks have been engaged in withdrawing their troops from Europe. Of the two Turkish divisions in Macedonia, one left that front some months ago, one or two regiments going to Mesopotamia and one regiment going to Palestine. The other division left about the end of June and has probably gone to Mesopotamia. Both the Turkish divisions in Galicia have probably been withdrawn though no reports have yet been

received

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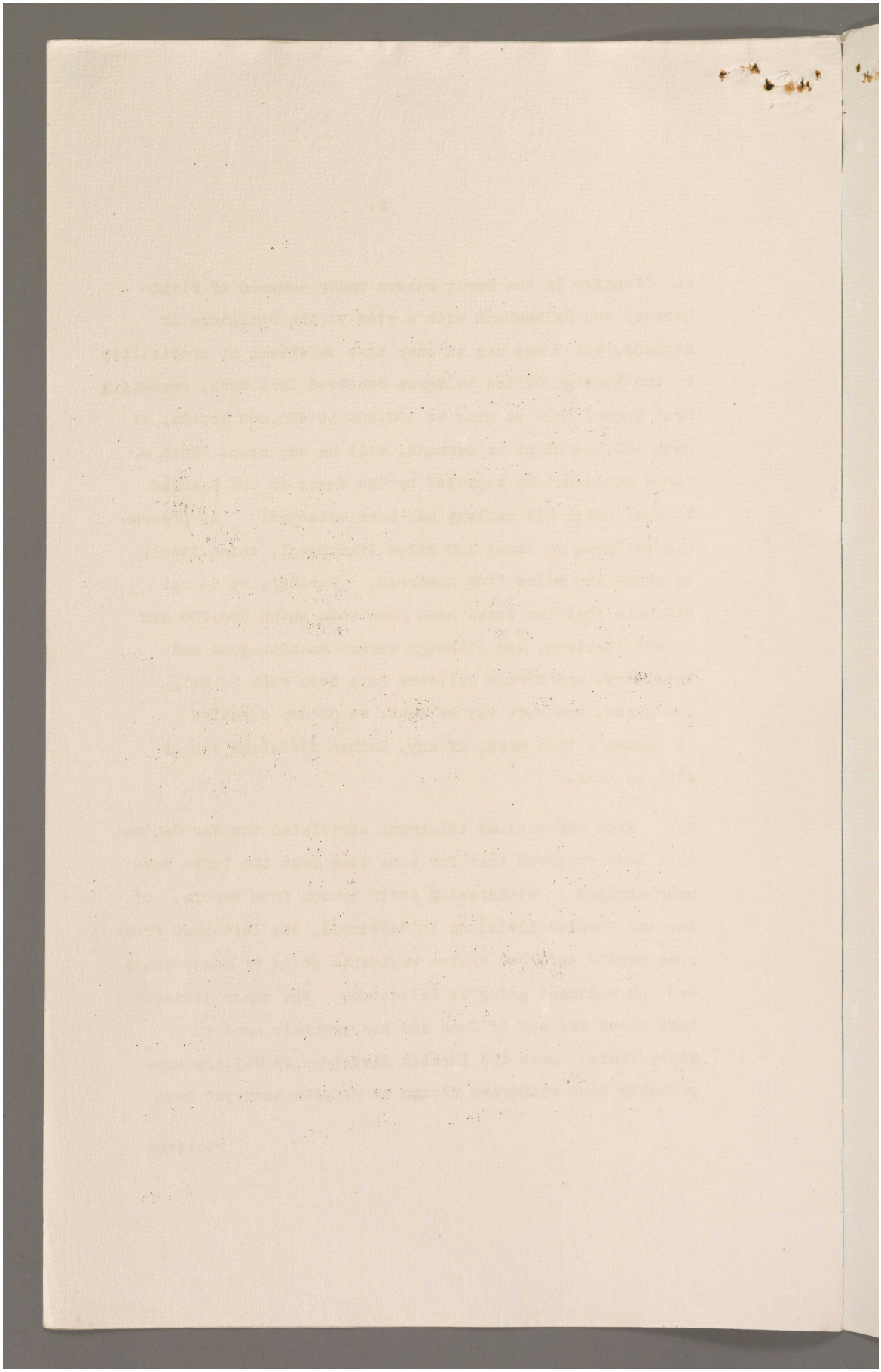

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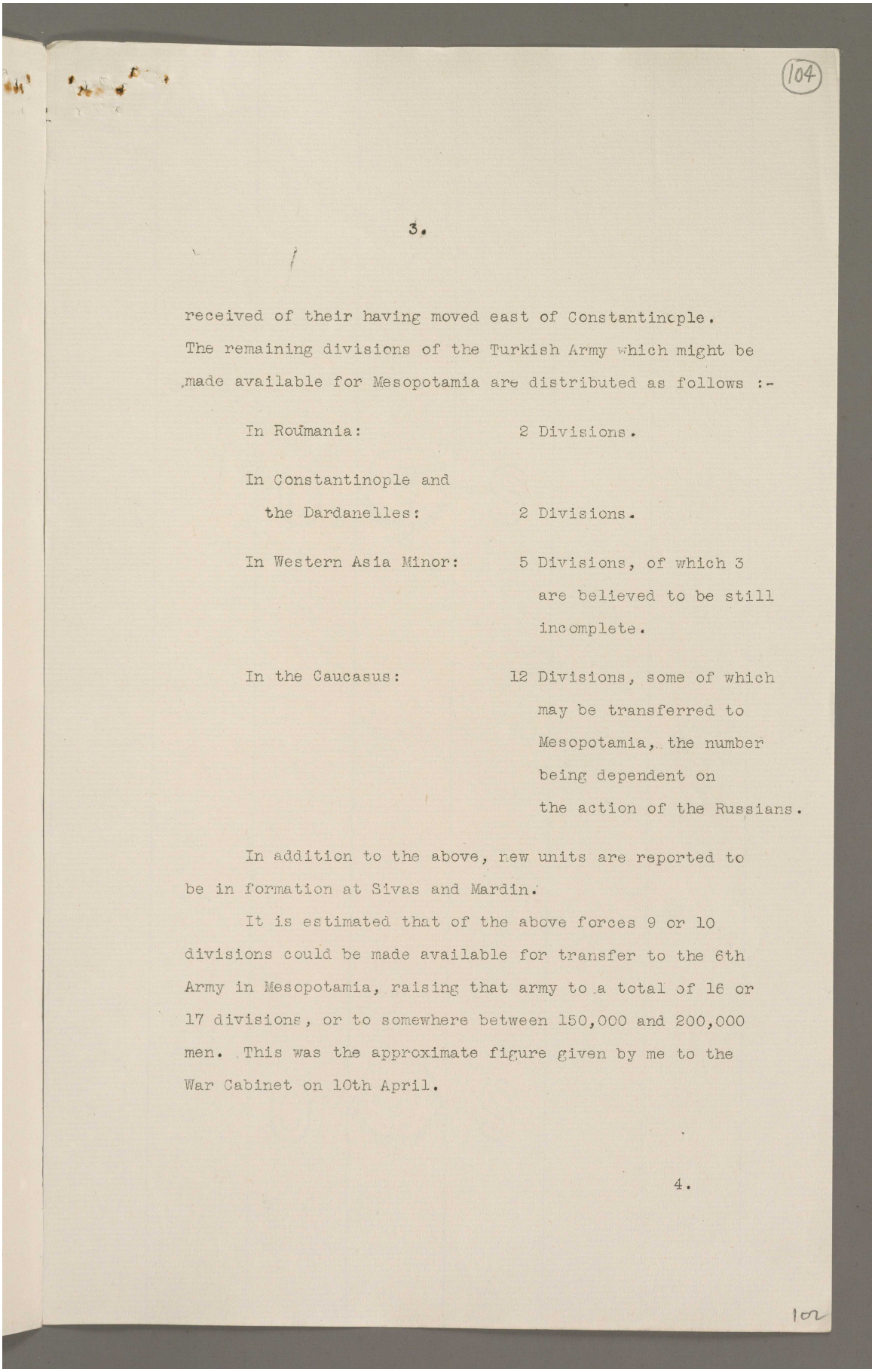

received of their having moved east of Constantincple.
The remaining divisions of the Turkish Army which might be made available for Mesopotamia are distributed as follows :-

In Roumania:	2 Divisions.
In Constantinople and the Dardanelles:	2 Divisions.
In Western Asia Minor:	5 Divisions, of which 3 are believed to be still incomplete.
In the Caucasus:	12 Divisions, some of which may be transferred to Mesopotamia, the number being dependent on the action of the Russians.

In addition to the above, new units are reported to be in formation at Sivas and Mardin.

It is estimated that of the above forces 9 or 10 divisions could be made available for transfer to the 6th Army in Mesopotamia, raising that army to a total of 16 or 17 divisions, or to somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 men. This was the approximate figure given by me to the War Cabinet on 10th April.

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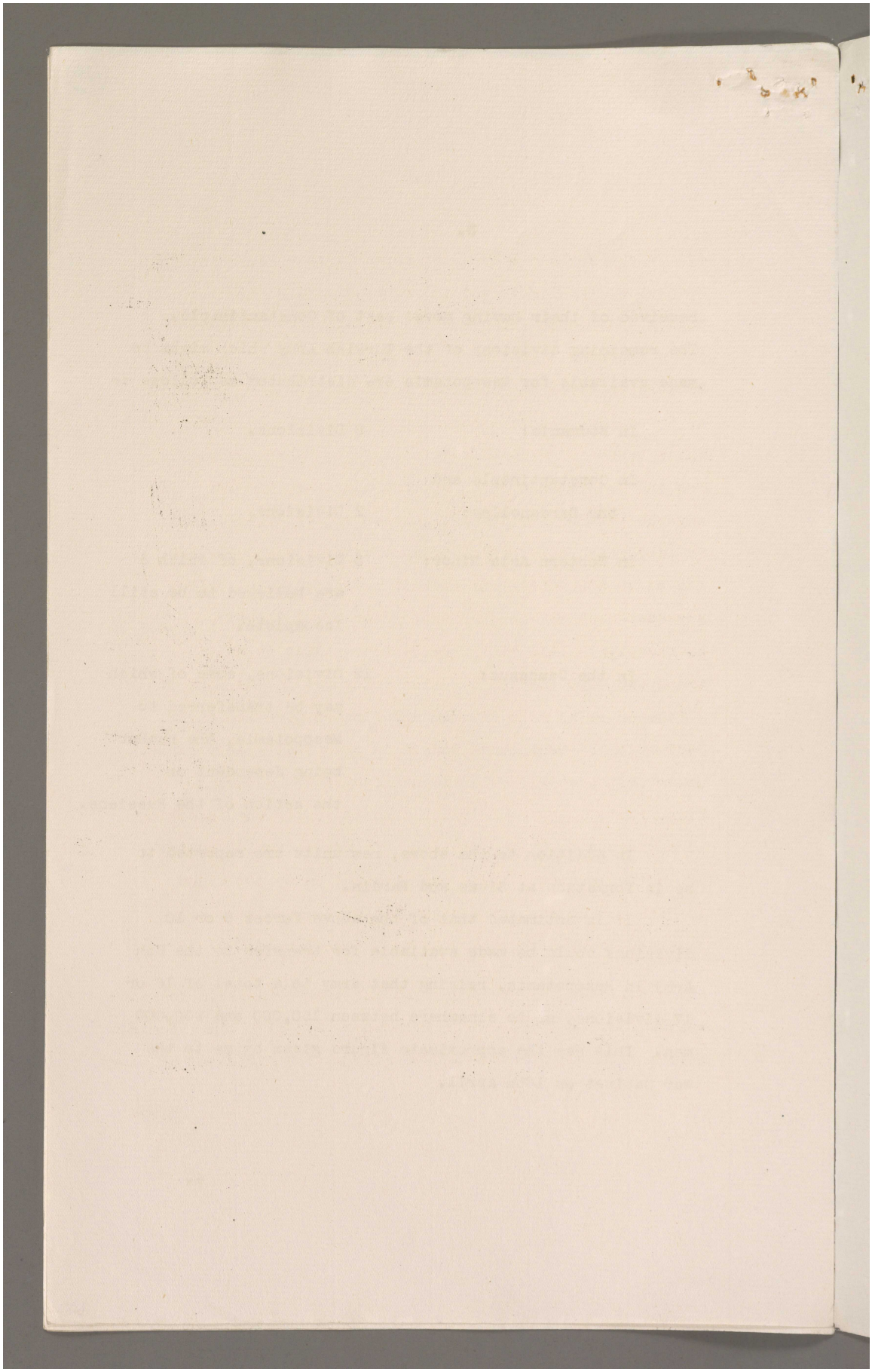

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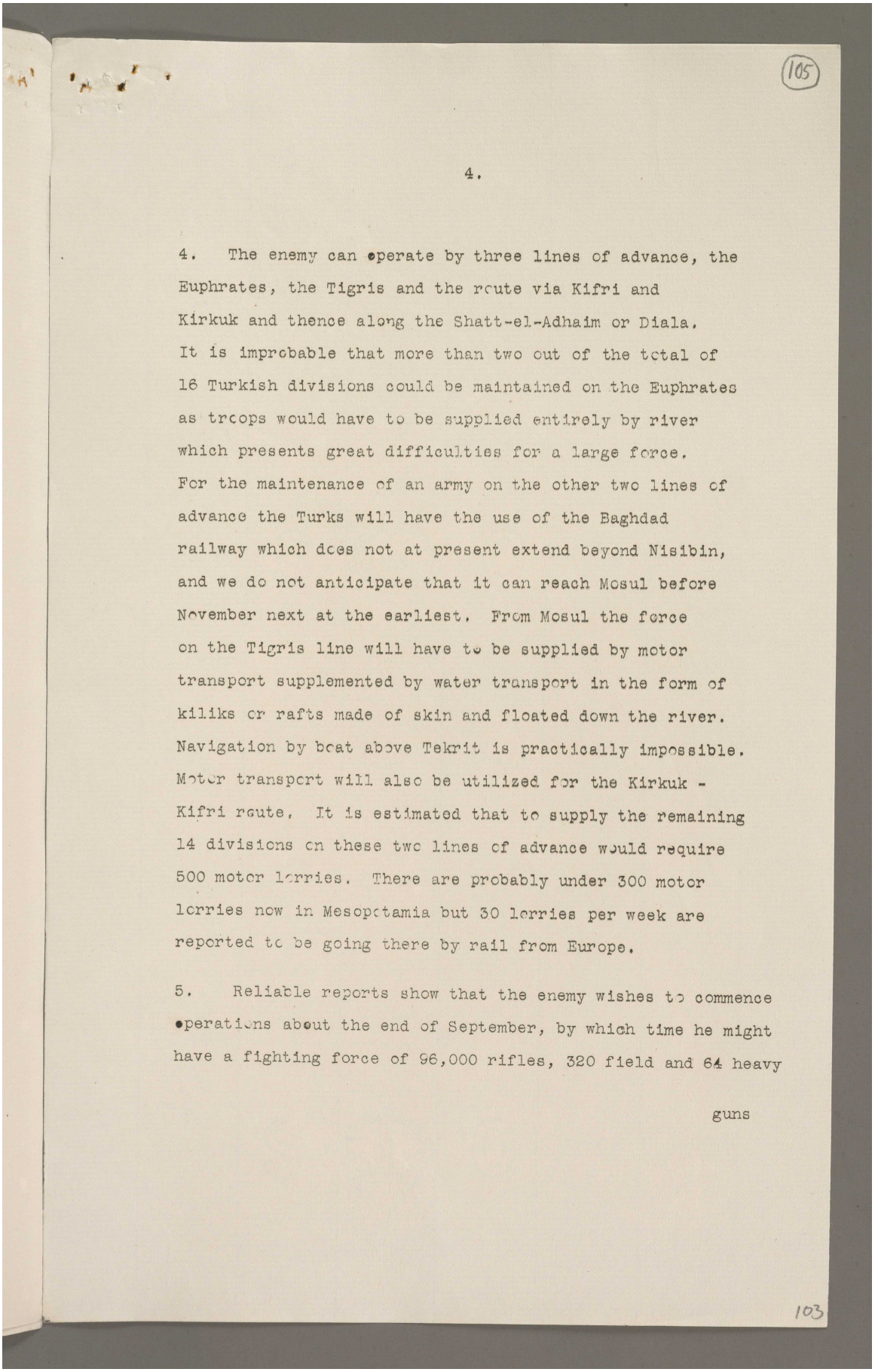

4. The enemy can operate by three lines of advance, the Euphrates, the Tigris and the route via Kifri and Kirkuk and thence along the Shatt-el-Adhaim or Diala. It is improbable that more than two out of the total of 16 Turkish divisions could be maintained on the Euphrates as troops would have to be supplied entirely by river which presents great difficulties for a large force. For the maintenance of an army on the other two lines of advance the Turks will have the use of the Baghdad railway which does not at present extend beyond Nisibin, and we do not anticipate that it can reach Mosul before November next at the earliest. From Mosul the force on the Tigris line will have to be supplied by motor transport supplemented by water transport in the form of kiliks or rafts made of skin and floated down the river. Navigation by boat above Tekrit is practically impossible. Motor transport will also be utilized for the Kirkuk - Kifri route. It is estimated that to supply the remaining 14 divisions on these two lines of advance would require 500 motor lorries. There are probably under 300 motor lorries now in Mesopotamia but 30 lorries per week are reported to be going there by rail from Europe.

5. Reliable reports show that the enemy wishes to commence operations about the end of September, by which time he might have a fighting force of 96,000 rifles, 320 field and 64 heavy

guns

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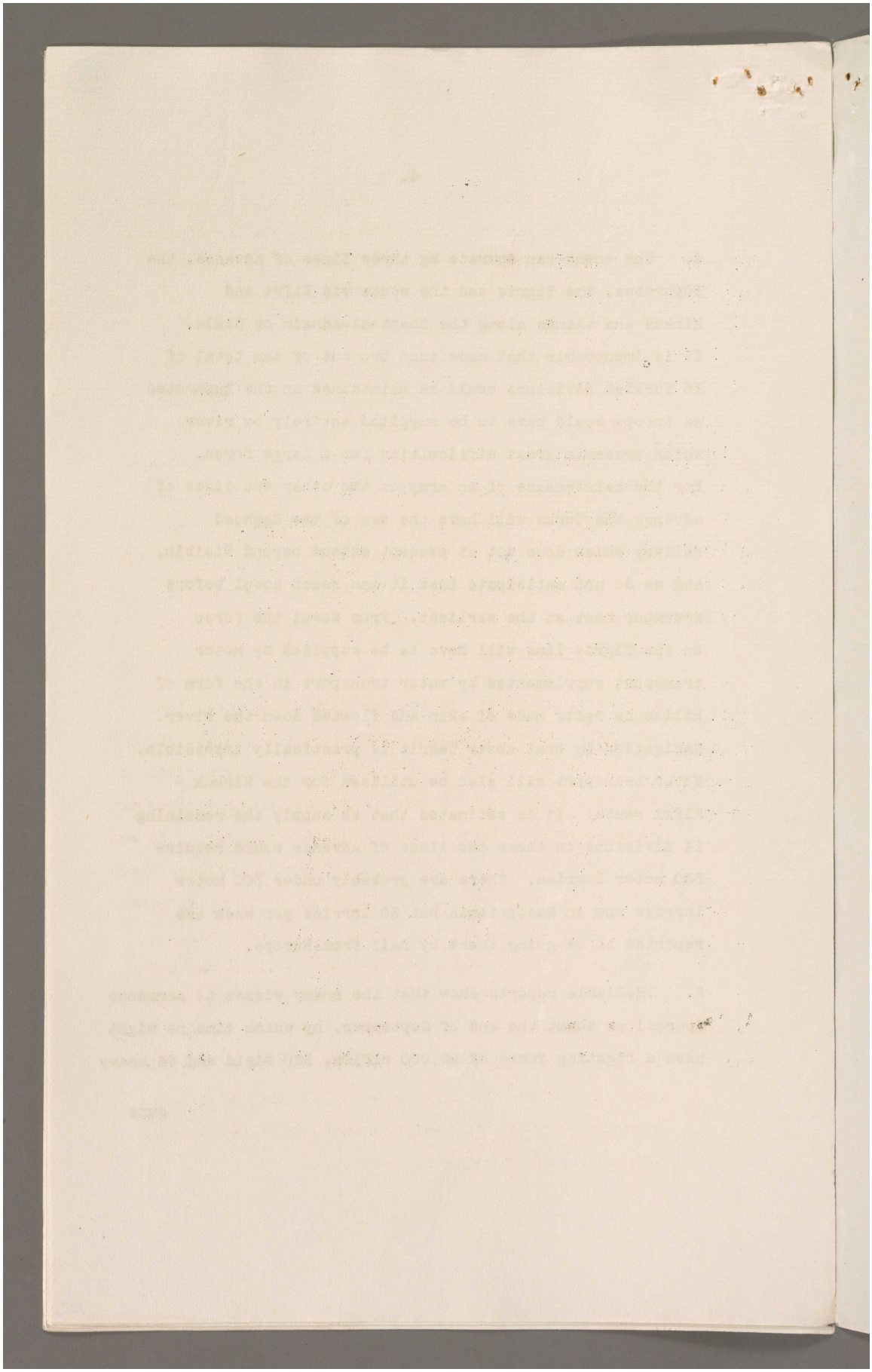

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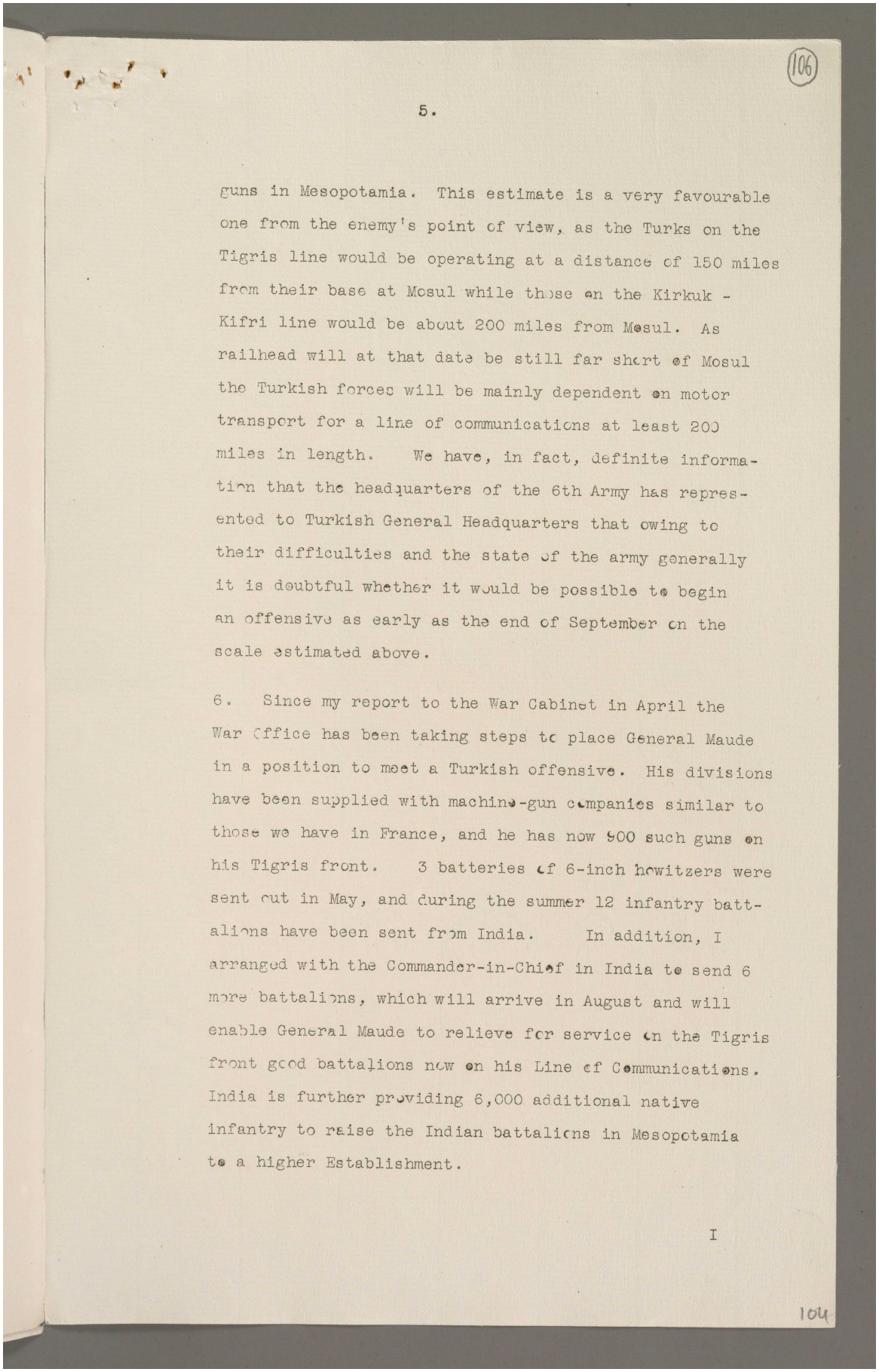

guns in Mesopotamia. This estimate is a very favourable one from the enemy's point of view, as the Turks on the Tigris line would be operating at a distance of 150 miles from their base at Mosul while those on the Kirkuk - Kifri line would be about 200 miles from Mosul. As railhead will at that date be still far short of Mosul the Turkish forces will be mainly dependent on motor transport for a line of communications at least 200 miles in length. We have, in fact, definite information that the headquarters of the 6th Army has represented to Turkish General Headquarters that owing to their difficulties and the state of the army generally it is doubtful whether it would be possible to begin an offensive as early as the end of September on the scale estimated above.

6. Since my report to the War Cabinet in April the War Office has been taking steps to place General Maude in a position to meet a Turkish offensive. His divisions have been supplied with machine-gun companies similar to those we have in France, and he has now 900 such guns on his Tigris front. 3 batteries of 6-inch howitzers were sent out in May, and during the summer 12 infantry battalions have been sent from India. In addition, I arranged with the Commander-in-Chief in India to send 6 more battalions, which will arrive in August and will enable General Maude to relieve for service on the Tigris front good battalions now on his Line of Communications. India is further providing 6,000 additional native infantry to raise the Indian battalions in Mesopotamia to a higher Establishment.

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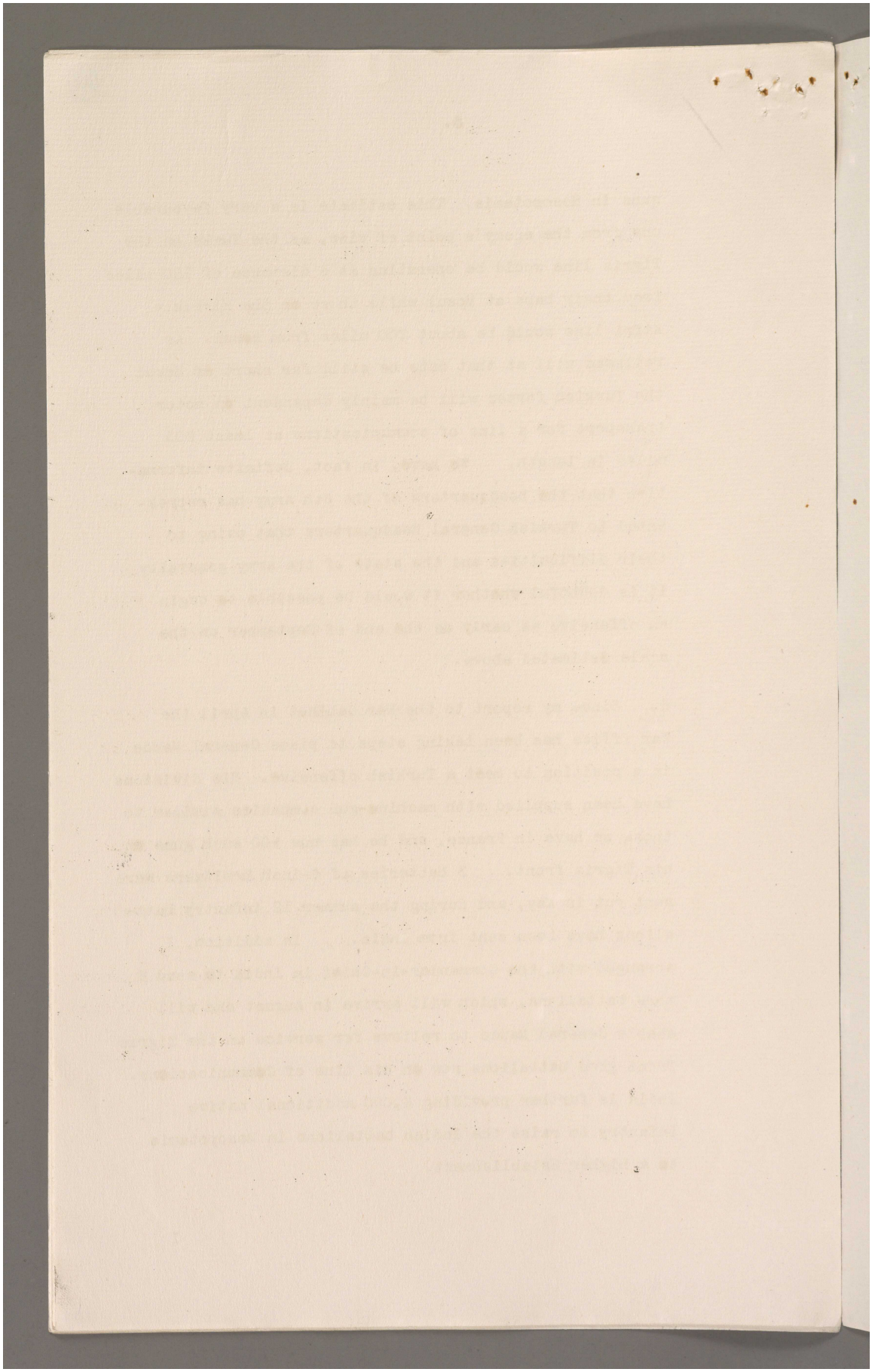

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I informed General Maude of these arrangements and also told him that 9 more field batteries, a 60 pdr. battery and an air squadron were on route, and that I hoped to send him two more 6" Howitzer batteries. I asked him "to let me know if he was satisfied that by these measures he would be enabled to meet any attack which may be reasonably expected".
General Maude replied that "if our outstanding demands, especially as regards mechanical transport, are fully met and, as casualties occur, ranks of our units here are promptly filled, I feel no anxiety as to our ability to meet successfully considerably superior numbers of Turks". I attach the complete telegrams which passed, as an Appendix.

7. Since the above interchange of telegrams 12 Mountain guns have been sent out in order to release good guns now detained on the lines of communication, and all the additions referred to above, as well as other demands made by General Maude, will be at Basra by or before the end of August, except part of one Mechanical Transport Company and some few unimportant details which will arrive by or before the end of September.

The effect of the above measures will be to increase the fighting strength of our forces on the Tigris front from

60,000

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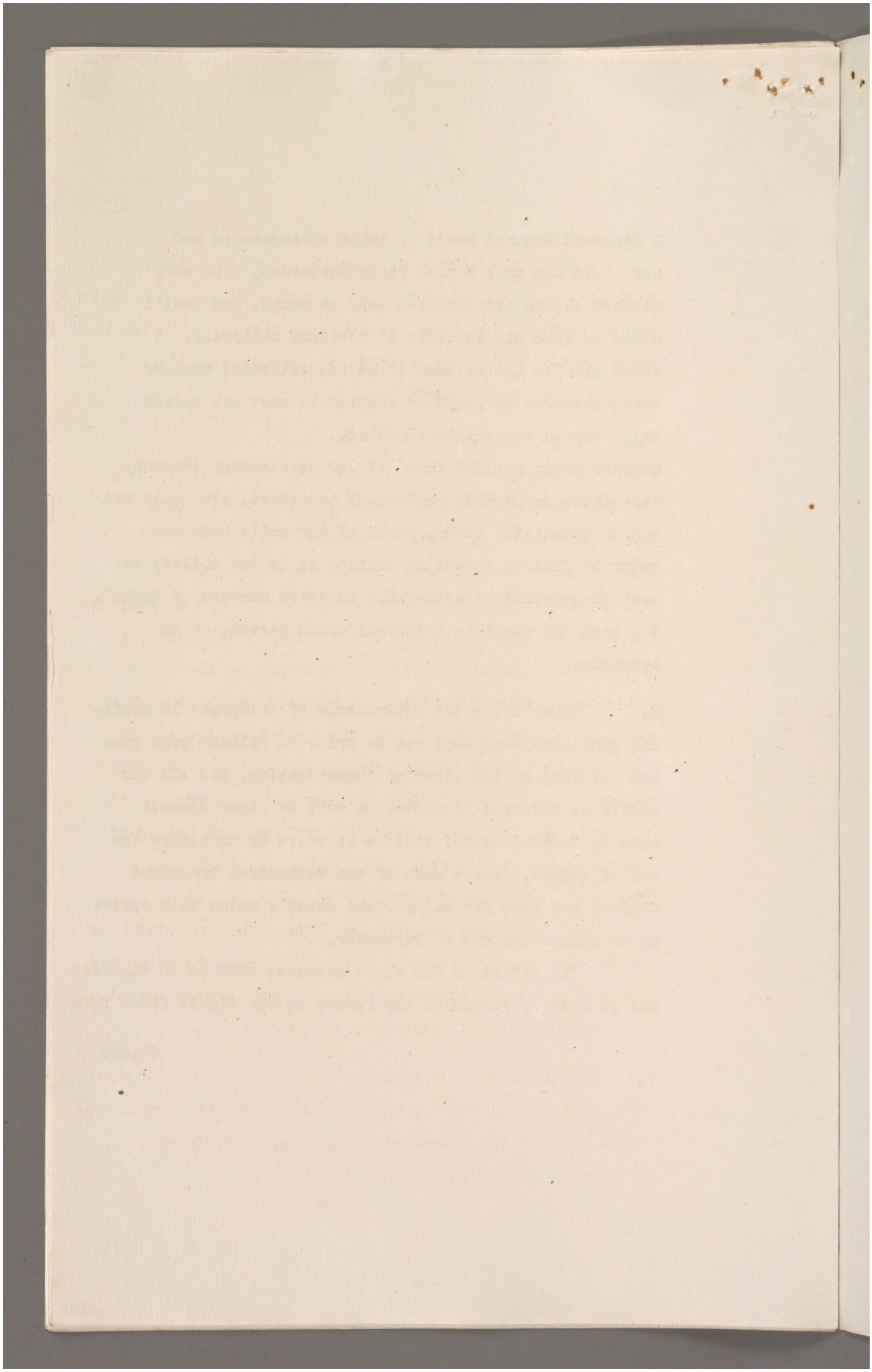

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60,000 rifles and sabres to 75,000 when concentration is complete. As regards artillery our present strength on the Tigris front is 134 field and 72 heavy guns. When the reinforcements arrive our strength will be 206 field guns and 84 heavy guns and howitzers.

8. Since he occupied Samarrah General Maude has been steadily preparing defensive positions covering Baghdad. The line Bakubah- Deltawa - Sindiyeh has been strongly entrenched as a rear line of defence. In advance of this line a strong natural position has been selected and entrenched covering Samarrah station with a second position two or three miles in rear, and a third about Istabulat. On the left bank of the Tigris Samarrah town is held as a bridgehead, and a position has been selected on this bank level with that on the right, which can be occupied and entrenched at short notice, should the military situation require it. Another bridgehead has been prepared on the left bank of the Tigris near the confluence of the Shatt-el-Adhaim and that river. Finally on the Euphrates a line has been prepared covering Felujah.

In these preparations for defence General Maude has had in view the retention of a large striking force in his own hand, so as to enable him to manoeuvre freely and if possible forestall the enemy in attack.

9. In order to give General Maude full mobility, great efforts have been made to extend and improve his communications. The river transport on the Tigris is now very efficient right up to Baghdad.

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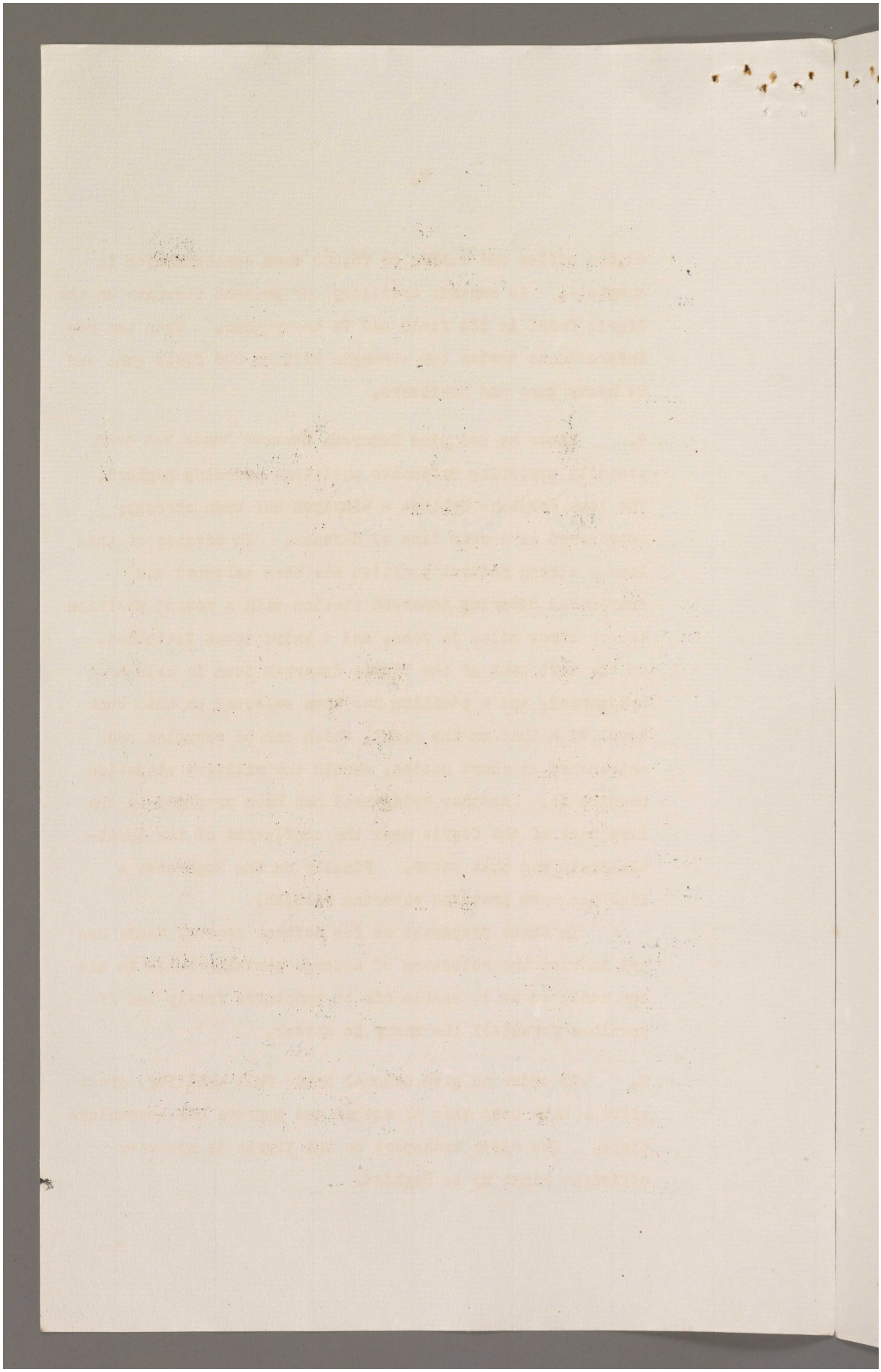

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The embankment of the railway from Basra to Kurna has been constructed and the bridge over the Tigris is now in hand. This line will be completed by the cool weather.

The metre gauge railways from Kurna to Amara and from Kut to Baghdad have been completed.

A 2'6" line has been laid from Baghdad to Bakuba which will be converted to metre gauge.

The section of the Baghdad railway between Baghdad and Samarrah is being used to a considerable extent though there is a shortage of engines on this line, which we are endeavouring to remedy.

Other lines are under construction from Baghdad to Musaijib on the Euphrates, and from Baghdad to Felujah. General Maude will thus have lines radiating north, east and west from Baghdad, and with the completion of the Kut - Baghdad line and with the increased facilities for drawing on the resources of the country which these branch lines give, is able to regard with equanimity the period of low water on the Tigris.

10. It is impossible to say how far we shall be able to rely on Russian assistance in Mesopotamia as this will depend upon developments in Russia and on the condition of the Russian forces in Persia whose morale is at present very low. General Maude stated on 18th June that he could supply a Russian force of 14,000 men and 6,000 horses via the Tigris - Jessan - Mendali route. Since that date however the Russians have retired to Paitak and are thus separated from Mendali by mountain tracks impracticable for wheeled transport. General Brusiloff has agreed to

this

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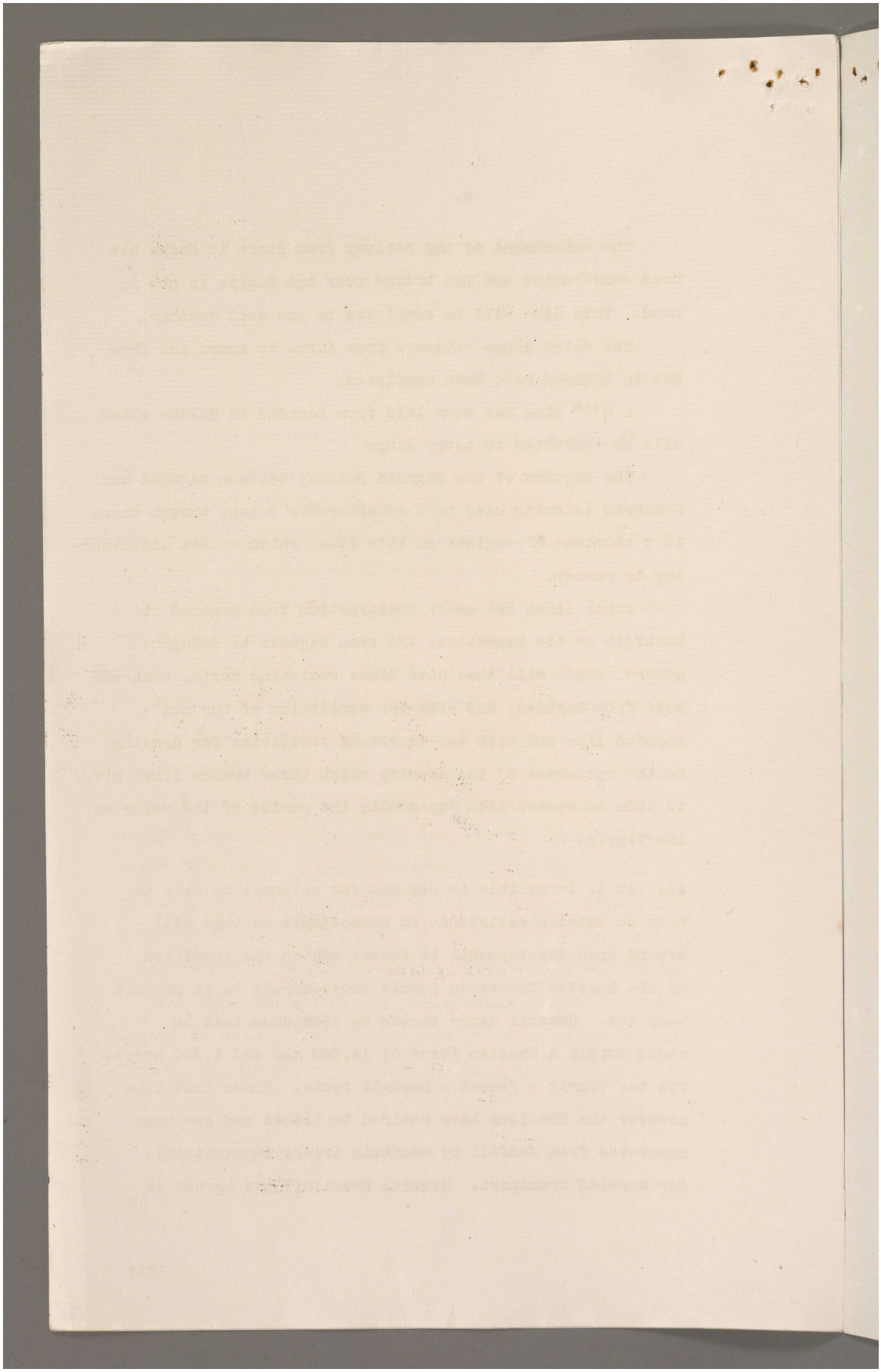

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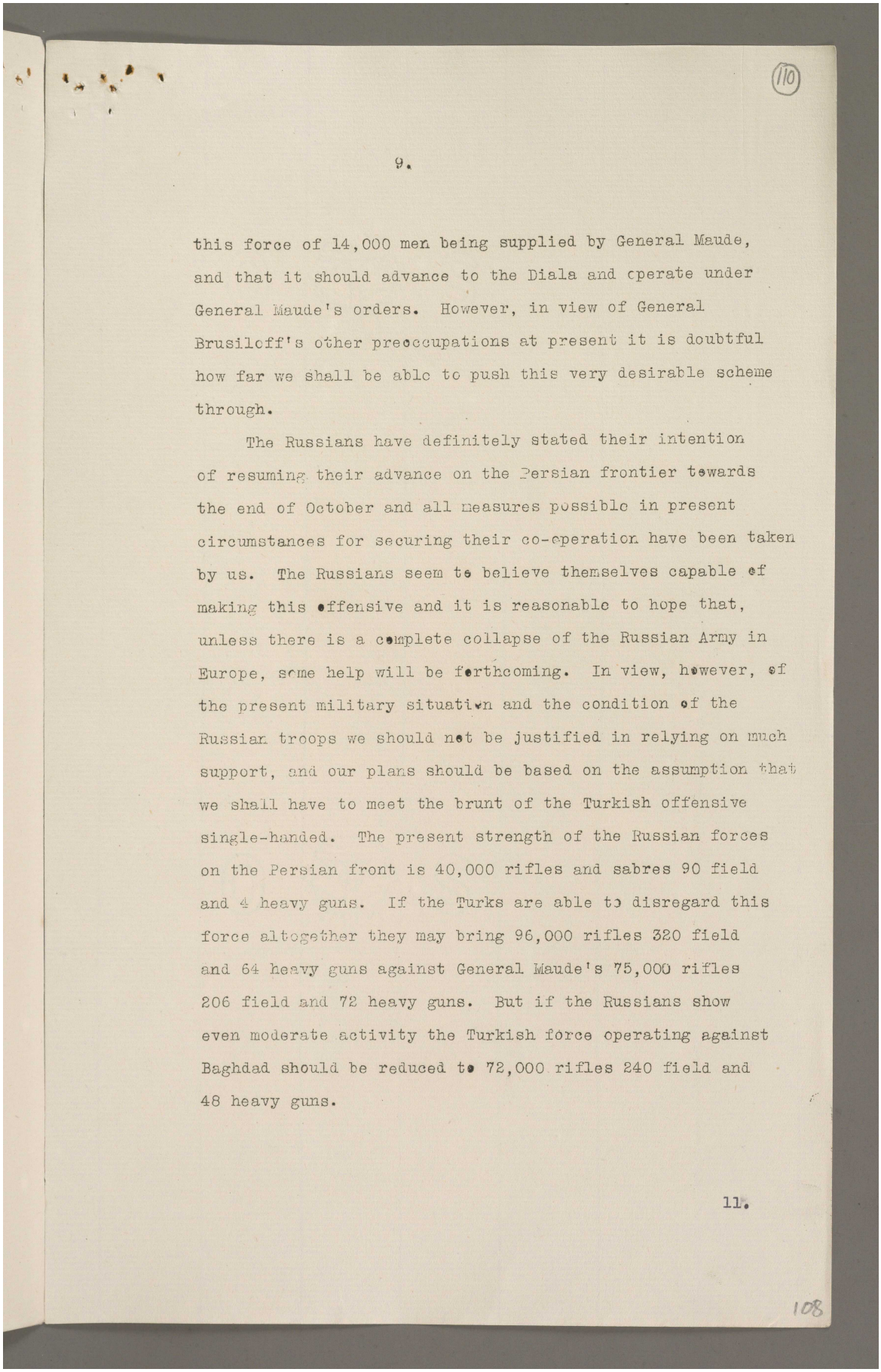

this force of 14,000 men being supplied by General Maude, and that it should advance to the Diala and operate under General Maude's orders. However, in view of General Brusiloff's other preoccupations at present it is doubtful how far we shall be able to push this very desirable scheme through.

The Russians have definitely stated their intention of resuming their advance on the Persian frontier towards the end of October and all measures possible in present circumstances for securing their co-operation have been taken by us. The Russians seem to believe themselves capable of making this offensive and it is reasonable to hope that, unless there is a complete collapse of the Russian Army in Europe, some help will be forthcoming. In view, however, of the present military situation and the condition of the Russian troops we should not be justified in relying on much support, and our plans should be based on the assumption that we shall have to meet the brunt of the Turkish offensive single-handed. The present strength of the Russian forces on the Persian front is 40,000 rifles and sabres 90 field and 4 heavy guns. If the Turks are able to disregard this force altogether they may bring 96,000 rifles 320 field and 64 heavy guns against General Maude's 75,000 rifles 206 field and 72 heavy guns. But if the Russians show even moderate activity the Turkish force operating against Baghdad should be reduced to 72,000 rifles 240 field and 48 heavy guns.

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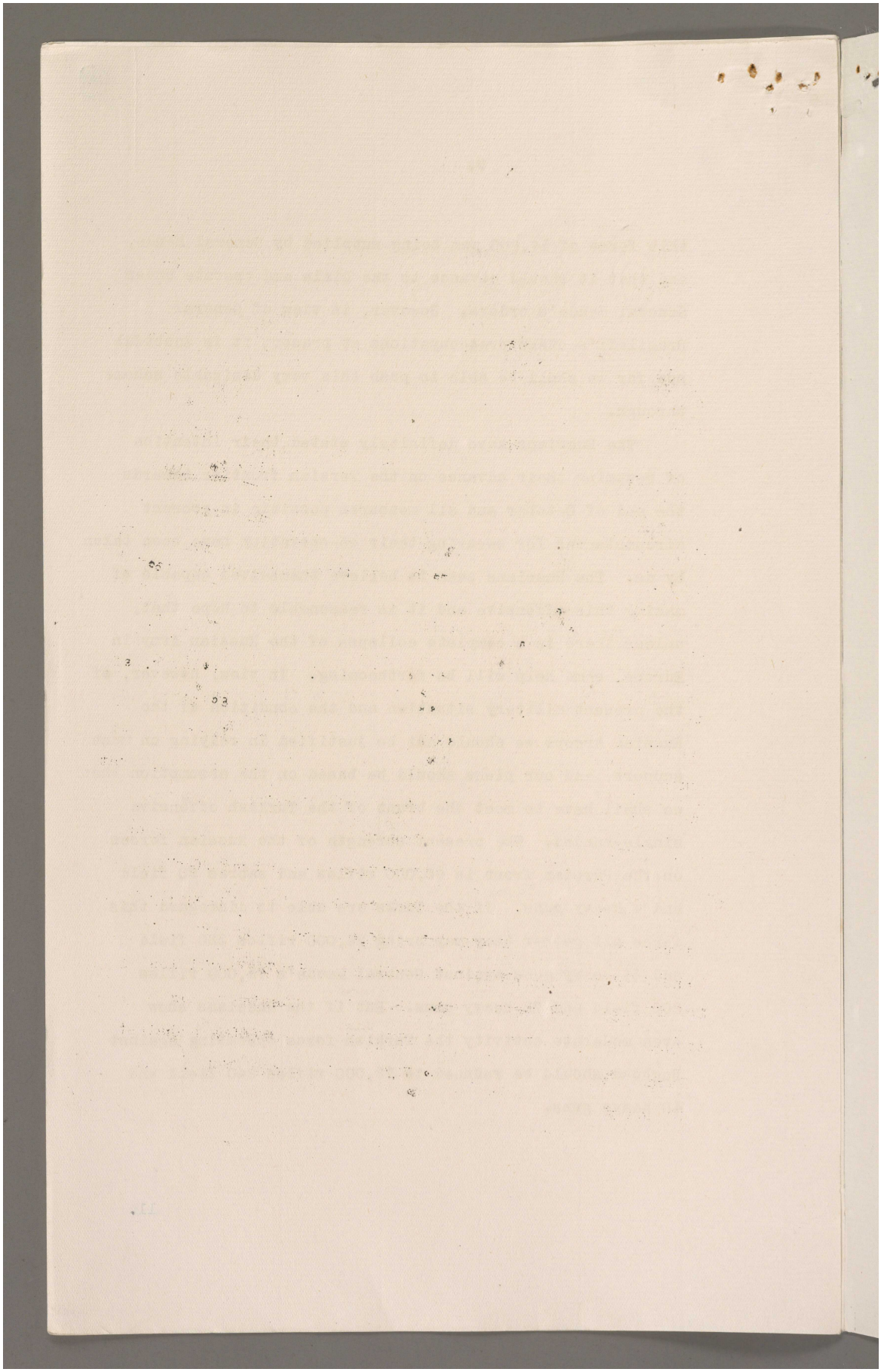

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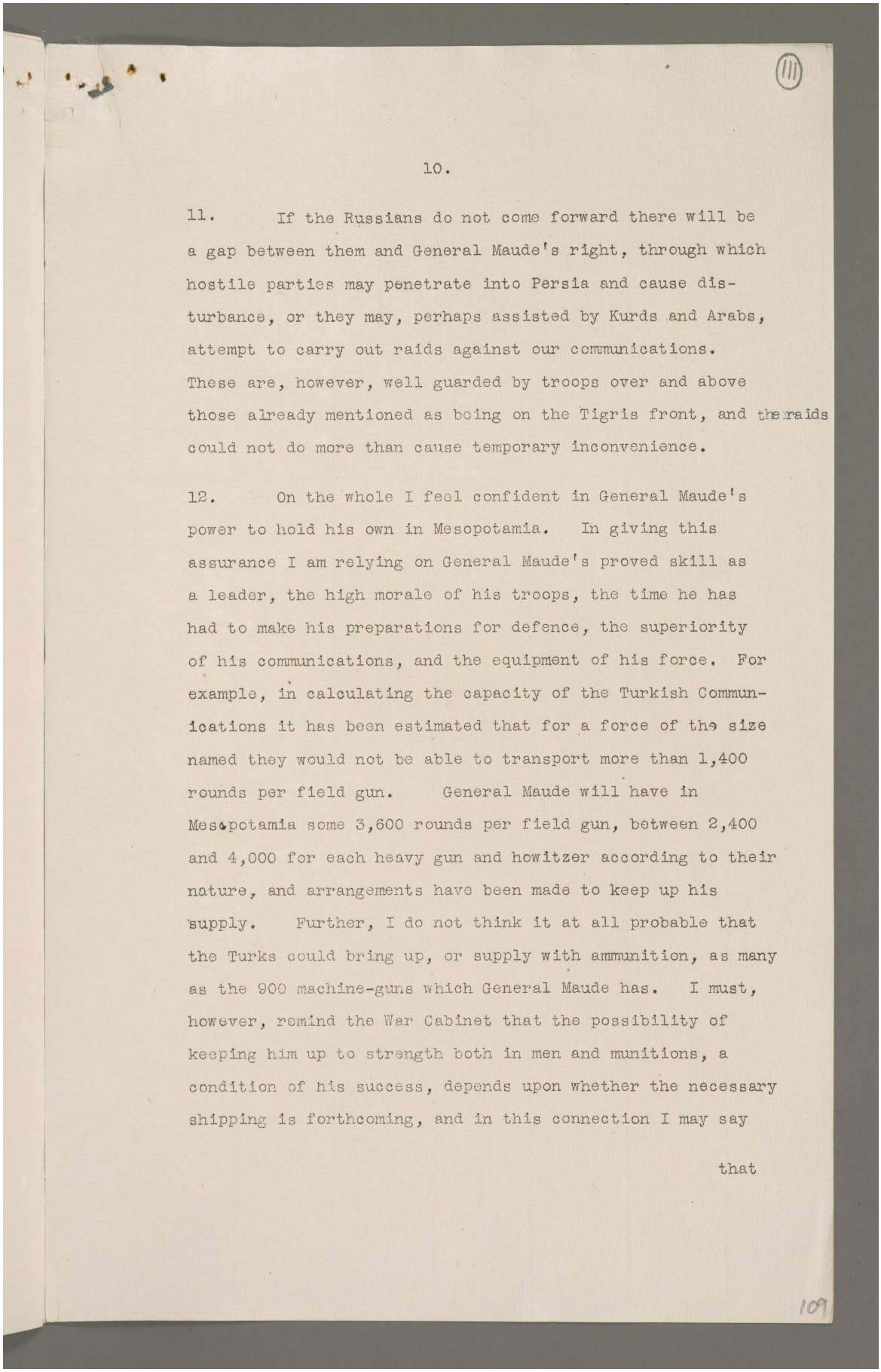

11. If the Russians do not come forward there will be a gap between them and General Maude's right, through which hostile parties may penetrate into Persia and cause disturbance, or they may, perhaps assisted by Kurds and Arabs, attempt to carry out raids against our communications. These are, however, well guarded by troops over and above those already mentioned as being on the Tigris front, and the raids could not do more than cause temporary inconvenience.

12. On the whole I feel confident in General Maude's power to hold his own in Mesopotamia. In giving this assurance I am relying on General Maude's proved skill as a leader, the high morale of his troops, the time he has had to make his preparations for defence, the superiority of his communications, and the equipment of his force. For example, in calculating the capacity of the Turkish Communications it has been estimated that for a force of the size named they would not be able to transport more than 1,400 rounds per field gun. General Maude will have in Mesopotamia some 3,600 rounds per field gun, between 2,400 and 4,000 for each heavy gun and howitzer according to their nature, and arrangements have been made to keep up his supply. Further, I do not think it at all probable that the Turks could bring up, or supply with ammunition, as many as the 900 machine-guns which General Maude has. I must, however, remind the War Cabinet that the possibility of keeping him up to strength both in men and munitions, a condition of his success, depends upon whether the necessary shipping is forthcoming, and in this connection I may say

that

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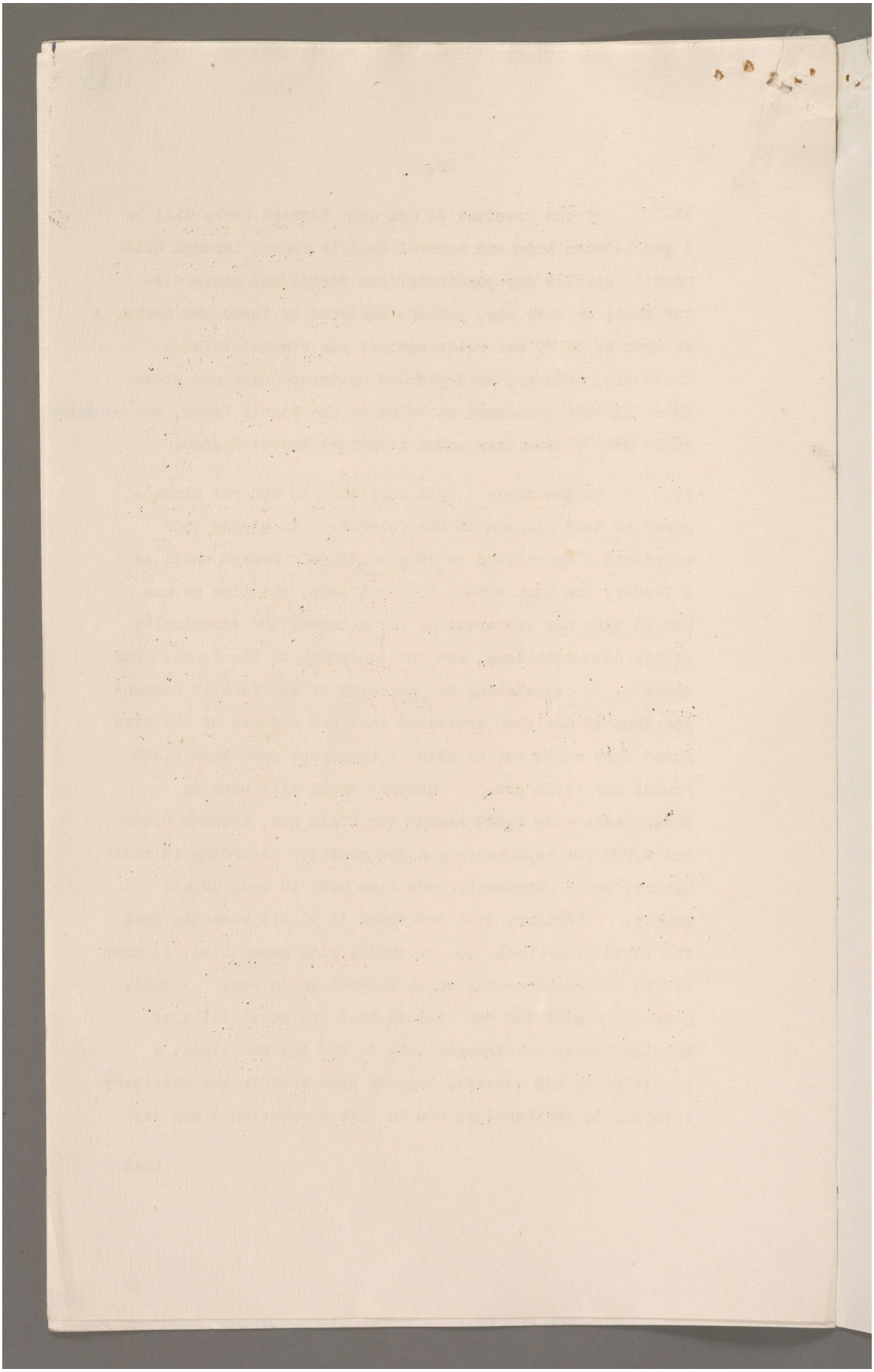

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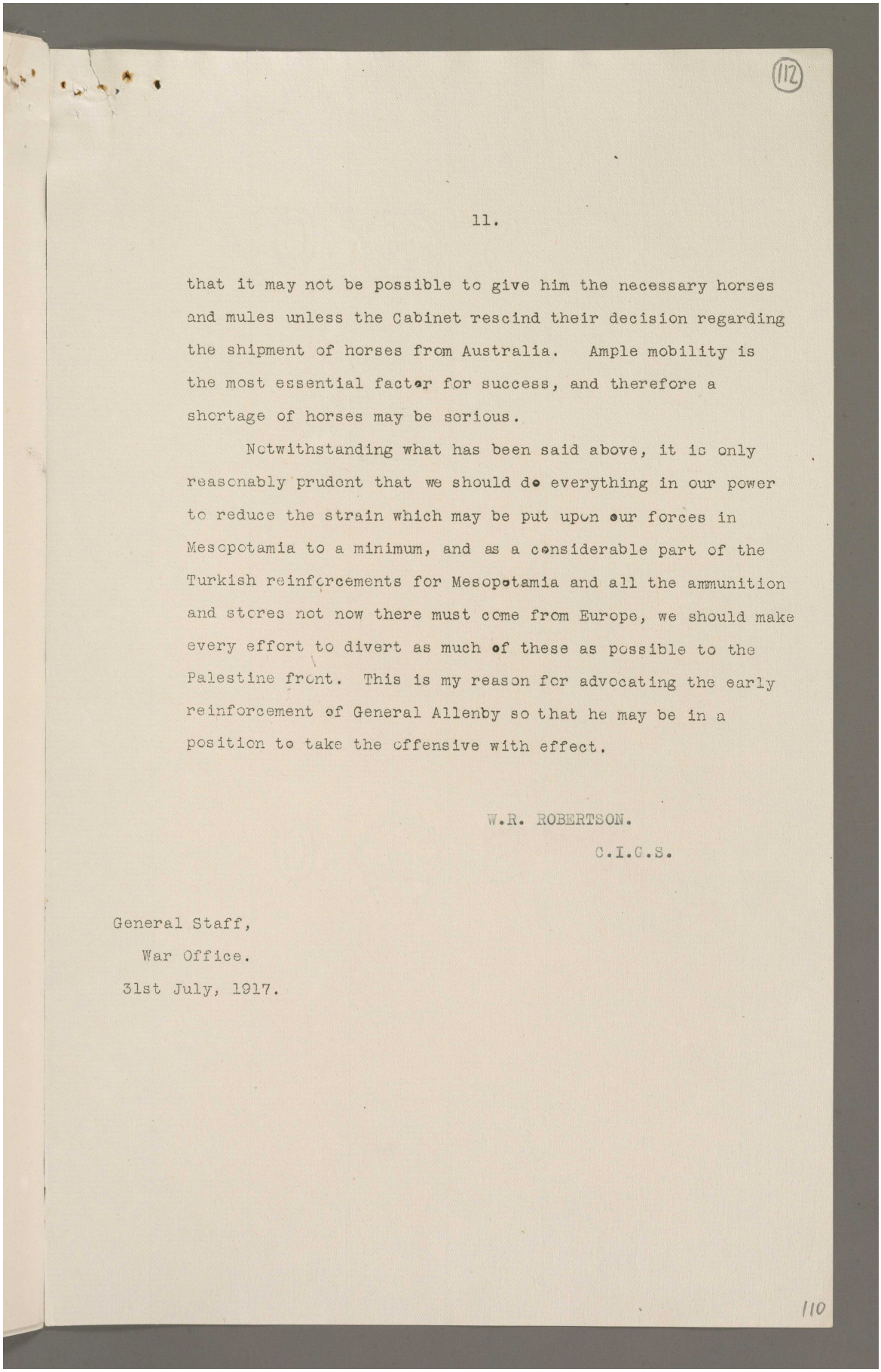

(112)

that it may not be possible to give him the necessary horses and mules unless the Cabinet rescind their decision regarding the shipment of horses from Australia. Ample mobility is the most essential factor for success, and therefore a shortage of horses may be serious.

Notwithstanding what has been said above, it is only reasonably prudent that we should do everything in our power to reduce the strain which may be put upon our forces in Mesopotamia to a minimum, and as a considerable part of the Turkish reinforcements for Mesopotamia and all the ammunition and stores not now there must come from Europe, we should make every effort to divert as much of these as possible to the Palestine front. This is my reason for advocating the early reinforcement of General Allenby so that he may be in a position to take the offensive with effect.

W.R. ROBERTSON.
C.I.G.S.

General Staff,
War Office.
31st July, 1917.

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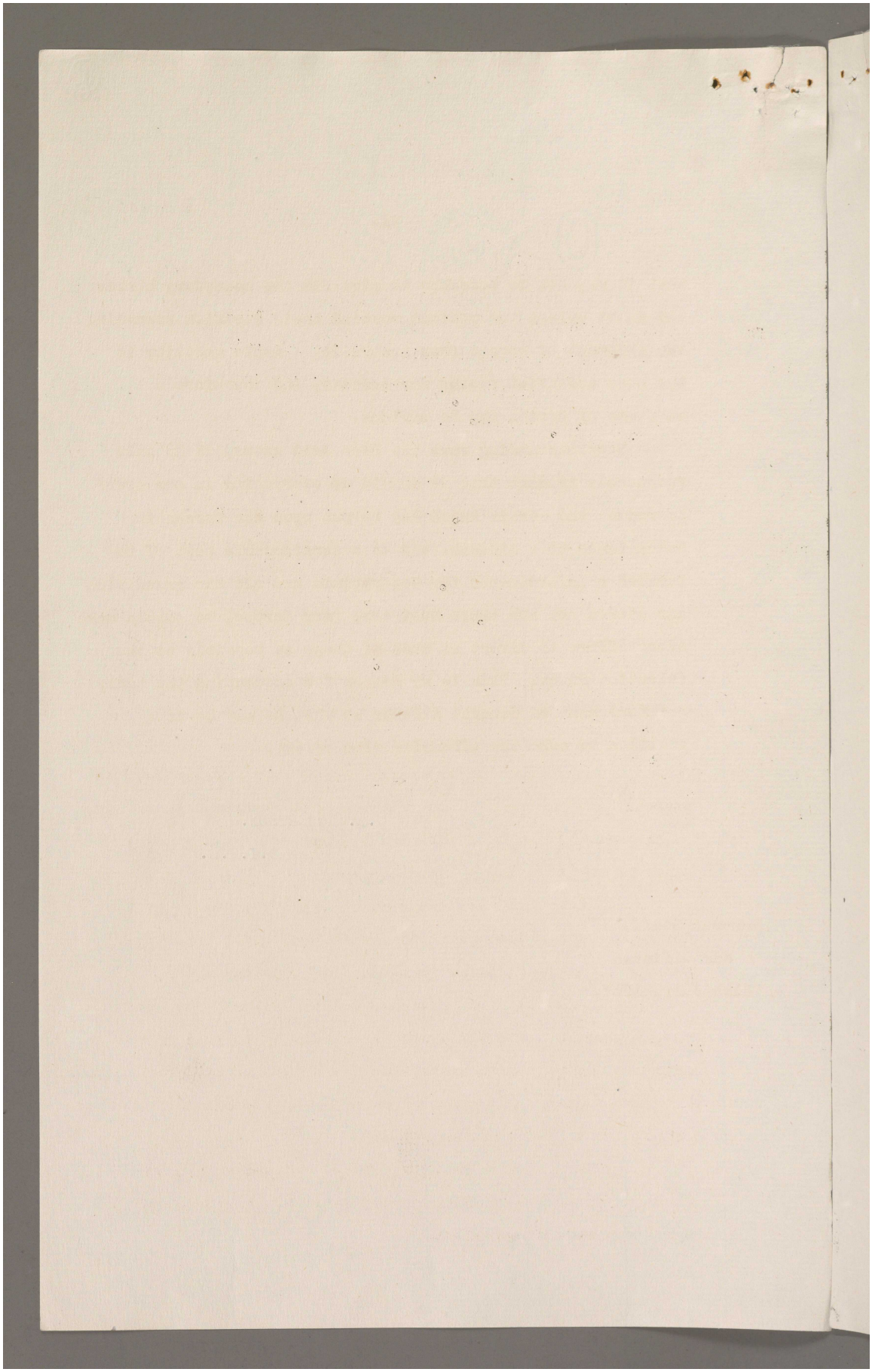

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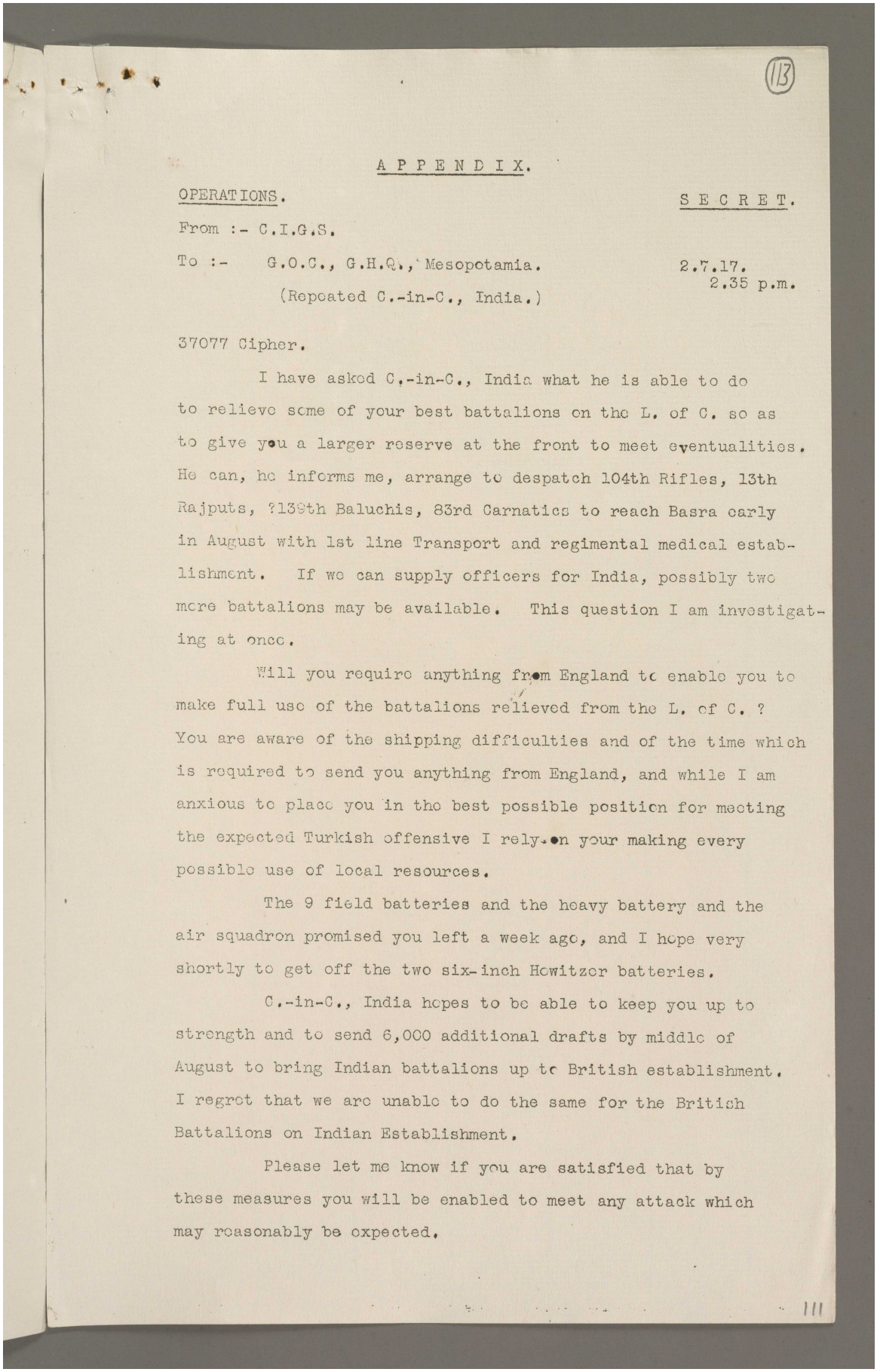

(113)

A P P E N D I X.

OPERATIONS. S E C R E T.

From :- C.I.G.S.

To :- G.O.C., G.H.Q., Mesopotamia. 2.7.17. 2.35 p.m.

(Repeated C.-in-C., India.)

37077 Cipher.

I have asked C.-in-C., India what he is able to do to relieve some of your best battalions on the L. of C. so as to give you a larger reserve at the front to meet eventualities. He can, he informs me, arrange to despatch 104th Rifles, 13th Rajputs, ?139th Baluchis, 83rd Carnatics to reach Basra early in August with 1st line Transport and regimental medical establishment. If we can supply officers for India, possibly two more battalions may be available. This question I am investigating at once.

Will you require anything from England to enable you to make full use of the battalions relieved from the L. of C. ? You are aware of the shipping difficulties and of the time which is required to send you anything from England, and while I am anxious to place you in the best possible position for meeting the expected Turkish offensive I rely on your making every possible use of local resources.

The 9 field batteries and the heavy battery and the air squadron promised you left a week ago, and I hope very shortly to get off the two six-inch Howitzer batteries.

C.-in-C., India hopes to be able to keep you up to strength and to send 6,000 additional drafts by middle of August to bring Indian battalions up to British establishment. I regret that we are unable to do the same for the British Battalions on Indian Establishment.

Please let me know if you are satisfied that by these measures you will be enabled to meet any attack which may reasonably be expected.

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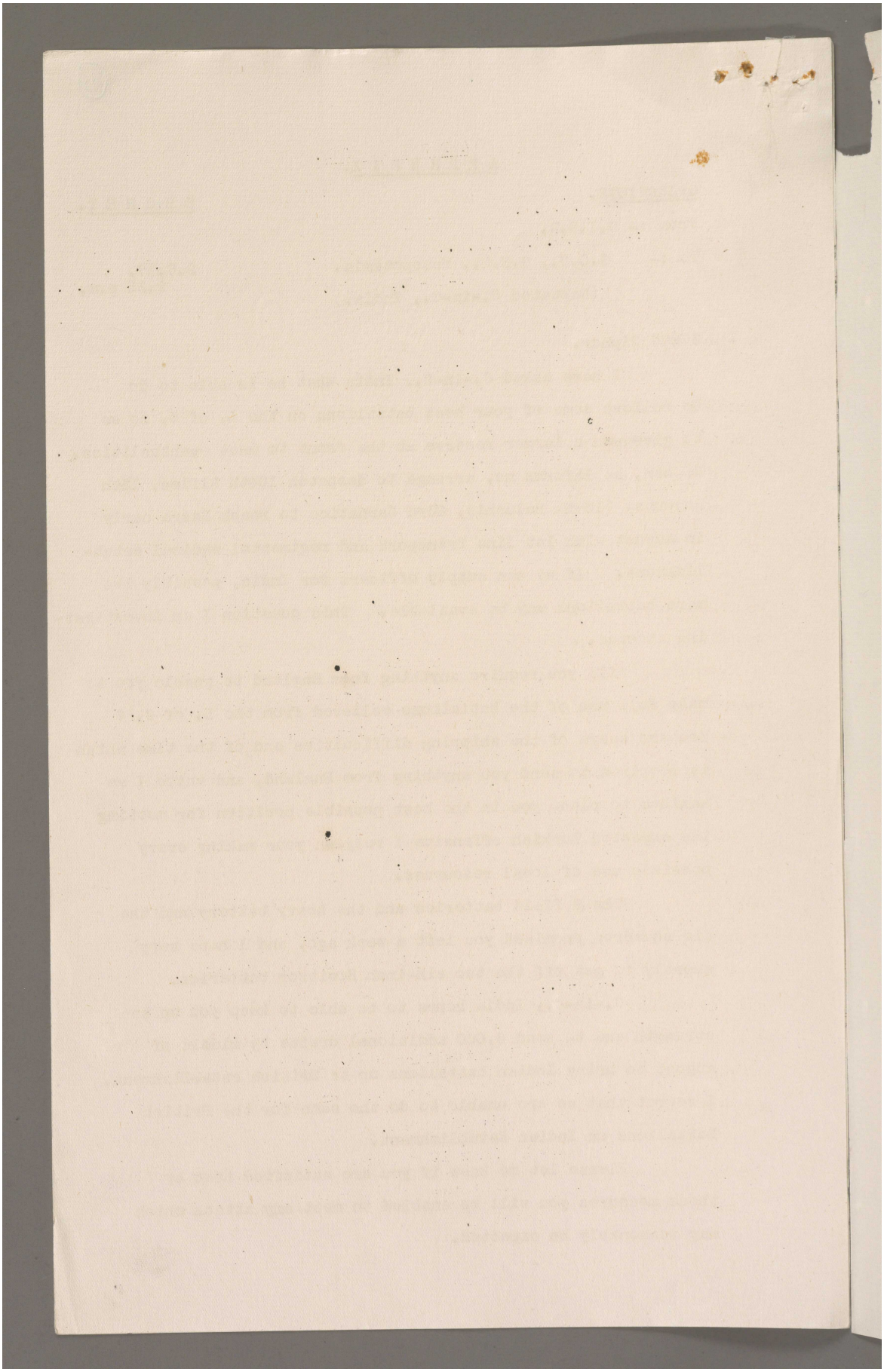

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(114)

SECRET. OPERATIONS.

From :- G.O.C-in-C., Mesopotamia. 4.7.17.

To :- C.I.G.S. 7 p.m.

X.2713. Your 37077.

For some time I have been thinking out my lines of communication defences with result that I have collected 8 unallotted battalions which are moving up here gradually in order to relieve Baghdad garrison and certain posts on Dialha, Tigris and Euphrates and thus enable troops now holding those places to join their divisions. Any guns that could be spared to go into these posts and so free our divisional artillery entirely would be welcome. I shall probably require 3 additional brigade staffs to organize my unallotted battalions and for purposes of command but as to these I will communicate separately from time to time. These additional 6 battalions now promised by India will be of great assistance in furthering my policy, which aims at assembling every fighting man available on this front. I shall require however two of these battalions from India for administrative duties on communications for we are very shorthanded there as already represented; so net gain will be 4 battalions only. Our requirements are always endless but I realize very fully need to economize all round and have for some time past done so, I know too how vital it is that we should not ask for things which are not absolutely necessary at expense of other fronts and I am in consequence developing local resources to best of my ability. The results in this respect are encouraging. If then our outstanding demands, especially as regards Mechanical Transport, are fully met and as casualties occur, ranks of our units here are promptly filled, I feel no anxiety as to our ability to meet successfully considerably superior number of Turks.

In fact it should not be impracticable to clear Tigris of Turkish forces by close of this year if Russians will co-operate vigorously.

Addressed C.I.G.S. repeated G.O.C-in-C., India.

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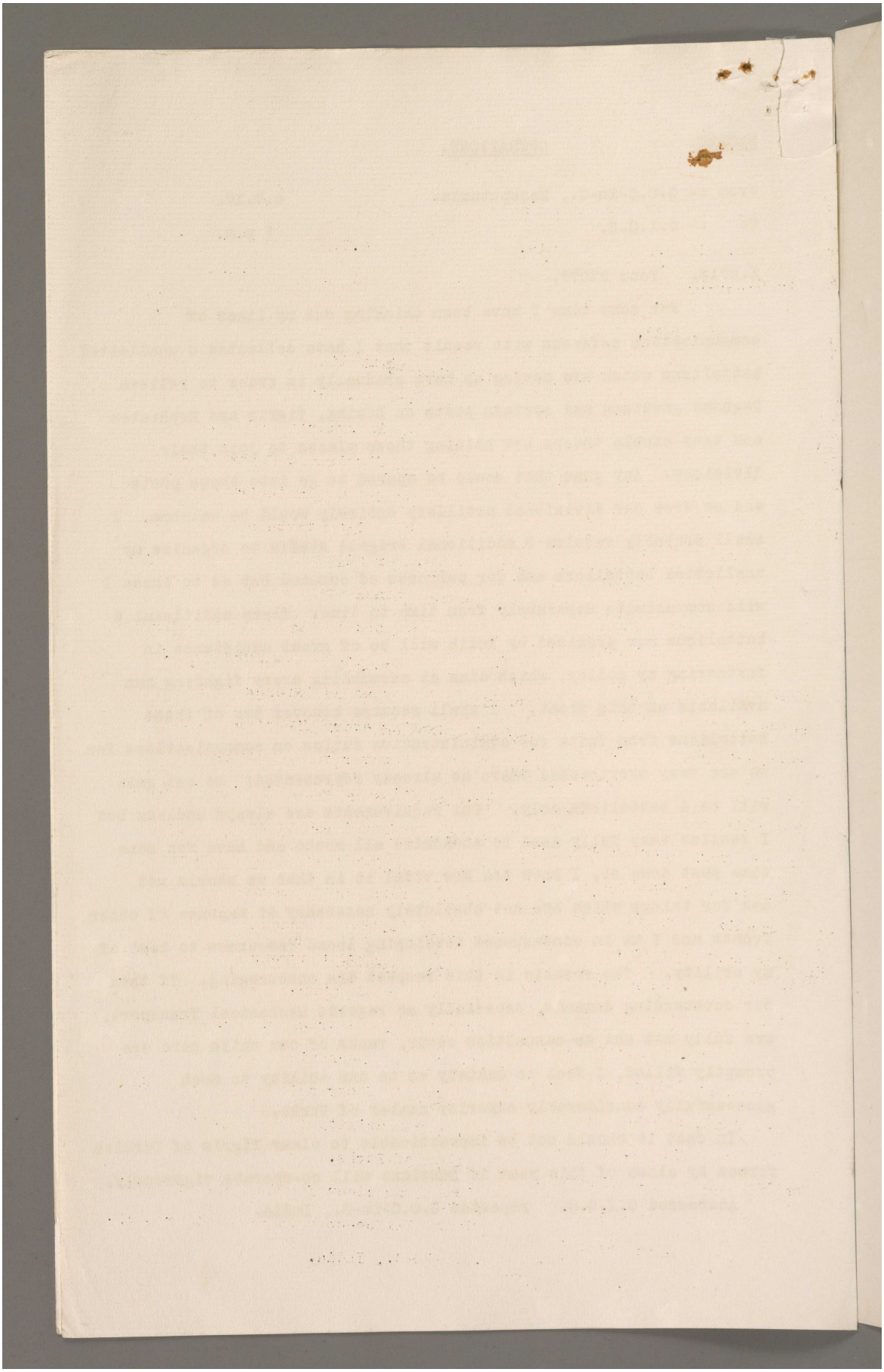

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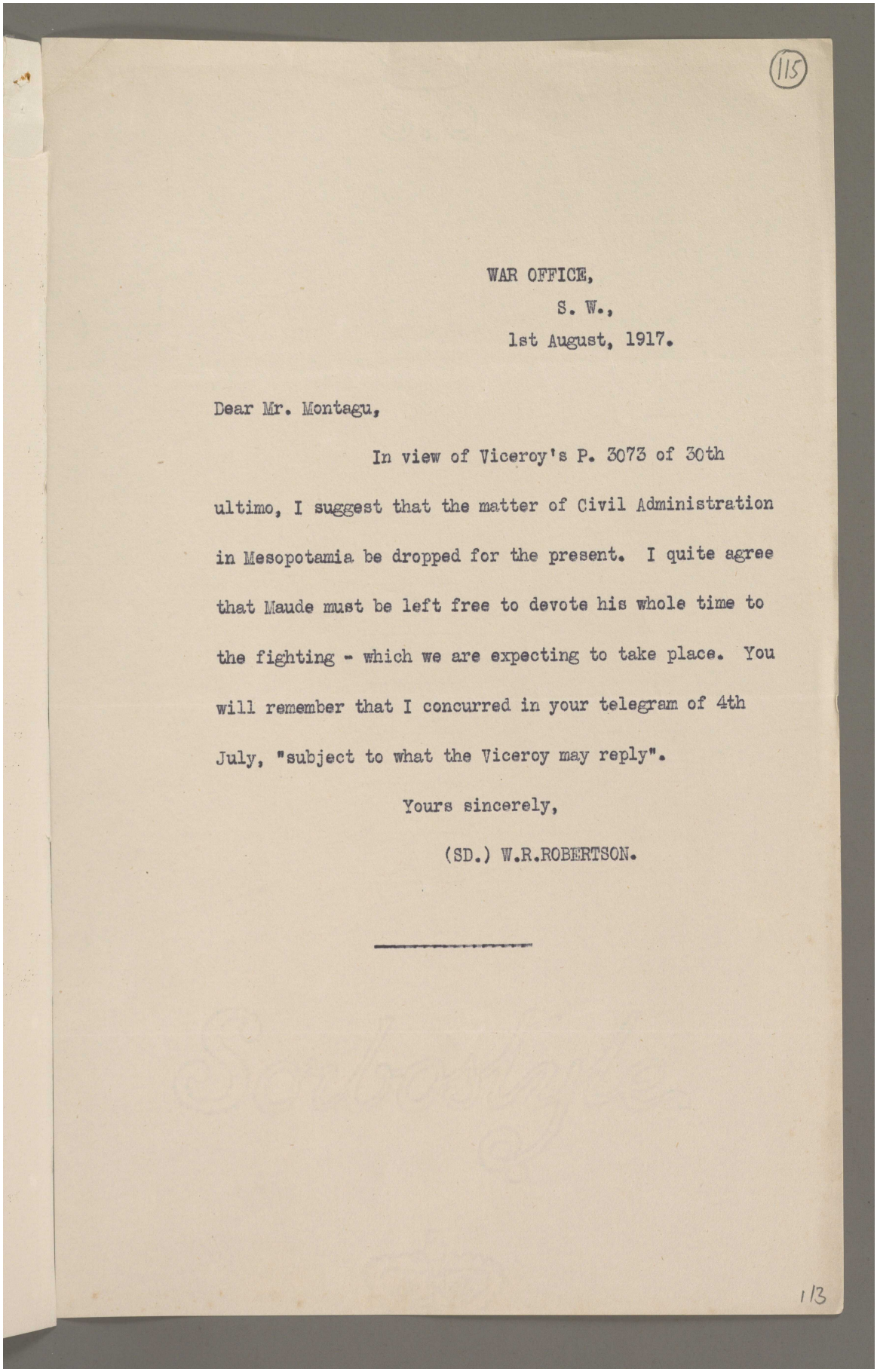

(115)

WAR OFFICE,
S. W.,
1st August, 1917.

Dear Mr. Montagu,

In view of Viceroy's P. 3073 of 30th ultimo, I suggest that the matter of Civil Administration in Mesopotamia be dropped for the present. I quite agree that Maude must be left free to devote his whole time to the fighting - which we are expecting to take place. You will remember that I concurred in your telegram of 4th July, "subject to what the Viceroy may reply".

Yours sincerely,

(SD.) W.R.ROBERTSON.

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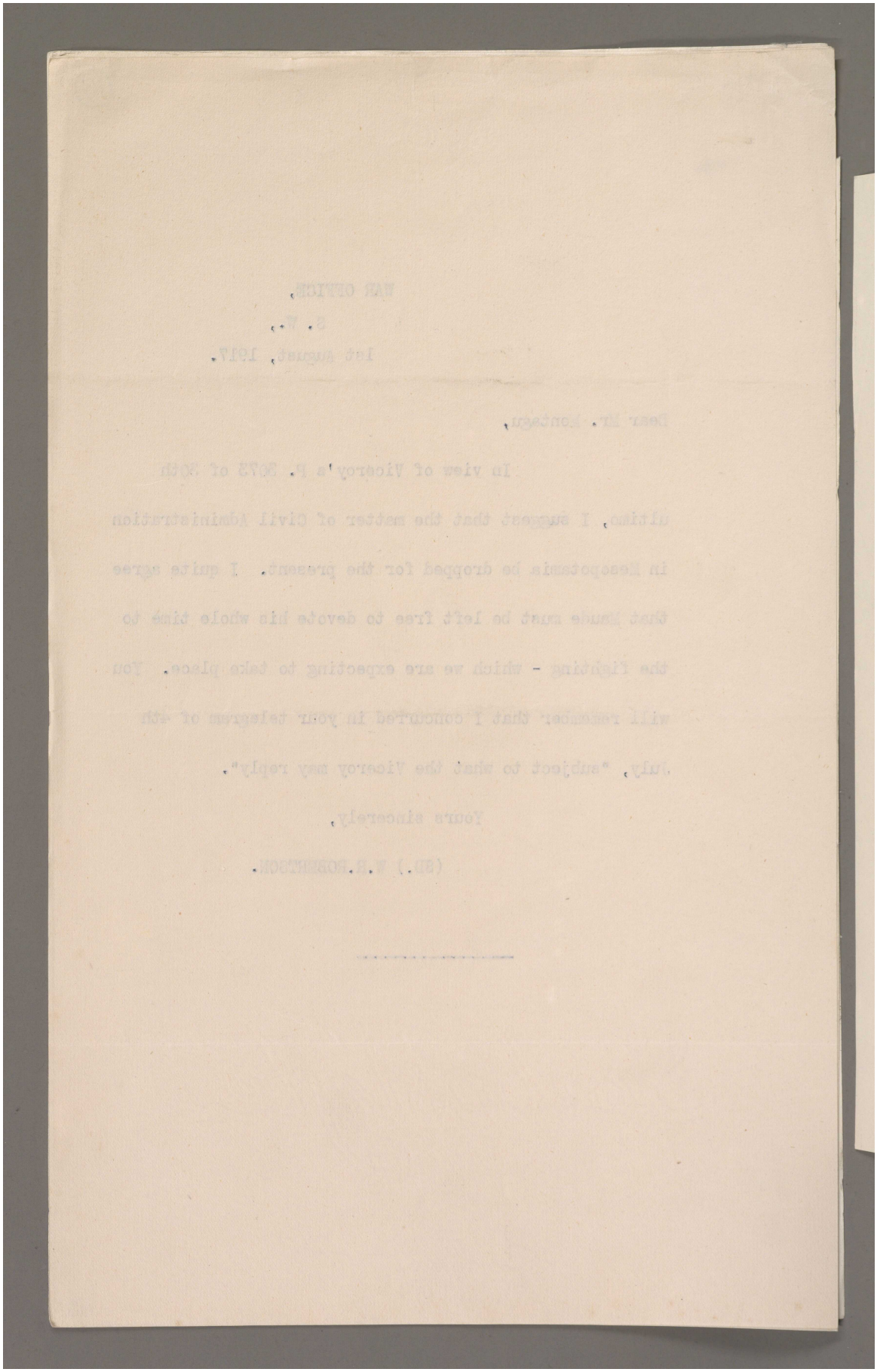

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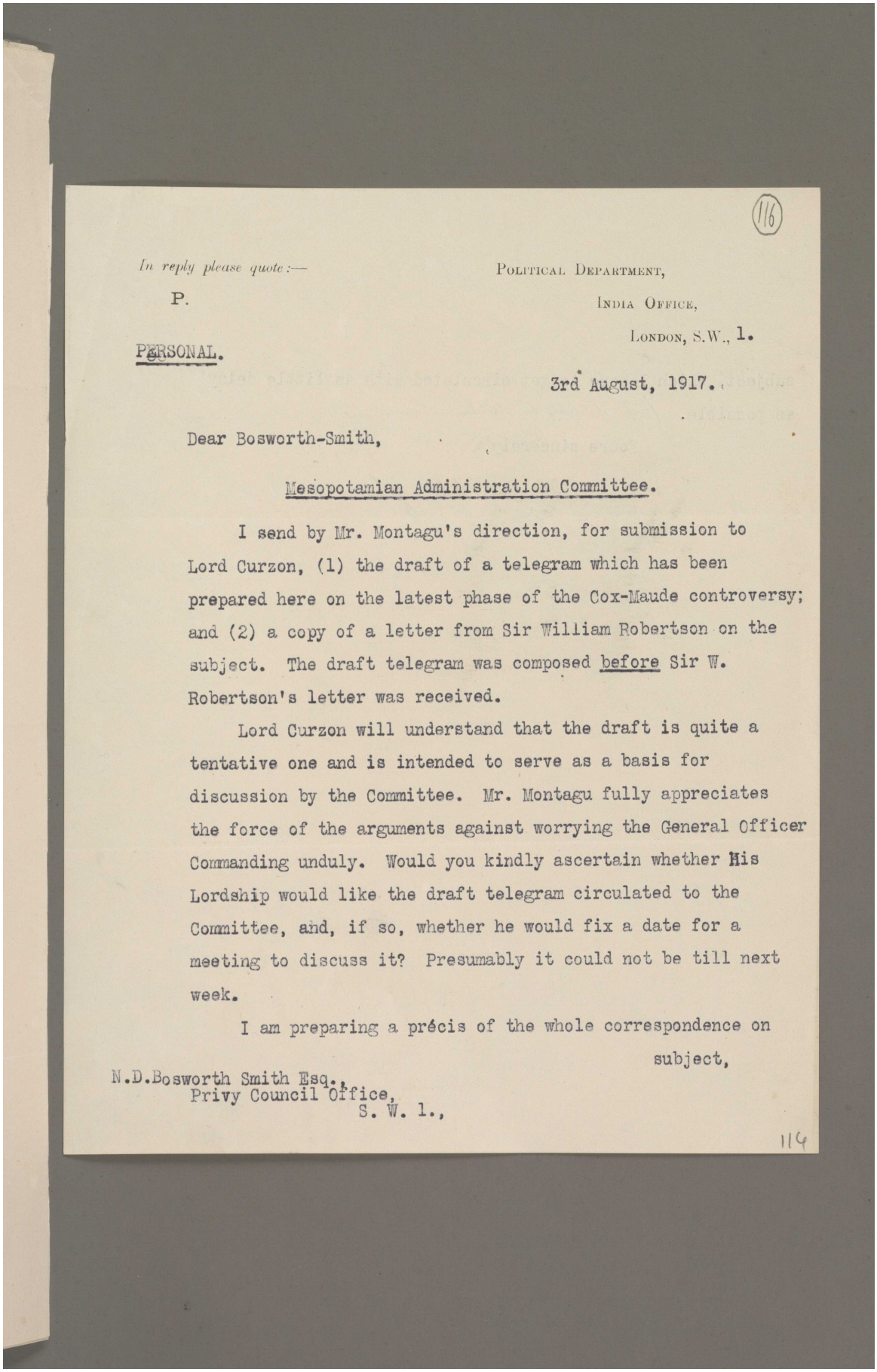

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In reply please quote:—

P.

PERSONAL.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT,
INDIA OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W., 1.

3rd August, 1917.

Dear Bosworth-Smith,

Mesopotamian Administration Committee.

I send by Mr. Montagu's direction, for submission to Lord Curzon, (1) the draft of a telegram which has been prepared here on the latest phase of the Cox-Maude controversy; and (2) a copy of a letter from Sir William Robertson on the subject. The draft telegram was composed before Sir W. Robertson's letter was received.

Lord Curzon will understand that the draft is quite a tentative one and is intended to serve as a basis for discussion by the Committee. Mr. Montagu fully appreciates the force of the arguments against worrying the General Officer Commanding unduly. Would you kindly ascertain whether His Lordship would like the draft telegram circulated to the Committee, and, if so, whether he would fix a date for a meeting to discuss it? Presumably it could not be till next week.

I am preparing a précis of the whole correspondence on subject,

N.D.Bosworth Smith Esq.,
Privy Council Office,
S. W. 1.,

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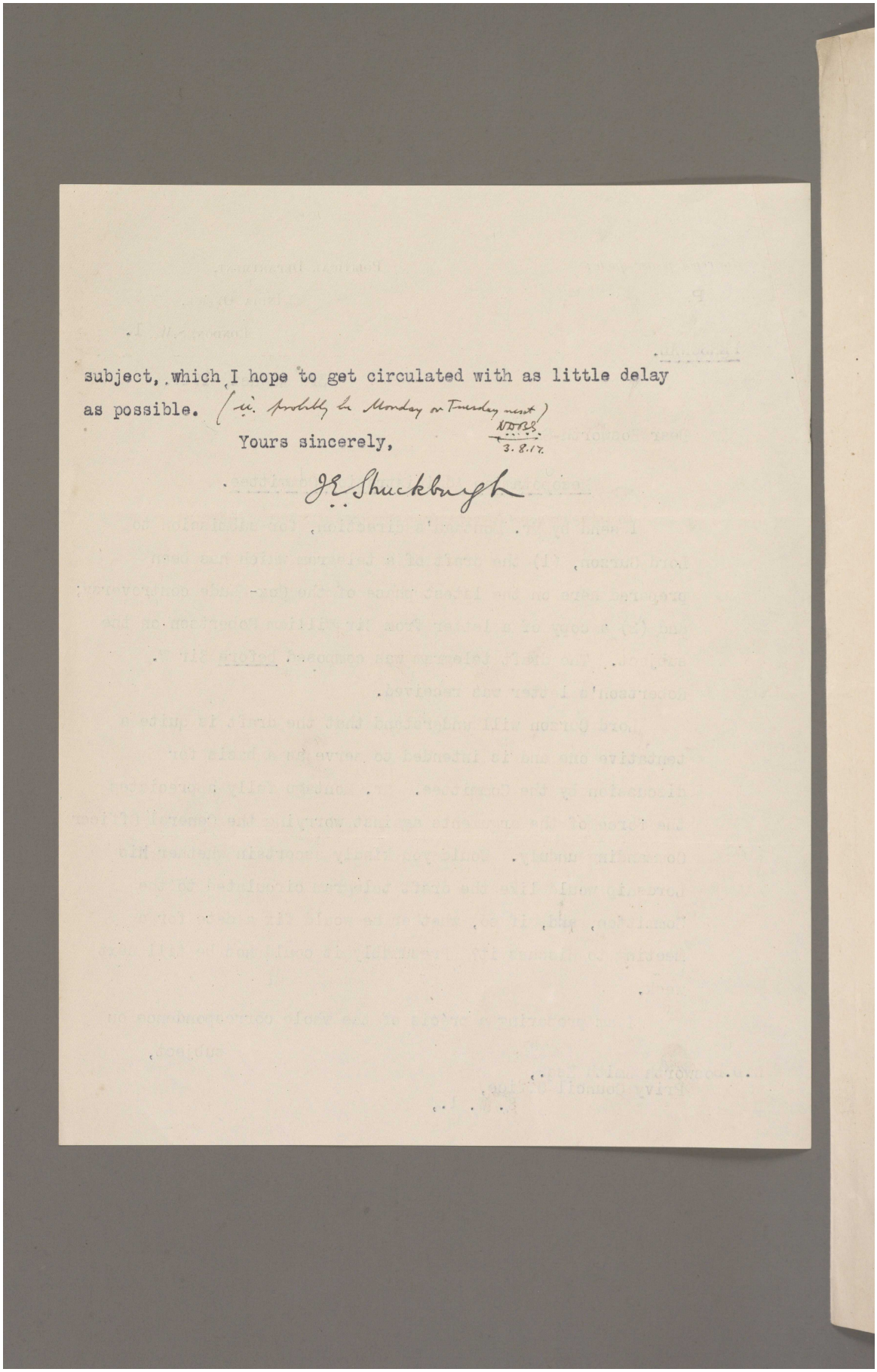

subject, which I hope to get circulated with as little delay as possible. (i.e. probably on Monday or Tuesday next)

Yours sincerely,

3.8.17.

J.E. Shuckburgh

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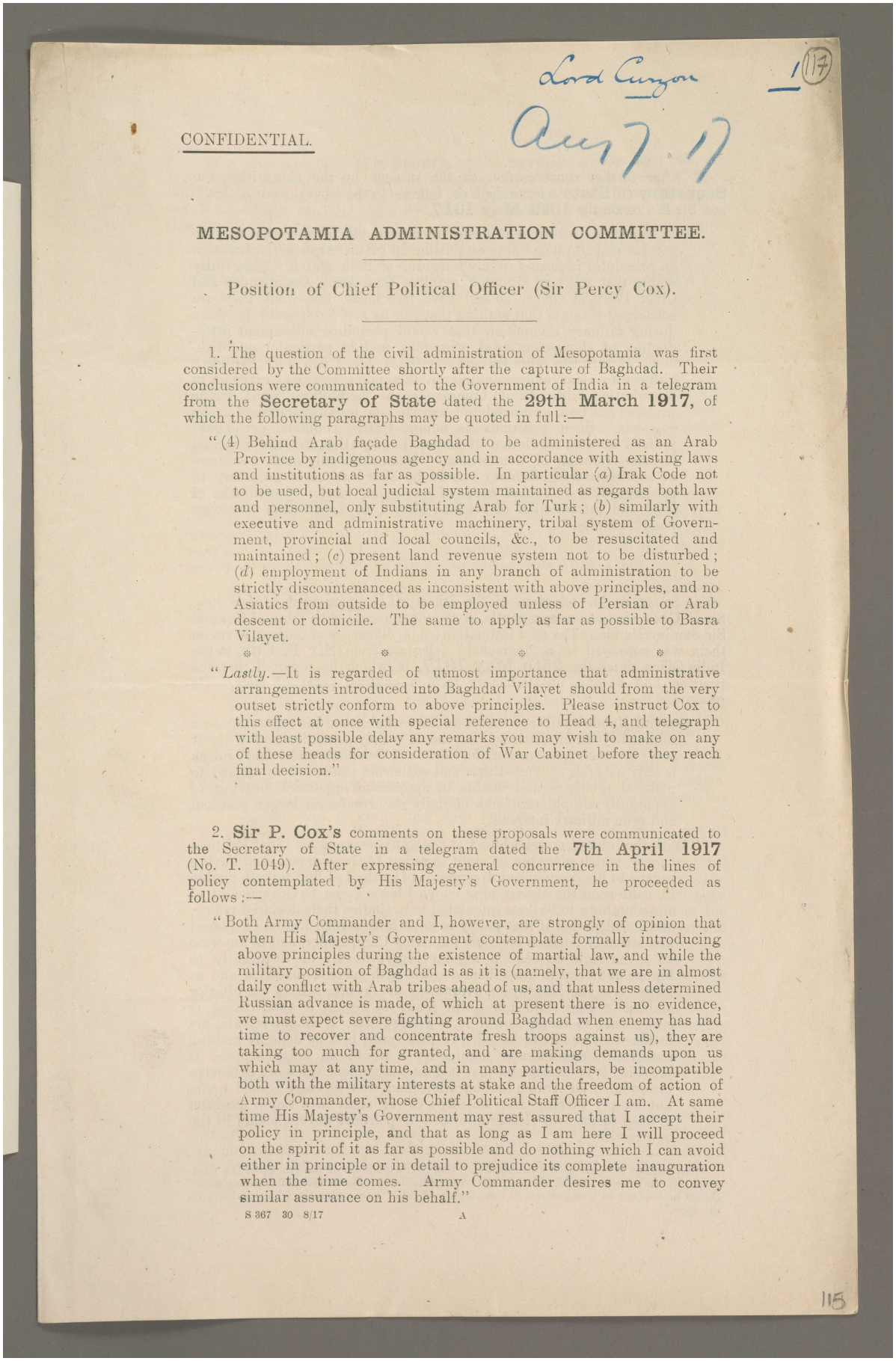

Lord Curzon 1(17)

Aug 7. 17

CONFIDENTIAL.

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Position of Chief Political Officer (Sir Percy Cox).

1. The question of the civil administration of Mesopotamia was first considered by the Committee shortly after the capture of Baghdad. Their conclusions were communicated to the Government of India in a telegram from the **Secretary of State** dated the **29th March 1917**, of which the following paragraphs may be quoted in full :—

> "(4) Behind Arab façade Baghdad to be administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular (*a*) Irak Code not to be used, but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk; (*b*) similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provincial and local councils, &c., to be resuscitated and maintained; (*c*) present land revenue system not to be disturbed; (*d*) employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with above principles, and no Asiatics from outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Basra Vilayet.
>
> * * * *
>
> "*Lastly.*—It is regarded of utmost importance that administrative arrangements introduced into Baghdad Vilayet should from the very outset strictly conform to above principles. Please instruct Cox to this effect at once with special reference to Head 4, and telegraph with least possible delay any remarks you may wish to make on any of these heads for consideration of War Cabinet before they reach final decision."

2. **Sir P. Cox's** comments on these proposals were communicated to the Secretary of State in a telegram dated the **7th April 1917** (No. T. 1049). After expressing general concurrence in the lines of policy contemplated by His Majesty's Government, he proceeded as follows :—

> "Both Army Commander and I, however, are strongly of opinion that when His Majesty's Government contemplate formally introducing above principles during the existence of martial law, and while the military position of Baghdad is as it is (namely, that we are in almost daily conflict with Arab tribes ahead of us, and that unless determined Russian advance is made, of which at present there is no evidence, we must expect severe fighting around Baghdad when enemy has had time to recover and concentrate fresh troops against us), they are taking too much for granted, and are making demands upon us which may at any time, and in many particulars, be incompatible both with the military interests at stake and the freedom of action of Army Commander, whose Chief Political Staff Officer I am. At same time His Majesty's Government may rest assured that I accept their policy in principle, and that as long as I am here I will proceed on the spirit of it as far as possible and do nothing which I can avoid either in principle or in detail to prejudice its complete inauguration when the time comes. Army Commander desires me to convey similar assurance on his behalf."

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3. After further consideration of the subject by the Committee, the **Secretary of State** telegraphed as follows to the Government of India and Sir P. Cox on the **10th May 1917** :—

"His Majesty's Government desire to assure you at once that they do not contemplate immediate establishment of an Arab administration on principles indicated in my telegram of 29th March. They fully realise that military situation requires that Army Commander and Chief Political Officer should have free hand, but what they are concerned about is that nothing that can be avoided should be done during military occupation that would prejudice subsequent introduction of above-mentioned principles, and in particular establishment of separate administrative systems for Basra and Baghdad. Subject to clear understanding on this point, Cox may carry on in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, until whole problem has been examined and reported on by a Commission[1] as he suggests. Such questions as administrative councils, permanent judicial system, regulation of Indian immigration, &c., are reserved for consideration of Commission. Meanwhile only such minimum of administrative efficiency should be aimed at as is necessary to preserve order and meet needs of occupying force. Amendment of laws and introduction of reforms should be kept within narrowest possible limits."

4. So far, as his telegram of the 7th April (*see* paragraph 2) indicates, Sir P. Cox's views were apparently in complete accord with those of General Sir Stanley Maude. The first intimation of a difference of outlook between them was conveyed in a "personal" telegram from **Sir P. Cox** to the India Office, dated the **25th May 1917,** in which he reported that the position had become unsatisfactory from a political point of view. He proceeded :—

"General Maude's military successes have established his reputation as a soldier beyond all criticism, but he is purely a soldier and without any previous experience of the East or of Orientals, and I find him, as is only natural, unsympathetic and somewhat intolerant in regard to political problems and unable to appreciate important bearing of apparently simple problems of daily occurrence on larger political and even military interests.

"With the limited power which I at present possess as his Chief Political Officer, which gives me no right to report to Government, and having regard to his pronounced divergence of outlook, I find myself unable to make good the undertaking which I have given to Government to allow nothing to be done calculated to prejudice their declared policy, and I realise that if that policy is to be safeguarded I must be placed in a stronger position *vis-à-vis* the Army Commander, and at any rate be given right to send a regular report weekly or fortnightly to higher authority to keep them *au fait* with current questions and at large. As His Majesty's Government are aware, I have no ulterior ambitions here, and am quite ready to resign if that course is convenient to them, but if it is desired that I should remain, my hands must be strengthened. If this could best be done by making me High Commissioner nominally, I would no longer oppose it provided it is understood that it does not connote any more extensive introduction of Arab administration than was recently agreed upon, but simply placing His Majesty's Government in a better position to keep themselves closely informed of political developments in the new territory."

[1] This refers to a proposal made by Sir P. Cox in his telegram of the 7th April (*see* paragraph 2), and accepted by His Majesty's Government, that a "Commission of first-rate men" should be sent out to Mesopotamia in the autumn of 1917 "to examine the whole problem on the spot."

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5. A few days later **Mr. Storrs,** of the Egyptian service, who was on temporary deputation to Basra, telegraphed privately to the Foreign Office (3rd June 1917) that "owing to the unsympathetic attitude of the military "to the Chief Political Officer's advice and recommendations, we are in "danger of losing ground with the population, on the whole very friendly "disposed, with grave prejudice to the present and subsequent policy as "enunciated by His Majesty's Government." He added:—"Prestige of "Chief Political Officer is very high throughout the country, and anything "done to strengthen his hand would tend to strengthen our hold on the "sympathies of the best and most powerful elements, without being in any "way incompatible with the necessary supremacy of the military."

6. The Government of India endeavoured to find a solution of the difficulty by inviting Sir P. Cox to proceed on leave to Simla to explain his grounds of complaint, which (as they remarked to the Secretary of State) "appear somewhat vague." This suggestion, however, did not commend itself to Sir P. Cox and was not pressed.

7. The whole question was again carefully considered by the Committee, with the result that, after consultation with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who concurred in the terms of the proposed telegram "subject to what the Viceroy may reply," the **Secretary of State** telegraphed as follows to the Viceroy and Sir P. Cox on the **4th July 1917**:—

> "In pursuance of the policy laid down by them and for their guidance in settling questions which must arise from time to time, His Majesty's Government think it necessary that they should receive regular and frequent information as to the political and economic condition of the territory and the establishment of civil institutions and be able to satisfy themselves as to the progress made in carrying out their policy.
>
> "They propose, therefore, that the Chief Political Officer shall be given the rank of Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia, and shall in that capacity submit reports on these matters at regular intervals by mail and telegraph for their information.
>
> "The Army Council are strongly of opinion that in view of the present military situation, the ultimate responsibility of the General Officer Commanding must remain unimpaired. His Majesty's Government concur, and in giving the Chief Political Officer the status of Civil Commissioner, His Majesty's Government do not propose to set up in the occupied territories a civil administration independent of the military authority. So long as military conditions prevail, the General Officer Commanding, subject to the control of His Majesty's Government, is the ultimate seat of authority. To make this clear, His Majesty's Government propose that the reports of the Civil Commissioner should be submitted to me through the General Officer Commanding, who will forward them with any observations which he may wish to make. It will be clearly understood by both the Civil Commissioner and the General Officer Commanding that His Majesty's Government desire that the opinion and advice of the Civil Commissioner should be given freely and to the best of his judgment in these reports. As by degrees normal conditions are re-established in parts of the territories, and the civil staff is increased and strengthened, it will be natural and desirable that a larger measure of independence should be conceded in civil affairs to Civil Commissioner."

It should be explained that Mr. Chamberlain's telegram contained no reference to Sir P. Cox's "personal" telegram of the 25th May (*see* paragraph 4); the proposals which it conveyed purported to be merely a development of the policy laid down in the Secretary of State's earlier telegrams of the 29th March and the 10th May (*see* paragraphs 1 and 3).

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8. Telegraphing to the War Office on the **9th July 1917** (No. X. 2782) **General Maude** took strong exception to the proposals contained in the Secretary of State's telegram. He adhered to the views expressed in Sir P. Cox's telegram of the 7th April (*see* paragraph 2). He pointed out that the military position at Baghdad was still insecure and that further severe fighting was to be anticipated in the autumn and winter. He expressed no anxiety as to the result "provided my hands are not otherwise tied and we are not swamped by numbers," but went on to make an appeal for a "free hand" in the following terms:—

> "I would ask that I should be given every opportunity to concentrate my whole energies on this issue, and that development of civil administration of Baghdad Vilayet, except as regards such matters as clearly do not clash with military necessity, and which we are already taking in hand, should wait until we are securely established here once for all. We are engaged in a vast war, the issues of which are vital, and it seems to me that if we attempt to combine general development of country with defeat of enemy, we shall be attempting too much, and we shall fail. A commander in the field has great responsibilities, and he must devote every moment available to task before him in order to ensure success.
>
> "If, then, civil considerations which may conflict with military interests are urged upon him repeatedly, though, no doubt, unintentionally, owing, perhaps, to military situation not being viewed exactly in true perspective, and if he is not free to resist them, his anxieties and his already heavy duties will be considerably increased, and his attention will be constantly distracted from what is for time being the main issue. It is one thing for a commander to know instinctively, as he should do, when a project will prejudice his military plans; it is another matter for him amid stress of war to have to justify his opinion. For instance, should proposals which would hamper General Officer Commanding's plans be propounded, General Officer Commanding would then, in forwarding them, have to record for you reasons for differing, and in order to do so intelligently at this distance from England, much time and labour would be necessary, possibly at a time of great pressure, and even then his points might not be made quite clear to those unfamiliar with existing local military considerations. For these reasons I would submit very earnestly for consideration that we should first concentrate our whole energies on winning the war, and that future of this country which has already waited development so long will not be seriously prejudiced even if certain steps on road of progress have to wait another year.
>
> "I can assure His Majesty's Government that I realise that it is not only my duty, but that it is my wish, to see that development of civil administration of this country shall be pushed forward as far as can conveniently be done without conflicting with military necessities. The many directions in which such development is taking place already are best proof in support of this statement."

9. **Sir P. Cox's** comments on the proposals of His Majesty's Government were communicated in a telegram dated the **25th July 1917**, (No. 2768). He explained that the views expressed in his telegram of the 7th April (*see* paragraph 2) were based on the experience of the preceding two and a half years, but that the events of the past three months had caused him to modify his opinion to some extent for the following reasons:—

> "Granted that we are both imbued with the fullest desire to make good assurances which we have given to Government, yet in practice many difficult questions arise in regard to which there is room for considerable divergence of view as to what is or is not in the interests of Government or in harmony with spirit of their policy, and even in our own particular sphere neither Army Commander nor I can lay

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claim to infallibility. I am consequently brought to opinion that it would be more satisfactory for His Majesty's Government, as well as fairer to each of us, that the former should receive regular and frequent reports which will both keep them posted in regard to progress of their policy, and will incidentally enable them to satisfy themselves that a just balance is being maintained between military and political or civil interests. In short, as regards question of reports I am entirely in favour of it, more especially in view of probability that military situation during the coming winter will preclude assembly of the proposed Commission[1] as early as was expected.

Sir P. Cox's telegram ended as follows :—

"My sole concern is that the civil and political interests of Government shall be adequately safeguarded. In regard to these interests whatever may be my nominal title or status *vis-à-vis* the Army Commander, and notwithstanding his supreme authority, the mere fact of my having been here throughout the period makes it impossible that I can be divested completely of personal responsibility whether present or ultimate."

10. The **Government of India** telegraphed on the **30th July 1917** :—

"We trust His Majesty's Government realise that these difficulties have arisen between Maude and Cox simply through Cox's desire to carry out loyally and faithfully policy indicated by His Majesty's Government. Events have proved immediate carrying out of that policy is impossible : and we have no hesitation in regarding Maude's arguments as unanswerable. Until military position in Baghdad Vilayet is completely secured, General Officer Commanding must obviously concentrate on military problems untrammelled by controversial political or civil considerations. We feel sure Maude appreciates enormous value of Cox's advice on civil and political questions as much as we do, and will be guided by it so far as military position admits. But we trust that His Majesty's Government will agree to drop the proposals put forward in your telegram under reply, so as to leave Maude free from all extraneous preoccupations until situation clears."

11. On the 1st August 1917 **Sir William Robertson** wrote to Mr. Montagu suggesting that, in view of the Government of India's telegram of the 30th July (*see* paragraph 10) "the matter of civil administration in Mesopotamia be dropped for the present." He agreed that "General Maude must be left free to devote his whole time to the fighting "which we are expecting to take place."

12. The actual points at issue between General Maude and Sir P. Cox are not altogether easy to define, but there seems no reason to conclude that their views are entirely irreconcilable. General Maude has not taken formal exception to the proposed change of Sir P. Cox's designation to "Civil Commissioner"; nor has he raised objections in principle to Sir P. Cox reporting direct to His Majesty's Government. His opposition to the arrangements proposed is based on the fear that "civil considerations which may conflict with military interests" will be constantly urged upon him, thereby distracting his attention from the main military problem; and that his labours will be greatly increased by the recurring necessity of formulating his views on the civil authorities' proposals in such a way as to render his attitude fully intelligible to His

[1] *See* footnote to paragraph 3.

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Majesty's Government. This difficulty ought to be capable of adjustment if it is made perfectly clear both to General Maude and Sir P. Cox that what His Majesty's Government require from the latter is *information*, not controversial proposals or elaborate administrative schemes. For the present Sir P. Cox's reports might be transmitted direct to the Secretary of State without putting the General to the trouble of acting as a channel of communication; and an undertaking might be given that, until the military situation is clearer, these reports will ordinarily be regarded by His Majesty's Government as sent to them for information only, and not as a basis for administrative proposals. If an agreement could be reached on these lines, the main object of His Majesty's Government, viz., to obtain further information, would be achieved, without adding appreciably to the labours of the General Officer Commanding until such time as the period of intense military pre-occupation is over.

The view expressed in the Viceroy's telegram of the 30th July (*see* paragraph 10) that the difficulties that have arisen are due solely to Sir P. Cox's desire—about which there can be no question—to carry out loyally the policy of His Majesty's Government will not bear examination. It is clear from Sir P. Cox's own telegrams (*see* paragraphs 4 and 9), and from Mr. Storrs's report (*see* paragraph 5), that there are differences of opinion and temperament between him and General Maude which can no longer be disguised.

Political Department,
India Office,
7th August 1917.

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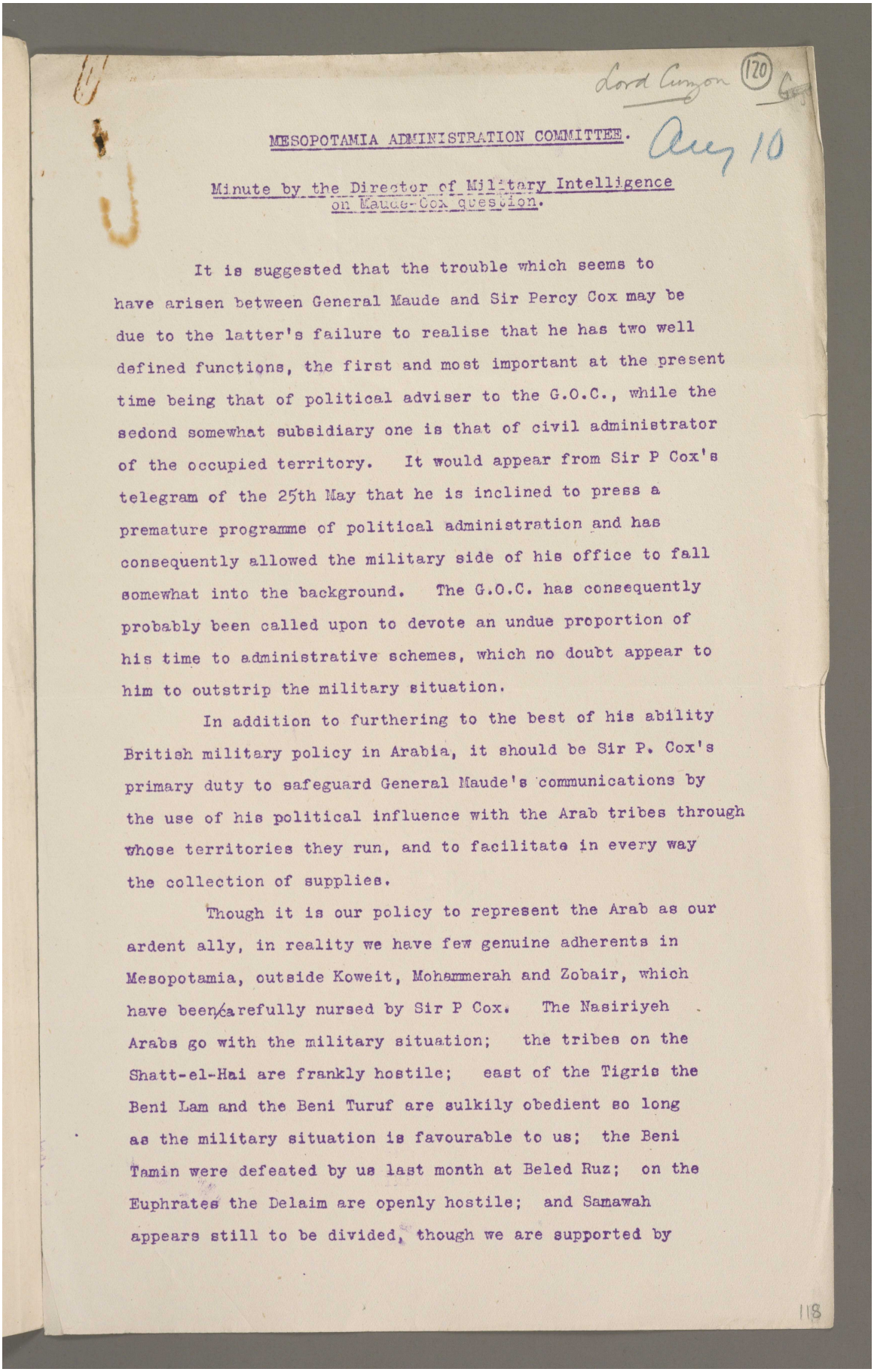

Lord Curzon (120) G

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE. Aug 10

Minute by the Director of Military Intelligence on Maude-Cox question.

It is suggested that the trouble which seems to have arisen between General Maude and Sir Percy Cox may be due to the latter's failure to realise that he has two well defined functions, the first and most important at the present time being that of political adviser to the G.O.C., while the sedond somewhat subsidiary one is that of civil administrator of the occupied territory. It would appear from Sir P Cox's telegram of the 25th May that he is inclined to press a premature programme of political administration and has consequently allowed the military side of his office to fall somewhat into the background. The G.O.C. has consequently probably been called upon to devote an undue proportion of his time to administrative schemes, which no doubt appear to him to outstrip the military situation.

In addition to furthering to the best of his ability British military policy in Arabia, it should be Sir P. Cox's primary duty to safeguard General Maude's communications by the use of his political influence with the Arab tribes through whose territories they run, and to facilitate in every way the collection of supplies.

Though it is our policy to represent the Arab as our ardent ally, in reality we have few genuine adherents in Mesopotamia, outside Koweit, Mohammerah and Zobair, which have been carefully nursed by Sir P Cox. The Nasiriyeh Arabs go with the military situation; the tribes on the Shatt-el-Hai are frankly hostile; east of the Tigris the Beni Lam and the Beni Turuf are sulkily obedient so long as the military situation is favourable to us; the Beni Tamin were defeated by us last month at Beled Ruz; on the Euphrates the Delaim are openly hostile; and Samawah appears still to be divided, though we are supported by

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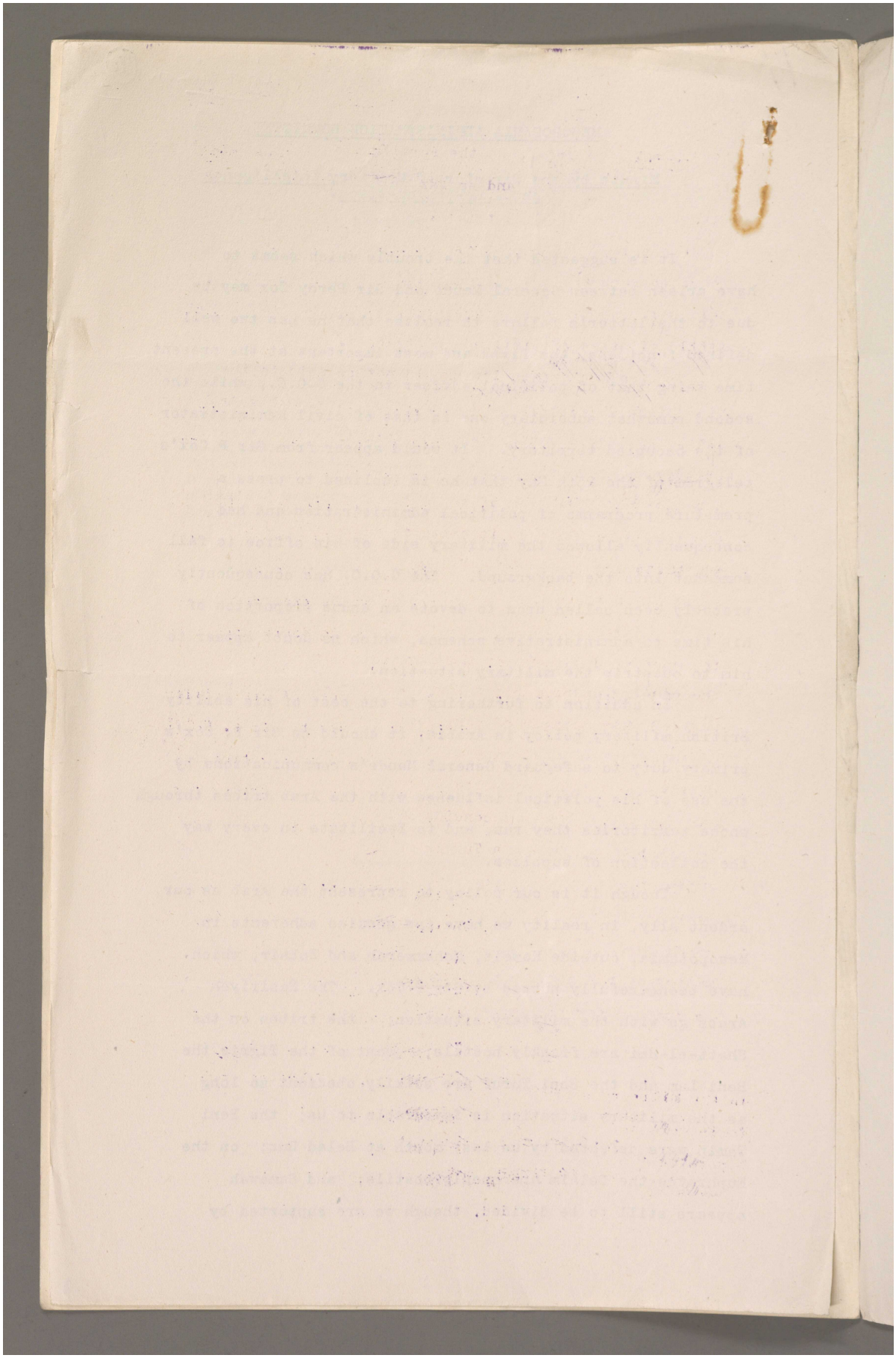

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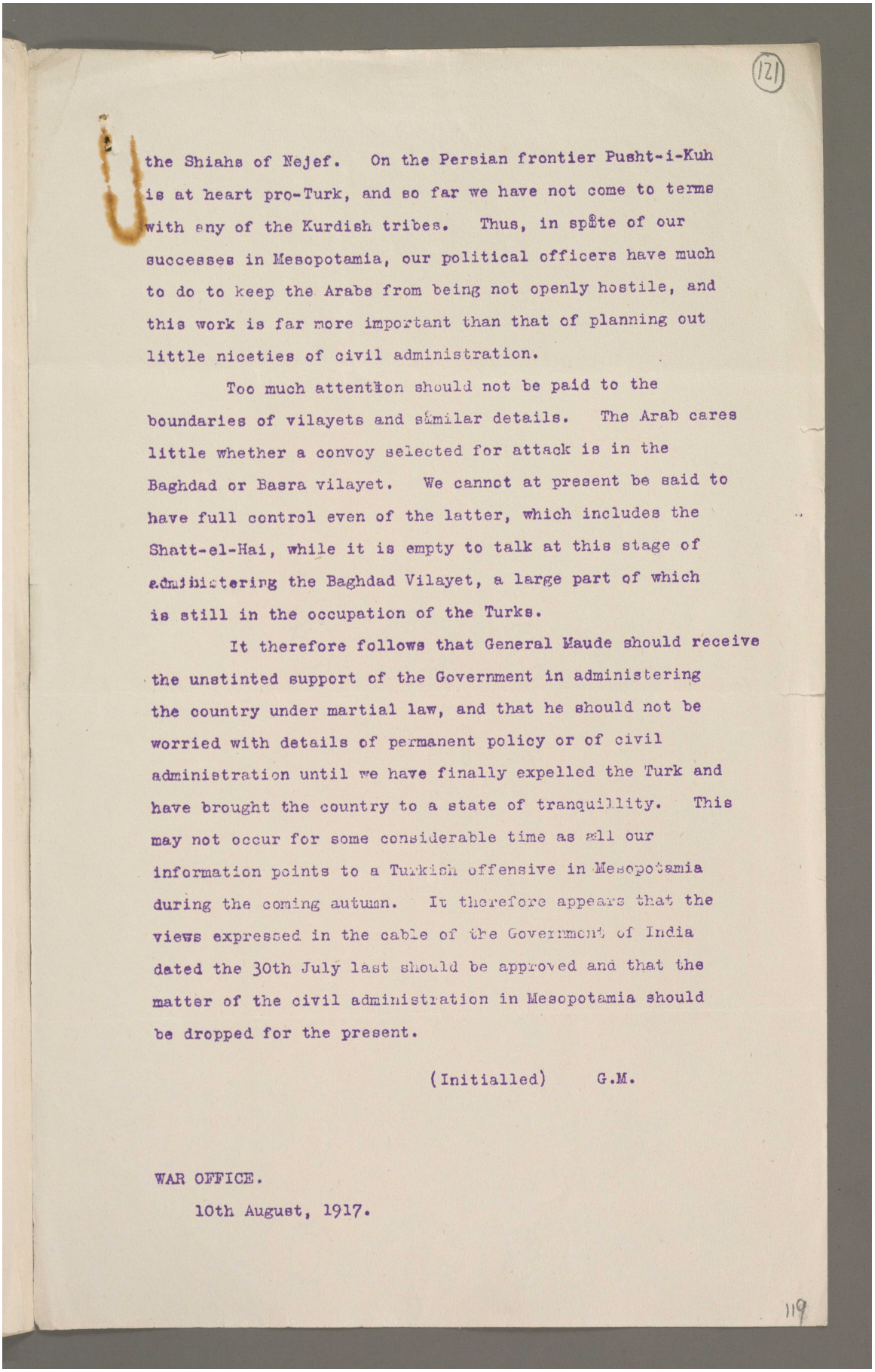

(121)

the Shiahs of Nejef. On the Persian frontier Pusht-i-Kuh is at heart pro-Turk, and so far we have not come to terms with any of the Kurdish tribes. Thus, in spite of our successes in Mesopotamia, our political officers have much to do to keep the Arabs from being not openly hostile, and this work is far more important than that of planning out little niceties of civil administration.

Too much attention should not be paid to the boundaries of vilayets and similar details. The Arab cares little whether a convoy selected for attack is in the Baghdad or Basra vilayet. We cannot at present be said to have full control even of the latter, which includes the Shatt-el-Hai, while it is empty to talk at this stage of administering the Baghdad Vilayet, a large part of which is still in the occupation of the Turks.

It therefore follows that General Maude should receive the unstinted support of the Government in administering the country under martial law, and that he should not be worried with details of permanent policy or of civil administration until we have finally expelled the Turk and have brought the country to a state of tranquillity. This may not occur for some considerable time as all our information points to a Turkish offensive in Mesopotamia during the coming autumn. It therefore appears that the views expressed in the cable of the Government of India dated the 30th July last should be approved and that the matter of the civil administration in Mesopotamia should be dropped for the present.

(Initialled) G.M.

WAR OFFICE.
10th August, 1917.

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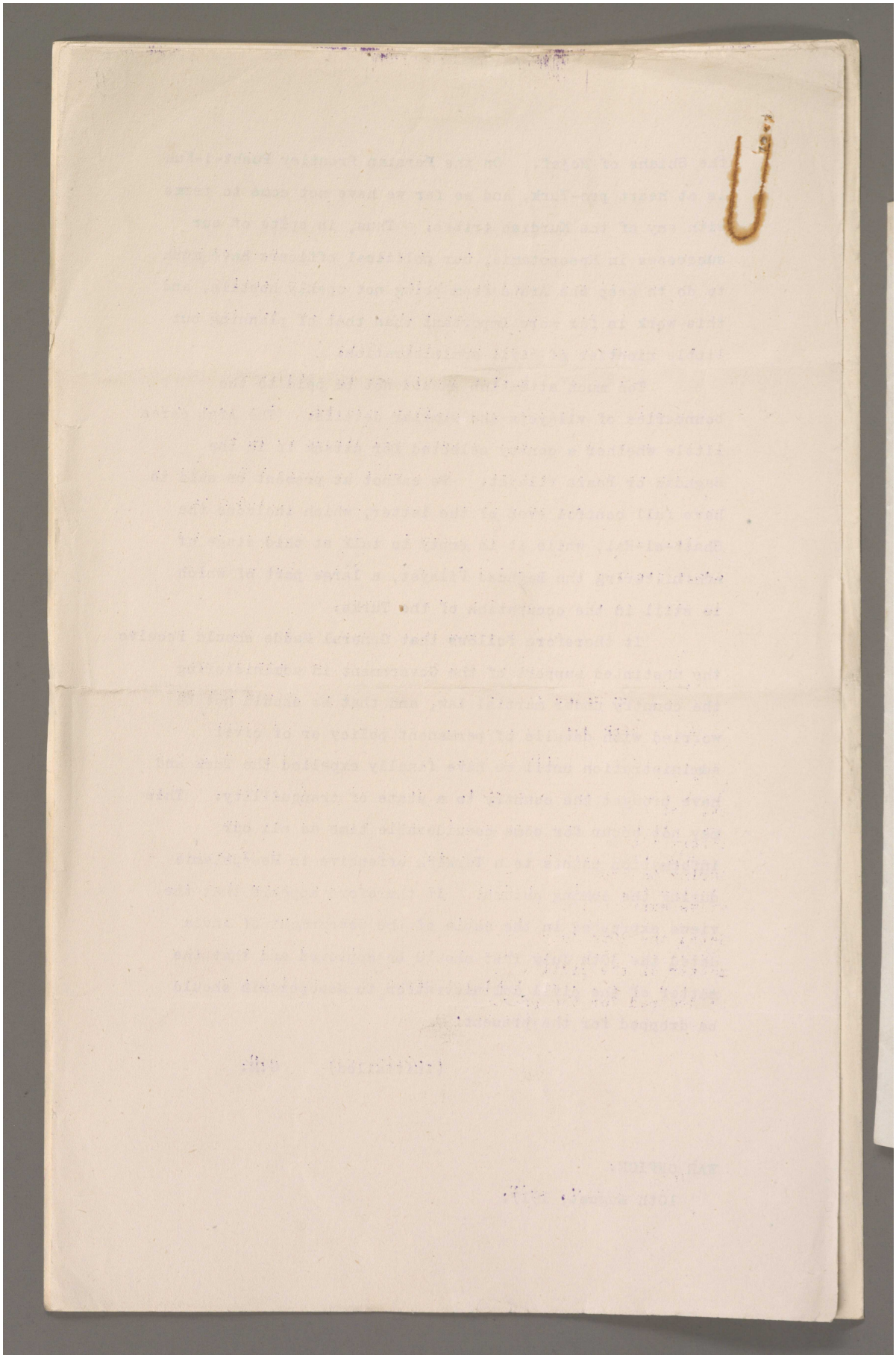

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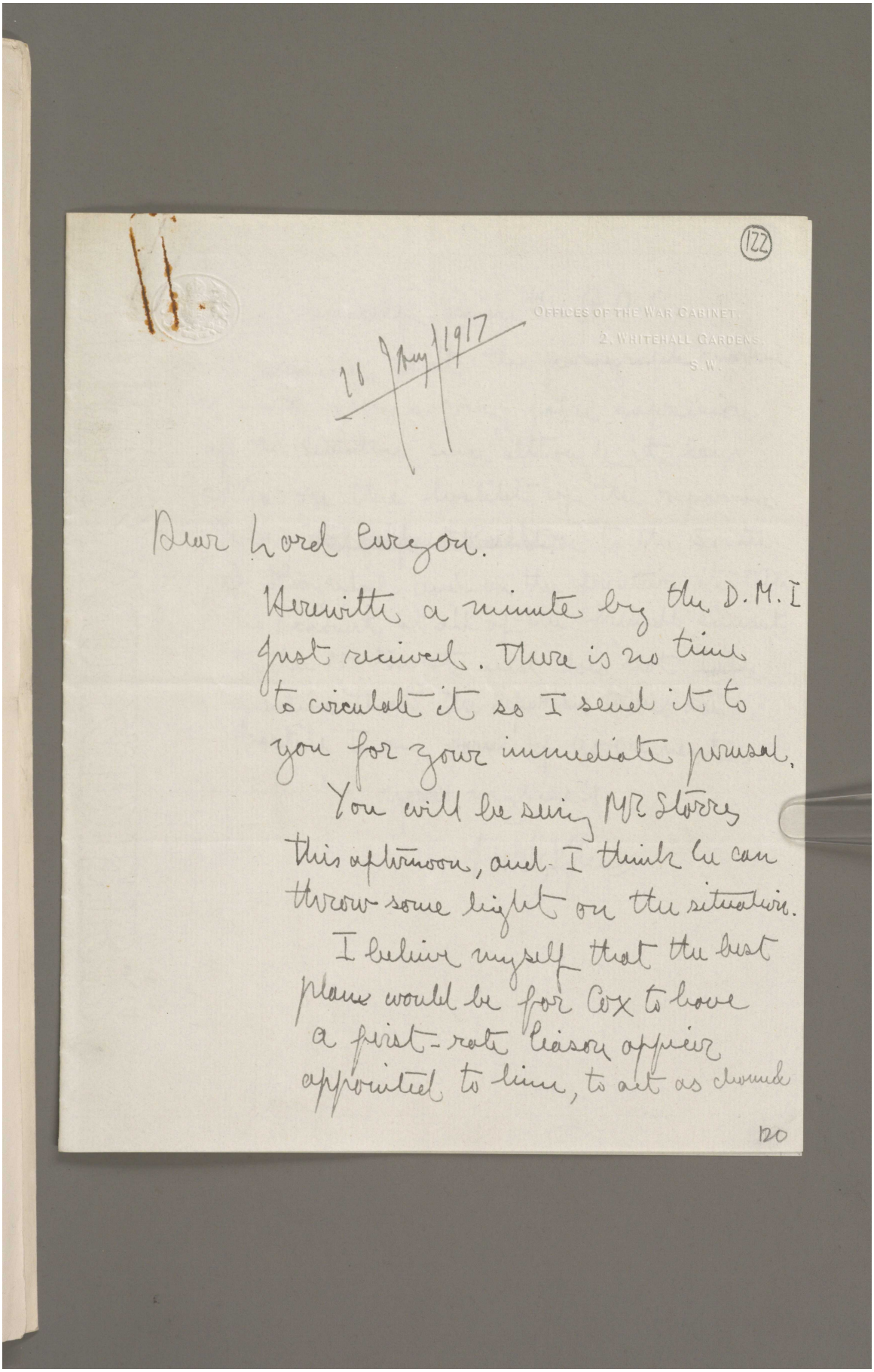

(122)

OFFICES OF THE WAR CABINET,
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS,
S.W.

11 May 1917

Dear Lord Curzon.

Herewith a minute by the D.M.I just received. There is no time to circulate it so I send it to you for your immediate perusal.

You will be seeing Mr Storrs this afternoon, and I think he can throw some light on the situation.

I believe myself that the best plan would be for Cox to have a first-rate liaison officer appointed to him, to act as channel

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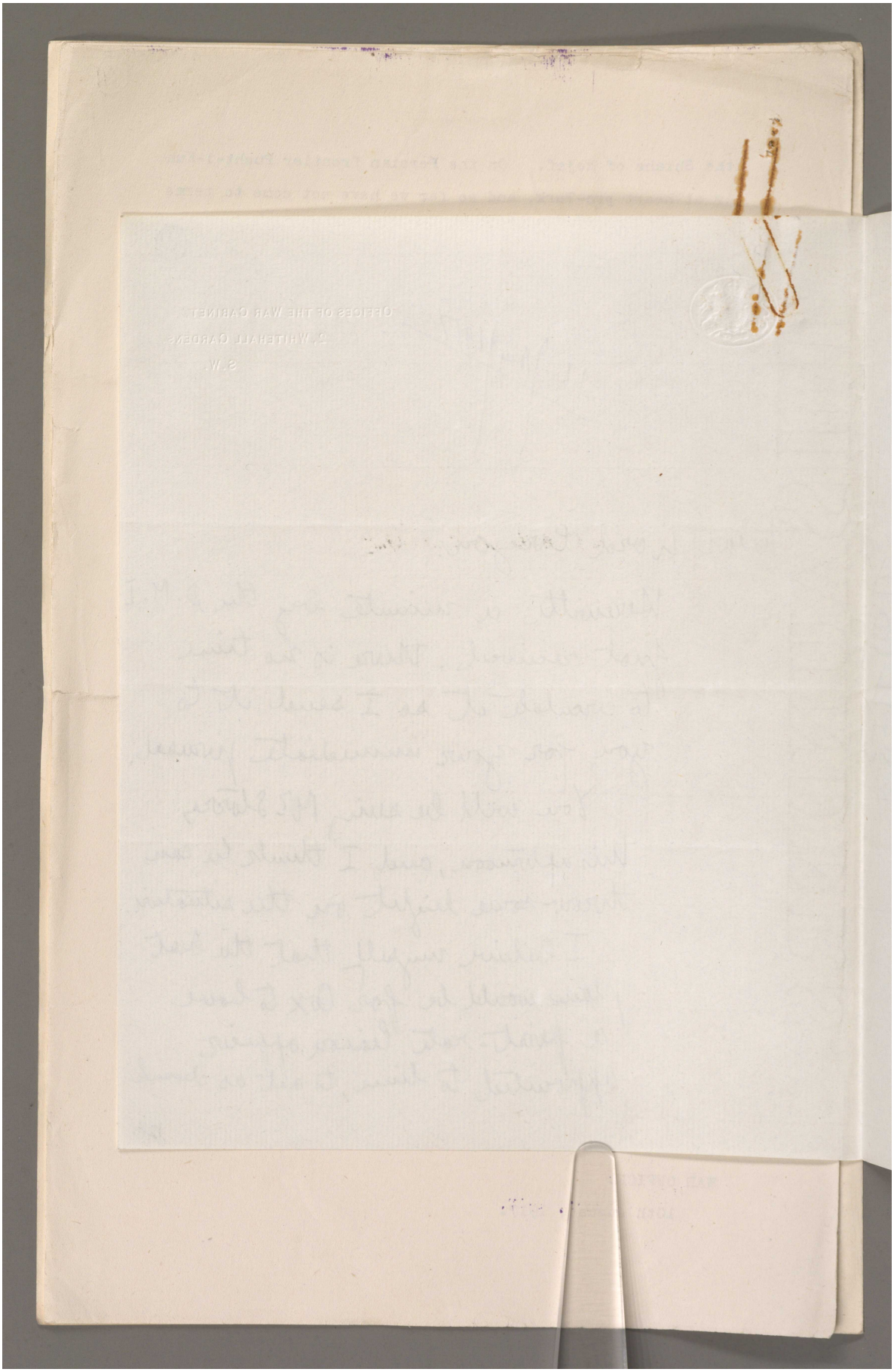

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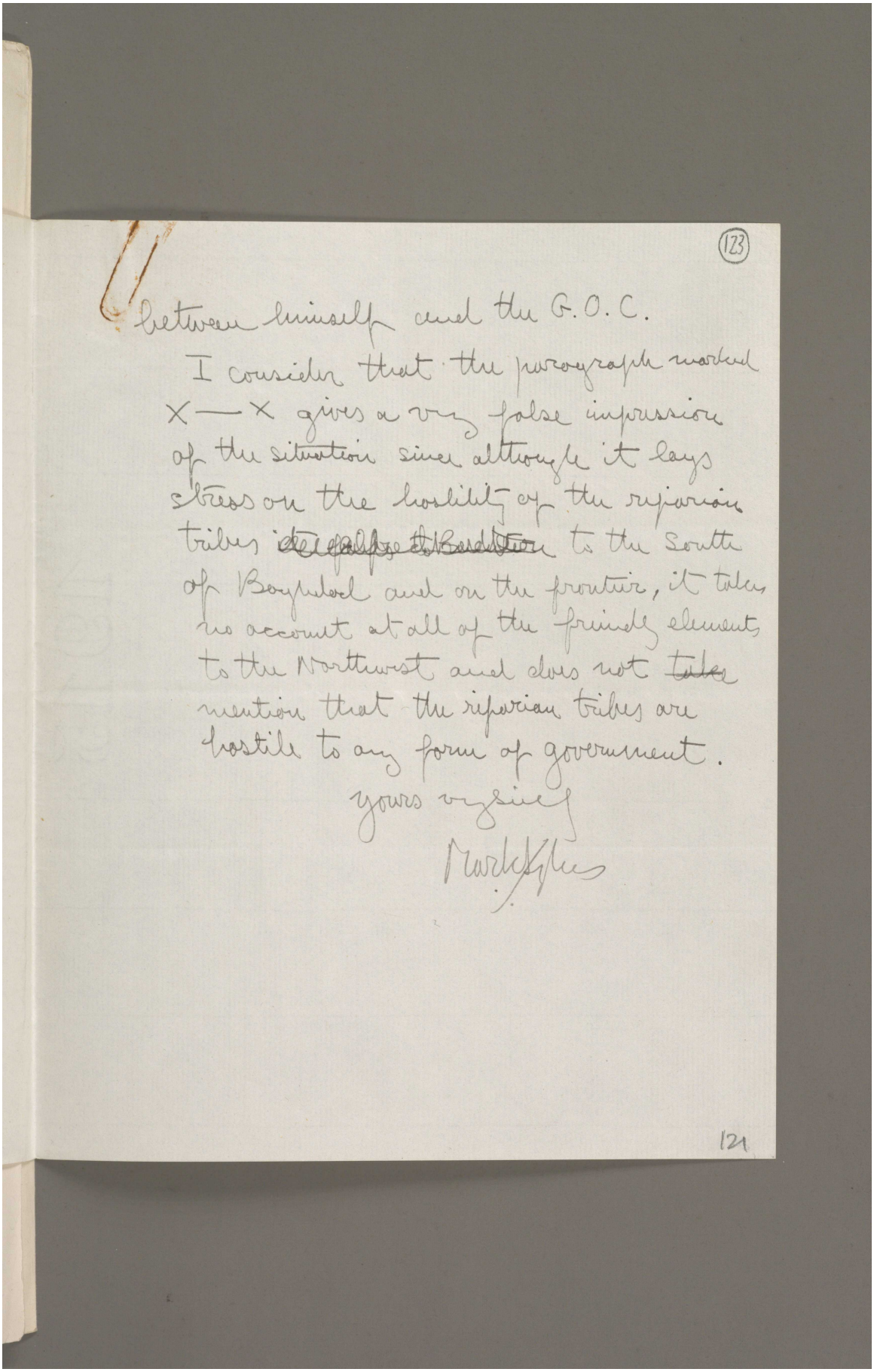

(123)

between himself and the G.O.C.

I consider that the paragraph marked X—X gives a very false impression of the situation since although it lays stress on the hostility of the riparian tribes ~~[illegible]~~ to the South of Baghdad and on the frontier, it takes no account at all of the friendly element to the Northwest and does not ~~take~~ mention that the riparian tribes are hostile to any form of government.

Yours very sincerely

Mark Sykes

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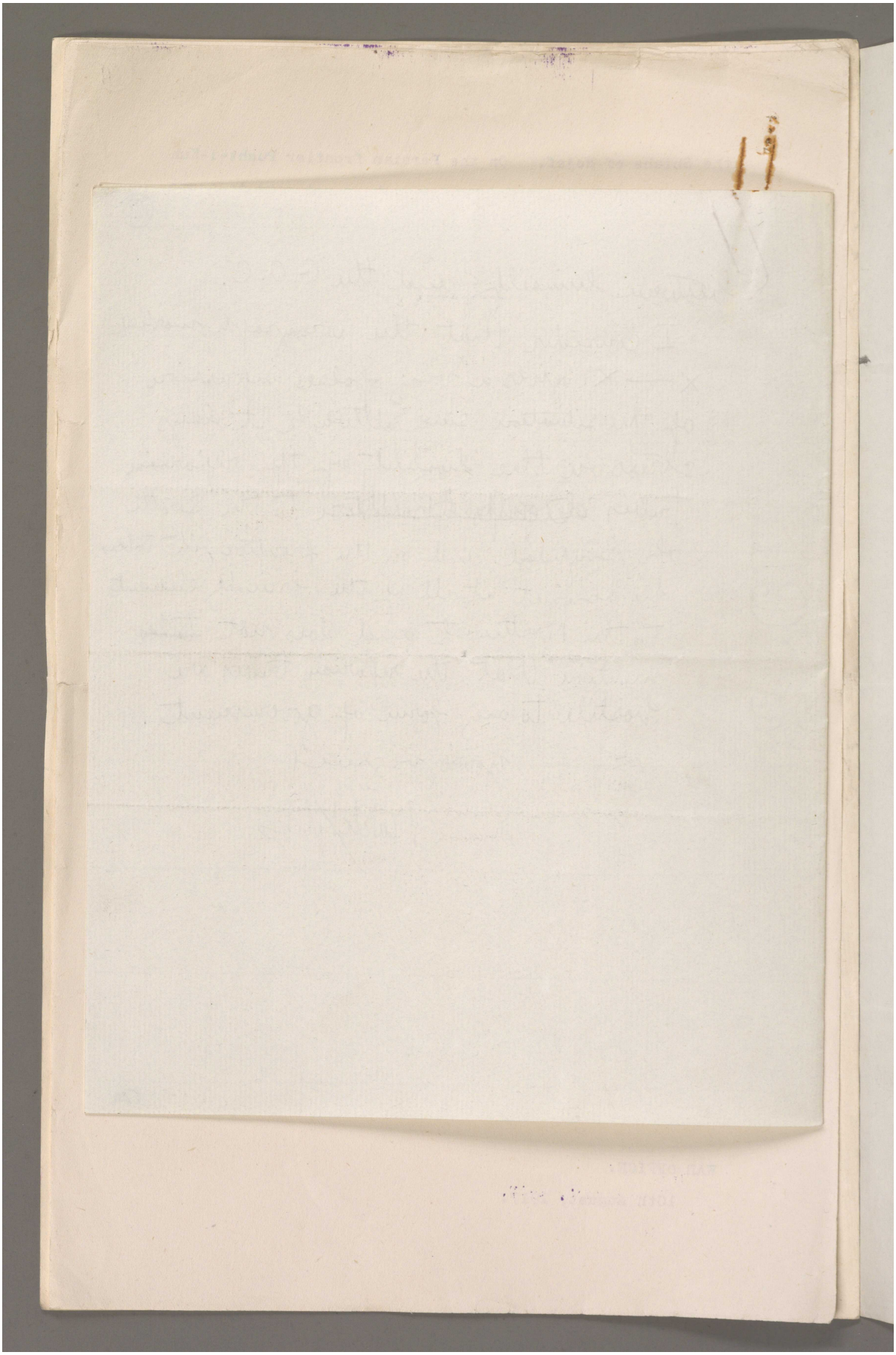

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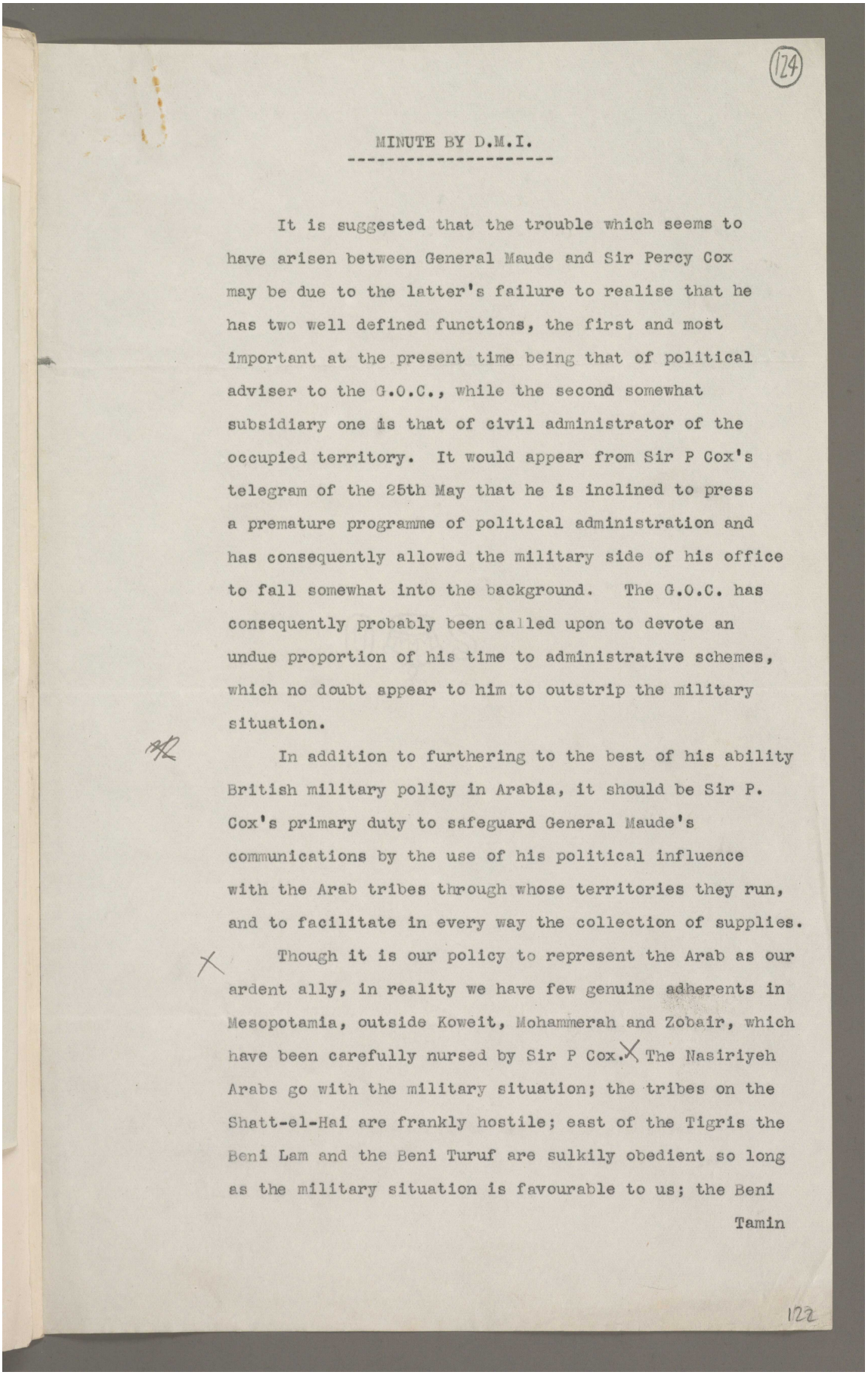

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MINUTE BY D.M.I.

It is suggested that the trouble which seems to have arisen between General Maude and Sir Percy Cox may be due to the latter's failure to realise that he has two well defined functions, the first and most important at the present time being that of political adviser to the G.O.C., while the second somewhat subsidiary one is that of civil administrator of the occupied territory. It would appear from Sir P Cox's telegram of the 25th May that he is inclined to press a premature programme of political administration and has consequently allowed the military side of his office to fall somewhat into the background. The G.O.C. has consequently probably been called upon to devote an undue proportion of his time to administrative schemes, which no doubt appear to him to outstrip the military situation.

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Tamin

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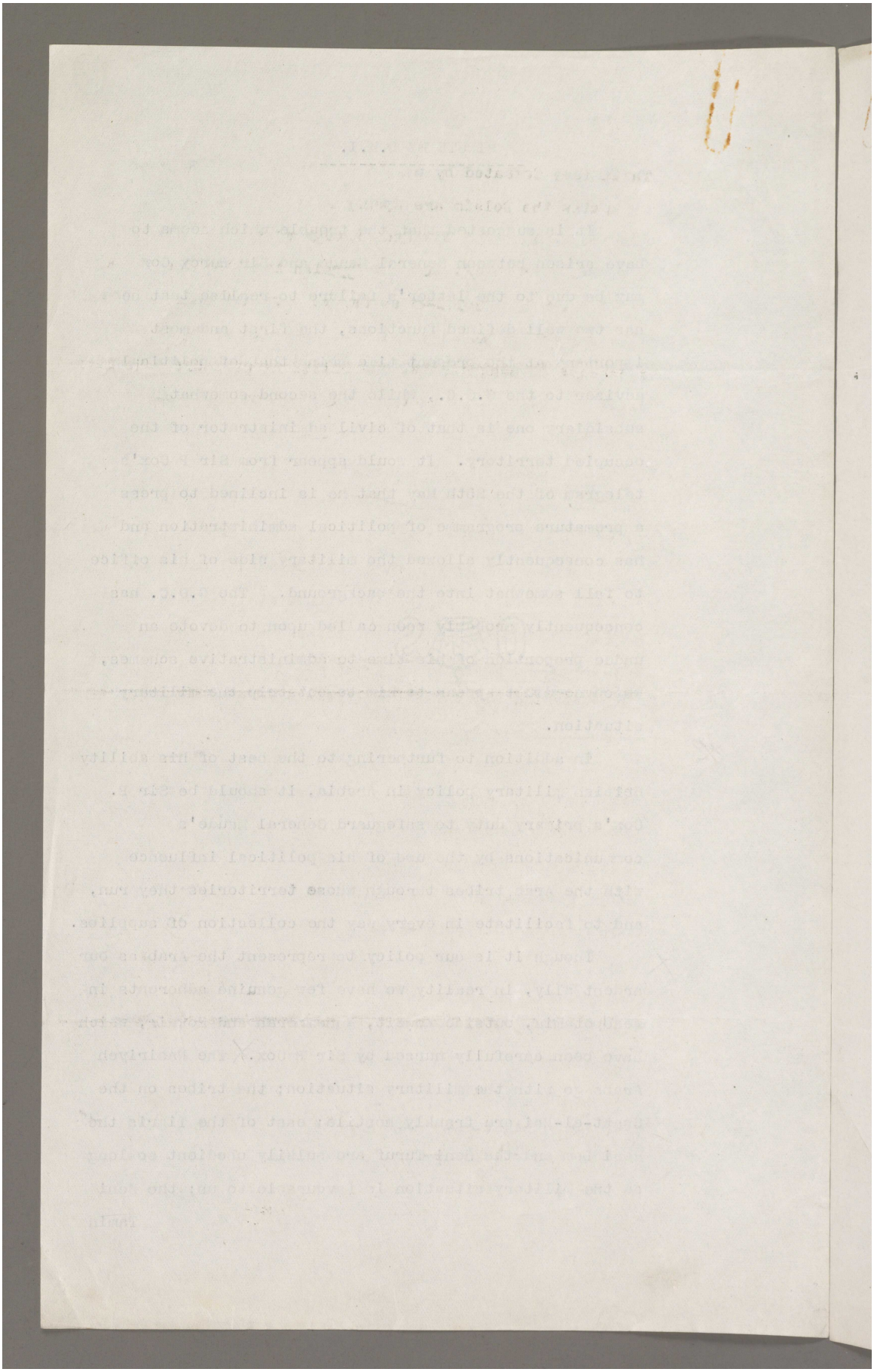

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Tamin were defeated by us last month at Beled Ruz; on the Euphrates the Delaim are openly hostile; and Samawah appears still to be divided, though we are supported by the Shiahs of Nejef. On the Persian frontier Pusht-i-Kuh is at heart pro-Turk, and so far we have not come to terms with any of the Kurdish tribes. Thus, in spite of our successes in Mesopotamia, our political officers have much to do to keep the Arabs from being not openly hostile, and this work is far more important than that of planning out little niceties of civil administration.

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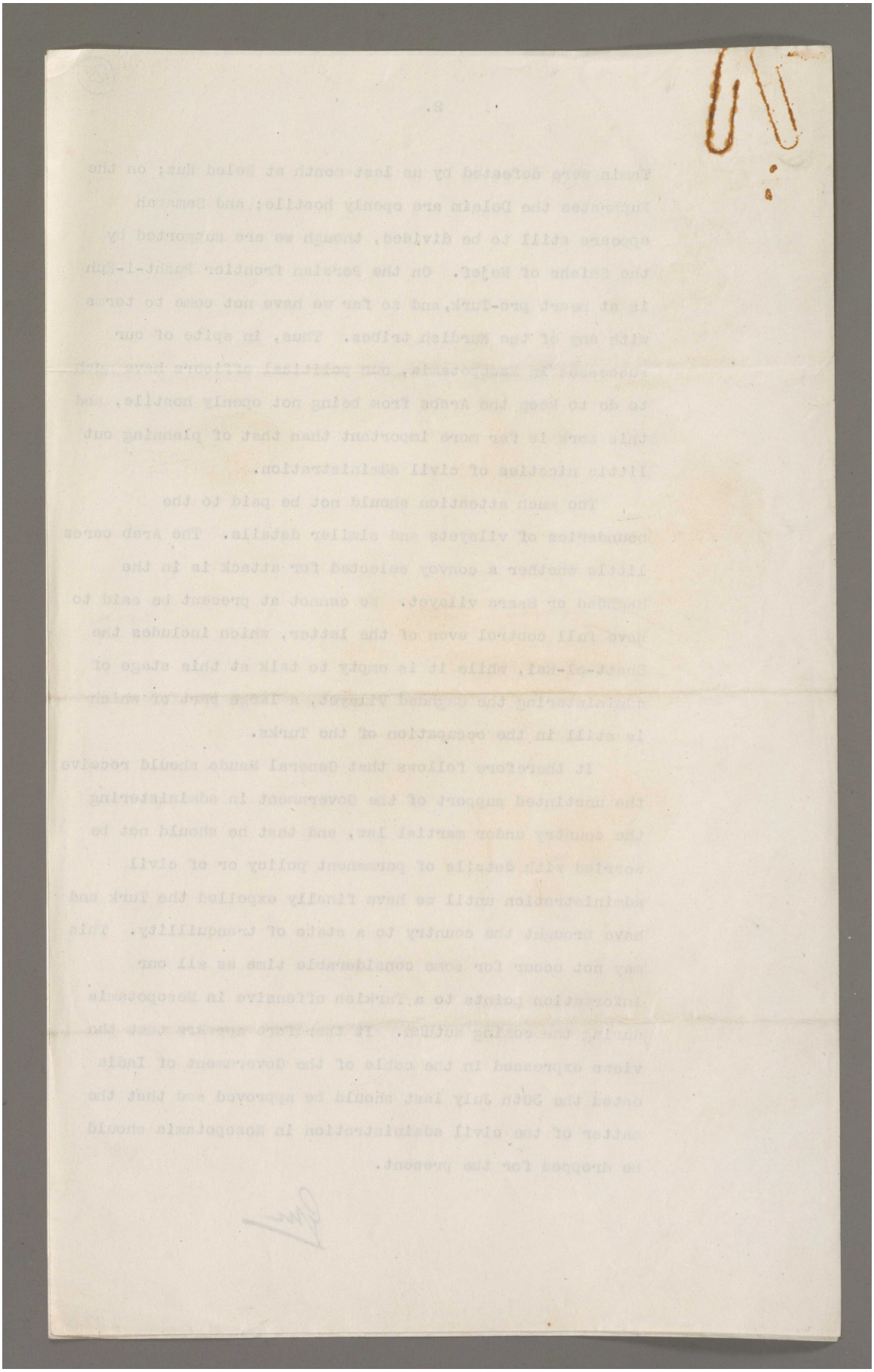

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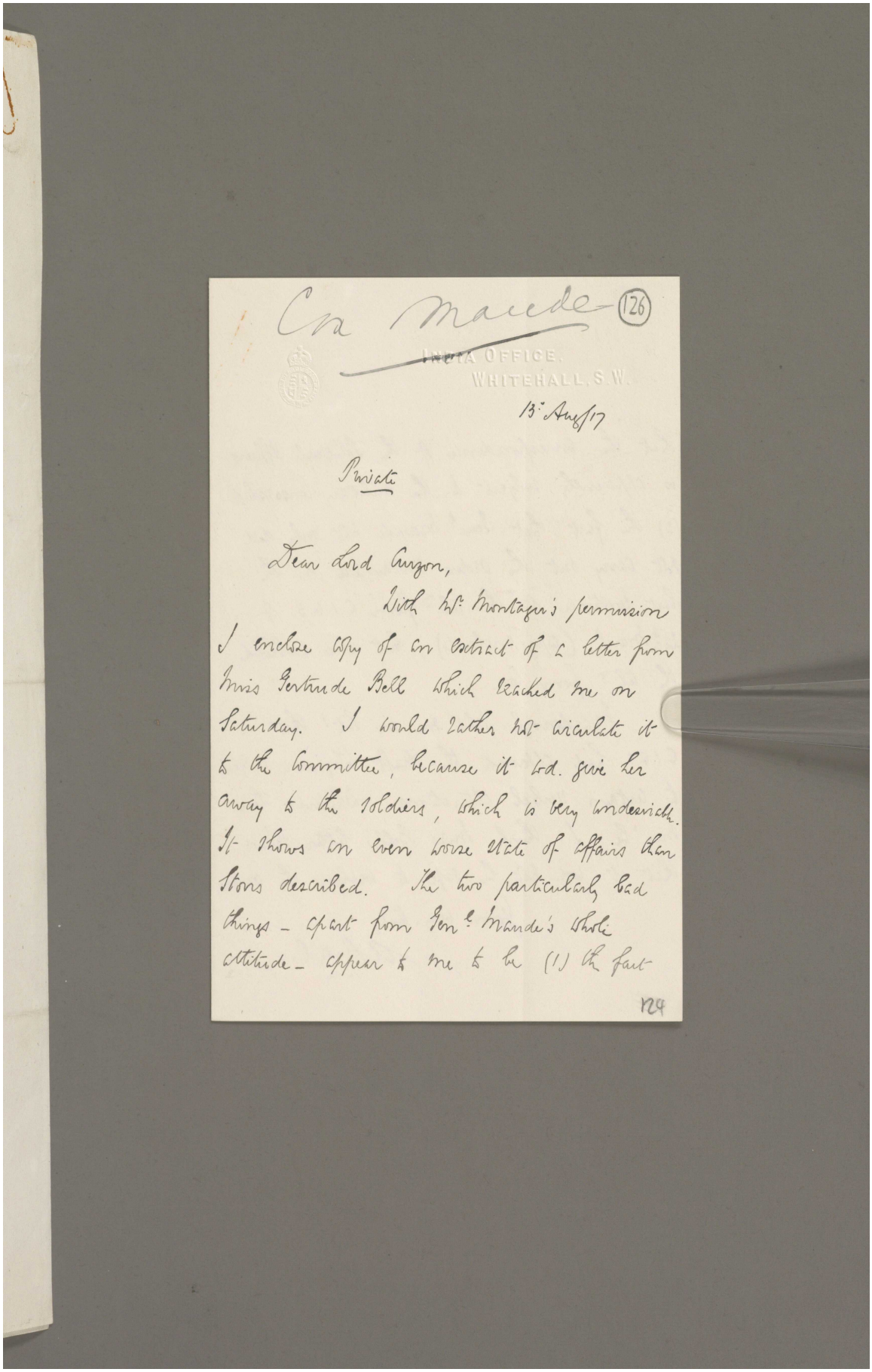

Ca Maude (126)

INDIA OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, S.W.

13th Aug/17

Private

Dear Lord Curzon,

With Mr Montagu's permission I enclose copy of an extract of a letter from Miss Gertrude Bell which reached me on Saturday. I would rather not circulate it to the Committee, because it wd. give her away to the soldiers, which is very undesirable. It shows an even worse state of affairs than Stons described. The two particularly bad things – apart from Gen[l] Maude's whole attitude – appear to me to be (1) the fact-

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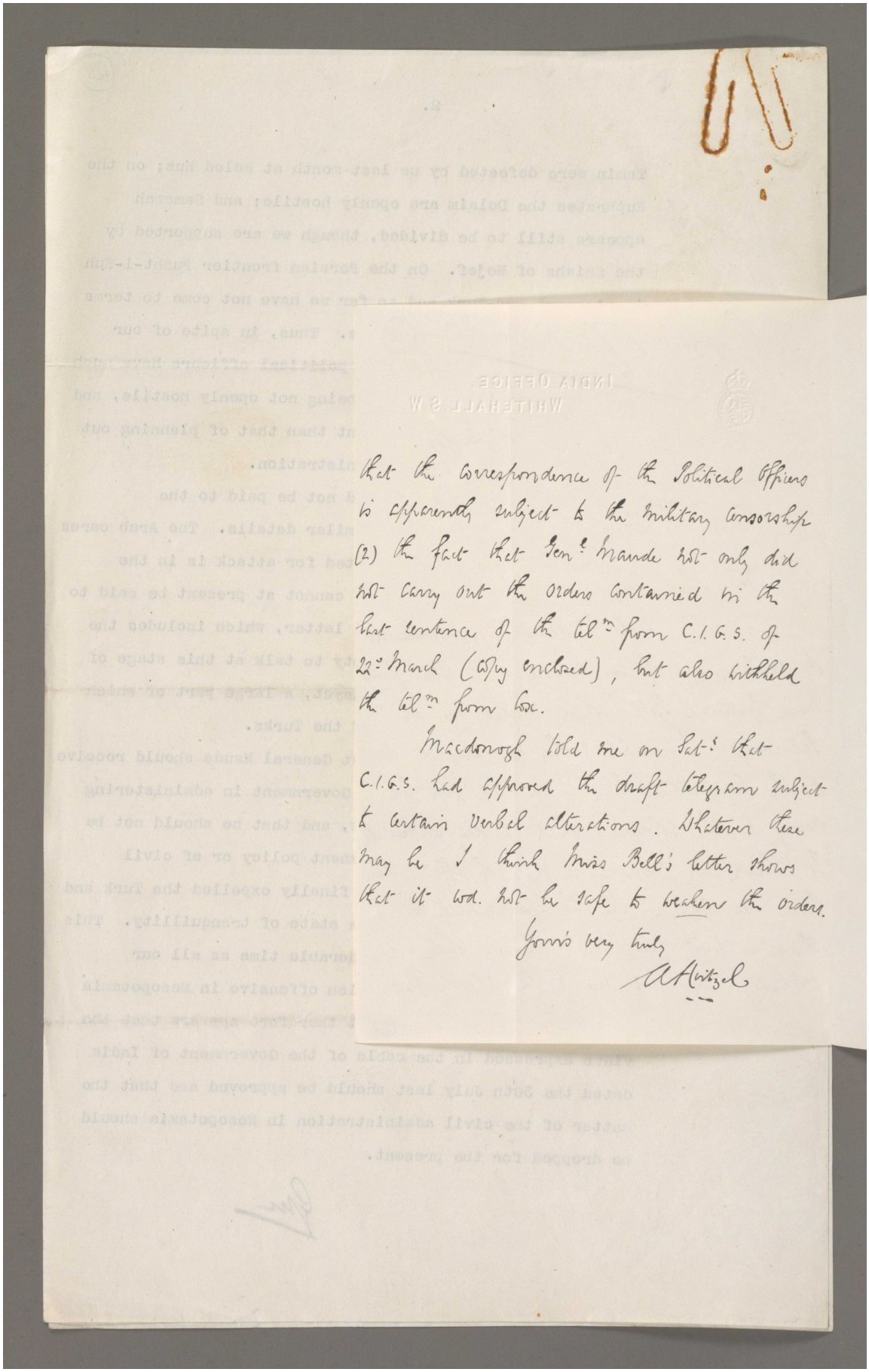

that the correspondence of the Political Officers is apparently subject to the military censorship (2) the fact that Gen.l Maude not only did not carry out the orders contained in the last sentence of the tel.m from C.I.G.S. of 22.d March (copy enclosed), but also withheld the tel.m from me.

Macdonogh told me on Sat.y that C.I.G.S. had approved the draft telegram subject to certain verbal alterations. Whatever these may be I think Miss Bell's letter shows that it wd. not be safe to weaken the orders.

Yours very truly

A Hirtzel

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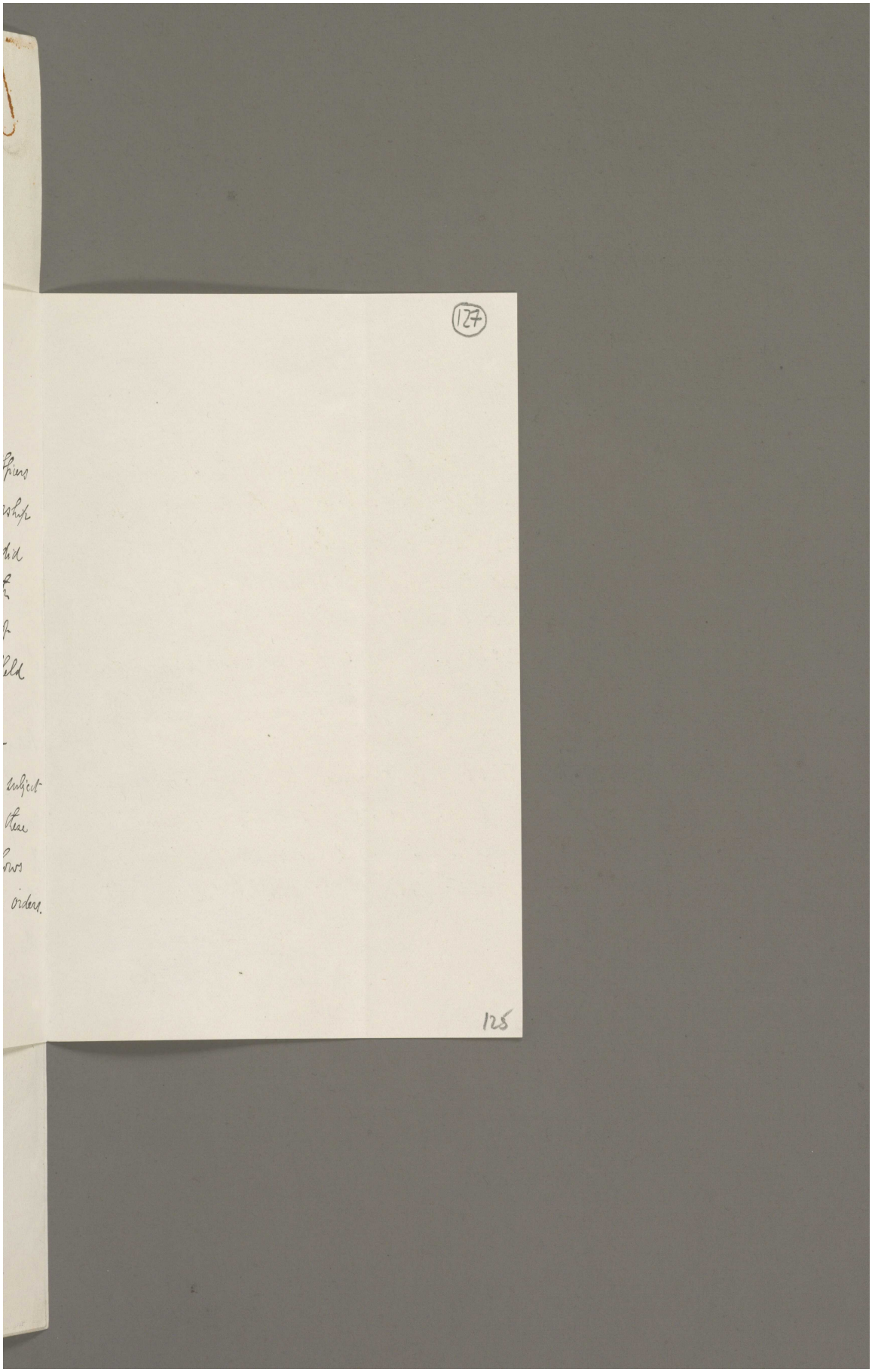

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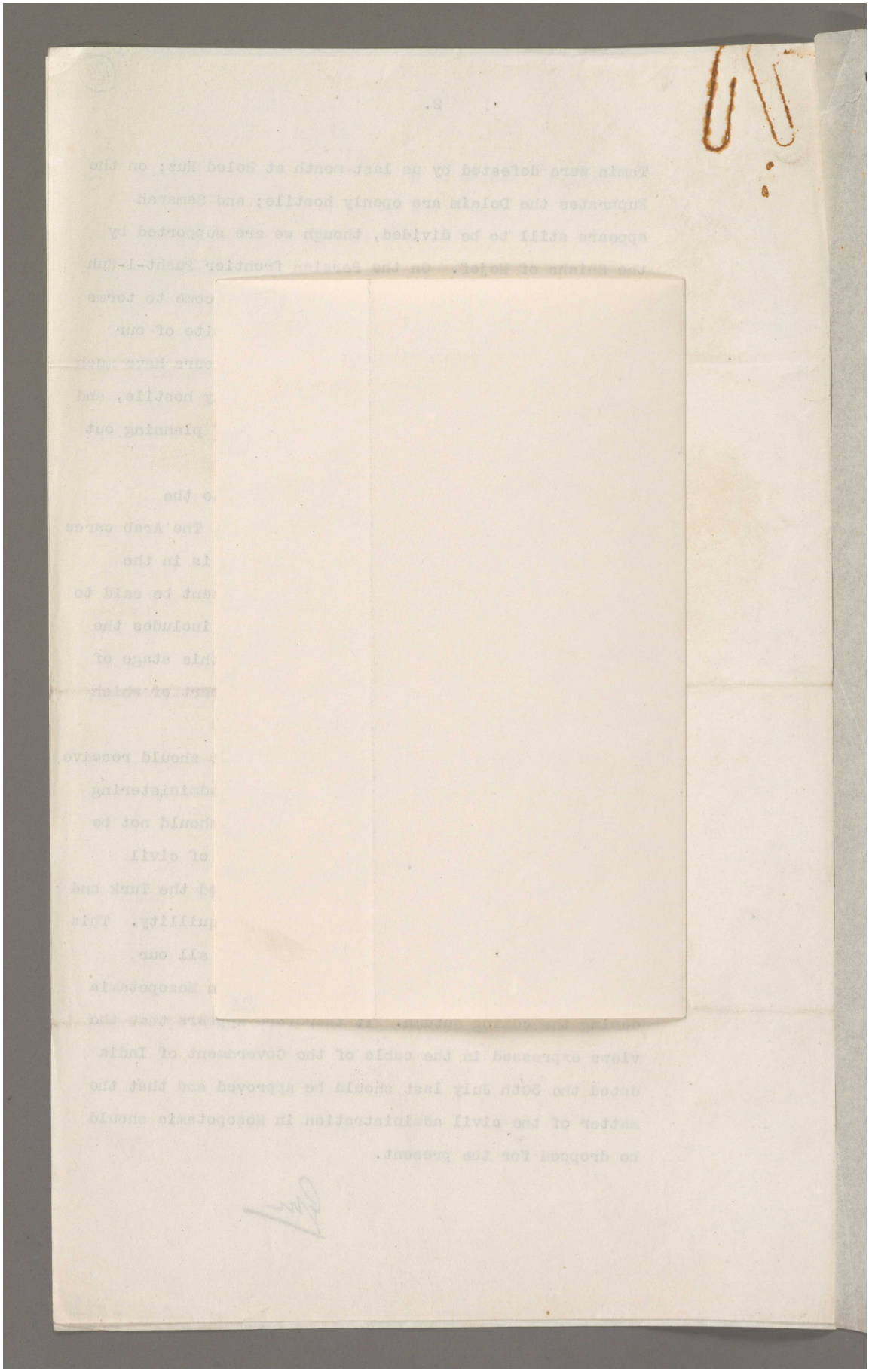

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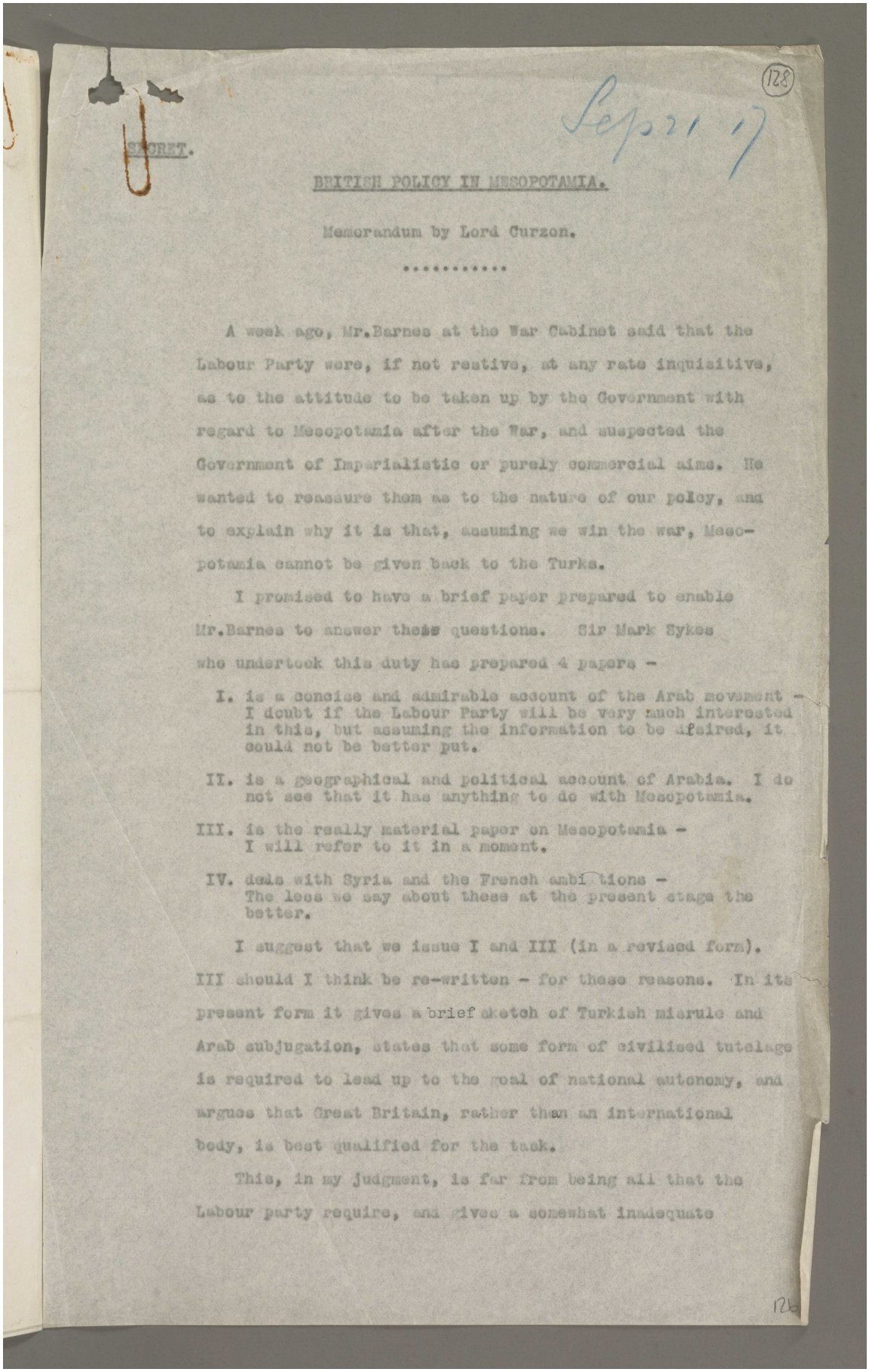

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Sept 21 17

BRITISH POLICY IN MESOPOTAMIA.

Memorandum by Lord Curzon.

.....

A week ago, Mr.Barnes at the War Cabinet said that the Labour Party were, if not restive, at any rate inquisitive, as to the attitude to be taken up by the Government with regard to Mesopotamia after the War, and suspected the Government of Imperialistic or purely commercial aims. He wanted to reassure them as to the nature of our policy, and to explain why it is that, assuming we win the war, Mesopotamia cannot be given back to the Turks.

I promised to have a brief paper prepared to enable Mr.Barnes to answer these questions. Sir Mark Sykes who undertook this duty has prepared 4 papers -

I. is a concise and admirable account of the Arab movement - I doubt if the Labour Party will be very much interested in this, but assuming the information to be desired, it could not be better put.

II. is a geographical and political account of Arabia. I do not see that it has anything to do with Mesopotamia.

III. is the really material paper on Mesopotamia - I will refer to it in a moment.

IV. deals with Syria and the French ambitions - The less we say about these at the present stage the better.

I suggest that we issue I and III (in a revised form). III should I think be re-written - for these reasons. In its present form it gives a brief sketch of Turkish misrule and Arab subjugation, states that some form of civilised tutelage is required to lead up to the goal of national autonomy, and argues that Great Britain, rather than an international body, is best qualified for the task.

This, in my judgment, is far from being all that the Labour party require, and gives a somewhat inadequate

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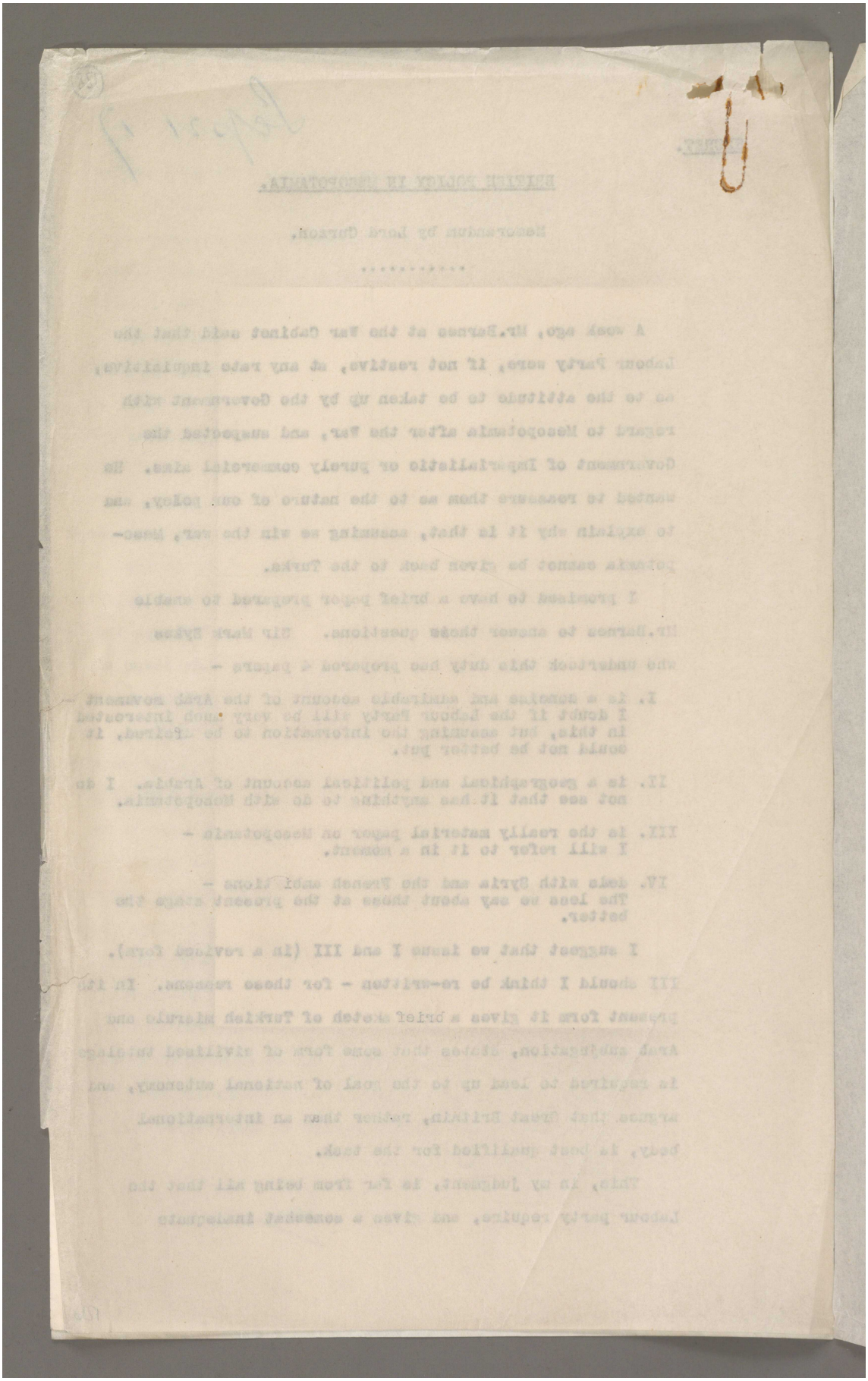

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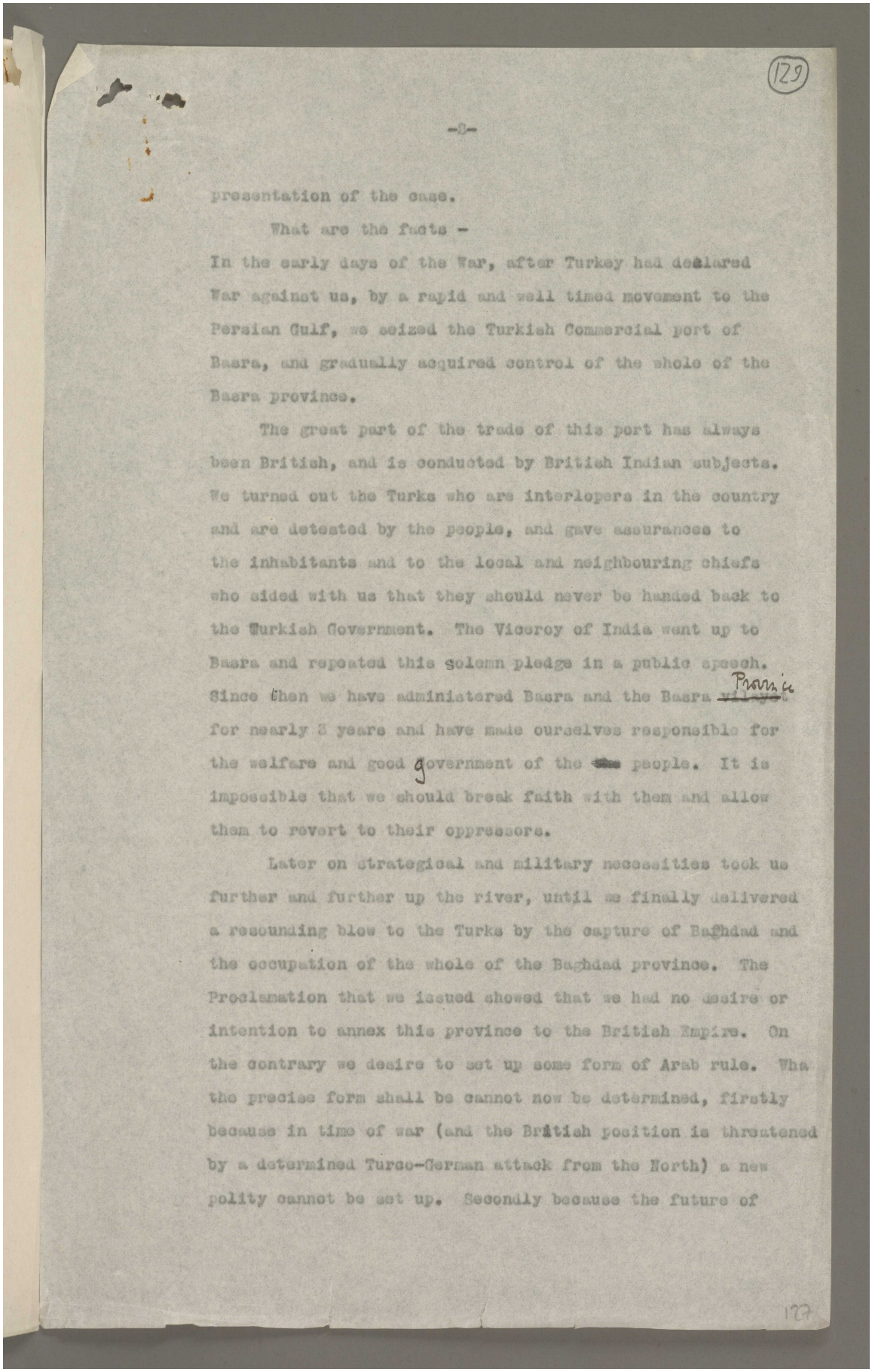

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presentation of the case.

What are the facts -

In the early days of the War, after Turkey had declared War against us, by a rapid and well timed movement to the Persian Gulf, we seized the Turkish Commercial port of Basra, and gradually acquired control of the whole of the Basra province.

The great part of the trade of this port has always been British, and is conducted by British Indian subjects. We turned out the Turks who are interlopers in the country and are detested by the people, and gave assurances to the inhabitants and to the local and neighbouring chiefs who sided with us that they should never be handed back to the Turkish Government. The Viceroy of India went up to Basra and repeated this solemn pledge in a public speech. Since then we have administered Basra and the Basra Province for nearly 3 years and have made ourselves responsible for the welfare and good government of the people. It is impossible that we should break faith with them and allow them to revert to their oppressors.

Later on strategical and military necessities took us further and further up the river, until we finally delivered a resounding blow to the Turks by the capture of Baghdad and the occupation of the whole of the Baghdad province. The Proclamation that we issued showed that we had no desire or intention to annex this province to the British Empire. On the contrary we desire to set up some form of Arab rule. Wha the precise form shall be cannot now be determined, firstly because in time of war (and the British position is threatened by a determined Turco-German attack from the North) a new polity cannot be set up. Secondly because the future of

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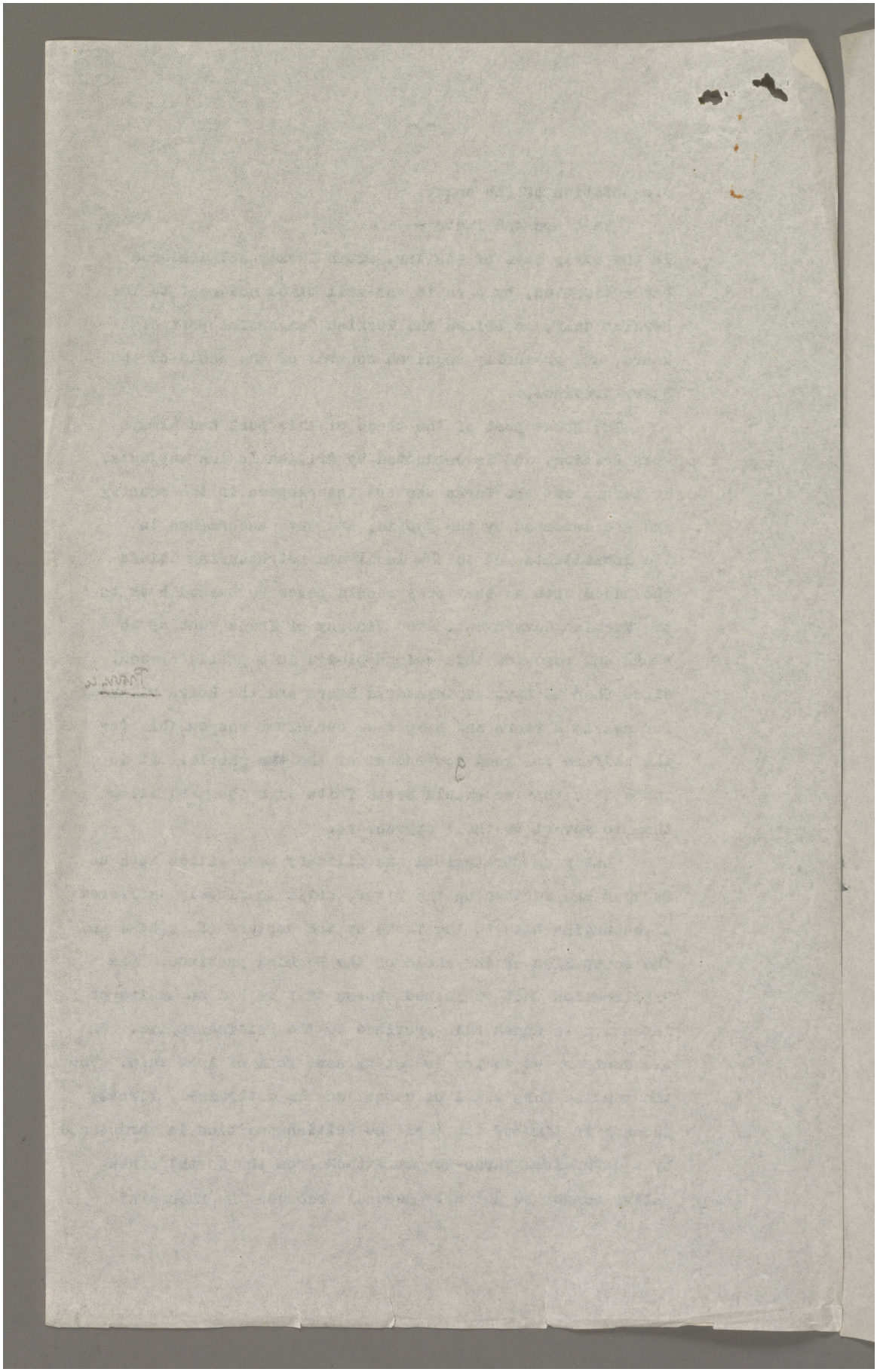

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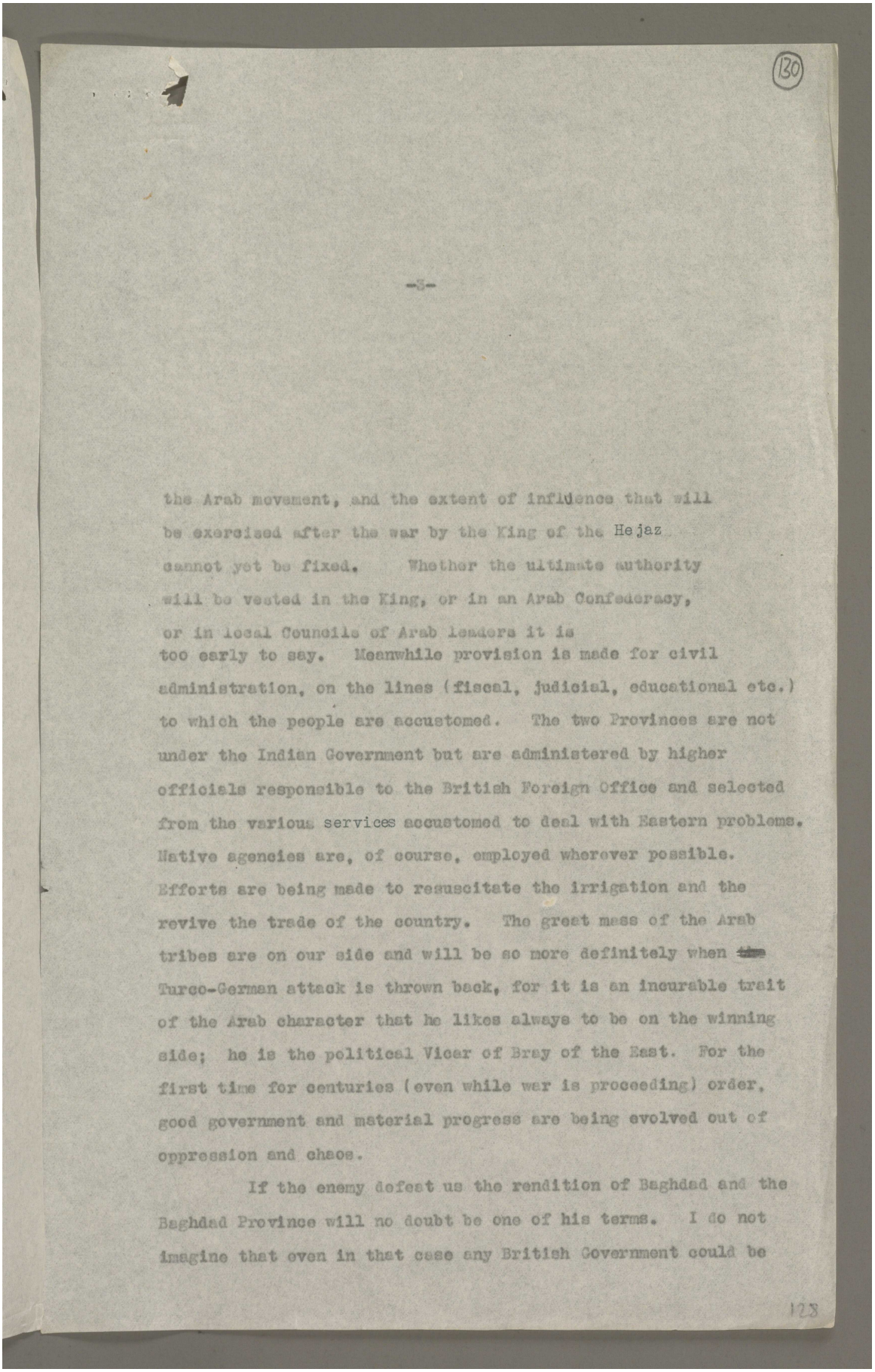

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the Arab movement, and the extent of influence that will be exercised after the war by the King of the Hejaz cannot yet be fixed. Whether the ultimate authority will be vested in the King, or in an Arab Confederacy, or in local Councils of Arab leaders it is too early to say. Meanwhile provision is made for civil administration, on the lines (fiscal, judicial, educational etc.) to which the people are accustomed. The two Provinces are not under the Indian Government but are administered by higher officials responsible to the British Foreign Office and selected from the various services accustomed to deal with Eastern problems. Native agencies are, of course, employed wherever possible. Efforts are being made to resuscitate the irrigation and the revive the trade of the country. The great mass of the Arab tribes are on our side and will be so more definitely when ~~the~~ Turco-German attack is thrown back, for it is an incurable trait of the Arab character that he likes always to be on the winning side; he is the political Vicar of Bray of the East. For the first time for centuries (even while war is proceeding) order, good government and material progress are being evolved out of oppression and chaos.

If the enemy defeat us the rendition of Baghdad and the Baghdad Province will no doubt be one of his terms. I do not imagine that even in that case any British Government could be

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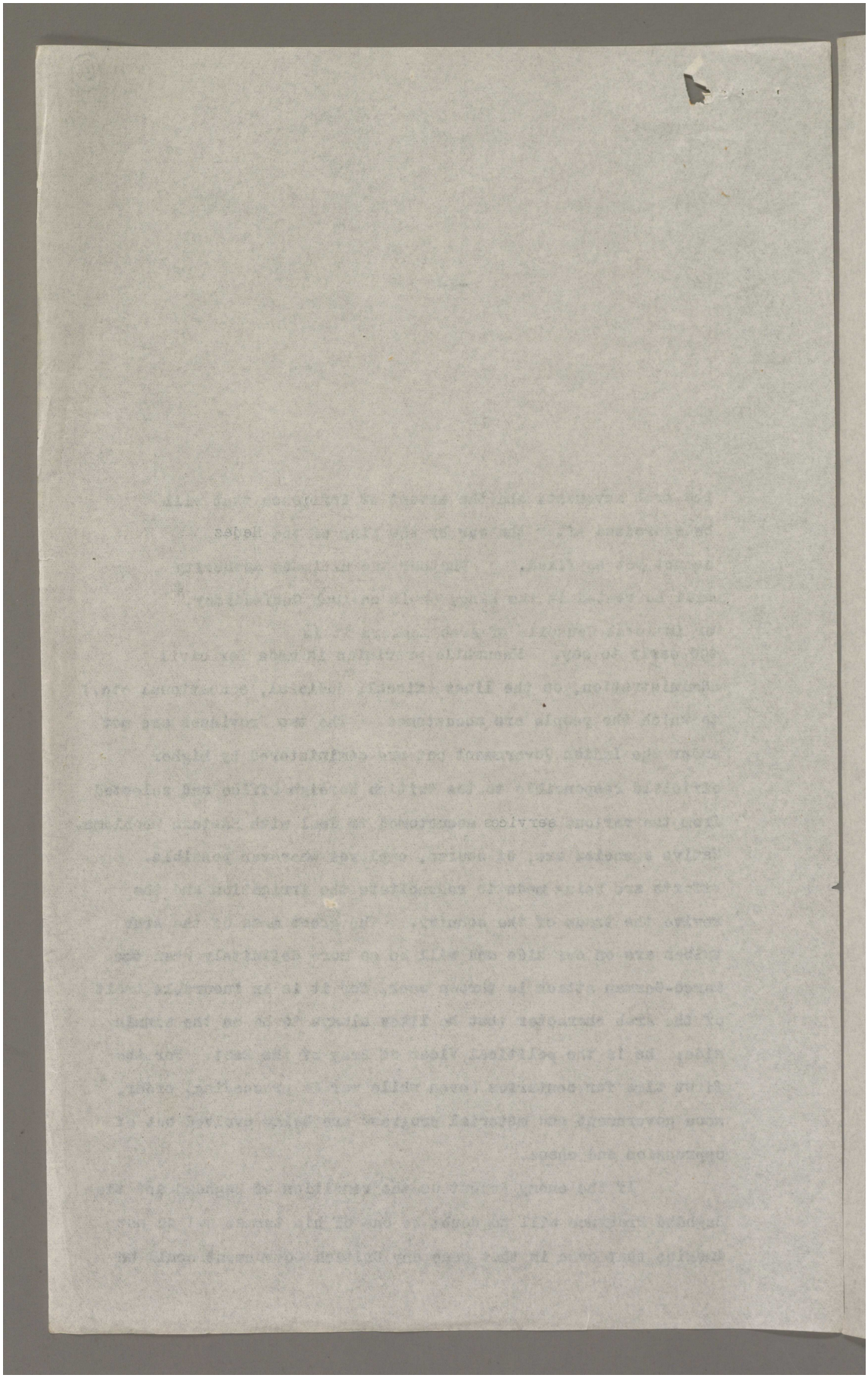

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found to agree to the restoration of Basra and the Basra Province, both because of the pledges that we have given and because the reappearance of Turkish rule, i.e. of German influence there, would be fatal to the British position in the Persian Gulf which is the maritime frontier of the Indian Empire on the West.

But neither, if we are victorious, will it be possible to give back Baghdad and the Baghdad province to the Turks.

(1) We cannot do it in the interests of the large number of inhabitants who have openly sided with us and who would be massacred to a man if we were to retreat:

(2) We cannot do it without alienating the whole of the Arab chieftains and tribes, who would desert the British cause at such a flagrant exhibition of weakness and bad faith:

(3) We cannot do it, without imperilling the entire Arab movement, and bringing about, not merely the collapse of the King of Hejaz, but the recovered authority and enhanced prestige of the Turk throughout the Arabian peninsula:

(4) We cannot do it without breaking the solemn pledge we have given in our Proclamation as to the future of the country:

(5) If we do it British authority and influence in Persia and Afghanistan will receive an almost irreparable blow and the repercussion on India itself will be more than serious.

(6) Further, if we do it, we restore to life the shattered German ambition of a great Teutonised dominion stretching through Europe and Asia Minor as far as the Persian Gulf - which is the real dream of German world policy and is the weapon with which, in a future war, the British Empire is to be struck down.

If the regions to which I have referred, and which have now been freed from the oppression of centuries, are to be set on their feet again - as Egypt was set on its feet after a Turkish misrule not less gross; if indigenous institutions are to be created among a people who have almost lost the idea of what freedom is, and if the splendid natural resources of the country are once again to be revived after centuries of neglect and decay, the responsibility of the undertaking must be assumed by a civilised power.

The only civilised Power that is either equipped for the task

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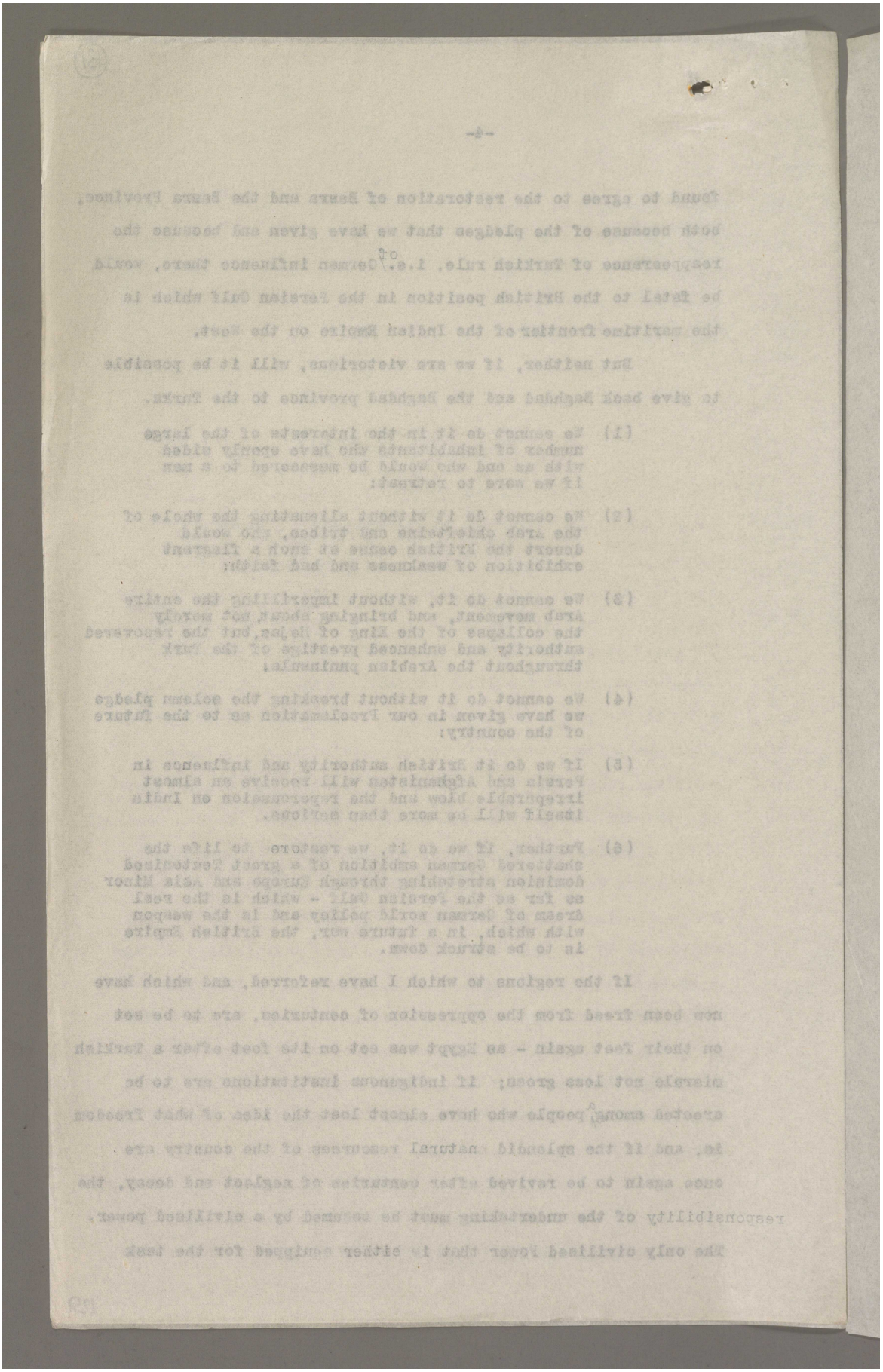

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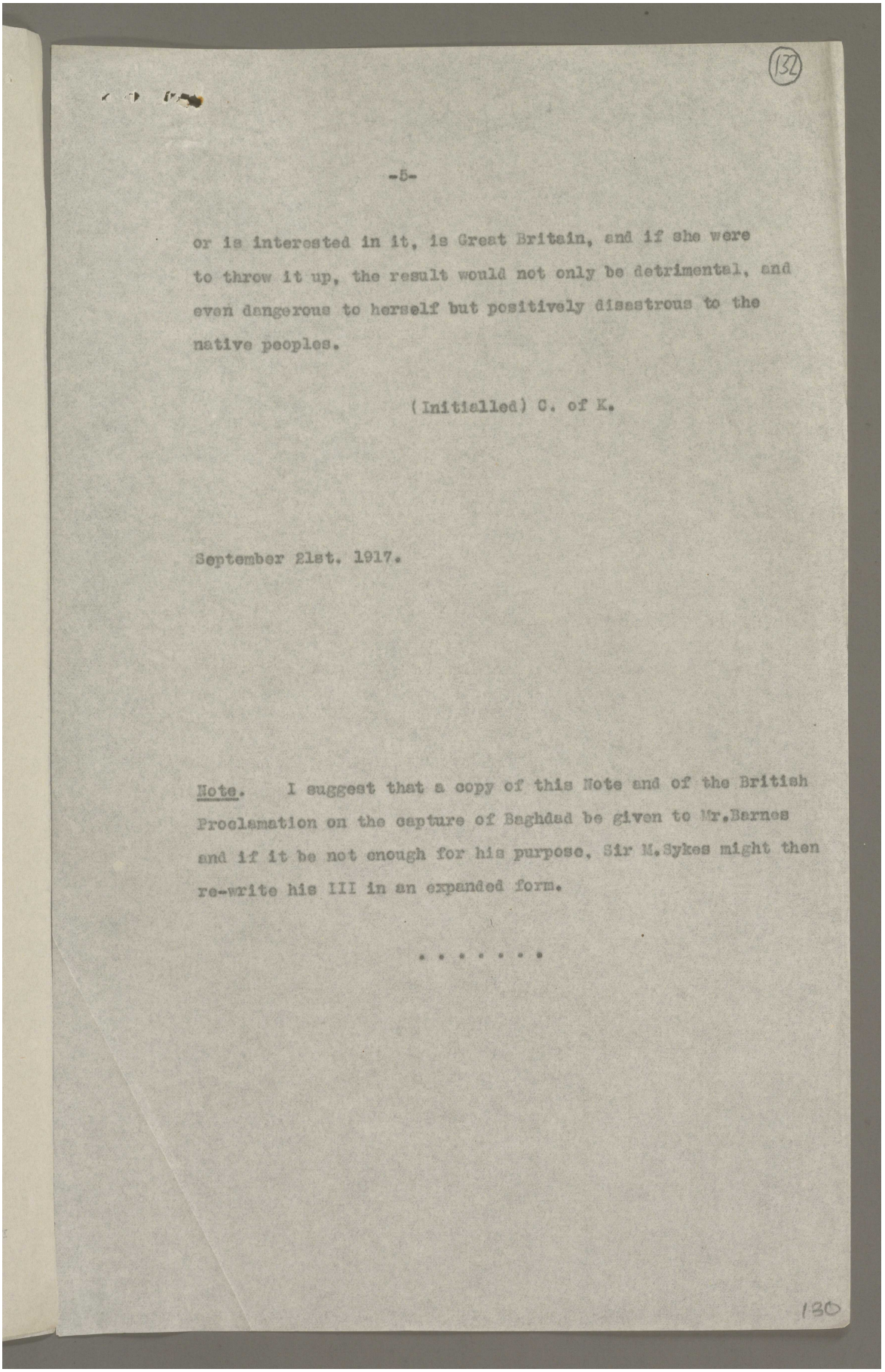

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or is interested in it, is Great Britain, and if she were to throw it up, the result would not only be detrimental, and even dangerous to herself but positively disastrous to the native peoples.

(Initialled) C. of K.

September 21st. 1917.

Note. I suggest that a copy of this Note and of the British Proclamation on the capture of Baghdad be given to Mr.Barnes and if it be not enough for his purpose, Sir M.Sykes might then re-write his III in an expanded form.

. . . . . .

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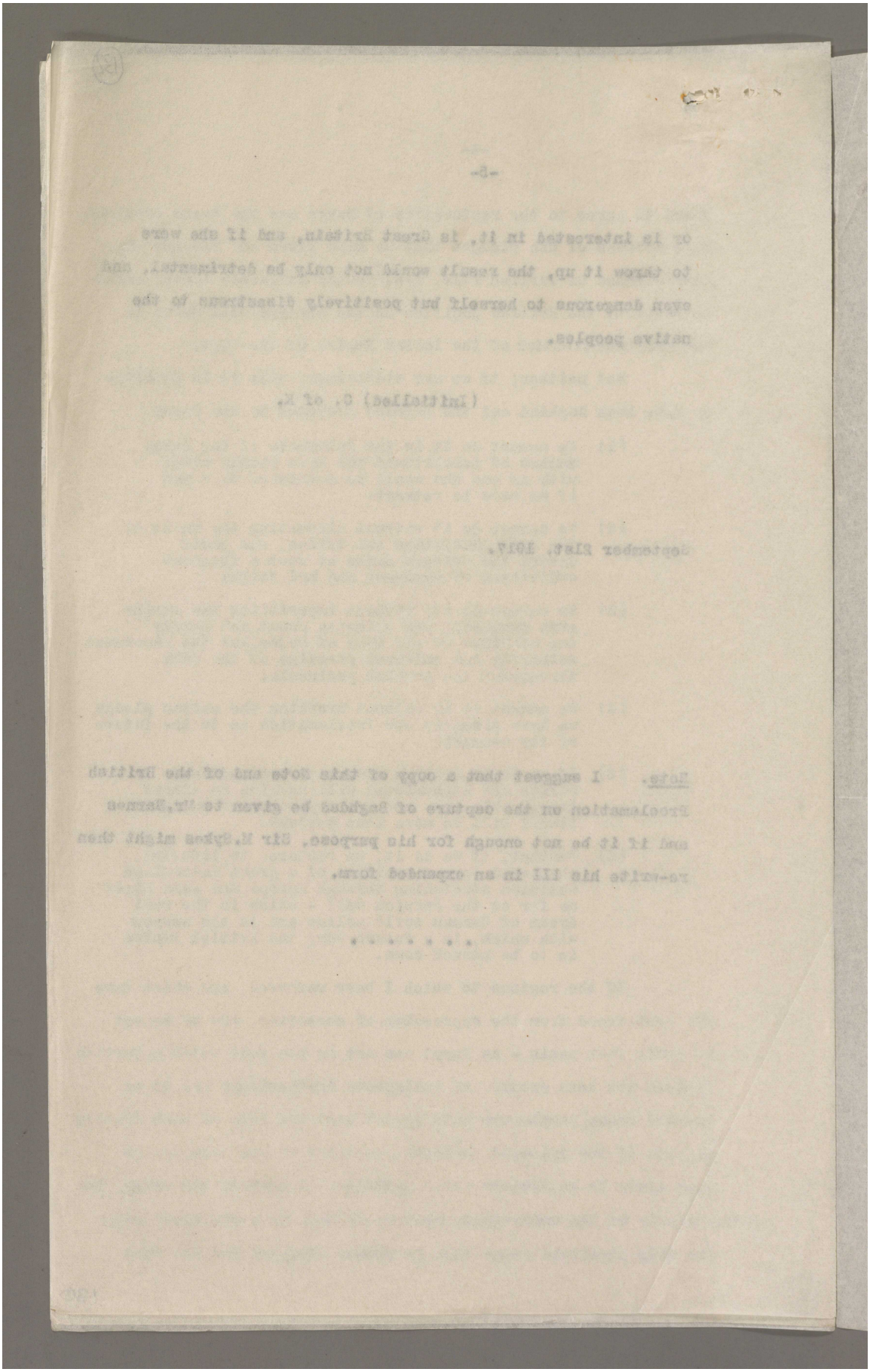

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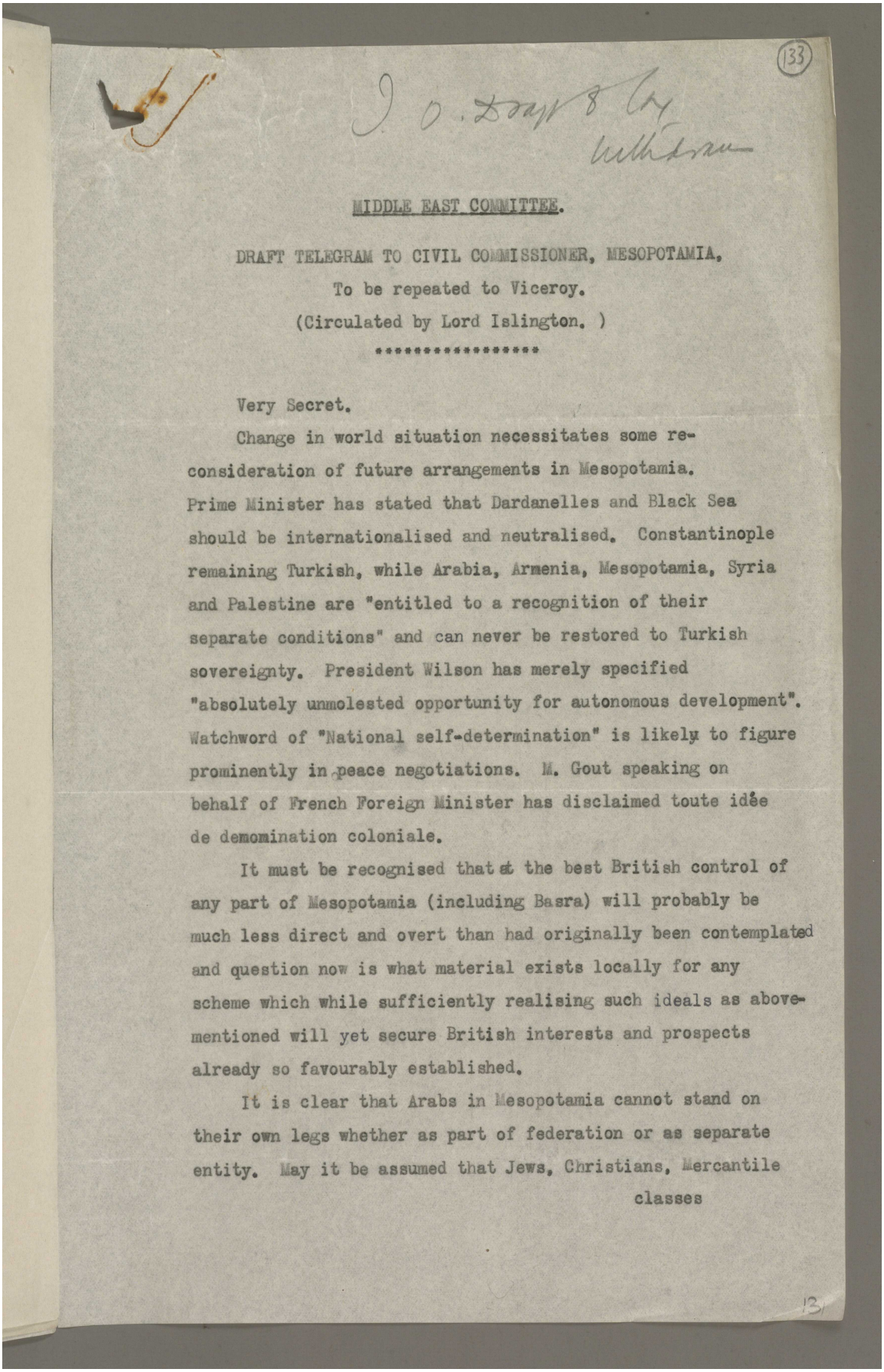

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I. O. Draft & Cy withdrawn

MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO CIVIL COMMISSIONER, MESOPOTAMIA.

To be repeated to Viceroy.

(Circulated by Lord Islington.)

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Very Secret.

Change in world situation necessitates some re-consideration of future arrangements in Mesopotamia. Prime Minister has stated that Dardanelles and Black Sea should be internationalised and neutralised. Constantinople remaining Turkish, while Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine are "entitled to a recognition of their separate conditions" and can never be restored to Turkish sovereignty. President Wilson has merely specified "absolutely unmolested opportunity for autonomous development". Watchword of "National self-determination" is likely to figure prominently in peace negotiations. M. Gout speaking on behalf of French Foreign Minister has disclaimed toute idée de demomination coloniale.

It must be recognised that at the best British control of any part of Mesopotamia (including Basra) will probably be much less direct and overt than had originally been contemplated and question now is what material exists locally for any scheme which while sufficiently realising such ideals as above-mentioned will yet secure British interests and prospects already so favourably established.

It is clear that Arabs in Mesopotamia cannot stand on their own legs whether as part of federation or as separate entity. May it be assumed that Jews, Christians, Mercantile classes

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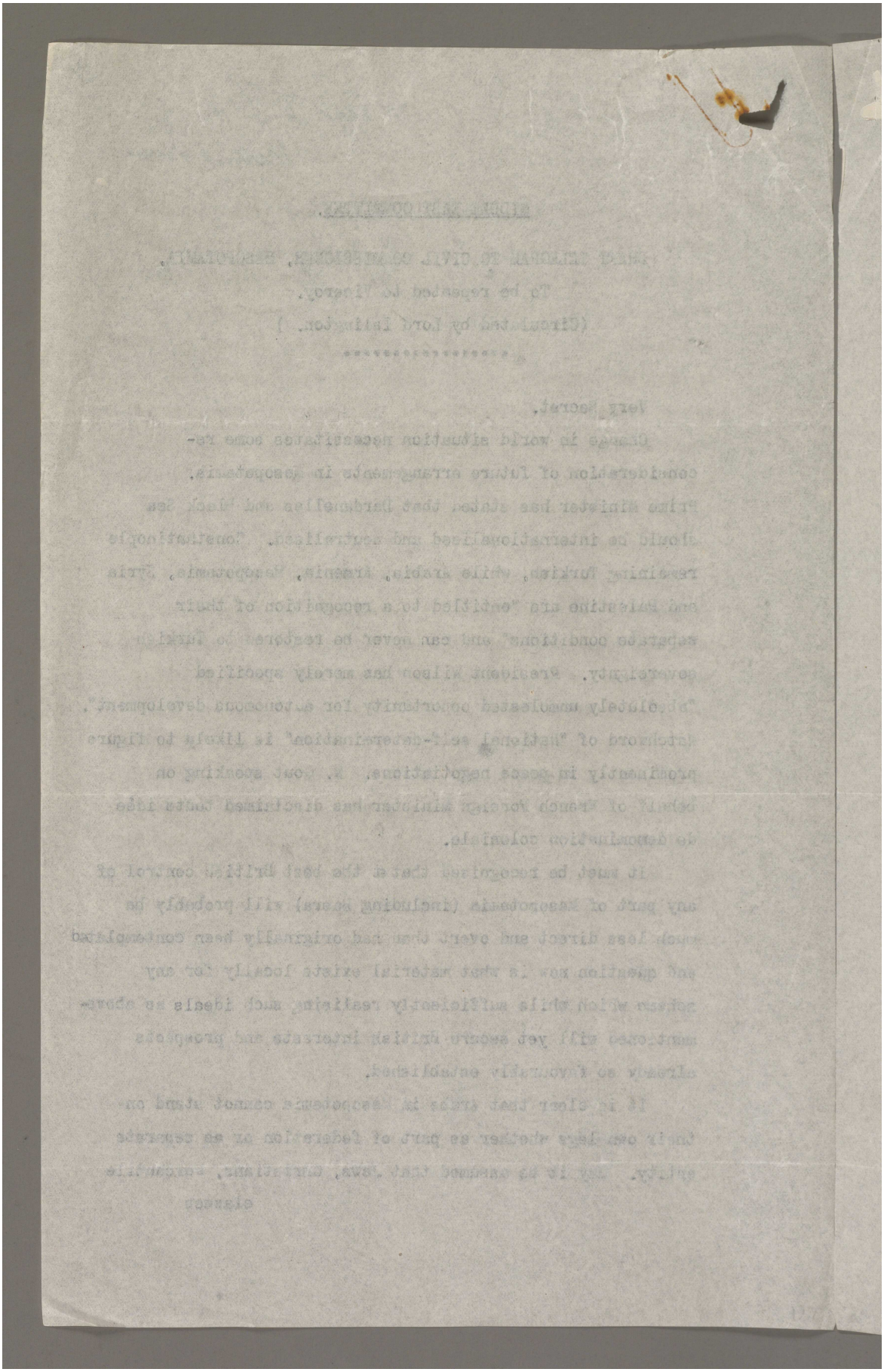

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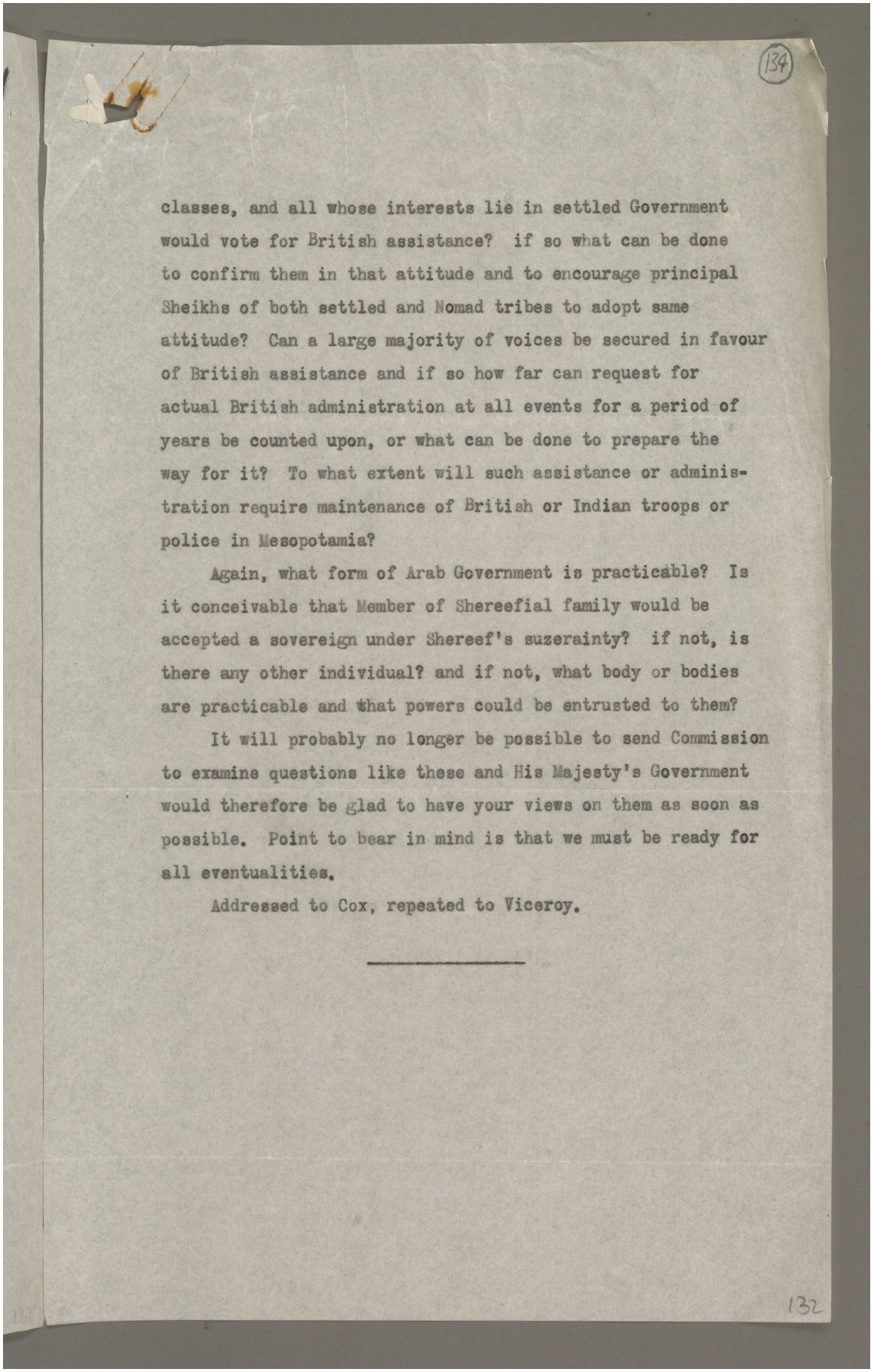

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classes, and all whose interests lie in settled Government would vote for British assistance? if so what can be done to confirm them in that attitude and to encourage principal Sheikhs of both settled and Nomad tribes to adopt same attitude? Can a large majority of voices be secured in favour of British assistance and if so how far can request for actual British administration at all events for a period of years be counted upon, or what can be done to prepare the way for it? To what extent will such assistance or administration require maintenance of British or Indian troops or police in Mesopotamia?

Again, what form of Arab Government is practicable? Is it conceivable that Member of Shereefial family would be accepted a sovereign under Shereef's suzerainty? if not, is there any other individual? and if not, what body or bodies are practicable and what powers could be entrusted to them?

It will probably no longer be possible to send Commission to examine questions like these and His Majesty's Government would therefore be glad to have your views on them as soon as possible. Point to bear in mind is that we must be ready for all eventualities.

Addressed to Cox, repeated to Viceroy.

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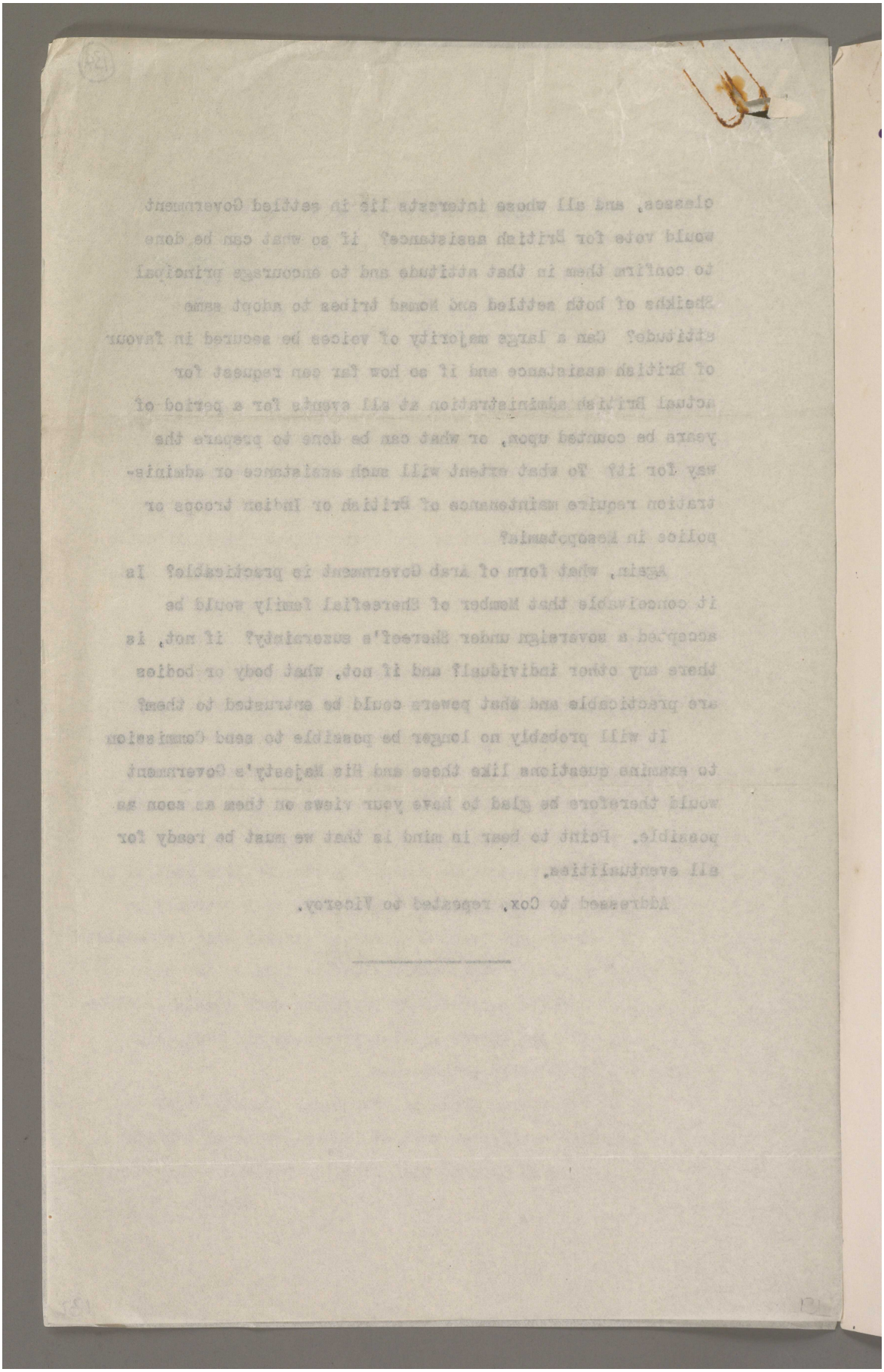

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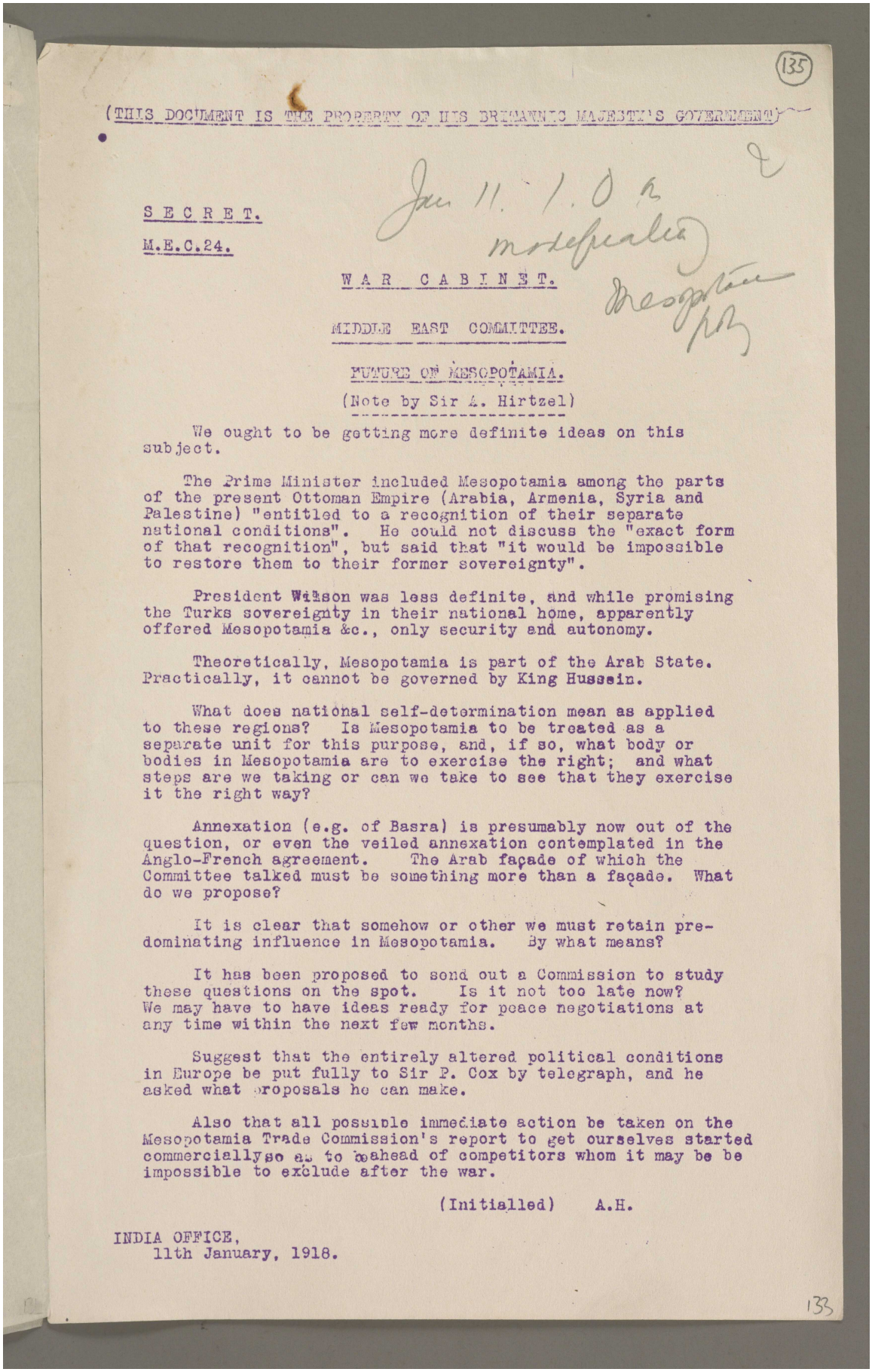

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WAR CABINET.

MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA.

(Note by Sir A. Hirtzel)

We ought to be getting more definite ideas on this subject.

The Prime Minister included Mesopotamia among the parts of the present Ottoman Empire (Arabia, Armenia, Syria and Palestine) "entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions". He could not discuss the "exact form of that recognition", but said that "it would be impossible to restore them to their former sovereignty".

President Wilson was less definite, and while promising the Turks sovereignty in their national home, apparently offered Mesopotamia &c., only security and autonomy.

Theoretically, Mesopotamia is part of the Arab State. Practically, it cannot be governed by King Hussein.

What does national self-determination mean as applied to these regions? Is Mesopotamia to be treated as a separate unit for this purpose, and, if so, what body or bodies in Mesopotamia are to exercise the right; and what steps are we taking or can we take to see that they exercise it the right way?

Annexation (e.g. of Basra) is presumably now out of the question, or even the veiled annexation contemplated in the Anglo-French agreement. The Arab façade of which the Committee talked must be something more than a façade. What do we propose?

It is clear that somehow or other we must retain predominating influence in Mesopotamia. By what means?

It has been proposed to send out a Commission to study these questions on the spot. Is it not too late now? We may have to have ideas ready for peace negotiations at any time within the next few months.

Suggest that the entirely altered political conditions in Europe be put fully to Sir P. Cox by telegraph, and he asked what proposals he can make.

Also that all possible immediate action be taken on the Mesopotamia Trade Commission's report to get ourselves started commercially so as to be ahead of competitors whom it may be be impossible to exclude after the war.

(Initialled) A.H.

INDIA OFFICE,
11th January, 1918.

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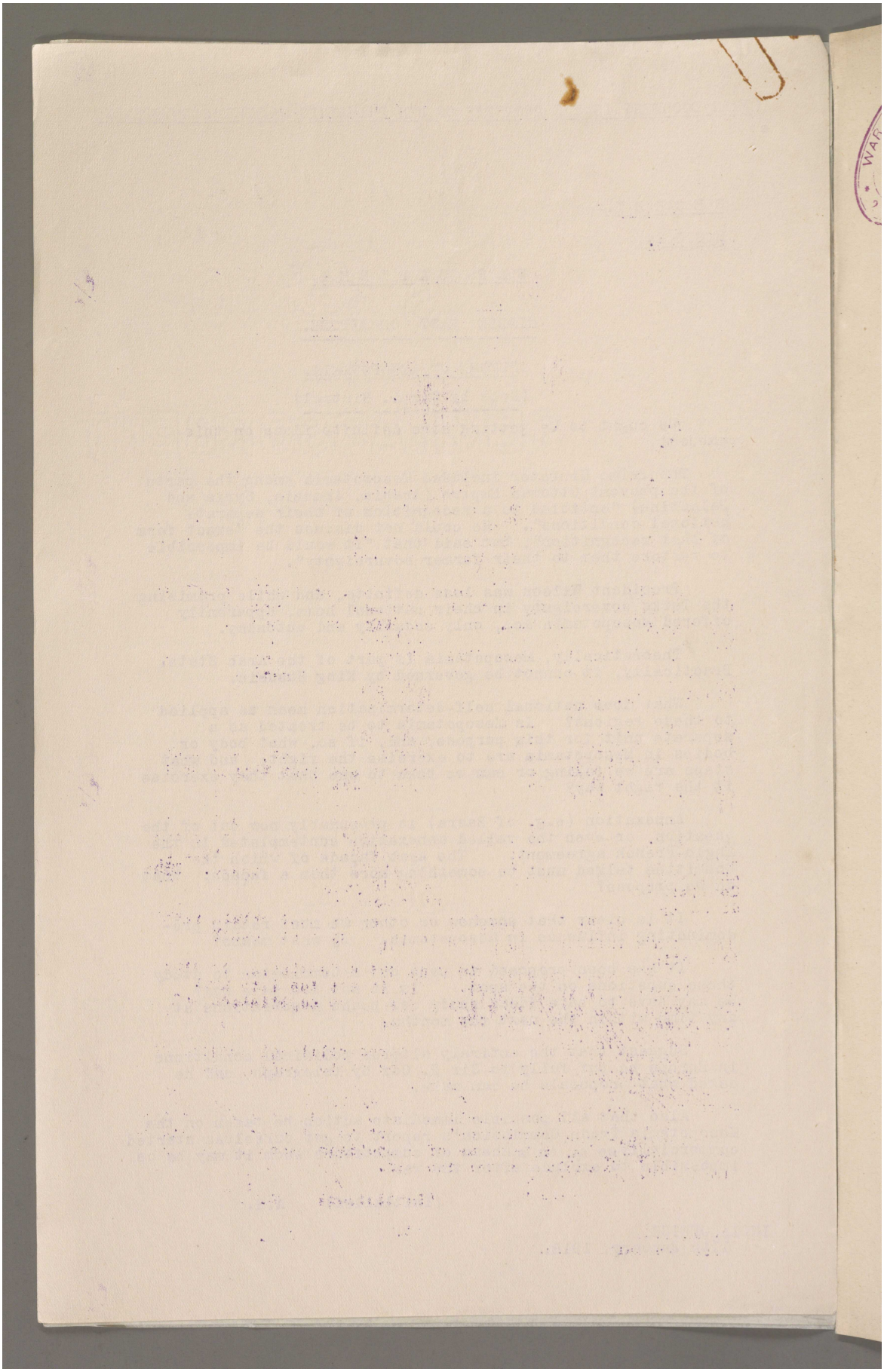

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Our pledges. Arab Proclamation Lord Curzon. (136)

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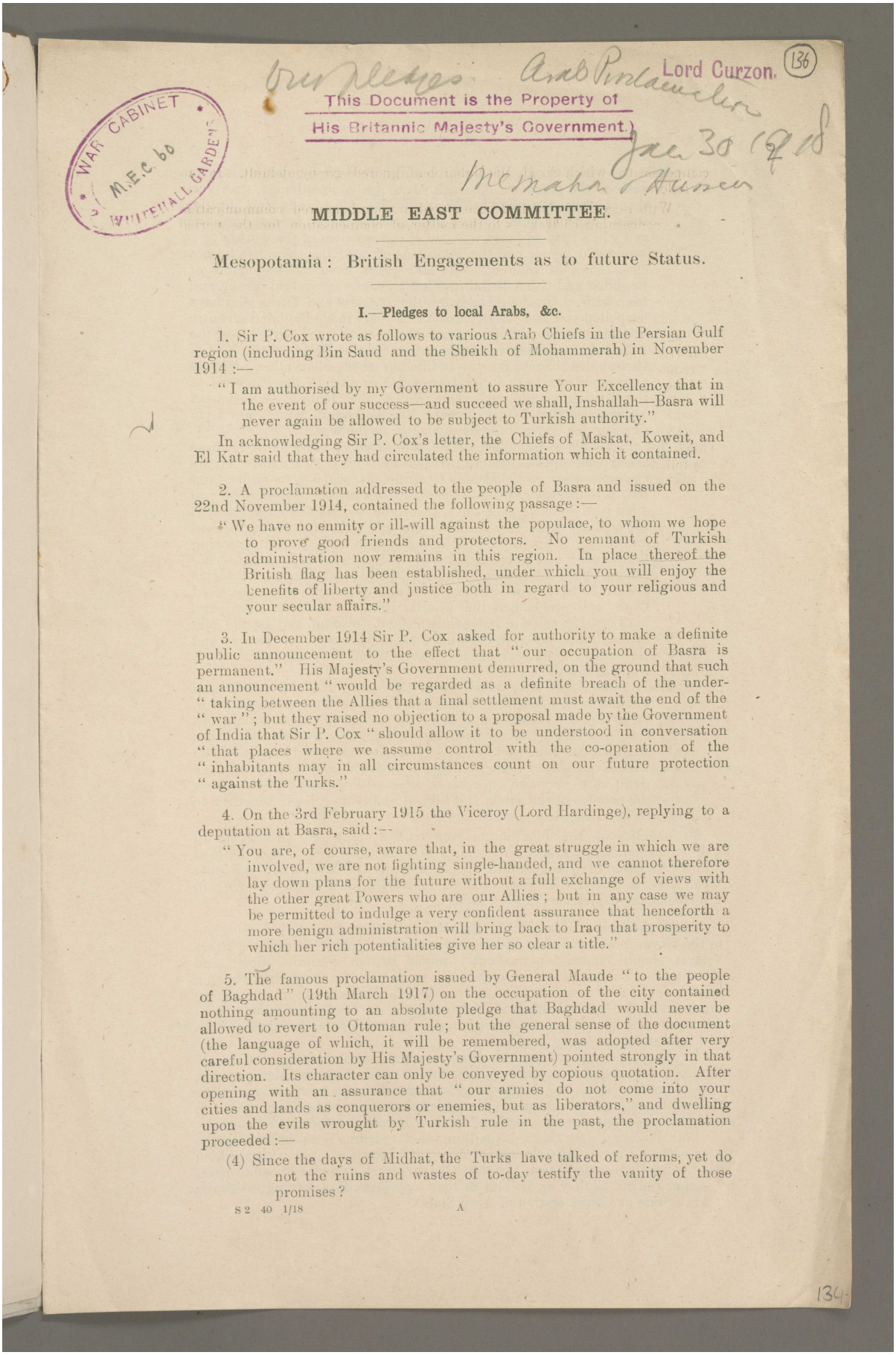
Jan 30 1918

McMahon & Hussein



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MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

Mesopotamia: British Engagements as to future Status.

I.—Pledges to local Arabs, &c.

1. Sir P. Cox wrote as follows to various Arab Chiefs in the Persian Gulf region (including Bin Saud and the Sheikh of Mohammerah) in November 1914:—

"I am authorised by my Government to assure Your Excellency that in the event of our success—and succeed we shall, Inshallah—Basra will never again be allowed to be subject to Turkish authority."

In acknowledging Sir P. Cox's letter, the Chiefs of Maskat, Koweit, and El Katr said that they had circulated the information which it contained.

2. A proclamation addressed to the people of Basra and issued on the 22nd November 1914, contained the following passage:—

"We have no enmity or ill-will against the populace, to whom we hope to prove good friends and protectors. No remnant of Turkish administration now remains in this region. In place thereof the British flag has been established, under which you will enjoy the benefits of liberty and justice both in regard to your religious and your secular affairs."

3. In December 1914 Sir P. Cox asked for authority to make a definite public announcement to the effect that "our occupation of Basra is permanent." His Majesty's Government demurred, on the ground that such an announcement "would be regarded as a definite breach of the under-"taking between the Allies that a final settlement must await the end of the "war"; but they raised no objection to a proposal made by the Government of India that Sir P. Cox "should allow it to be understood in conversation "that places where we assume control with the co-operation of the "inhabitants may in all circumstances count on our future protection "against the Turks."

4. On the 3rd February 1915 the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge), replying to a deputation at Basra, said:—

"You are, of course, aware that, in the great struggle in which we are involved, we are not fighting single-handed, and we cannot therefore lay down plans for the future without a full exchange of views with the other great Powers who are our Allies; but in any case we may be permitted to indulge a very confident assurance that henceforth a more benign administration will bring back to Iraq that prosperity to which her rich potentialities give her so clear a title."

5. The famous proclamation issued by General Maude "to the people of Baghdad" (19th March 1917) on the occupation of the city contained nothing amounting to an absolute pledge that Baghdad would never be allowed to revert to Ottoman rule; but the general sense of the document (the language of which, it will be remembered, was adopted after very careful consideration by His Majesty's Government) pointed strongly in that direction. Its character can only be conveyed by copious quotation. After opening with an assurance that "our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators," and dwelling upon the evils wrought by Turkish rule in the past, the proclamation proceeded:—

(4) Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises?

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(5) It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

(6) Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks who have despoiled you and yours, have for 20 years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

(7) But you people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hejaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

(8) Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them, that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

In conclusion, the inhabitants were called upon "to participate in "the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political "representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that "you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South and West in "realising the aspirations of your race."

6. At the end of March 1917 His Majesty's Government, in a telegram to the Government of India, laid it down as their policy (1) that the Basra Vilayet should remain permanently under British administration; and (2) that the Baghdad Vilayet should be made into an Arab State with a local ruler or Government, but under a British Protectorate in everything but name; the State, behind its Arab *façade*, to be administered as an Arab province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible.

In his recent speech on the War Aims of Great Britain, the Prime Minister declared (5th January 1918) that "Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, "Syria and Palestine are, in our judgment, entitled to a recognition of their "separate national conditions." He added that it would be "impossible to restore" the territories in question "to their former sovereignty."

Both Baghdad and Basra lie within the "red area" as defined by the Anglo-Russo-French Agreements of May 1916, *i.e.*, the zone within which the British Government may "establish such direct or indirect administra- "tion or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the "Arab State or Confederation of Arab States."

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II.—Pledges to King Husain.

7. The Sherif of Mecca's territorial demands, as formulated by him during his negotiations with the High Commissioner for Egypt (Sir Henry MacMahon) in the latter part of 1915 were as follows :—

> "England to acknowledge the independence of the Arab countries, bounded on the north by Mersina-Adana up to the 37° of latitude, on which degree falls Birijik, Urfa, Mardin, Midiat, Amadia Island, up to the border of Persia; on the east by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basra; on the south by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Aden to remain as it is; on the west by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea up to Mersina."

8. The area so defined includes the whole of Mesopotamia and Irak. Replying on the 24th October 1915, Sir H. MacMahon informed the Sherif that, subject to certain modifications (not affecting Mesopotamia), Great Britain was "prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs within the territories included in the limits and boundaries proposed." With regard to Mesopotamia he put in the following *caveat* :—

> "With regard to the vilayets of Baghdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognise that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitate special measures of administrative control in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of the local populations and to safeguard our mutual economic interests."

9. The Sherif replied (5th November 1915) :—

> "As the Provinces of Irak are parts of the pure Arab Kingdom and were in fact the seat of its Governments in the time of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and in the time of all Caliphs who succeeded him; and as in them began the civilisation of the Arabs, and as their towns in those provinces were the first towns built in Islam where the Arab power became so great; therefore these provinces are greatly valued by all Arabs far and near, and their traditions cannot be forgotten by them. Consequently, we cannot satisfy the Arab nations or make them submit to give up such a title to nobility. But in order to render an accord easy, and taking into consideration the assurances mentioned in the fifth article of your letter, to keep and guard our mutual interests in that country as they are one and the same, for all these reasons we might agree to leave under the British Administration for a short time those districts now occupied by the British troops, without the rights of either party being prejudiced thereby (especially those of the Arab nation, which interests are to it economic and vital) and against a suitable sum paid as compensation to the Arab Kingdom for the period of occupation, in order to meet the expenses which every new kingdom is bound to support, at the same time respecting your agreements with the Sheikhs of those districts, and especially those which are essential."

10. The Sherif's proposal was never formally accepted. Sir H. MacMahon merely replied (17th December 1915) :—

> "The Government of Great Britain, as I have already informed you, are ready to give all guarantees of assistance and support within their power to the Arab Kingdom, but their interests demand, as you yourself have recognised, a friendly and stable administration in the vilayet of Baghdad, and the adequate safeguarding of these interests calls for a much fuller and more detailed consideration than the present situation and the urgency of these negotiations permits."

11. The Sherif's reply (1st January 1916) purported to be an acceptance of Sir H. MacMahon's view, but he was careful not to let the question of

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compensation (which Sir H. MacMahon had ignored) go by default. It ran as follows :—

"With regard to what had been stated in your honoured communication concerning El Irak, as to the matter of compensation for the period of occupation, we, in order to strengthen the confidence of Great Britain in our attitude and in our words and actions, really and veritably, and in order to give her evidence of our certainty and assurance in trusting her glorious Government, leave the determination of the amount to the perception of her wisdom and justice."

12. The correspondence, so far as Mesopotamia is concerned, closed with Sir H. MacMahon's reply, in which he merely "took note" of the Sherif's "remarks concerning the Vilayet of Baghdad," and promised that he would "take the question into careful consideration when the enemy has been "defeated and the time for peaceful settlements arrives."

13. On the 25th August 1916 the Sherif, in acknowledging the grant to him of a monthly subsidy of 125,000*l.* by His Majesty's Government, wrote as follows to Sir H. MacMahon :—

"Your Excellency knows that the above-mentioned monthly pay of 125,000*l.* is for the organisation of government and its necessary administrations, and will be deducted from the amount which we left to the justice of Great Britain to decide for our deficient Government, which is under Great Britain's guardianship and protection, during her occupation of Basra and Irak."

No reply appears to have been returned to this letter.

14. In a recent telegram (22nd January 1918) Sir R. Wingate has recommended that, in view of what he describes as the "growing uneasiness among Arabs about the Entente's intentions for Arab countries," he should be authorised at once to give King Husain the following definite assurances :—

(1) that His Majesty's Government is still determined to secure Arab independence and to fulfil the promises made at the beginning of the Hejaz revolt ;

(2) that His Majesty's Government will countenance no permanent foreign or European occupation of Palestine, Irak (except the province of Basra) or Syria after the war ; and

(3) that these districts will be in the possession of their natives, and that foreign interference with Arab countries will be restricted to assistance and protection.

15. Commenting on these recommendations, Sir P. Cox (telegram of 25th January 1918) has protested strongly against Mesopotamia being "treated as a pawn in our negotiations or relations with young Arabs of "Egypt and the Sherif" ; and has urged that, if any new declarations are considered necessary, no reference should be made to the promises of 1915, at all events so far as Mesopotamia is concerned. The Government of India (telegram of 29th January) support Sir P. Cox's view, and recommend that, if further discussion with King Husain at the present stage is really unavoidable, an endeavour should be made to obtain the King's assent to a "definite modification of MacMahon's unfortunate pledge in the light of "actual facts and his acceptance of principle that we should have right to "continue administration in both Vilayets with the object of gradually "building up self-government in both."

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT,
INDIA OFFICE,
30th January 1918.

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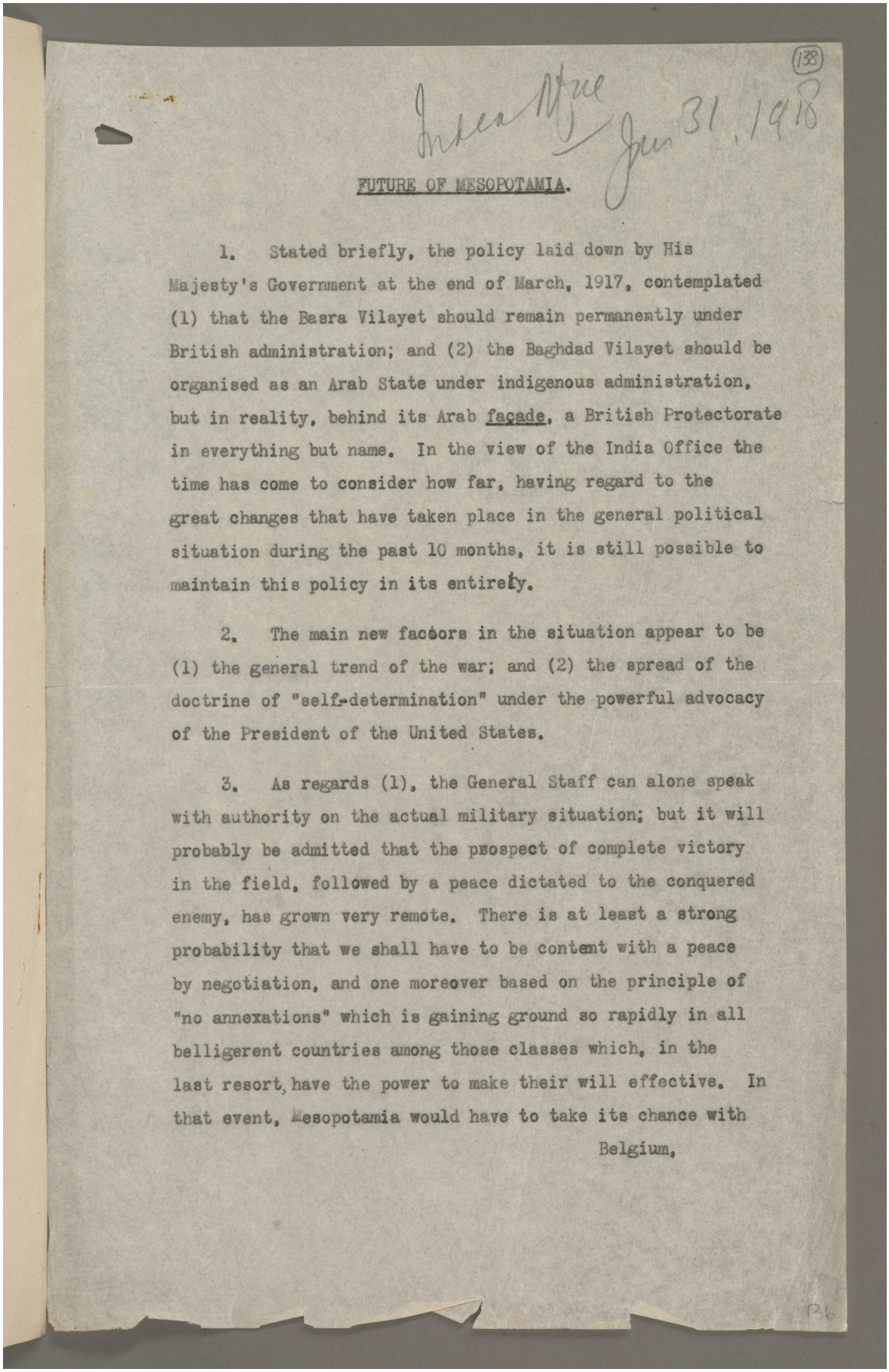

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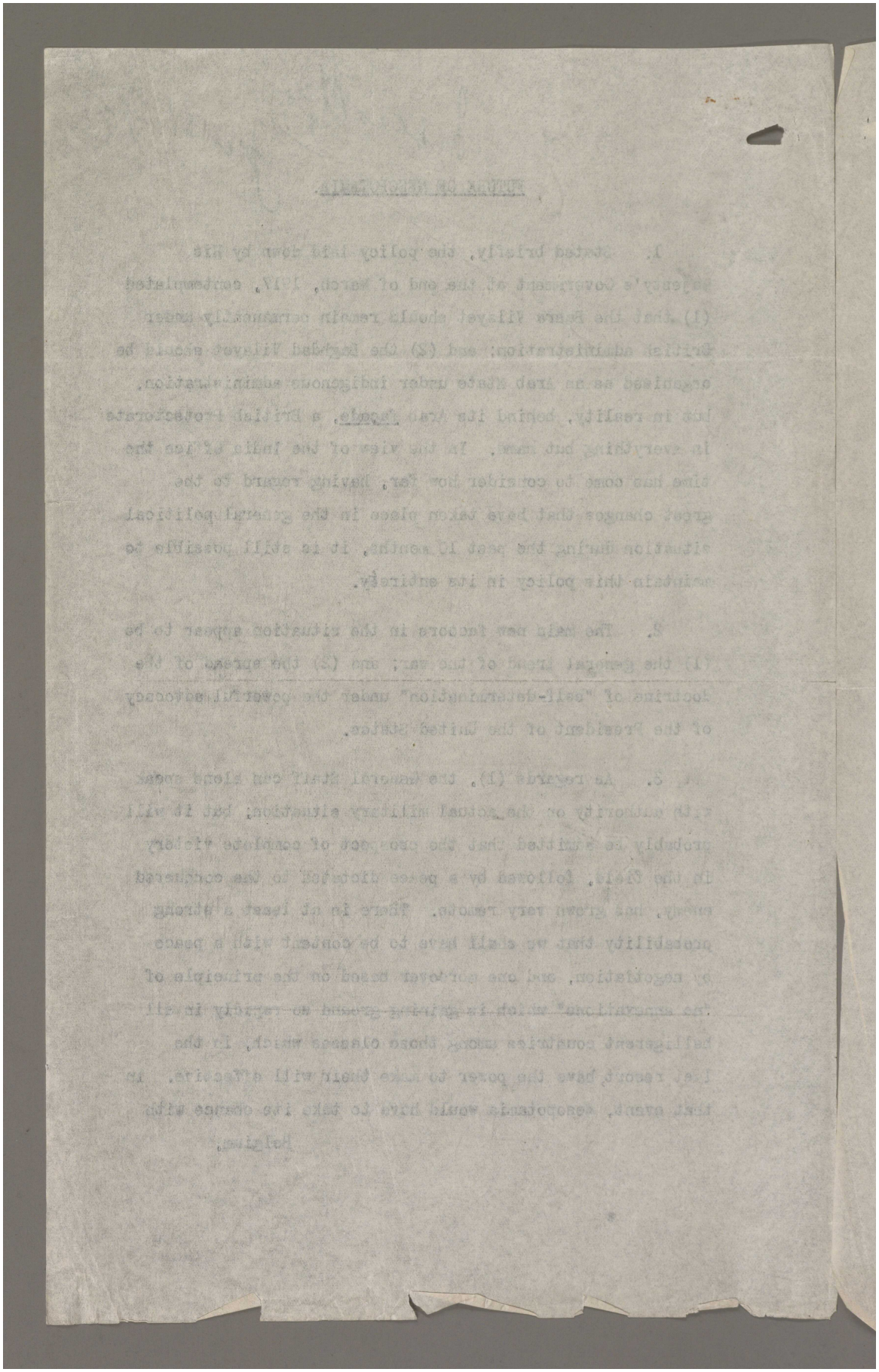
India Office Jan 31. 1918

FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA.

1. Stated briefly, the policy laid down by His Majesty's Government at the end of March, 1917, contemplated (1) that the Basra Vilayet should remain permanently under British administration; and (2) the Baghdad Vilayet should be organised as an Arab State under indigenous administration, but in reality, behind its Arab façade, a British Protectorate in everything but name. In the view of the India Office the time has come to consider how far, having regard to the great changes that have taken place in the general political situation during the past 10 months, it is still possible to maintain this policy in its entirety.

2. The main new factors in the situation appear to be (1) the general trend of the war; and (2) the spread of the doctrine of "self-determination" under the powerful advocacy of the President of the United States.

3. As regards (1), the General Staff can alone speak with authority on the actual military situation; but it will probably be admitted that the prospect of complete victory in the field, followed by a peace dictated to the conquered enemy, has grown very remote. There is at least a strong probability that we shall have to be content with a peace by negotiation, and one moreover based on the principle of "no annexations" which is gaining ground so rapidly in all belligerent countries among those classes which, in the last resort, have the power to make their will effective. In that event, Mesopotamia would have to take its chance with Belgium,



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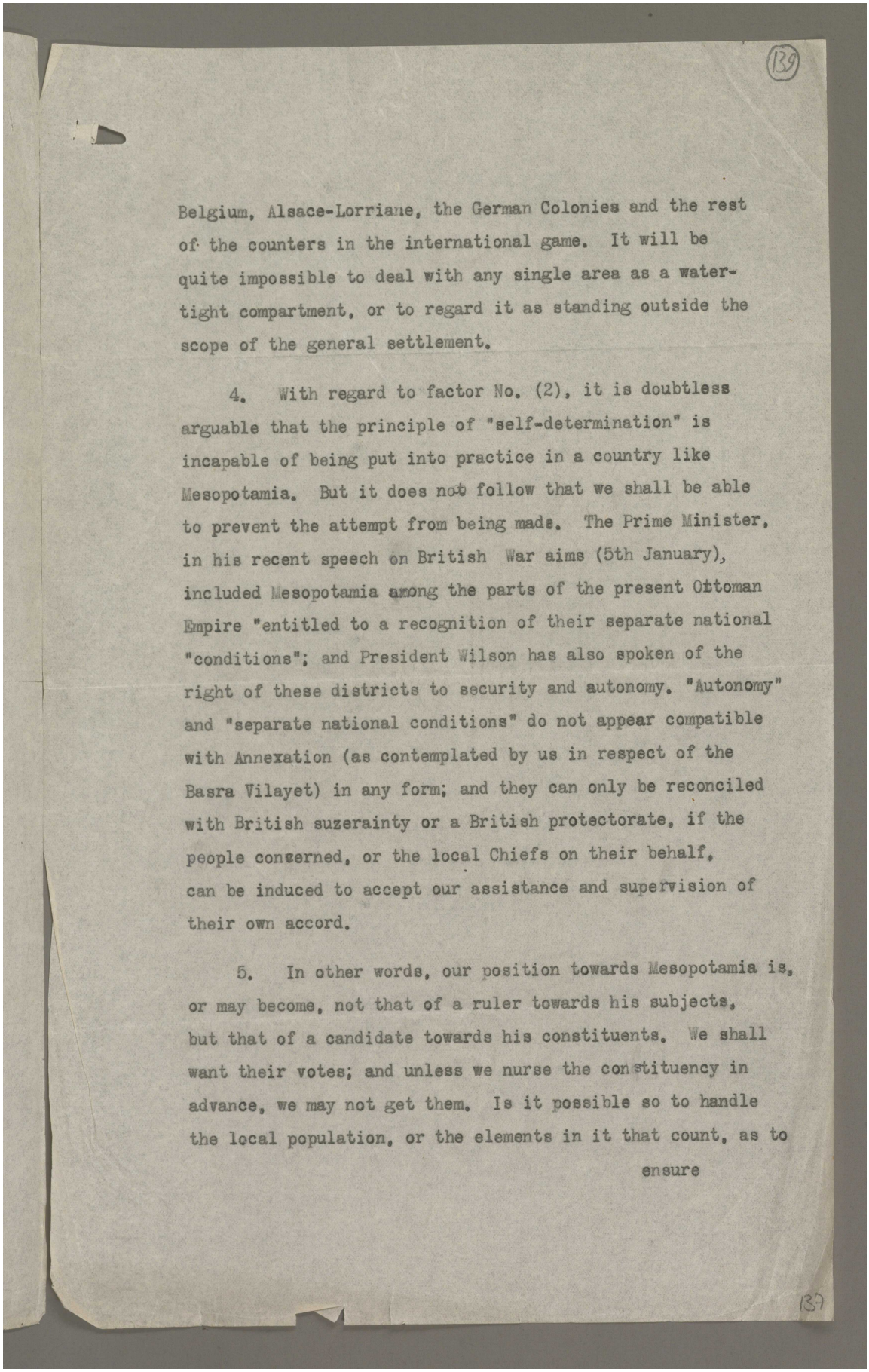

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Belgium, Alsace-Lorriane, the German Colonies and the rest of the counters in the international game. It will be quite impossible to deal with any single area as a water-tight compartment, or to regard it as standing outside the scope of the general settlement.

4. With regard to factor No. (2), it is doubtless arguable that the principle of "self-determination" is incapable of being put into practice in a country like Mesopotamia. But it does not follow that we shall be able to prevent the attempt from being made. The Prime Minister, in his recent speech on British War aims (5th January), included Mesopotamia among the parts of the present Ottoman Empire "entitled to a recognition of their separate national "conditions"; and President Wilson has also spoken of the right of these districts to security and autonomy. "Autonomy" and "separate national conditions" do not appear compatible with Annexation (as contemplated by us in respect of the Basra Vilayet) in any form; and they can only be reconciled with British suzerainty or a British protectorate, if the people concerned, or the local Chiefs on their behalf, can be induced to accept our assistance and supervision of their own accord.

5. In other words, our position towards Mesopotamia is, or may become, not that of a ruler towards his subjects, but that of a candidate towards his constituents. We shall want their votes; and unless we nurse the constituency in advance, we may not get them. Is it possible so to handle the local population, or the elements in it that count, as to ensure

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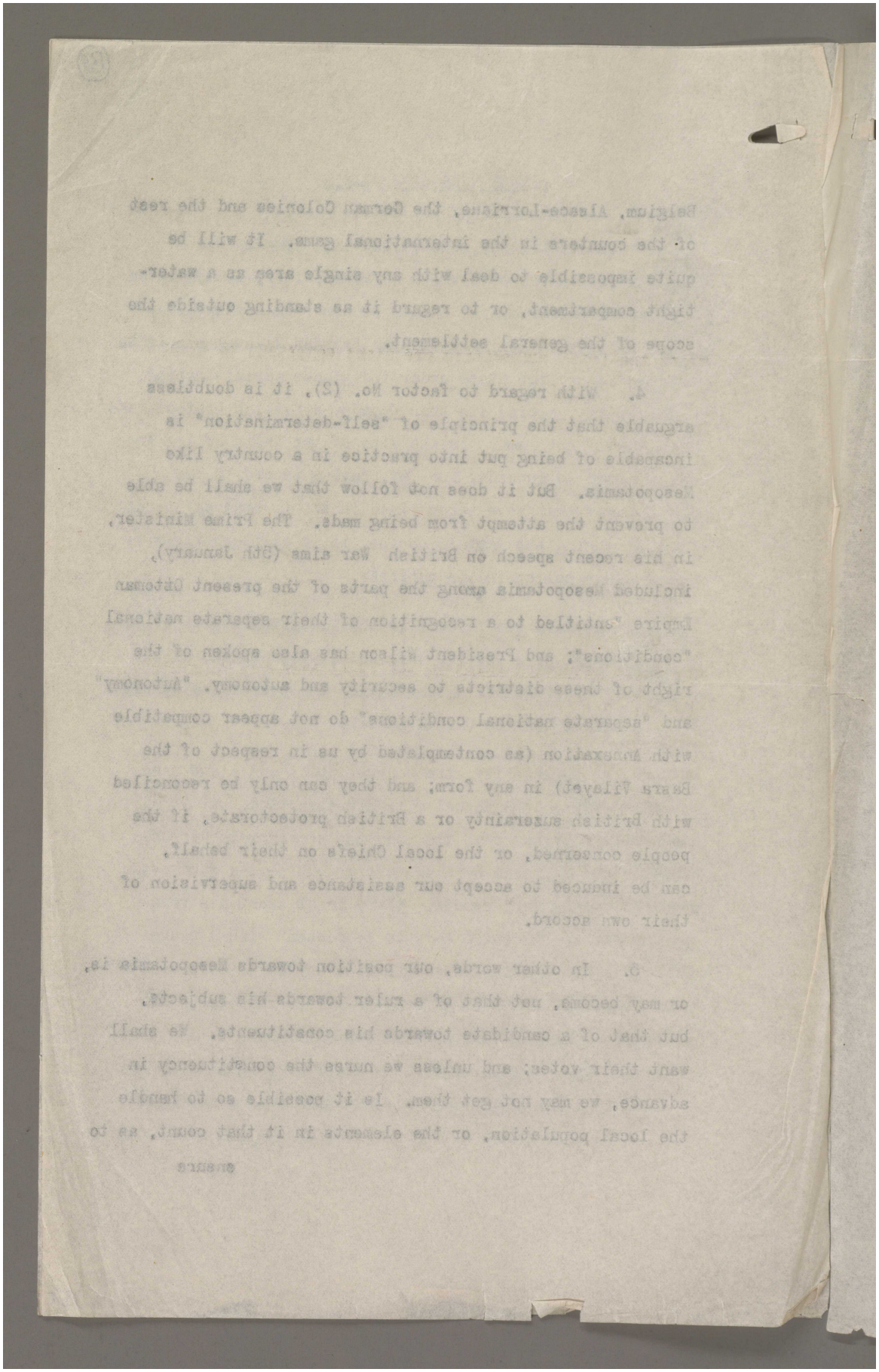

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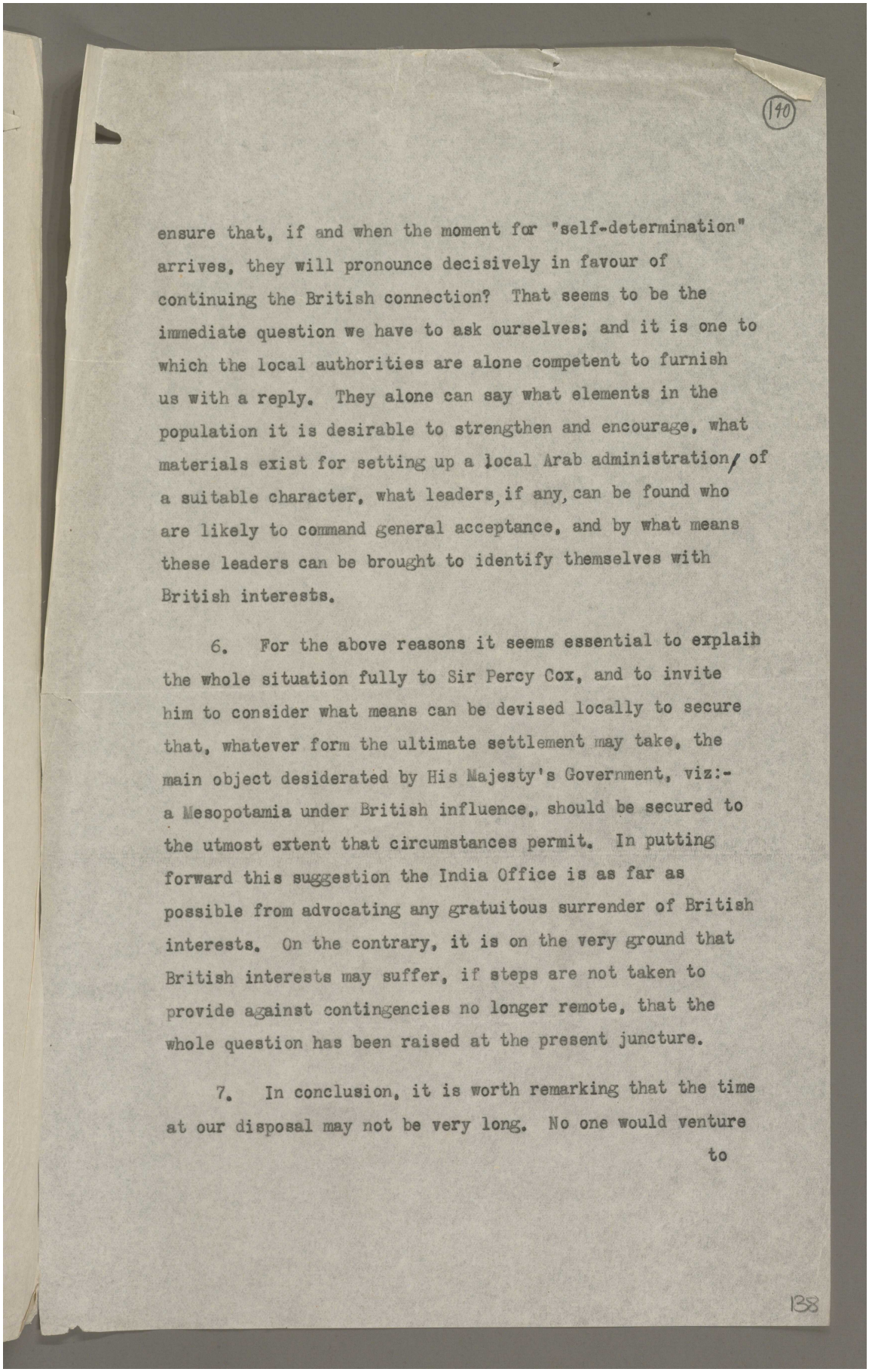

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ensure that, if and when the moment for "self-determination" arrives, they will pronounce decisively in favour of continuing the British connection? That seems to be the immediate question we have to ask ourselves; and it is one to which the local authorities are alone competent to furnish us with a reply. They alone can say what elements in the population it is desirable to strengthen and encourage, what materials exist for setting up a local Arab administration of a suitable character, what leaders, if any, can be found who are likely to command general acceptance, and by what means these leaders can be brought to identify themselves with British interests.

6. For the above reasons it seems essential to explain the whole situation fully to Sir Percy Cox, and to invite him to consider what means can be devised locally to secure that, whatever form the ultimate settlement may take, the main object desiderated by His Majesty's Government, viz:- a Mesopotamia under British influence, should be secured to the utmost extent that circumstances permit. In putting forward this suggestion the India Office is as far as possible from advocating any gratuitous surrender of British interests. On the contrary, it is on the very ground that British interests may suffer, if steps are not taken to provide against contingencies no longer remote, that the whole question has been raised at the present juncture.

7. In conclusion, it is worth remarking that the time at our disposal may not be very long. No one would venture to

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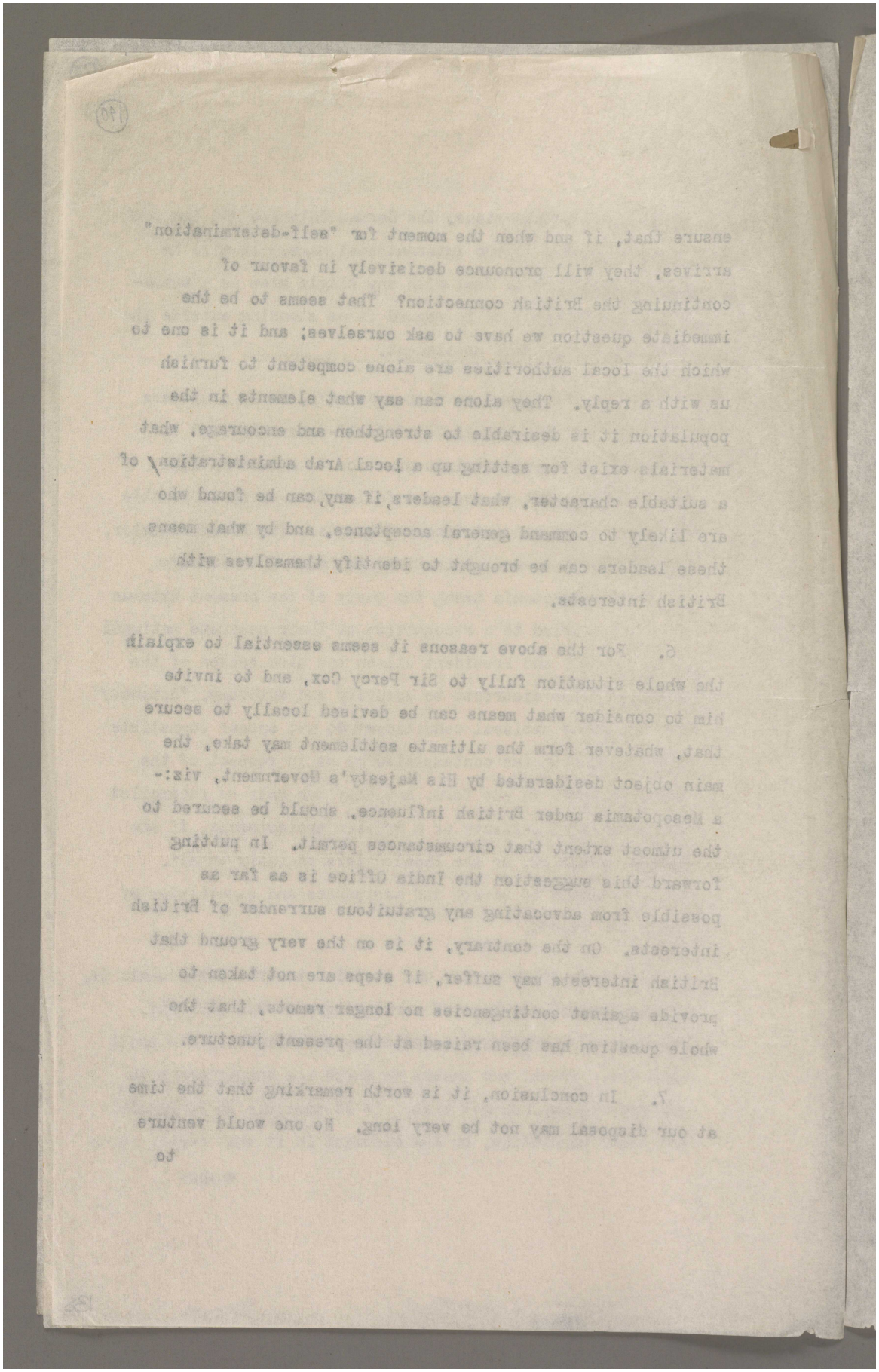

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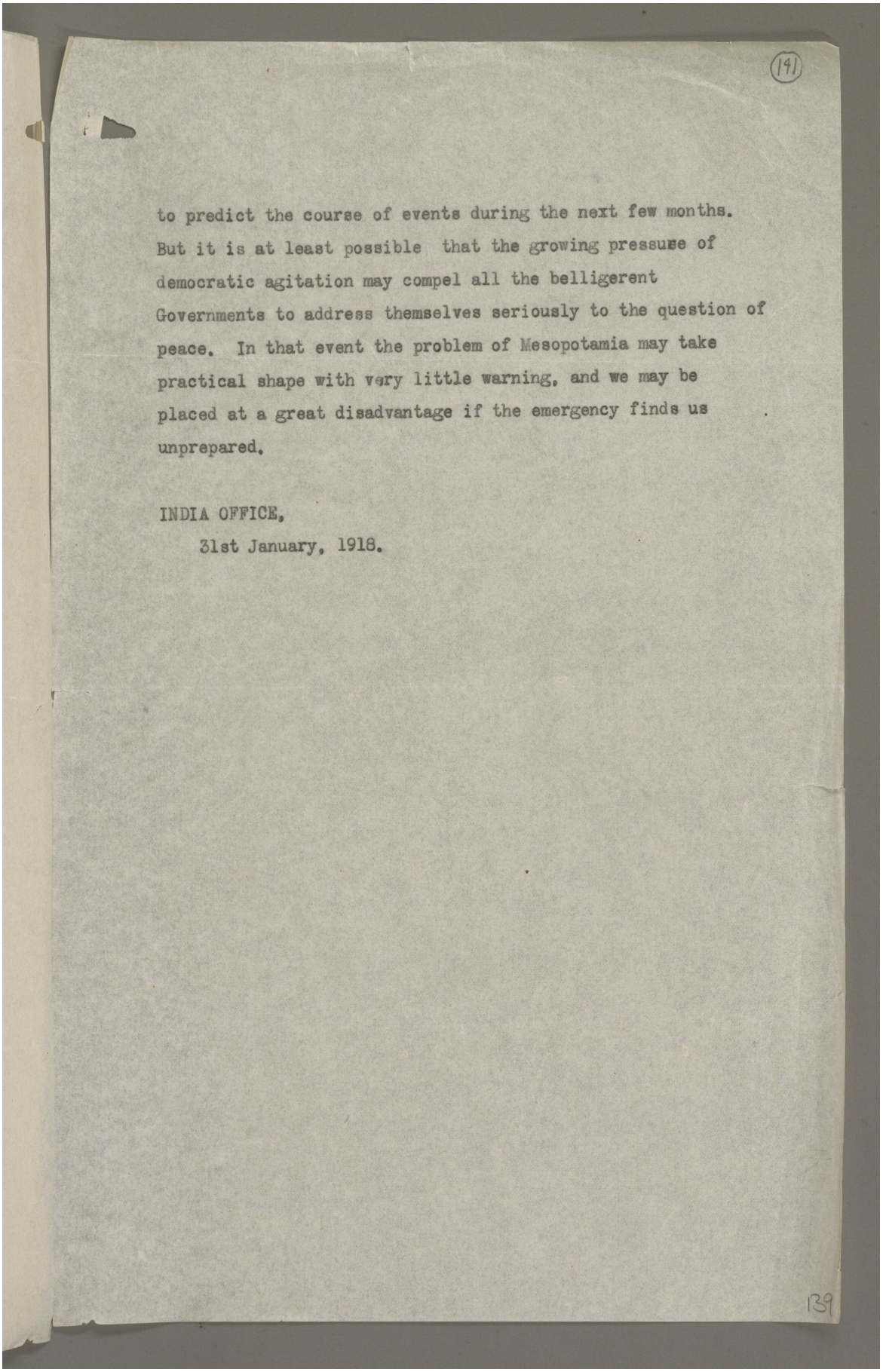

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to predict the course of events during the next few months. But it is at least possible that the growing pressure of democratic agitation may compel all the belligerent Governments to address themselves seriously to the question of peace. In that event the problem of Mesopotamia may take practical shape with very little warning, and we may be placed at a great disadvantage if the emergency finds us unprepared.

INDIA OFFICE,
31st January, 1918.

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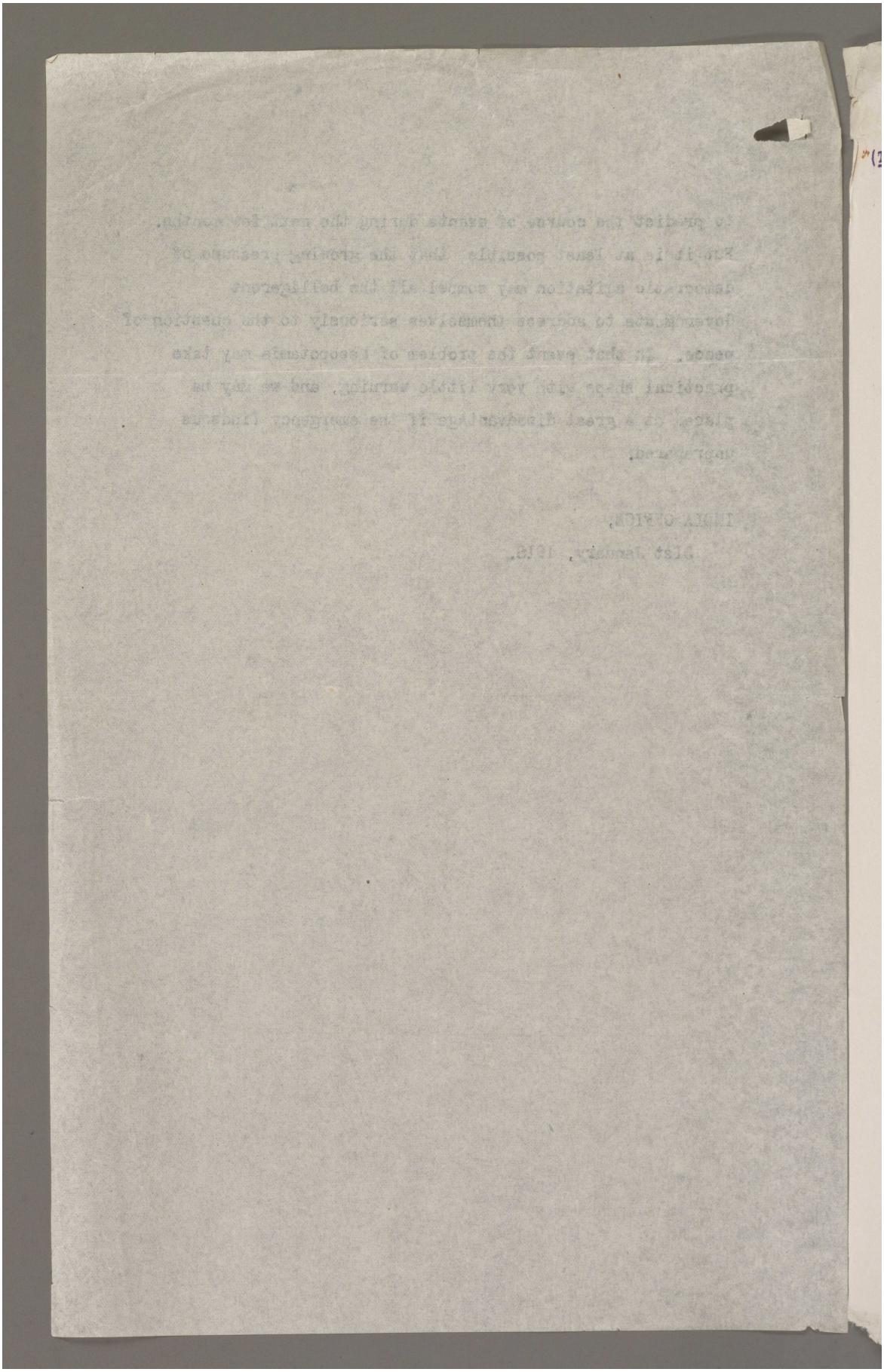

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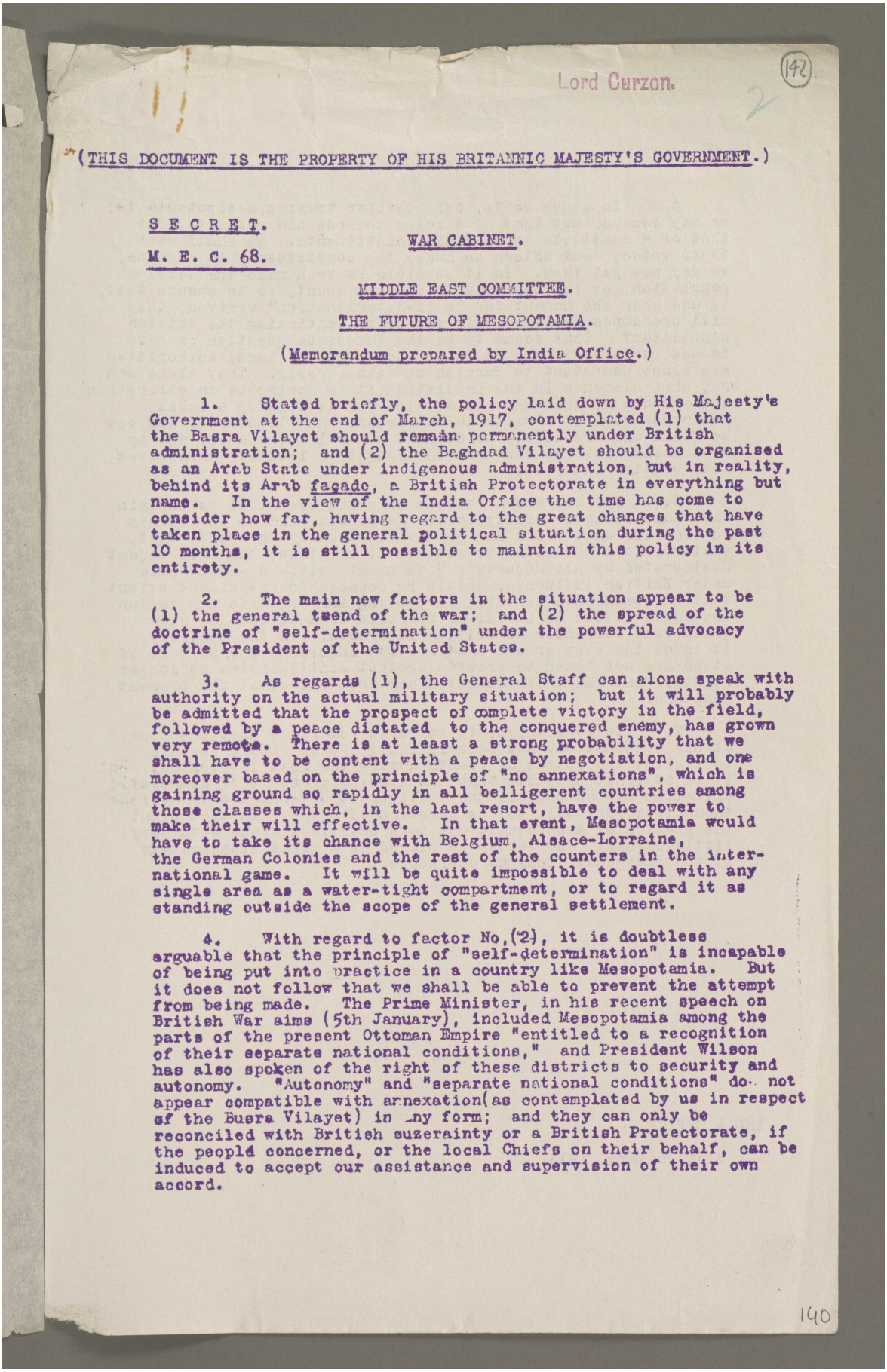

Lord Curzon.

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(THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.)

SECRET.

M. E. C. 68.

WAR CABINET.

MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

THE FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA.

(Memorandum prepared by India Office.)

1. Stated briefly, the policy laid down by His Majesty's Government at the end of March, 1917, contemplated (1) that the Basra Vilayet should remain permanently under British administration; and (2) the Baghdad Vilayet should be organised as an Arab State under indigenous administration, but in reality, behind its Arab façade, a British Protectorate in everything but name. In the view of the India Office the time has come to consider how far, having regard to the great changes that have taken place in the general political situation during the past 10 months, it is still possible to maintain this policy in its entirety.

2. The main new factors in the situation appear to be (1) the general trend of the war; and (2) the spread of the doctrine of "self-determination" under the powerful advocacy of the President of the United States.

3. As regards (1), the General Staff can alone speak with authority on the actual military situation; but it will probably be admitted that the prospect of complete victory in the field, followed by a peace dictated to the conquered enemy, has grown very remote. There is at least a strong probability that we shall have to be content with a peace by negotiation, and one moreover based on the principle of "no annexations", which is gaining ground so rapidly in all belligerent countries among those classes which, in the last resort, have the power to make their will effective. In that event, Mesopotamia would have to take its chance with Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, the German Colonies and the rest of the counters in the international game. It will be quite impossible to deal with any single area as a water-tight compartment, or to regard it as standing outside the scope of the general settlement.

4. With regard to factor No. (2), it is doubtless arguable that the principle of "self-determination" is incapable of being put into practice in a country like Mesopotamia. But it does not follow that we shall be able to prevent the attempt from being made. The Prime Minister, in his recent speech on British War aims (5th January), included Mesopotamia among the parts of the present Ottoman Empire "entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions," and President Wilson has also spoken of the right of these districts to security and autonomy. "Autonomy" and "separate national conditions" do not appear compatible with annexation (as contemplated by us in respect of the Basra Vilayet) in any form; and they can only be reconciled with British suzerainty or a British Protectorate, if the people concerned, or the local Chiefs on their behalf, can be induced to accept our assistance and supervision of their own accord.

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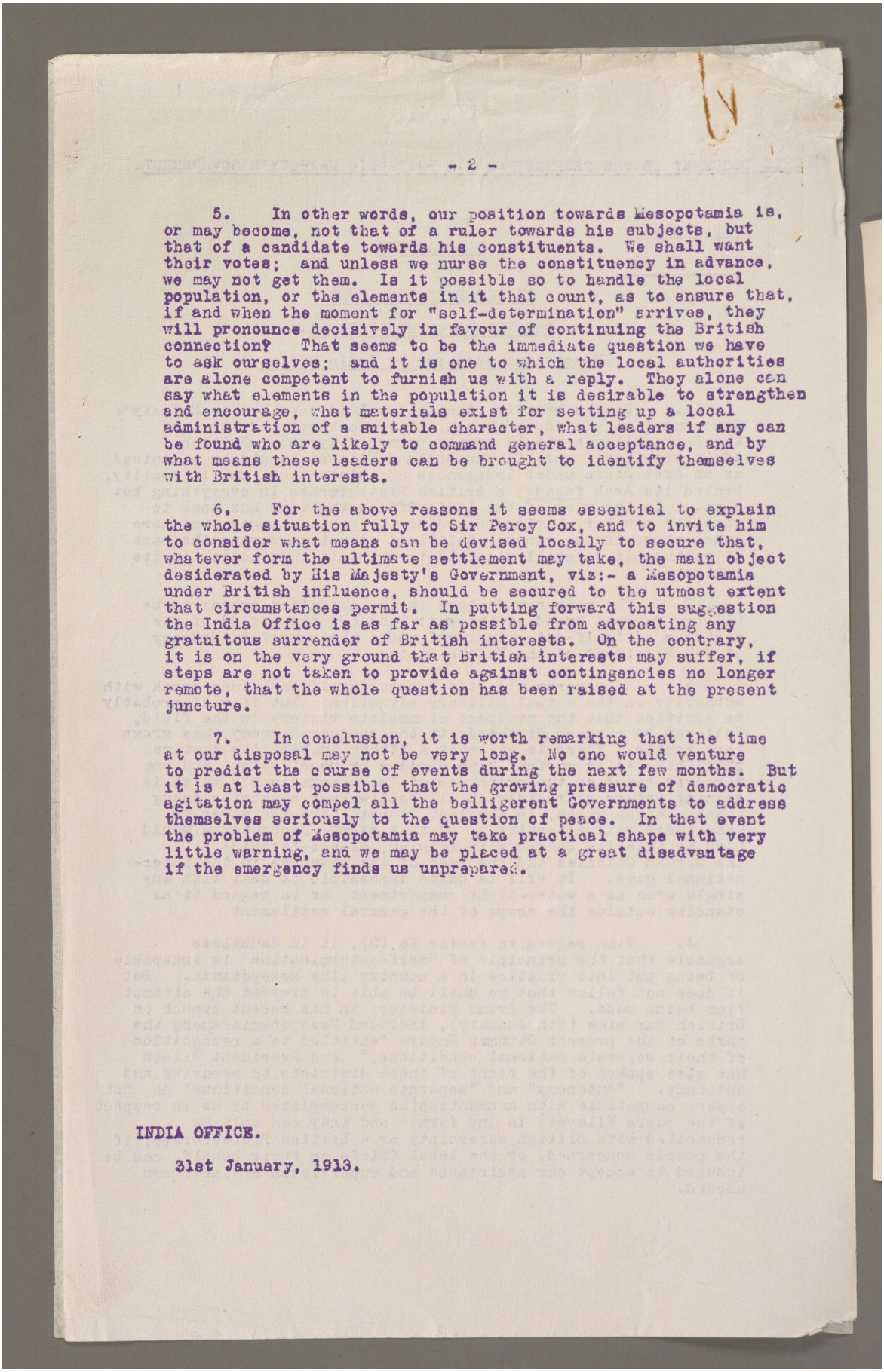

5. In other words, our position towards Mesopotamia is, or may become, not that of a ruler towards his subjects, but that of a candidate towards his constituents. We shall want their votes; and unless we nurse the constituency in advance, we may not get them. Is it possible so to handle the local population, or the elements in it that count, as to ensure that, if and when the moment for "self-determination" arrives, they will pronounce decisively in favour of continuing the British connection? That seems to be the immediate question we have to ask ourselves; and it is one to which the local authorities are alone competent to furnish us with a reply. They alone can say what elements in the population it is desirable to strengthen and encourage, what materials exist for setting up a local administration of a suitable character, what leaders if any can be found who are likely to command general acceptance, and by what means these leaders can be brought to identify themselves with British interests.

6. For the above reasons it seems essential to explain the whole situation fully to Sir Percy Cox, and to invite him to consider what means can be devised locally to secure that, whatever form the ultimate settlement may take, the main object desiderated by His Majesty's Government, viz:- a Mesopotamia under British influence, should be secured to the utmost extent that circumstances permit. In putting forward this suggestion the India Office is as far as possible from advocating any gratuitous surrender of British interests. On the contrary, it is on the very ground that British interests may suffer, if steps are not taken to provide against contingencies no longer remote, that the whole question has been raised at the present juncture.

7. In conclusion, it is worth remarking that the time at our disposal may not be very long. No one would venture to predict the course of events during the next few months. But it is at least possible that the growing pressure of democratic agitation may compel all the belligerent Governments to address themselves seriously to the question of peace. In that event the problem of Mesopotamia may take practical shape with very little warning, and we may be placed at a great disadvantage if the emergency finds us unprepared.

INDIA OFFICE.

31st January, 1913.

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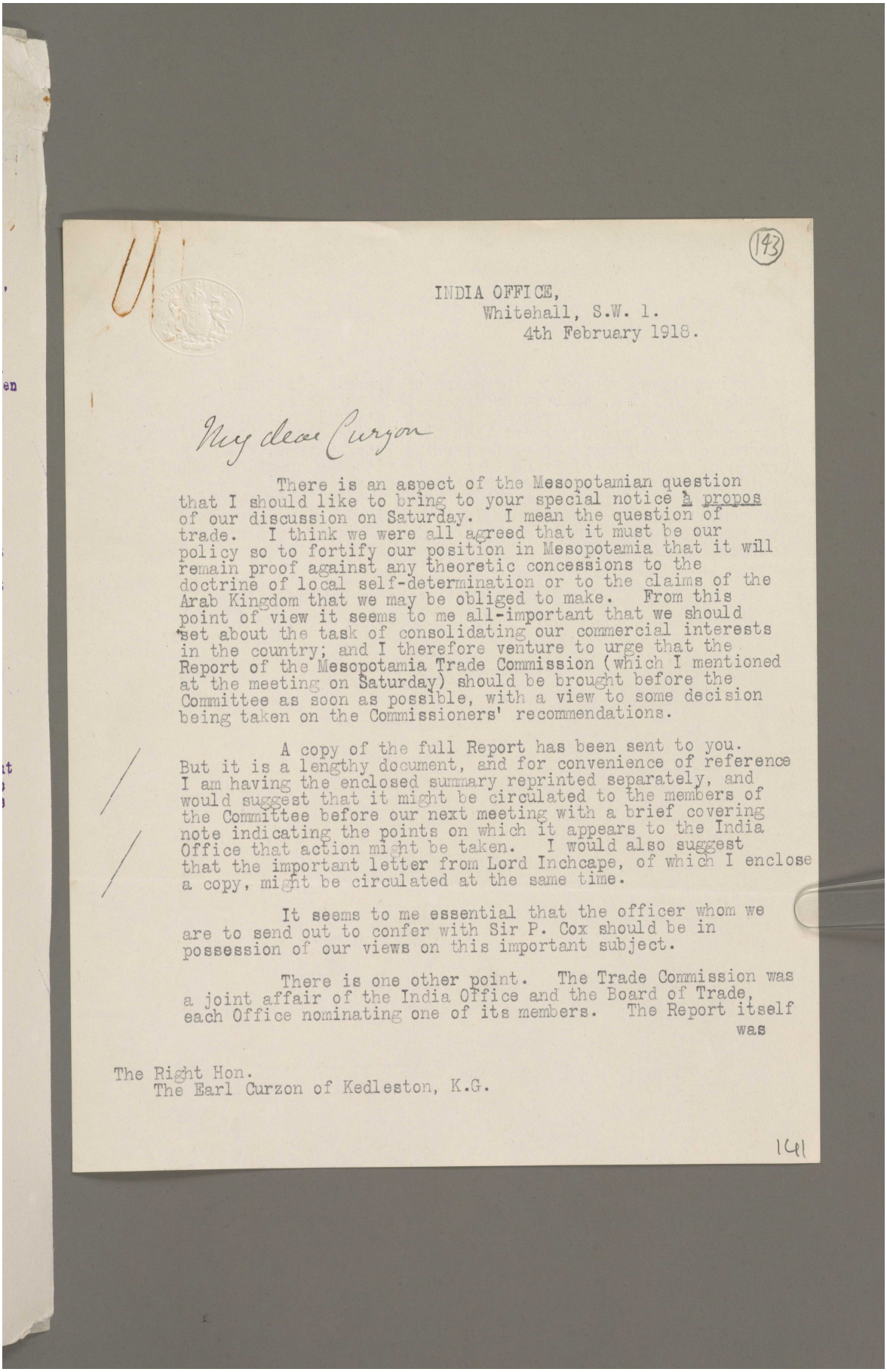

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INDIA OFFICE,
Whitehall, S.W. 1.
4th February 1918.

My dear Curzon

There is an aspect of the Mesopotamian question that I should like to bring to your special notice à propos of our discussion on Saturday. I mean the question of trade. I think we were all agreed that it must be our policy so to fortify our position in Mesopotamia that it will remain proof against any theoretic concessions to the doctrine of local self-determination or to the claims of the Arab Kingdom that we may be obliged to make. From this point of view it seems to me all-important that we should set about the task of consolidating our commercial interests in the country; and I therefore venture to urge that the Report of the Mesopotamia Trade Commission (which I mentioned at the meeting on Saturday) should be brought before the Committee as soon as possible, with a view to some decision being taken on the Commissioners' recommendations.

A copy of the full Report has been sent to you. But it is a lengthy document, and for convenience of reference I am having the enclosed summary reprinted separately, and would suggest that it might be circulated to the members of the Committee before our next meeting with a brief covering note indicating the points on which it appears to the India Office that action might be taken. I would also suggest that the important letter from Lord Inchcape, of which I enclose a copy, might be circulated at the same time.

It seems to me essential that the officer whom we are to send out to confer with Sir P. Cox should be in possession of our views on this important subject.

There is one other point. The Trade Commission was a joint affair of the India Office and the Board of Trade, each Office nominating one of its members. The Report itself was

The Right Hon.
The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.

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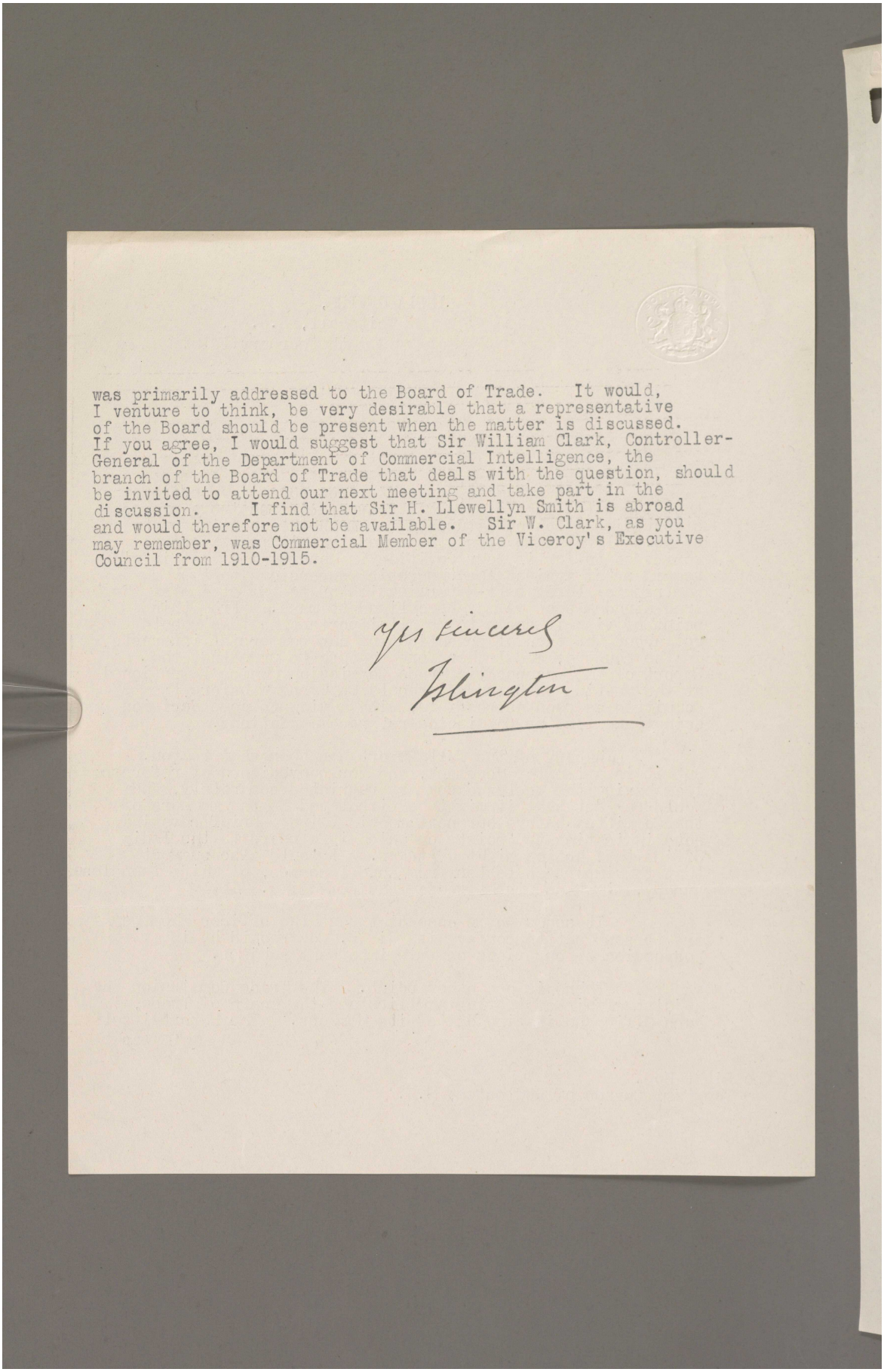

was primarily addressed to the Board of Trade. It would, I venture to think, be very desirable that a representative of the Board should be present when the matter is discussed. If you agree, I would suggest that Sir William Clark, Controller-General of the Department of Commercial Intelligence, the branch of the Board of Trade that deals with the question, should be invited to attend our next meeting and take part in the discussion. I find that Sir H. Llewellyn Smith is abroad and would therefore not be available. Sir W. Clark, as you may remember, was Commercial Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1910-1915.

Yrs sincerely
Islington

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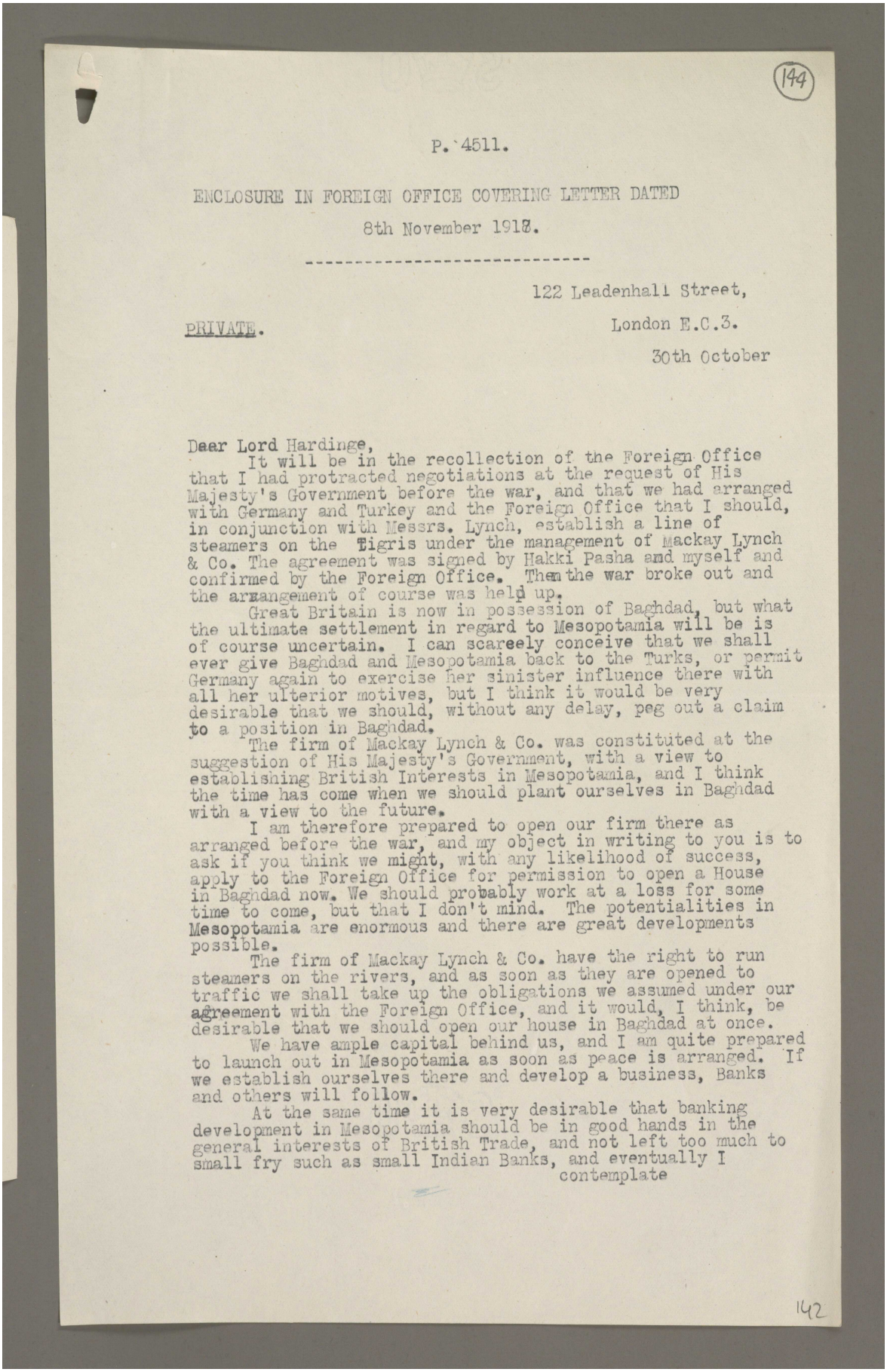

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P.`4511.

ENCLOSURE IN FOREIGN OFFICE COVERING LETTER DATED

8th November 1918.

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122 Leadenhall Street,

PRIVATE. London E.C.3.

30th October

Daar Lord Hardinge,

It will be in the recollection of the Foreign Office that I had protracted negotiations at the request of His Majesty's Government before the war, and that we had arranged with Germany and Turkey and the Foreign Office that I should, in conjunction with Messrs. Lynch, establish a line of steamers on the Tigris under the management of Mackay Lynch & Co. The agreement was signed by Hakki Pasha and myself and confirmed by the Foreign Office. Then the war broke out and the arrangement of course was held up.

Great Britain is now in possession of Baghdad, but what the ultimate settlement in regard to Mesopotamia will be is of course uncertain. I can scareely conceive that we shall ever give Baghdad and Mesopotamia back to the Turks, or permit Germany again to exercise her sinister influence there with all her ulterior motives, but I think it would be very desirable that we should, without any delay, peg out a claim to a position in Baghdad.

The firm of Mackay Lynch & Co. was constituted at the suggestion of His Majesty's Government, with a view to establishing British Interests in Mesopotamia, and I think the time has come when we should plant ourselves in Baghdad with a view to the future.

I am therefore prepared to open our firm there as arranged before the war, and my object in writing to you is to ask if you think we might, with any likelihood of success, apply to the Foreign Office for permission to open a House in Baghdad now. We should probably work at a loss for some time to come, but that I don't mind. The potentialities in Mesopotamia are enormous and there are great developments possible.

The firm of Mackay Lynch & Co. have the right to run steamers on the rivers, and as soon as they are opened to traffic we shall take up the obligations we assumed under our agreement with the Foreign Office, and it would, I think, be desirable that we should open our house in Baghdad at once.

We have ample capital behind us, and I am quite prepared to launch out in Mesopotamia as soon as peace is arranged. If we establish ourselves there and develop a business, Banks and others will follow.

At the same time it is very desirable that banking development in Mesopotamia should be in good hands in the general interests of British Trade, and not left too much to small fry such as small Indian Banks, and eventually I contemplate

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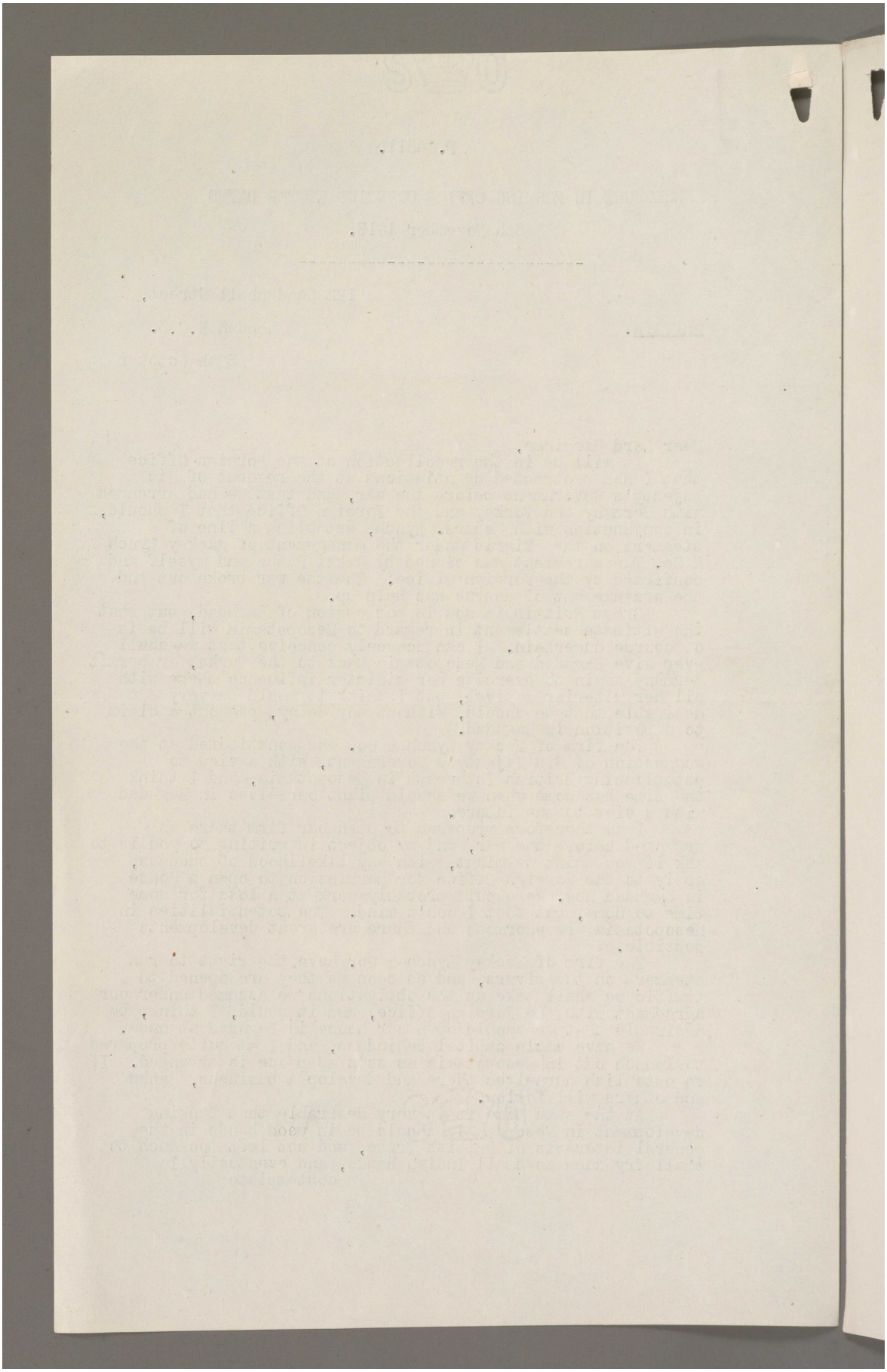

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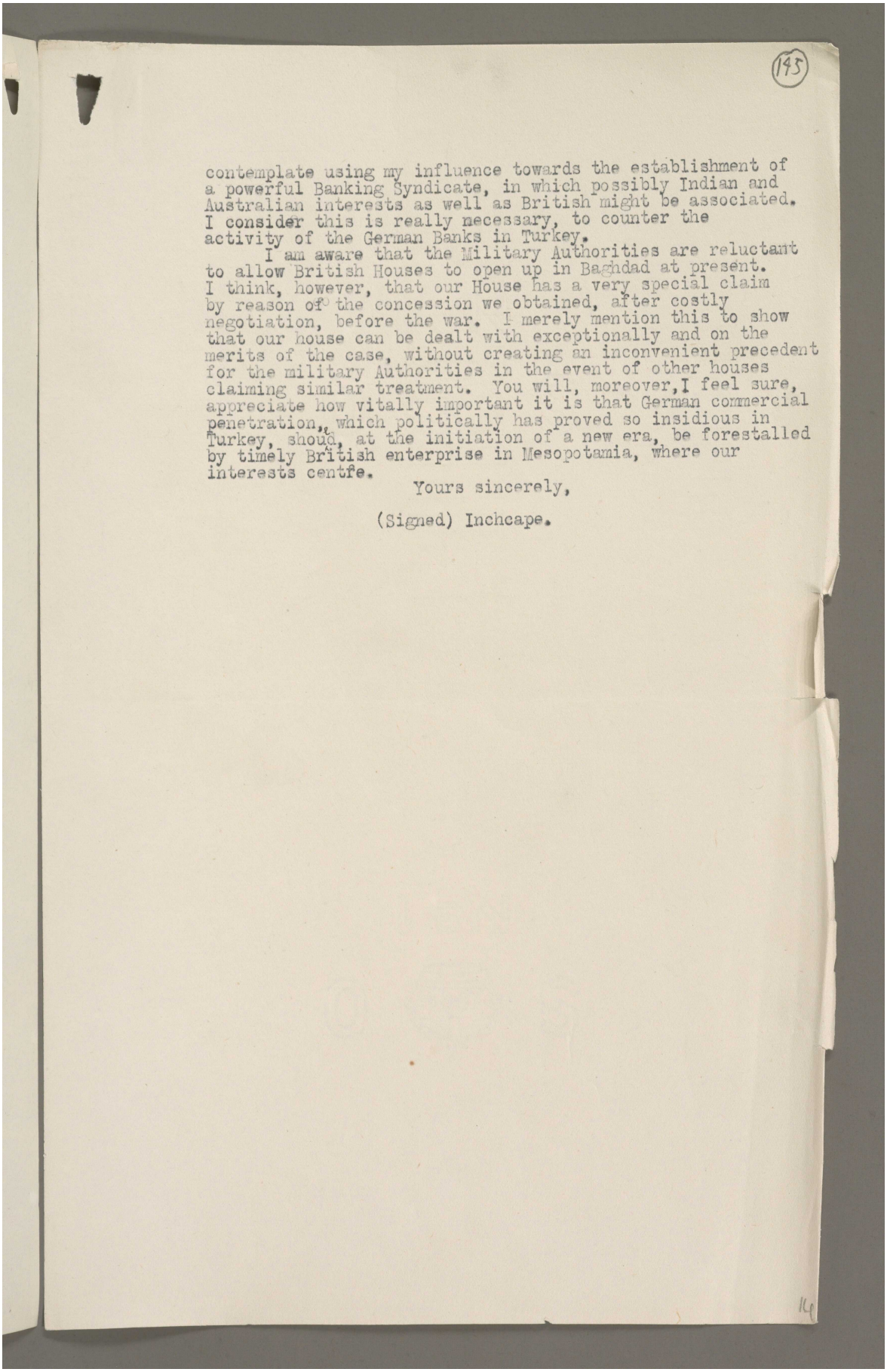

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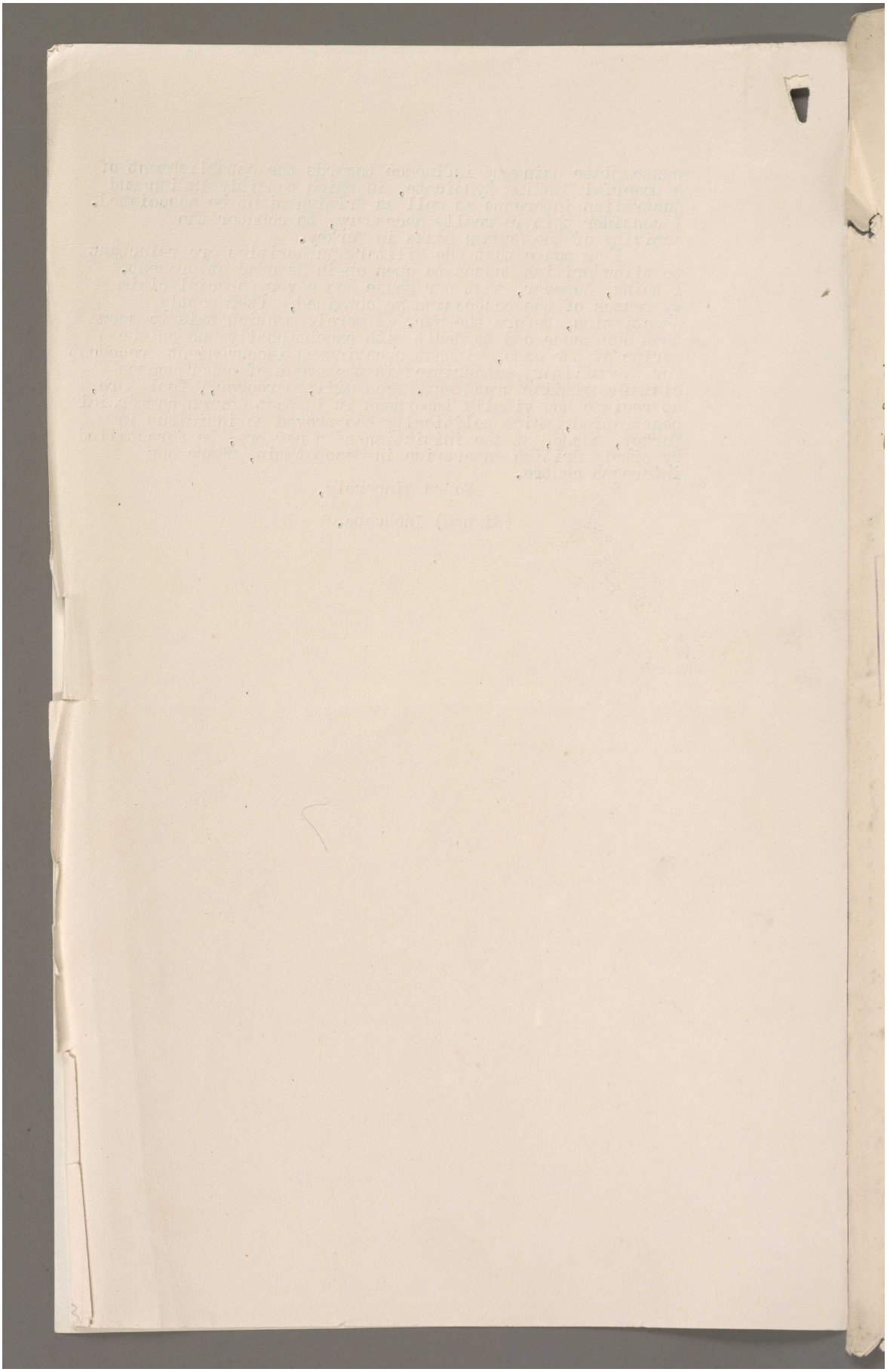
contemplate using my influence towards the establishment of a powerful Banking Syndicate, in which possibly Indian and Australian interests as well as British might be associated. I consider this is really necessary, to counter the activity of the German Banks in Turkey.

I am aware that the Military Authorities are reluctant to allow British Houses to open up in Baghdad at present. I think, however, that our House has a very special claim by reason of the concession we obtained, after costly negotiation, before the war. I merely mention this to show that our house can be dealt with exceptionally and on the merits of the case, without creating an inconvenient precedent for the military Authorities in the event of other houses claiming similar treatment. You will, moreover, I feel sure, appreciate how vitally important it is that German commercial penetration, which politically has proved so insidious in Turkey, should, at the initiation of a new era, be forestalled by timely British enterprise in Mesopotamia, where our interests centre.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Inchcape.



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Preliminary Issue.

Copy to 24/7/17 F.O. D.M.?

Indexed.

P ~~2960~~ 2572 1917

Approved Send with letter J 4/2

N.B. This is a preliminary issue. The summary in its final form, as printed in paragraphs 127-141 (pp. 61-65) of the full Report, is somewhat modified & abbreviated. It is the latter that is being reprinted for circulation to the Commr, if approved by the Chairman. 4/2/18

ENCLOSURE IN
INDIA FOREIGN SECRETARY'S
Letter. No. 46 M
Dated 15 JUN 1917
Received 20 JUL 1917

THE PROSPECTS OF BRITISH TRADE IN MESOPOTAMIA AND THE PERSIAN GULF.

[SUMMARY.]

Paras. 1-4. German competition in the Gulf.

1. Just before the war the total sea-borne trade of the Gulf, excluding coasting and local trade, was valued at about 14½ millions sterling of which the British share was 66½ per cent. The pecuniary value of the trade was no great matter and its loss would not have seriously affected British commerce. Commercial success in the Gulf has, however, involved the assumption of political responsibilities and these cannot be lightly surrendered. The Germans realised that British political predominance achieved through commerce was vulnerable through commerce and they accordingly set themselves to win as large a share of the trade as possible. In 1895 they had 2 per cent. of the trade and no shipping in the Gulf. In 1913, they possessed at least 8 per cent. of the trade and their steamers represented 14 per cent. of the Gulf shipping. Their commercial competition was the cutting edge of a vast political intrigue which was organised with the object of obtaining control over the railway route to the East and by this means exerting pressure upon the British Empire at a sensitive point.

Paras. 5-6. Measures for protection of British interests after the war.

2. The war has wiped out German commerce, and the occupation of Mesopotamia by our troops has restored and strengthened Great Britain's political position in the Gulf. If the war ends favourably for the Allies, British shipping and commerce will recommence operations under conditions which, politically, could hardly be more advantageous.

Nevertheless, it is too much to hope that the Baghdad Railway question will be eliminated for ever from world politics or that no foreign power will ever again be dazzled by the prospect of becoming master of the land route to Asia. No precautions should, therefore, be omitted which might have the effect of discouraging politico-commercial adventures. The obvious and effective means of defence would be the closure of the Persian Gulf for a period of years to all foreign shipping by expansion of the defensive declaration of 1903. Great Britain might justly claim such a monopoly on the ground of the lives and treasure which have been expended in the Gulf during the last 300 years, the prerogatives which have been gained, and the political engagements

RECEIVED IN 20 JUL 1917 POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

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which have been entered into, while the peace of the world would benefit if the Gulf were no longer a forcing house for political intrigue.

Paras. 7-8.

3. Political considerations will, however doubtless, militate against the adoption of this course and resort must, therefore, be had to alternative methods in order to secure for British shipping, privileges everywhere in the Gulf as compared with the shipping of other nationalities. Whatever measures may be adopted by the Government of India in this connection can be made applicable to the port of Basrah, and if any restrictions are imposed upon Japanese shipping with regard to the Indian coasting trade, British shipping will benefit. At Maskat and the Arabian ports in particular, advantage should be taken of the influence wielded by Great Britain to require the Rulers to refuse to foreigners permission to reside or carry on business. Special privileges should be arranged for British shipping at various ports, as circumstances permit.

Paras. 9-12. Organisation of British shipping.

4. Next, with a view to consolidate British commercial interests against attack, the shipping companies concerned should be organised so as to render the most efficient and economical service possible as public carriers. The interests of the British trading community between the United Kingdom and the Persian Gulf would probably best be served by a combination between the powerful British shipping authorities. But, whereas in the past the interests of the shipping companies have naturally been directed towards the earning of dividends for their shareholders, circumstances may imperatively demand that in the future the interests of the carriers shall be co-ordinated with those of commerce. Shipping companies cannot be expected to squander the dividends of their shareholders in a vain fight against the subsidised attack of foreign trade associations or foreign governments, and combination between the manufacturer, shipper and marketer may conceivably become necessary for protection against concerted competition, and in order to ensure full consideration being paid to world-wide traffic conditions and the commercial possibilities of the different parts of the Empire. Further, while there are acknowledged objections to the grant of shipping subsidies, unless as remuneration for the performance of specific duties, yet if competition is obviously directed to political ends, it would seem that the British Government may reasonably be expected to advance into the open and take up the struggle with such weapons as may be most effective.

At the outset, a line or a combination of lines affording direct communication between

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the United Kingdom and the Gulf should provide sailings, on as regular a schedule as possible, at such frequent intervals as the trade may warrant. A direct mail between England and the Gulf, with appropriate subsidy, may conceivably be justified at a later date, and better facilities than in the past for the carriage of passengers will probably be required.

Para. 13.

As regards shipping communications with India, so long as foreign competition can be excluded on this route, there would seem to be no ground for favouring a monopoly. It is desirable that competition from India should have free play in order that Indian trade may reap all possible benefit from the competition. Measures have been suggested with a view to meeting complaints from shippers and consignees. Until exports from the Gulf to India are largely developed, the coastal trade cannot be expected to pay well, seeing that during a considerable part of the year the ships return comparatively empty from the Gulf. Special precautions should be taken to obviate trans-shipment difficulties and delays in India.

Paras. 14-17. The three spheres of trade in the Gulf.

5. The question of the subsidiary measures to be taken to develope and safeguard British commerce in the Gulf will now be discussed with reference to each of the three spheres into which the trade currents flow, namely :—

(1) Mesopotamia ;

(2) the Persian Ports and South Persia ; and

(3) the Ports on the Coast of Arabia.

Mr. Lloyd in his report of 1908 described the dimensions and conditions of British trade in Mesopotamia and drew attention to the danger to be anticipated from the rapidly growing German trade with the advantage of subsidies and the cleverly devised system of through rates. The Germans had, just before the war, achieved a position which enabled them to cause a great deal of inconvenience and even loss to British trade and shipping, although, on the whole, British merchants retained the great advantage which they derived from their long start. German trade has now dropped to the bottom of the ladder and if the Resolutions of the Paris Conference are brought into effect, it will be unable to start climbing again for a period of years after the conclusion of peace. When this period comes to an end, however, it must be expected that German competition will re-appear in Mesopotamia as in other places, assuming that the Persian Gulf will remain open to foreign shipping.

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Paras. 18-26. British and German methods in Mesopotamia contrasted.

6. Mr. Lloyd held that the successful German competition, while mainly based upon the special advantages which their trade and shipping enjoyed, was also attributable partly to their superior business methods. British merchants in his view were by comparison somewhat supine and unenterprising and were content with the comfortable profits which they were making. The contrast between the methods of the British and German merchants must, however, be ascribed very largely to deep-seated causes and was not peculiar to Basrah. The Report of the French Chamber of Commerce in China indicates that a similar comparison could legitimately be drawn between German and French merchants competing at Chinese Ports. The German political organisation and their system of education must be held responsible for the high standard of business efficiency maintained by the merchants. It is to be hoped that after the war British commerce will be conducted on more up-to-date lines and that the interests of the producer and marketer of goods will be scientifically harmonised. A few suggestions of a general nature are offered for the information of British firms who contemplate opening business in the Gulf. For the proper enlightenment of Chambers of Commerce and individual merchants, however, it is essential that, as recommended by Sir Percy Cox, a commercial intelligence officer should be appointed in the occupied territories at the earliest possible date. It might also be desirable that, as recommended by the Indian Chamber of Commerce at Bombay, that officer should have the benefit of the advice and assistance of an Indian attaché.

Commercial Bureau.

Paras. 27-37. Condition which militated against commerce before the war.

7. Commerce in Mesopotamia before the war was cramped and confined owing, firstly, to the paucity of exports for which imports could be exchanged and, secondly, to the inadequacy and insecurity of the internal communications. The inefficiency of the Turkish administration was ultimately to blame for the undeveloped state of the country, and now that the blight has been removed, enterprise and reform should bring about a happy change. Scanty exports were due to the backward condition of agriculture which in itself is attributable mainly to the uncontrolled vagaries of the rivers, coupled with scarcity of labour and insecurity of life and property.

Agriculture.

The main agricultural products of the Basrah Vilayat before the war were dates, rice, wheat, barley, millet, melons, vegetables, fruit. It is estimated that the total area cultivated was about 350,000 acres of which 100,000 were under rice, 70,000 under barley, 30,000 under millet, 20,000 under wheat and

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20,000 under vegetables. Date groves accounted for about 100,000 acres. These estimates must, however, be accepted with great caution since the data on which they are based are by no means reliable. Dates have hitherto formed the most valuable item of export and may be considered to be the staple article of food in the country. The rice crop is of great value and capable of much expansion. The wheat exported came mostly from outside the Vilayat and the trade was subject to remarkable fluctuations owing to the uncertainty of the water-supply and the inadequate transport. Suggestions are offered with a view to improvement of the existing system of cultivation and handling of the crop. In some areas, agriculture has suffered severely from the insecurity of the cultivators' tenure, and the matter needs careful consideration. The institution of an Agricultural Department at an early date is of prime importance.

There is every reason, however, to hope that Mesopotamia has a future not only for wheat but for cotton. The soil and climate appear to be suitable for the cultivation of fine cottons and it is recommended that tests should be made at an early opportunity with a view to ascertaining the suitable varieties for adoption.

Paras. 38-45. Irrigation and river control.

8. Next, with a view to the development of the agricultural possibilities of Mesopotamia, plans must be devised for the scientific control of the rivers, so as to prevent the damage now caused by inundation and to provide irrigation for the redemption of the deserts. It is patent, of course, that no comprehensive irrigation scheme is possible, unless command of the rivers is assured from the points where they respectively enter their deltas down to the sea.

The restoration of the régime of the rivers appears to involve a three-fold problem. Firstly, the successful but economical application of their waters for irrigation purposes; secondly, their preservation as long as possible for navigation; and, thirdly, the drainage of the swamps now in existence. It is doubtful whether the schemes framed in outline by Sir William Willcocks could be relied upon to restore the lost régime of the rivers on sound and permanent lines. It is recommended that no far-reaching measures be decided upon until a body of information has been collected which may enable sound conclusions to be drawn. It would seem advisable that an Irrigation Board, comprising at least two highly-qualified irrigation engineers, should now be constituted for the collection of detailed information in regard to the rivers and the existing canal systems with a view

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to frame recommendations for a restoration of the régime of the rivers. In the meanwhile, there would probably be no objection to proceeding, under the Irrigation Board's advice, with certain minor irrigation schemes which are not likely to prejudice the solution of the main problem of the two rivers, *e.g.*, the Akhdhar channel and the Mendeli, Duwairij and Tib streams.

Paras. 46-50. Labour and the Arab character.

9. All schemes for the agricultural development and commercial exploitation of the country are, however, conditioned and limited by the capacity, temperament and character of the inhabitants. The two Vilayats of Baghdad and Basrah are thinly populated, possessing an average of 9 inhabitants per square mile, which is inadequate for agricultural developments. Moreover, the population is of a motley type including peoples of diverse races and religions; and although Muhammadans are in the large majority, they have no unity and are distracted by divergence of religious opinion, character, occupations and interests. All the cultivable land within the Jezireh must, however, be regarded as in the nominal possession or within the sphere of influence of some Arab tribe or other and although the tribes are able to cultivate only small portions of the total area, yet they would be resentful of the intrusion of Indian colonists. For the present, it would seem undesirable, from the local point of view, that Indian settlers should be introduced wholesale, and any attempt to do so might evoke a powerful protest from the Arab world. There does not appear to be, however, any need for haste in adding to the population of Mesopotamia. The intention presumably is that the country shall be developed for the benefit of the Arab inhabitants and the pace of development should therefore not be unduly accelerated. Large irrigation schemes cannot be commenced for some years to come and the existing population, supplemented from neighbouring sources, will be sufficient, to begin with, for minor works which it may be decided to undertake. The pastoral population which is the backbone of the country must be treated with special consideration and irrigation schemes must be conceived so as to conserve for afforestation and pasturage large areas in addition to those under cultivation. Finally, the introduction of modern types of earth-working and agricultural machinery, worked under competent supervision by skilled labour, will deprive the labour question of a good deal of its urgency and importance. Canadians and Australians might find in Mesopotamia a field peculiarly suited to their talents and experience.

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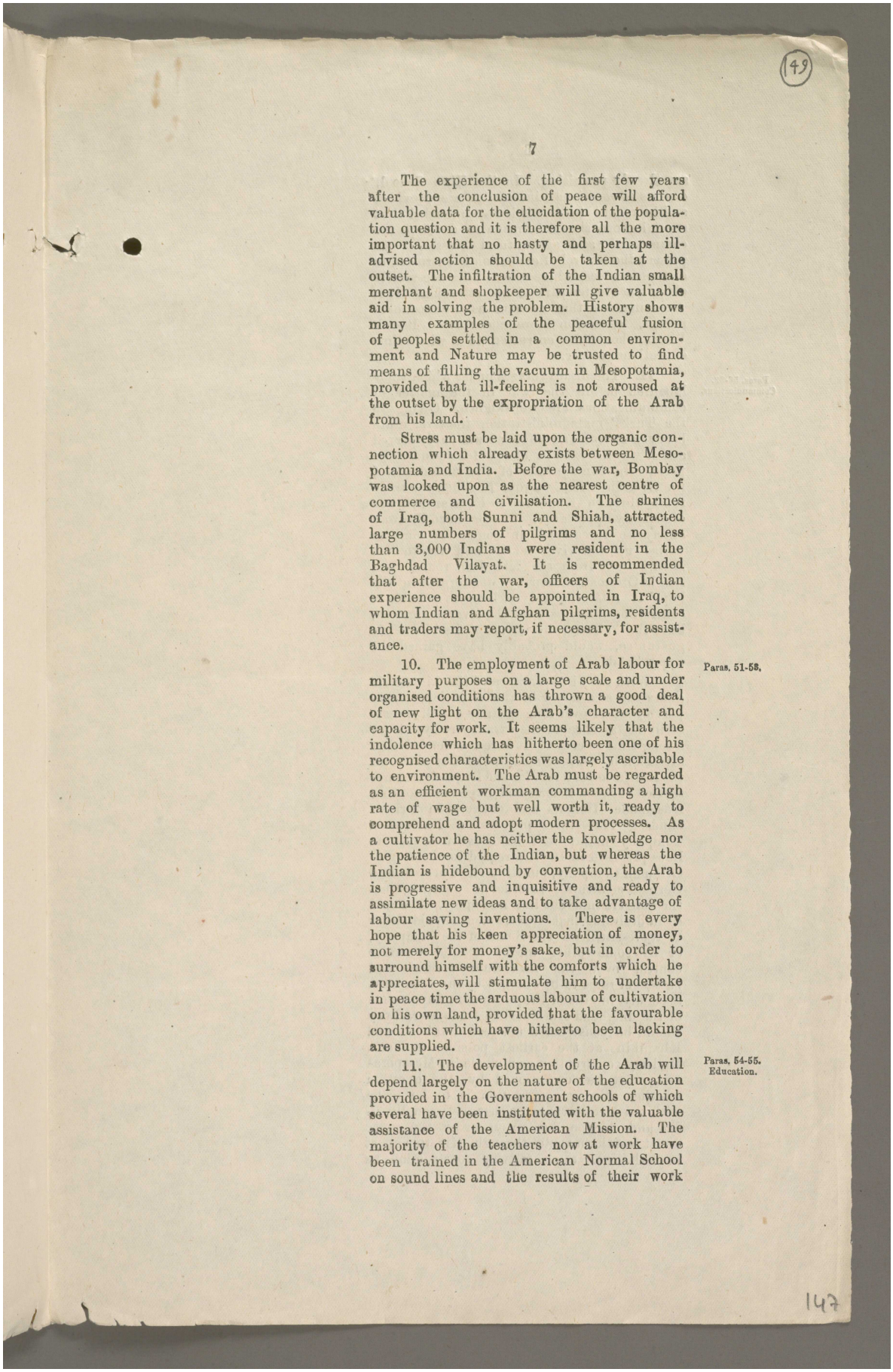

The experience of the first few years after the conclusion of peace will afford valuable data for the elucidation of the population question and it is therefore all the more important that no hasty and perhaps ill-advised action should be taken at the outset. The infiltration of the Indian small merchant and shopkeeper will give valuable aid in solving the problem. History shows many examples of the peaceful fusion of peoples settled in a common environment and Nature may be trusted to find means of filling the vacuum in Mesopotamia, provided that ill-feeling is not aroused at the outset by the expropriation of the Arab from his land.

Stress must be laid upon the organic connection which already exists between Mesopotamia and India. Before the war, Bombay was looked upon as the nearest centre of commerce and civilisation. The shrines of Iraq, both Sunni and Shiah, attracted large numbers of pilgrims and no less than 3,000 Indians were resident in the Baghdad Vilayat. It is recommended that after the war, officers of Indian experience should be appointed in Iraq, to whom Indian and Afghan pilgrims, residents and traders may report, if necessary, for assistance.

10. The employment of Arab labour for military purposes on a large scale and under organised conditions has thrown a good deal of new light on the Arab's character and capacity for work. It seems likely that the indolence which has hitherto been one of his recognised characteristics was largely ascribable to environment. The Arab must be regarded as an efficient workman commanding a high rate of wage but well worth it, ready to comprehend and adopt modern processes. As a cultivator he has neither the knowledge nor the patience of the Indian, but whereas the Indian is hidebound by convention, the Arab is progressive and inquisitive and ready to assimilate new ideas and to take advantage of labour saving inventions. There is every hope that his keen appreciation of money, not merely for money's sake, but in order to surround himself with the comforts which he appreciates, will stimulate him to undertake in peace time the arduous labour of cultivation on his own land, provided that the favourable conditions which have hitherto been lacking are supplied. Paras. 51-58.

11. The development of the Arab will depend largely on the nature of the education provided in the Government schools of which several have been instituted with the valuable assistance of the American Mission. The majority of the teachers now at work have been trained in the American Normal School on sound lines and the results of their work Paras. 54-55. Education.

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are already promising. In the High School, courses of vocational instruction are provided and in regard to this it is recommended that special efforts should be made to develope the commercial and agricultural classes. At present the control of education is entrusted to a revenue officer whose other duties necessarily claim the greater part of his attention. It is recommended that as soon as circumstances permit, education throughout the Basrah Vilayat should be entrusted to a whole-time educational officer.

Paras. 56-62. Communications.

12. The disadvantages under which trade laboured before the war in the matter of communications are well-known. Owing to the Turks' maladministration the river route between Basrah and Baghdad was badly served and it was liable to be closed for considerable periods in consequence of the turbulence of the riverain tribes. From Baghdad the trade route through Khanikin to Kermanshah was of primary importance. The Baghdad Railway enterprise threatened in course of time to wither up the river service and also to oust British trade from the Khanikin route. An Anglo-Ottoman Company was formed in the hope of retaining for so long as possible a controlling influence over the river navigation, but the railway, by virtue of its kilometric guarantee, would probably have gained the upper hand.

With the disappearance of the kilometric guarantee as a factor in the situation, transport by water over long distances will necessarily be far cheaper than transport by rail for a long time to come. It is recommended that attention be concentrated, in the first place, on the institution of a regular and frequent steamer service between Basrah and Baghdad affording reasonable freights and entirely in British hands. For this purpose, a Navigation Company might well be constituted on the lines proposed in 1913 in regard to the Anglo-Ottoman Company, omitting the Turkish and German elements. In order to guard against the dangers inherent in a monopoly, it would seem desirable that Government should either be represented on the Board of the Company, or by some other means should exercise control over the maximum freights and passenger rates to be charged by the Company. Secondly, in view of the paramount importance of the Baghdad-Kermanshah trade a railway should be constructed between Baghdad and Khanikin at the earliest possible moment. Railway construction as a whole in Mesopotamia must be conditioned by the question whether railway connection is to be made with the Mediterranean either between Baghdad and Aleppo *viâ* Mosul or by the more direct southern route through Hit to a port in Palestine. Such railway construction as

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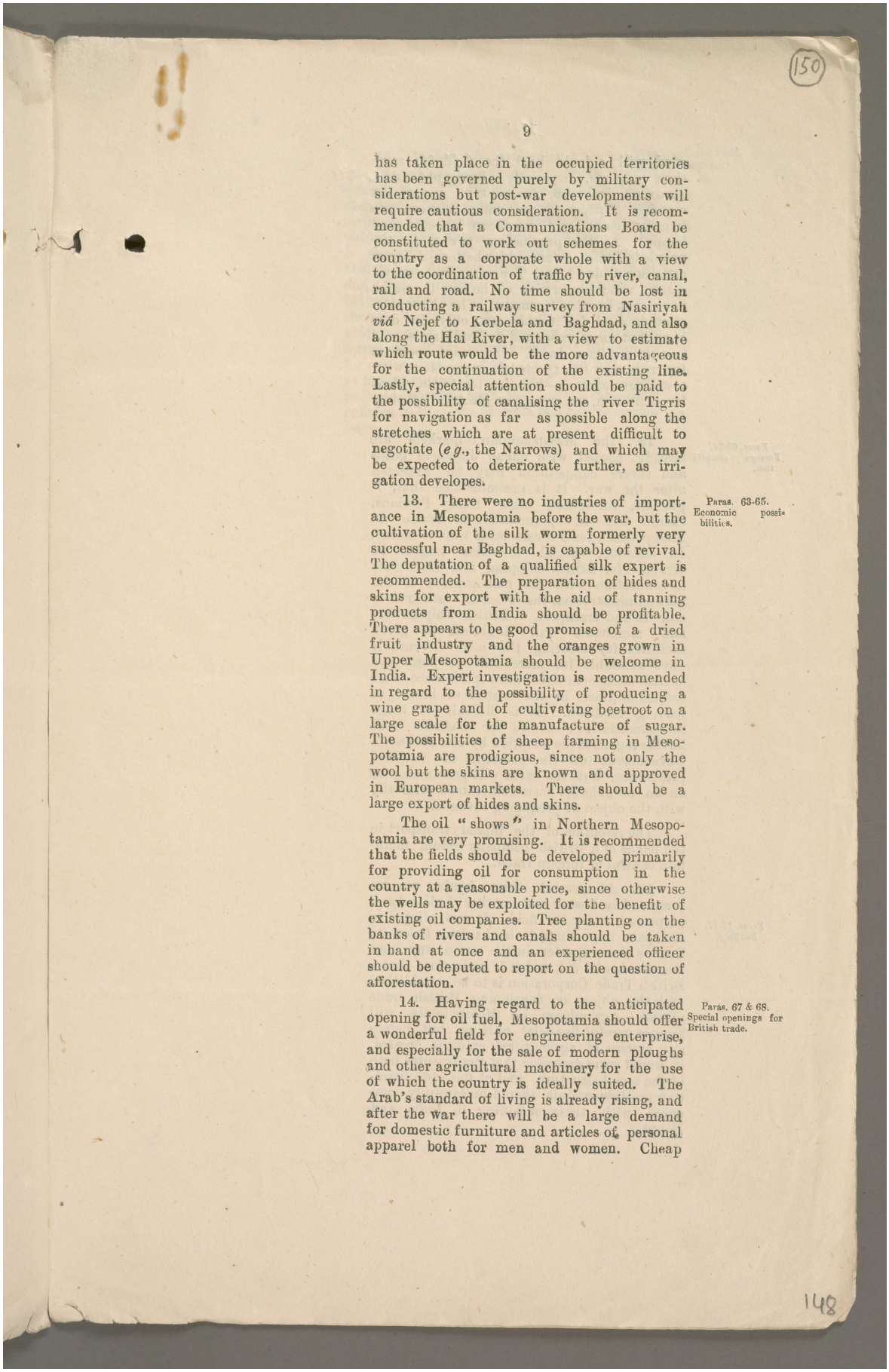

has taken place in the occupied territories has been governed purely by military considerations but post-war developments will require cautious consideration. It is recommended that a Communications Board be constituted to work out schemes for the country as a corporate whole with a view to the coordination of traffic by river, canal, rail and road. No time should be lost in conducting a railway survey from Nasiriyah *viâ* Nejef to Kerbela and Baghdad, and also along the Hai River, with a view to estimate which route would be the more advantageous for the continuation of the existing line. Lastly, special attention should be paid to the possibility of canalising the river Tigris for navigation as far as possible along the stretches which are at present difficult to negotiate (*e g.*, the Narrows) and which may be expected to deteriorate further, as irrigation developes.

Paras. 63-65. Economic possibilities.

13. There were no industries of importance in Mesopotamia before the war, but the cultivation of the silk worm formerly very successful near Baghdad, is capable of revival. The deputation of a qualified silk expert is recommended. The preparation of hides and skins for export with the aid of tanning products from India should be profitable. There appears to be good promise of a dried fruit industry and the oranges grown in Upper Mesopotamia should be welcome in India. Expert investigation is recommended in regard to the possibility of producing a wine grape and of cultivating beetroot on a large scale for the manufacture of sugar. The possibilities of sheep farming in Mesopotamia are prodigious, since not only the wool but the skins are known and approved in European markets. There should be a large export of hides and skins.

The oil "shows" in Northern Mesopotamia are very promising. It is recommended that the fields should be developed primarily for providing oil for consumption in the country at a reasonable price, since otherwise the wells may be exploited for the benefit of existing oil companies. Tree planting on the banks of rivers and canals should be taken in hand at once and an experienced officer should be deputed to report on the question of afforestation.

Paras. 67 & 68. Special openings for British trade.

14. Having regard to the anticipated opening for oil fuel, Mesopotamia should offer a wonderful field for engineering enterprise, and especially for the sale of modern ploughs and other agricultural machinery for the use of which the country is ideally suited. The Arab's standard of living is already rising, and after the war there will be a large demand for domestic furniture and articles of personal apparel both for men and women. Cheap

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goods will no doubt hold the field for some time to come, especially as regards china, glassware, ironware, enamelware, paper and matches. Spades of the native pattern are in great demand and also cheap lanterns and lamps. As the purchasing power of the people increases, a demand for better quality of articles will develope. The sugar trade needs careful watching in view of the uses to which it was put by the Germans. The Mesopotamian demand for timber not only for date boxes but for oil cases and for building should be supplied from India. Important openings for trade may be expected in connection with town development—building materials, plant for sanitation, water-supply, electric lighting, &c.

Paras. 69-74. Foreign competition.

15. The Mesopotamian markets are already flooded with cheap Japanese goods and severe competition may be expected after the war. It is recommended that, if possible, foreigners, other than Persians, should not be permitted to reside in Mesopotamia for a considerable time to come. In addition, special facilities might be arranged for British shipping and merchants in connection with the management of the port administration, the customs' warehouses and inland transport. British ship-owners and merchants will doubtless be given facilities for securing the most favourable sites available for mercantile purposes and British steamers might have preference over foreign steamers in the matter of berths or loading facilities. It is difficult to make recommendations as to the customs tariff having regard to the adoption by His Majesty's Government of the principle of modified preference, but the tariff will presumably be on an *ad valorem* basis and framed primarily with the object of producing revenue.

The retention of the inland transport in the hands of a British company should facilitate control of foreign trade.

Paras. 75-77. Banking.

16. At present three banks are represented in Basrah and another Indian bank proposes to enter the field. It was alleged in the past that English banks had failed to finance the exporter in the same way that German banks did, and it is understood that a British Trade Corporation is to be established with the object of developing British trade abroad. Agriculture in Mesopotamia will require careful financial nursing, but before any system of agricultural credit is created, it would seem desirable that the features both of the social structure and of the administration in Mesopotamia should be carefully compared with those obtaining in India and Egypt.

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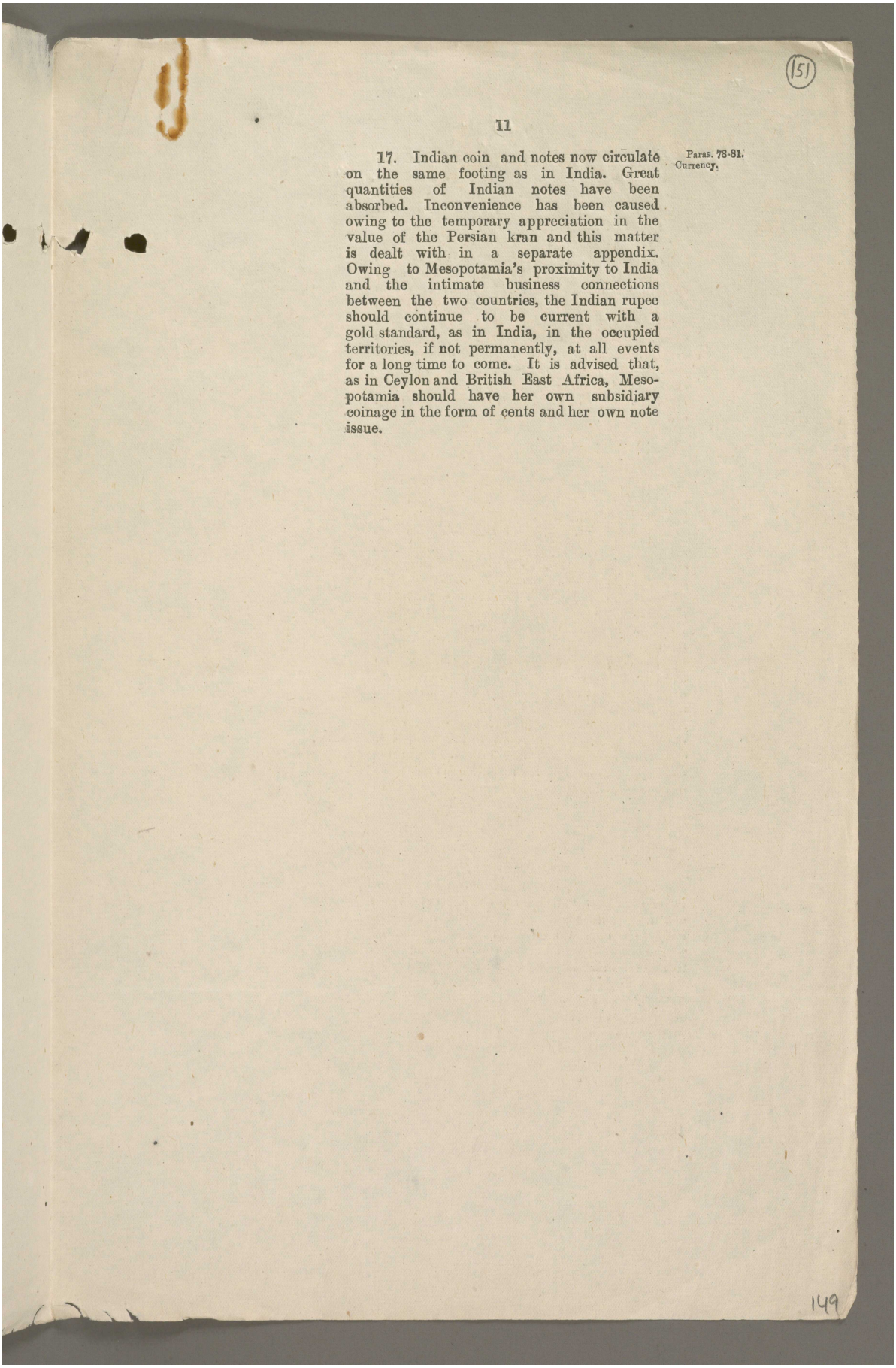

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Paras. 78-81. Currency.

17. Indian coin and notes now circulate on the same footing as in India. Great quantities of Indian notes have been absorbed. Inconvenience has been caused owing to the temporary appreciation in the value of the Persian kran and this matter is dealt with in a separate appendix. Owing to Mesopotamia's proximity to India and the intimate business connections between the two countries, the Indian rupee should continue to be current with a gold standard, as in India, in the occupied territories, if not permanently, at all events for a long time to come. It is advised that, as in Ceylon and British East Africa, Mesopotamia should have her own subsidiary coinage in the form of cents and her own note issue.

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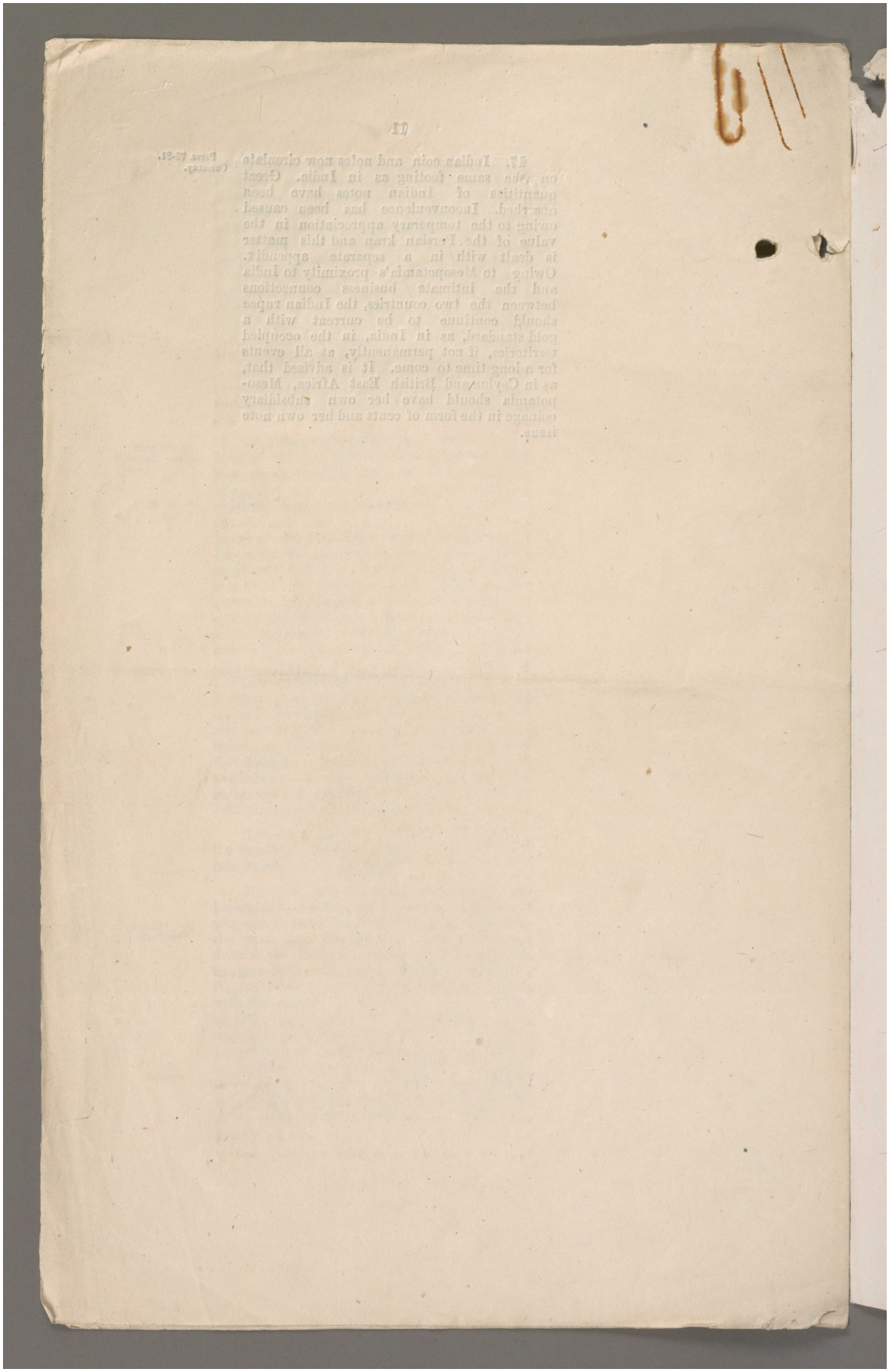

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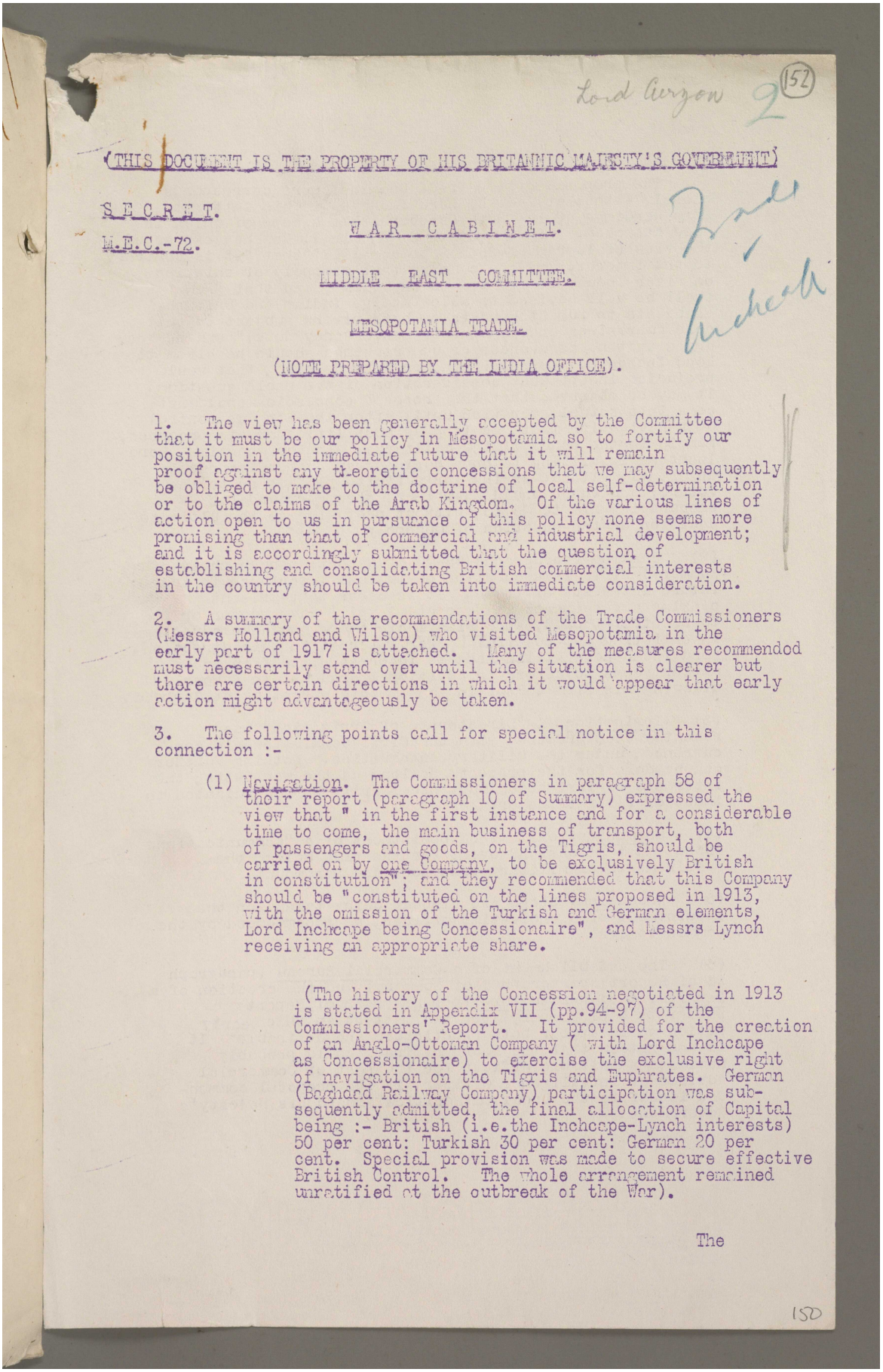

Lord Curzon 2 (152)

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S E C R E T.

M.E.C.-72.

W A R C A B I N E T.

MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

MESOPOTAMIA TRADE.

(NOTE PREPARED BY THE INDIA OFFICE).

1. The view has been generally accepted by the Committee that it must be our policy in Mesopotamia so to fortify our position in the immediate future that it will remain proof against any theoretic concessions that we may subsequently be obliged to make to the doctrine of local self-determination or to the claims of the Arab Kingdom. Of the various lines of action open to us in pursuance of this policy none seems more promising than that of commercial and industrial development; and it is accordingly submitted that the question of establishing and consolidating British commercial interests in the country should be taken into immediate consideration.

2. A summary of the recommendations of the Trade Commissioners (Messrs Holland and Wilson) who visited Mesopotamia in the early part of 1917 is attached. Many of the measures recommended must necessarily stand over until the situation is clearer but there are certain directions in which it would appear that early action might advantageously be taken.

3. The following points call for special notice in this connection :-

(1) Navigation. The Commissioners in paragraph 58 of their report (paragraph 10 of Summary) expressed the view that " in the first instance and for a considerable time to come, the main business of transport, both of passengers and goods, on the Tigris, should be carried on by one Company, to be exclusively British in constitution"; and they recommended that this Company should be "constituted on the lines proposed in 1913, with the omission of the Turkish and German elements, Lord Inchcape being Concessionaire", and Messrs Lynch receiving an appropriate share.

(The history of the Concession negotiated in 1913 is stated in Appendix VII (pp.94-97) of the Commissioners' Report. It provided for the creation of an Anglo-Ottoman Company (with Lord Inchcape as Concessionaire) to exercise the exclusive right of navigation on the Tigris and Euphrates. German (Baghdad Railway Company) participation was subsequently admitted, the final allocation of Capital being :- British (i.e.the Inchcape-Lynch interests) 50 per cent: Turkish 30 per cent: German 20 per cent. Special provision was made to secure effective British Control. The whole arrangement remained unratified at the outbreak of the War).

The

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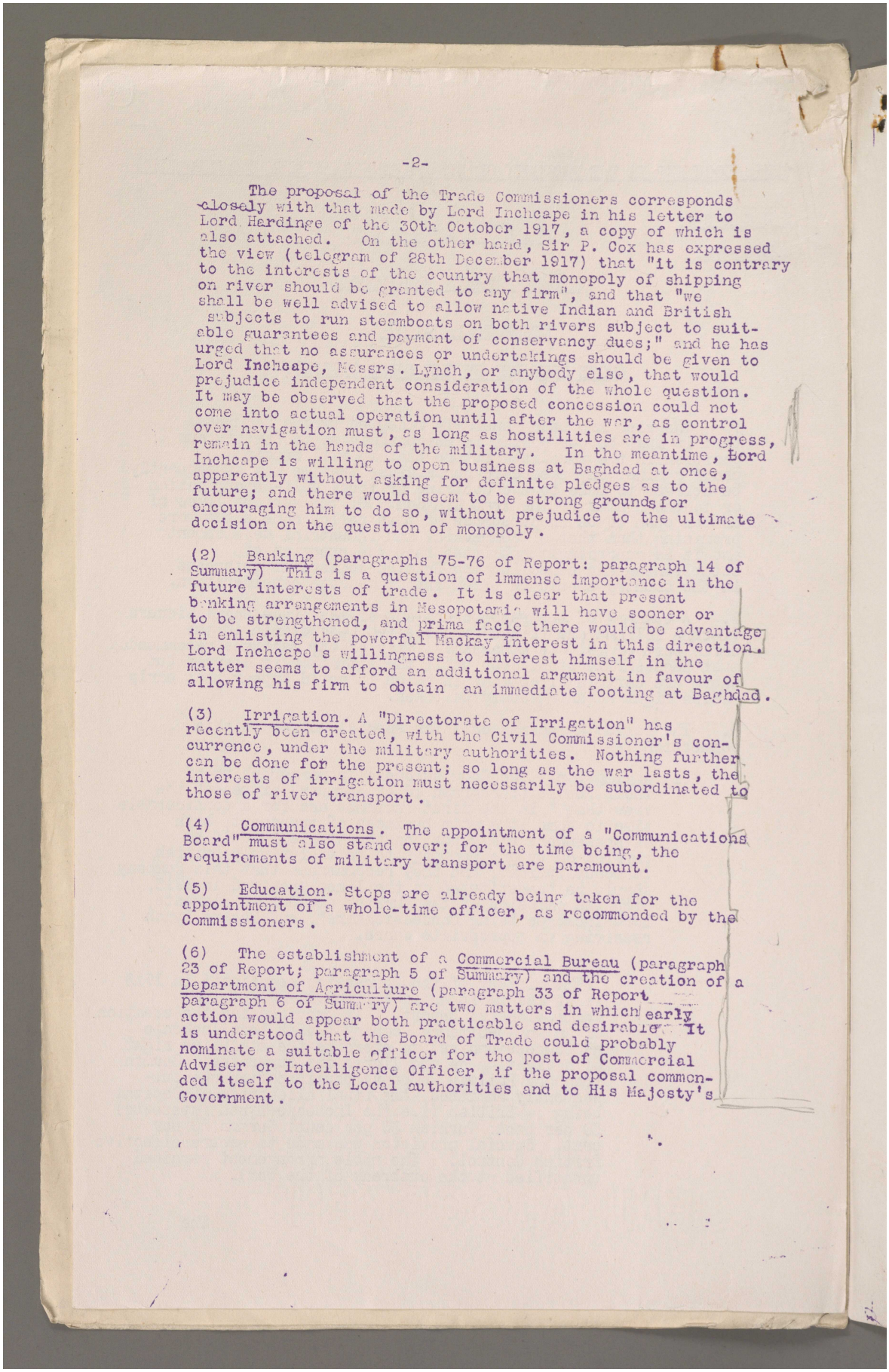

The proposal of the Trade Commissioners corresponds closely with that made by Lord Inchcape in his letter to Lord Hardinge of the 30th October 1917, a copy of which is also attached. On the other hand, Sir P. Cox has expressed the view (telegram of 28th December 1917) that "it is contrary to the interests of the country that monopoly of shipping on river should be granted to any firm", and that "we shall be well advised to allow native Indian and British subjects to run steamboats on both rivers subject to suitable guarantees and payment of conservancy dues;" and he has urged that no assurances or undertakings should be given to Lord Inchcape, Messrs. Lynch, or anybody else, that would prejudice independent consideration of the whole question. It may be observed that the proposed concession could not come into actual operation until after the war, as control over navigation must, as long as hostilities are in progress, remain in the hands of the military. In the meantime, Lord Inchcape is willing to open business at Baghdad at once, apparently without asking for definite pledges as to the future; and there would seem to be strong grounds for encouraging him to do so, without prejudice to the ultimate decision on the question of monopoly.

(2) Banking (paragraphs 75-76 of Report: paragraph 14 of Summary) This is a question of immense importance in the future interests of trade. It is clear that present banking arrangements in Mesopotamia will have sooner or to be strengthened, and prima facie there would be advantage in enlisting the powerful Mackay interest in this direction. Lord Inchcape's willingness to interest himself in the matter seems to afford an additional argument in favour of allowing his firm to obtain an immediate footing at Baghdad.

(3) Irrigation. A "Directorate of Irrigation" has recently been created, with the Civil Commissioner's concurrence, under the military authorities. Nothing further can be done for the present; so long as the war lasts, the interests of irrigation must necessarily be subordinated to those of river transport.

(4) Communications. The appointment of a "Communications Board" must also stand over; for the time being, the requirements of military transport are paramount.

(5) Education. Steps are already being taken for the appointment of a whole-time officer, as recommended by the Commissioners.

(6) The establishment of a Commercial Bureau (paragraph 23 of Report; paragraph 5 of Summary) and the creation of a Department of Agriculture (paragraph 33 of Report paragraph 6 of Summary) are two matters in which early action would appear both practicable and desirable. It is understood that the Board of Trade could probably nominate a suitable officer for the post of Commercial Adviser or Intelligence Officer, if the proposal commended itself to the Local authorities and to His Majesty's Government.

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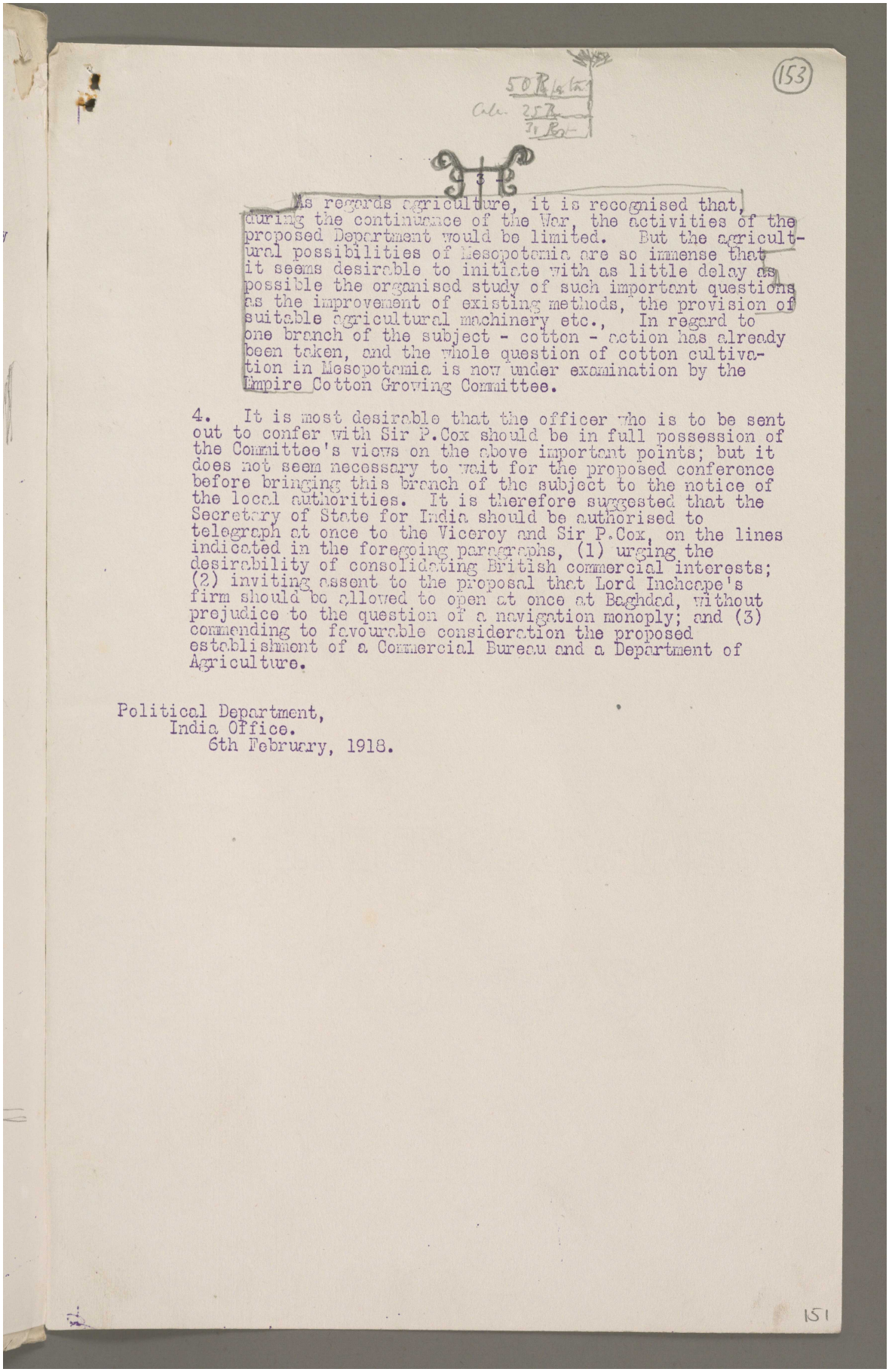

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As regards agriculture, it is recognised that, during the continuance of the War, the activities of the proposed Department would be limited. But the agricultural possibilities of Mesopotamia are so immense that it seems desirable to initiate with as little delay as possible the organised study of such important questions as the improvement of existing methods, the provision of suitable agricultural machinery etc., In regard to one branch of the subject - cotton - action has already been taken, and the whole question of cotton cultivation in Mesopotamia is now under examination by the Empire Cotton Growing Committee.

4. It is most desirable that the officer who is to be sent out to confer with Sir P.Cox should be in full possession of the Committee's views on the above important points; but it does not seem necessary to wait for the proposed conference before bringing this branch of the subject to the notice of the local authorities. It is therefore suggested that the Secretary of State for India should be authorised to telegraph at once to the Viceroy and Sir P.Cox, on the lines indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, (1) urging the desirability of consolidating British commercial interests; (2) inviting assent to the proposal that Lord Inchcape's firm should be allowed to open at once at Baghdad, without prejudice to the question of a navigation monoply; and (3) commending to favourable consideration the proposed establishment of a Commercial Bureau and a Department of Agriculture.

Political Department,
India Office.
6th February, 1918.

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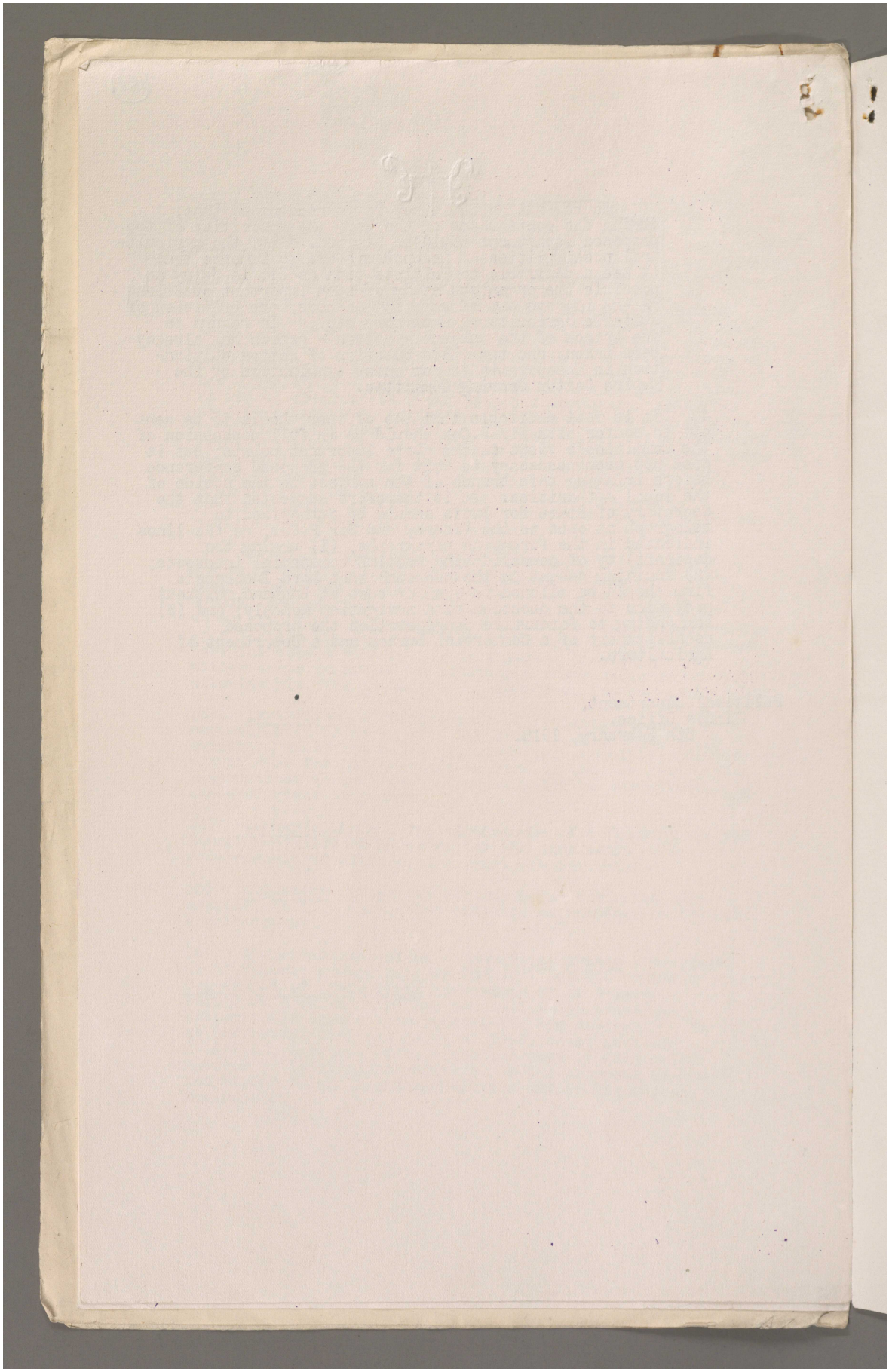

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COPY OF LETTER FROM LORD INCHCAPE TO LORD HARDINGE.

122 Leadenhall Street,
London, E.C.3.
30th October, 1917.

Dear Lord Hardinge.

It will be in the recollection of the Foreign Office that I had protracted negotiations at the request of His Majesty's Government before the war, and that we had arranged with Germany and Turkey and the Foreign Office that I should, in conjunction with Messrs. Lynch, establish a line of steamers on the Tigris under the management of Mackay Lynch & Co. The agreement was signed by Hakki Pasha and myself and confirmed by the Foreign Office. Then the war broke out and the arrangement of course was held up.

Great Britain is now in possession of Baghdad, but what the ultimate settlement in regard to Mesopotamia will be is of course uncertain. I can scarcely conceive that we shall ever give Baghdad and Mesopotamia back to the Turks, or permit Germany again to exercise her sinister influence there with all her ulterior motives, but I think it would be very desirable that we should, without any delay, peg out a claim to a position in Baghdad.

The firm of Mackay Lynch & Co. was constituted at the suggestion of His Majesty's Government, with a view to establishing British Interests in Mesopotamia, and I think the time has come when we should plant ourselves in Baghdad with a view to the future.

I am therefore prepared to open our firm there as arranged before the war, and my object in writing to you is to ask if you think we might, with any likelihood of success, apply to the Foreign Office for permission to open a House in Baghdad now. We should probably work at a loss for some time to come, but that I don't mind. The potentialities in Mesopotamia are enormous and there are great developments possible.

The firm of Mackay, Lynch & Co. have the right to run steamers on the rivers, and as soon as they are opened to traffic we shall take up the obligations we assumed under our agreement with the Foreign Office, and it would, I think, be desirable that we should open our house in Baghdad at once.

We have ample capital behind us, and I am quite prepared to launch out in Mesopotamia as soon as peace is arranged. If we establish ourselves there and develop a business, Banks and others will follow.

At the same time it is very desirable that banking development in Mesopotamia should be in good hands in the general interests of British Trade, and not left too much to small fry such as small Indian Banks, and eventually I contemplate using my influnece towards the establishment of a powerful Banking Syndicate, in which possibly Indian and Australian interests as well as British might be associated. I consider this is really necessary, to counter the activity of the German Banks in Turkey.

I am aware that the Military Authorities are reluctant to allow British Houses to open up in Baghdad at present. I think, however, that our House has a very special claim by reason of the concession we obtained, after costly negotiation, before the war. I merely mention this to show that our House can be dealt with exceptionally and on the merits of the case, without creating an inconvenient precedent for the military Authorities in the event of other houses claiming similar treatment. You will, moreover, I feel sure, appreciate how vitally important it is that German commercial penetration, which politically has proved so insidious in Turkey, should, at the initiation of a new era, be forestalled by timely British enterprise in Mesopotamia, where our interests centre.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) INCHCAPE.

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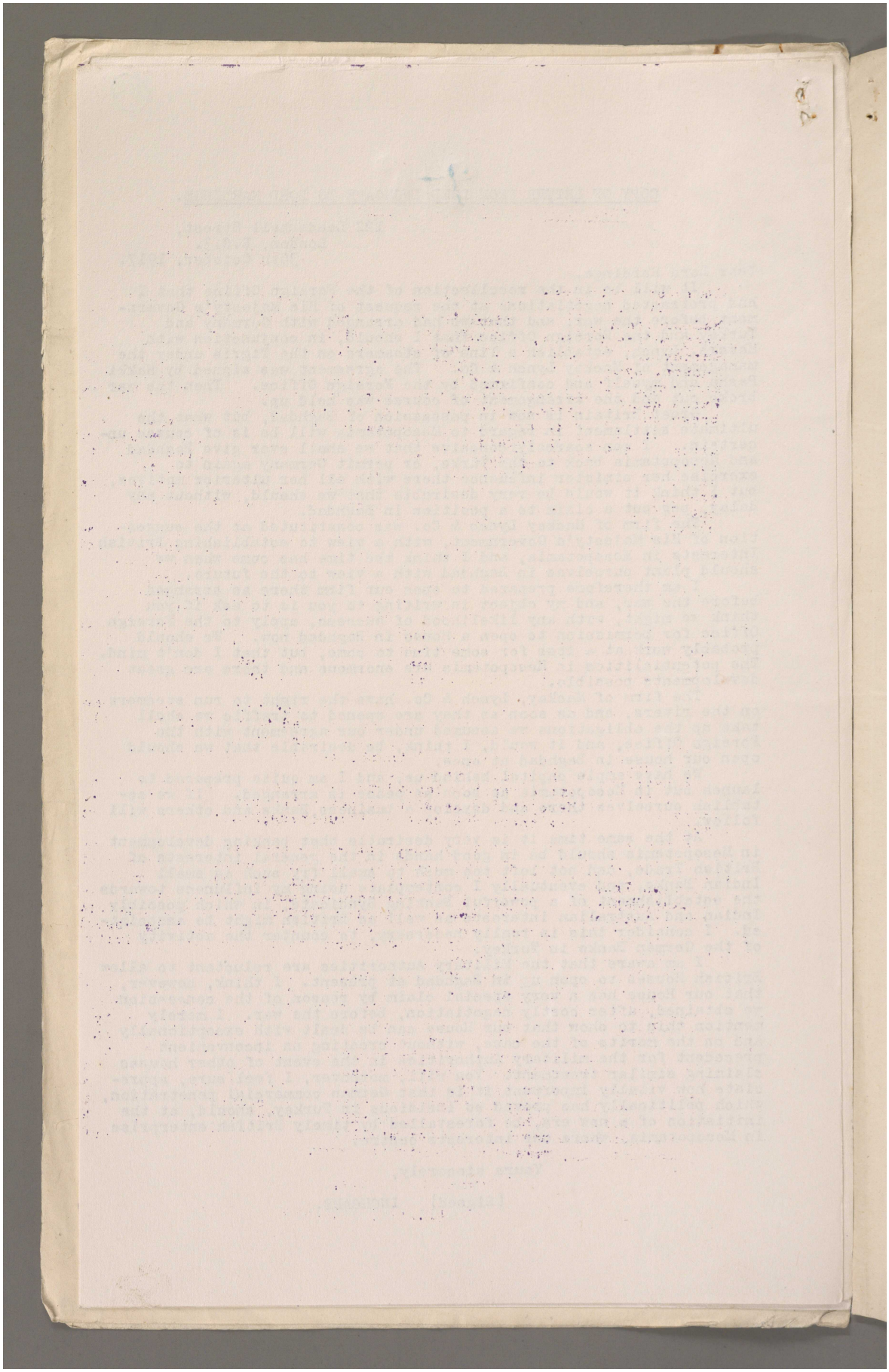

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MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

Report of Mesopotamia Trade Commissioners (Messrs. R. E. Holland and J. H. Wilson).

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Just before the war the total sea-borne trade of the Gulf, excluding coasting and local trade, was valued at about 12½ millions sterling, of which the British share was 76 per cent. The pecuniary value of the trade was no great matter and its loss would not have seriously affected British commerce. Commercial success in the Gulf has, however, involved the assumption of political responsibilities and these cannot be lightly surrendered. The Germans, realising that British political predominance achieved through commerce was vulnerable through commerce, set themselves to win as large a share of the trade as possible. Their commercial competition was the cutting edge of a vast political intrigue which was organised with the object of obtaining control over the railway route to the East and by this means exerting pressure upon the British Empire at a sensitive point.

2. If the war ends favourably for the Allies, British shipping and commerce will recommence operations in the Gulf under conditions which, politically, could hardly be more advantageous.

Nevertheless, it is too much to hope that the Baghdad Railway question will be eliminated for ever from world politics. No precautions should, therefore, be omitted which might have the effect of discouraging politico-commercial adventures. The obvious and effective means of defence would be the closure of the Persian Gulf for a period of years to all foreign shipping by expansion of the defensive declaration of 1903.

Political considerations will, however, doubtless militate against the adoption of this course and resort must, therefore, be had to alternative methods, in order to secure for British shipping privileges everywhere in the Gulf as compared with the shipping of other nationalities. At Maskat and the Arabian ports in particular, advantage should be taken of the influence wielded by Great Britain to require the Rulers to refuse to foreigners permission to reside or carry on business. Special privileges should be arranged for British shipping at various ports, as circumstances permit.

3. **Shipping.**—Next, with a view to consolidate British commercial interests against attack, the shipping companies concerned should be organised so as to render the most efficient and economical service possible as public carriers. The interests of the British community trading between the United Kingdom and the Persian Gulf would probably best be served by a combination between the main British shipping authorities.

At the outset, a line or a combination of lines affording direct communication between the United Kingdom and the Gulf should provide sailings, on as regular a schedule as possible, at such frequent intervals as the trade may warrant. A direct mail between England and the Gulf, with appropriate subsidy, may conceivably be justified at a later date, and better facilities than in the past for the carriage of passengers will probably be required.

As regards shipping communications with India, so long as foreign competition can be excluded on this route, there would seem to be no ground for favouring a monopoly. It is desirable that competition from India should have free play in order that Indian trade may reap all possible benefit from the competition. Measures have been suggested with a view to meeting complaints from shippers and consignees.

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4. **Subsidiary Measures.**—The subsidiary measures required for developing and safeguarding British commerce in the Gulf are discussed with reference to each of the three spheres into which the trade currents flow, namely :—

(1) Mesopotamia ;
(2) Persia ;
(3) the Ports on the Coast of Arabia.

Mr. Lloyd, in his report of 1908, described the dimensions and conditions of British trade in Mesopotamia and drew attention to the danger to be anticipated from the rapidly growing German trade with the advantage of subsidies and the cleverly devised system of through rates. On the whole, British merchants seem to have retained the great advantage which they derived from their long start. German trade has now dropped to the bottom of the ladder and, if the Resolutions of the Paris Conference are brought into effect, it will be unable to start climbing again for a period of years after the conclusion of peace. When this period comes to an end, however, it must be expected that German competition will re-appear in Mesopotamia as in other places, assuming that the Persian Gulf will remain open to foreign shipping.

5. **Commercial Bureau.**—The contrast between the methods of the British and German merchants must be ascribed very largely to deep-seated causes and was not peculiar to Basrah. The German political organisation and their system of education must be held responsible for the high standard of business efficiency maintained by the merchants. A few suggestions of a general nature are offered for the information of British firms who contemplate opening business in the Gulf. For the proper enlightenment of Chambers of Commerce and individual merchants, it is essential that a *commercial intelligence officer* should be appointed in the occupied territories at the earliest possible date, possibly with an Indian attaché.

6. **Agriculture.**—Commerce in Mesopotamia before the war was cramped and confined, owing, firstly, to the paucity of exports for which imports could be exchanged and, secondly, to the inadequacy and insecurity of the internal communications. The inefficiency of the Turkish administration was ultimately to blame for the undeveloped state of the country. Scanty exports were due to the backward condition of agriculture, which, in itself, is attributable mainly to the uncontrolled vagaries of the rivers, coupled with scarcity of labour and insecurity of life and property.

The main agricultural products of the Basrah Vilayat before the war were dates, rice, wheat, barley, millet, melons, vegetables, fruit. It is estimated that the total area cultivated was about 350,000 acres, of which 100,000 were under rice, 70,000 under barley, 30,000 under millet, 20,000 under wheat and 20,000 under vegetables. Date groves accounted for about 100,000 acres. These estimates must, however, be accepted with great caution, since the data on which they are based are by no means reliable. The rice crop is of great value and capable of much expansion. The wheat exported came mostly from outside the Vilayat and the trade was subject to remarkable fluctuations, owing to the uncertainty of the water supply and the inadequate transport. Suggestions are offered with a view to improvement of the existing system of cultivation and handling of the crop. In some areas, agriculture has suffered severely from the insecurity of the cultivators' tenure, and the matter needs careful consideration. The institution of an *Agricultural Department* at an early date is recommended.

There is every reason, however, to hope that Mesopotamia has a future not only for wheat but for cotton. The soil and climate appear to be suitable for the cultivation of fine cottons, and it is recommended that tests be made at an early opportunity with a view to ascertaining the suitable varieties for adoption.

7. **Irrigation and River Control.**—Next, with a view to the development of the agricultural possibilities of Mesopotamia, plans must be devised for the scientific control of the rivers, so as to prevent the damage now caused

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by inundation and to provide irrigation for the redemption of the deserts.

The problem involved is three-fold. Firstly, the successful, but economical, application of the water for irrigation purposes; secondly, the preservation of the rivers as long as possible for navigation; and, thirdly, the drainage of the swamps now in existence. It is recommended that no far-reaching measures be decided upon until a body of information has been collected which may enable sound conclusions to be drawn. It would seem advisable that an *Irrigation Board*, comprising at least two highly-qualified irrigation engineers, should now be constituted for the collection of detailed information in regard to the rivers and the existing canal systems with a view to framing recommendations for a restoration of the régime of the rivers. In the meanwhile, there would probably be no objection to proceeding under the Irrigation Board's advice with certain minor irrigation schemes which are not likely to prejudice the solution of the main problem of the two rivers, *e.g.*, the Akhdhar channel and the Mendeli, Duwairij and Tib streams.

8. **Labour.**—All schemes for the agricultural development and commercial exploitation of the country are, however, conditioned and limited by the capacity, temperament and character of the inhabitants. The two Vilayats of Baghdad and Basrah are thinly populated, possessing an average of nine inhabitants per square mile, which is inadequate for agricultural developments. Moreover, the population is of a motley type, including peoples of diverse races and religions. All the cultivable land within the Jezireh must, however, be regarded as in the nominal possession or within the sphere of influence of some Arab tribe or other. For the present, it would seem undesirable, from the local point of view, that Indian settlers should be introduced wholesale, and any attempt to do so might evoke a powerful protest from the Arab world. There does not appear to be, however, any need for haste in adding to the population of Mesopotamia. Large irrigation schemes cannot be commenced for some years to come, and the existing population, supplemented from neighbouring sources, will be sufficient, to begin with, for minor works which it may be decided to undertake. The pastoral population, which is the backbone of the country, must be treated with special consideration, and irrigation schemes must be conceived so as to conserve for afforestation and pasturage large areas in addition to those under cultivation. Finally, the introduction of modern types of earth-working and agricultural machinery, worked under competent supervision by skilled labour, will deprive the labour question of a good deal of its urgency and importance. Canadians and Australians might find in Mesopotamia a field peculiarly suited to their talents and experience.

Stress must be laid upon the organic connection which already exists between Mesopotamia and India. It is recommended that, after the war, *officers of Indian experience* should be appointed in Iraq, to whom Indian and Afghan pilgrims, residents and traders may report, if necessary, for assistance.

9. **Education.**—The employment of Arab labour for military purposes on a large scale and under organised conditions has thrown a good deal of new light on the Arab's character and capacity for work. It seems likely that the indolence which has hitherto been one of his recognised characteristics was largely ascribable to environment.

The development of the Arab will depend largely on the nature of the education provided in the Government schools, of which several have been instituted with the valuable assistance of the American Mission. In the High School, courses of vocational instruction are provided, and in regard to this it is recommended that special efforts should be made to develop the commercial and agricultural classes. At present the control of education is entrusted to a revenue officer, whose other duties necessarily claim the greater part of his attention. It is recommended that, as soon as circumstances permit, education throughout the Basrah Vilayat should be entrusted to a *whole-time educational officer*.

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10. **Communications.**—The disadvantages under which trade laboured before the war in the matter of communications are well known. It is recommended that attention be concentrated, in the first place, on the institution of a regular and frequent steamer service between Basrah and Baghdad, affording reasonable freights and entirely in British hands. For this purpose a *Navigation Company* might well be constituted on the lines proposed in 1913 in regard to the Anglo-Ottoman Company, omitting the Turkish and German elements. In order to guard against the dangers inherent in a monopoly it would seem desirable that Government should either be represented on the Board of the Company or by some other means should exercise control over the maximum freights and passenger rates to be charged by the Company. Secondly, in view of the paramount importance of the Baghdad-Kermanshah trade a railway should be constructed between Baghdad and Khaniqin at the earliest possible moment. Railway construction as a whole in Mesopotamia must be conditioned by the question whether connection is to be made with the Mediterranean either between Baghdad and Aleppo *viâ* Mosul or by the more direct southern route through Hit to a port in Palestine. Such railway construction as has taken place in the occupied territories has been governed purely by military considerations, but post-war developments will require cautious consideration. It is therefore recommended, in the third place, that a *Communications Board* be constituted to work out schemes for the country as a corporate whole with a view to the co-ordination of traffic by river, canal, rail and road. No time should be lost in conducting a railway survey from Nasiriyah *viâ* Nejef to Kerbela and Baghdad, and also along the Hai river, with a view to estimate which route would be the more advantageous for the continuation of the existing line. Fourthly, special attention should be paid to the possibility of canalising the River Tigris for navigation as far as possible along the stretches which are at present difficult to negotiate (*e.g.*, the Narrows) and which may be expected to deteriorate further, as irrigation develops.

11. **Economic Products: Silk, Oil, &c.**—There were no industries of importance in Mesopotamia before the war, but the cultivation of the silkworm, formerly very successful near Baghdad, is capable of revival. The deputation of a *qualified silk expert* is recommended. The preparation of hides and skins for export with the aid of tanning products from India should be profitable. There appears to be good promise of a dried fruit industry, and the oranges grown in Upper Mesopotamia should be welcome in India. Expert investigation is recommended in regard to the possibility of producing a wine grape and of cultivating beetroot on a large scale for the manufacture of sugar. The possibilities of sheep farming in Mesopotamia are prodigious, since not only the wool but the skins are known and approved in European markets. There should be a large export of hides and skins.

The oil "shows" in Northern Mesopotamia are very promising. It is recommended that the fields should be developed primarily for providing oil for consumption in the country at a reasonable price, since otherwise the wells may be exploited for the benefit of existing oil companies. Tree-planting on the banks of rivers and canals should be taken in hand at once, and an *experienced officer* should be deputed to report on the question of *afforestation*.

12. **Openings for Trade.**—Having regard to the anticipated opening for oil fuel, Mesopotamia should offer a wonderful field for engineering enterprise, and especially for the sale of modern ploughs and other agricultural machinery, for the use of which the country is ideally suited. The Arab's standard of living is already rising, and after the war there will be a large demand for domestic furniture and articles of personal apparel both for men and women. Cheap goods will no doubt hold the field for some time to come, especially as regards china, glassware, ironware, enamelware, paper and matches. Spades of the native pattern are in great demand, and also cheap lanterns and lamps. As the purchasing power of the people increases, a demand for better quality articles will develop. The sugar trade needs careful watching in view of the uses to which it was put by the Germans. The Mesopotamian demand for timber, not only for date boxes but for oil

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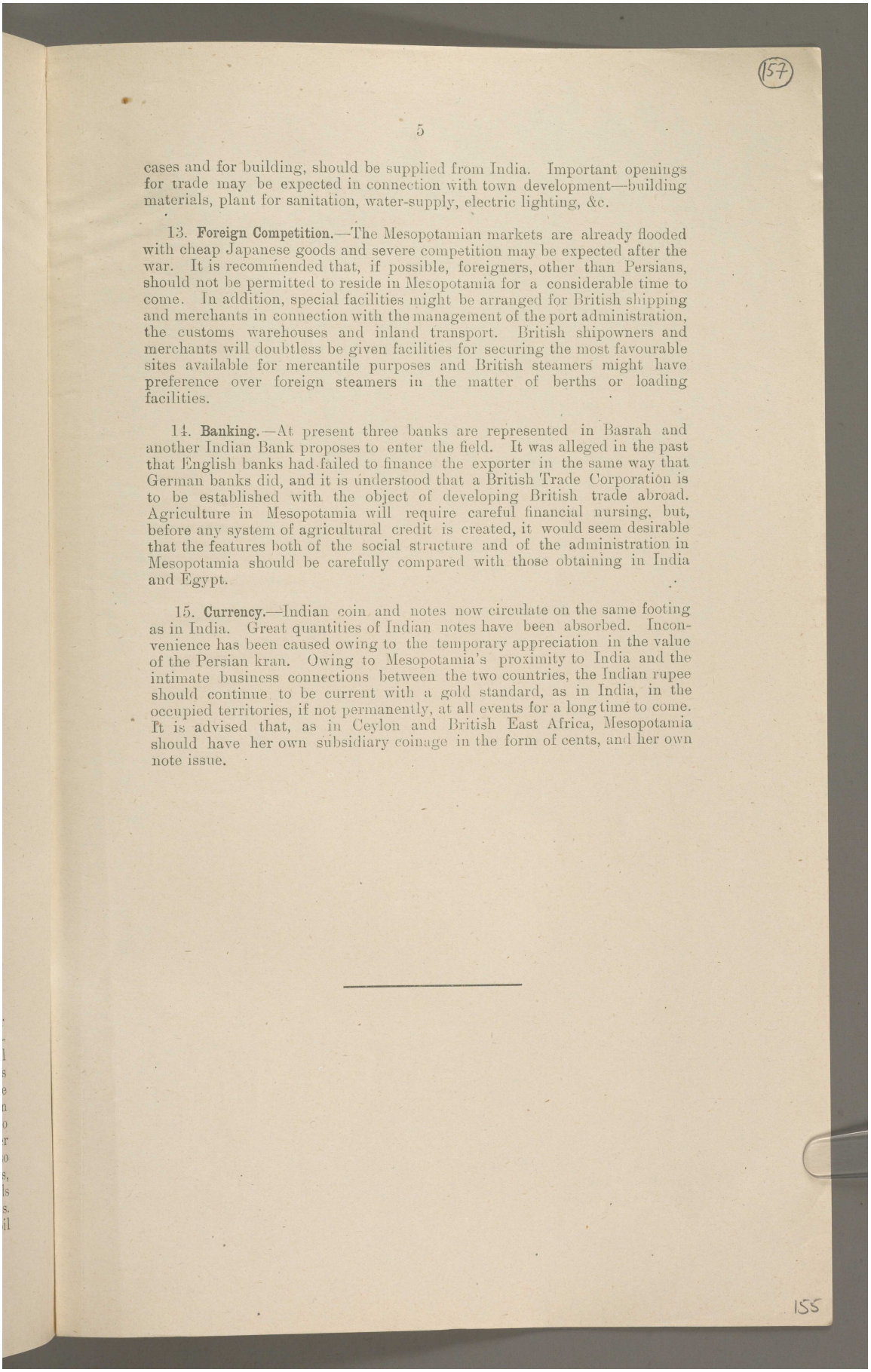

cases and for building, should be supplied from India. Important openings for trade may be expected in connection with town development—building materials, plant for sanitation, water-supply, electric lighting, &c.

13. **Foreign Competition.**—The Mesopotamian markets are already flooded with cheap Japanese goods and severe competition may be expected after the war. It is recommended that, if possible, foreigners, other than Persians, should not be permitted to reside in Mesopotamia for a considerable time to come. In addition, special facilities might be arranged for British shipping and merchants in connection with the management of the port administration, the customs warehouses and inland transport. British shipowners and merchants will doubtless be given facilities for securing the most favourable sites available for mercantile purposes and British steamers might have preference over foreign steamers in the matter of berths or loading facilities.

14. **Banking.**—At present three banks are represented in Basrah and another Indian Bank proposes to enter the field. It was alleged in the past that English banks had failed to finance the exporter in the same way that German banks did, and it is understood that a British Trade Corporation is to be established with the object of developing British trade abroad. Agriculture in Mesopotamia will require careful financial nursing, but, before any system of agricultural credit is created, it would seem desirable that the features both of the social structure and of the administration in Mesopotamia should be carefully compared with those obtaining in India and Egypt.

15. **Currency.**—Indian coin and notes now circulate on the same footing as in India. Great quantities of Indian notes have been absorbed. Inconvenience has been caused owing to the temporary appreciation in the value of the Persian kran. Owing to Mesopotamia's proximity to India and the intimate business connections between the two countries, the Indian rupee should continue to be current with a gold standard, as in India, in the occupied territories, if not permanently, at all events for a long time to come. It is advised that, as in Ceylon and British East Africa, Mesopotamia should have her own subsidiary coinage in the form of cents, and her own note issue.

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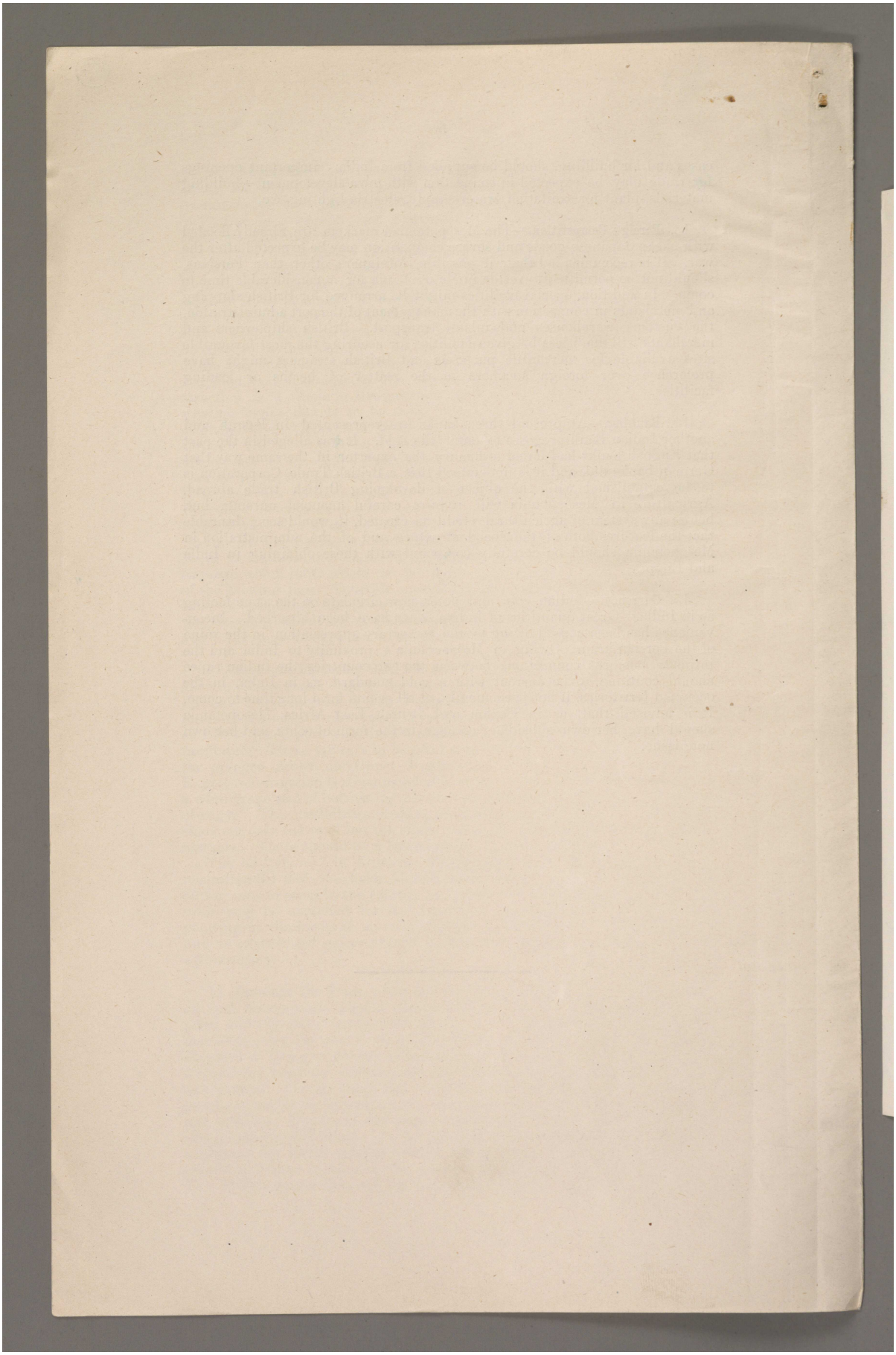

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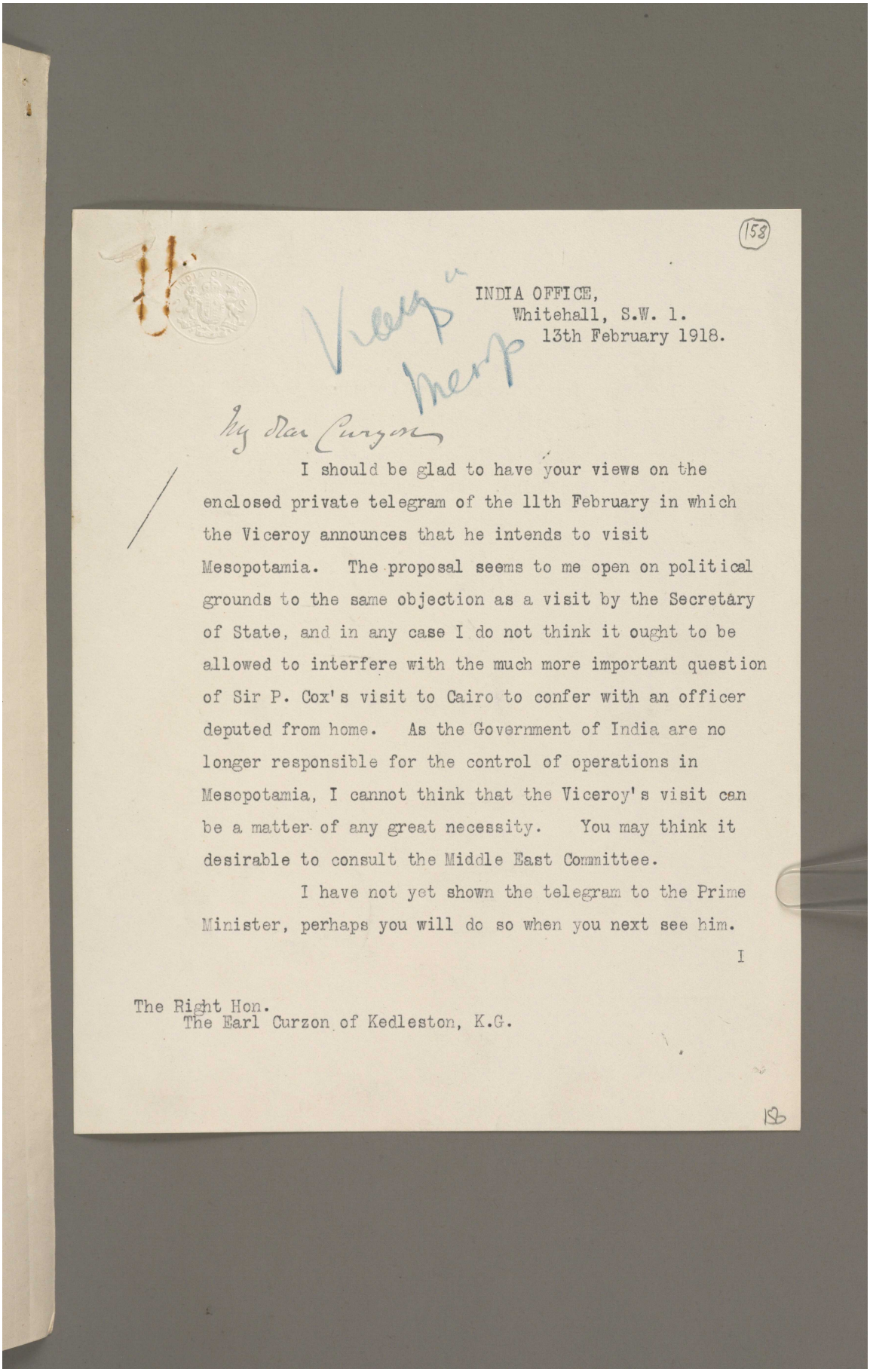


(158)

INDIA OFFICE,
Whitehall, S.W. 1.
13th February 1918.

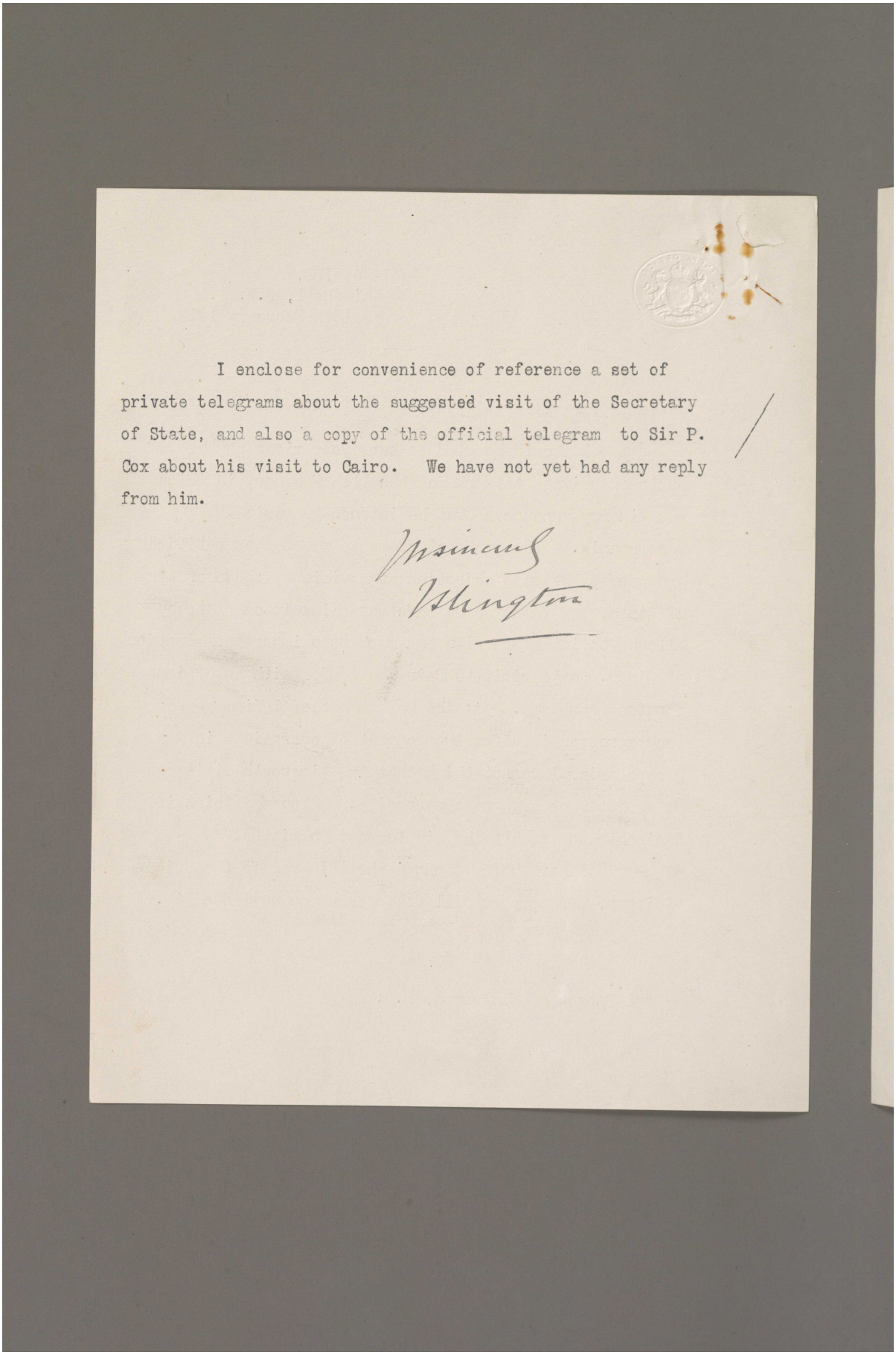
My dear Curzon

I should be glad to have your views on the enclosed private telegram of the 11th February in which the Viceroy announces that he intends to visit Mesopotamia. The proposal seems to me open on political grounds to the same objection as a visit by the Secretary of State, and in any case I do not think it ought to be allowed to interfere with the much more important question of Sir P. Cox's visit to Cairo to confer with an officer deputed from home. As the Government of India are no longer responsible for the control of operations in Mesopotamia, I cannot think that the Viceroy's visit can be a matter of any great necessity. You may think it desirable to consult the Middle East Committee.

I have not yet shown the telegram to the Prime Minister, perhaps you will do so when you next see him.

I

The Right Hon.
The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.



I enclose for convenience of reference a set of private telegrams about the suggested visit of the Secretary of State, and also a copy of the official telegram to Sir P. Cox about his visit to Cairo. We have not yet had any reply from him.

Yours sincerely
Islington

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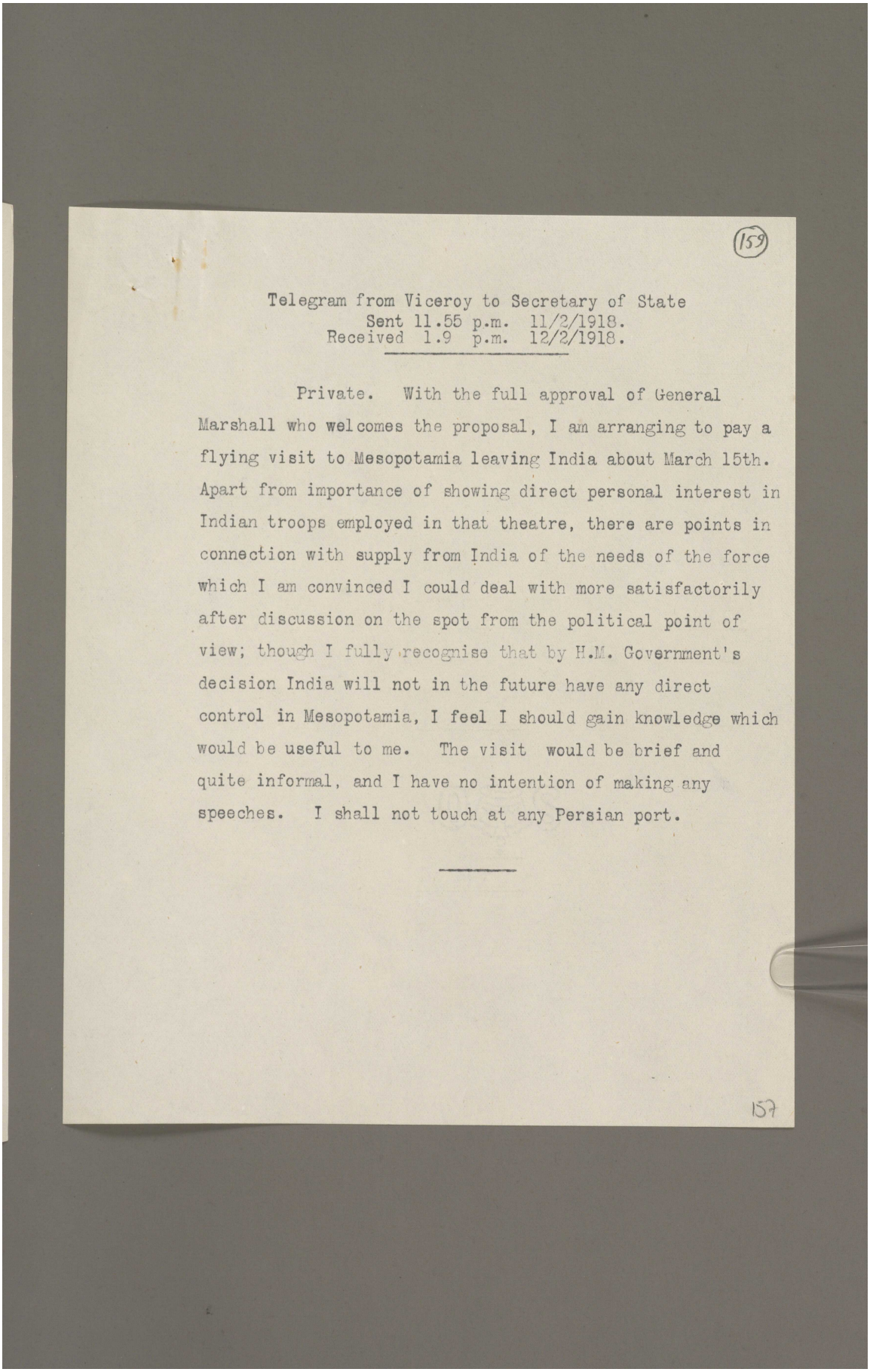

(159)

Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State
Sent 11.55 p.m. 11/2/1918.
Received 1.9 p.m. 12/2/1918.

Private. With the full approval of General Marshall who welcomes the proposal, I am arranging to pay a flying visit to Mesopotamia leaving India about March 15th. Apart from importance of showing direct personal interest in Indian troops employed in that theatre, there are points in connection with supply from India of the needs of the force which I am convinced I could deal with more satisfactorily after discussion on the spot from the political point of view; though I fully recognise that by H.M. Government's decision India will not in the future have any direct control in Mesopotamia, I feel I should gain knowledge which would be useful to me. The visit would be brief and quite informal, and I have no intention of making any speeches. I shall not touch at any Persian port.

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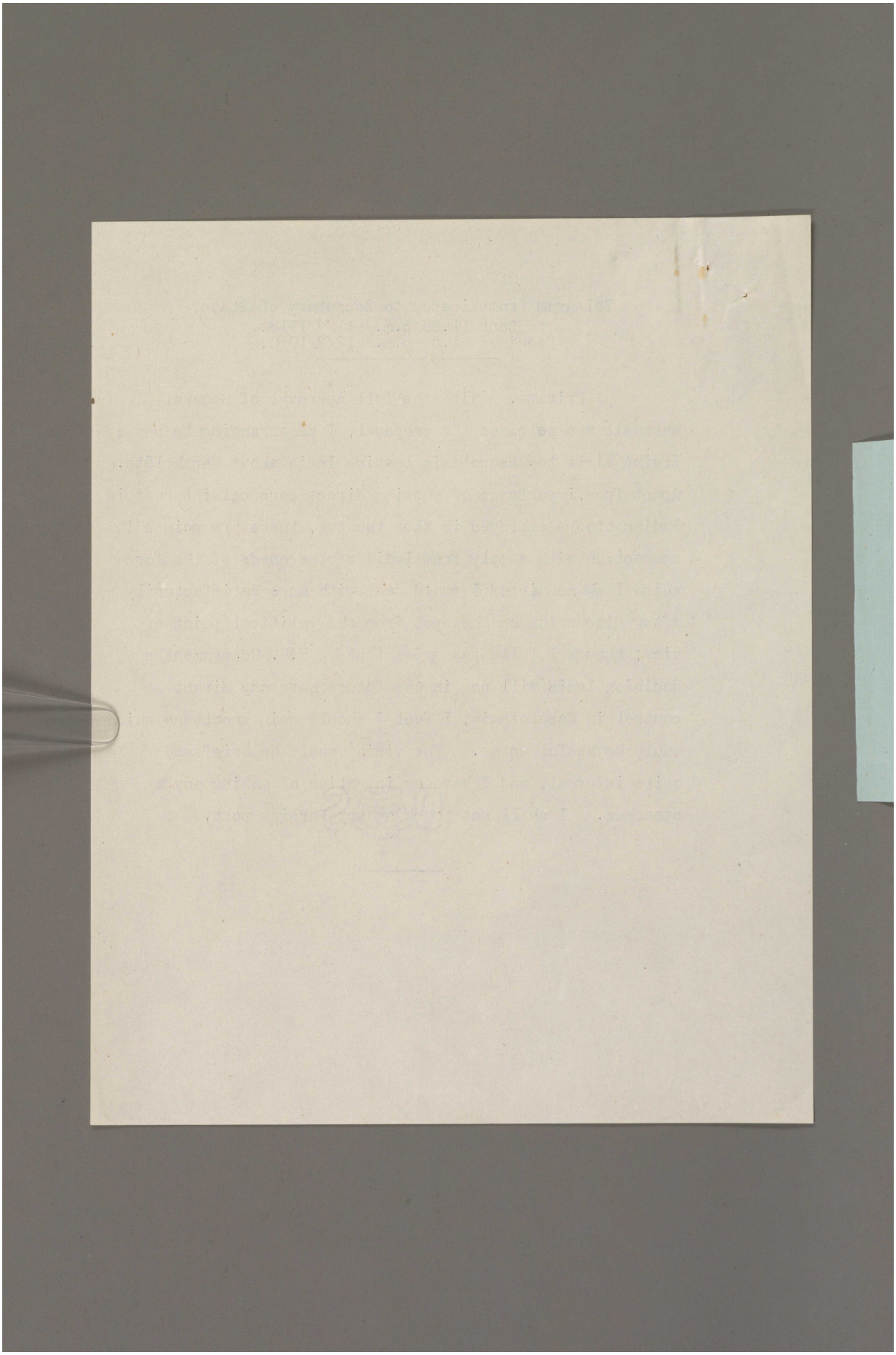

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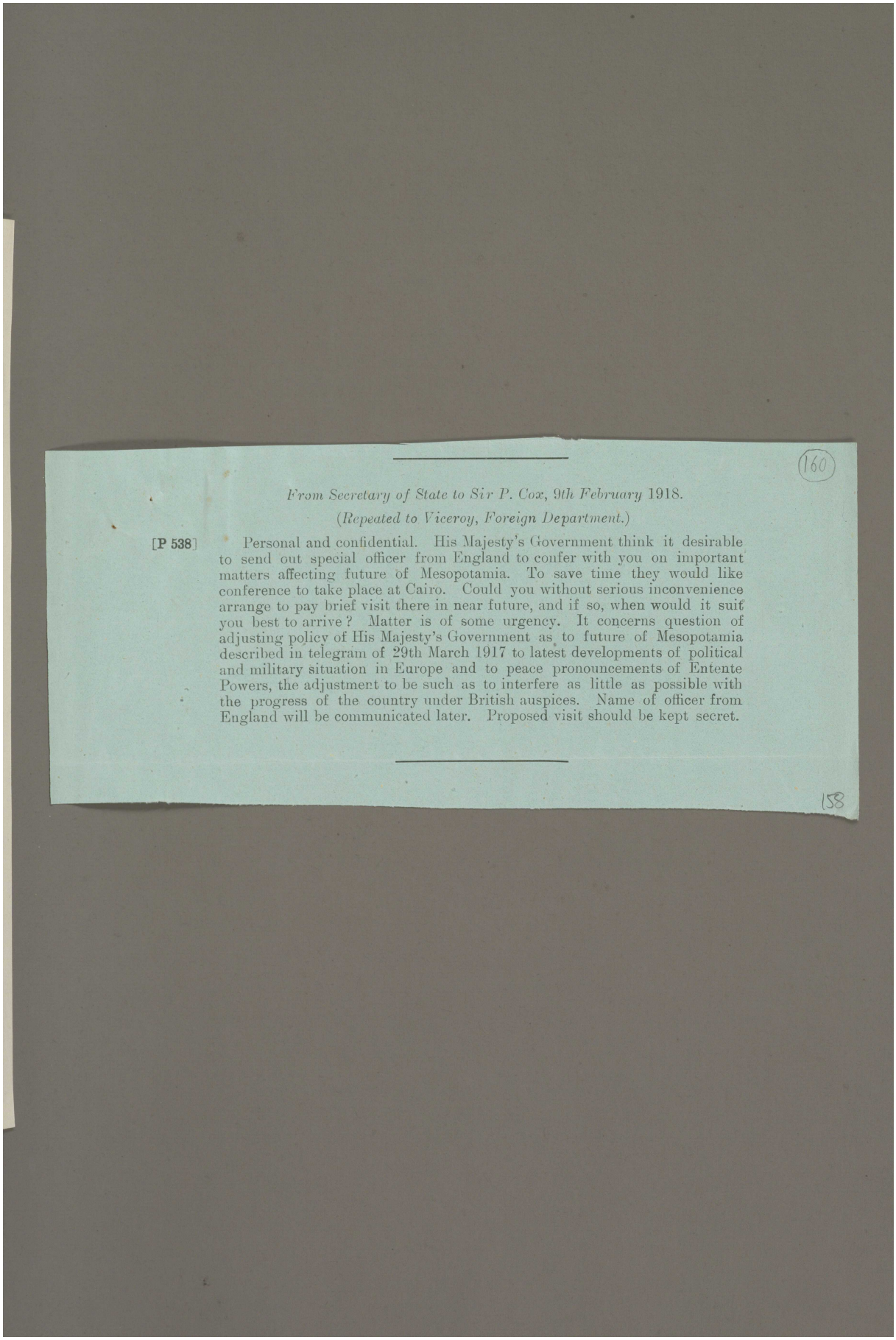

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From Secretary of State to Sir P. Cox, 9th February 1918.

(Repeated to Viceroy, Foreign Department.)

[P 538] Personal and confidential. His Majesty's Government think it desirable to send out special officer from England to confer with you on important matters affecting future of Mesopotamia. To save time they would like conference to take place at Cairo. Could you without serious inconvenience arrange to pay brief visit there in near future, and if so, when would it suit you best to arrive? Matter is of some urgency. It concerns question of adjusting policy of His Majesty's Government as to future of Mesopotamia described in telegram of 29th March 1917 to latest developments of political and military situation in Europe and to peace pronouncements of Entente Powers, the adjustment to be such as to interfere as little as possible with the progress of the country under British auspices. Name of officer from England will be communicated later. Proposed visit should be kept secret.

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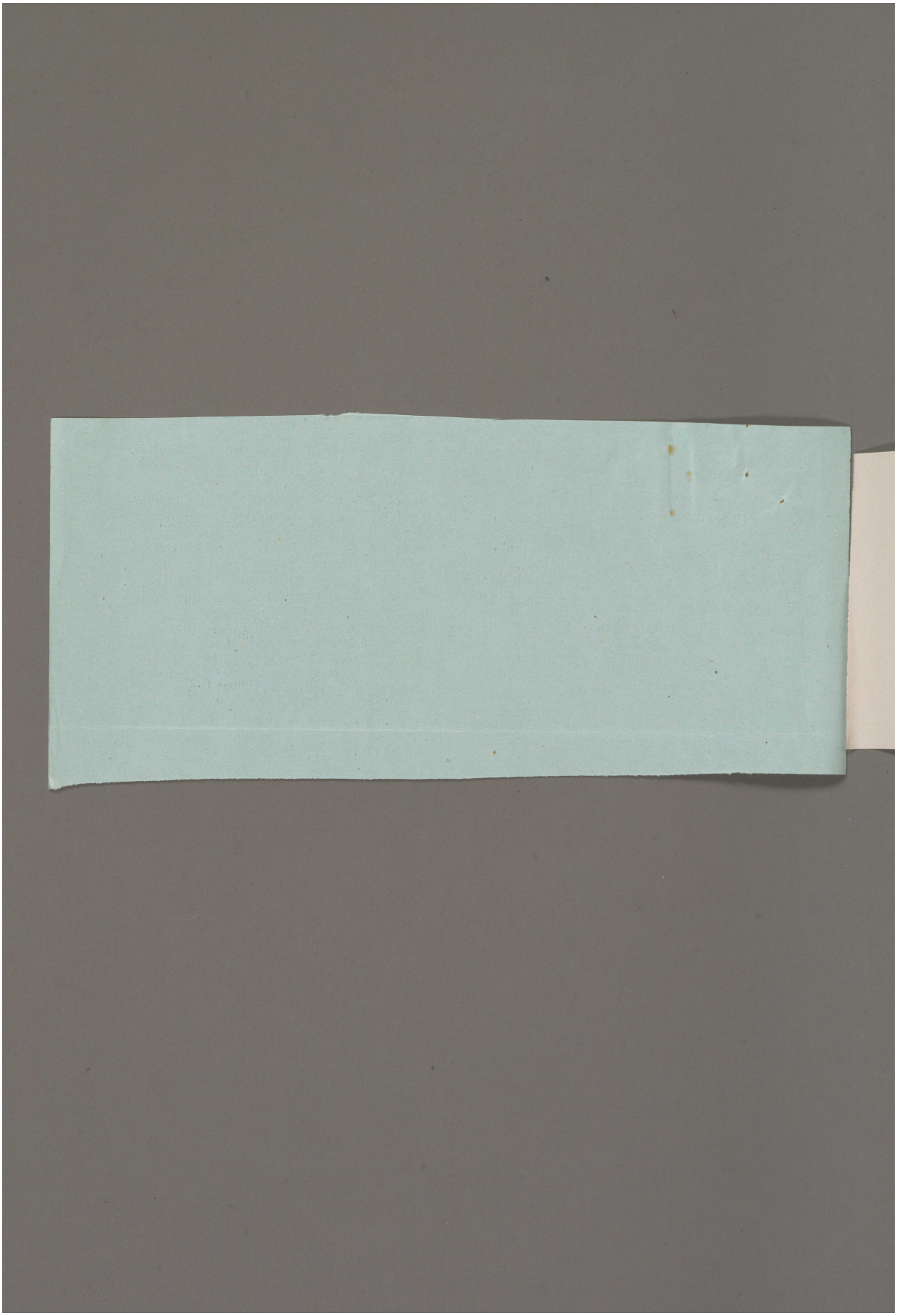

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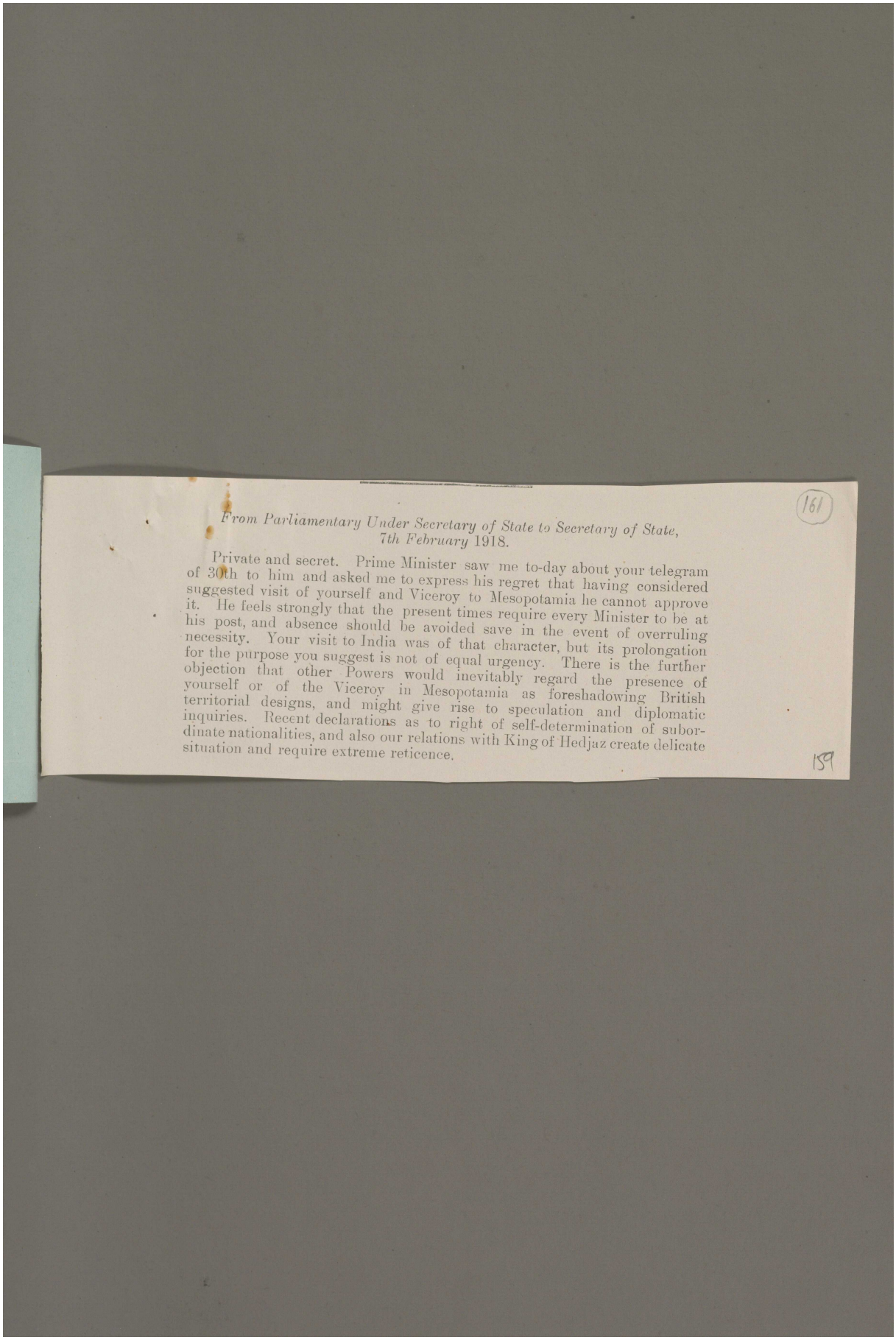

From Parliamentary Under Secretary of State to Secretary of State,
7th February 1918.

Private and secret. Prime Minister saw me to-day about your telegram of 30th to him and asked me to express his regret that having considered suggested visit of yourself and Viceroy to Mesopotamia he cannot approve it. He feels strongly that the present times require every Minister to be at his post, and absence should be avoided save in the event of overruling necessity. Your visit to India was of that character, but its prolongation for the purpose you suggest is not of equal urgency. There is the further objection that other Powers would inevitably regard the presence of yourself or of the Viceroy in Mesopotamia as foreshadowing British territorial designs, and might give rise to speculation and diplomatic inquiries. Recent declarations as to right of self-determination of subordinate nationalities, and also our relations with King of Hedjaz create delicate situation and require extreme reticence.

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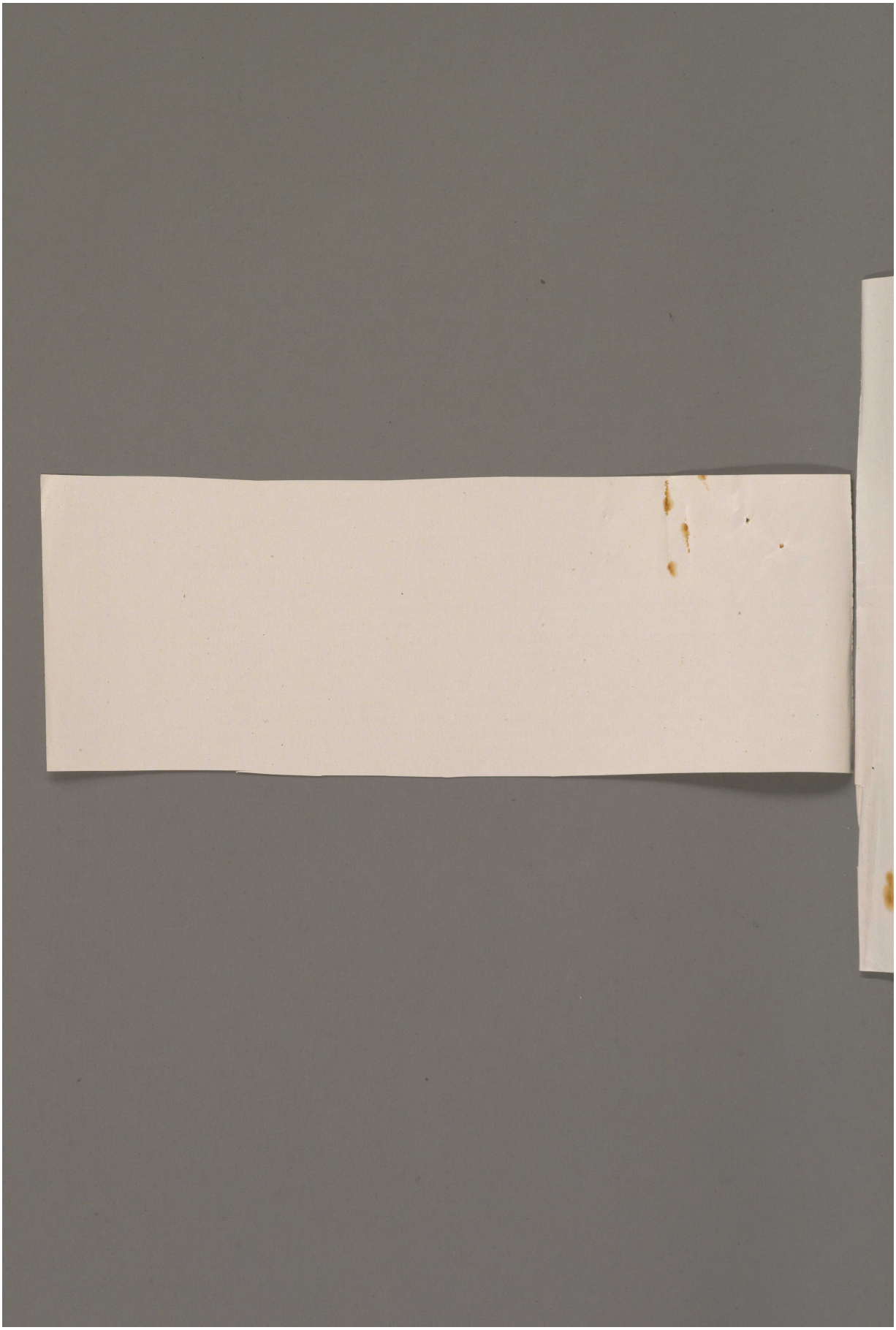

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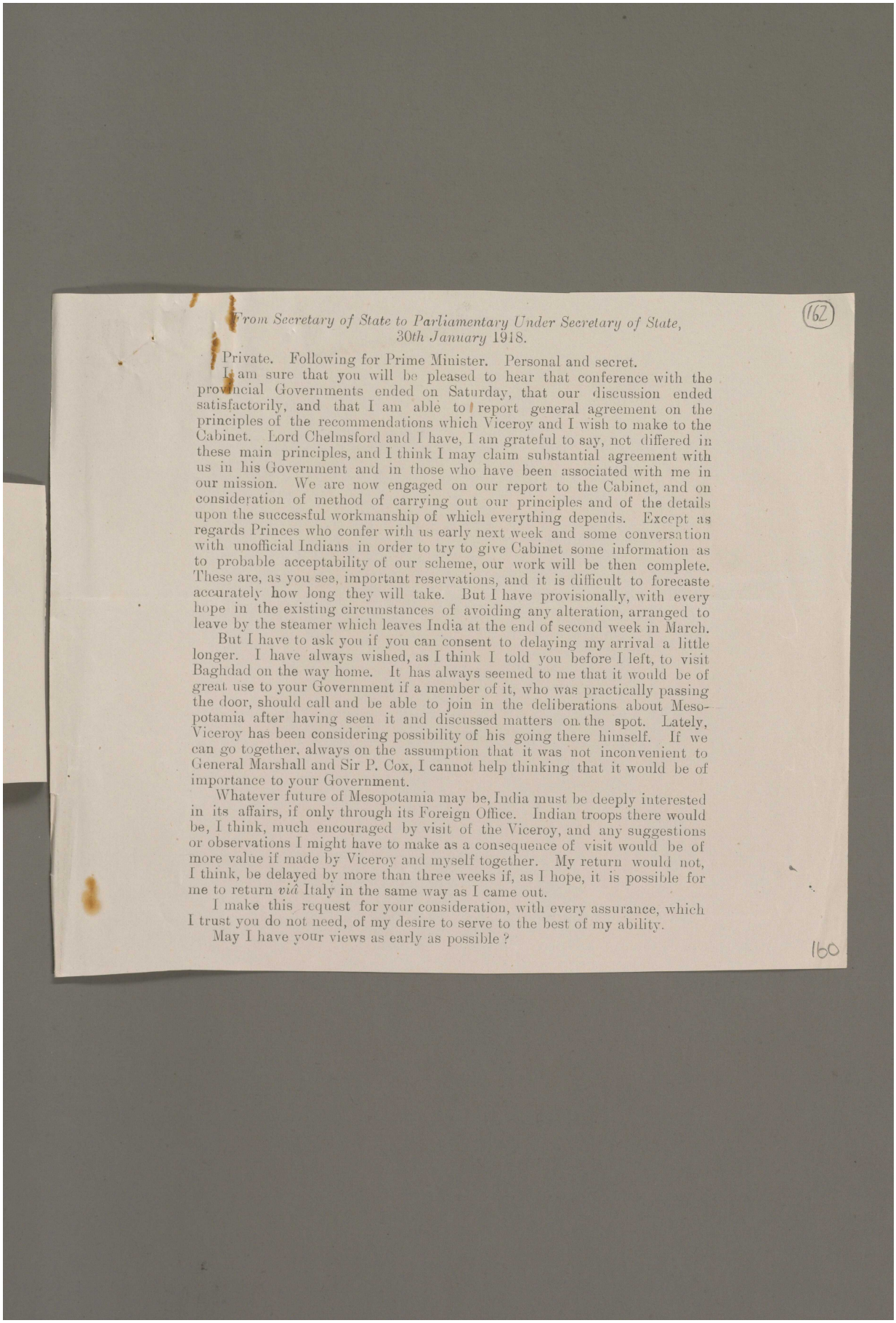

From Secretary of State to Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
30th January 1918.

(162)

Private. Following for Prime Minister. Personal and secret.

I am sure that you will be pleased to hear that conference with the provincial Governments ended on Saturday, that our discussion ended satisfactorily, and that I am able to report general agreement on the principles of the recommendations which Viceroy and I wish to make to the Cabinet. Lord Chelmsford and I have, I am grateful to say, not differed in these main principles, and I think I may claim substantial agreement with us in his Government and in those who have been associated with me in our mission. We are now engaged on our report to the Cabinet, and on consideration of method of carrying out our principles and of the details upon the successful workmanship of which everything depends. Except as regards Princes who confer with us early next week and some conversation with unofficial Indians in order to try to give Cabinet some information as to probable acceptability of our scheme, our work will be then complete. These are, as you see, important reservations, and it is difficult to forecaste accurately how long they will take. But I have provisionally, with every hope in the existing circumstances of avoiding any alteration, arranged to leave by the steamer which leaves India at the end of second week in March.

But I have to ask you if you can consent to delaying my arrival a little longer. I have always wished, as I think I told you before I left, to visit Baghdad on the way home. It has always seemed to me that it would be of great use to your Government if a member of it, who was practically passing the door, should call and be able to join in the deliberations about Mesopotamia after having seen it and discussed matters on the spot. Lately, Viceroy has been considering possibility of his going there himself. If we can go together, always on the assumption that it was not inconvenient to General Marshall and Sir P. Cox, I cannot help thinking that it would be of importance to your Government.

Whatever future of Mesopotamia may be, India must be deeply interested in its affairs, if only through its Foreign Office. Indian troops there would be, I think, much encouraged by visit of the Viceroy, and any suggestions or observations I might have to make as a consequence of visit would be of more value if made by Viceroy and myself together. My return would not, I think, be delayed by more than three weeks if, as I hope, it is possible for me to return *viâ* Italy in the same way as I came out.

I make this request for your consideration, with every assurance, which I trust you do not need, of my desire to serve to the best of my ability.

May I have your views as early as possible?

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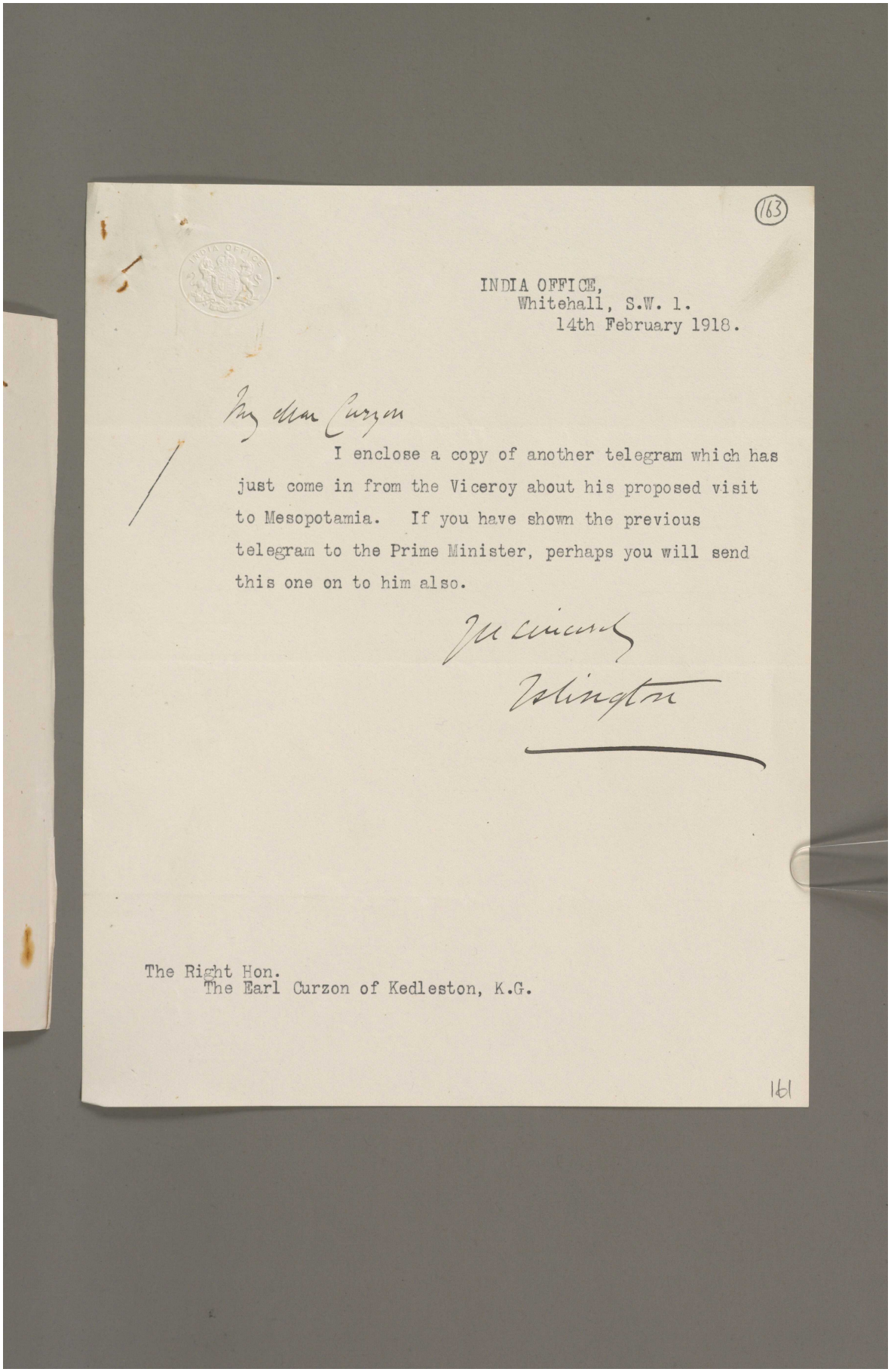

(163)

INDIA OFFICE,
Whitehall, S.W. 1.
14th February 1918.

My dear Curzon

I enclose a copy of another telegram which has just come in from the Viceroy about his proposed visit to Mesopotamia. If you have shown the previous telegram to the Prime Minister, perhaps you will send this one on to him also.

Yours sincerely
Islington

The Right Hon.
The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.

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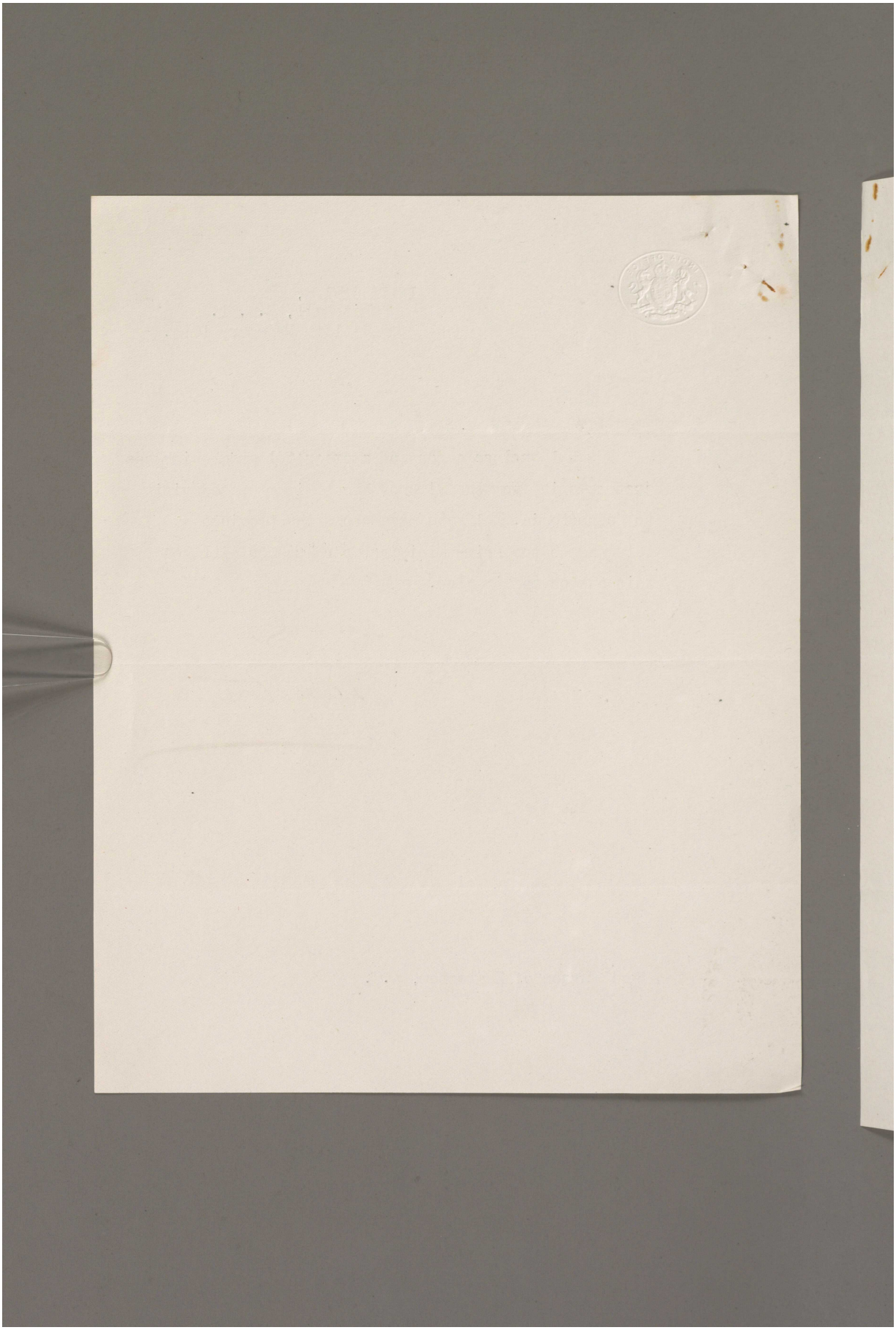

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(164)

India Office

Telegram from Viceroy to the ~~Secretary of State~~
Dated 14th February 1918.
Received at India Office, 8.0. a.m.

Clear the Line.

Private. My private telegram of the 11th February. Montagu is in jungles and I have only just received copy of your private telegram to him on the subject. I had received no indication that H.M's Government saw possible objection to my visiting Mesopotamia. I trust you will explain this to Prime Minister. If in spite of limited scope of tour defined in my telegram and of my conviction that my visit would help to remove serious misunderstandings affecting India in regard to supply of material to Force "D" H.M's Government feel that the objections they have raised still hold good I shall of course instantly acquiesce in that decision.

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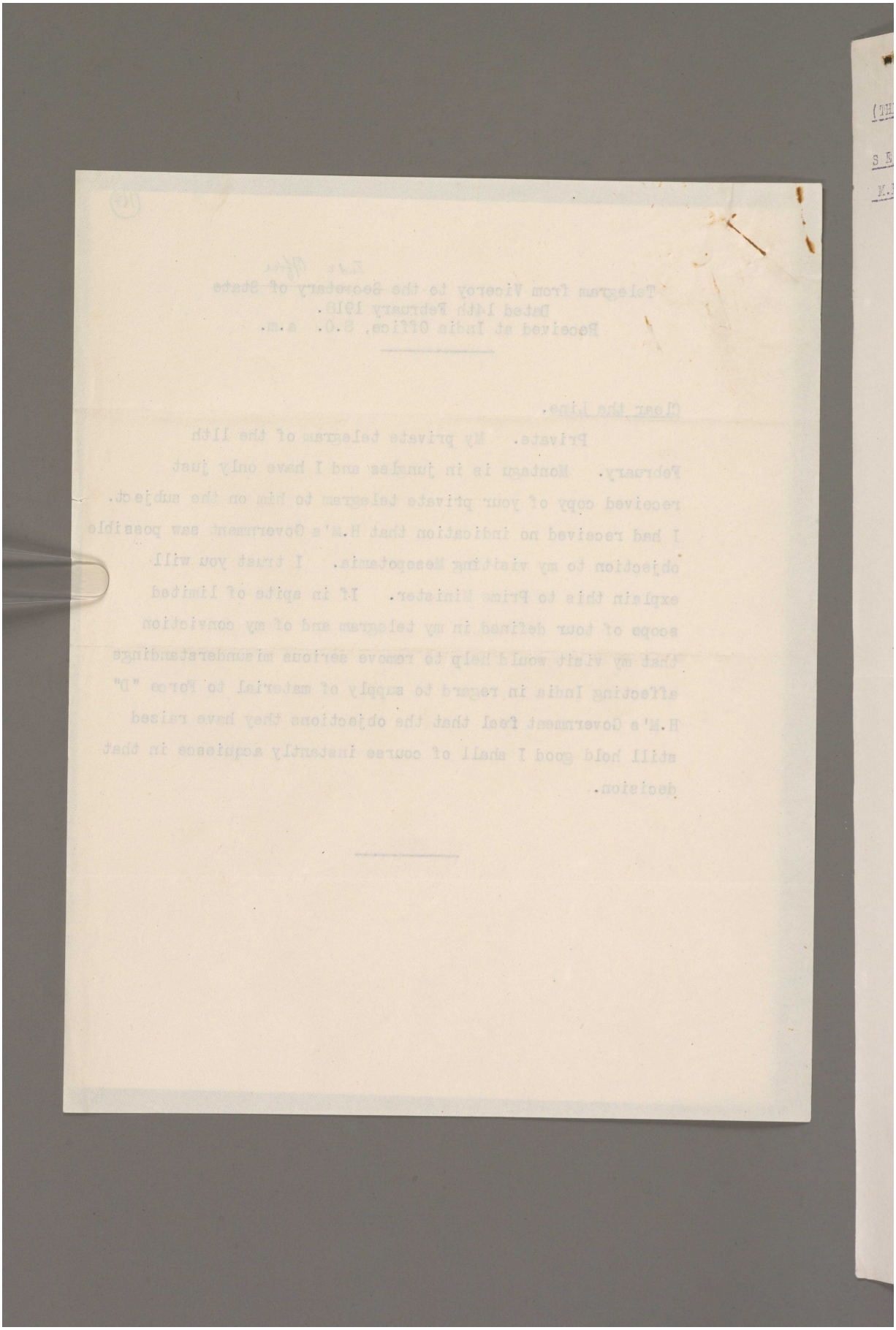

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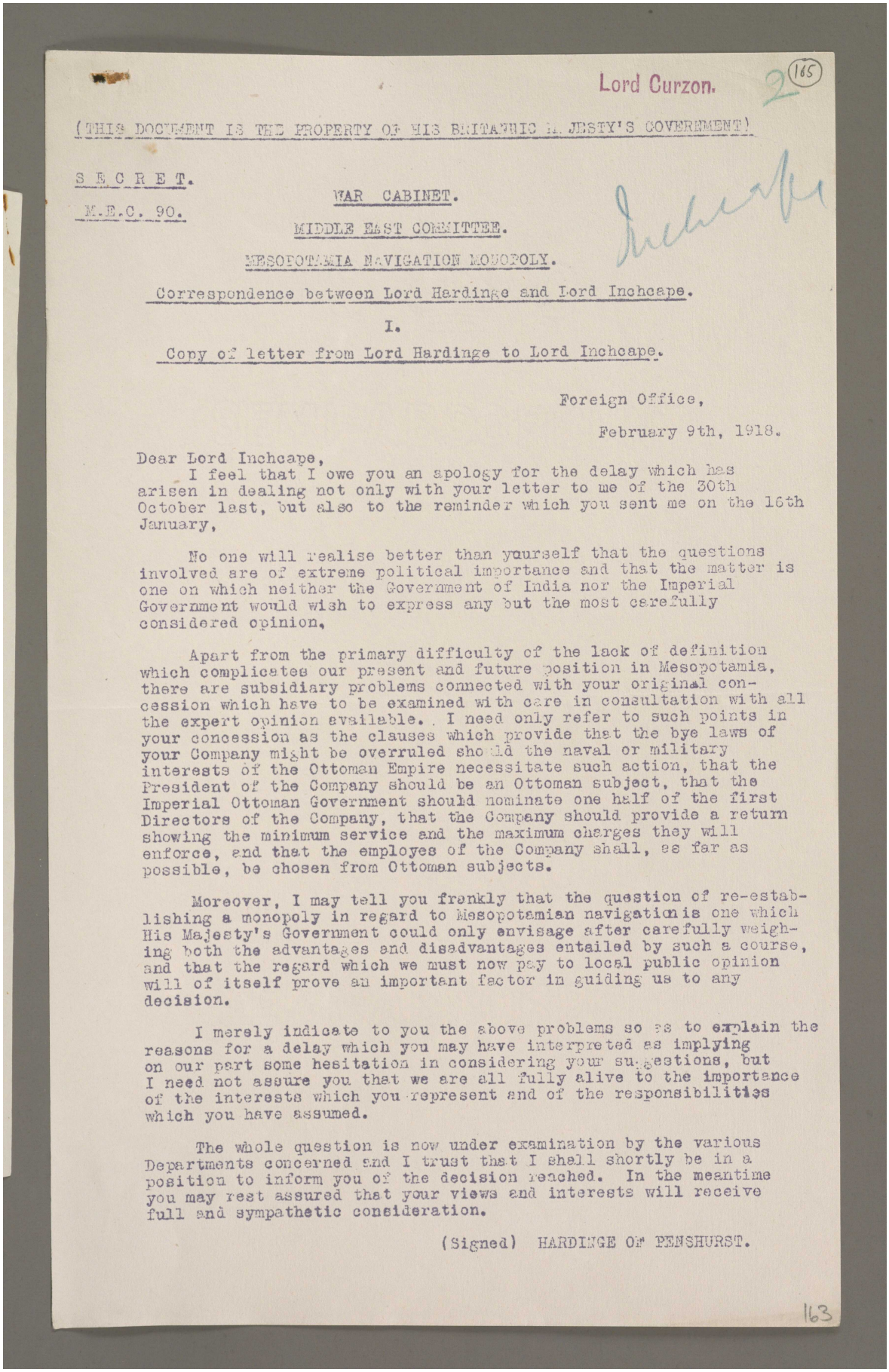

Lord Curzon. 2 (165)

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SECRET.

M.E.C. 90.

WAR CABINET.

MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

MESOPOTAMIA NAVIGATION MONOPOLY.

Correspondence between Lord Hardinge and Lord Inchcape.

I.

Copy of letter from Lord Hardinge to Lord Inchcape.

Foreign Office,

February 9th, 1918.

Dear Lord Inchcape,

I feel that I owe you an apology for the delay which has arisen in dealing not only with your letter to me of the 30th October last, but also to the reminder which you sent me on the 16th January,

No one will realise better than yourself that the questions involved are of extreme political importance and that the matter is one on which neither the Government of India nor the Imperial Government would wish to express any but the most carefully considered opinion,

Apart from the primary difficulty of the lack of definition which complicates our present and future position in Mesopotamia, there are subsidiary problems connected with your original concession which have to be examined with care in consultation with all the expert opinion available. I need only refer to such points in your concession as the clauses which provide that the bye laws of your Company might be overruled should the naval or military interests of the Ottoman Empire necessitate such action, that the President of the Company should be an Ottoman subject, that the Imperial Ottoman Government should nominate one half of the first Directors of the Company, that the Company should provide a return showing the minimum service and the maximum charges they will enforce, and that the employes of the Company shall, as far as possible, be chosen from Ottoman subjects.

Moreover, I may tell you frankly that the question of re-establishing a monopoly in regard to Mesopotamian navigation is one which His Majesty's Government could only envisage after carefully weighing both the advantages and disadvantages entailed by such a course, and that the regard which we must now pay to local public opinion will of itself prove an important factor in guiding us to any decision.

I merely indicate to you the above problems so as to explain the reasons for a delay which you may have interpreted as implying on our part some hesitation in considering your suggestions, but I need not assure you that we are all fully alive to the importance of the interests which you represent and of the responsibilities which you have assumed.

The whole question is now under examination by the various Departments concerned and I trust that I shall shortly be in a position to inform you of the decision reached. In the meantime you may rest assured that your views and interests will receive full and sympathetic consideration.

(Signed) HARDINGE OF PENSHURST.

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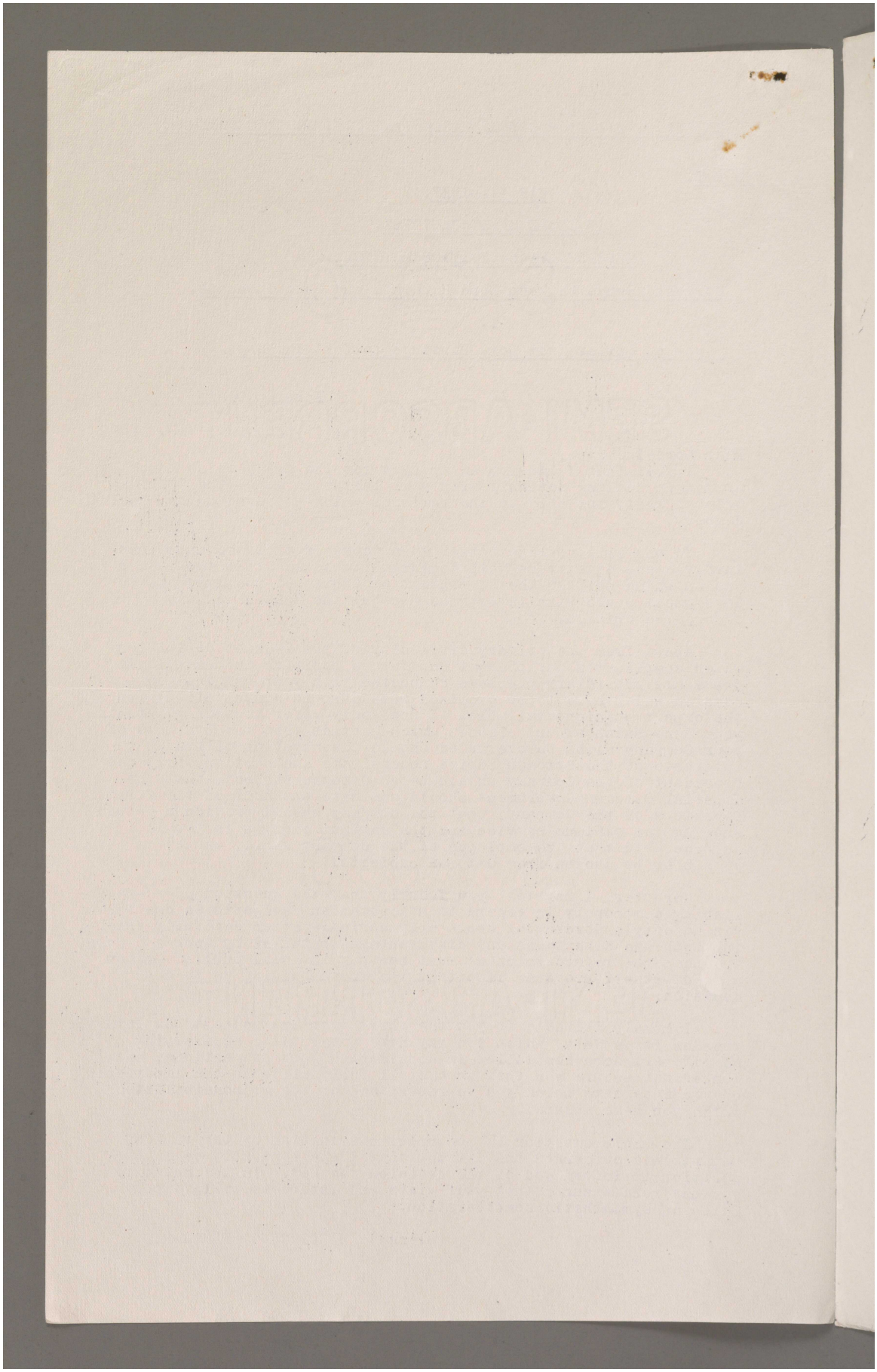

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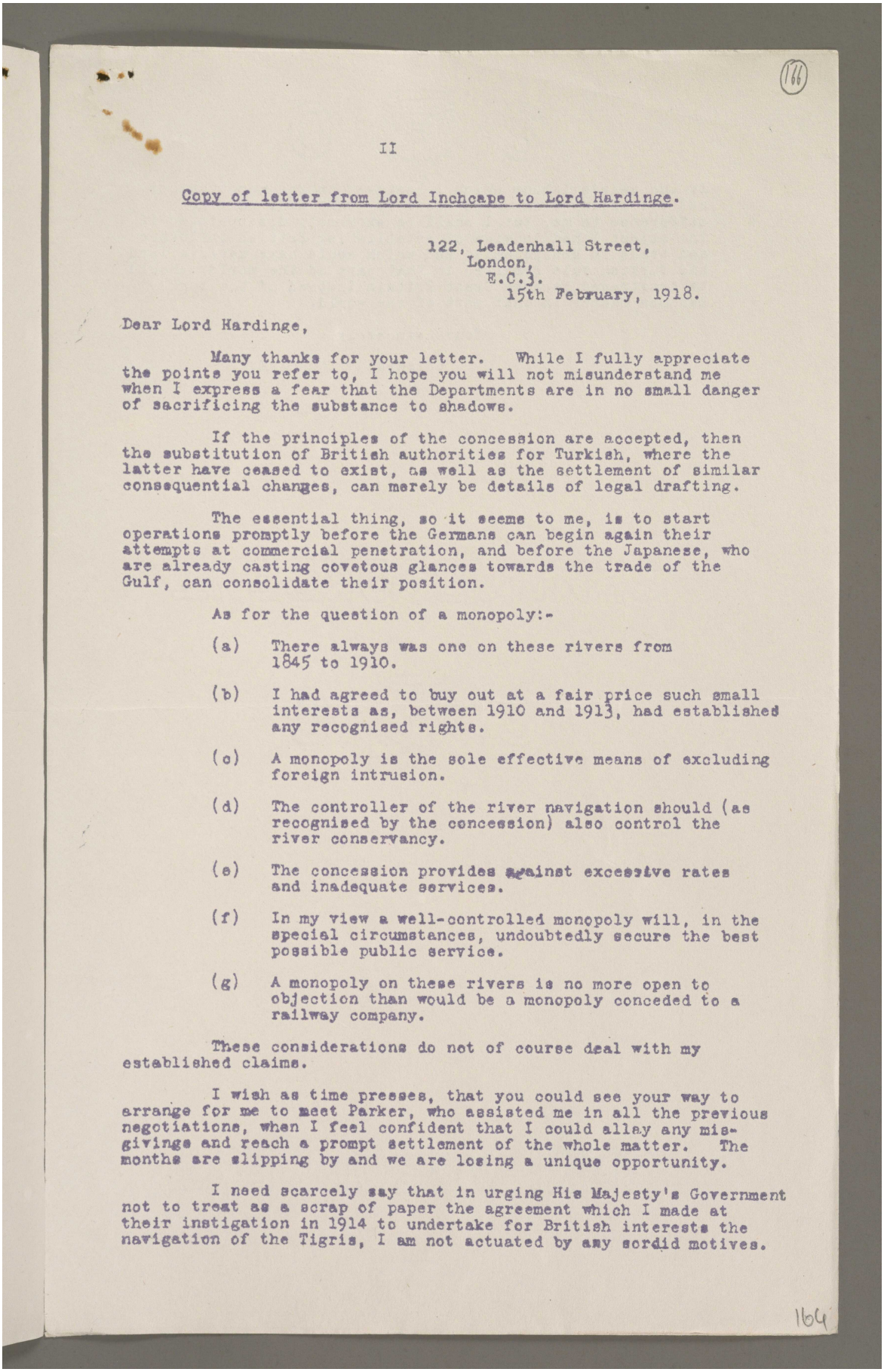


II

Copy of letter from Lord Inchcape to Lord Hardinge.

122, Leadenhall Street,
London,
E.C.3.
15th February, 1918.

Dear Lord Hardinge,

Many thanks for your letter. While I fully appreciate the points you refer to, I hope you will not misunderstand me when I express a fear that the Departments are in no small danger of sacrificing the substance to shadows.

If the principles of the concession are accepted, then the substitution of British authorities for Turkish, where the latter have ceased to exist, as well as the settlement of similar consequential changes, can merely be details of legal drafting.

The essential thing, so it seems to me, is to start operations promptly before the Germans can begin again their attempts at commercial penetration, and before the Japanese, who are already casting covetous glances towards the trade of the Gulf, can consolidate their position.

As for the question of a monopoly:-

(a) There always was one on these rivers from 1845 to 1910.

(b) I had agreed to buy out at a fair price such small interests as, between 1910 and 1913, had established any recognised rights.

(c) A monopoly is the sole effective means of excluding foreign intrusion.

(d) The controller of the river navigation should (as recognised by the concession) also control the river conservancy.

(e) The concession provides against excessive rates and inadequate services.

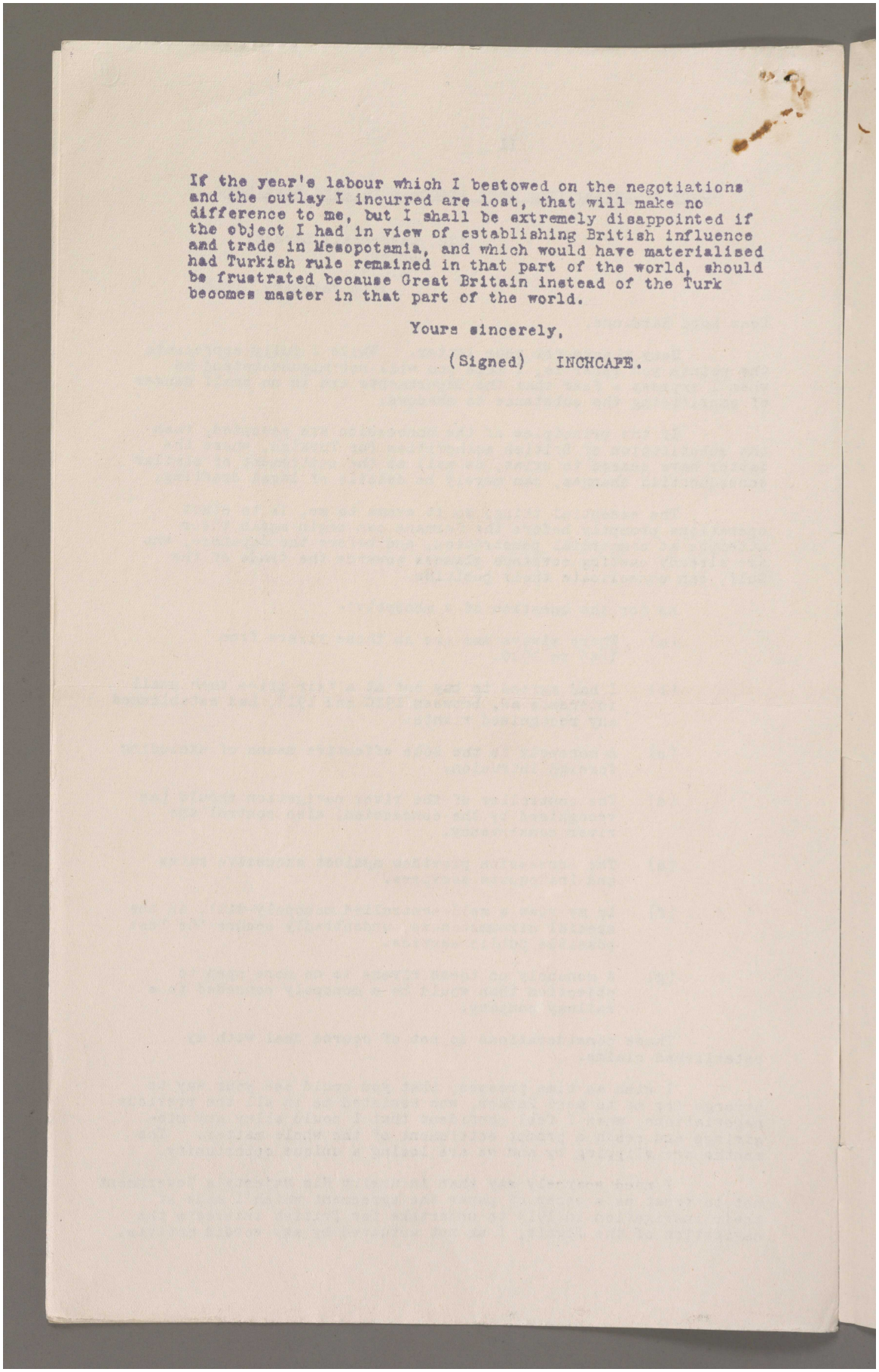
(f) In my view a well-controlled monopoly will, in the special circumstances, undoubtedly secure the best possible public service.

(g) A monopoly on these rivers is no more open to objection than would be a monopoly conceded to a railway company.

These considerations do not of course deal with my established claims.

I wish as time presses, that you could see your way to arrange for me to meet Parker, who assisted me in all the previous negotiations, when I feel confident that I could allay any misgivings and reach a prompt settlement of the whole matter. The months are slipping by and we are losing a unique opportunity.

I need scarcely say that in urging His Majesty's Government not to treat as a scrap of paper the agreement which I made at their instigation in 1914 to undertake for British interests the navigation of the Tigris, I am not actuated by any sordid motives.



If the year's labour which I bestowed on the negotiations and the outlay I incurred are lost, that will make no difference to me, but I shall be extremely disappointed if the object I had in view of establishing British influence and trade in Mesopotamia, and which would have materialised had Turkish rule remained in that part of the world, should be frustrated because Great Britain instead of the Turk becomes master in that part of the world.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) INCHCAPE.

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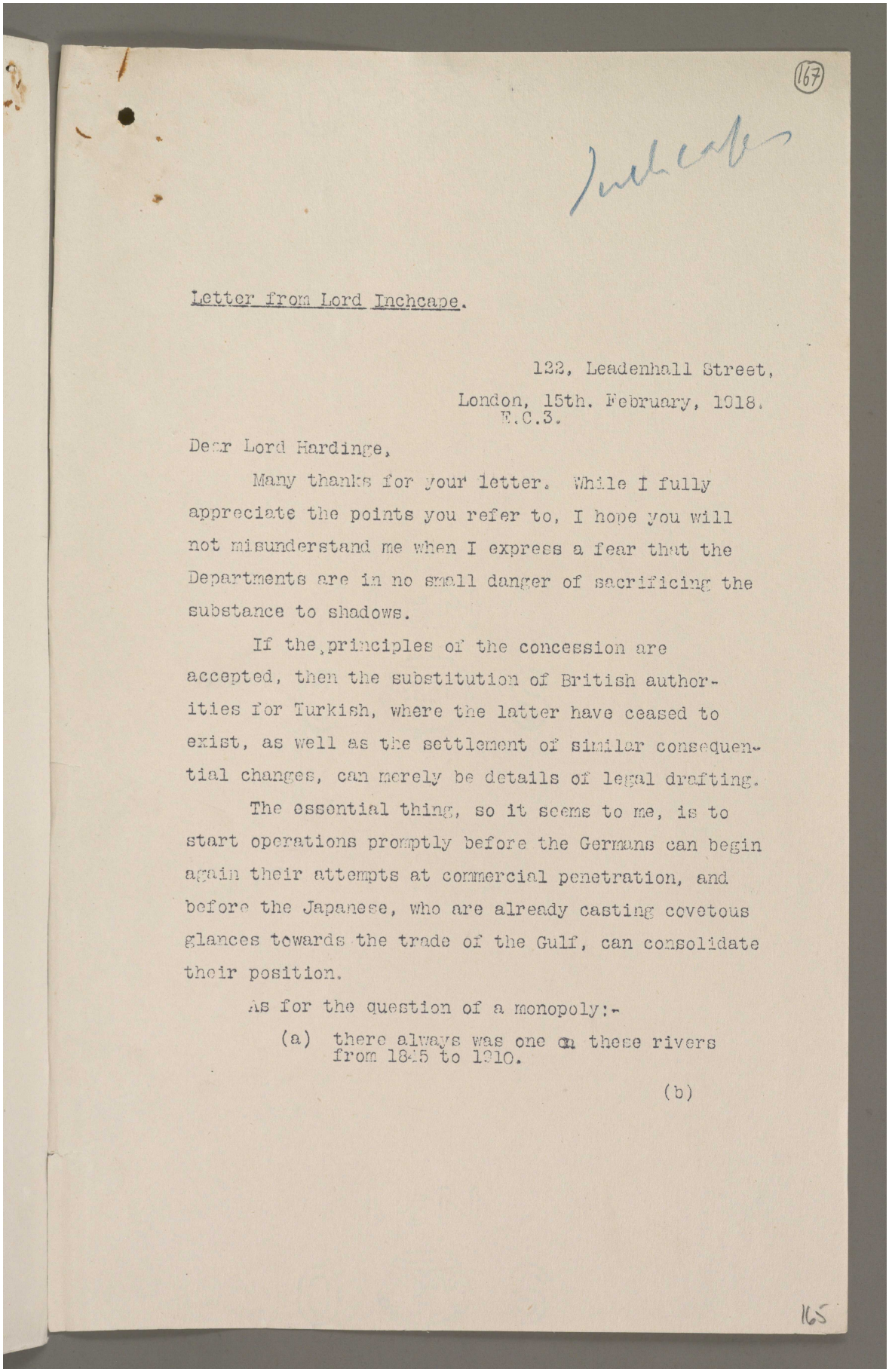

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Inchcape

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London, 15th. February, 1918.
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(b)

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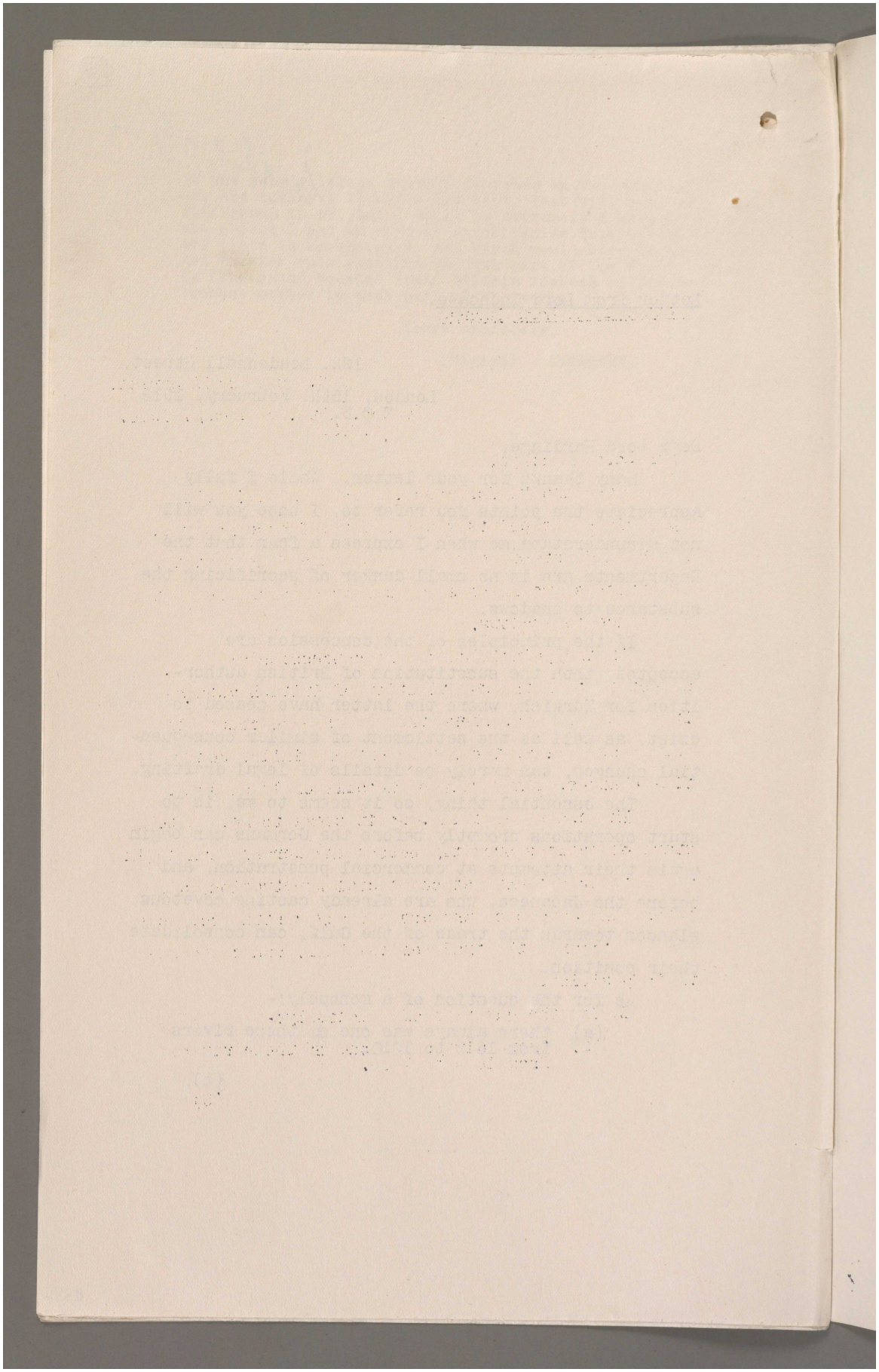

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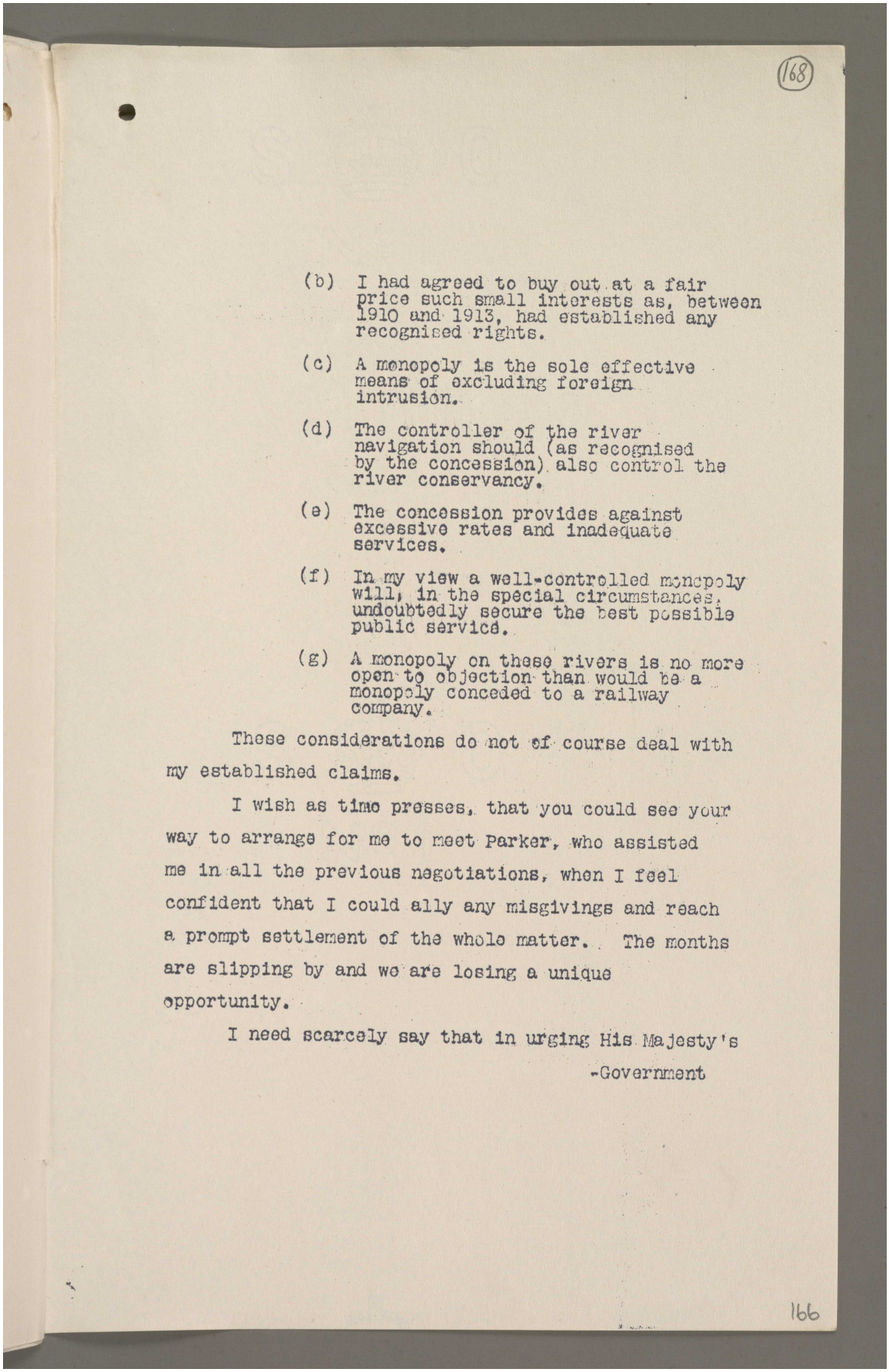

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These considerations do not of course deal with my established claims.

I wish as time presses, that you could see your way to arrange for me to meet Parker, who assisted me in all the previous negotiations, when I feel confident that I could ally any misgivings and reach a prompt settlement of the whole matter. The months are slipping by and we are losing a unique opportunity.

I need scarcely say that in urging His Majesty's

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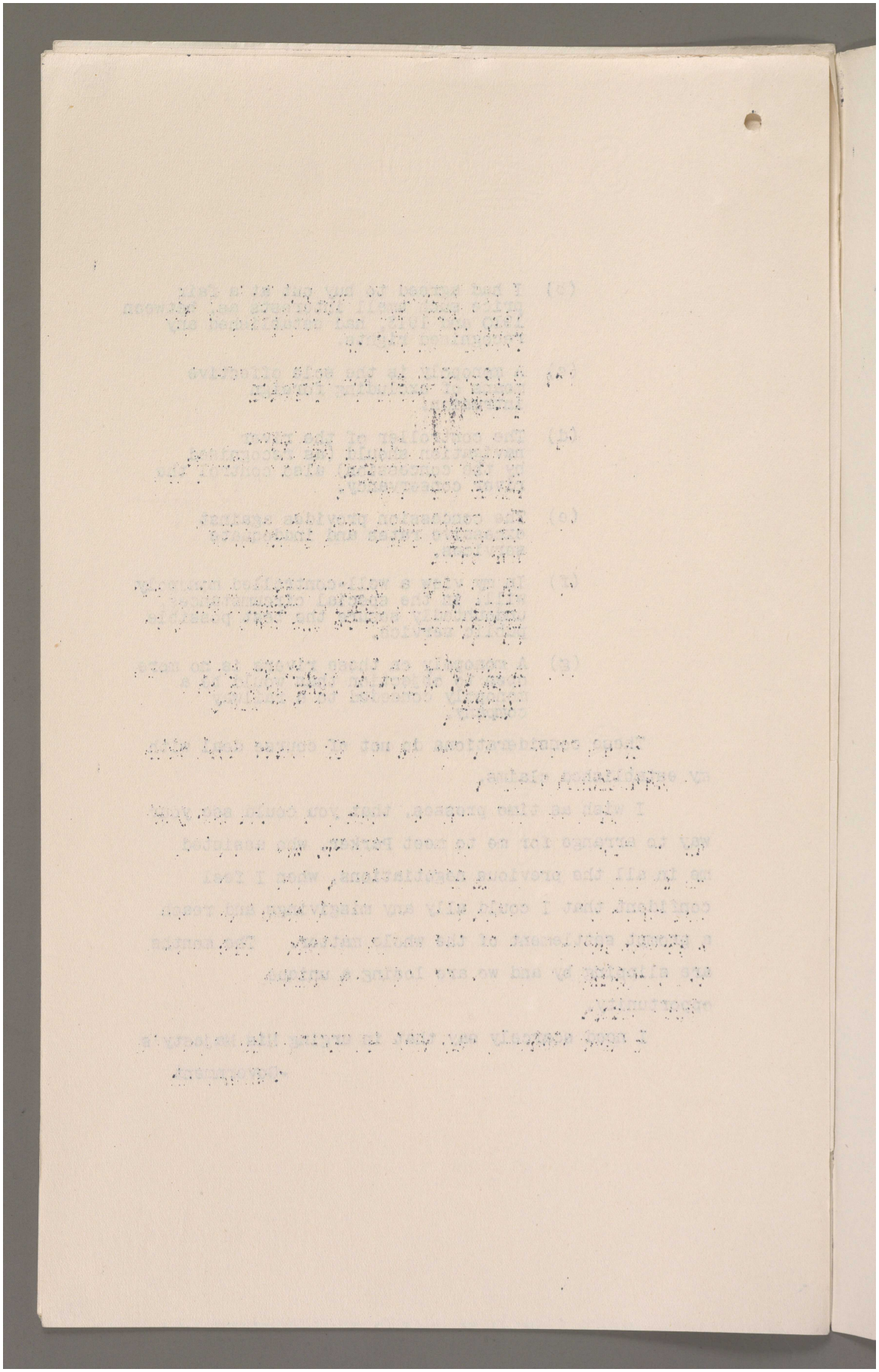

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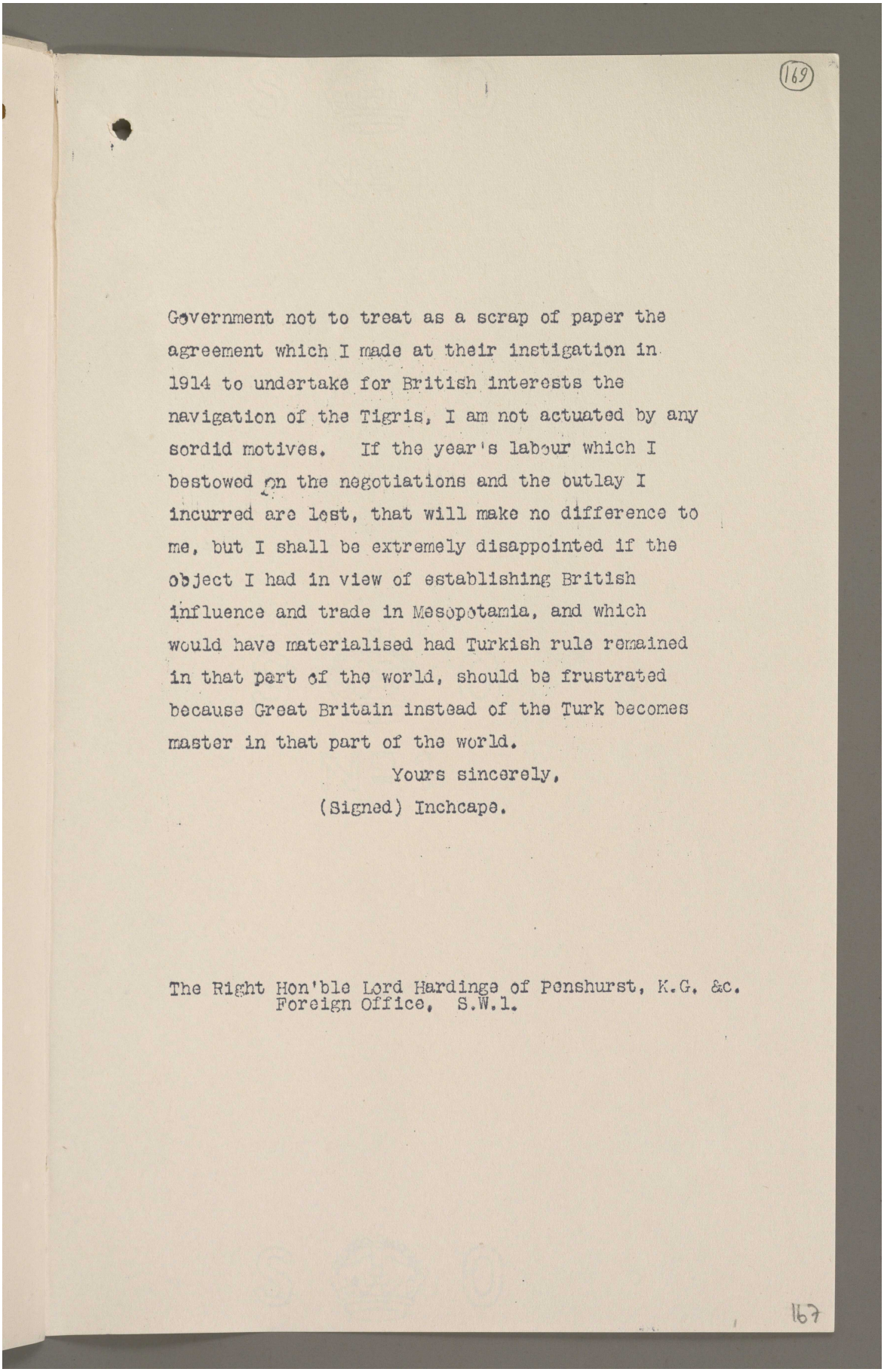

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Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Inchcape.

The Right Hon'ble Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, K.G. &c.
Foreign Office, S.W.1.

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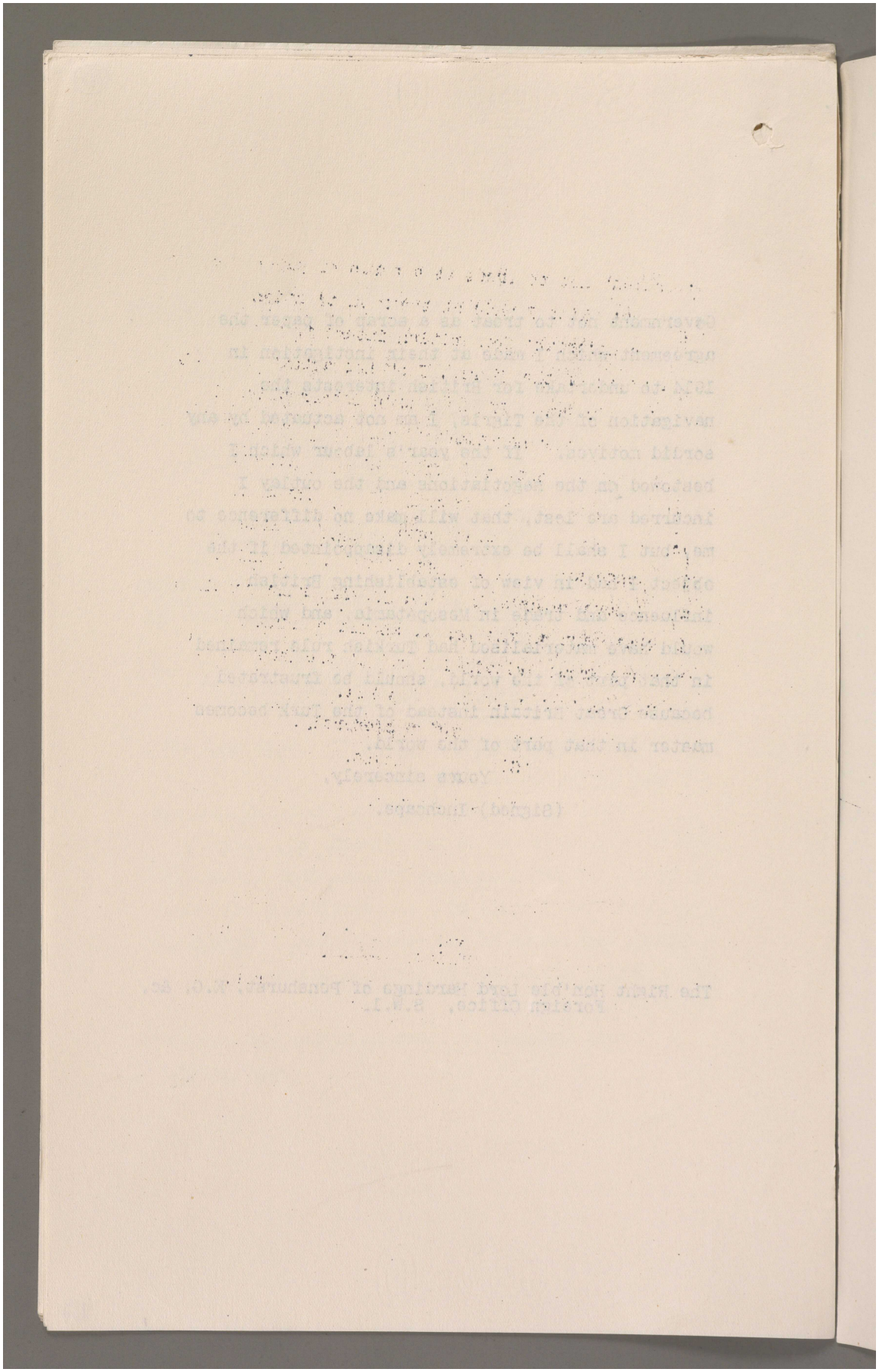

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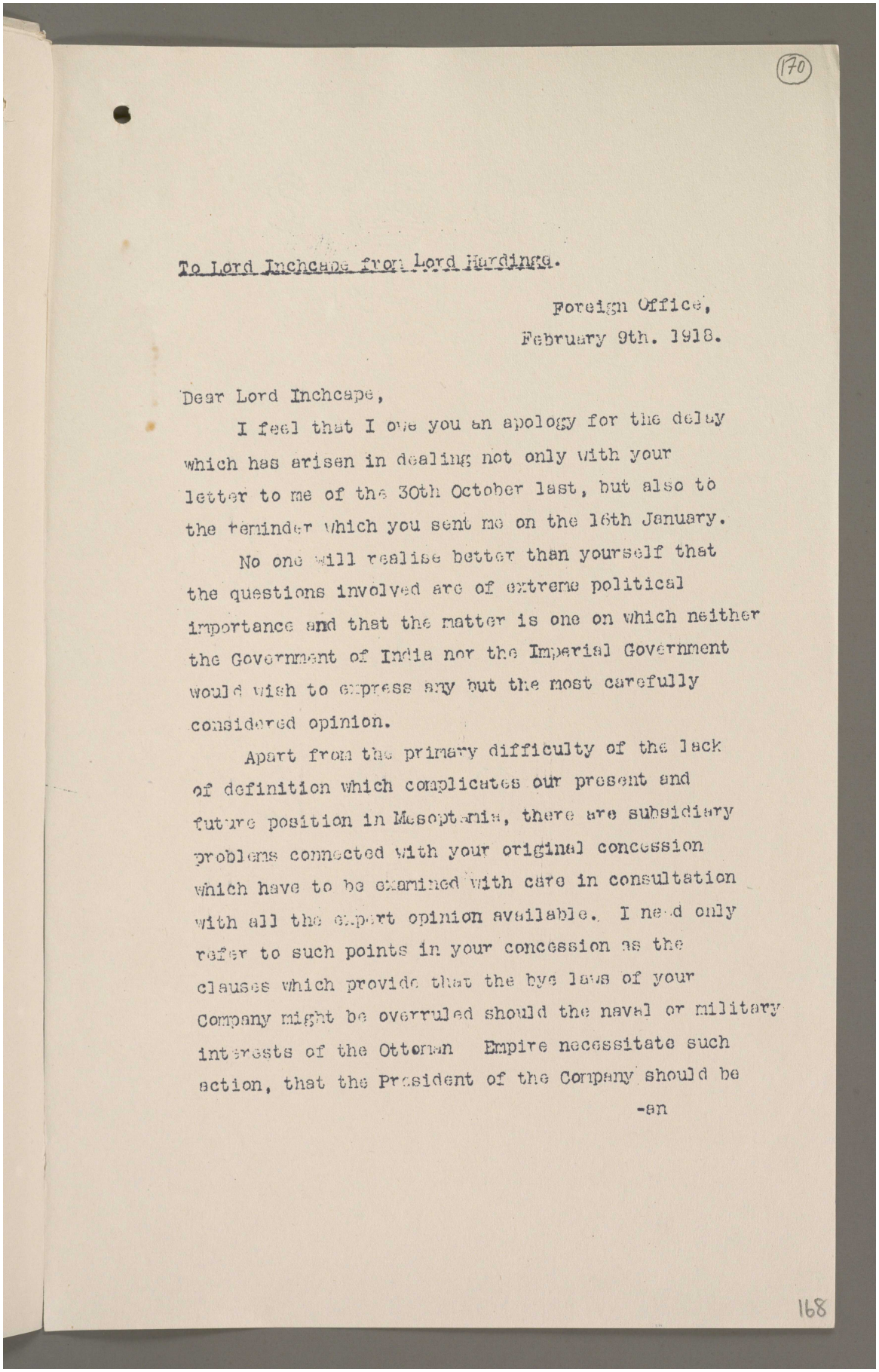

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To Lord Inchcape from Lord Hardinge.

Foreign Office,
February 9th. 1918.

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Apart from the primary difficulty of the lack of definition which complicates our present and future position in Mesopotamia, there are subsidiary problems connected with your original concession which have to be examined with care in consultation with all the expert opinion available. I need only refer to such points in your concession as the clauses which provide that the bye laws of your Company might be overruled should the naval or military interests of the Ottoman Empire necessitate such action, that the President of the Company should be

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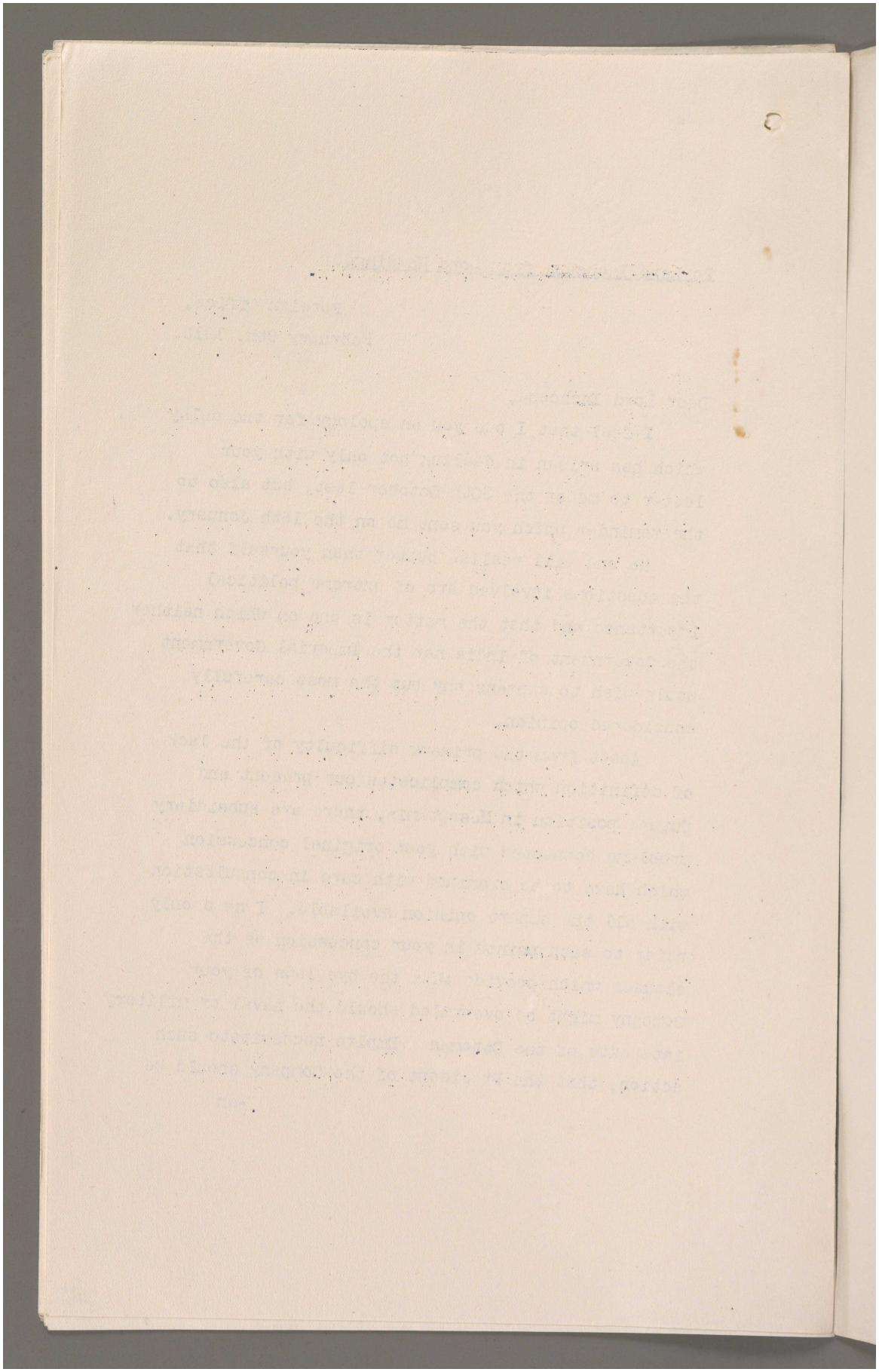

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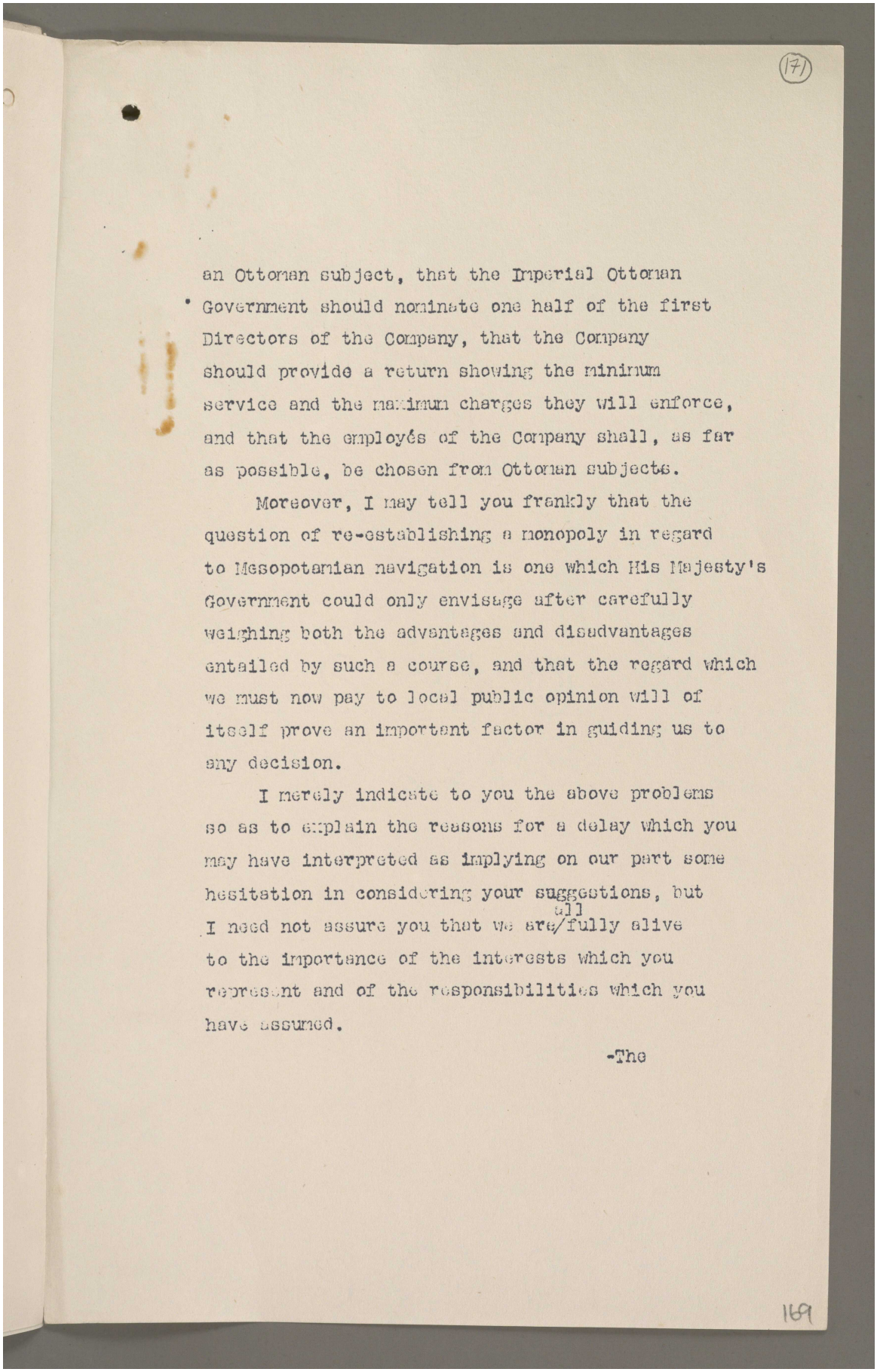

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an Ottoman subject, that the Imperial Ottoman Government should nominate one half of the first Directors of the Company, that the Company should provide a return showing the minimum service and the maximum charges they will enforce, and that the employés of the Company shall, as far as possible, be chosen from Ottoman subjects.

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I merely indicate to you the above problems so as to explain the reasons for a delay which you may have interpreted as implying on our part some hesitation in considering your suggestions, but I need not assure you that we are fully alive to the importance of the interests which you represent and of the responsibilities which you have assumed.

-The

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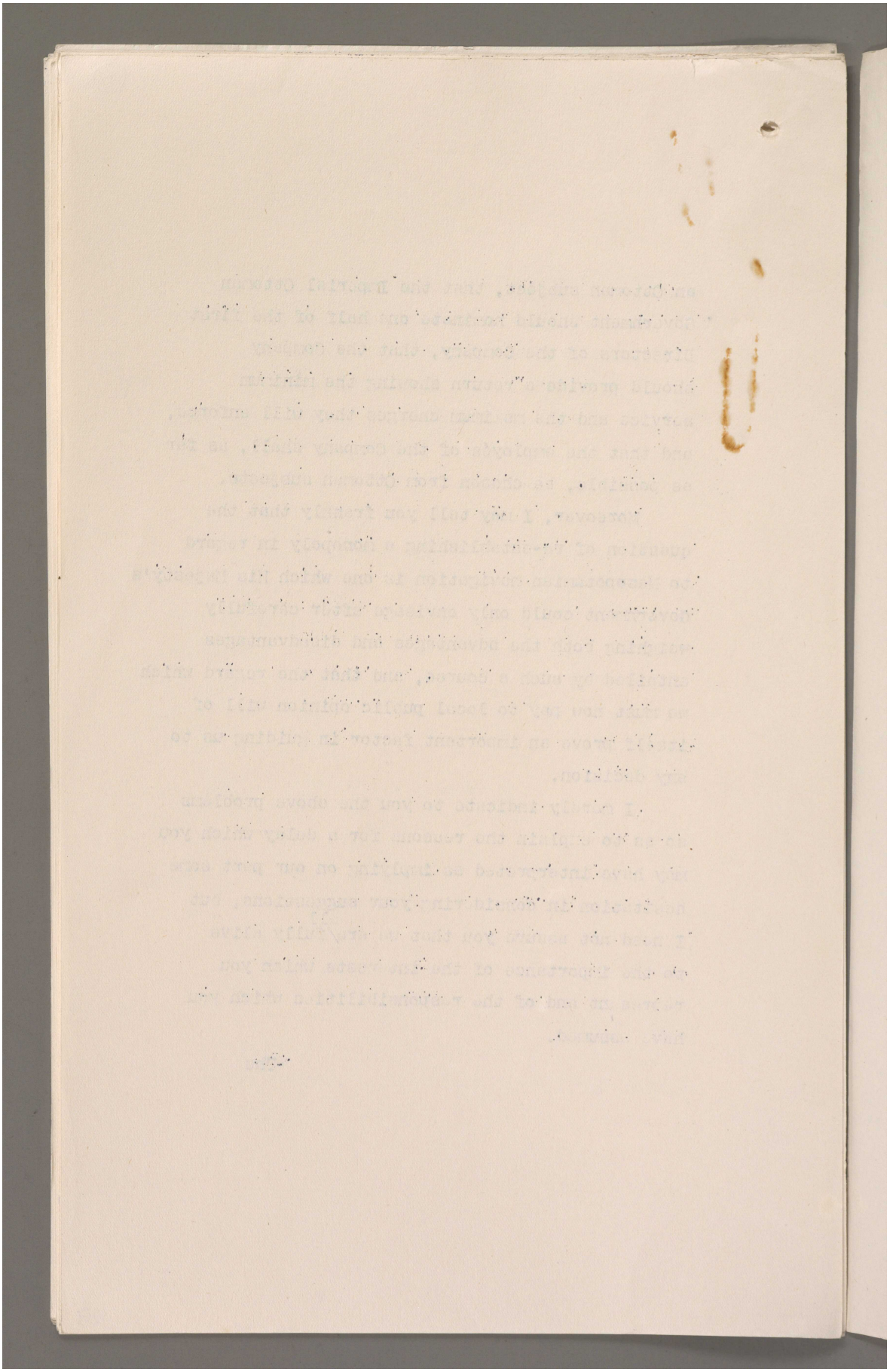

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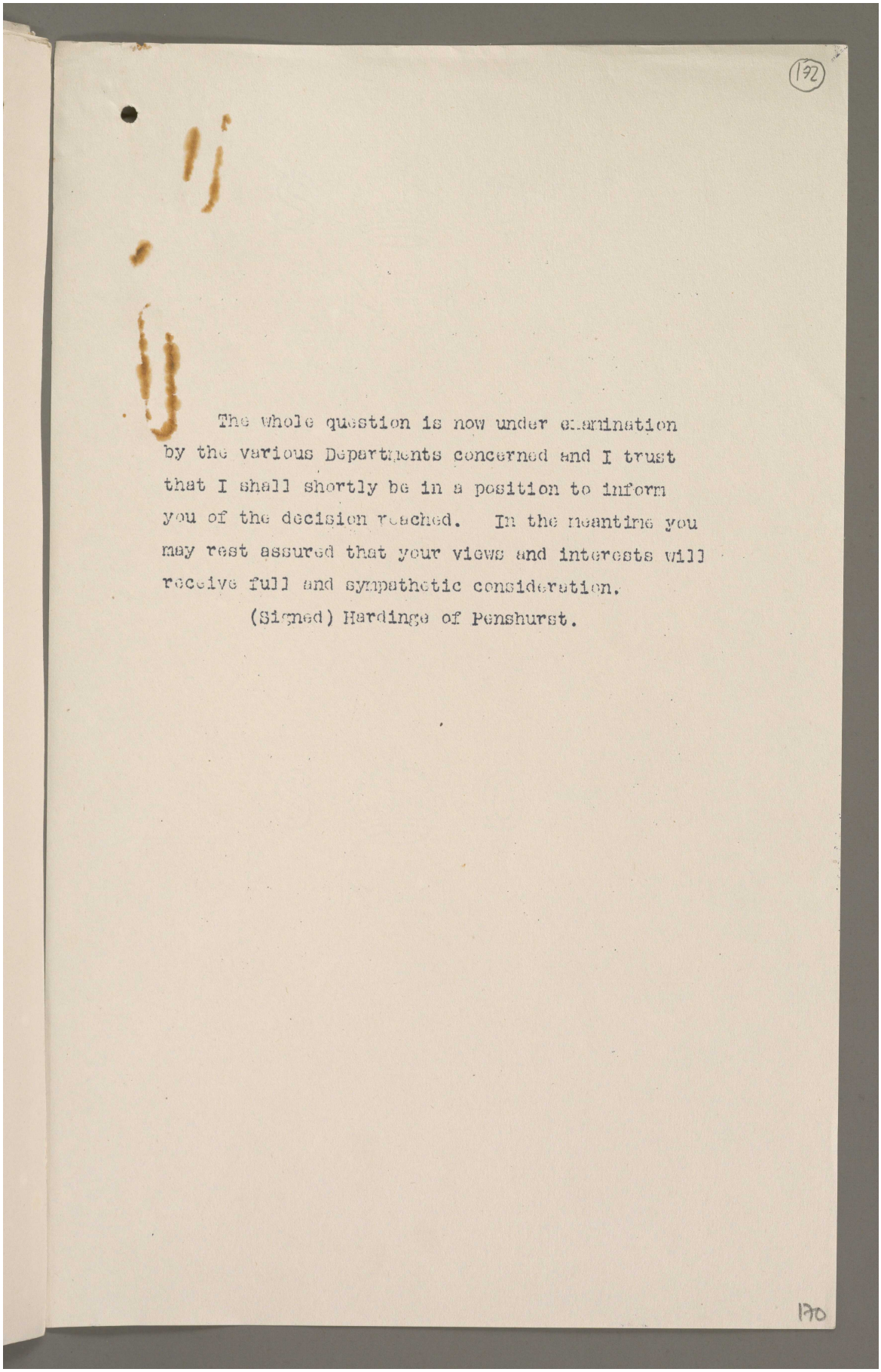

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The whole question is now under examination by the various Departments concerned and I trust that I shall shortly be in a position to inform you of the decision reached. In the meantime you may rest assured that your views and interests will receive full and sympathetic consideration.

(Signed) Hardinge of Penshurst.

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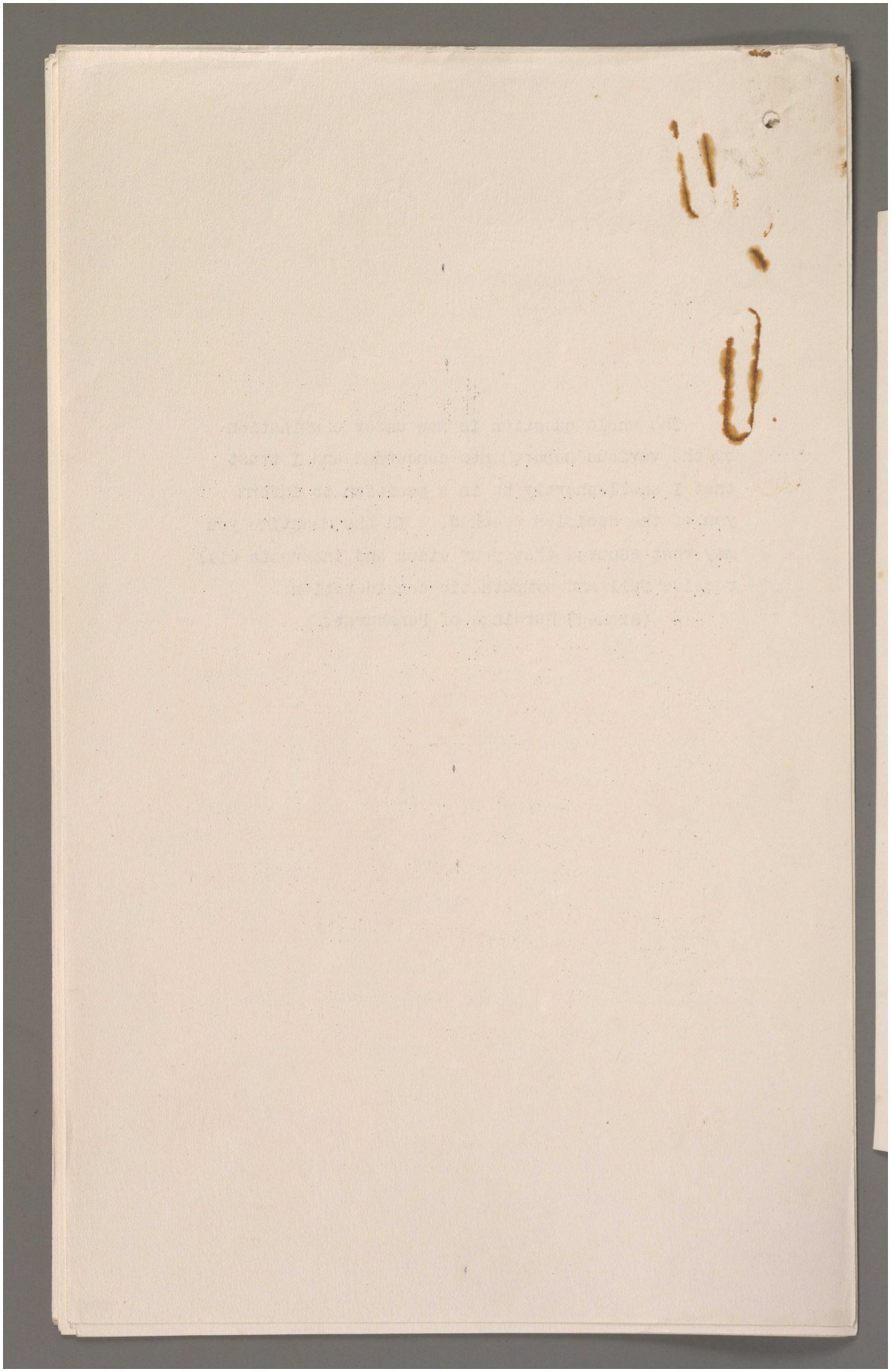

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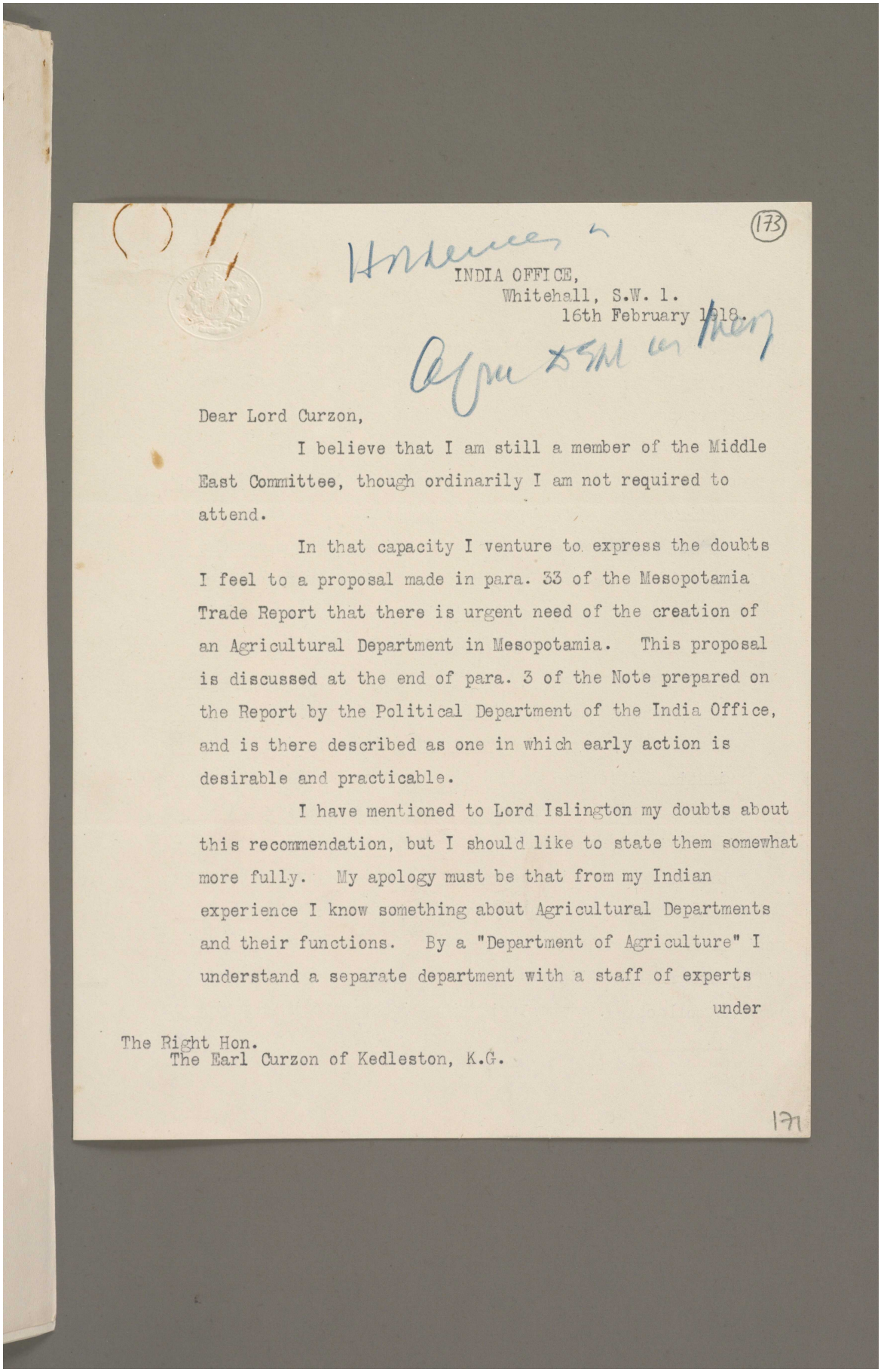

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INDIA OFFICE,
Whitehall, S.W. 1.
16th February 1918.

Dear Lord Curzon,

I believe that I am still a member of the Middle East Committee, though ordinarily I am not required to attend.

In that capacity I venture to express the doubts I feel to a proposal made in para. 33 of the Mesopotamia Trade Report that there is urgent need of the creation of an Agricultural Department in Mesopotamia. This proposal is discussed at the end of para. 3 of the Note prepared on the Report by the Political Department of the India Office, and is there described as one in which early action is desirable and practicable.

I have mentioned to Lord Islington my doubts about this recommendation, but I should like to state them somewhat more fully. My apology must be that from my Indian experience I know something about Agricultural Departments and their functions. By a "Department of Agriculture" I understand a separate department with a staff of experts under

The Right Hon.
The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.

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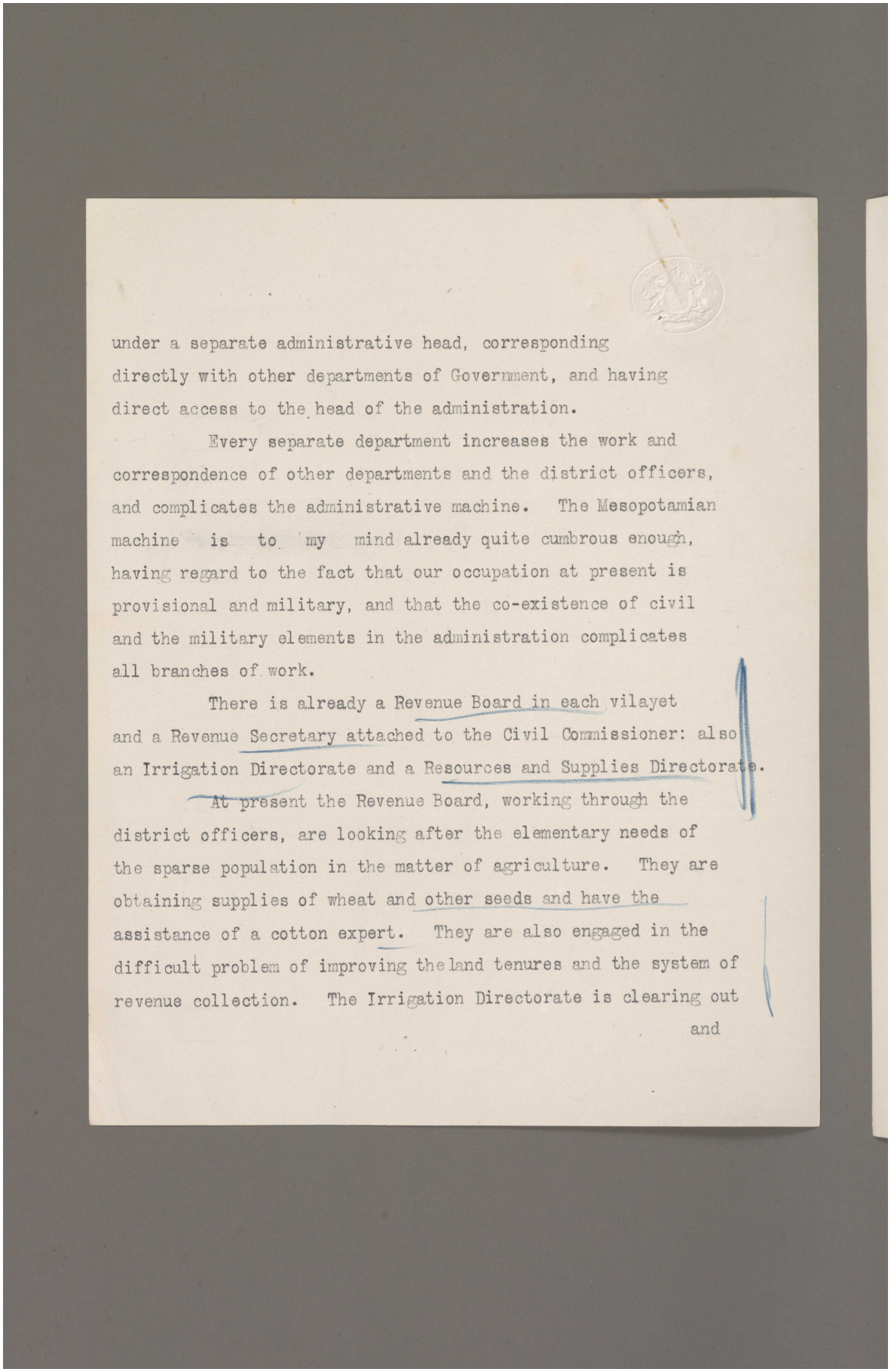

under a separate administrative head, corresponding directly with other departments of Government, and having direct access to the head of the administration.

Every separate department increases the work and correspondence of other departments and the district officers, and complicates the administrative machine. The Mesopotamian machine is to my mind already quite cumbrous enough, having regard to the fact that our occupation at present is provisional and military, and that the co-existence of civil and the military elements in the administration complicates all branches of work.

There is already a Revenue Board in each vilayet and a Revenue Secretary attached to the Civil Commissioner: also an Irrigation Directorate and a Resources and Supplies Directorate.

At present the Revenue Board, working through the district officers, are looking after the elementary needs of the sparse population in the matter of agriculture. They are obtaining supplies of wheat and other seeds and have the assistance of a cotton expert. They are also engaged in the difficult problem of improving the land tenures and the system of revenue collection. The Irrigation Directorate is clearing out

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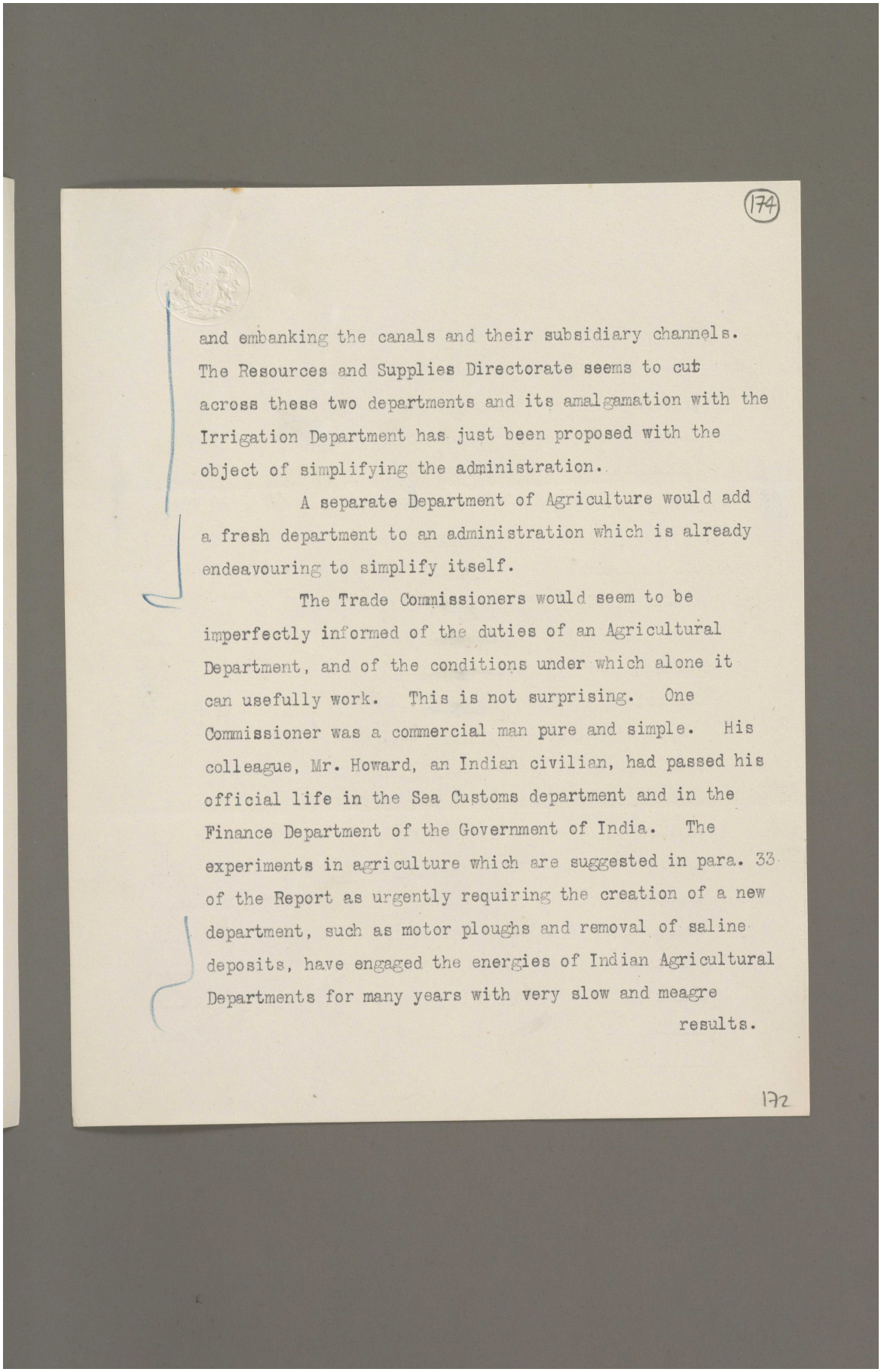

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and embanking the canals and their subsidiary channels. The Resources and Supplies Directorate seems to cut across these two departments and its amalgamation with the Irrigation Department has just been proposed with the object of simplifying the administration.

A separate Department of Agriculture would add a fresh department to an administration which is already endeavouring to simplify itself.

The Trade Commissioners would seem to be imperfectly informed of the duties of an Agricultural Department, and of the conditions under which alone it can usefully work. This is not surprising. One Commissioner was a commercial man pure and simple. His colleague, Mr. Howard, an Indian civilian, had passed his official life in the Sea Customs department and in the Finance Department of the Government of India. The experiments in agriculture which are suggested in para. 33 of the Report as urgently requiring the creation of a new department, such as motor ploughs and removal of saline deposits, have engaged the energies of Indian Agricultural Departments for many years with very slow and meagre results.

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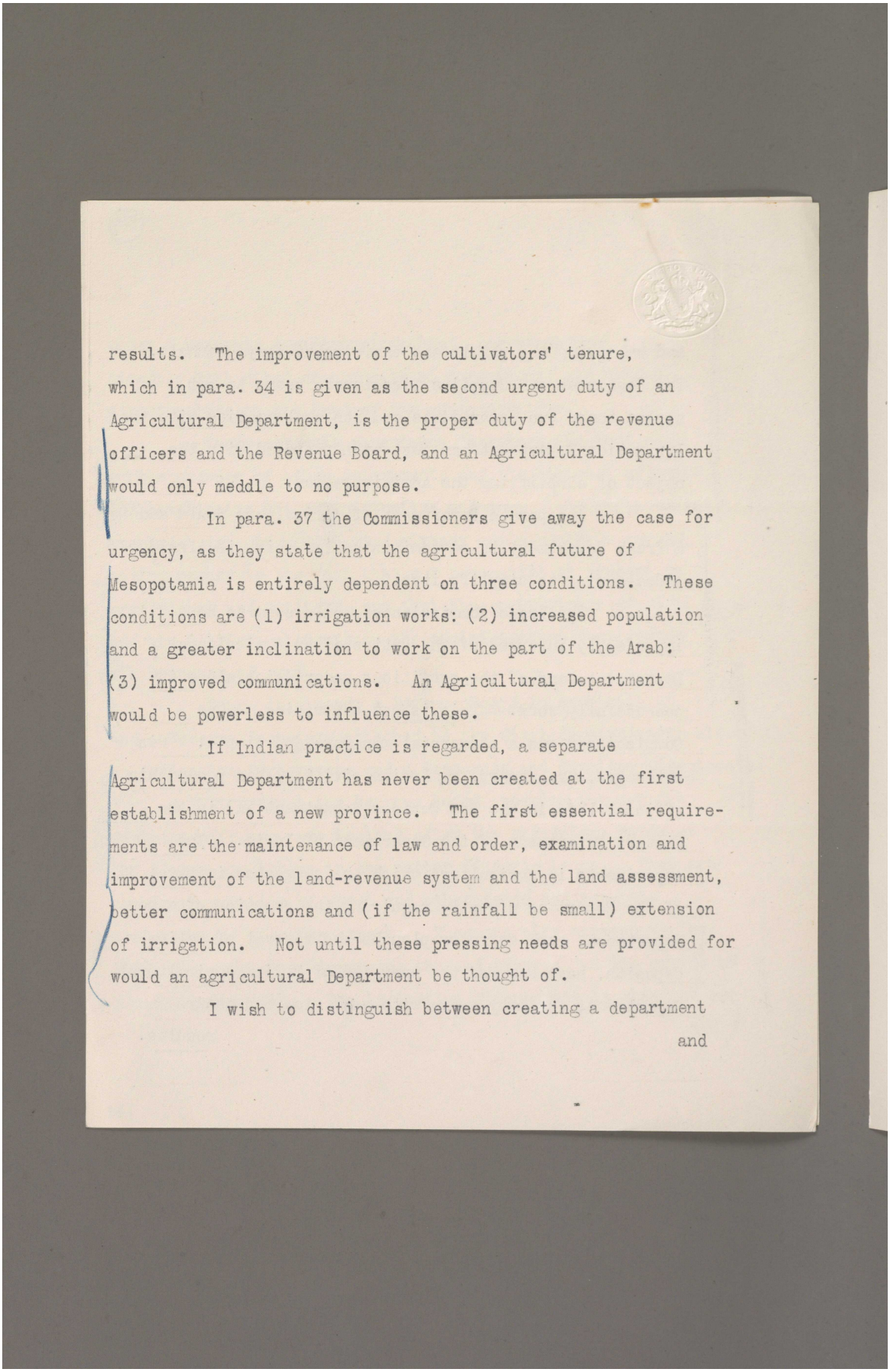

results. The improvement of the cultivators' tenure, which in para. 34 is given as the second urgent duty of an Agricultural Department, is the proper duty of the revenue officers and the Revenue Board, and an Agricultural Department would only meddle to no purpose.

In para. 37 the Commissioners give away the case for urgency, as they state that the agricultural future of Mesopotamia is entirely dependent on three conditions. These conditions are (1) irrigation works: (2) increased population and a greater inclination to work on the part of the Arab: (3) improved communications. An Agricultural Department would be powerless to influence these.

If Indian practice is regarded, a separate Agricultural Department has never been created at the first establishment of a new province. The first essential requirements are the maintenance of law and order, examination and improvement of the land-revenue system and the land assessment, better communications and (if the rainfall be small) extension of irrigation. Not until these pressing needs are provided for would an agricultural Department be thought of.

I wish to distinguish between creating a department

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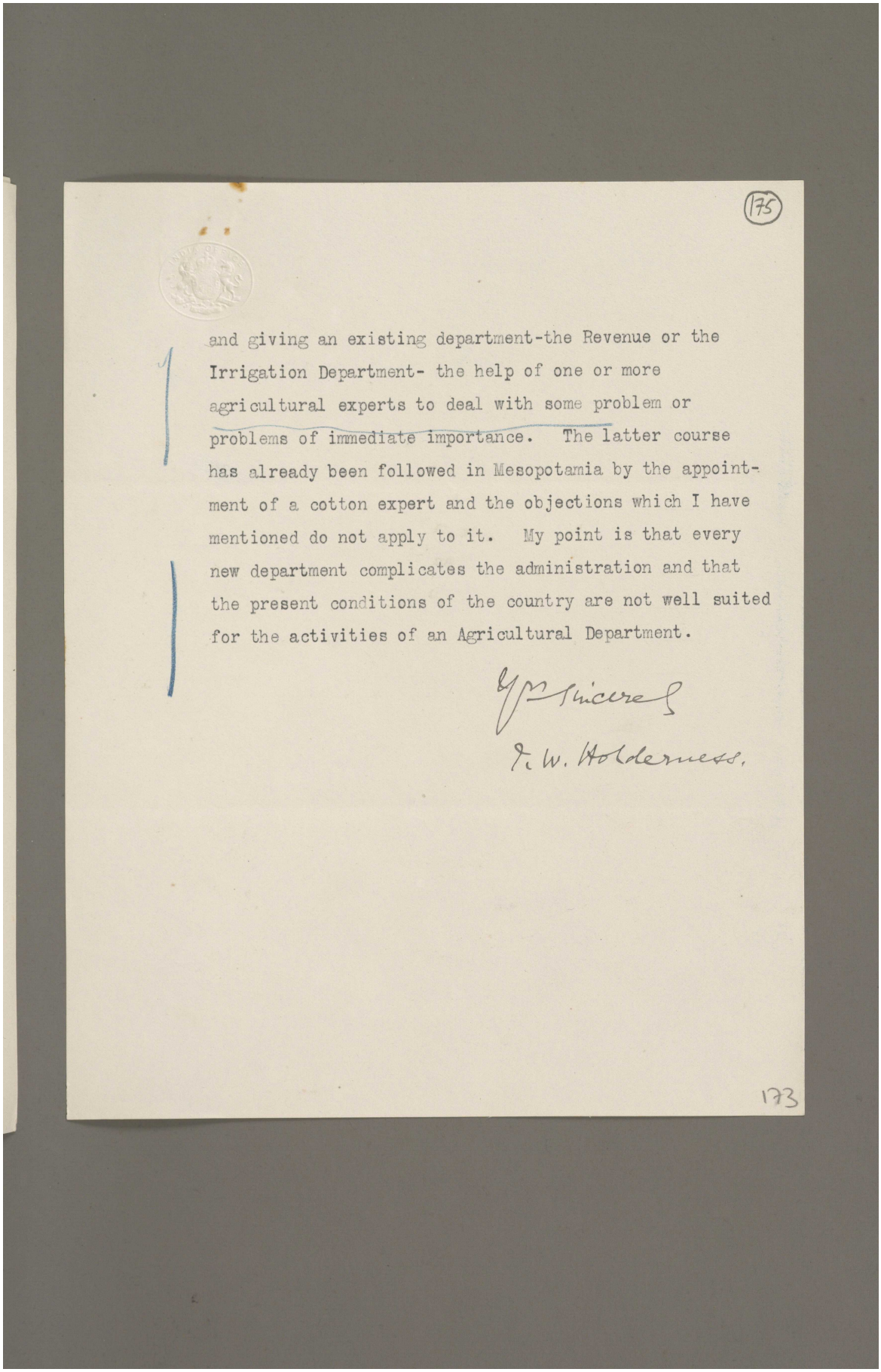

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and giving an existing department-the Revenue or the Irrigation Department- the help of one or more agricultural experts to deal with some problem or problems of immediate importance. The latter course has already been followed in Mesopotamia by the appointment of a cotton expert and the objections which I have mentioned do not apply to it. My point is that every new department complicates the administration and that the present conditions of the country are not well suited for the activities of an Agricultural Department.

Yours sincerely

J. W. Holderness.

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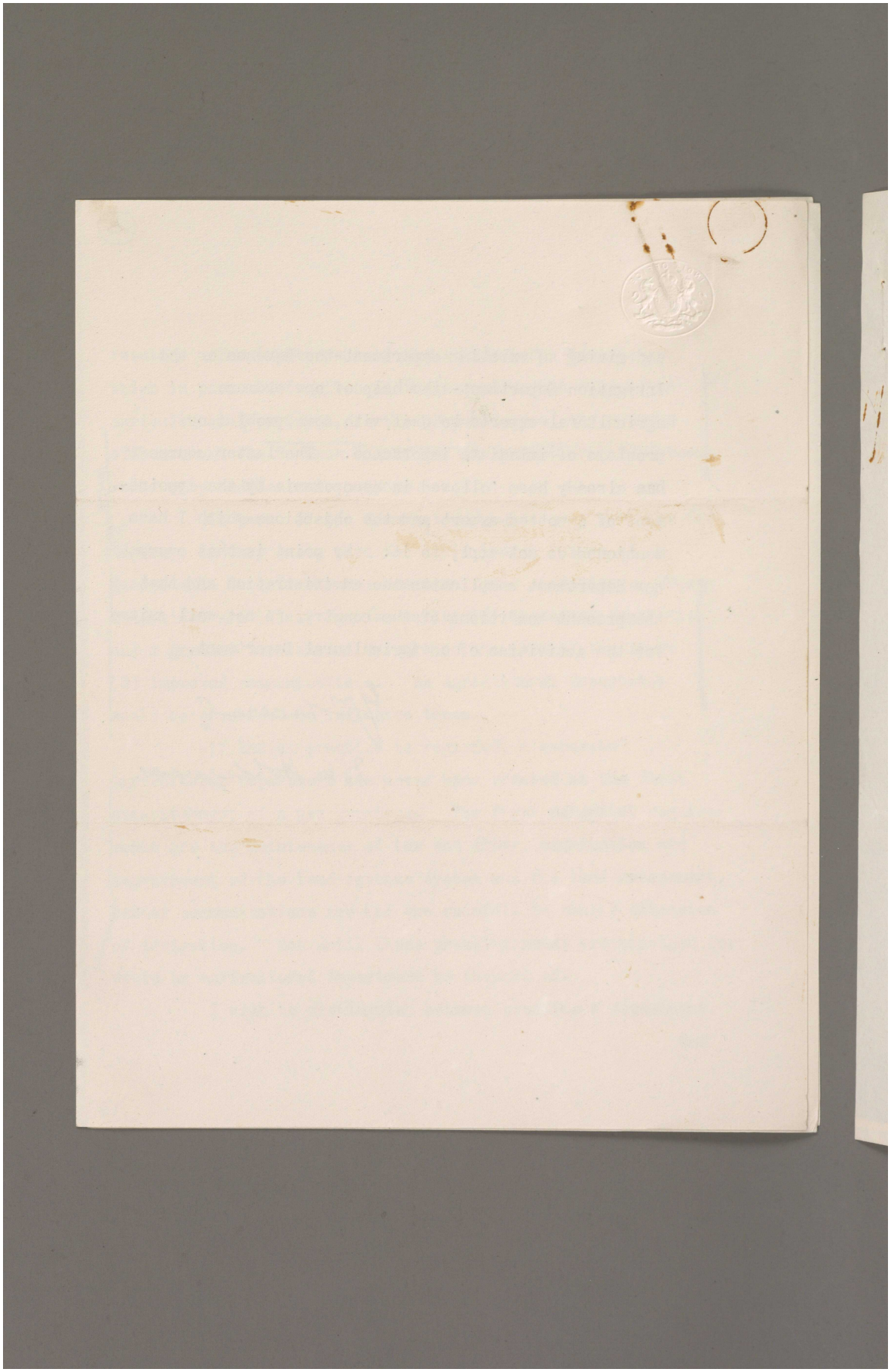

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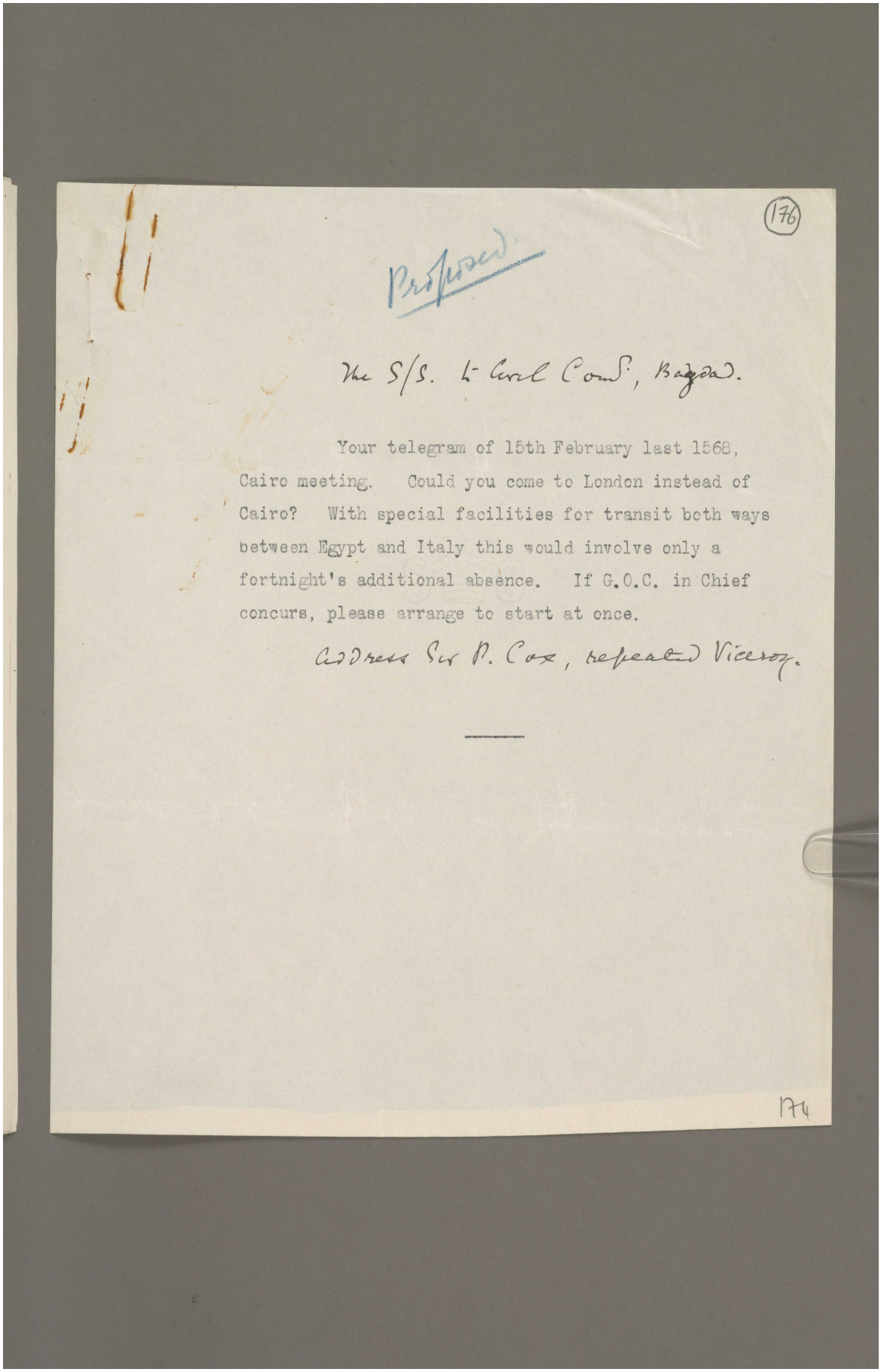

(176)

Proposed.

The S/S. for Civil Cons., Bagdad.

Your telegram of 15th February last 1568, Cairo meeting. Could you come to London instead of Cairo? With special facilities for transit both ways between Egypt and Italy this would involve only a fortnight's additional absence. If G.O.C. in Chief concurs, please arrange to start at once.

Address Sir P. Cox, repeated Viceroy.

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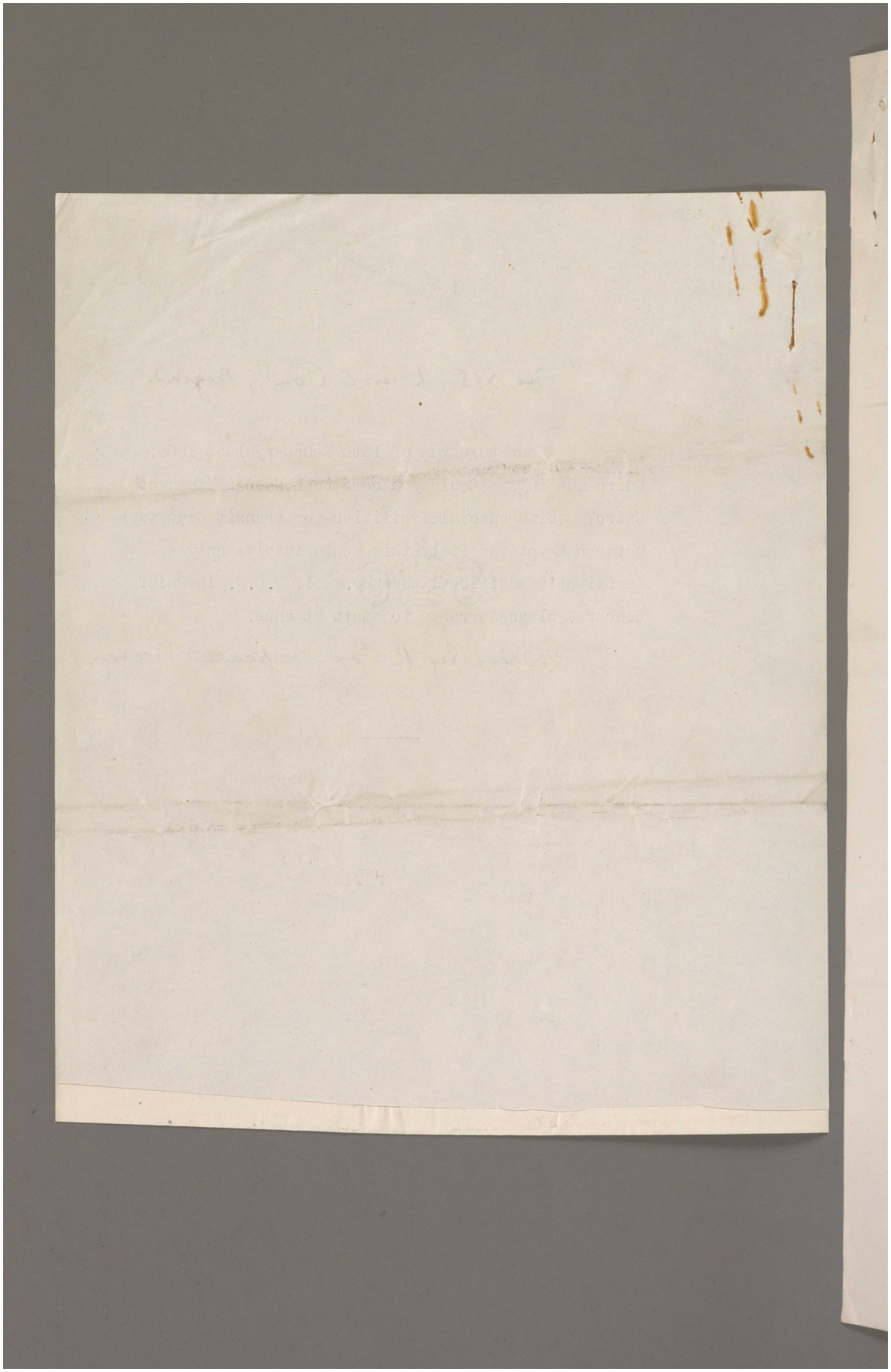

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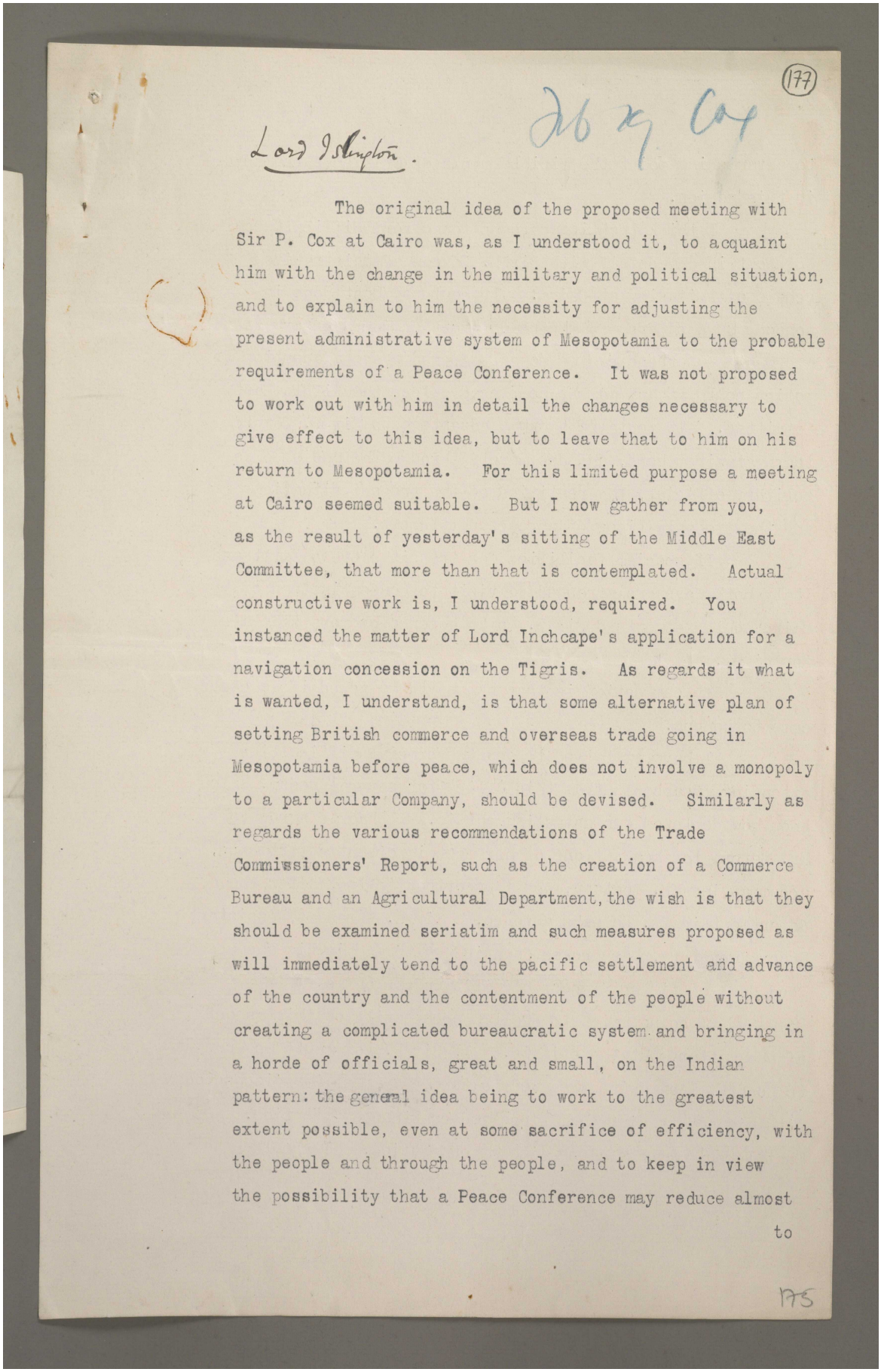

(177)

Lord Islington.

The original idea of the proposed meeting with Sir P. Cox at Cairo was, as I understood it, to acquaint him with the change in the military and political situation, and to explain to him the necessity for adjusting the present administrative system of Mesopotamia to the probable requirements of a Peace Conference. It was not proposed to work out with him in detail the changes necessary to give effect to this idea, but to leave that to him on his return to Mesopotamia. For this limited purpose a meeting at Cairo seemed suitable. But I now gather from you, as the result of yesterday's sitting of the Middle East Committee, that more than that is contemplated. Actual constructive work is, I understood, required. You instanced the matter of Lord Inchcape's application for a navigation concession on the Tigris. As regards it what is wanted, I understand, is that some alternative plan of setting British commerce and overseas trade going in Mesopotamia before peace, which does not involve a monopoly to a particular Company, should be devised. Similarly as regards the various recommendations of the Trade Commissioners' Report, such as the creation of a Commerce Bureau and an Agricultural Department, the wish is that they should be examined seriatim and such measures proposed as will immediately tend to the pacific settlement and advance of the country and the contentment of the people without creating a complicated bureaucratic system and bringing in a horde of officials, great and small, on the Indian pattern: the general idea being to work to the greatest extent possible, even at some sacrifice of efficiency, with the people and through the people, and to keep in view the possibility that a Peace Conference may reduce almost to

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to a vanishing point the visible marks of British supremacy in this region.

I think that it would be found very difficult to work out in any detail with Sir P. Cox an administrative scheme of this kind at Cairo. It could be best done in London where papers and records on every subject are available, where other persons can be consulted, and where a question of policy could at any moment be placed before the Middle East Committee. It would be a great advantage to Sir P. Cox to learn at first hand, and not merely through the medium of a solitary official, the realities of the present situation and the probable lines of a peace settlement.

If special facilities for transit between Egypt and Italy both ways are arranged, a visit to London instead of Cairo would not extend Sir P. Cox's absence by more than a fortnight.

My suggestion is that he should be asked if he could come to London.

I have explained to you the special difficulties attending my absence from this Office for several weeks. You know how depleted our establishment is. I had to agree to Mr. Seton, the head of one of our most important departments, accompanying Mr. Montagu, and I undertook to look after the department in Mr. Seton's absence. Sir L. Abrahams, Assistant Under Secretary, has broken down in health and in his absence a good deal of financial responsibility rests on me.

I do not wish to dwell unnecessarily on this aspect of the matter, but there it is. If Sir P. Cox could be brought to London, I am quite prepared to take charge of the discussions with him and to give them close and continuous attention. That I could manage along with my own duties. I should have

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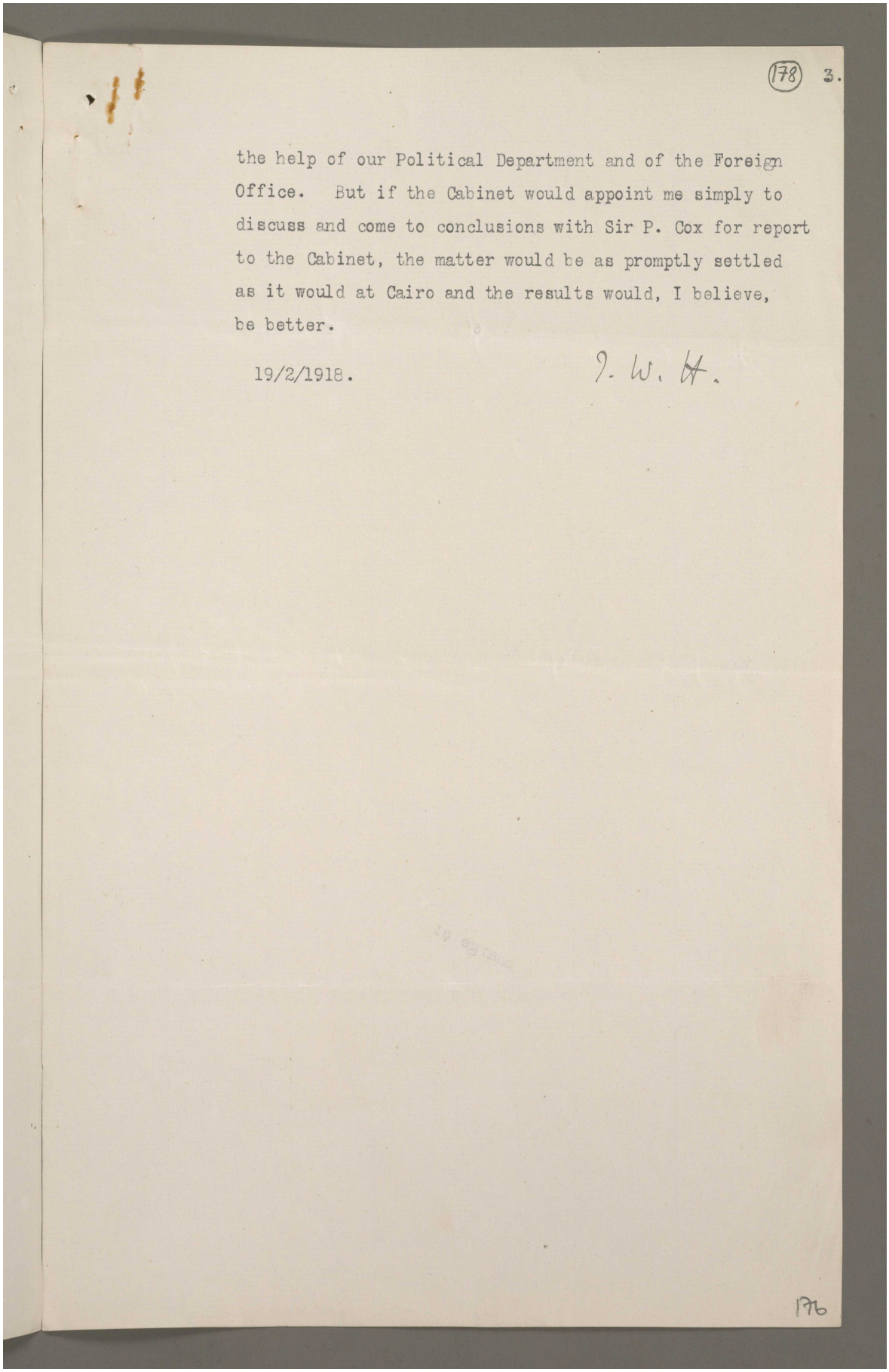

(178) 3.

the help of our Political Department and of the Foreign Office. But if the Cabinet would appoint me simply to discuss and come to conclusions with Sir P. Cox for report to the Cabinet, the matter would be as promptly settled as it would at Cairo and the results would, I believe, be better.

19/2/1918. D. L. G.

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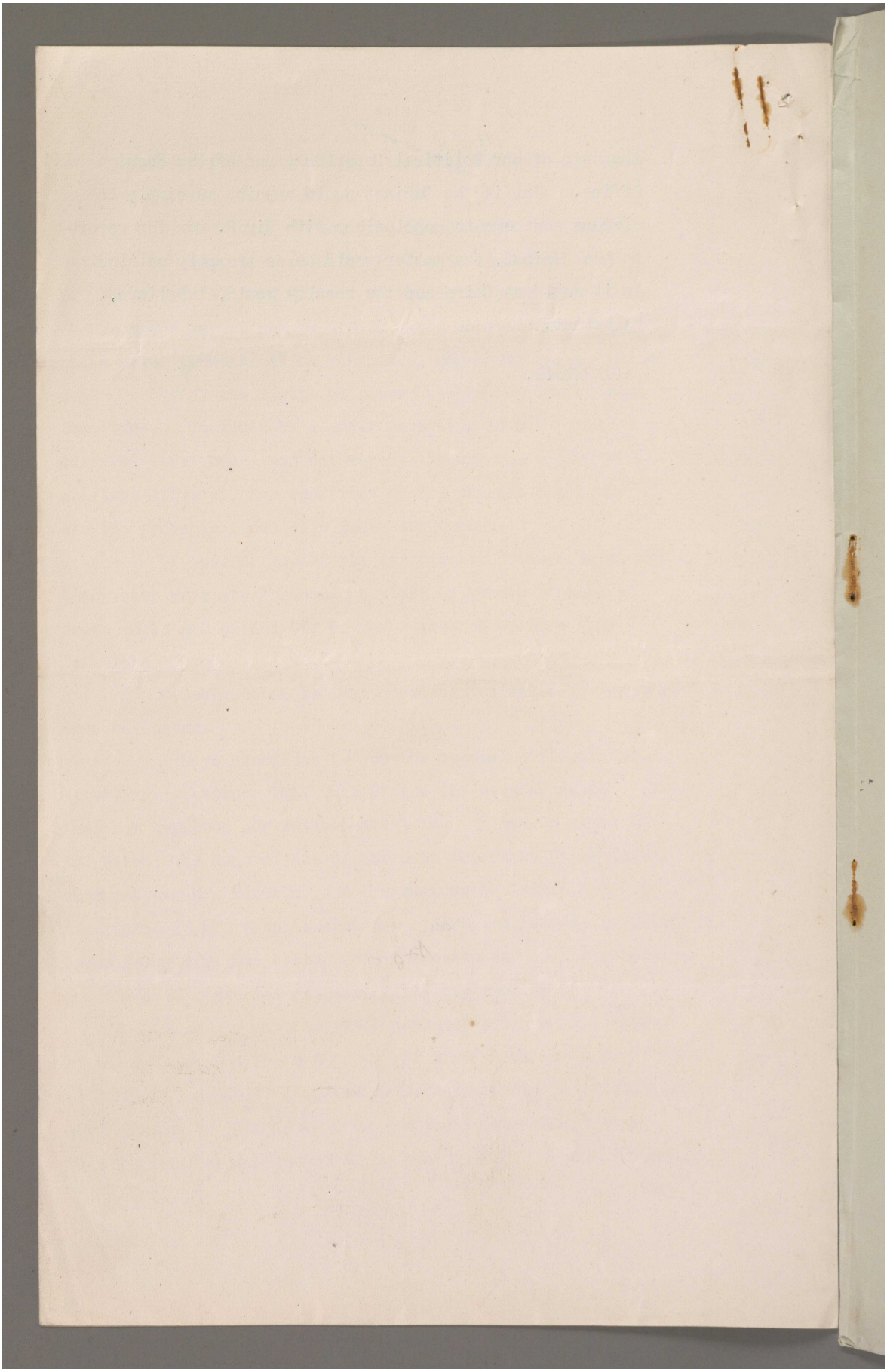

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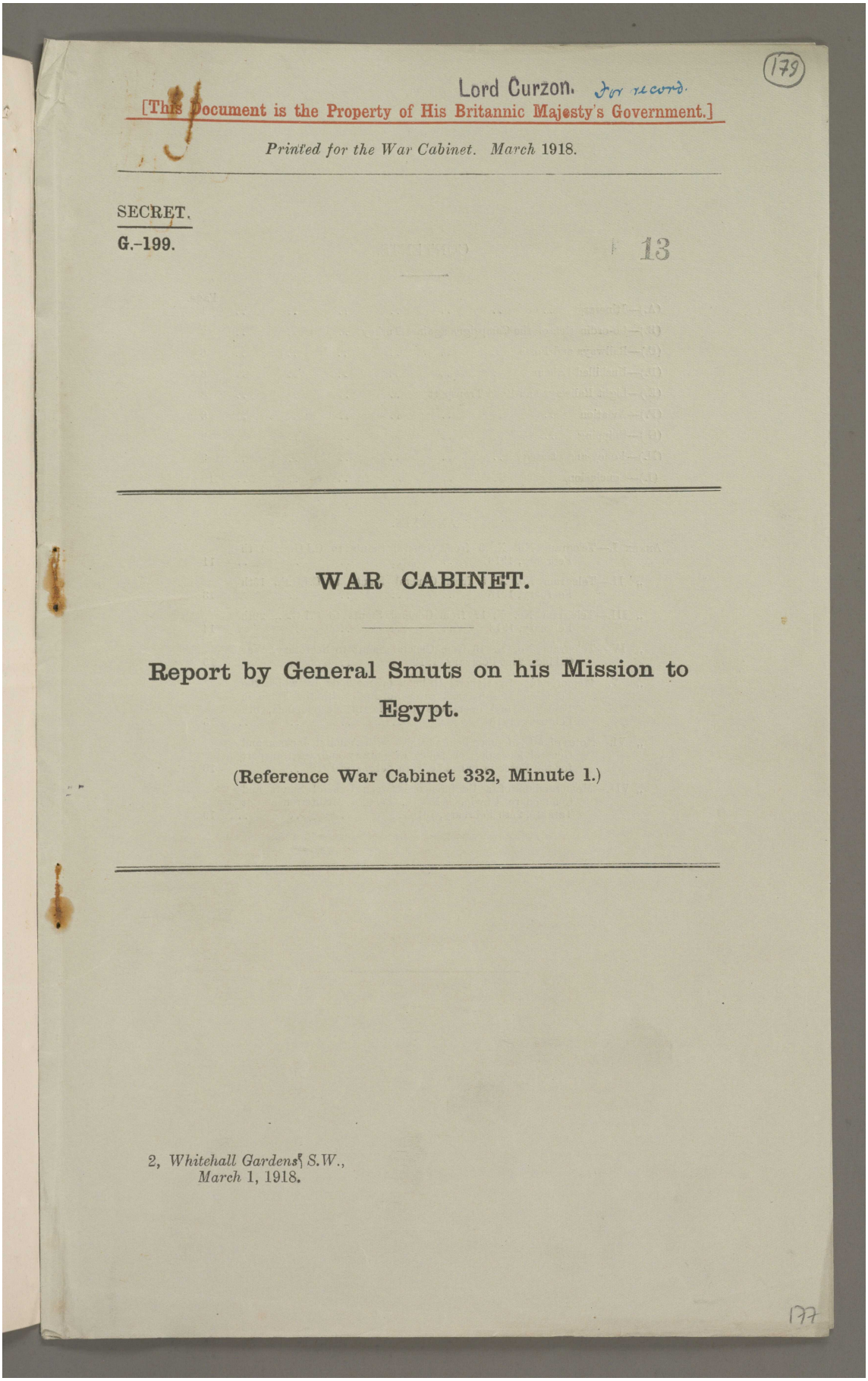

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Lord Curzon. for record.

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Printed for the War Cabinet. March 1918.

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WAR CABINET.

Report by General Smuts on his Mission to Egypt.

(Reference War Cabinet 332, Minute 1.)

2, *Whitehall Gardens*, S.W.,
March 1, 1918.

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GENERAL SMUTS' MISSION TO EGYPT.

(A.)—ITINERARY.

On the 5th February I left London for the Middle East, taking with me Brigadier-General Stewart, of Field-Marshal Haig's Headquarters; Colonel Kirke, of the Imperial General Staff; Lieutenant-Colonel Amery, of the Staff of the Supreme War Council; and Captain Lane, War Cabinet Staff. The First Lord of the Admiralty and Sir Guy Granet, Director-General of Military Transport, had preceded me, and were to meet me in Rome in order to discuss certain transportation questions.

The 6th February I spent at Versailles discussing various questions in connection with my mission with Sir Henry Wilson, and collecting information in possession of the Staff at Versailles, and bearing on the campaigns in Palestine and Mesopotamia.

On the 8th February I reached Rome, and there had various discussions with Sir Eric Geddes, Sir Guy Granet and General Nash. I also saw General Grey, who had been in charge of the Inland Water Transport in Mesopotamia, and explained to me fully the transportation situation on the Tigris. As a result of these discussions, I thought it unnecessary for Sir Guy Granet to proceed with me to Egypt as had been originally intended.

On the 9th February I reached Taranto, and inspected the camp through which our troops to and from Salonica and Egypt have to pass. There was already accommodation for 4,000 troops, and extensions were in progress which would increase the capacity of the camp so as to accommodate 10,000 troops. The camp on the whole is well situated and suitable for the purpose for which it was intended.

On the 11th February I reached Alexandria and met Admiral Jackson, and discussed with him the possibility of landing stores on the Palestine and Syrian coasts in connection with General Allenby's advance. He told me that as much as 1,000 tons a day had already been landed in fine weather, and he expected, once Haifa was opened for traffic, that he could probably deal with a larger daily tonnage in fine weather. The netting for Haifa Harbour was arriving, and as soon as the place had been taken by land operations its preparation and development by the Navy would be urgently pushed forward. Stormy weather had continually interfered with the landing of stores, but with better summer weather coming and the opening of Haifa he expected much more use could be made of the coast for transportation purposes.

While I was passing through Alexandria I ascertained that General Hopwood, who had been General Maude's Chief of General Staff, was there on his way to London. I took him with me part of the way to Cairo in order to discuss with him the general situation in Mesopotamia with which he was fully conversant. The discussion with him proved very valuable, and materially strengthened my impression that the Mesopotamian campaign would have to be reduced to a strictly defensive basis in future.

On the night of the 11th February I reached Cairo, and spent two days there, leaving on the evening of the 13th for General Allenby's Headquarters in Palestine. At Cairo I stayed with Sir Reginald Wingate, with whom I had the advantage of discussing many important questions. I also met in Cairo Major-General Bols, General Allenby's Chief of General Staff, and Brigadier-General Macauley, in charge of the Egyptian and Palestine railways, and discussed with them the situation in Palestine, both in its strategical and transportation aspects. Colonel Storrs, the Governor of Jerusalem, who happened to be in Cairo, gave me valuable information as to the political relations of Arabs and Jews. This question was also incidentally discussed with Sir Reginald Wingate and Generals Allenby and Clayton. I make a brief reference to it later.

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At Cairo I also met Major-General Salmond, who is in charge of aviation in the Middle East. I discussed the air situation with him, and inspected the aerodrome and training school at Heliopolis. On my return to Egypt from Palestine I inspected the aerodrome, repair, construction, and store sheds at Alexandria, and formed a very favourable opinion of the training and air work generally of this area. I refer to this again later.

The 14th, 15th, and 16th February were spent in discussions with General Allenby and his principal officers at his Headquarters, and in visits to various important parts of his front which enabled me to form a general conception of the physical and other conditions with which his advance is faced. The strategic, transportation, and other questions connected with his future advance were fully discussed, and as a result of these discussions I sent to the War Cabinet the telegram of the 15th February, No. X 3 (Annex I), setting forth my recommendations for the future plan of campaign for their approval. I also sent supplementary telegrams to the War Office dealing with future railway, transport, and other requirements. I was greatly struck wherever I went by the fine healthy appearance of the troops in spite of the considerable hardships recently undergone by them, by their high spirits, and by the universal confidence which the Commander-in-Chief, General Allenby, has succeeded in inspiring in all ranks.

On the night of the 16th February I returned with General Allenby to Egypt in order to meet General Gillman, General Marshall's Chief of General Staff, who arrived at Cairo on the 20th February. The situation in Mesopotamia was fully discussed with him, and the views he expressed only confirmed the provisional conclusions at which I had arrived from my previous study of the problem. He and General Marshall had, as a matter of fact, independently arrived at the same conclusion as myself, after a careful study of the railway problems involved in a simultaneous advance either by the Tigris or the Euphrates route, and General Marshall had agreed that he could reduce his force to four divisions for purely defensive operations. I also had an opportunity to continue the discussion of transportation questions with Admiral Jackson and Generals Macauley and Campbell, the Quartermaster-General to General Allenby, as well as further opportunities of discussing the general situation with General Allenby and with the High Commissioner.

I left Egypt on the 22nd February, and arrived on the 25th at Taranto, where I was able to go further into the question of supplementing the railway in Palestine by landing stores on the coast, or at Haifa and Beirut, with Commodore Unwin, Principal Naval Transport Officer, Eastern Mediterranean, who confirmed the favourable expectations of the possibilities of development in this direction which I had already formed as a result of my discussions with Admiral Jackson. I also discussed with Commodore Unwin his labour and other requirements in connection with the proposed development in the landing of stores. After spending the 26th February in Rome and the 28th in Paris, I returned to London on the 1st March.

Throughout I met with the greatest courtesy from all the officers referred to above, and the greatest readiness to supply all available information, and I especially acknowledge my great indebtedness to Sir Reginald Wingate and Sir Edmund Allenby for the assistance they have given me in my enquiries.

(B.)—CO-ORDINATION OF THE CAMPAIGNS AGAINST TURKEY.

The Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council, in their note on the campaign for 1918 (Joint Note No. 12), have laid down that the offensive against Turkey should be envisaged, not as a series of disconnected operations, but as a single co-ordinated scheme. With this aim clearly in view, the first question to consider was whether it might be possible to carry out a combined convergent offensive from Palestine and Mesopotamia simultaneously, or whether it was preferable to concentrate all available forces in one of these theatres, reducing the other for the time being to a purely defensive rôle.

A careful consideration of the Mesopotamian situation has convinced me that an offensive from Mesopotamia could not further the main object of the campaign. A local success might, no doubt, be obtained, such as the capture of Mosul, which might be of some value in connection with General Dunsterville's activities. But to have any effect on the main Turkish armies it would be necessary to advance on Aleppo. This advance would, from Mosul westwards, be exposed to considerable

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danger on its right flank. To secure its left flank it would, probably, also have to move up the line of the Euphrates. In any case the addition of another 500 miles to our already long line of communications, and the enormous amount of railway construction required, under very great climatic difficulties, appear to me conclusive against such an operation, which, moreover, could only be of service if the force advancing from Palestine could simultaneously reach Aleppo from the south. This General Allenby's army may not be able to do without substantial reinforcements. If, on the other hand, General Allenby can reach Aleppo it will be impossible for the Turks to maintain any serious force in Mesopotamia, and the task of clearing Mesopotamia will, to a large extent, have been accomplished automatically.

These considerations have led me to the conclusion that the only effective co-ordination of the forces in the Turkish theatre lies in the reduction of the force in Mesopotamia to the minimum compatible with reasonable security, in order to concentrate all available resources upon exploiting to the full the very substantial success already achieved in Palestine. The Mesopotamian force is, indeed, as favourably situated for defence as it is unfavourably situated for offence. The Turkish forces in front of it are weak, and are likely to be reduced still further as General Allenby's advance progresses. Their communications in rear are defective, and there is no evidence that the construction of the Baghdad Railway is being pushed on with any vigour. In front they are separated by a broad tract of desert from General Marshall's force, which holds a line of strong and well-organised defensive positions both on the Euphrates and on the Tigris, as well as further north on the Jebel Hamrin. Beyond holding these positions, which can be done with considerably reduced forces, the only task incumbent upon General Marshall is that of keeping open the Khanikin-Hamadan road on his right flank for the passage of officers, supplies, &c., required by General Dunsterville to enable him to carry out the organisation of local sources of resistance to the Turks in Trans-Caucasia and North-Western Persia.

General Marshall has, at present, six infantry divisions, three cavalry brigades, and a number of battalions of line of communication troops. Two of these infantry divisions—including the 13th Division, consisting of British troops—and one cavalry brigade should be transferred to the Palestine front as soon as the shipping now conveying the 7th Division from Mesopotamia to Palestine is available The same applies to the six batteries of howitzers from the Italian front, sent to Mesopotamia in order to cope with the anticipated offensive by General von Falkenhayn, and, indeed, to all other personnel, transport, and material now in Mesopotamia or destined for Mesopotamia, which are not absolutely required for maintaining the defence. As many mountain batteries as can be spared from India should also be sent to Palestine. I understand that there are various projects, more particularly of railway construction, under consideration in Mesopotamia which have, in themselves, much to recommend them, but are not absolutely essential to the maintenance of the reduced force. All these should be postponed, and the material, skilled construction, and operating personnel, as well as the unskilled labour, immediately diverted to Palestine. The reductions advocated above may seem large, but they are to my mind essential to making a success of the campaign, and may, indeed, be carried even further at a later stage when General Allenby's advance approaches Aleppo and draws all available Turkish forces towards him.

The conditions for an advance in Palestine and Syria are in almost every respect much more favourable than in Mesopotamia. General Allenby's force starts at a point much nearer its base and connected with it by a standard gauge railway which is double tracked for a great part of the way. The left flank of the advance rests upon the sea, a matter of the first importance in connection with the development of the system of supply and communications, as it makes possible the opening up of supplementary bases in immediate proximity to the front as the advance proceeds. The information I have received from Admiral Jackson and from Commodore Unwin, as well as the actual experience of the supplies regularly landed at Jaffa and on the beach at Nahr Sukhereir, make me believe that the assistance which the ports and even beaches of the Syrian coast can furnish is much greater than has been surmised at home, or than was allowed for in the estimates of requirements for rolling-stock and railway personnel originally made by the experts who have advised me on railway matters. In addition to the continuation of the standard gauge railway from Egypt, and the development, in connection with it, of the capacities of the ports successively reached, the problem of communications will be

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facilitated by the existence of the Turkish 3-ft. 5½-in. railway system in the interior of the country. The repair and utilisation of this form an essential feature in General Allenby's plans.

The fact that the left flank of the advance will throughout rest upon the sea is an advantage from the tactical and strategical point of view as well as from that of communications and supply. The navy was able to co-operate most effectively in the bombardment of the Turkish positions at Gaza, and this process can be repeated against every line which the Turks may attempt to hold. Even if a landing in large force, with a view to threatening the main Turkish line of communications, is precluded by considerations of tonnage and escorts available, it may always be possible at a later stage of the operations to make effective use of landings on a smaller scale more immediately in rear of the enemy's right flank. While owing to our command of the sea, the Turkish right flank is thus continually in the air and menaced with envelopment, the same applies to his left flank owing to our command of the desert. Here again major operations are excluded by physical conditions as well as by the character of Arab warfare. But minor operations, such as have already been carried out with such extraordinary courage and organising power by Major Lawrence, can be of very real assistance and can be relied upon always to lock up some portion of the Turkish force in guarding the line of communications on that flank.

Enjoying this advantage of continually being in a position to threaten both flanks of the enemy General Allenby has, between the sea and the desert, a width of front sufficient to enable him to make the fullest use of his superiority in total numbers, and more especially in mounted troops, over the Turks. He is not tied down to a single line of advance, and is therefore in a position of strategical freedom essential for that warfare of movement from which the greatest results both in the destruction of the enemy's forces and in the attainment of geographical objectives are to be obtained. Of these latter, while none can be said to be vital, several, such as Deraa, the key of the Turkish communications into Palestine westwards, and the great grain-producing area of the Hauran region eastwards, and Damascus, the capital of Syria and the real centre of the Arab-speaking world, are of sufficient importance to be of great moral and material value in themselves, and a temptation to the enemy to incur serious strategical risks in order to hold on to them to the last. Further factors in favour of the advance through Palestine and Syria are the generally friendly disposition of the inhabitants, from whom, however, it would be unwise to count on any active support till we have actually occupied any particular district, and the by no means inappreciable resources of the country in supplies of all kinds.

General Allenby's plans are based on the full utilisation, as vigorously as physical conditions and the progress of railway construction permit, of the various factors alluded to above and include the following main moves:—

(*a.*) An immediate advance to the Jordan on his right flank followed by operations aiming at the destruction of the Hejaz railway and the definite isolation of the Turkish Medina force, and at establishing direct contact with the Arabs.

(*b.*) As soon as weather conditions permit, an advance on the front between the Jordan and the sea towards the Haifa-Lake Tiberias line. This advance is to be supported by the continuation, at the most rapid rate possible, of the standard gauge railway to Haifa and then on northward along the coast. The Turkish railway from the point where the standard gauge ceases to make use of its road bed, and from Haifa to the Jordan and to the Hejaz railway, will be repaired and utilised as quickly as possible.

(*c.*) One column will then continue to push on up the coast by Es Sur (Tyre) and Beirut, supplied both by the standard gauge railway and by the successive ports which it opens up, and protected on its right flank by the mountains with a population mainly friendly and likely to prove useful as a source of timely information of Turkish movements. This advance, upon which the bulk of the forces will eventually be concentrated, will aim at cutting off the Turks at Damascus, or compelling a further retreat, by a move inland. It is possible that a really convenient point for this move may not be found till the force reaches the

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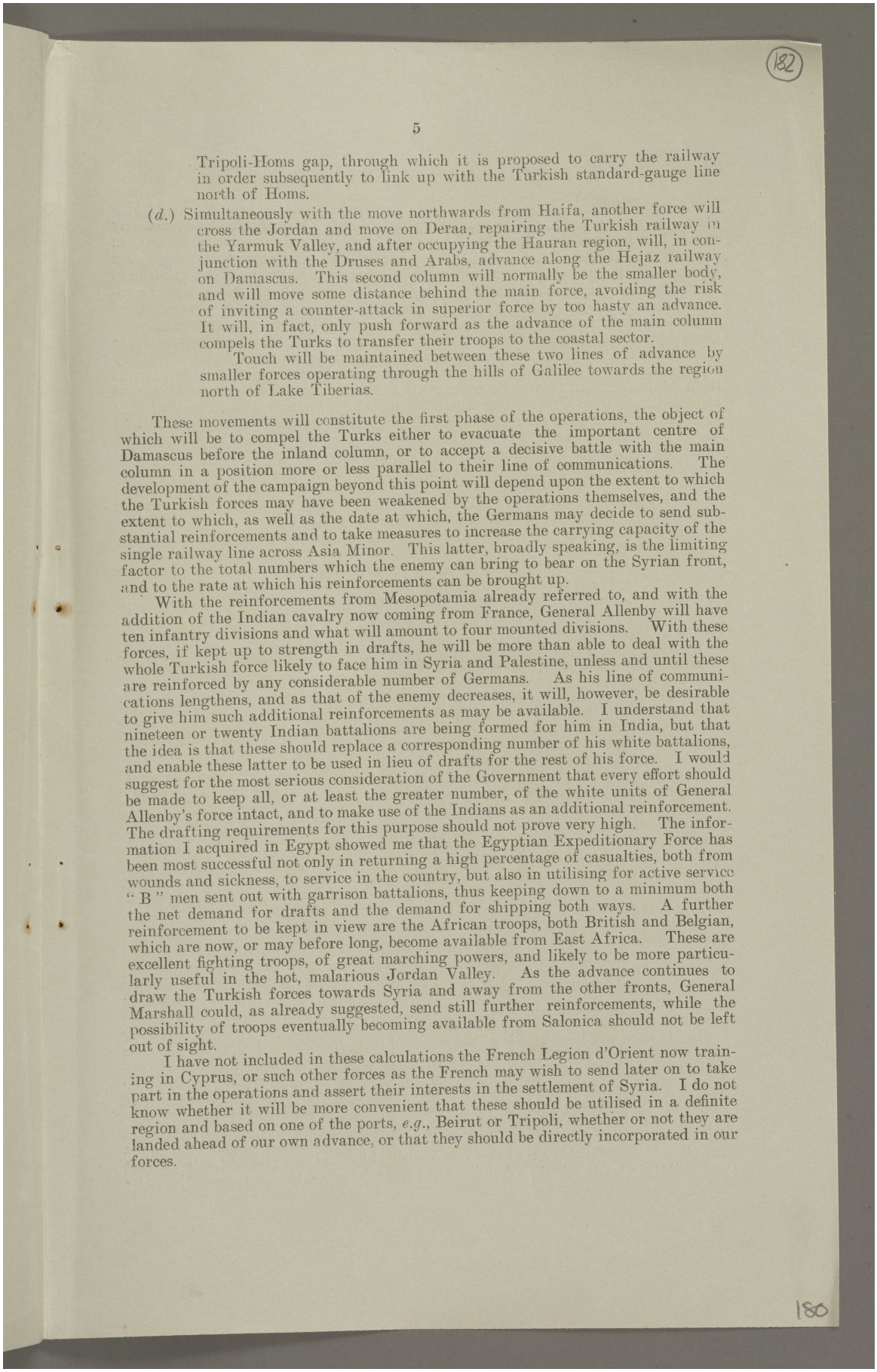

Tripoli-Homs gap, through which it is proposed to carry the railway in order subsequently to link up with the Turkish standard-gauge line north of Homs.

(*d.*) Simultaneously with the move northwards from Haifa, another force will cross the Jordan and move on Deraa, repairing the Turkish railway in the Yarmuk Valley, and after occupying the Hauran region, will, in conjunction with the Druses and Arabs, advance along the Hejaz railway on Damascus. This second column will normally be the smaller body, and will move some distance behind the main force, avoiding the risk of inviting a counter-attack in superior force by too hasty an advance. It will, in fact, only push forward as the advance of the main column compels the Turks to transfer their troops to the coastal sector.

Touch will be maintained between these two lines of advance by smaller forces operating through the hills of Galilee towards the region north of Lake Tiberias.

These movements will constitute the first phase of the operations, the object of which will be to compel the Turks either to evacuate the important centre of Damascus before the inland column, or to accept a decisive battle with the main column in a position more or less parallel to their line of communications. The development of the campaign beyond this point will depend upon the extent to which the Turkish forces may have been weakened by the operations themselves, and the extent to which, as well as the date at which, the Germans may decide to send substantial reinforcements and to take measures to increase the carrying capacity of the single railway line across Asia Minor. This latter, broadly speaking, is the limiting factor to the total numbers which the enemy can bring to bear on the Syrian front, and to the rate at which his reinforcements can be brought up.

With the reinforcements from Mesopotamia already referred to, and with the addition of the Indian cavalry now coming from France, General Allenby will have ten infantry divisions and what will amount to four mounted divisions. With these forces, if kept up to strength in drafts, he will be more than able to deal with the whole Turkish force likely to face him in Syria and Palestine, unless and until these are reinforced by any considerable number of Germans. As his line of communications lengthens, and as that of the enemy decreases, it will, however, be desirable to give him such additional reinforcements as may be available. I understand that nineteen or twenty Indian battalions are being formed for him in India, but that the idea is that these should replace a corresponding number of his white battalions, and enable these latter to be used in lieu of drafts for the rest of his force. I would suggest for the most serious consideration of the Government that every effort should be made to keep all, or at least the greater number, of the white units of General Allenby's force intact, and to make use of the Indians as an additional reinforcement. The drafting requirements for this purpose should not prove very high. The information I acquired in Egypt showed me that the Egyptian Expeditionary Force has been most successful not only in returning a high percentage of casualties, both from wounds and sickness, to service in the country, but also in utilising for active service "B" men sent out with garrison battalions, thus keeping down to a minimum both the net demand for drafts and the demand for shipping both ways. A further reinforcement to be kept in view are the African troops, both British and Belgian, which are now, or may before long, become available from East Africa. These are excellent fighting troops, of great marching powers, and likely to be more particularly useful in the hot, malarious Jordan Valley. As the advance continues to draw the Turkish forces towards Syria and away from the other fronts, General Marshall could, as already suggested, send still further reinforcements, while the possibility of troops eventually becoming available from Salonica should not be left out of sight.

I have not included in these calculations the French Legion d'Orient now training in Cyprus, or such other forces as the French may wish to send later on to take part in the operations and assert their interests in the settlement of Syria. I do not know whether it will be more convenient that these should be utilised in a definite region and based on one of the ports, *e.g.*, Beirut or Tripoli, whether or not they are landed ahead of our own advance, or that they should be directly incorporated in our forces.

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(C.)—RAILWAYS AND PORTS.

General Allenby's prospects of success depend mainly on the rapidity with which his railway construction and repair can be carried out. A slow rate of advance may enable him to push the enemy back a certain distance, at a considerable cost in casualties to his own force. But the advance will sooner or later be brought to a standstill by the gradual increase of enemy reinforcements and by the improvement which the enemy, if given time enough, may be able to effect in his own system of communications. Only a rapid rate of advance will give him strategical freedom of action, enable him to follow up any tactical success, and so to achieve results sufficiently decisive to influence the general military situation. To secure this rapid rate of construction the force in Palestine should be reinforced by two Canadian railway construction battalions, with all the mechanical equipment which they have with them on the Western front. So essential is it that these skilled troops should come at once that I have already urged most strongly by telegraph that they should be despatched from France forthwith, and replaced there if necessary by other battalions raised in Canada. With these, and adequate unskilled labour, it should be possible to construct the main line at the rate of two miles a day, as against half a mile a day with the more primitive methods at present in use, and to repair, with the least possible delay, the Turkish railway, including the probable reconstruction of the bridges in the Yarmuk Valley. There will also be a need for additional operating personnel. In so far as this cannot be furnished by Egypt, Mesopotamia, or India, I suggest that a special appeal should be made to the United States, whose railway operating personnel is probably as great as that of the rest of the world put together.

The scheme of standard gauge construction originally recommended by Generals Campbell, Macauley, and Stewart provided for the carrying of the double track, now nearly at Rafa, as far as Haifa, and was based on the assumption that the whole supplies of the force would be carried by rail from Egypt. This would have made the force entirely independent of the coast ports, but would have involved for the advance as far as Beirut an addition of 56 engines, 1,120 wagons, 127 miles of track, 1 construction battalion, and about 1,200 operating staff, as well as an additional monthly consumption of 1,000 tons of coal. This is as compared with the alternative proposal of suspending double tracking at Rafa, and supplementing the railway by the landing on the coast of an average of about 1,100 tons a day.

At a conference which I held at Cairo on the 20th February, at which Admiral Jackson, General Sir G. Macauley, and General Stewart were present, Admiral Jackson informed me that, apart from a determined concentration of hostile submarine effort against him, he could undertake to land 1,100 to 1,200 tons a day, providing he could supplement his present total of eighteen trawlers and six drifters with certain additional small craft, more especially for mine-sweeping at Haifa and for patrolling the net which he proposed to put out there. In view of this statement, General Macauley and General Stewart both felt that there was no sufficient justification for demanding the large additional requirements in rolling stock, material, and personnel involved in the policy of doubling the line to Haifa, and we accordingly decided to recommend that the doubling should not be carried out beyond Rafa, which point has practically been reached. This decision was confirmed by the further discussion I had on the subject with Commodore Unwin.

With regard to the manner in which the facilities for landing on the coast should be utilised, Admiral Jackson was of opinion that it will be best to continue the present practice by which ships come in the first instance to Egypt, and goods for the force in Palestine are then transferred to smaller vessels, of about 2,000 tons capacity, and escorted by trawlers up the coast. This was also the policy contemplated by Commodore Unwin, who informed me that he had available, or could lay his hands upon sufficient vessels of the required type, lighters and surf boats to cope with the demand of such a service, at whatever point on the coast may be most convenient, up to and as far as Beirut. The direct despatch of larger vessels from the United Kingdom or Taranto to Haifa was not recommended by Admiral Jackson. The capacity of Haifa for dealing with traffic would not justify sending whole convoys there, and any other proceeding was uneconomical in escorts. Even with a net and mine-sweeping Haifa was not likely to be as secure as the Egyptian ports, and it was therefore preferable only to expose smaller ships to these risks. Lastly, Egypt was still, to a large extent, a distribution centre for other theatres, and this was a

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convenient arrangement from the shipping point of view, which would have to be modified if Palestine cargoes had to be kept more strictly separate. These considerations appeared to me conclusive, at any rate as regards the immediate future. At a later stage, when both Beirut and Haifa are in our possession, it is possible that the joint capacity of these two ports may be found sufficient to warrant their development on a large scale, and may then justify the direct despatch of convoys. Such a policy of developing these ports to their maximum capacity would undoubtedly mean a very great shortening of our railway line of communications, and a corresponding saving in rolling-stock and operating personnel for the further advance towards Aleppo.

The question of inland water traffic in Egypt is closely associated with the whole railway situation, in so far as it affects the capacity of the Egyptian State Railway to assist the military traffic in Palestine with rolling-stock and personnel. Any assistance to this which could be made available from Mesopotamia in the shape of tugs or other craft would correspondingly relieve the general Egypt-Palestine railway situation.

The calculations of the railway and supply experts is that a force of 14 divisions (10 infantry and 4 mounted) will require daily 27 trains of 175-215 tons average net capacity; *i.e.*, 14 for supplies, 3 for carriage of construction materials, 3 for ammunition and stores, 1 for railway coal, 3 for moving of troops, 1 passenger train, and 2 hospital trains. As the carrying capacity of a single line to Haifa is limited to an average maximum of 22 trains, that leaves 1,075 tons, or 5 trainloads, to be landed on the coast. This appears to me a very ample scale of requirements, even allowing for the high proportion of natives and animals attached to the force. In any case, it does not take into consideration the possibility of securing any relief to the railway situation from local supplies. Even apart from the Hauran, with its great grain-growing capacity, it ought to be possible to turn to account the not inconsiderable resources of Western Palestine, including the Plain of Esdraelon, more particularly in the direction of fodder, which constitutes one of the largest items in the requirements of the force.

Accepting, however, the standard of supplies asked for by General Campbell, the following is the list of the total requirements, up to Beirut and Damascus, of the programme decided upon :—

Construction Material.

Standard (4-*ft.* 8½-*in.*) *gauge track*, 75-*lb. rails.* 261 *miles.*—

Of this 146 miles of track, sleepers and accessories are available, being either already in the country or on the way; or 231 miles, if it is decided to take up the existing railway from Alexandria to Dabaa.

Turkish 3-*ft.* 5½-*in. gauge*, 50-*lb. rails.* 40 *miles.*—

This is assuming that forty out of the eighty miles from Haifa to Deraa will have to be replaced. There is, however, available in the country the line from Ramleh to Beersheba, as well as such sectors of the line, *e.g.*, Ludd to Artuf and part of the line Ludd to Tul Keram, as we may re-lay with standard gauge. This, amounting possibly to over sixty miles of track in all, will be in hand for any excess of destruction of line above the anticipated 50 per cent., and for repairs from Deraa to Damascus.

Skilled Construction Troops.—

Two battalions of Canadian railway troops from France in addition to skilled construction personnel already in Egypt. With these the construction of the main line at two miles a day and the repair of the Turkish line should be assured, provided that sufficient labour and material are on the spot.

Engines and Rolling-Stock.

Standard Gauge. 154 engines. 3,080 ten-ton waggons.—

These are additional to engines and rolling-stock now in use. Of the waggons about 1,500 should be box trucks.

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Turkish Line. 40 engines. 350 ten-ton waggons.—

This would enable twelve trains daily to operate on the line Haifa-Damascus. These trains are calculated to maintain two divisions.

Operating Personnel.

For the working of the main line to Beirut and of the Turkish line a total addition of fifteen sections or 3,960 men will be required.

Coal.

Present monthly consumption for the railway is 6,000 tons. Another 4,000 tons will be required when the main line reaches Haifa, and 5,000 tons more when railheads reach Beirut and Damascus.

(D.)—UNSKILLED LABOUR.

Both for railway construction and for the work of landing stores on the coast a large increase in unskilled labour will have to be provided, estimated by General Macauley for his requirements as an additional 19,500, and by Commodore Unwin as an additional 3,000 men, or 22,500 in all. It appears to me that by additional recruiting for the Egyptian Labour Corps, which is doing admirable work, by the transfer of all labour that can now be spared from Mesopotamia, by further recruiting, if necessary, in India, and by the fullest possible utilisation of Turkish prisoners, there ought to be no difficulty in meeting the above, or considerably greater demands. With regard to the Turkish prisoners, there are, I gather, still a considerable number of these in Egypt and Cyprus not engaged on work of great importance, as well as some 4,000 at Salonika engaged upon the construction of a railway line to Stavros, the whole or greater part of whom may, I hope, soon become available. In this connection I would like to point out that both the capacity and willingness of prisoners to do good work depends on their being given as full a scale of rations as is required to maintain the energies of voluntary workers, as well as such other inducements as are customary to stimulate their efforts.

(E.)—LIGHT RAILWAYS AND ROAD TRANSPORT.

It is essential to the strategic freedom of General Allenby's force that he should be able to operate at a considerable distance from rail-head. He has already in Egypt, or on order, a sufficiency of 60-centimetre and 2-ft. 6-in. line and rolling-stock (the 2-ft. 6-in. material previously earmarked for Mesopotamia but now countermanded) to enable him to assist an advance and to maintain his forces over the width of front required. But he will require a substantial addition to his road transport organisation, and this has been estimated by General Campbell at ten auxiliary Petrol Companies with workshops and personnel complete. It should be possible to obtain a portion of the above from Mesopotamia.

(F.)—AVIATION.

My inspection of the aerodromes at Heliopolis and Aboukir, as well as my discussions with General Salmond, have strengthened my conviction that Egypt is an eminently suitable place for air training, and that it should be the training school, not only for the Air Service in the Middle East, but also for large numbers of pilots intended for the European front.

Weather conditions as well as terrain are ideal for continuous training purposes, and much relief could thus be given to the congested conditions of our aerodromes in England. The possibility of relieving shipping difficulties in this connection by establishing aerodromes in Crete and at Sollum on the African coast, which would enable machines to be flown from England to Egypt, and perhaps also to Salonika and Mudros both from England and Egypt, is, at any rate, worth examining.

As regards offensive operations, Constantinople, and to some extent also the railway line and dumps in Thrace and Asia Minor, supply suitable targets. The

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aerodromes at Mudros and Imbros should be the centre of bombing squadrons capable of carrying out continuous attacks by night and day against these objectives. When the force is reinforced by an additional two divisions, General Salmond considers that he will require an additional two squadrons in Palestine (one R.E. 8 and one D.H. 9). These and other proposals of General Salmond I shall discuss with the Air Council and Air Policy Committee.

(G.)—SHIPPING.

The transfer to Palestine of troops, labour, and material from Mesopotamia, once accomplished, should involve no appreciable recurrent addition of shipping. Supplies and troops from India would have to come somewhat further, but a much greater distance would be saved in the case of supplies and troops from the United Kingdom. The only items of the programme advocated which involve heavy initial demands for shipping are the additional aeroplanes, the ten auxiliary Petrol Companies, and the requirement, based upon the standard of supply laid down by General Campbell, of 154 engines and 3,080 waggons standard gauge, and forty engines and 350 waggons 3-ft. 5½-in. gauge. These, or such reduced figure as may be decided upon, would have to be in the country by the time the army reached the line Beirut-Damascus. Only 64 engines and 1,280 trucks (subject to reduction as above) are required as far as Haifa, or proportionately less if the advance to Haifa is completed before the two extra divisions from Mesopotamia are actually used in Palestine. In either case it has been assumed that the total supplies landed at the coast ports will not exceed 1,100 tons a day. After Beirut, the opening up of that port and the further development of Haifa, may enable the rolling-stock then available to sustain the further advance. Apart from the provision of rolling-stock, the only substantial recurrent items of increased tonnage necessitated by the proposed operations are the coal for working the railway, additional railway or port construction material above the requirements already referred to, and such engineering and signal stores, ammunition, remounts and reinforcements, as are involved in prosecuting active operations.

A considerable volume of shipping, 30 ships, sufficient for the transport of 1½ divisions, is at present kept in the Mediterranean for strategic contingencies. Urgent as is the need for shipping in every direction, I would strongly urge that this reserve be maintained. In the first place, even if landing operations on a large scale are not contemplated, minor landings at no great distance from the main advance along the coast may in certain contingencies exercise a most important effect upon the operations. From a broader point of view, the possibility of being able in an emergency suddenly to transport additional troops to Palestine from Mesopotamia or Salonika, or from Palestine to either of those theatres, is of the greatest importance, and constitutes both a valuable safeguard and a potential enhancement of our offensive power in the whole Eastern theatre of war, where, in spite of submarine risks, we enjoy the advantage of a system of inner, or at any rate more rapid, lines of local intercommunication as compared with our enemies. Lastly there are political contingencies, such as a Turkish request for rapid help to secure Constantinople against a Bulgar attack, in the event of Turkey abandoning the German alliance, which it will not be wise to leave altogether out of sight.

(H.)—POLICY AND STRATEGY.

The note of the Military Representatives to the Supreme War Council on the campaign of 1918 laid special stress on the necessity that strategy and policy should go closely hand in hand in the operations against Turkey. I have discussed this matter fully with Sir R. Wingate, with General Allenby, General Clayton, Colonel Storrs, and others, and have no hesitation in endorsing the view taken by the Military Representatives as to the importance of a careful adjustment of our political to our military action. There are, in this connection, several points which require careful watching. It is essential in the first place, that nothing should be done which might upset our Arab Allies, whose military usefulness is being increasingly felt, and may assume yet greater importance as we get in touch with the Hauran and the powerful tribes east of Damascus. The Turks are working hard to detach them from us, and are making the most of the openings afforded them

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by our declaration with regard to Zionism, and by the publication of the Sykes-Picot agreement. With regard to the former, it is important that we should make it quite clear that the reservations in the declaration with regard to the rights of the existing population of Palestine are seriously meant. We should, in any case, avoid anything savouring of an active carrying out of Zionist schemes in Palestine till we can give the Arabs an earnest in practice, as we advance, of our good faith towards them by our recognition of their position in Damascus and Syria generally. This, of course, raises, in the most direct form, the question of the Sykes-Picot agreement of May 1916, and of the effect of its publication upon the Arabs. This document has undoubtedly been taken by the Arabs as implying the conversion of a great part of Syria, including the whole coast region, into a French Colony, and this has greatly increased the distrust of our Allies which, for one reason and another, the Arabs have already entertained. Nothing could help our prospects more in that respect than an explicit disavowal by France of such designs, or of any ambitions beyond that of exercising a helpful guidance in the building up of a self-governing Arab community or group of communities. It will be no less necessary, before long, to make up our minds clearly as to what is the maximum of concession which we can afford to make to the Turks for the sake of a separate peace, without abandoning the general policy to which we are already committed with regard to the Arabs.

As regards the Turks themselves, our soundest course must be, while hammering their armies, to bring home to them by every means, public and private, that we do not mean to deprive them of Constantinople or of any part of their present Empire in Europe as well as in Asia, in which the Turkish race forms a majority, and that we are willing to concede economic and financial terms which would enable a Turkish national State to start after the war with a good prospect of attaining economic independence and prosperity. It is by no means impossible that the stress which German propagandists have laid upon Turkish nationalism in the interests of the so-called Pan-Turanian movement may not, in the end, have served a useful purpose by inducing the Turks to acquiesce more easily in the substitution of a Turkish national State for the present Ottoman Empire. The most serious difficulty in the way of any actual move for peace on the part of the Turks themselves is their realisation that any revolution aiming at peace might expose Constantinople to the danger of seizure by a German-Bulgar army before the Turkish forces themselves could be withdrawn from the front to defend it. This may necessitate on our part, not only connivance at the withdrawal of Turkish troops from in front of us, but even, in certain contingencies, prompt military and naval intervention at whatever point our sympathisers among the Turks may most need it.

(I.)—CONCLUSION.

In conclusion I wish to express my very great indebtedness to Brig.-General Stewart, Colonel W. Kirke, and Lieut.-Colonel L. S. Amery for the invaluable assistance they have given me in my work.

I attach hereto copies of the principal telegrams I addressed to the War Cabinet and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, notes of my conferences with Admiral Jackson and Commodore Unwin, as well as recommendations of Generals Marshall and Gillman in regard to the Mesopotamian campaign. General Gillman wrote his report before my discussions with him, and it is interesting to note by what reasoning he and General Marshall arrived independently at the same conclusions as myself in regard to the further prosecution of that campaign.

J. C. SMUTS.

2, *Whitehall Gardens, S.W.*,
March 1, 1918.

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ANNEX I.

From General Smuts to Chief Imperial General Staff, War Office, London.

(*Despatched from G.H.Q., Egypt, on 15th February*, 1918.)

X, 3.

February 15.

Please communicate the following to Sir Maurice Hankey for information of War Cabinet.

Begins. I have discussed following plan of future operations in Palestine and Mesopotamia with Allenby, who is in agreement with recommendations set out below. I unexpectedly had advantage of meeting at Alexandria, General Hopwood, Maude's Chief General Staff, and discussing situation in Mesopotamia with him. He also appeared personally to favour following proposals. Gillman, Marshall's Chief General Staff, will arrive at Cairo on the 20th February, and I am anxious to be in position on his arrival to settle and explain both to him and Allenby future policy to be followed in Syria and Mesopotamia. As I hope to leave Egypt on Thursday, 21st, on my return journey, it is considered desirable that War Cabinet should consider my following recommendations as soon as possible and authorise me to state definitely to them before leaving policy of Cabinet in regard to these campaigns. Thereafter Chief Imperial General Staff could follow up the matter with formal instructions.

It is impossible to continue the offensive on both Syrian and Mesopotamian fronts as neither force is separately strong enough to go far enough. One force will have to go definitely on the defensive and feed the other with reinforcements of everything surplus to its reasonable requirements for defence. Mesopotamia Force is one which should become purely defensive, because of its excessive distance from Aleppo, the danger of lengthening the lines of communication, its excessive requirements in railway construction along both the Euphrates and Tigris, and danger to its right flank if it proceeds beyond Mosul. It has at present very strong defensive positions both on Euphrates and on Tigris, between Samara and Baghdad, as well as further north on Jebel Hamrin, which positions can be held with reduced forces. Route from Mosul to North-Western Persia should be closed by small detachments working in conjunction with local tribesmen and levies at present being organised by Dunsterville. Marshall has six infantry divisions, three cavalry brigades, and fourteen battalions of L. of C. troops. Of these two infantry divisions, including 13th Division, consisting of British troops, together with one Cavalry Brigade, should be definitely earmarked for Allenby and transferred to Palestine front. This also applies to six batteries of howitzers from Italian front now in Mesopotamia.

Allenby will then have ten infantry divisions, one Indian cavalry division now coming from France, and one cavalry brigade from Mesopotamia, in addition to his present three mounted divisions. With these he will be prepared to undertake as vigorous an offensive as progress of railway construction and physical conditions will permit. His plans will include (*a*) an immediate advance to the Jordan, and thereafter the demolition of the Hedjaz railway so as to isolate Turkish Medina force and support Arabs; (*b*) an advance as soon as weather conditions permit towards Haifa and Tiberias line; (*c*) construction of broad gauge railway at rapidest possible rate to Haifa and thence northward along the coast to Es Sur or Tyre and Beirut, or further to most convenient point from which to turn Damascus position through the mountains. This may have to be through Tripoli-Homs gap. His main force will advance with this railway and Haifa Tyre Beirut, and all convenient ports will be developed *en route* to assist his transport situation; (*d*) restoration and repair of Turkish line from Haifa viâ El Fule and Yarmuk to Hedjaz railway in order to support smaller column which will follow this route towards Damascus, and in conjunction with Arabs and Druses occupy Hauran area. This second column will move some distance behind the main force and avoid counter-attacks in superior force by the enemy. Other smaller forces will operate through hills of Galilee towards the north of Lake Tiberias. The advance of the main column along the coast will facilitate supplies, will be protected on the right flank by the mountains with friendly population, and should render it impossible for enemy to hold on long in strength to any centre in the interior such as Deraa or Damascus, as his retreat will be thereby endangered.

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Allenby will be more than able to deal with whole present Turkish force in Palestine and Syria if his above strength is maintained in drafts. Nineteen or twenty battalions are being formed for him in India, but it is a serious question whether, in addition to these, every effort should not be made to keep all his white battalions intact and as full as possible with drafts from home. Hope to send rough estimate of requirements later. As this northern advance proceeds and enemy force increases on Syrian front and weakens on Mesopotamian front, Marshall could still further reinforce Allenby, and this seems to me the only way in which the two campaigns could be effectively co-ordinated. The reinforcement of Allenby by African troops from East Africa or the Congo, more particularly for use in the tropical Jordan valley, and, perhaps, also eventually from Salonika should be borne in mind. The total Turkish forces in all theatres are, of course, still considerable, but it should be borne in mind that the single railway line through Asia Minor is the limiting factor to the numbers which the enemy can bring to and supply on the Syrian front. Allenby's most serious difficulty in rapid advance will be railway construction and transport. I am sending separate telegrams to War Office giving details of his requirements in these respects based on joint advice of Generals Campbell, Macauley, and Stewart. To summarise their recommendations, Allenby will want for transport ten additional auxiliary petrol companies with workshops and personnel complete. Construction of standard gauge railway at rate of two miles per day with double track as far as Haifa and single track from then onwards, together with repairs of Turkish railway from Haifa on to and including Hejaz railway, will require two battalions of Canadian railway troops, and many thousands of unskilled labour. Two Canadian battalions could only come in time from those already in France, and I urge most strongly that this be ordered at once, and that they should be replaced, if necessary, in France by fresh battalions recruited in Canada.

Every effort will be made to utilise Turkish prisoner labour and to recruit additional unskilled labour in Egypt and locally, but the possibility may have to be faced that part at any rate of additional requirements will have to be met from India. All railway construction in Mesopotamia should be definitely stopped, and all available labour, skilled and unskilled, as well as material, should be transferred to this front. As regards additional railway track, locomotives and waggons, I was assured by Sir Guy Granet in Rome that they could be supplied provided he is advised in time to make necessary arrangements.

Of total requirements wired separately, certain amount can be found in Egypt or has already been indented for by General Macauley. About these I hope to send another wire in a couple of days. The balance will have to be found by Granet. I am personally in doubt about necessity of doubling standard track as far as Haifa. It must be remembered that in proportion as ports above-named can be effectively developed, advantage of double track and demand for rolling stock will be reduced. Admiral Jackson is sanguine that both Haifa and Beirut can be developed for a very good rate of traffic. Large demand of coal for military should be met from South Africa viâ the East Coast as much as possible.

It must be realised by the War Cabinet that the policy indicated above will entail a large initial and some permanent increase in tonnage as compared with purely defensive policy. It is with object of enabling shipping requirements to be calculated that I am sending fullest possible estimates of main requirements.

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ANNEX II.

From General Smuts to Chief Imperial General Staff.

X. 5.

February 15.

In connection with my wire X. 3, following estimate of additional railway requirements has been agreed upon by Macauley and Stewart.

Begins.

75 lb. 4-ft. 8½-in. gauge track.

	Miles.
Doubling the line from Rafa to Ludd	64
Single line Ludd to Artuf	22
Double line Ludd to Haifa	143
Single line Haifa to Sur	53
Single line Sur to Beirut	65
Single line Karm to Beersheba	13
Complete doubling from Kilo. 164 to Rafa	25
Completing Sukhereir Branch	3
Total	388

If no doubling is done beyond Rafa 261 miles will suffice.

Rolling-stock and Engines.

Rate of construction assumed to be two miles per day, and half a train a day allowed for private stores for Jerusalem.

	Trains.
Total number of trains daily for double line	30

Locomotives required for double line—	If single line only beyond Rafa.
60 between Kantara and Ludd	20
60 from Ludd to Haifa	44
40 from Haifa to Sur	40
50 from Sur to Beirut	50
Total 210 engines.	154

These are in addition to all engines now in use.

For doubling as above—

10-ton waggons—	If single line beyond Rafa.
1,200 Kantara to Ludd	400
1,200 Ludd to Haifa	880
800 Haifa to Sur	800
1,000 Sur to Beirut	1,000
4,200, of which 1,500 should be box trucks.	3,080

These waggons are additional to the waggons at present in use. Two more hospital trains will be wanted.

Turkish Line.

3-ft. 5½-in. guage.

Assuming that 50 per cent. of the track and all bridges are destroyed.

Distance from Haifa to Deraa, 80 miles: so 40 miles 50 lb. track is required.

The number of trains required on this line is 12 trains daily. This requires 40 engines, and 350 10-ton trucks to operate the line from Haifa to Damascus. These trains are calculated to maintain two divisions.

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Construction Troops.

4-*ft.* 8½-*in. line.*

Assuming construction to proceed at the rate of two miles per day, required at the broad guage railhead 1,500 skilled construction men, besides construction companies at present in Egypt.

Turkish Line.

1,200 skilled construction men.

This would mean two battalions of Canadian railway troops in addition to the construction personnel already in Egypt.

R. O. D.

For 30 trains from	Kantara	to	Ludd	...	want 5 extra sections
,, 30 ,, ,,	Ludd	,,	Haifa	...	,, 5 ,, ,,
,, 30 ,, ,,	Haifa	,,	Sur	...	,, 2 ,, ,,
,, 30 ,, ,,	Sur	,,	Beirut	...	,, 3 ,, ,,
				Total	15 sections.

or 3,960 men, in addition to all those already in Egypt.

Coal, if doubling beyond Rafa is to be done.

At present railways are using up to 6,000 tons per month. The increased number of trains and increased distance to Haifa will necessitate an addition of 4,000, making 10,000 tons per month, and to railhead another 5,000.

The above figures are all based on the assumption that all supplies and stores for the army would be moved up by rail.

If all line is single beyond Rafa 14,000 tons will suffice, and the navy will have to land 1,075 tons daily near railhead, wherever that happens to be.

Of the above quantities of permanent way materials, a certain amount are already on order, and a further amount can be provided from Egypt. Details of these will be cabled in a few days.

To recapitulate, if all line beyond Rafa is single, as far as Beirut, the following will be saved:—

Track	127 miles.
Locomotives	56
Waggons	1,120
Construction troops	1 battalion.*

Ends. End of message.

ANNEX III.

From General Smuts to Chief Imperial General Staff.

X. 12.

February 20.

Begins. At a Conference which I held to-day with Admiral Jackson and General Macauley, the relative advantages of the following main alternatives were considered: (*a*) doubling of the railway to Haifa, (*b*) doubling to Rafa only, and dependence on coast ports for balance of requirements, a minimum average of 1,000 tons per diem. It was decided to adopt the second alternative, it being understood from Admiral Jackson that he could guarantee landing the above amount subject to some addition to his present total of trawlers and drifters now operating on the coast. This decision involves adoption of smaller programme of rolling-stock,

* Two battalions will still be required; three would have been required for double track programme. This was not quite clear in the text of the telegram.

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material, and personnel, referred to my telegram No. X. 5, of the 15th. With reference to your telegram 52606, para. 1, to meet 261 miles shown as required in my statement, there are already available in country 146 miles* 75-lb. rails with sleepers and other accessories, in addition to 85 miles of line Alexandria to Debaa. Para. 2: Any addition over amount already estimated can be got by taking up Turkish line further south. Para. 3: Two construction battalions will cover revised requirements. Para. 4: One in a hundred. Para. 5: 22 trains. Para. 6: Personnel asked for included maintenance. It was calculated for double standard line and did not include Turkish line, but would cover single line plus Turkish line.

Ends. End of message.

ANNEX IV.

General Smuts to Colonel Hankey.

X. 13.

February 21.

Begins: Have discussed Mesopotamia situation fully with Gillman. Marshall agrees that he can release two more divisions if he remains on defensive on present front. Gillman sees no difficulty about also releasing one cavalry brigade. If Marshall has to move to Mosul he will want all his present force. But Gillman considers my proposal best on the whole. Mesopotamia will also help Palestine with unskilled labour not now required to continue Euphrates railway.

There is now I hope no difficulty in sanctioning my proposals. I leave here to-night and Alexandria to-morrow. *Ends.*

ANNEX V.

Methods by which the Force in Mesopotamia can Co-operate with the Force in Palestine, and Operations possible in Mesopotamia.

Memorandum by Major-General W. Gillman.

Ref. Map of Eastern Turkey in Asia, 1/2,000,000.

1. *Three Methods of Co-operation.*

There are three ways in which our force in Mesopotamia can assist that in Palestine—

(*a.*) By advancing up the Euphrates,
(*b.*) By advancing up the Tigris,
(*c.*) By transferring part of the force to Palestine.

The first method would, on our reaching Meskene (east of Aleppo), have a direct effect by threatening the Turkish line of communication in Palestine.

The effect of the second method would be rather of an indirect nature, and would consist in taking or threatening Mosul, and in retaining in that area the Turkish troops now opposing us, as well as possibly in drawing off others in order to stop our further advance. It would compel the Turkish forces now operating between the Jebel Hamrin and Lake Urmia to fall back northwards from the Persian frontier, thus facilitating any developments we may wish to initiate in that direction.

The third method needs no comment.

2. *Railway Problems.*

In the first two methods the underlying difficulty is one of railway construction and of the supply of locomotives and rolling-stock, more especially of standard gauge which are, it is understood, obtainable only in England, where the demand

* As a matter of fact, fifty-nine of these were still *en route* when the telegram was sent.

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at present is greatly in excess of the supply. It would appear advisable, therefore, to make the railway situation clear before the merits and demerits of the above methods are discussed.

(a.) *Standard Gauge.*

There are 106 miles of standard gauge track in the country, and 44 more are on order in India.

Tigris Route.—As far as the Tigris route is concerned, a further 50 miles of track would enable us to join Samarra with Mosul. The rate of laying this track is problematical, but up to the Jebel Hamrin it should be possible to lay a surface line at the rate of 1 mile a day. Beyond that ridge the ground is more broken, and it is doubtful if more than half-a-mile a day could be counted on. As an approximate estimate, it may be assumed that the track to Shoreimieh would be laid in two months and to Mosul in about nine months.

In rolling-stock, we have enough to work the line up to Shoreimieh, and it is calculated that for the working of the whole line to Mosul an extra 18 locomotives and 180 trucks would be required, two-thirds of that amount being sufficient for supply as far as the Greater Zab.

Euphrates Route.—As regards a line along the Euphrates, Meskene is about 700 miles from the nearest point of the Busra-Nasrie railway and about 400 miles from Feluja. The line to Nasrie is laid on standard gauge sleepers with heavy rails, and could be used for this gauge with little trouble if required.

Assuming that work began simultanously at Feluja and Nasrie, and that a surface track along the desert could be laid at the rate of 1 mile a day, a period of 400 days must elapse before the track reached Meskene, during the first 300 days of which all the material required at Feluja and beyond must come up the Tigris to Baghdad and be forwarded thence by rail.

Each mile of track requires 300 tons of shipping, which means that approximately one-seventh of the total tonnage now landed at Baghdad would for a period of 300 days be utilised in supplying this railway material.

The difficulties of obtaining the necessary locomotives and rolling-stock in England, and the shortage of shipping, would in any case appear to prohibit the idea of constructing a line of this gauge at the present time.

(b.) *Metre Gauge.*

135 miles of metre gauge are in the country or on order, and it is estimated that 100 miles per month can be turned out in India. Rolling-stock should also be available in that country. Each mile of track requires 250 tons of shipping, so that the problems of shipping and of forwarding up river would be lessened but little as compared with standard gauge plant. The time taken to lay the line would be approximately the same.

3. *Deductions from Railway Considerations.*

Owing to the time required to lay the track, and to the difficulties of supply, it does not appear possible that any line up the Euphrates can be completed in time to enable direct assistance to be given to the force in Palestine before April 1919.

As regards the line to Mosul the continuation of a standard gauge track beyond Samarra presents no difficulty except as regards the extra locomotives and rolling-stock required. An addition of 12 engines and 120 trucks would enable railhead to be established opposite the junction of the Tigris and Greater Zab by the end of October 1918. The question of a further continuance of the line either into Mosul or on to Nisibin must be a matter for subsequent decision based on the policy at the time and on the rolling-stock available. No outside labour would be required for laying any line.

4. *Various Offensive Measures.*

(a.) *An Offensive to the North-East.*

To the north-east our policy has recently been affected by the necessity of keeping the road open to Kermanshah, and to possible developments in Northern Persia. For these reasons, we have lately occupied Kasrishirin, which is inside the Persian frontier, and have placed small posts to guard and keep in repair the Kermanshah road as far as the Tak-i-Girrah Pass.

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The Turks occupy Kifri and have posts along the right bank of the Diala as far down as Kara Tepe. Their line of supply and of retirement (as obtained from captured documents) is viâ Tuz Khurmatli—Kirkuk—Erbil.

A railway runs to the Jebel Hamrin a few miles north-east of Shahroban. It was originally 2-ft. 6-in. gauge, but as metre gauge track arrived it was substituted for the narrower gauge, and the line is now (1st February) metre gauge as far as Bakuba, and will be continued as such to Khanikin. The 2-ft. 6-in. track is being laid northwards from Bakuba to feed the troops on the Deli Abbas-Sindia line, and it is under contemplation to continue this line up to the vicinity of the Band i Adhaim Pass in case it is decided to take and hold Kifri.

The advantages of taking Kifri would be to drive the Turks further away from the Persian frontier, to make use of the coal mine, and to make good the initial stage of a subsequent advance on Mosul. There is ample water on the Kifri-Erbil road, and it would be used by one column while another moved up the Tigris—see sub-paragraph (b) below.

(b.) *An offensive to the North.*

Up the Tigris a standard gauge line runs from Baghdad as far as Samarra. At Ashik our defences are strong, and are echeloned back in depth as far as Beled. It is also at Ashik that the River Tigris may be said to leave the foot hills and enter the plain of Irak, so that we are now in a position to control the flood waters of that river. As far as the Jebel Hamrin the country has no agricultural future owing to difficulties of irrigation, and above Samarra the rocky bed of the Tigris renders it unsuitable for navigation.

There are at present no Turks other than patrols south of the Jebel Hamrin, and there is in consequence no difficulty in advancing to Tekrit and conveying supplies there during the dry weather, but if a further advance is decided on, the railway must be pushed forward as our troops advance. The Jebel Hamrin is held strongly, and unless it is intended to push on to Mosul, there does not appear to be any object in driving the Turks off that ridge in the vicinity of Shoreimieh. We do not gain much by pushing our line, which runs from just north of Deli Abbas to Ashik, on to the line Kifri-Kala Jebaar.

Mosul is the headquarters of the Turkish 6th Army under Halil. This comprises the 13th and 18th Army Corps, the former being in the area Kifri-Erbil, and the latter in the area Shoreimieh-Bilalik. Their total strength is about 18,500 rifles, 131 guns, and a proportion of other arms. There are in addition 2 frontier battalions in the vicinity, one at Sulaimania and the other near Rowanduz.

The capture of Mosul, coupled with the defeat of Halil's army, would be a great blow to Turkish prestige, and would deny to the enemy a large and fertile area from which they have hitherto drawn the bulk of their foodstuffs. It would affect seriously, if not put a stop to, Turkish interference in the country between the Jebel Hamrin and Lake Urmia, and would cause the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the proximity of the Persian frontier.

To enable an advance on Mosul to be carried out, it is essential that the railway up the Tigris should be pushed forward at least as far as the Greater Zab, as both the column moving up the Tigris and that moving north from Kifri would be fed from it by means of auxiliary methods of supply, such as Ford van companies and mule columns.

The disadvantages of capturing Mosul are that it would entail our holding a very acute salient with an increase to our already long lines of communications, and by bringing us nearer Turkish railhead would facilitate their powers of supply and reinforcement from the west.

(c.) *An Offensive towards Hit.*

The Turkish troops near Hit amount to 3,250 rifles, etc., and 1,650 more rifles may be on their way. A scheme for capturing the town has been prepared, and should give no difficulty. The capture of the garrison, which is chiefly aimed at, is a more difficult problem, as the Turks are now very much on the alert, and are not likely to be surrounded again as they were at Ramadie.

At Ramadie we are in a position to control the flood waters of the Euphrates. By going on to Hit we gain possession of the bitumen wells in the intervening area, and the rocky river bed through which the Euphrates enters the Mesopotamian plain, which may be of use in subsequent bridging operations.

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CONCLUSION.

With the troops and means available, the Mesopotamian Force can push forward, though not simultaneously, to Kifri, Tekrit, and Hit, but owing to the difficulties connected with supply, it may not be possible to stay in these forward positions till the present railways are extended.

No serious opposition against these advances is expected from the Turks. Our troops will, however, be called upon to prepare a new defensive line at the commencement of the hot season.

With the railway material at present available, General Marshall considers that he can push forward the standard gauge line up the Tigris as far as Shoreimieh, and a small gauge line due north to the Jebel Hamrin from Bakuba. He can then seize and hold the line Kasrishirin-Tuz Khurmatli-Lesser Zab, and at the same time spare one division for operations elsewhere.

Given priority of railway rolling-stock to enable a line to be worked as far as the Greater Zab or beyond, he is prepared to go on to Mosul, but in that contingency he cannot spare a division from his force.

If a purely defensive policy is laid down for his force, he considers that he can hold with four divisions the ground he now occupies against the enemy at present opposed to him, thus sparing two divisions for service elsewhere.

(Signed) W. GILLMAN,
Major-General, C.G.S.

February 6, 1918.

ANNEX VI.

Notes on a Conference held at Cairo on the 20th February, 1918, with Admiral Jackson and General Macauley on Policy of Railway and Sea Transport for the Force in Palestine.

1. The relative advantages of the following main alternatives were first considered—

(*a.*) Doubling of the railway to Haifa.
(*b.*) Doubling to Rafa only and dependence on coast ports for balance of requirements, a minimum average of 1,100 tons per diem.

It was decided that the second alternative would be preferable if Admiral Jackson considered that he could guarantee the naval portion of the programme. This he thought he could do with his existing trawlers and drifters.

2. In regard to the policy decided upon, two further alternatives were then considered—

(*a.*) Continuance of present system by which all ships were taken in the first instance to one of the Egyptian ports, and cargoes for Syrian ports then transhipped into vessels averaging 2,000 tons.
(*b.*) Possibility of running ocean-going steamers direct into Haifa, and so saving transhipment in Egypt.

Admiral Jackson preferred the first alternative for the following reasons :—

(i.) Economy in escorts. Ships were moved to Egypt on the convoy system, which would not be economical in the case of Haifa, as it would mean great delays in unloading, and would also expose valuable ships unnecessarily to submarine attack.
(ii.) Convoys to Egypt conveyed stores not only for Palestine but for Mesopotamia, Salonica, &c. The loading of ships to proceed direct to Haifa might add further complications, and therefore delay.

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3. Admiral Jackson stated that he thought he would be able to land the required amount of stores at Haifa with his five existing transports, and could protect them, given additional trawlers and drifters.

Note.—With regard to the guarantee mentioned in para. 1, Admiral Jackson wishes this to be considered as subject to the proviso that there is no hostile activity to prevent the naval programme being carried out, in the absence of which he considers that the minimum average can be attained.

ANNEX VII.

Memorandum of Conference between General Smuts and Commodore Unwin, P.N.T.O., Eastern Mediterranean, at Taranto, on the 25th February, 1918.

With reference to the question whether the doubling of the railway line beyond Rafa could be avoided if the landing of an average of 1,100 tons a day on the coast could be assured, Commodore Unwin said that he could give a reasonable assurance as far as he personally was concerned, but could not, of course, assume the responsibility which properly belonged to higher authorities. In his opinion, he could land at least 2,000 tons a day, and, indeed, 3,000 a day, on one beach when weather permitted. There was always risk of work being stopped for a week or ten days by weather. From the experience of last summer it might be estimated that work would be stopped six or seven days a month during the summer months. In view of the above, he considered that a minimum of 1,100 tons could be reasonably assured.

In respect of the number of days on which supplies could be landed, Jaffa was better than Nahr Sukhereir, and Haifa would be considerably better than either. Commodore Unwin suggested that if cribs were built in Egypt and sunk in continuation of the projection of Mount Carmel to form a breakwater, landing at Haifa might take place almost continuously. Piers, though advantageous, were not necessary at Haifa, as landing could be managed from surf boats, but a breakwater, if feasible from an engineering point of view, would be a great advantage.*

Beirut was much better than Haifa, and could, in his opinion, be developed up to a maximum of 4,000 tons a day.

As regards craft, he had, or could lay his hands upon, sufficient surf boats and lighters. He proposed to use 9 vessels for transport, 3 of which would be discharging, 3 loading, and 3 in transit. This would allow for a proportion being out of action at any one time. Some of these would be L. lighters (dismantled sailing vessels), which could be towed, and which he thought might, if the naval authorities approved, sail without escort, as they were of little value beyond the cargo they carried. To carry out this general programme effectively it was necessary that ships should not be held back for want of escorts or cargoes.

As regards labour, Commodore Unwin was entirely willing to fall in with General Campbell's suggestion that he should have his own own labour. At present he had some 2,000 men, but would require a total of 5,000. This would enable him to put stores right up to the dump, as at present, without the necessity of employing any M.L.O.'s staff. He would be well satisfied if Turkish prisoner labour were allotted to him for the purpose; the military authorities could decide whether they preferred that the Turkish prisoner labour should be used in Palestine or at Kantara. In the latter case the Egyptian Labour Corps there would be released for Palestine. The prisoners would in either case remain under the military authorities for purposes of discipline, but he suggested that the P.N.T.O. should be free to fix rates of pay, gratuities, and scales of rations to stimulate good work. This labour did not include the 600 surf boatmen, for which work he doubted if the Turks were suitable. He would, in fact, have to call upon Egypt for another 600 of these.

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* General Stewart considered that there would be no difficulty in putting down such cribs, filled with rock, at any rate out to a depth of 30 feet.

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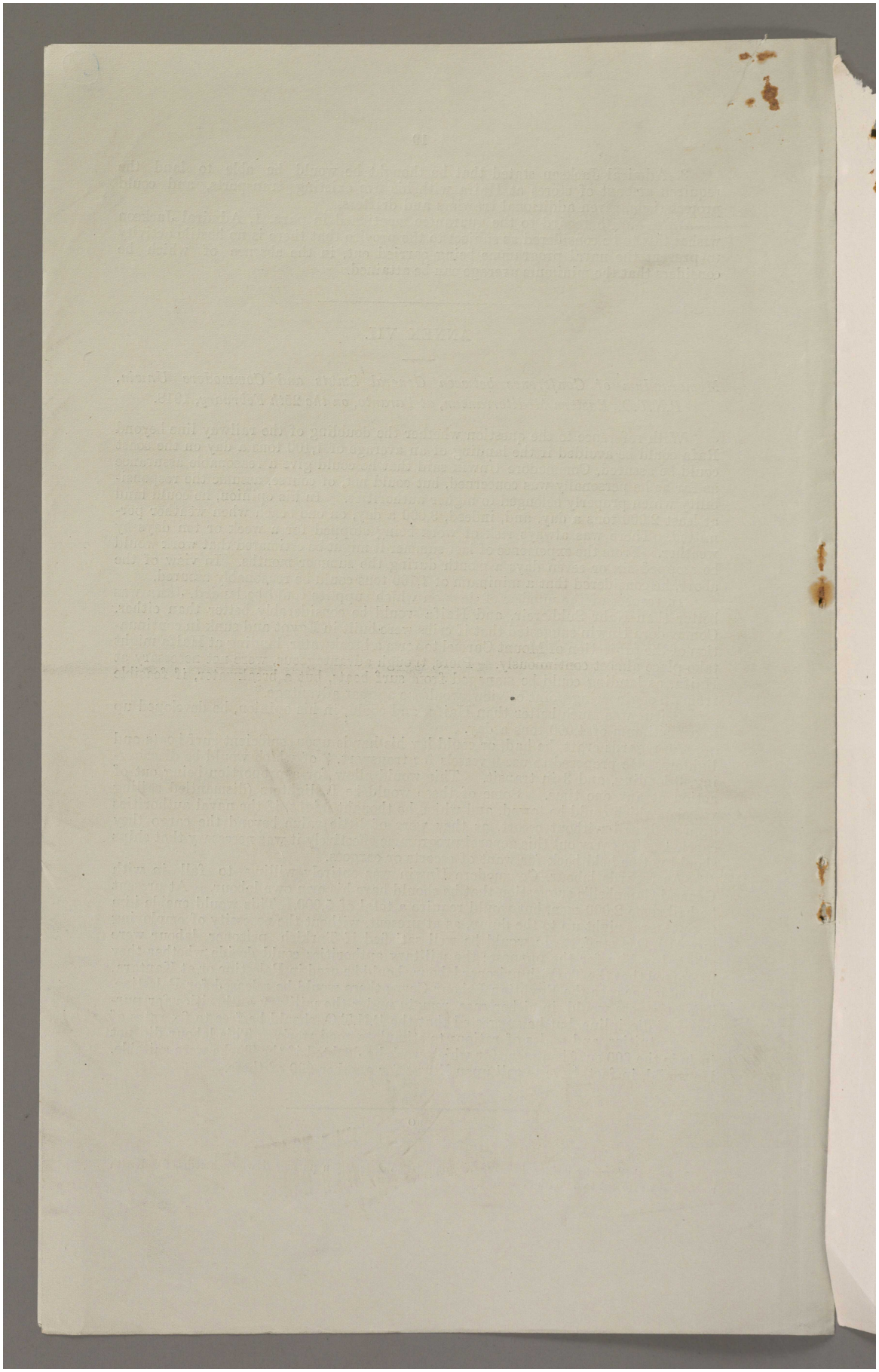

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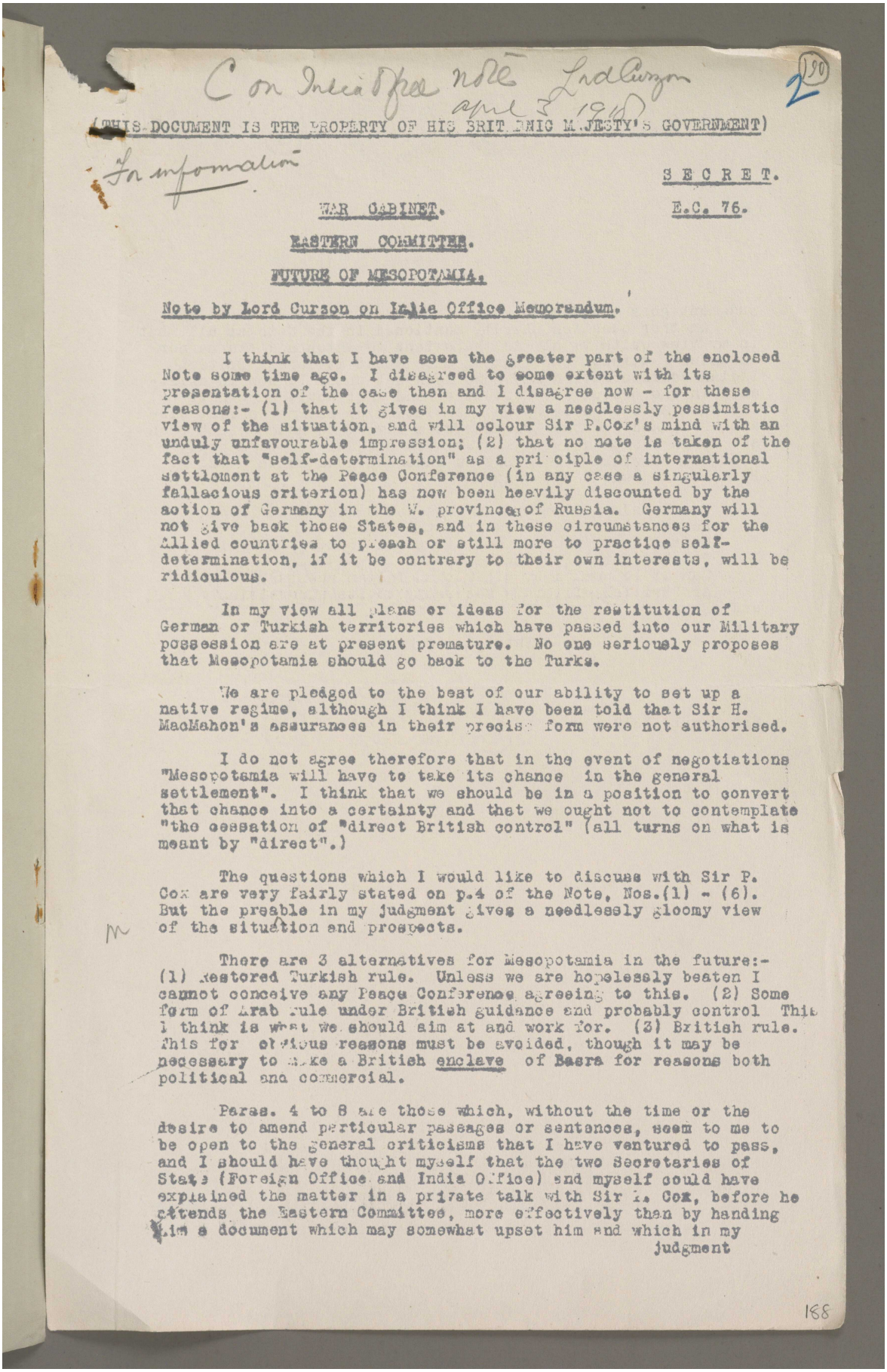

Con India Office note Ld Curzon
April 3 1918
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For information

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WAR CABINET. E.C. 76.

EASTERN COMMITTEE.

FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA.

Note by Lord Curzon on India Office Memorandum.

I think that I have seen the greater part of the enclosed Note some time ago. I disagreed to some extent with its presentation of the case then and I disagree now - for these reasons:- (1) that it gives in my view a needlessly pessimistic view of the situation, and will colour Sir P.Cox's mind with an unduly unfavourable impression; (2) that no note is taken of the fact that "self-determination" as a principle of international settlement at the Peace Conference (in any case a singularly fallacious criterion) has now been heavily discounted by the action of Germany in the W. provinces of Russia. Germany will not give back those States, and in these circumstances for the Allied countries to preach or still more to practice self-determination, if it be contrary to their own interests, will be ridiculous.

In my view all plans or ideas for the restitution of German or Turkish territories which have passed into our Military possession are at present premature. No one seriously proposes that Mesopotamia should go back to the Turks.

We are pledged to the best of our ability to set up a native regime, although I think I have been told that Sir H. MacMahon's assurances in their precise form were not authorised.

I do not agree therefore that in the event of negotiations "Mesopotamia will have to take its chance in the general settlement". I think that we should be in a position to convert that chance into a certainty and that we ought not to contemplate "the cessation of "direct British control" (all turns on what is meant by "direct".)

The questions which I would like to discuss with Sir P. Cox are very fairly stated on p.4 of the Note, Nos.(1) - (6). But the preable in my judgment gives a needlessly gloomy view of the situation and prospects.

There are 3 alternatives for Mesopotamia in the future:- (1) Restored Turkish rule. Unless we are hopelessly beaten I cannot conceive any Peace Conference agreeing to this. (2) Some form of Arab rule under British guidance and probably control This I think is what we should aim at and work for. (3) British rule. This for obvious reasons must be avoided, though it may be necessary to make a British enclave of Basra for reasons both political and commercial.

Paras. 4 to 8 are those which, without the time or the desire to amend particular passages or sentences, seem to me to be open to the general criticisms that I have ventured to pass, and I should have thought myself that the two Secretaries of State (Foreign Office and India Office) and myself could have explained the matter in a private talk with Sir P. Cox, before he attends the Eastern Committee, more effectively than by handing him a document which may somewhat upset him and which in my judgment

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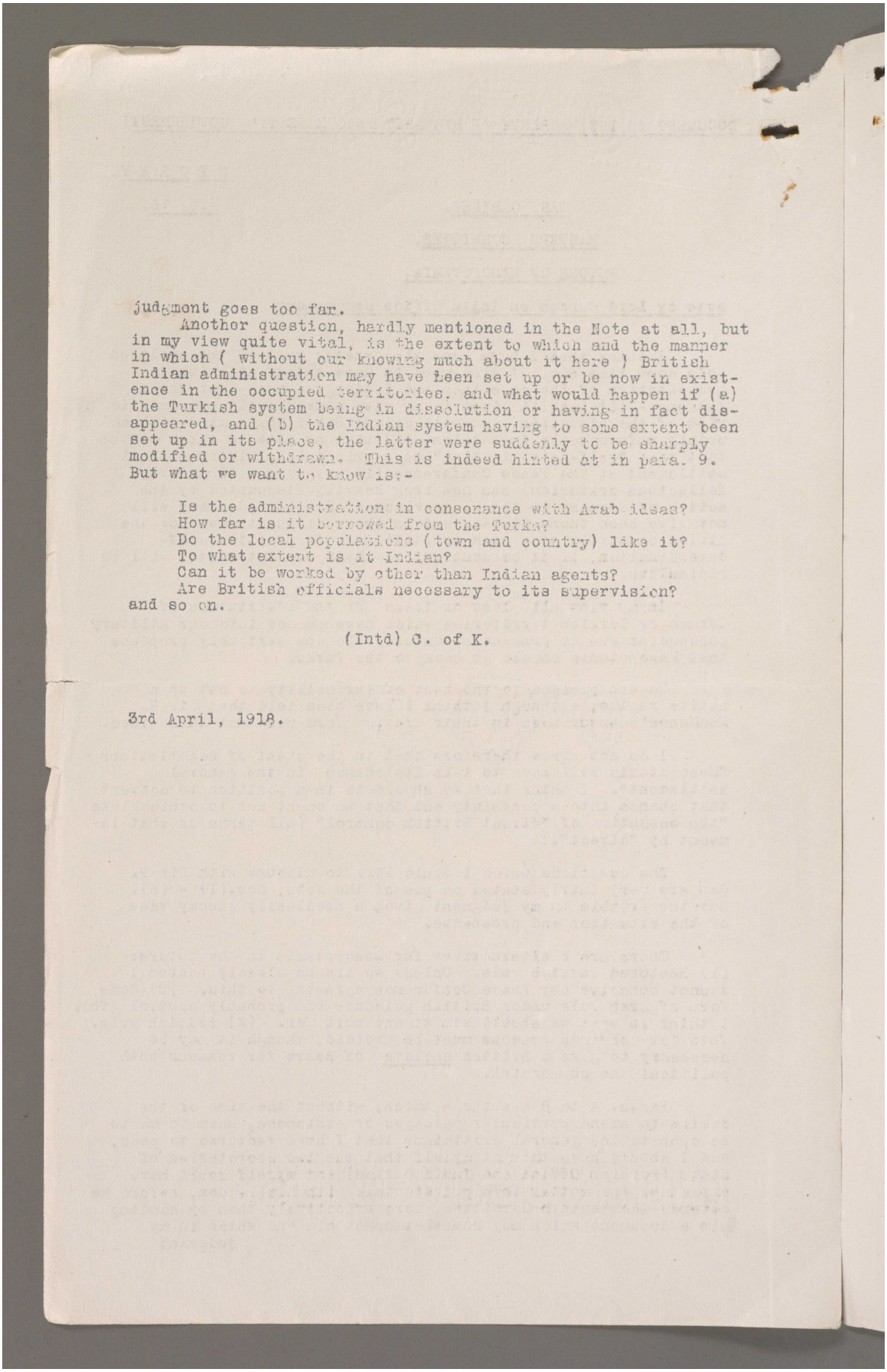


judgment goes too far.

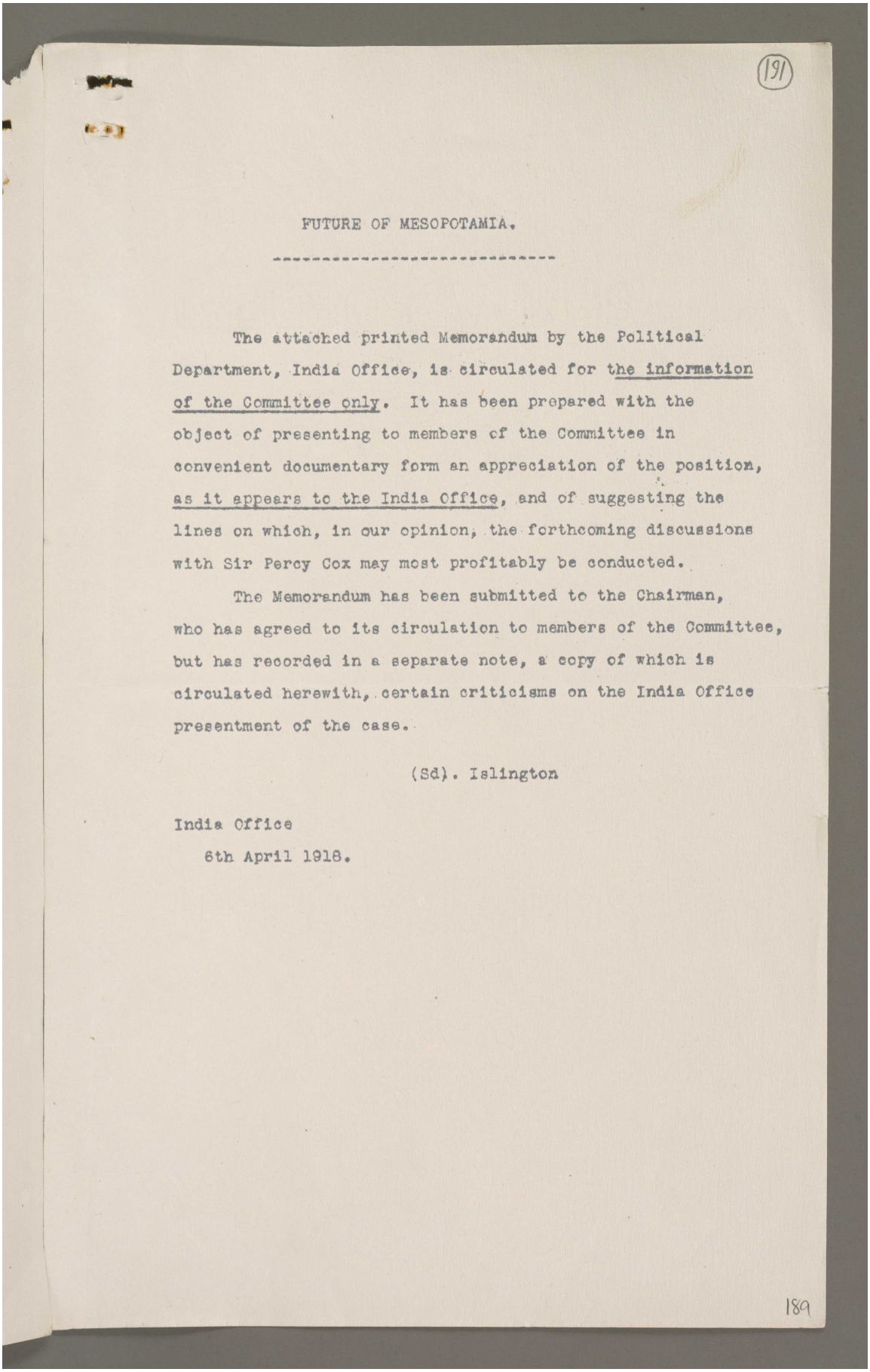
Another question, hardly mentioned in the Note at all, but in my view quite vital, is the extent to which and the manner in which (without our knowing much about it here) British Indian administration may have been set up or be now in existence in the occupied territories, and what would happen if (a) the Turkish system being in dissolution or having in fact disappeared, and (b) the Indian system having to some extent been set up in its place, the latter were suddenly to be sharply modified or withdrawn. This is indeed hinted at in para. 9. But what we want to know is:-

Is the administration in consonance with Arab ideas?
How far is it borrowed from the Turks?
Do the local populations (town and country) like it?
To what extent is it Indian?
Can it be worked by other than Indian agents?
Are British officials necessary to its supervision?

and so on.

(Intd) C. of K.

3rd April, 1918.



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FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA.

The attached printed Memorandum by the Political Department, India Office, is circulated for the information of the Committee only. It has been prepared with the object of presenting to members of the Committee in convenient documentary form an appreciation of the position, as it appears to the India Office, and of suggesting the lines on which, in our opinion, the forthcoming discussions with Sir Percy Cox may most profitably be conducted.

The Memorandum has been submitted to the Chairman, who has agreed to its circulation to members of the Committee, but has recorded in a separate note, a copy of which is circulated herewith, certain criticisms on the India Office presentment of the case.

(Sd). Islington

India Office
6th April 1918.

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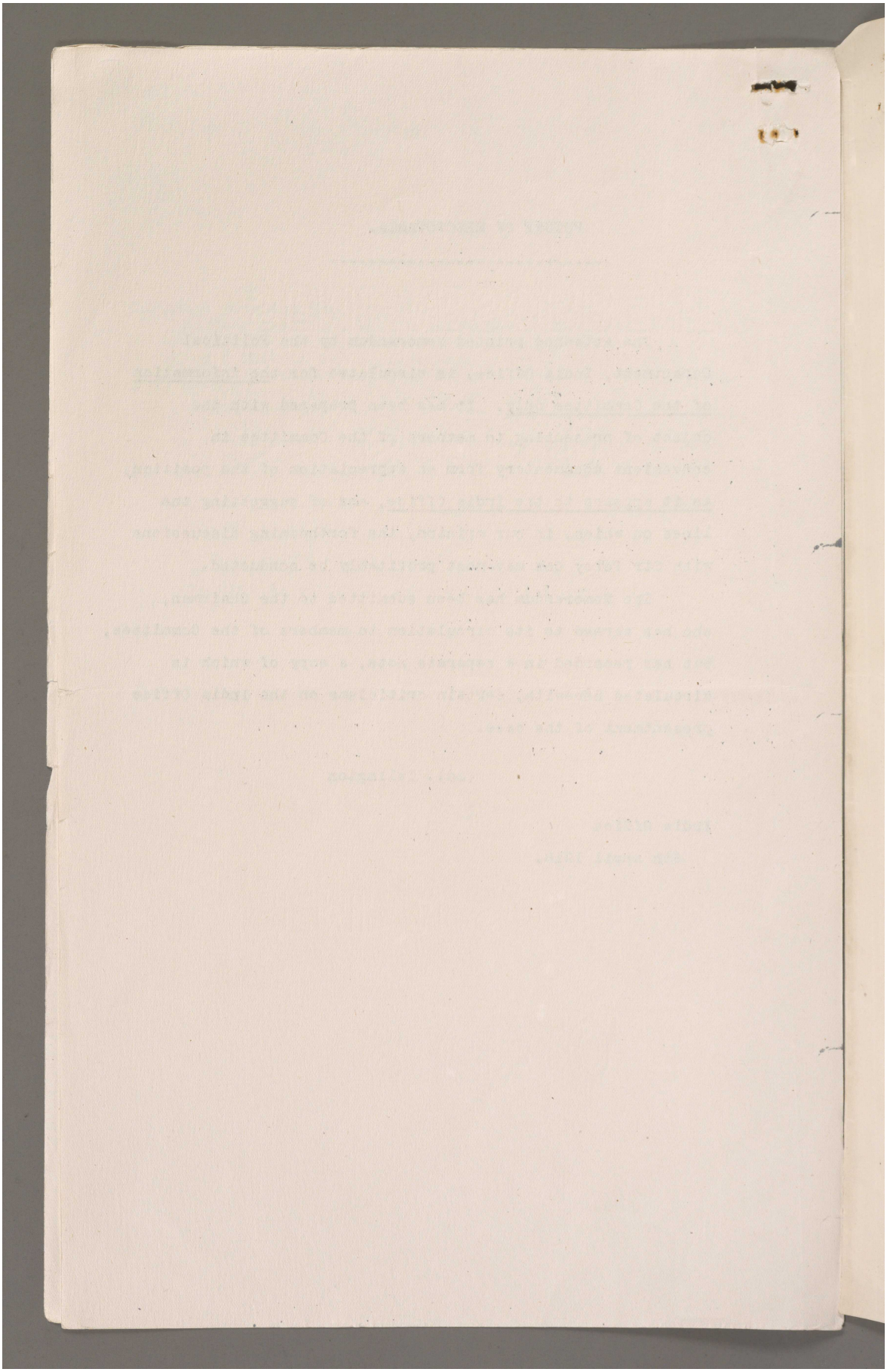

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B. 281.

FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA.

Note by Political Department, India Office, on points for discussion with Sir P. Cox.

I.

1. Policy of His Majesty's Government.—Certain conclusions regarding the future administration of Mesopotamia were formulated by His Majesty's Government in March 1917 after the occupation of Baghdad. The main conclusions were: (1) that the circumstances of the Basra Vilayet were such as to require the permanent retention of British administration; but (2) that the Baghdad Vilayet should be organised, with British assistance and support, as an Arab State under indigenous administration.

2. Pledges to King of Hejaz.—Certain pledges affecting Mesopotamia were given by Sir H. MacMahon to the Sherif of Mecca in 1915, during the negotiations preceding the Arab revolt of the following year. In a letter dated the 24th October 1915, Sir H. MacMahon pledged the British Government "to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs" within a specified area, which included both the Basra and Baghdad Vilayets, and he added an undertaking that "when the situation permits, Great Britain will "give to the Arabs her advice and will assist them to establish what may "appear to be the most suitable forms of government in these various "territories."

This declaration was accompanied (i) by the general proviso that "it is "understood that the Arabs have decided to seek the advice and guidance "of Great Britain only, and that such European advisers and officials as "may be required for the formation of a sound form of administration "will be British;" and (ii) by the following special *caveat* in regard to Mesopotamia:—

> "With regard to the Vilayets of Baghdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognise that the established position and interests of Great Britain will necessitate *special measures of administrative control* in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of the local populations and to safeguard our mutual economic interests."

The Sherif replied (5th November 1915) that the provinces of Irak were "parts of the pure Arab Kingdom," that they were "greatly valued by Arabs far and near," and that "we cannot satisfy the Arab nations or make them submit to give up such a title to nobility." At the same time he agreed "*to leave under the British Administration for a short time* those "districts now occupied by the British troops, without the rights of either "party being prejudiced thereby (especially those of the Arab nation, which "interests are to it *economic and vital*), and against a suitable sum paid as "compensation to the Arab Kingdom for the period of occupation." The Sherif's proposal was never formally accepted, Sir H. MacMahon merely replying that the matter required "a much fuller and more detailed consideration" than the circumstances of the time allowed. He ignored the question of compensation. The Sherif, however, in closing the correspondence (1st January 1916) was careful to keep this question alive; and he reverted to it later in the year (25th August 1916) in acknowledging the grant to him of a monthly subsidy of 125,000*l.* by His Majesty's Government. In this latter communication he spoke of his Government being "under Great Britain's guardianship and protection *during her occupation of Basra and Irak*."

Quite recently (4th February 1918) Sir R. Wingate has been authorised to give renewed assurances to King Hussain in the following terms:—

> "His Majesty's Government along with their Allies stand for the cause of the liberation of the oppressed nations, and are determined to stand

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by the Arab peoples in their struggle for the reconstruction of an Arab world in which law shall once again replace Ottoman violence, and unity the artificial rivalries promoted by Turkish officials. *His Majesty's Government reaffirm their former pledges to His Highness in regard to the freeing of the Arab peoples.* Liberation is the policy His Majesty's Government have pursued and intend to pursue with unswerving determination by protecting such Arabs as are already liberated from the danger of reconquest, and assisting such Arabs as are still under the yoke of the oppressor to obtain their freedom."

3. Position vis-à-vis Foreign Powers.—Both Baghdad and Basra lie within the "red area," as defined by the Anglo-Franco-Russian Agreements of May 1916, *i.e.*, the zone within which the British Government may "establish "such direct or indirect administration as they desire and as they think fit "to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States." In other words, so far as engagements with their Allies are concerned, His Majesty's Government have a free hand in Mesopotamia. It may be added here that in November 1914 we gave a public undertaking that "Basra will never again be allowed to be subject to Turkish authority." In regard to Baghdad our declarations have been less definite, but General Maude's proclamation of the 19th March 1917, in the course of which he invited the Baghdad Arabs to join their kinsmen "in realising the aspirations of your race," pointed clearly in the same direction.

II.

4. It is not suggested that the policy of His Majesty's Government, as laid down in March 1917, should be modified *in essence*. It is scarcely thinkable that we should suffer the results already achieved to be entirely thrown away; or that we should allow a country of such historic associations and future economic possibilities to revert to the blighting conditions under which it has stagnated for centuries past, and from which it has at length been rescued at so heavy a cost in British blood and treasure. In particular, local conditions being what they are, it seems essential that Basra should remain to all intents and purposes a British port (whether formally annexed to the British Crown or not), and that the surrounding district should be under effective British control. But, though our aims may remain substantially the same, it may not be possible, in view of the great change that has taken place in the general political situation during the past year, to realise them in full or in the manner originally contemplated. An early reconsideration and readjustment of the policy to be pursued in the occupied territory during the continuance of the war seems therefore necessary.

5. The main new factors in the situation may be classified broadly under two heads, viz.:—(i) the general trend of the war in Europe; and (ii) the general change of outlook in regard to questions of imperial policy which the war has brought about, and, in particular, the spread of the doctrine of "self-determination" under the powerful advocacy of the President of the United States.

6. As regards (1), the issue of the conflict still remains in doubt. But the possibility must at least be contemplated that complete victory, followed by a peace dictated to the conquered enemy, may prove to be unattainable; and that the Allies may have to content themselves with a peace by negotiation based on some principle such as that of "no annexations," which is gaining so many adherents in all belligerent countries, and particularly among those classes which, in the last resort, have the power to make their will effective. Of the Allies, Great Britain alone is in occupation of enemy territory. If the Central Powers should offer to treat on the basis of mutual relinquishment of conquests, a claim on our part to retain control over Lower Mesopotamia, even if urged on humanitarian grounds, might meet with but little support; and our case at the Peace Conference will be rendered none the stronger by the fact that three of our adversaries (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria) will be

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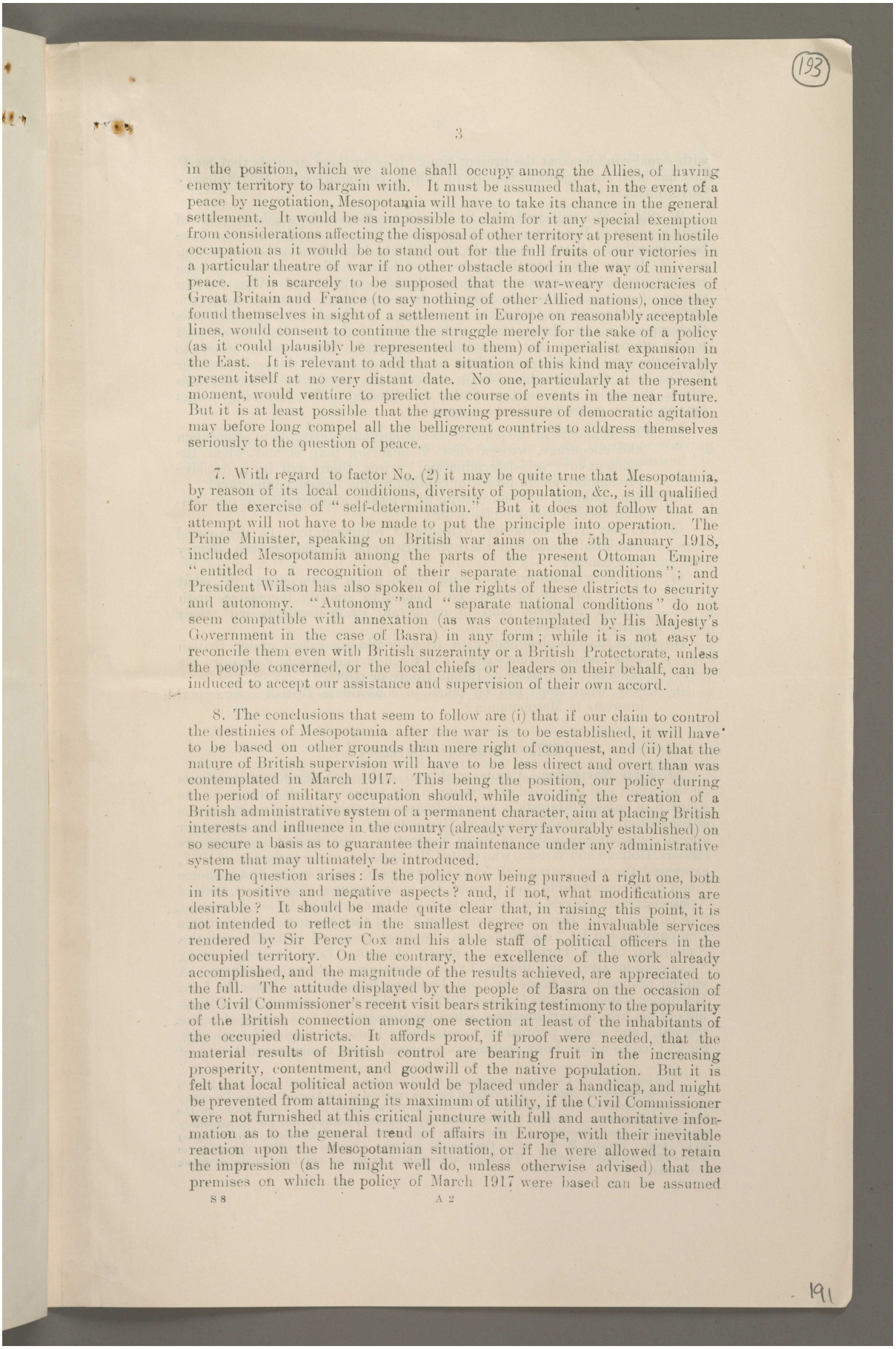

in the position, which we alone shall occupy among the Allies, of having enemy territory to bargain with. It must be assumed that, in the event of a peace by negotiation, Mesopotamia will have to take its chance in the general settlement. It would be as impossible to claim for it any special exemption from considerations affecting the disposal of other territory at present in hostile occupation as it would be to stand out for the full fruits of our victories in a particular theatre of war if no other obstacle stood in the way of universal peace. It is scarcely to be supposed that the war-weary democracies of Great Britain and France (to say nothing of other Allied nations), once they found themselves in sight of a settlement in Europe on reasonably acceptable lines, would consent to continue the struggle merely for the sake of a policy (as it could plausibly be represented to them) of imperialist expansion in the East. It is relevant to add that a situation of this kind may conceivably present itself at no very distant date. No one, particularly at the present moment, would venture to predict the course of events in the near future. But it is at least possible that the growing pressure of democratic agitation may before long compel all the belligerent countries to address themselves seriously to the question of peace.

7. With regard to factor No. (2) it may be quite true that Mesopotamia, by reason of its local conditions, diversity of population, &c., is ill qualified for the exercise of "self-determination." But it does not follow that an attempt will not have to be made to put the principle into operation. The Prime Minister, speaking on British war aims on the 5th January 1918, included Mesopotamia among the parts of the present Ottoman Empire "entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions"; and President Wilson has also spoken of the rights of these districts to security and autonomy. "Autonomy" and "separate national conditions" do not seem compatible with annexation (as was contemplated by His Majesty's Government in the case of Basra) in any form; while it is not easy to reconcile them even with British suzerainty or a British Protectorate, unless the people concerned, or the local chiefs or leaders on their behalf, can be induced to accept our assistance and supervision of their own accord.

8. The conclusions that seem to follow are (i) that if our claim to control the destinies of Mesopotamia after the war is to be established, it will have to be based on other grounds than mere right of conquest, and (ii) that the nature of British supervision will have to be less direct and overt than was contemplated in March 1917. This being the position, our policy during the period of military occupation should, while avoiding the creation of a British administrative system of a permanent character, aim at placing British interests and influence in the country (already very favourably established) on so secure a basis as to guarantee their maintenance under any administrative system that may ultimately be introduced.

The question arises: Is the policy now being pursued a right one, both in its positive and negative aspects? and, if not, what modifications are desirable? It should be made quite clear that, in raising this point, it is not intended to reflect in the smallest degree on the invaluable services rendered by Sir Percy Cox and his able staff of political officers in the occupied territory. On the contrary, the excellence of the work already accomplished, and the magnitude of the results achieved, are appreciated to the full. The attitude displayed by the people of Basra on the occasion of the Civil Commissioner's recent visit bears striking testimony to the popularity of the British connection among one section at least of the inhabitants of the occupied districts. It affords proof, if proof were needed, that the material results of British control are bearing fruit in the increasing prosperity, contentment, and goodwill of the native population. But it is felt that local political action would be placed under a handicap, and might be prevented from attaining its maximum of utility, if the Civil Commissioner were not furnished at this critical juncture with full and authoritative information as to the general trend of affairs in Europe, with their inevitable reaction upon the Mesopotamian situation, or if he were allowed to retain the impression (as he might well do, unless otherwise advised) that the premises on which the policy of March 1917 were based can be assumed

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with equal confidence at the present time. It is on these grounds that Sir P. Cox has been summoned to Europe to confer personally with His Majesty's Government.

9. Sir P. Cox will doubtless be invited to discuss the whole question of British policy in Mesopotamia in the light of the new conditions that have been described. Stated succinctly, the principal questions to be put to him are: (1) Is the administrative system now being built up adapted to the contingency of the cessation of direct British control? (2) What further means, if any, can be devised locally to secure that, whatever form the ultimate settlement may take, the main object desiderated by His Majesty's Government, viz., a Mesopotamia under British influence, shall be secured to the utmost extent that circumstances permit? The question is one to which the local authorities are alone competent to furnish the reply, and Sir P. Cox will doubtless be able to indicate the particular channels into which discussion can most profitably be directed. The following points for consideration are tentatively suggested:—

(1) What elements in the population is it specially desirable to strengthen and encourage, with a view to ensuring that, if and when the moment for "self-determination" arises, there will be a decisive pronouncement in favour of continuing the British connection?
(2) What materials exist for setting up a local administration or administrations of a suitable character?
(3) Can any Arab authority, dynastic or representative, be discovered that would command the necessary moral sanction in the country as a whole?
(4) Supposing a Ruler, or ruling body, to be forthcoming, by what means can he, or they, be brought to identify themselves with British interests, and to co-operate whole-heartedly with their British advisers?
(5) Given the establishment of a friendly administration under British supervision, to what extent, and for how long, would it require the assistance of British or Indian troops or police?
(6) Lastly, what steps can be taken to consolidate British commercial interests in Mesopotamia?

III.—Commercial Development.

10. River Navigation.—Commercial and industrial development affords an important and (provided everything in the nature of *exploitation* of the country in outside interests is rigorously avoided) perfectly legitimate means of consolidating British influence in Mesopotamia. One question calling for special consideration is that of River Navigation. The Trade Commissioners (Messrs. Holland and Wilson) who visited Mesopotamia in the early part of 1917, expressed the view (paragraph 58 of their Report) that "in the first instance "and for a considerable time to come, the main business of transport, both of "passengers and goods, on the Tigris should be carried on by *one Company*, "to be exclusively British in constitution"; and they recommended that this Company should be "constituted on the lines proposed in 1913,[1] with the "omission of the Turkish and German elements, Lord Inchcape being "Concessionnaire," and Messrs. Lynch receiving an appropriate share. A similar proposal was made by Lord Inchcape himself, in a letter to Lord Hardinge, dated the 20th October 1917, in which he expressed the willingness of his firm to start business, when the time arrived, "as arranged before the war," and sought permission to establish a house at Baghdad forthwith. Sir P. Cox, to whom Lord Inchcape's proposals were communicated, was of

[1] The history of the Concession negotiated in 1913 is stated in Appendix VII. (pp. 94–97) of the Commissioners' Report. It provided for the creation of an Anglo-Ottoman Company (with Lord Inchcape as Concessionnaire) to exercise the exclusive right of navigation on the Tigris and Euphrates. German (Baghdad Railway Company) participation was subsequently admitted, the final allocation of capital being:—British (*i.e.*, the Inchcape-Lynch interests) 50 per cent.; Turkish 30 per cent.; German 20 per cent. Special provision was made to secure effective British control. The whole arrangement remained unratified at the outbreak of the war.

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opinion (telegram of 28th December 1917) that it would be "contrary to the "interests of the country that monopoly of shipping on river should be "granted to any firm," and that "we shall be well advised to allow native "Indian and British subjects to run steamboats on both rivers subject to "suitable guarantees and payment of conservancy dues." He urged that no assurances or undertakings should be given to Lord Inchcape, Messrs. Lynch, or anybody else, that would prejudice independent consideration of the whole question.

It may be observed, parenthetically, that the proposed concession could not come into actual operation until after the war, as control over navigation must remain in the hands of the military so long as hostilities last. What Lord Inchcape had in view, in desiring to open house *at once*, was presumably the general advantage of being first in the field. The whole question was fully discussed by the Middle East Committee on the 18th February 1918. Opinions were somewhat divided, and it was eventually resolved "that no steps should be taken to come to an arrangement with "Lord Inchcape or any other firm until the views of Sir Percy Cox had been "obtained regarding the various points raised in the discussion." Lord Inchcape has since (15th March) written again to Lord Hardinge waiving the question of a monopoly, but renewing his request for permission "to "establish my organisation at Baghdad now, so that I may be in a position "to begin operations as soon as local circumstances permit." He has been informed in reply that the matter will be discussed with Sir P. Cox.

11. Banking.—Another question of vital importance to the future interests of trade is that of Banking. On this point the following extract from Lord Inchcape's letter of the 30th October may be quoted :—

> "At the same time it is very desirable that banking development in Mesopotamia should be in good hands in the general interest of British trade, and not left too much to small fry such as small Indian Banks, and eventually I contemplate using my influence towards the establishment of a powerful Banking Syndicate, in which possibly Indian and Australian interests as well as British might be associated. I consider this is really necessary, to counter activity of the German Banks in Turkey."

It seems clear that present banking arrangements in Mesopotamia will have sooner or later to be strengthened, and Lord Inchcape's willingness to interest himself in the matter is a point to be borne in mind in considering the question of allowing his firm to obtain an immediate footing at Baghdad.

12. The early establishment of (1) a Commercial Bureau, and (2) an Agricultural Department in Mesopotamia, as recommended by the Trade Commissioners, are other points that might usefully be discussed.

Political Department, India Office,
3rd April 1918.

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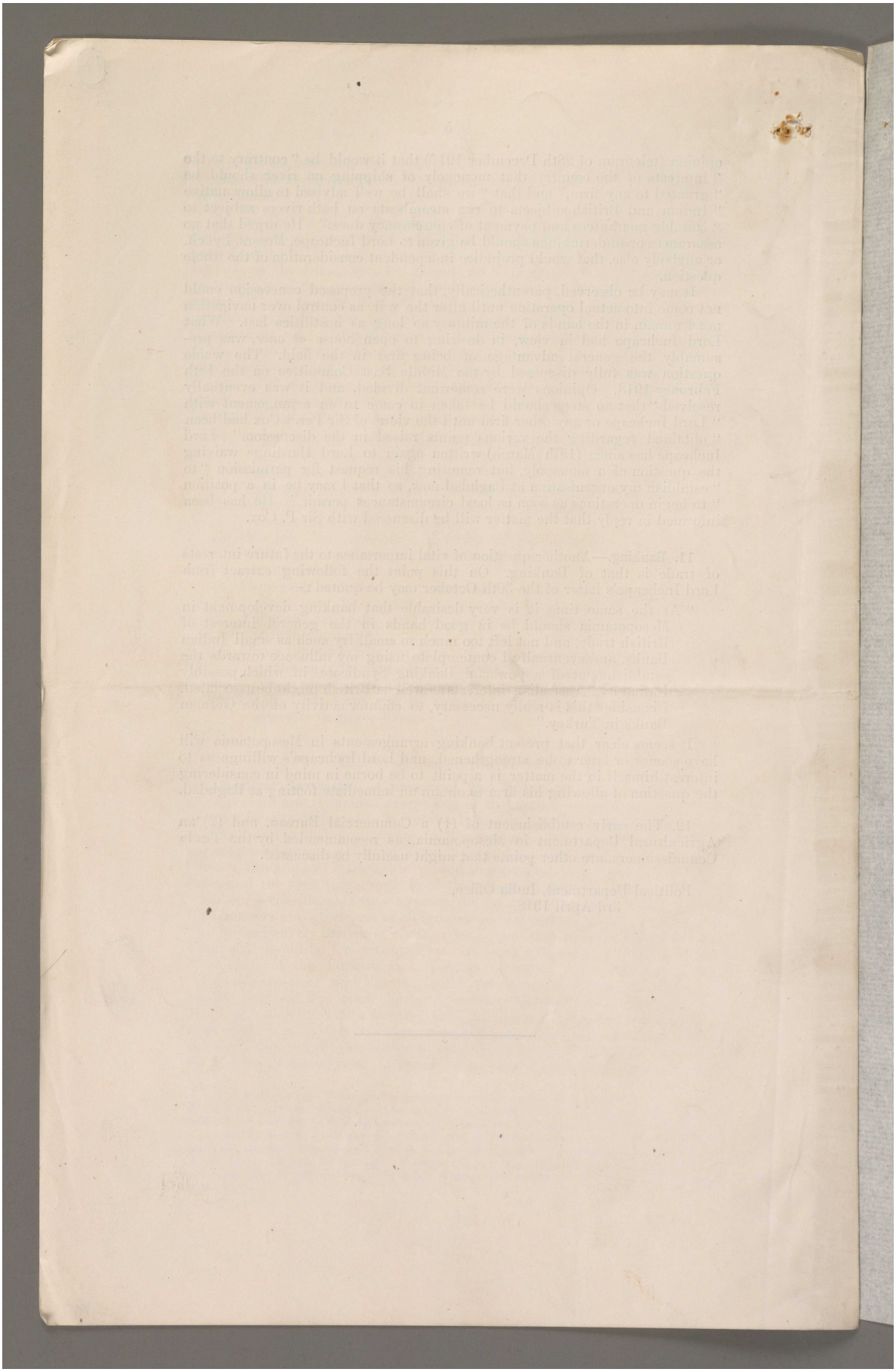

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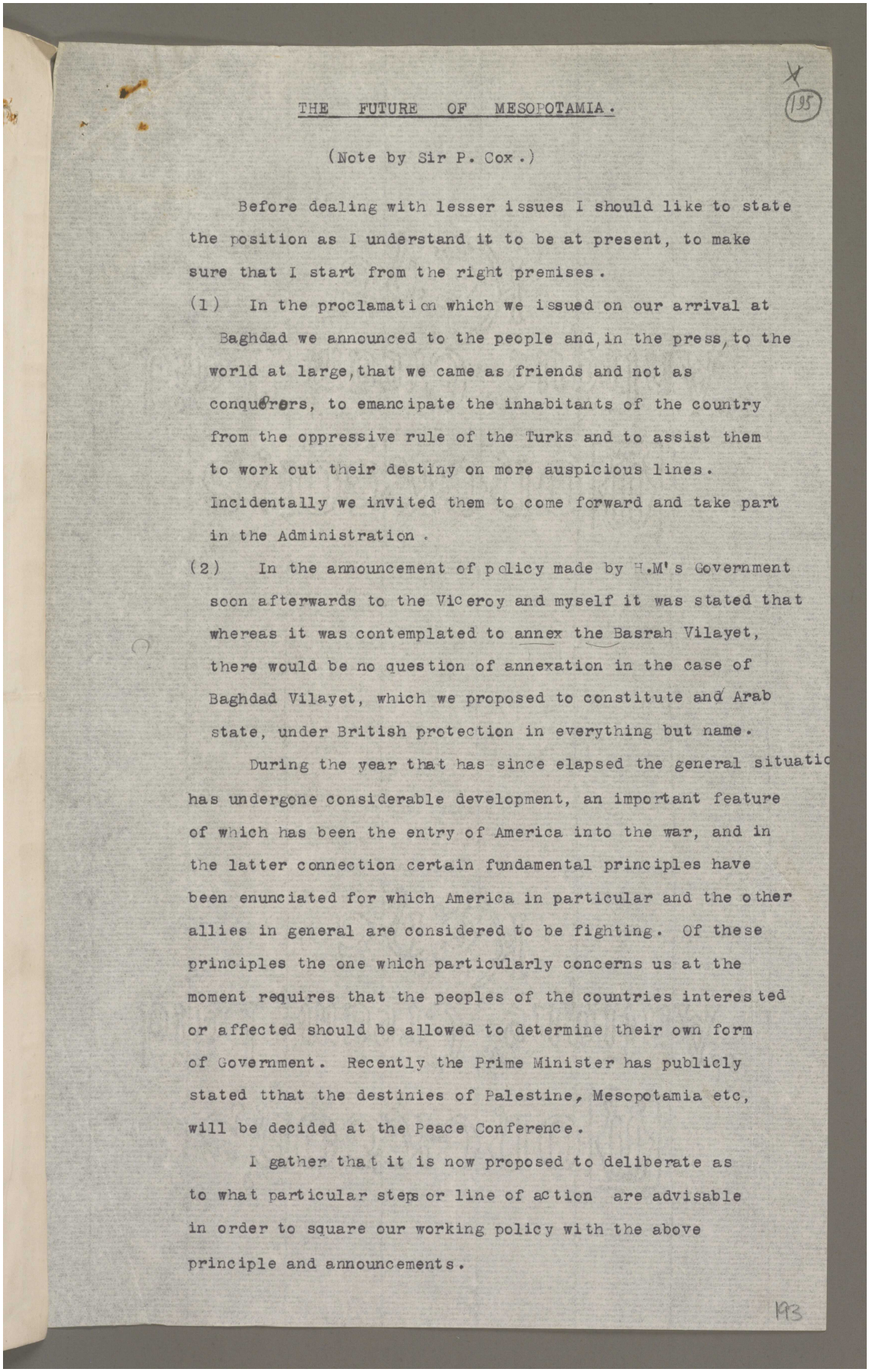

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THE FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA.

(Note by Sir P. Cox.)

Before dealing with lesser issues I should like to state the position as I understand it to be at present, to make sure that I start from the right premises.

(1) In the proclamation which we issued on our arrival at Baghdad we announced to the people and, in the press, to the world at large, that we came as friends and not as conquerors, to emancipate the inhabitants of the country from the oppressive rule of the Turks and to assist them to work out their destiny on more auspicious lines. Incidentally we invited them to come forward and take part in the Administration.

(2) In the announcement of policy made by H.M's Government soon afterwards to the Viceroy and myself it was stated that whereas it was contemplated to annex the Basrah Vilayet, there would be no question of annexation in the case of Baghdad Vilayet, which we proposed to constitute and Arab state, under British protection in everything but name.

During the year that has since elapsed the general situatic has undergone considerable development, an important feature of which has been the entry of America into the war, and in the latter connection certain fundamental principles have been enunciated for which America in particular and the other allies in general are considered to be fighting. Of these principles the one which particularly concerns us at the moment requires that the peoples of the countries interested or affected should be allowed to determine their own form of Government. Recently the Prime Minister has publicly stated tthat the destinies of Palestine, Mesopotamia etc, will be decided at the Peace Conference.

I gather that it is now proposed to deliberate as to what particular steps or line of action are advisable in order to square our working policy with the above principle and announcements.

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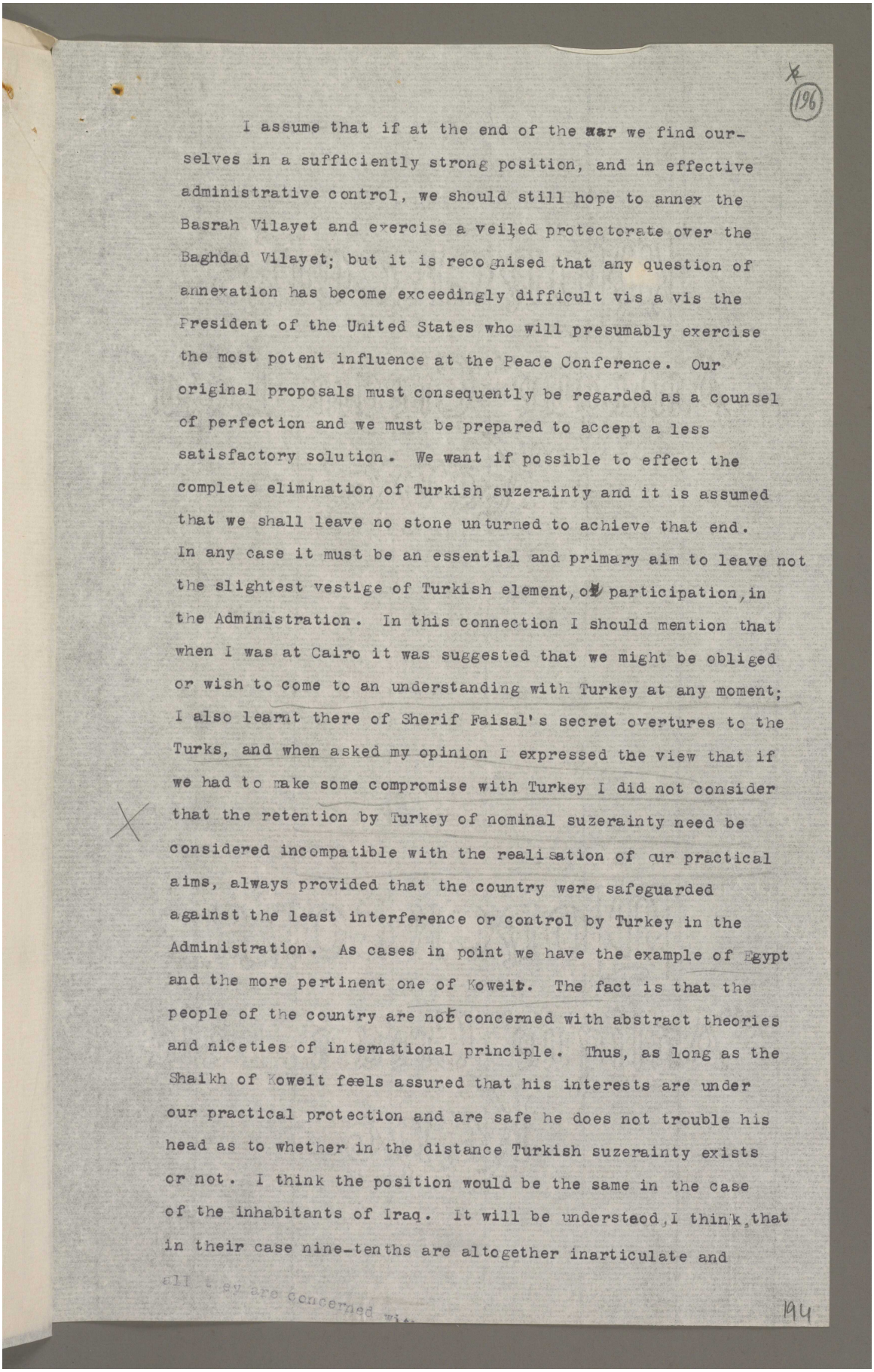

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I assume that if at the end of the war we find ourselves in a sufficiently strong position, and in effective administrative control, we should still hope to annex the Basrah Vilayet and exercise a veiled protectorate over the Baghdad Vilayet; but it is recognised that any question of annexation has become exceedingly difficult vis a vis the President of the United States who will presumably exercise the most potent influence at the Peace Conference. Our original proposals must consequently be regarded as a counsel of perfection and we must be prepared to accept a less satisfactory solution. We want if possible to effect the complete elimination of Turkish suzerainty and it is assumed that we shall leave no stone unturned to achieve that end. In any case it must be an essential and primary aim to leave not the slightest vestige of Turkish element, or participation, in the Administration. In this connection I should mention that when I was at Cairo it was suggested that we might be obliged or wish to come to an understanding with Turkey at any moment; I also learnt there of Sherif Faisal's secret overtures to the Turks, and when asked my opinion I expressed the view that if we had to make some compromise with Turkey I did not consider that the retention by Turkey of nominal suzerainty need be considered incompatible with the realisation of our practical aims, always provided that the country were safeguarded against the least interference or control by Turkey in the Administration. As cases in point we have the example of Egypt and the more pertinent one of Koweit. The fact is that the people of the country are not concerned with abstract theories and niceties of international principle. Thus, as long as the Shaikh of Koweit feels assured that his interests are under our practical protection and are safe he does not trouble his head as to whether in the distance Turkish suzerainty exists or not. I think the position would be the same in the case of the inhabitants of Iraq. It will be understood, I think, that in their case nine-tenths are altogether inarticulate and

all they are concerned wi...

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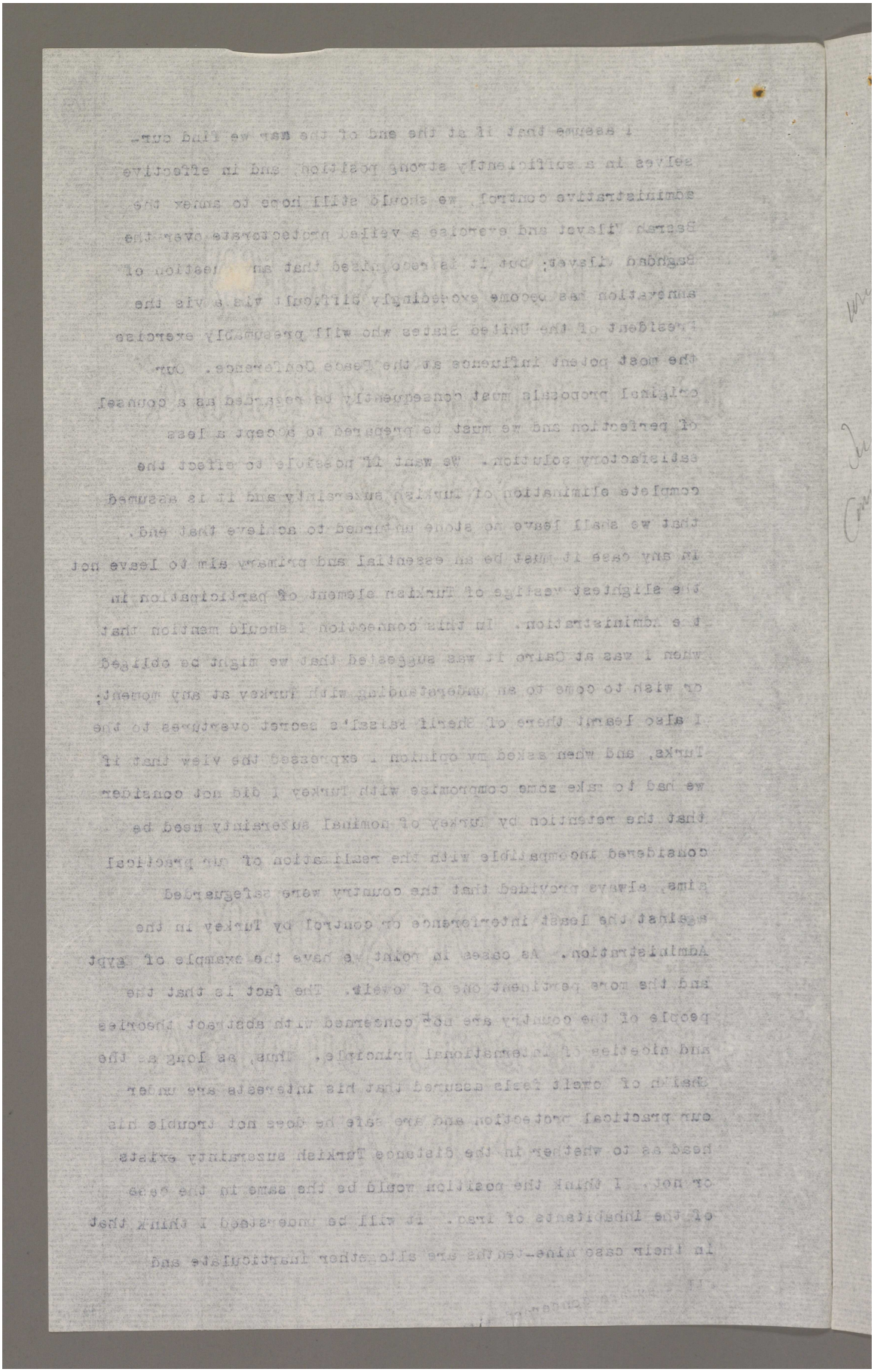

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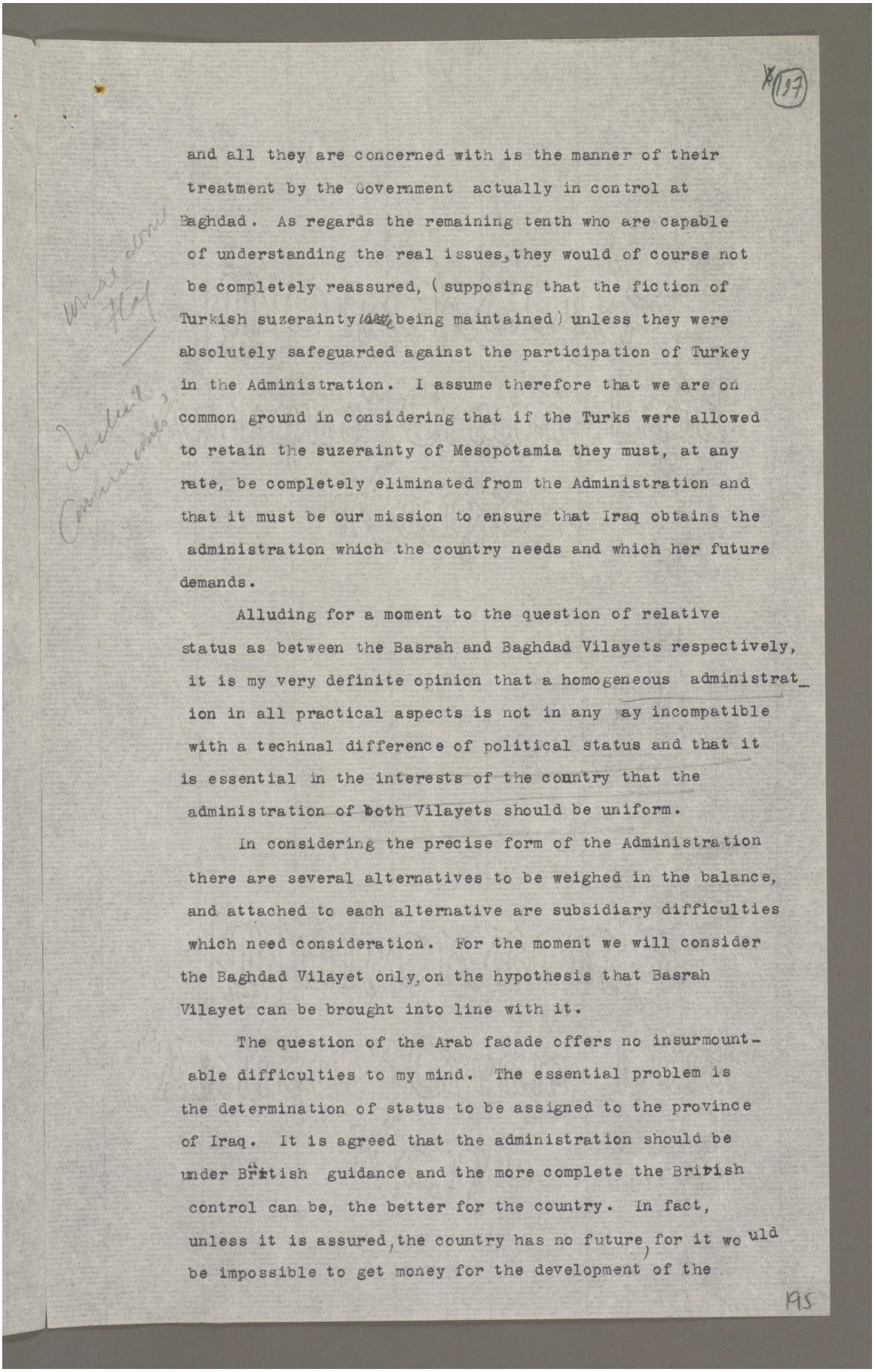

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and all they are concerned with is the manner of their treatment by the Government actually in control at Baghdad. As regards the remaining tenth who are capable of understanding the real issues, they would of course not be completely reassured, (supposing that the fiction of Turkish suzerainty were being maintained) unless they were absolutely safeguarded against the participation of Turkey in the Administration. I assume therefore that we are on common ground in considering that if the Turks were allowed to retain the suzerainty of Mesopotamia they must, at any rate, be completely eliminated from the Administration and that it must be our mission to ensure that Iraq obtains the administration which the country needs and which her future demands.

Alluding for a moment to the question of relative status as between the Basrah and Baghdad Vilayets respectively, it is my very definite opinion that a homogeneous administration in all practical aspects is not in any way incompatible with a techinal difference of political status and that it is essential in the interests of the country that the administration of both Vilayets should be uniform.

In considering the precise form of the Administration there are several alternatives to be weighed in the balance, and attached to each alternative are subsidiary difficulties which need consideration. For the moment we will consider the Baghdad Vilayet only, on the hypothesis that Basrah Vilayet can be brought into line with it.

The question of the Arab facade offers no insurmountable difficulties to my mind. The essential problem is the determination of status to be assigned to the province of Iraq. It is agreed that the administration should be under British guidance and the more complete the British control can be, the better for the country. In fact, unless it is assured, the country has no future, for it would be impossible to get money for the development of the

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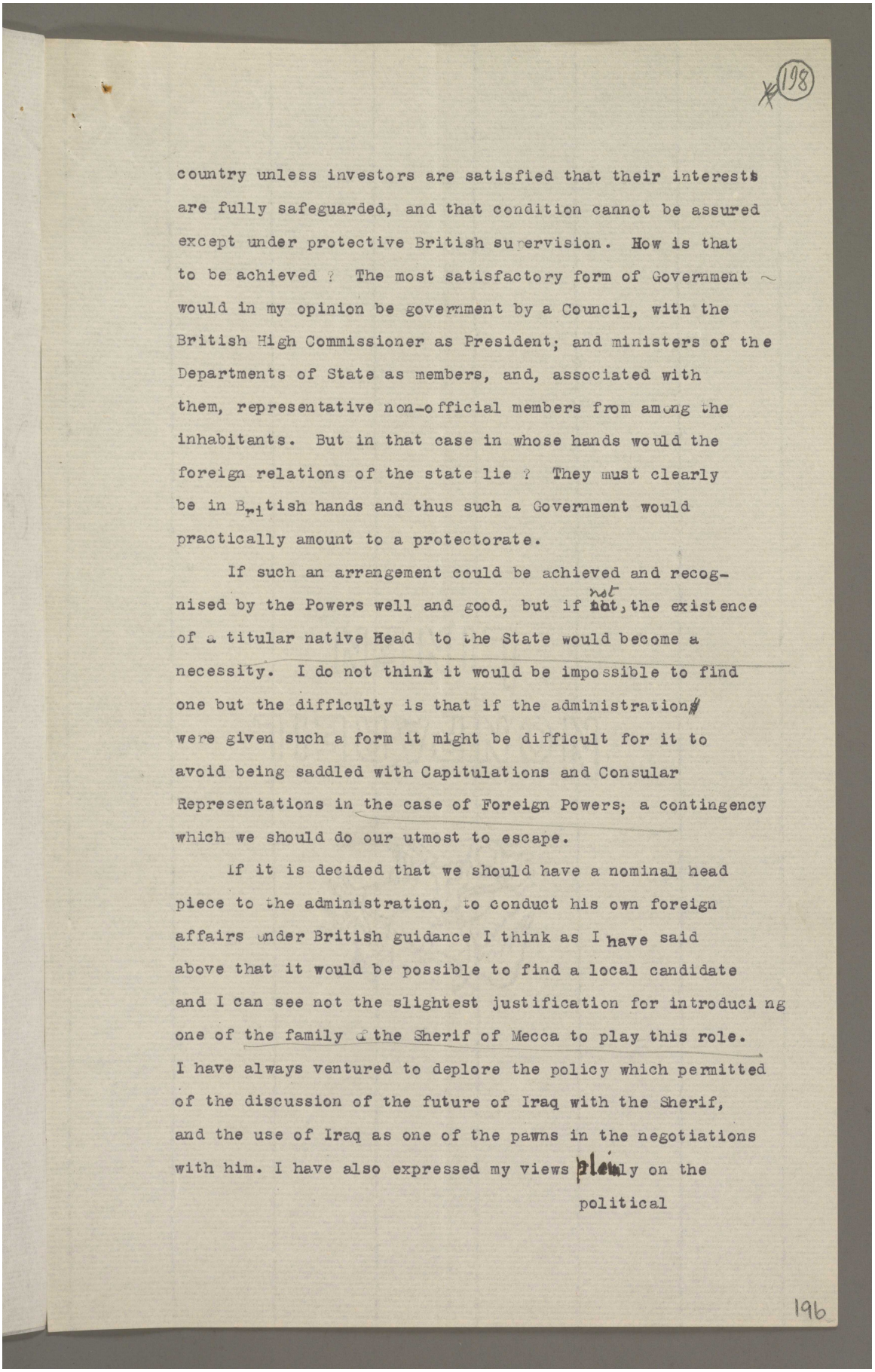

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country unless investors are satisfied that their interests are fully safeguarded, and that condition cannot be assured except under protective British supervision. How is that to be achieved ? The most satisfactory form of Government would in my opinion be government by a Council, with the British High Commissioner as President; and ministers of the Departments of State as members, and, associated with them, representative non-official members from among the inhabitants. But in that case in whose hands would the foreign relations of the state lie ? They must clearly be in British hands and thus such a Government would practically amount to a protectorate.

If such an arrangement could be achieved and recognised by the Powers well and good, but if not, the existence of a titular native Head to the State would become a necessity. I do not think it would be impossible to find one but the difficulty is that if the administration were given such a form it might be difficult for it to avoid being saddled with Capitulations and Consular Representations in the case of Foreign Powers; a contingency which we should do our utmost to escape.

If it is decided that we should have a nominal head piece to the administration, to conduct his own foreign affairs under British guidance I think as I have said above that it would be possible to find a local candidate and I can see not the slightest justification for introducing one of the family of the Sherif of Mecca to play this role. I have always ventured to deplore the policy which permitted of the discussion of the future of Iraq with the Sherif, and the use of Iraq as one of the pawns in the negotiations with him. I have also expressed my views plainly on the political

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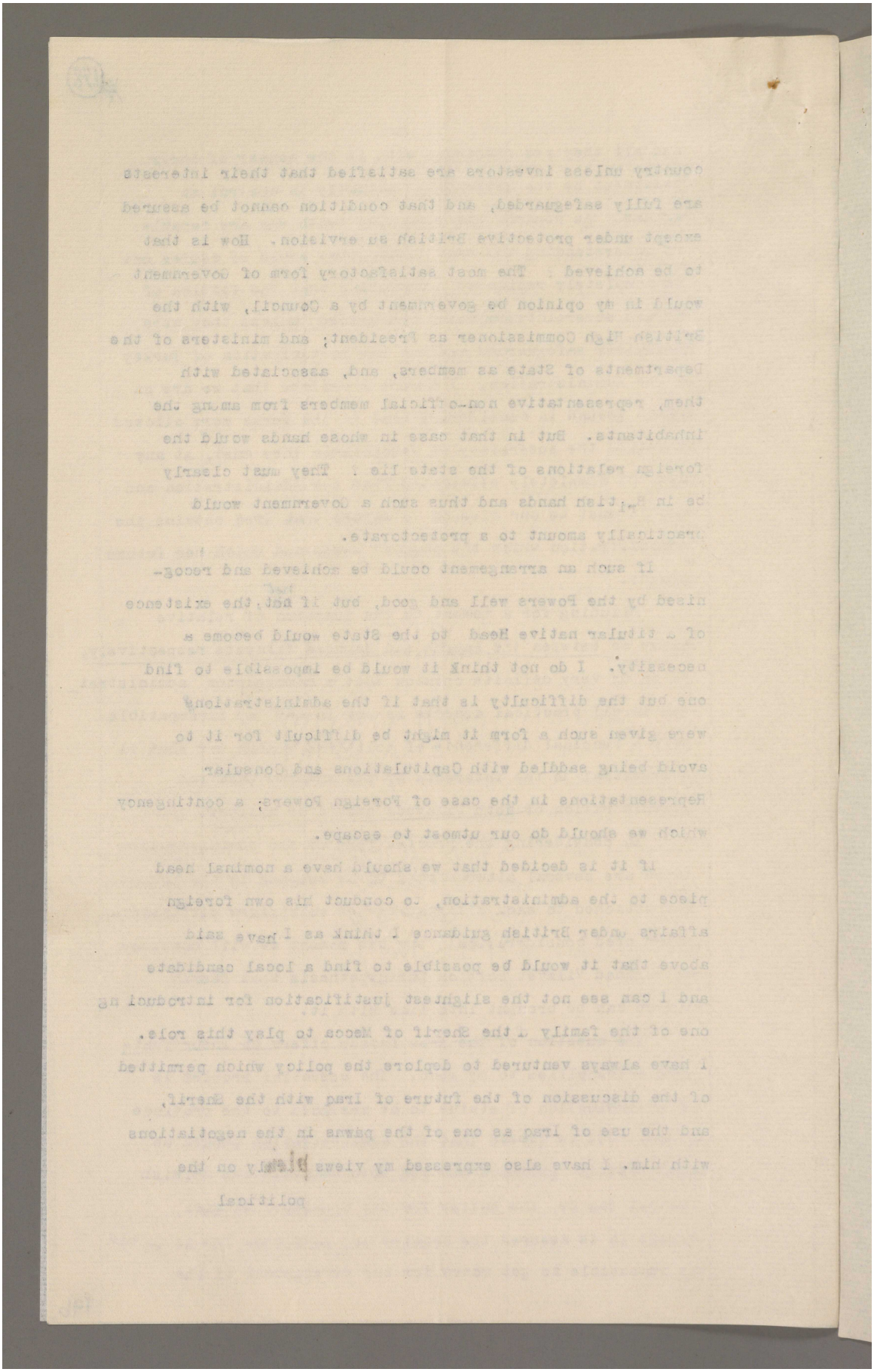

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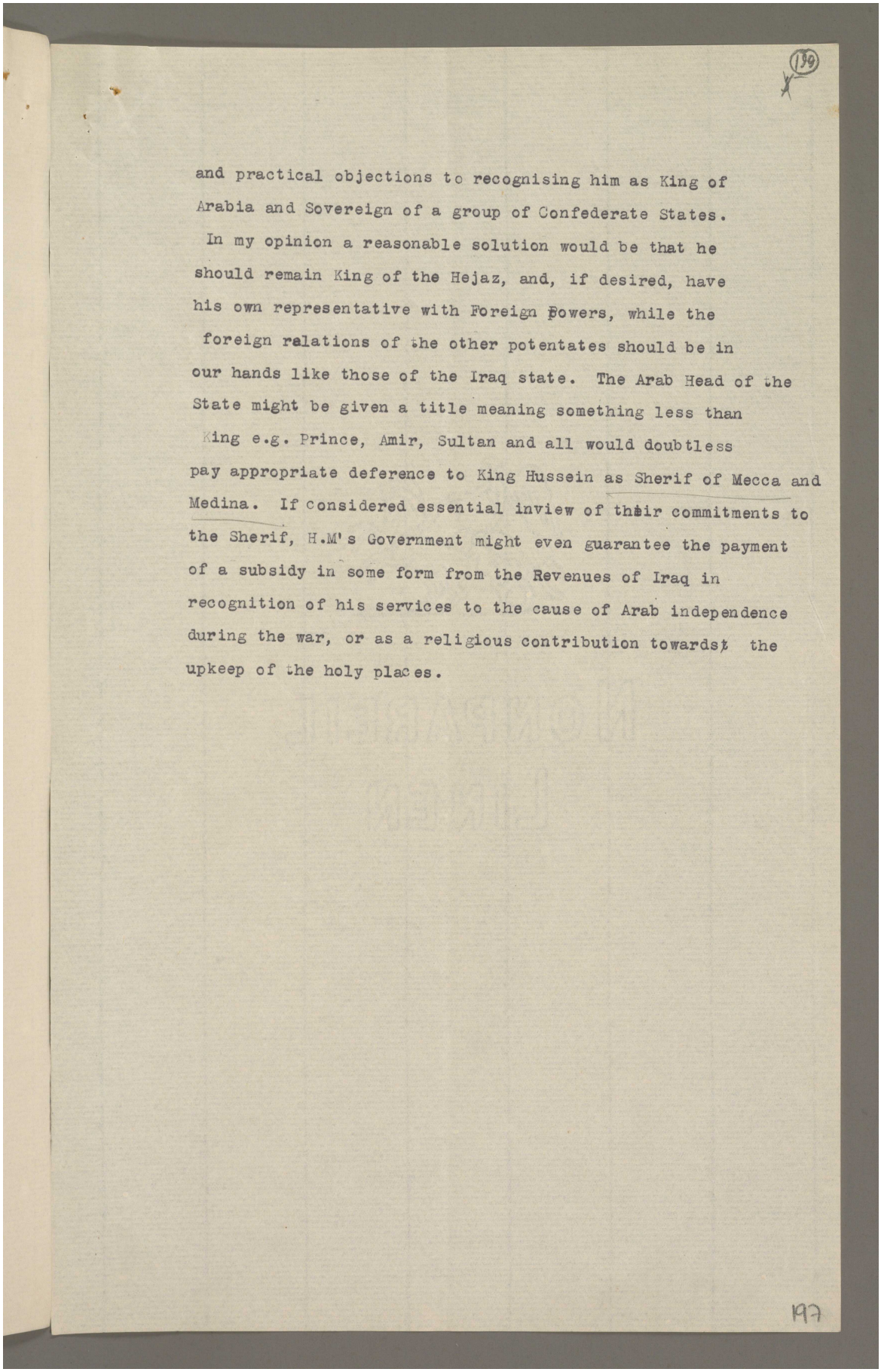

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and practical objections to recognising him as King of Arabia and Sovereign of a group of Confederate States. In my opinion a reasonable solution would be that he should remain King of the Hejaz, and, if desired, have his own representative with Foreign Powers, while the foreign relations of the other potentates should be in our hands like those of the Iraq state. The Arab Head of the State might be given a title meaning something less than King e.g. Prince, Amir, Sultan and all would doubtless pay appropriate deference to King Hussein as Sherif of Mecca and Medina. If considered essential inview of their commitments to the Sherif, H.M's Government might even guarantee the payment of a subsidy in some form from the Revenues of Iraq in recognition of his services to the cause of Arab independence during the war, or as a religious contribution towards the upkeep of the holy places.

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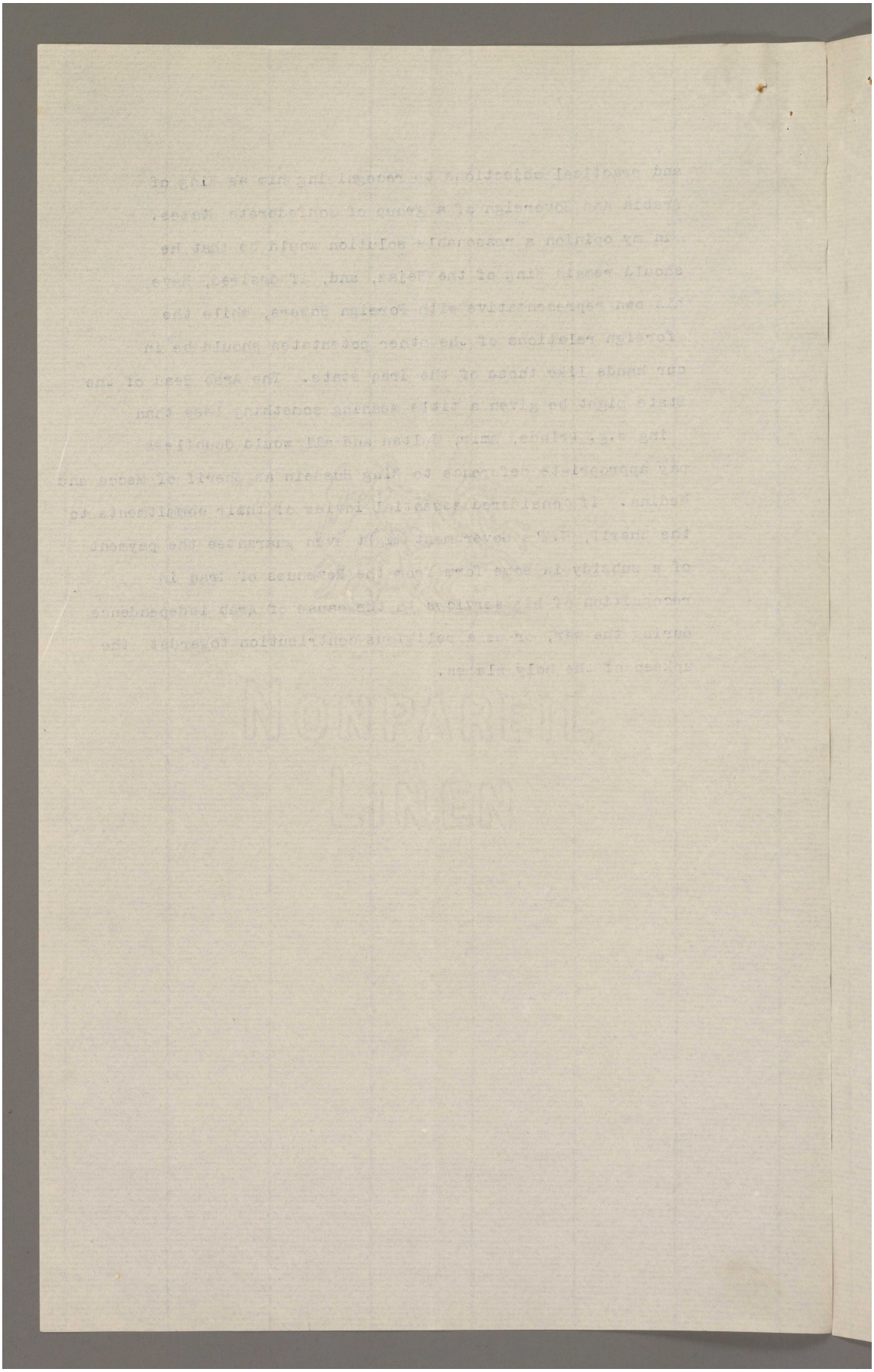

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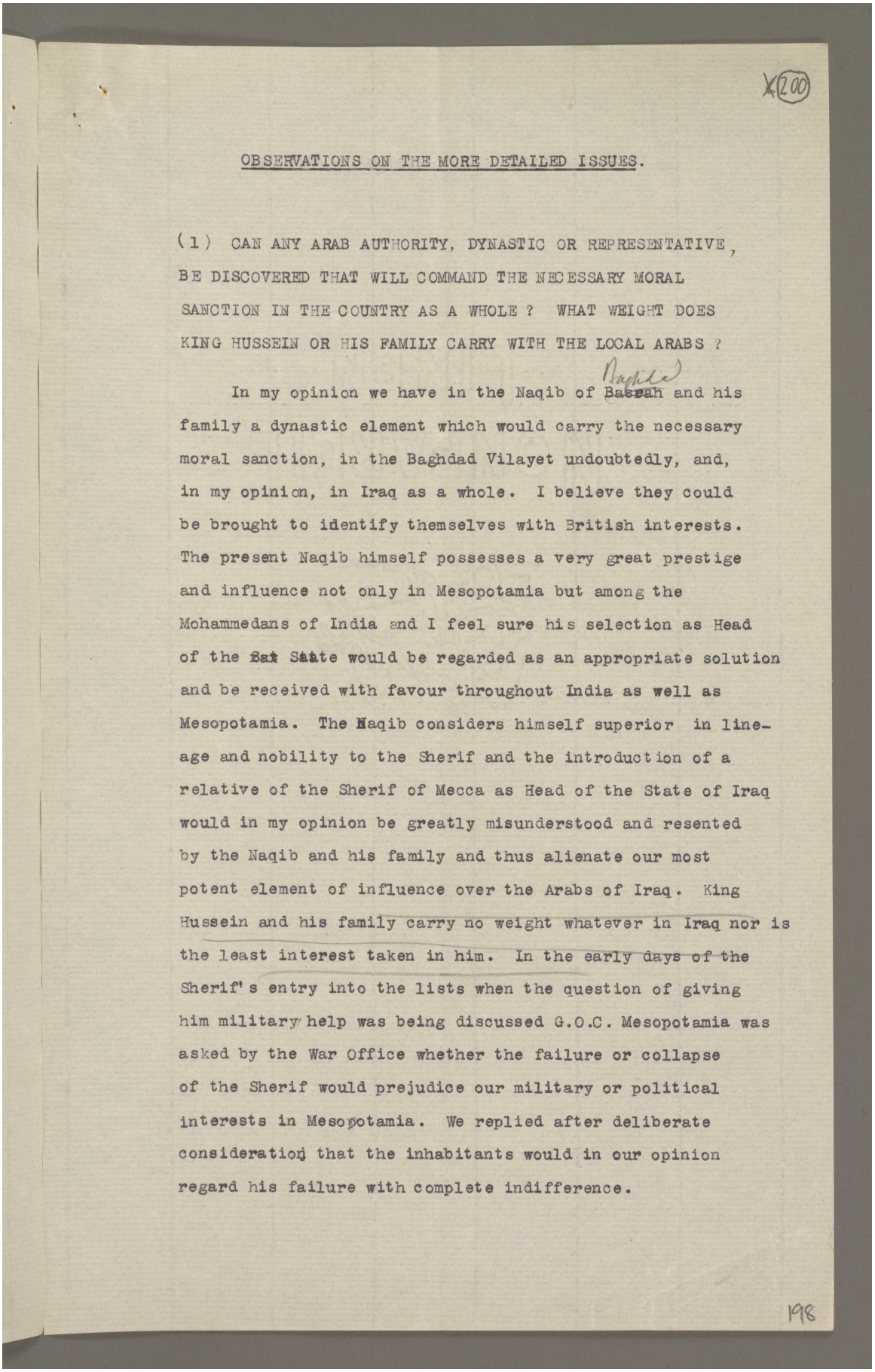

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE MORE DETAILED ISSUES.

(1) CAN ANY ARAB AUTHORITY, DYNASTIC OR REPRESENTATIVE, BE DISCOVERED THAT WILL COMMAND THE NECESSARY MORAL SANCTION IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE ? WHAT WEIGHT DOES KING HUSSEIN OR HIS FAMILY CARRY WITH THE LOCAL ARABS ?

In my opinion we have in the Naqib of Baghdad and his family a dynastic element which would carry the necessary moral sanction, in the Baghdad Vilayet undoubtedly, and, in my opinion, in Iraq as a whole. I believe they could be brought to identify themselves with British interests. The present Naqib himself possesses a very great prestige and influence not only in Mesopotamia but among the Mohammedans of India and I feel sure his selection as Head of the ~~Sat~~ State would be regarded as an appropriate solution and be received with favour throughout India as well as Mesopotamia. The Naqib considers himself superior in lineage and nobility to the Sherif and the introduction of a relative of the Sherif of Mecca as Head of the State of Iraq would in my opinion be greatly misunderstood and resented by the Naqib and his family and thus alienate our most potent element of influence over the Arabs of Iraq. King Hussein and his family carry no weight whatever in Iraq nor is the least interest taken in him. In the early days of the Sherif's entry into the lists when the question of giving him military help was being discussed G.O.C. Mesopotamia was asked by the War Office whether the failure or collapse of the Sherif would prejudice our military or political interests in Mesopotamia. We replied after deliberate consideration that the inhabitants would in our opinion regard his failure with complete indifference.

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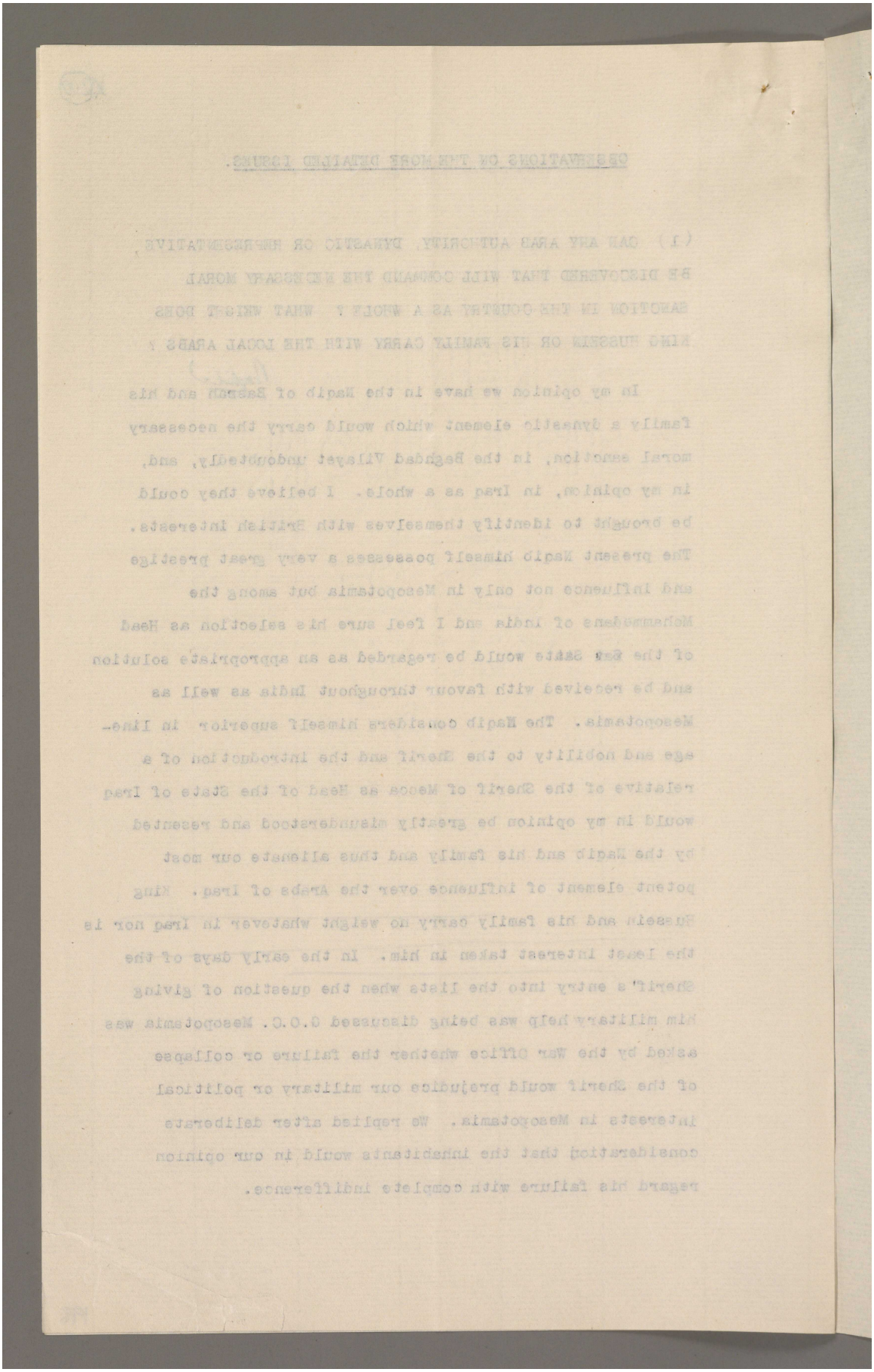

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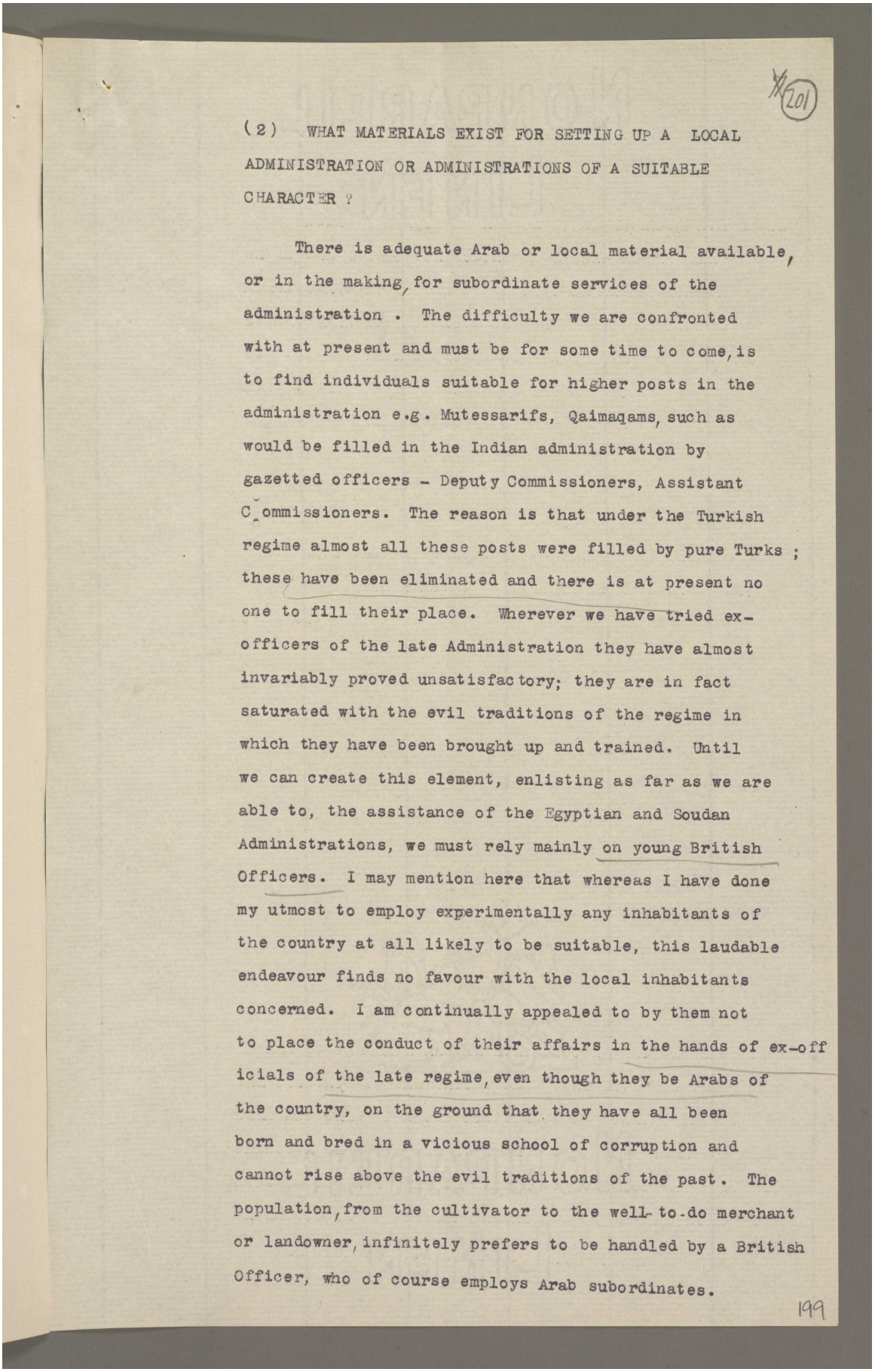

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(2) WHAT MATERIALS EXIST FOR SETTING UP A LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OR ADMINISTRATIONS OF A SUITABLE CHARACTER ?

There is adequate Arab or local material available, or in the making, for subordinate services of the administration . The difficulty we are confronted with at present and must be for some time to come, is to find individuals suitable for higher posts in the administration e.g. Mutessarifs, Qaimaqams, such as would be filled in the Indian administration by gazetted officers - Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners. The reason is that under the Turkish regime almost all these posts were filled by pure Turks ; these have been eliminated and there is at present no one to fill their place. Wherever we have tried ex-officers of the late Administration they have almost invariably proved unsatisfactory; they are in fact saturated with the evil traditions of the regime in which they have been brought up and trained. Until we can create this element, enlisting as far as we are able to, the assistance of the Egyptian and Soudan Administrations, we must rely mainly on young British Officers. I may mention here that whereas I have done my utmost to employ experimentally any inhabitants of the country at all likely to be suitable, this laudable endeavour finds no favour with the local inhabitants concerned. I am continually appealed to by them not to place the conduct of their affairs in the hands of ex-officials of the late regime, even though they be Arabs of the country, on the ground that they have all been born and bred in a vicious school of corruption and cannot rise above the evil traditions of the past. The population, from the cultivator to the well-to-do merchant or landowner, infinitely prefers to be handled by a British Officer, who of course employs Arab subordinates.

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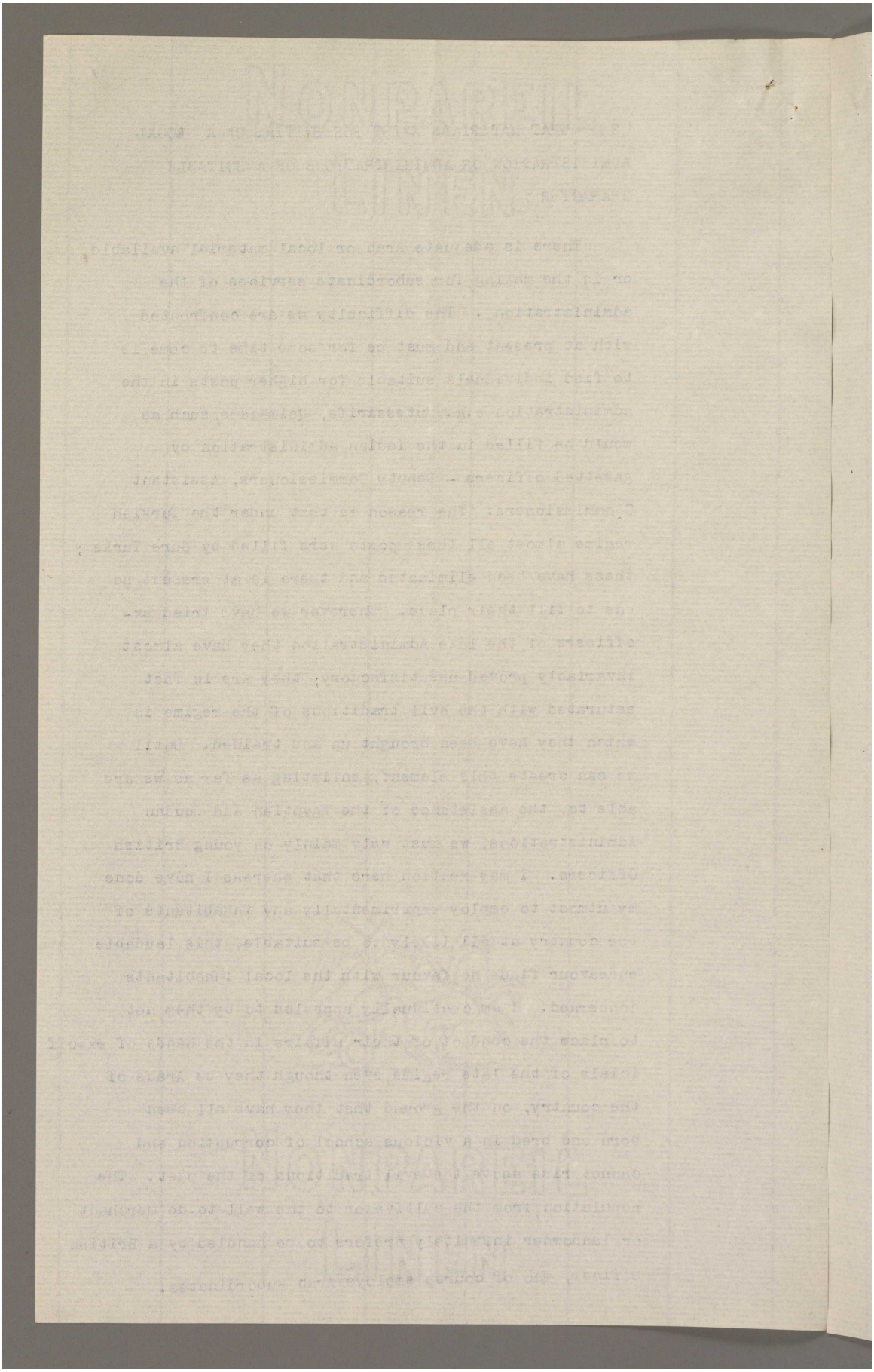

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I fully realise the importance of finding or creating a type suitable for employment in the superior posts but the fact is that it does not at present exist. In the more subordinate posts our personnel is almost entirely indigenous. Where other elements, Indian or English, are employed it is almost entirely in the purely clerical or technical branches of the Headquarter Administration e.g. clerical and cypher branches, English branch of Government Press etc. The following is a rough analysis of employees in the Baghdad Vilayet :-

Arab, Armenian, Christian, Jew, ex-employes of the late Government taken over by us 210

Newly entertained by us

Mohammedans of Iraq	17
Domiciled Persians of Iraq	16
Jews do	60
Christians, Syrians, Chaldeans	132
Egyptians	3
Indian Christians	19
British Born Europeans	35
(Govt Offices, Govt . Presses etc)	

The highest type of official corresponding to those who function as Heads of Departments and Ministers of State does not exist in Mesopotamia, they will have to be imported.

(3) TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE ADMINISTRATION BASED ON INDIAN MODELS AND TO WHAT EXTENT IS BRITISH SUPERVISION INDISPENSABLE ?

Except in that the "Iraq Occupied Territories" Code of Law applied in Basrah is based on English and Indian Law, just as the Soudan Code is, the administration is not based on Indian models. We have taken over the structure of the Turkish Administrative system as we found it substituting British Officers for Mutessarifs, Qaimaqams, but for the present designating them Political Officers and Assistant Political Officers, while in the posts which under the Turks would have been filled by an official of the status of Mudir, we have been able to employ natives

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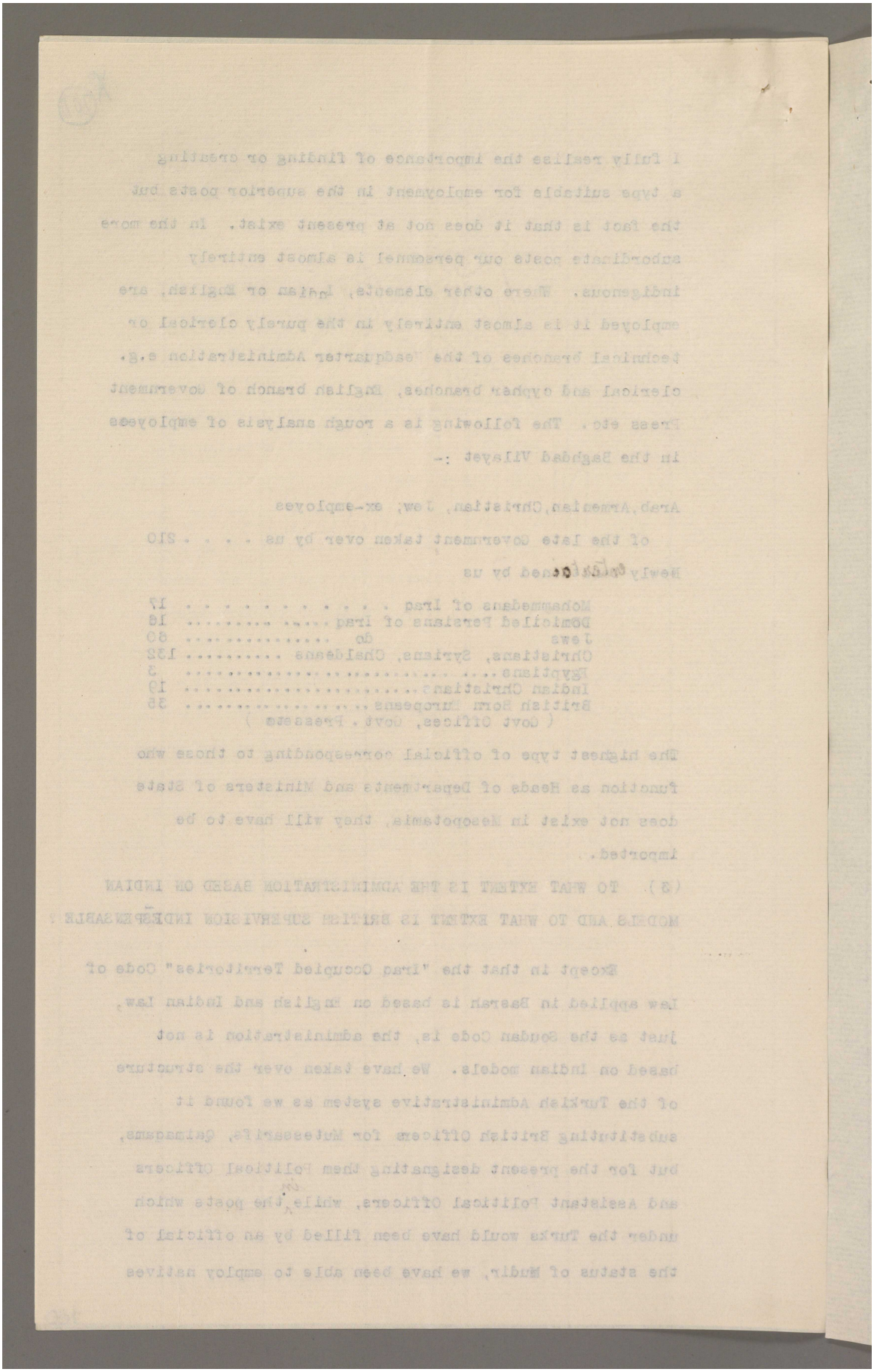

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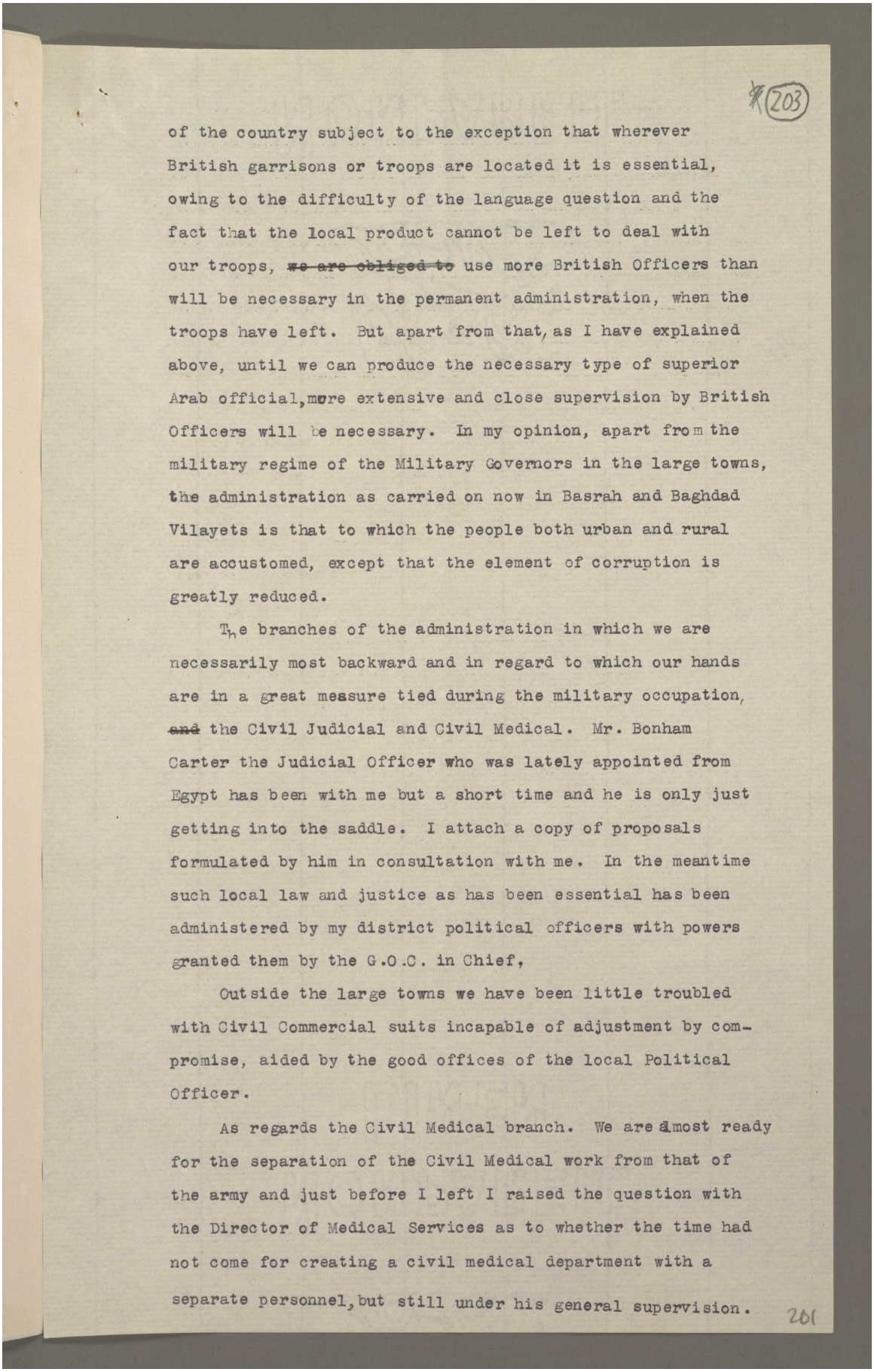

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of the country subject to the exception that wherever British garrisons or troops are located it is essential, owing to the difficulty of the language question and the fact that the local product cannot be left to deal with our troops, ~~we are obliged to~~ use more British Officers than will be necessary in the permanent administration, when the troops have left. But apart from that, as I have explained above, until we can produce the necessary type of superior Arab official, more extensive and close supervision by British Officers will be necessary. In my opinion, apart from the military regime of the Military Governors in the large towns, the administration as carried on now in Basrah and Baghdad Vilayets is that to which the people both urban and rural are accustomed, except that the element of corruption is greatly reduced.

The branches of the administration in which we are necessarily most backward and in regard to which our hands are in a great measure tied during the military occupation, ~~and~~ the Civil Judicial and Civil Medical. Mr. Bonham Carter the Judicial Officer who was lately appointed from Egypt has been with me but a short time and he is only just getting into the saddle. I attach a copy of proposals formulated by him in consultation with me. In the meantime such local law and justice as has been essential has been administered by my district political officers with powers granted them by the G.O.C. in Chief,

Outside the large towns we have been little troubled with Civil Commercial suits incapable of adjustment by compromise, aided by the good offices of the local Political Officer.

As regards the Civil Medical branch. We are almost ready for the separation of the Civil Medical work from that of the army and just before I left I raised the question with the Director of Medical Services as to whether the time had not come for creating a civil medical department with a separate personnel, but still under his general supervision.

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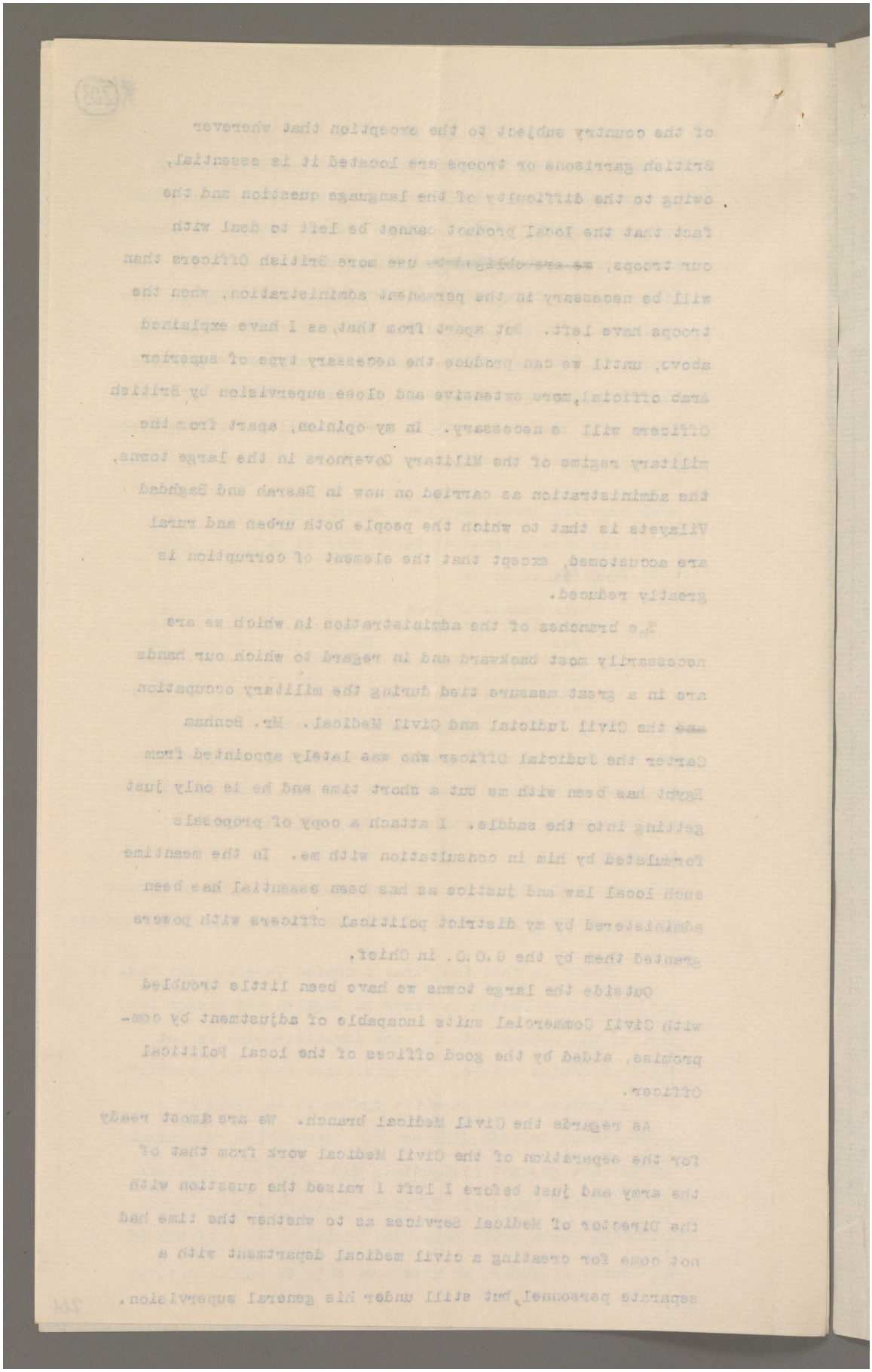

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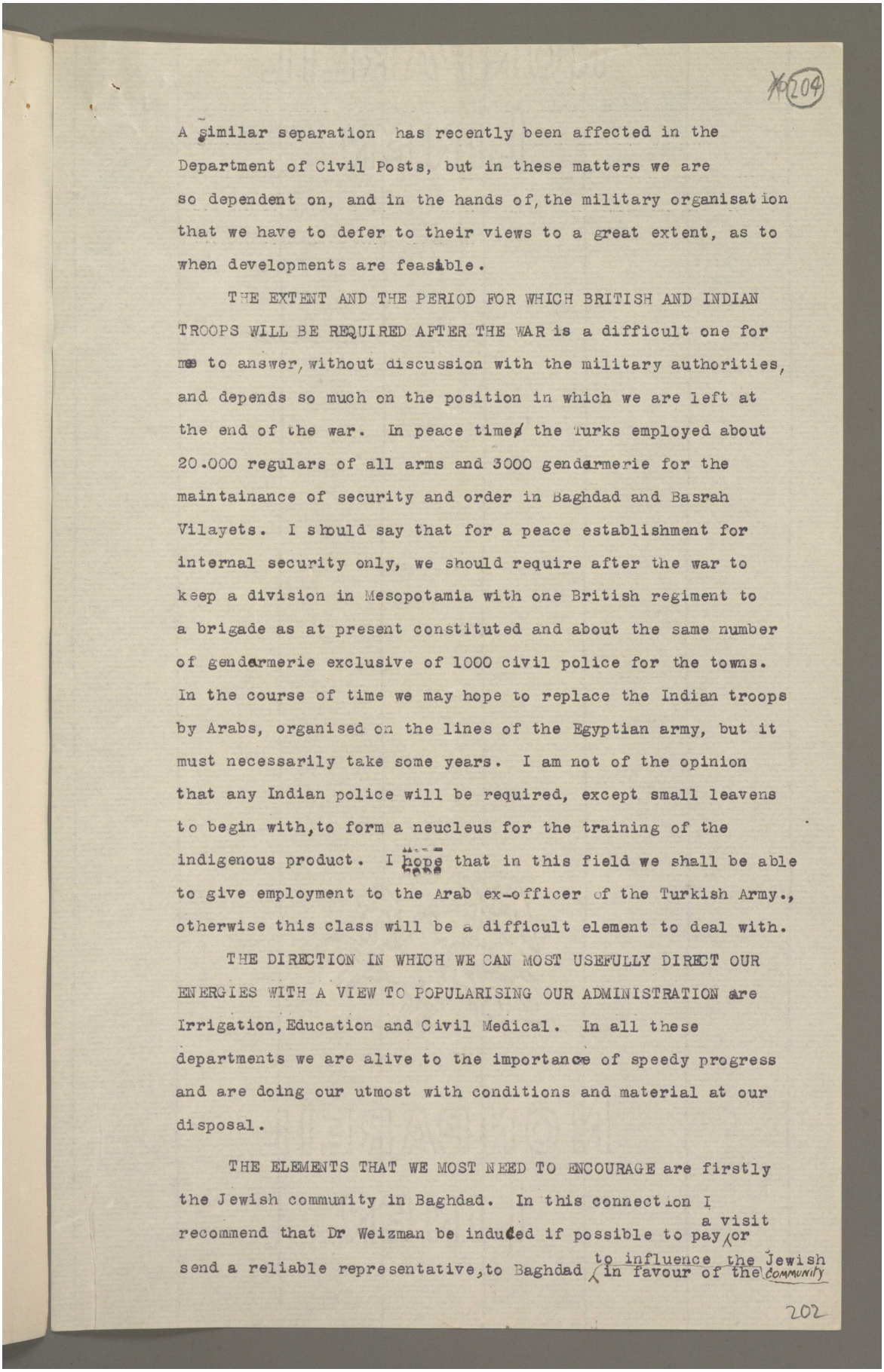

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A similar separation has recently been affected in the Department of Civil Posts, but in these matters we are so dependent on, and in the hands of, the military organisation that we have to defer to their views to a great extent, as to when developments are feasible.

THE EXTENT AND THE PERIOD FOR WHICH BRITISH AND INDIAN TROOPS WILL BE REQUIRED AFTER THE WAR is a difficult one for me to answer, without discussion with the military authorities, and depends so much on the position in which we are left at the end of the war. In peace times the Turks employed about 20.000 regulars of all arms and 3000 gendarmerie for the maintainance of security and order in Baghdad and Basrah Vilayets. I should say that for a peace establishment for internal security only, we should require after the war to keep a division in Mesopotamia with one British regiment to a brigade as at present constituted and about the same number of gendarmerie exclusive of 1000 civil police for the towns. In the course of time we may hope to replace the Indian troops by Arabs, organised on the lines of the Egyptian army, but it must necessarily take some years. I am not of the opinion that any Indian police will be required, except small leavens to begin with, to form a neucleus for the training of the indigenous product. I hope that in this field we shall be able to give employment to the Arab ex-officer of the Turkish Army., otherwise this class will be a difficult element to deal with.

THE DIRECTION IN WHICH WE CAN MOST USEFULLY DIRECT OUR ENERGIES WITH A VIEW TO POPULARISING OUR ADMINISTRATION are Irrigation, Education and Civil Medical. In all these departments we are alive to the importance of speedy progress and are doing our utmost with conditions and material at our disposal.

THE ELEMENTS THAT WE MOST NEED TO ENCOURAGE are firstly the Jewish community in Baghdad. In this connection I recommend that Dr Weizman be induced if possible to pay a visit or send a reliable representative, to Baghdad to influence the Jewish community in favour of the

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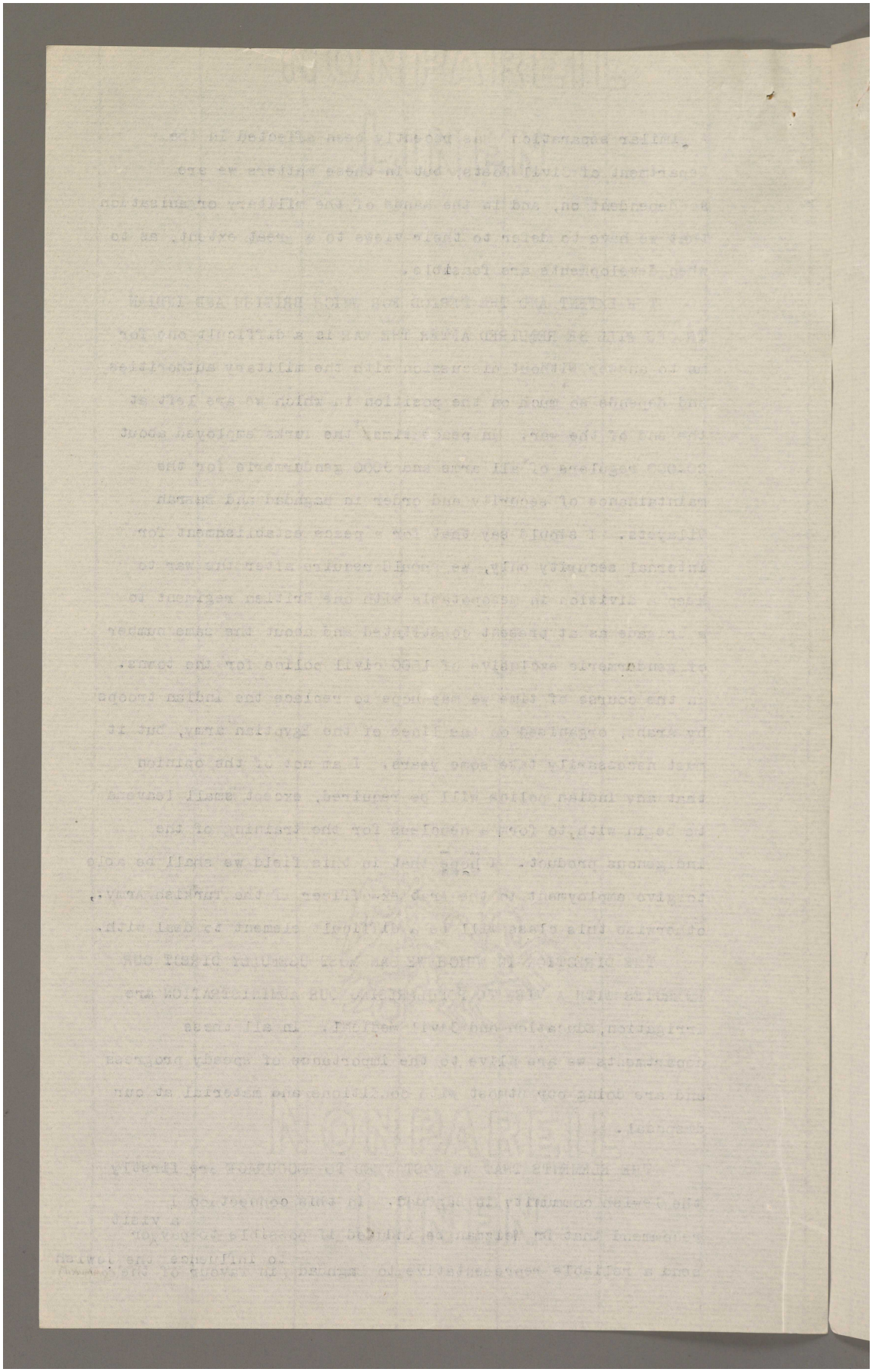

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the British connection.

Secondly, the Arab notables and nobility among the towns-people of Baghdad and Basrah. They are a somewhat impecunious and backward element but one which it is very necessary to encourage and take into our counsels as far as possible.

Thirdly, the wealthy landlord element, both Arab and Jew, and the important Shaikhs of the settled tribes.

If it becomes a question of obtaining public expression of feeling in favour of British control, it can be done, but I think the subject would have to be handled cautiously. The intelligent inhabitants of Iraq at the back of their minds are possessed by the apprehension that Mesopotamia may conceivably be restored to the Turks at the Peace Conference, and as long as this nightmare is present with them we should merely emphasise it by asking them which Government they would prefer. By so doing we should be clearly putting them in a very unfair position because they know well that if they elect for British control, and if nevertheless the Turks ultimately returned, all those who had declared for us would receive short shrift. It will be understood that the rural population of Iraq as a whole is quite inarticulate and can hardly be consulted. As regards the element who do count, e.g. the Jews and other denominational communities in the large towns, they could without doubt be squared in some form to give expression to the sentiments that we desire. But we must consider and decide what is to be regarded as constituting the representative public opinion which we have to consult.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO CONSOLIDATE COMMERCIAL INFLUENCE IN MESOPOTAMIA.

The great initial difficulty here is the absence of commercial transport and general scarcity of tonnage and accomodation and last but not least the uncertainty of the future. It is difficult to encourage private enterprise when accomodation for agencies is not available; Sites and land cannot be sold, and machinery cannot be exported.

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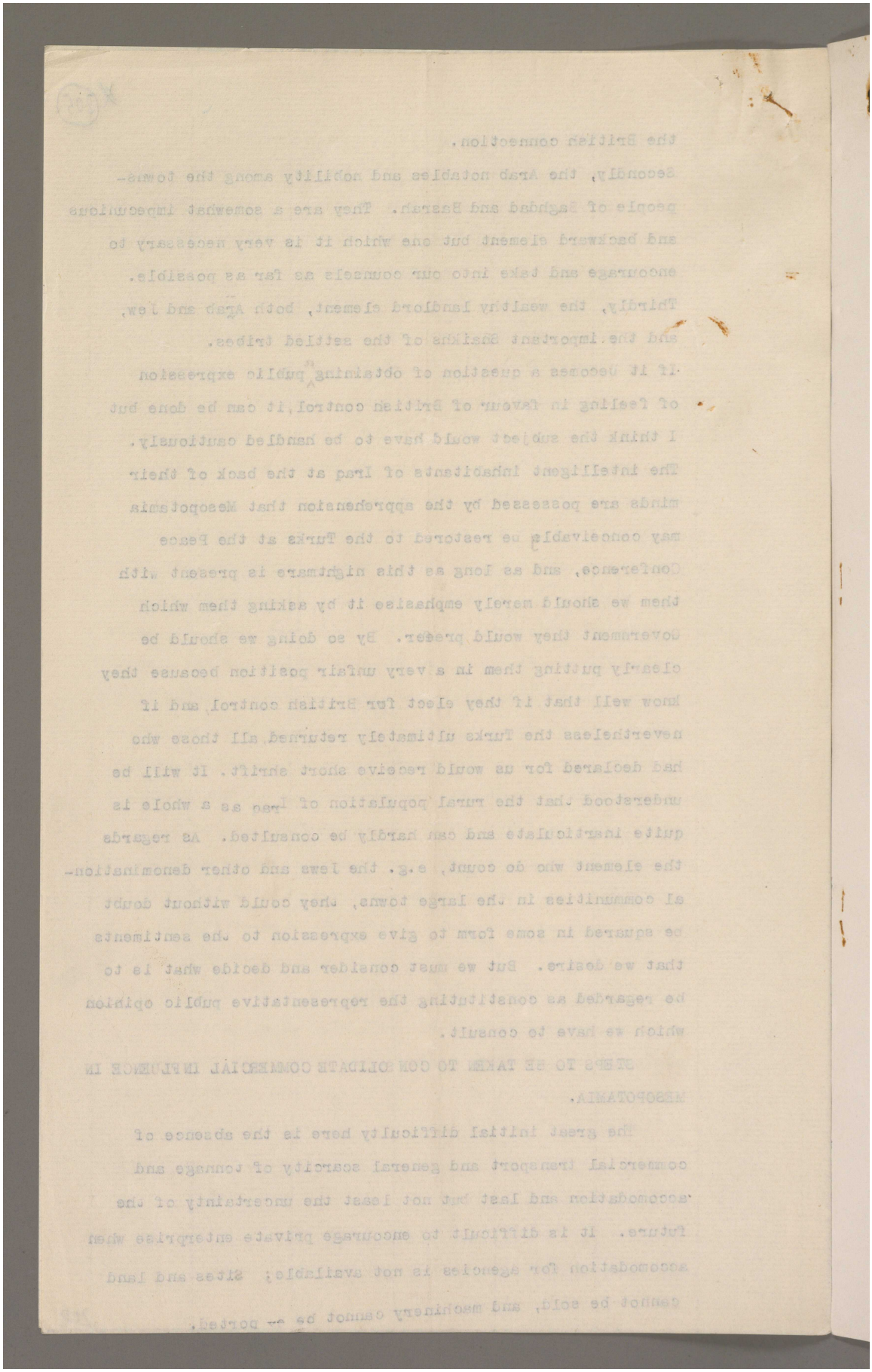

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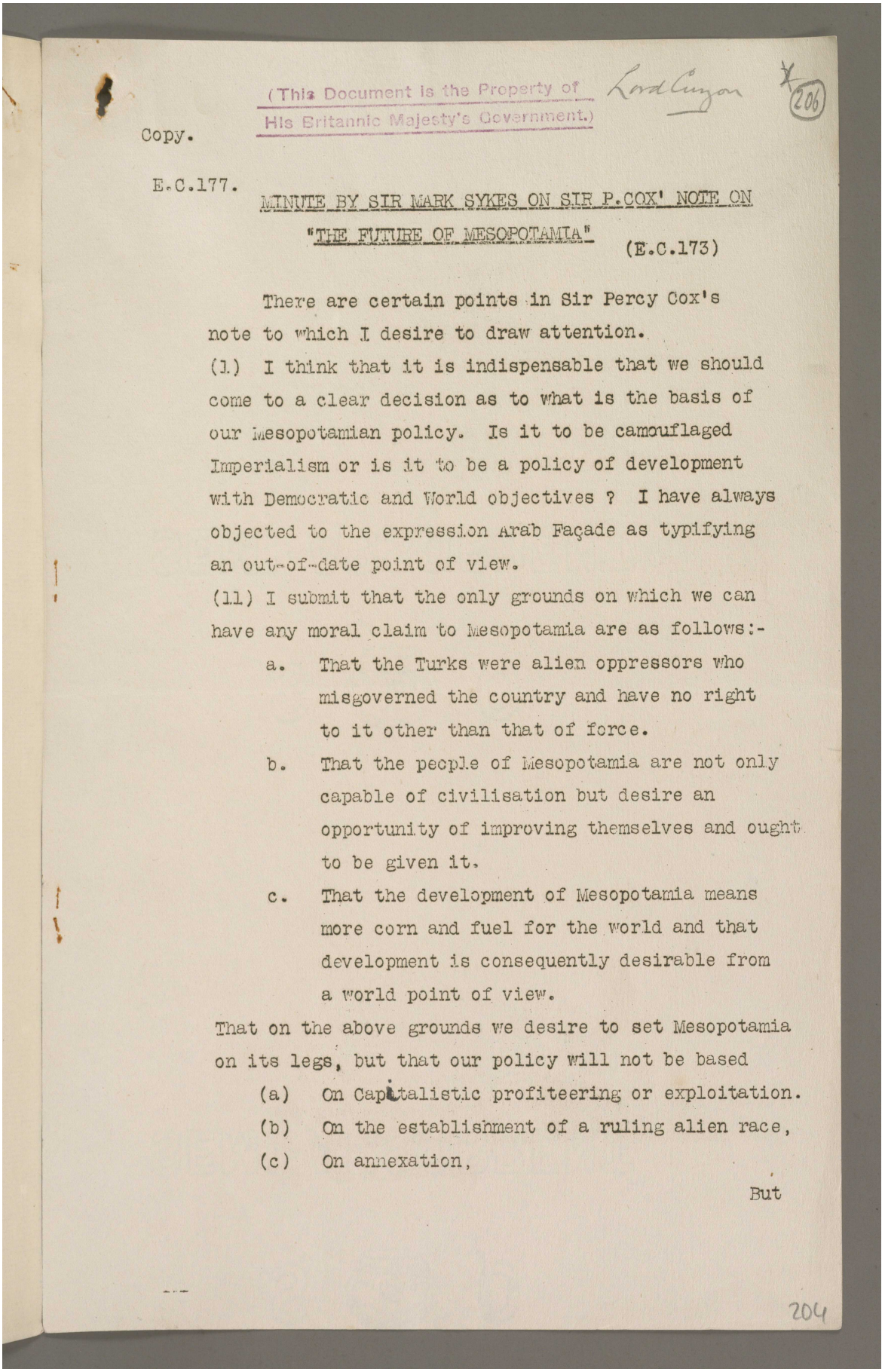

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Lord Curzon

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E.C.177.

MINUTE BY SIR MARK SYKES ON SIR P.COX' NOTE ON "THE FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA" (E.C.173)

There are certain points in Sir Percy Cox's note to which I desire to draw attention.

(I.) I think that it is indispensable that we should come to a clear decision as to what is the basis of our Mesopotamian policy. Is it to be camouflaged Imperialism or is it to be a policy of development with Democratic and World objectives ? I have always objected to the expression Arab Façade as typifying an out-of-date point of view.

(II.) I submit that the only grounds on which we can have any moral claim to Mesopotamia are as follows:-

a. That the Turks were alien oppressors who misgoverned the country and have no right to it other than that of force.

b. That the people of Mesopotamia are not only capable of civilisation but desire an opportunity of improving themselves and ought to be given it.

c. That the development of Mesopotamia means more corn and fuel for the world and that development is consequently desirable from a world point of view.

That on the above grounds we desire to set Mesopotamia on its legs, but that our policy will not be based

(a) On Capitalistic profiteering or exploitation.

(b) On the establishment of a ruling alien race,

(c) On annexation,

But

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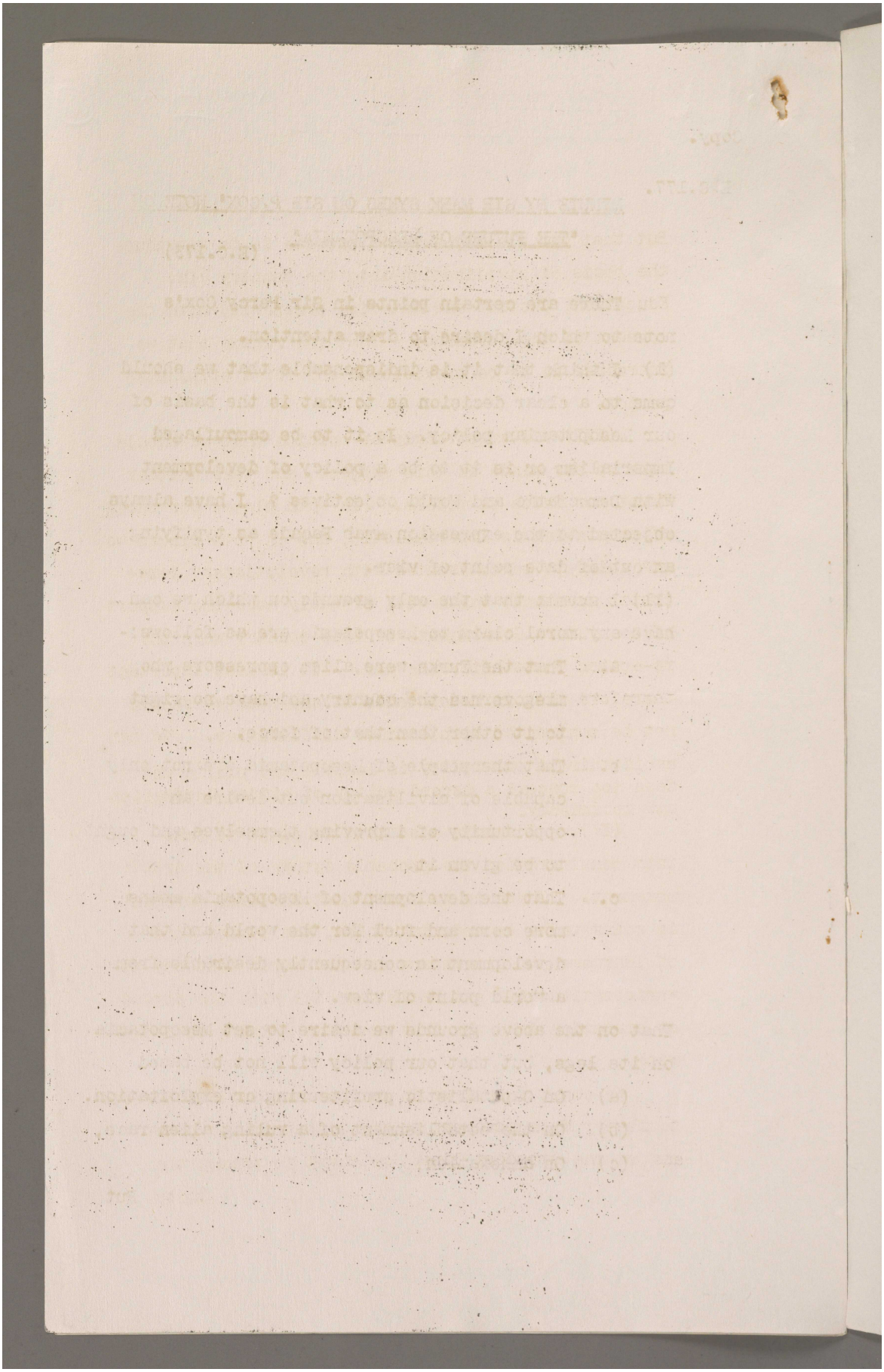

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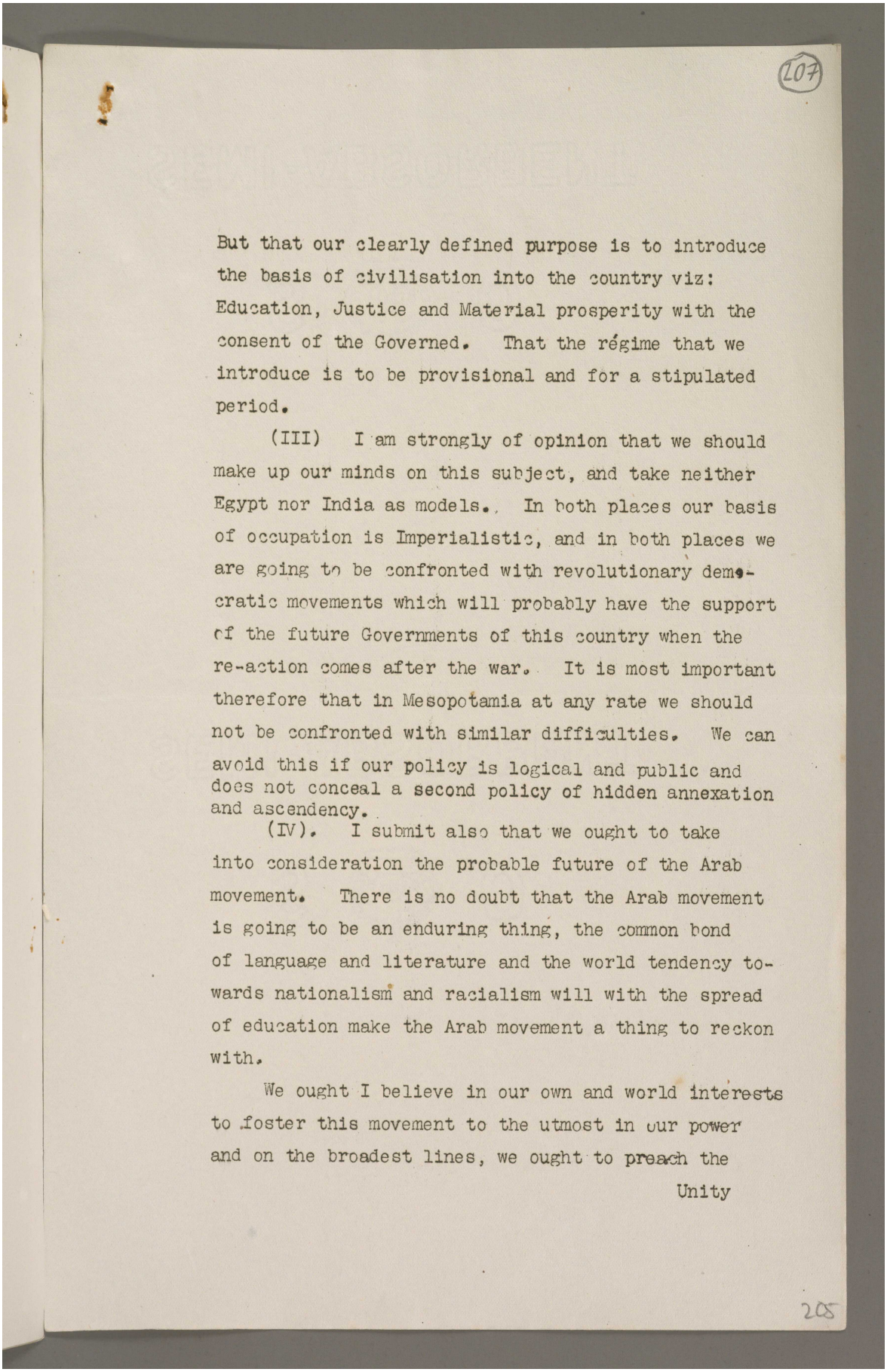

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But that our clearly defined purpose is to introduce the basis of civilisation into the country viz: Education, Justice and Material prosperity with the consent of the Governed. That the régime that we introduce is to be provisional and for a stipulated period.

(III) I am strongly of opinion that we should make up our minds on this subject, and take neither Egypt nor India as models. In both places our basis of occupation is Imperialistic, and in both places we are going to be confronted with revolutionary democratic movements which will probably have the support of the future Governments of this country when the re-action comes after the war. It is most important therefore that in Mesopotamia at any rate we should not be confronted with similar difficulties. We can avoid this if our policy is logical and public and does not conceal a second policy of hidden annexation and ascendency.

(IV). I submit also that we ought to take into consideration the probable future of the Arab movement. There is no doubt that the Arab movement is going to be an enduring thing, the common bond of language and literature and the world tendency towards nationalism and racialism will with the spread of education make the Arab movement a thing to reckon with.

We ought I believe in our own and world interests to foster this movement to the utmost in our power and on the broadest lines, we ought to preach the

Unity

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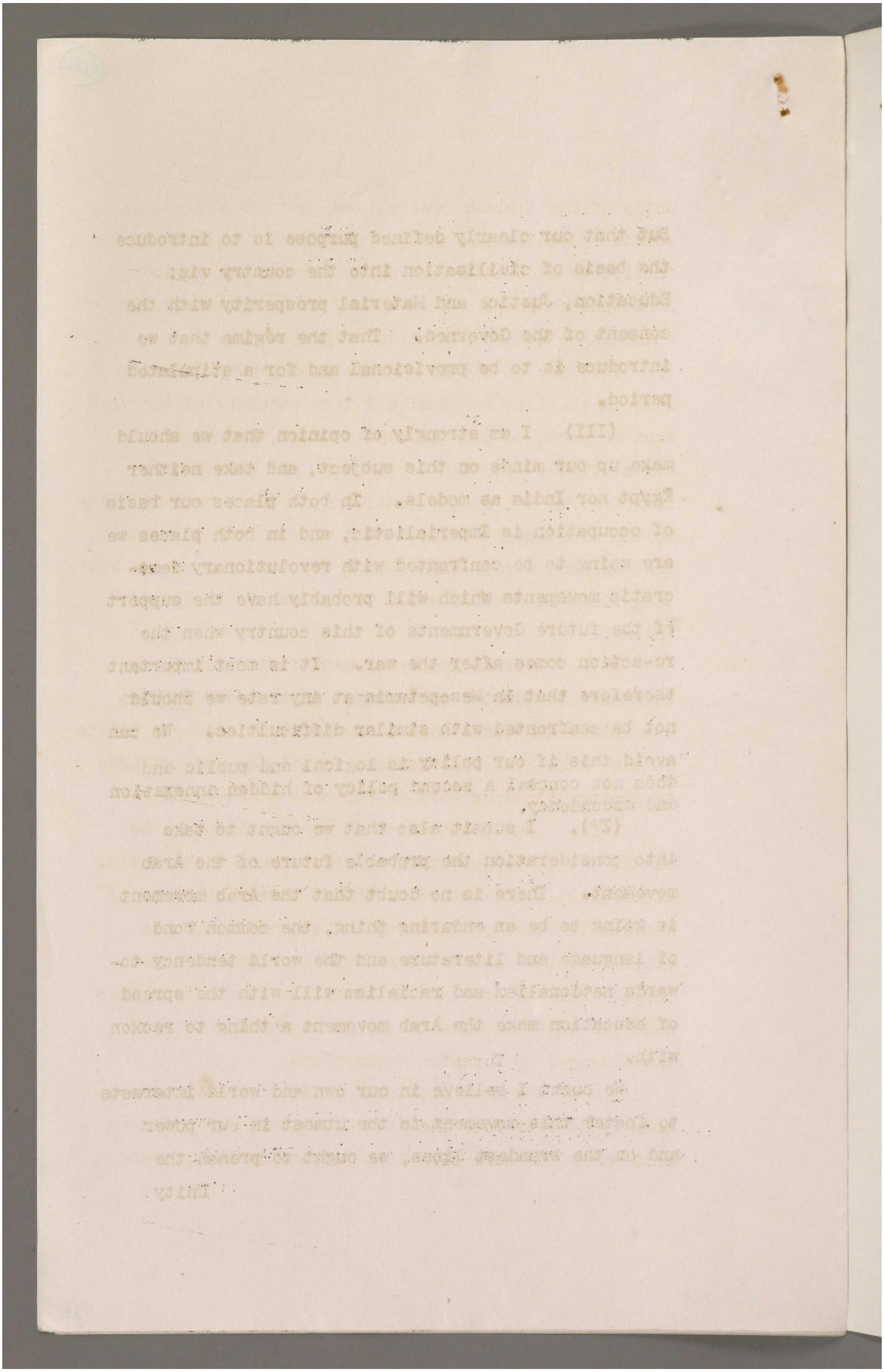

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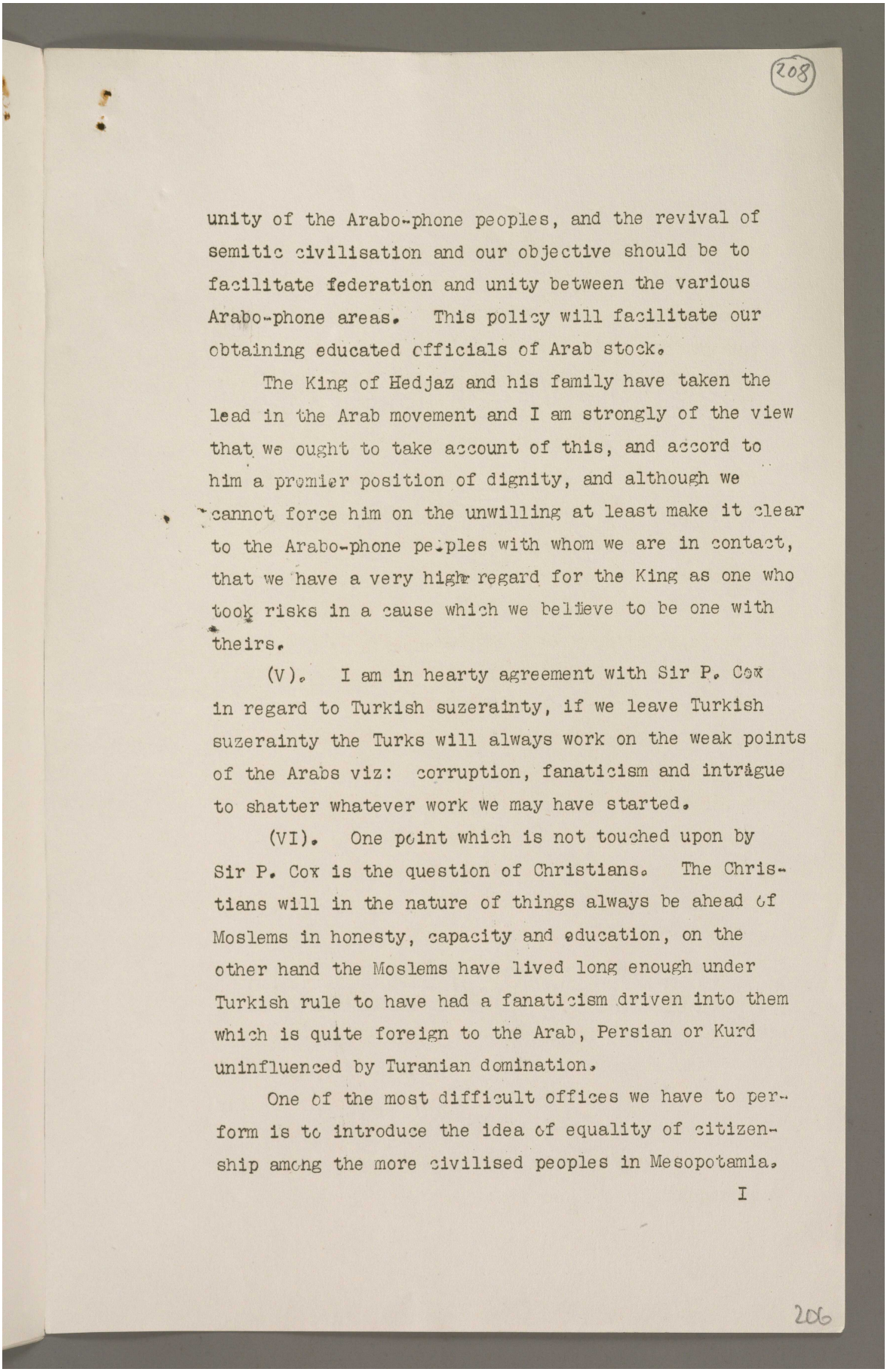

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unity of the Arabo-phone peoples, and the revival of semitic civilisation and our objective should be to facilitate federation and unity between the various Arabo-phone areas. This policy will facilitate our obtaining educated officials of Arab stock.

The King of Hedjaz and his family have taken the lead in the Arab movement and I am strongly of the view that we ought to take account of this, and accord to him a premier position of dignity, and although we cannot force him on the unwilling at least make it clear to the Arabo-phone peoples with whom we are in contact, that we have a very high regard for the King as one who took risks in a cause which we believe to be one with theirs.

(V). I am in hearty agreement with Sir P. Cox in regard to Turkish suzerainty, if we leave Turkish suzerainty the Turks will always work on the weak points of the Arabs viz: corruption, fanaticism and intrigue to shatter whatever work we may have started.

(VI). One point which is not touched upon by Sir P. Cox is the question of Christians. The Christians will in the nature of things always be ahead of Moslems in honesty, capacity and education, on the other hand the Moslems have lived long enough under Turkish rule to have had a fanaticism driven into them which is quite foreign to the Arab, Persian or Kurd uninfluenced by Turanian domination.

One of the most difficult offices we have to perform is to introduce the idea of equality of citizenship among the more civilised peoples in Mesopotamia.

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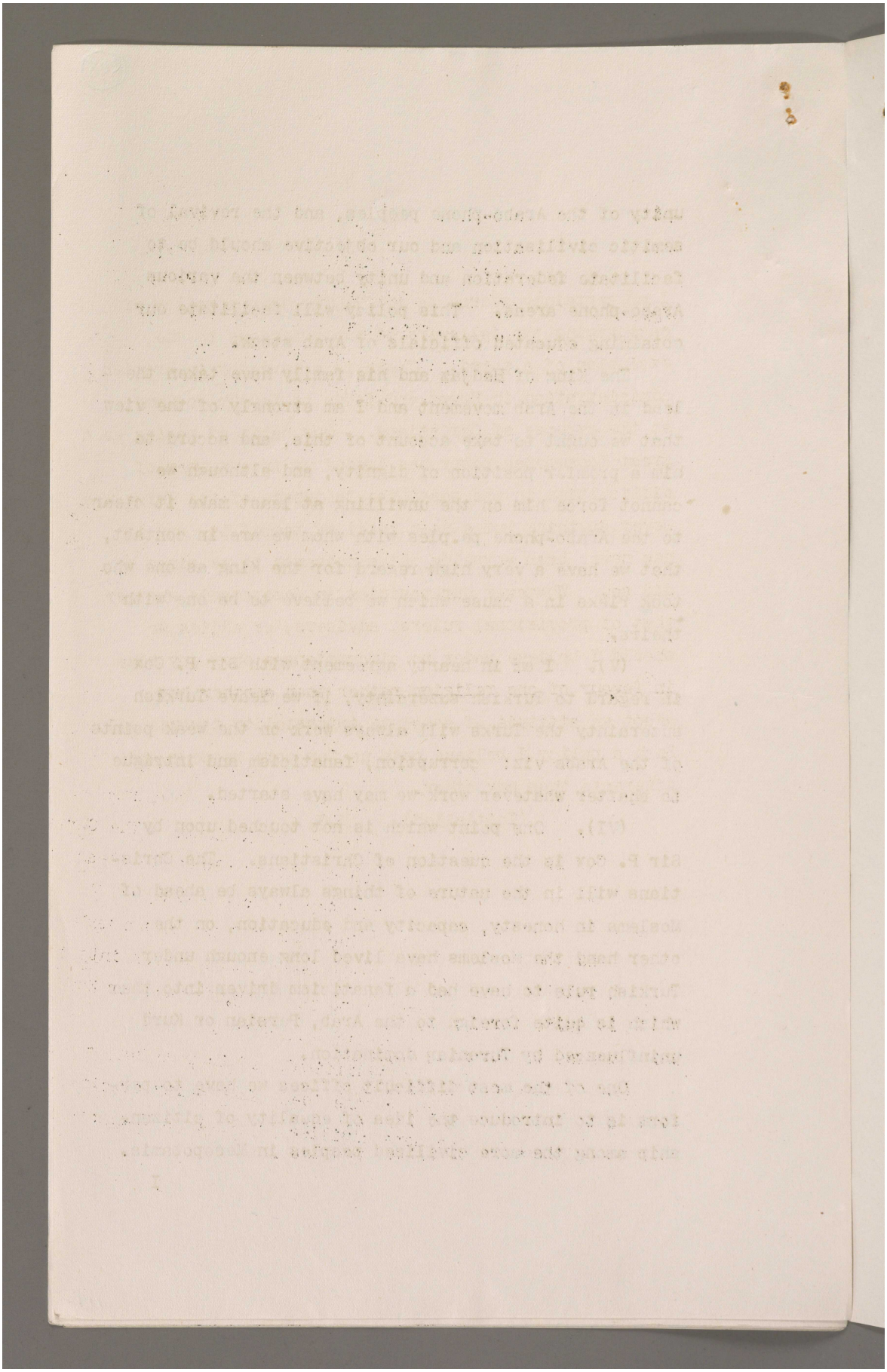

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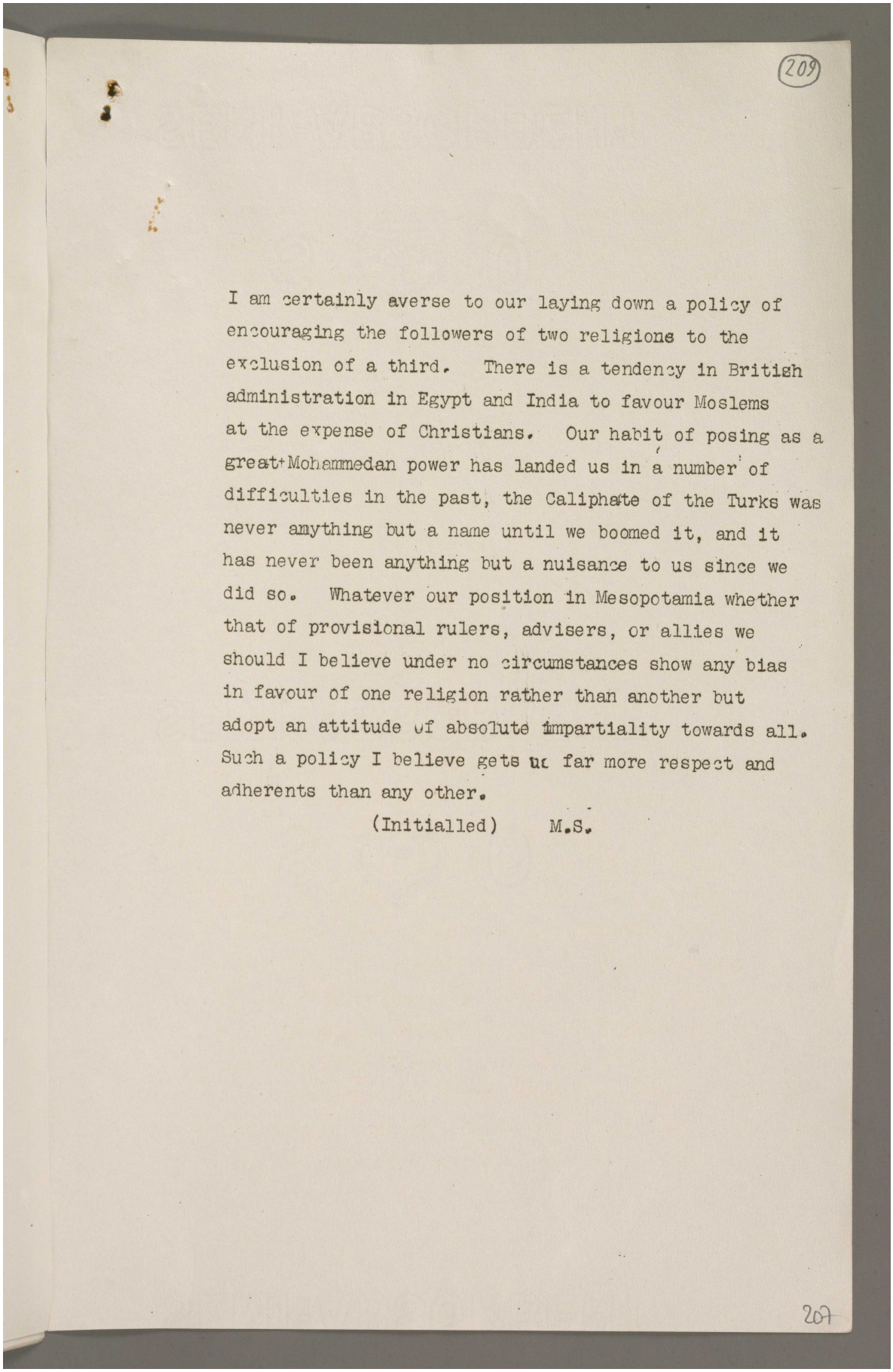

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I am certainly averse to our laying down a policy of encouraging the followers of two religions to the exclusion of a third. There is a tendency in British administration in Egypt and India to favour Moslems at the expense of Christians. Our habit of posing as a great Mohammedan power has landed us in a number of difficulties in the past, the Caliphate of the Turks was never anything but a name until we boomed it, and it has never been anything but a nuisance to us since we did so. Whatever our position in Mesopotamia whether that of provisional rulers, advisers, or allies we should I believe under no circumstances show any bias in favour of one religion rather than another but adopt an attitude of absolute impartiality towards all. Such a policy I believe gets us far more respect and adherents than any other.

(Initialled) M.S.

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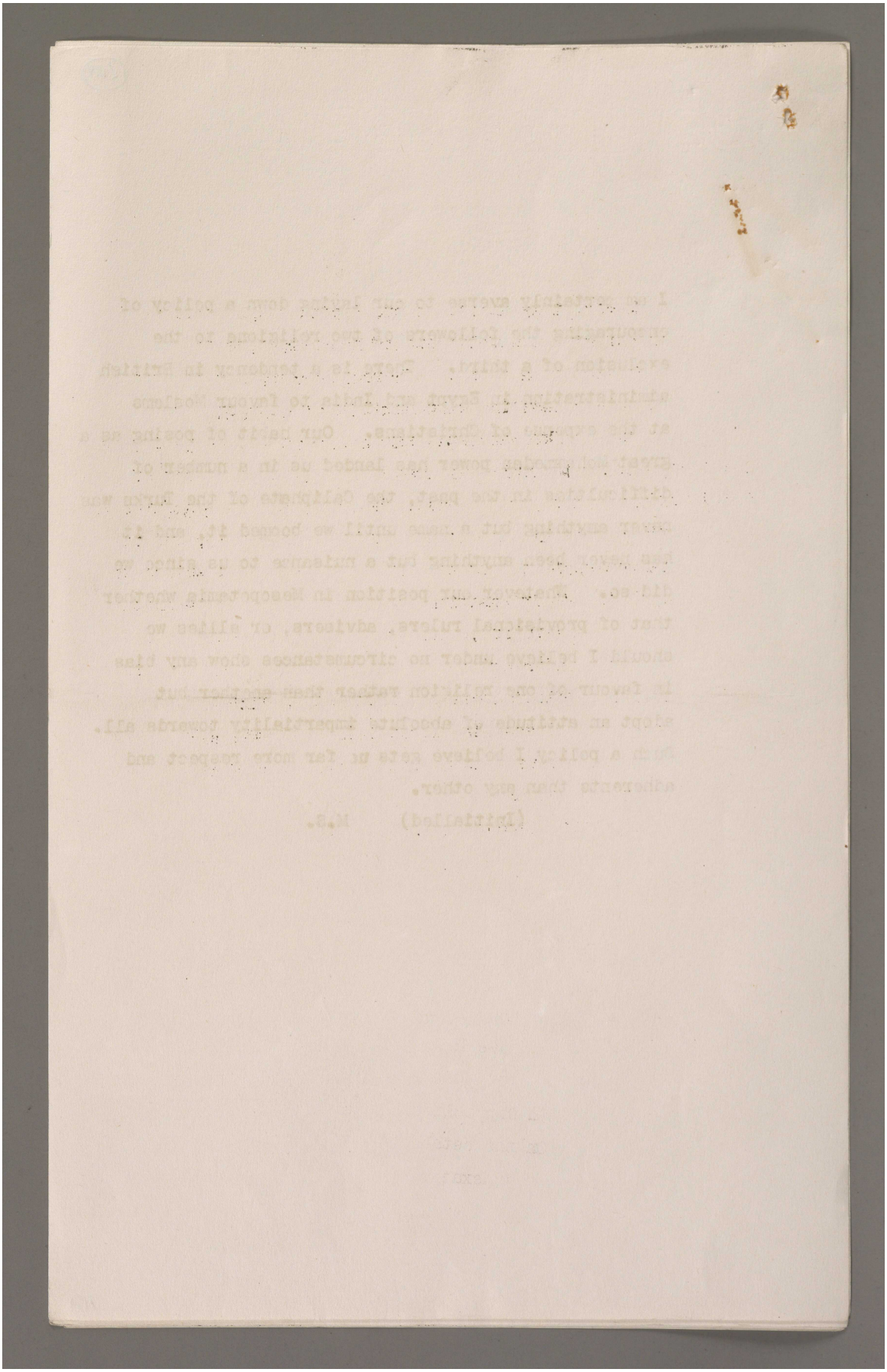

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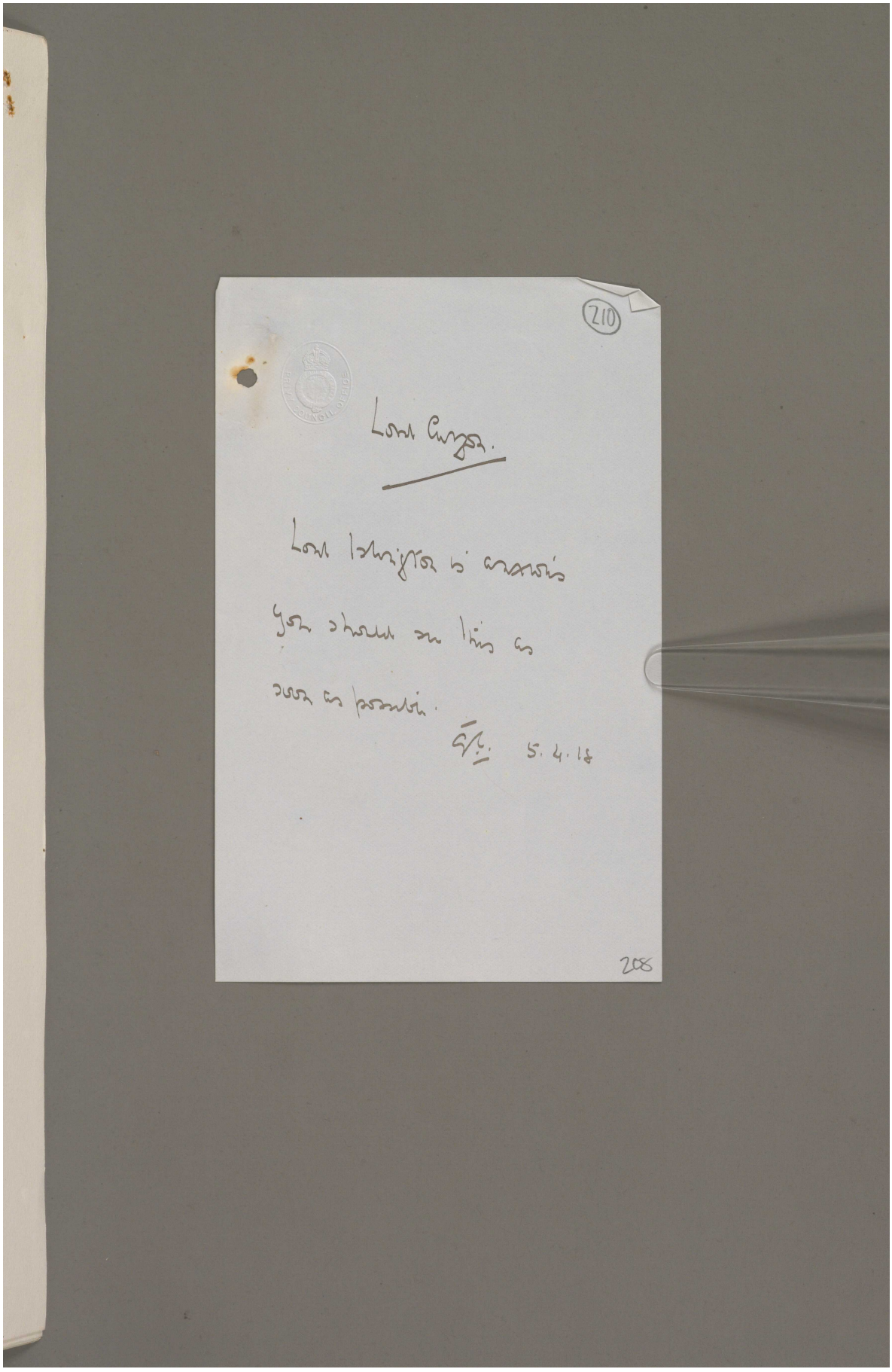

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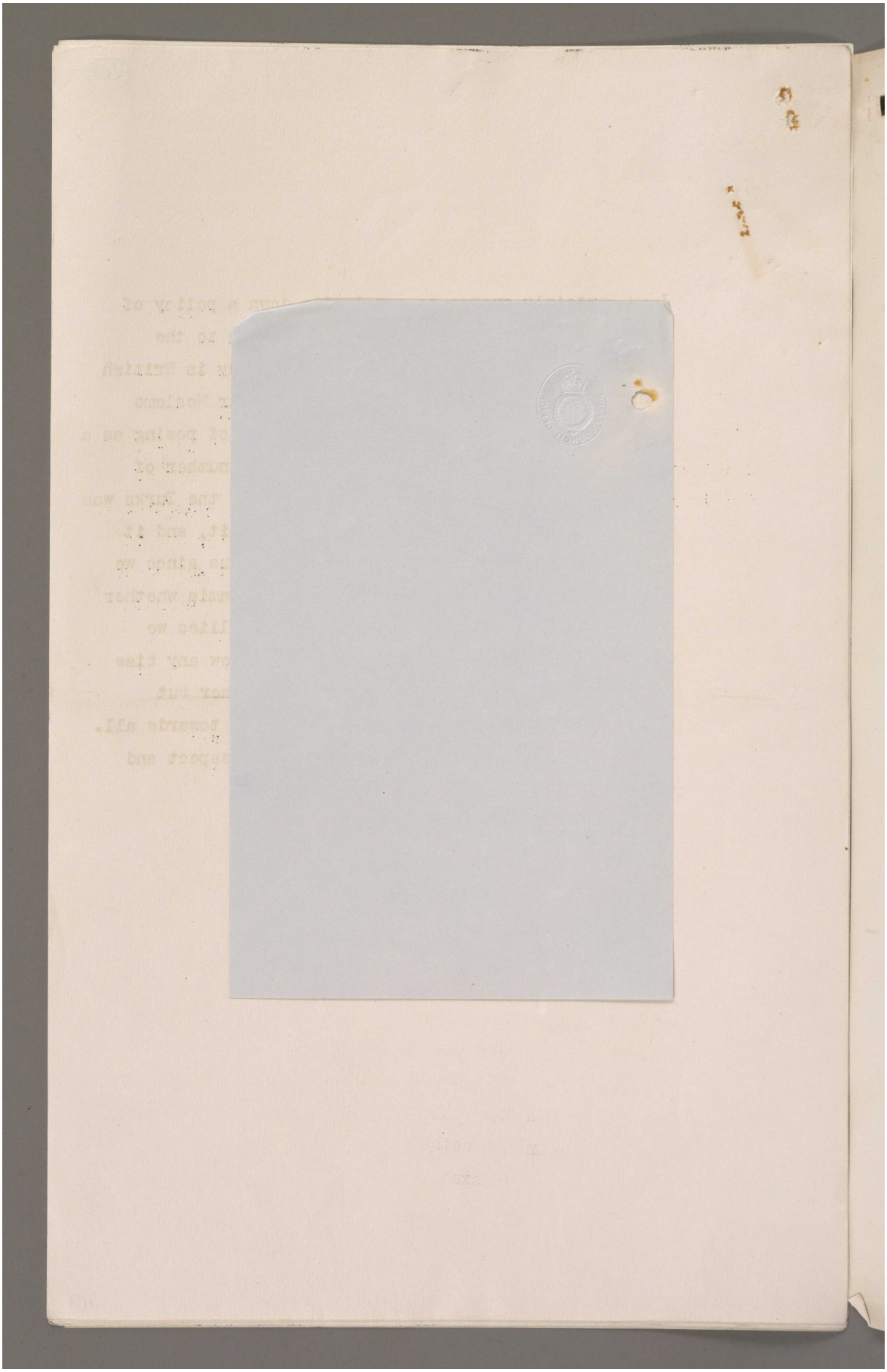

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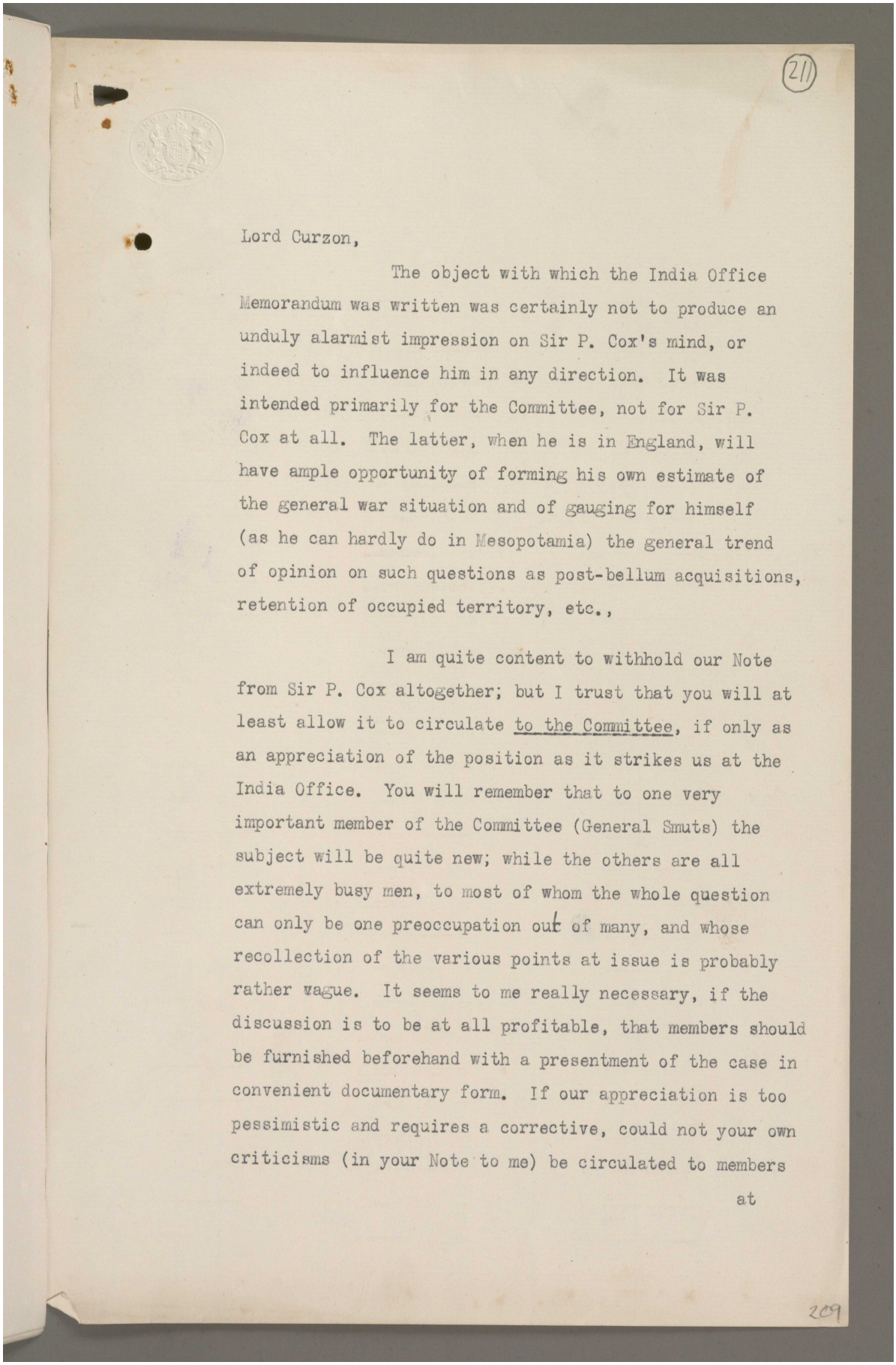

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Lord Curzon,

The object with which the India Office Memorandum was written was certainly not to produce an unduly alarmist impression on Sir P. Cox's mind, or indeed to influence him in any direction. It was intended primarily for the Committee, not for Sir P. Cox at all. The latter, when he is in England, will have ample opportunity of forming his own estimate of the general war situation and of gauging for himself (as he can hardly do in Mesopotamia) the general trend of opinion on such questions as post-bellum acquisitions, retention of occupied territory, etc.,

I am quite content to withhold our Note from Sir P. Cox altogether; but I trust that you will at least allow it to circulate to the Committee, if only as an appreciation of the position as it strikes us at the India Office. You will remember that to one very important member of the Committee (General Smuts) the subject will be quite new; while the others are all extremely busy men, to most of whom the whole question can only be one preoccupation out of many, and whose recollection of the various points at issue is probably rather vague. It seems to me really necessary, if the discussion is to be at all profitable, that members should be furnished beforehand with a presentment of the case in convenient documentary form. If our appreciation is too pessimistic and requires a corrective, could not your own criticisms (in your Note to me) be circulated to members

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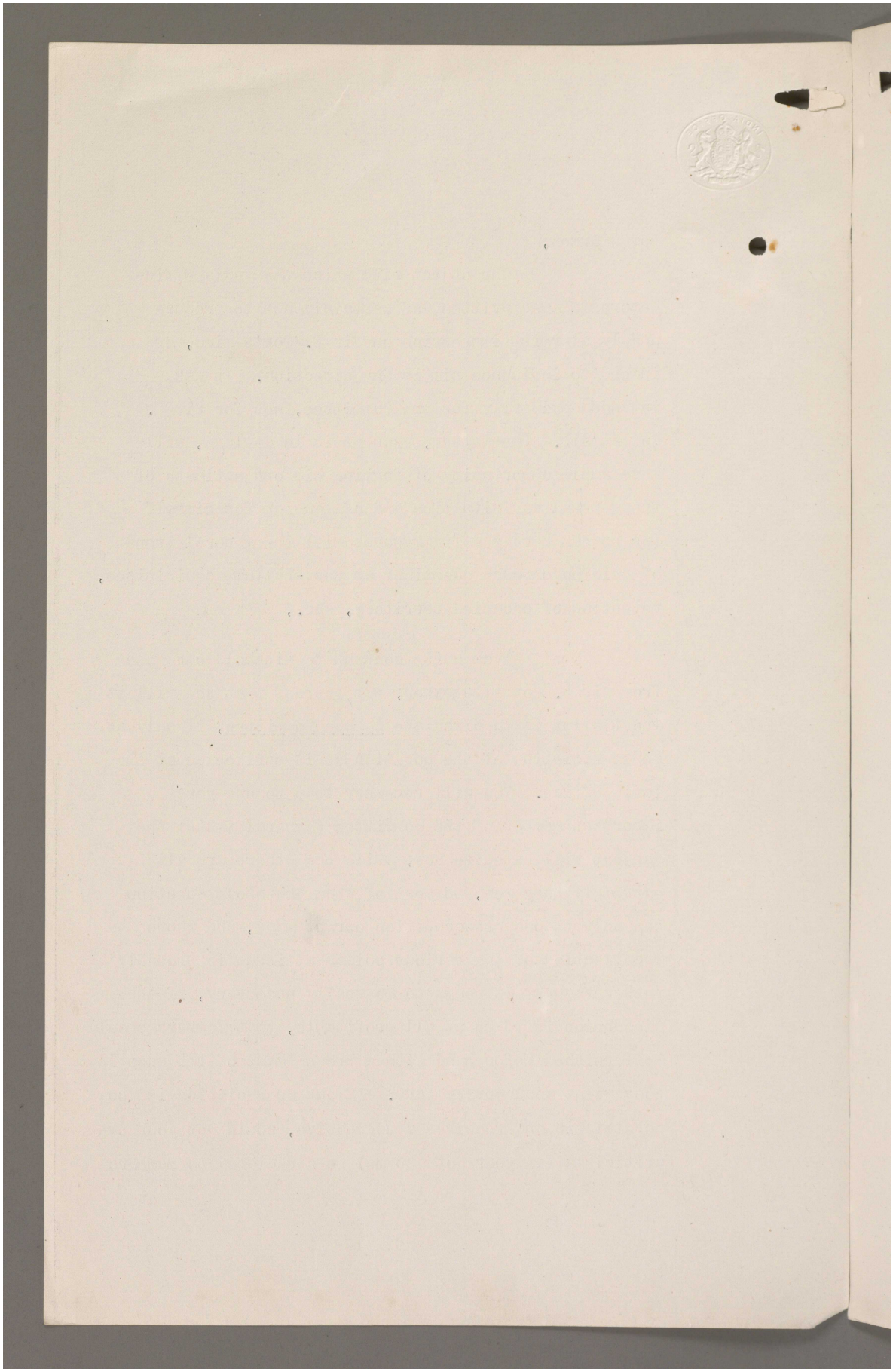

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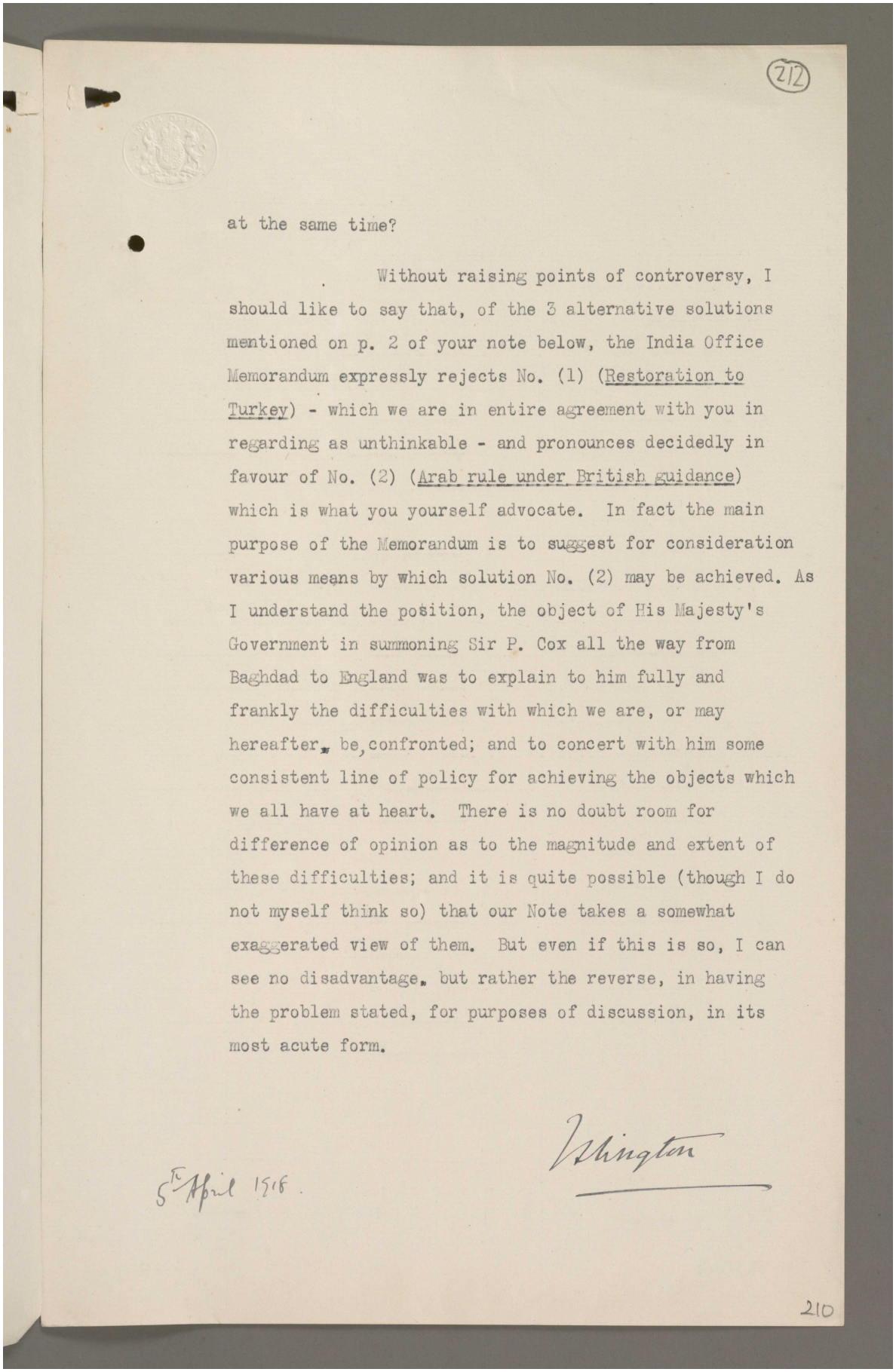

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at the same time?

Without raising points of controversy, I should like to say that, of the 3 alternative solutions mentioned on p. 2 of your note below, the India Office Memorandum expressly rejects No. (1) (Restoration to Turkey) - which we are in entire agreement with you in regarding as unthinkable - and pronounces decidedly in favour of No. (2) (Arab rule under British guidance) which is what you yourself advocate. In fact the main purpose of the Memorandum is to suggest for consideration various means by which solution No. (2) may be achieved. As I understand the position, the object of His Majesty's Government in summoning Sir P. Cox all the way from Baghdad to England was to explain to him fully and frankly the difficulties with which we are, or may hereafter be, confronted; and to concert with him some consistent line of policy for achieving the objects which we all have at heart. There is no doubt room for difference of opinion as to the magnitude and extent of these difficulties; and it is quite possible (though I do not myself think so) that our Note takes a somewhat exaggerated view of them. But even if this is so, I can see no disadvantage, but rather the reverse, in having the problem stated, for purposes of discussion, in its most acute form.

Ishington

5th April 1918.

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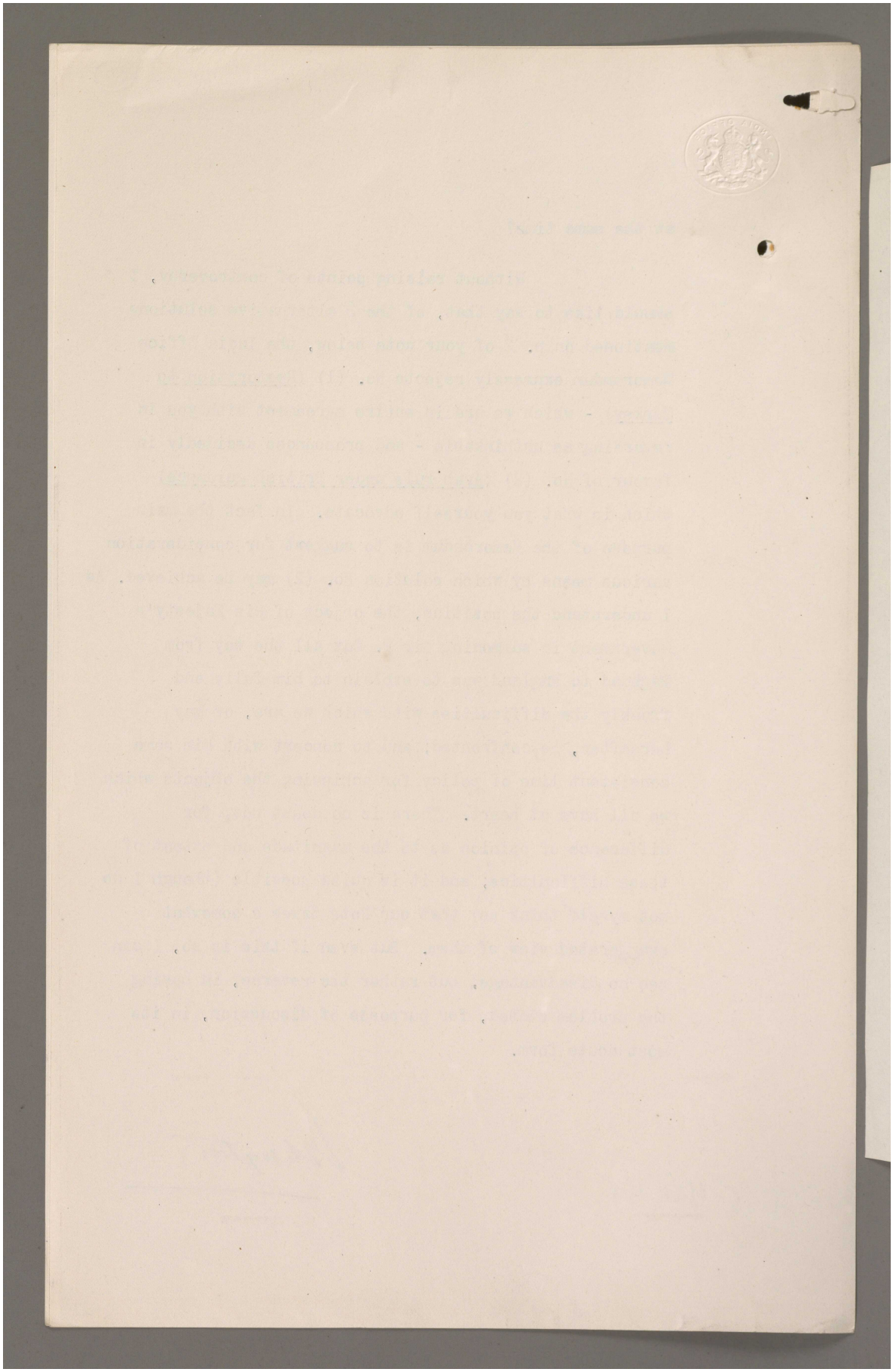

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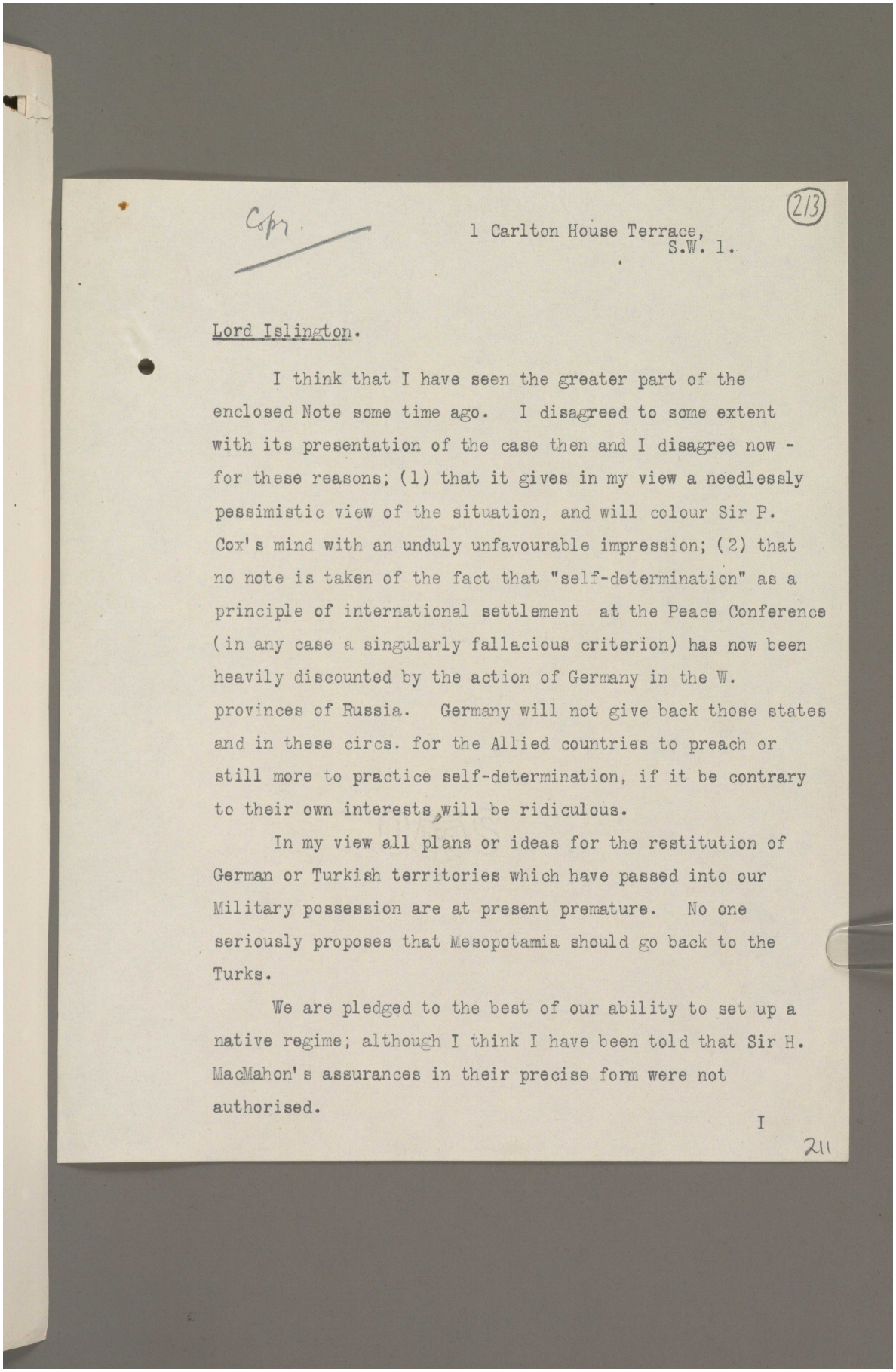

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S.W. 1.

Lord Islington.

I think that I have seen the greater part of the enclosed Note some time ago. I disagreed to some extent with its presentation of the case then and I disagree now - for these reasons; (1) that it gives in my view a needlessly pessimistic view of the situation, and will colour Sir P. Cox's mind with an unduly unfavourable impression; (2) that no note is taken of the fact that "self-determination" as a principle of international settlement at the Peace Conference (in any case a singularly fallacious criterion) has now been heavily discounted by the action of Germany in the W. provinces of Russia. Germany will not give back those states and in these circs. for the Allied countries to preach or still more to practice self-determination, if it be contrary to their own interests, will be ridiculous.

In my view all plans or ideas for the restitution of German or Turkish territories which have passed into our Military possession are at present premature. No one seriously proposes that Mesopotamia should go back to the Turks.

We are pledged to the best of our ability to set up a native regime; although I think I have been told that Sir H. MacMahon's assurances in their precise form were not authorised.

I

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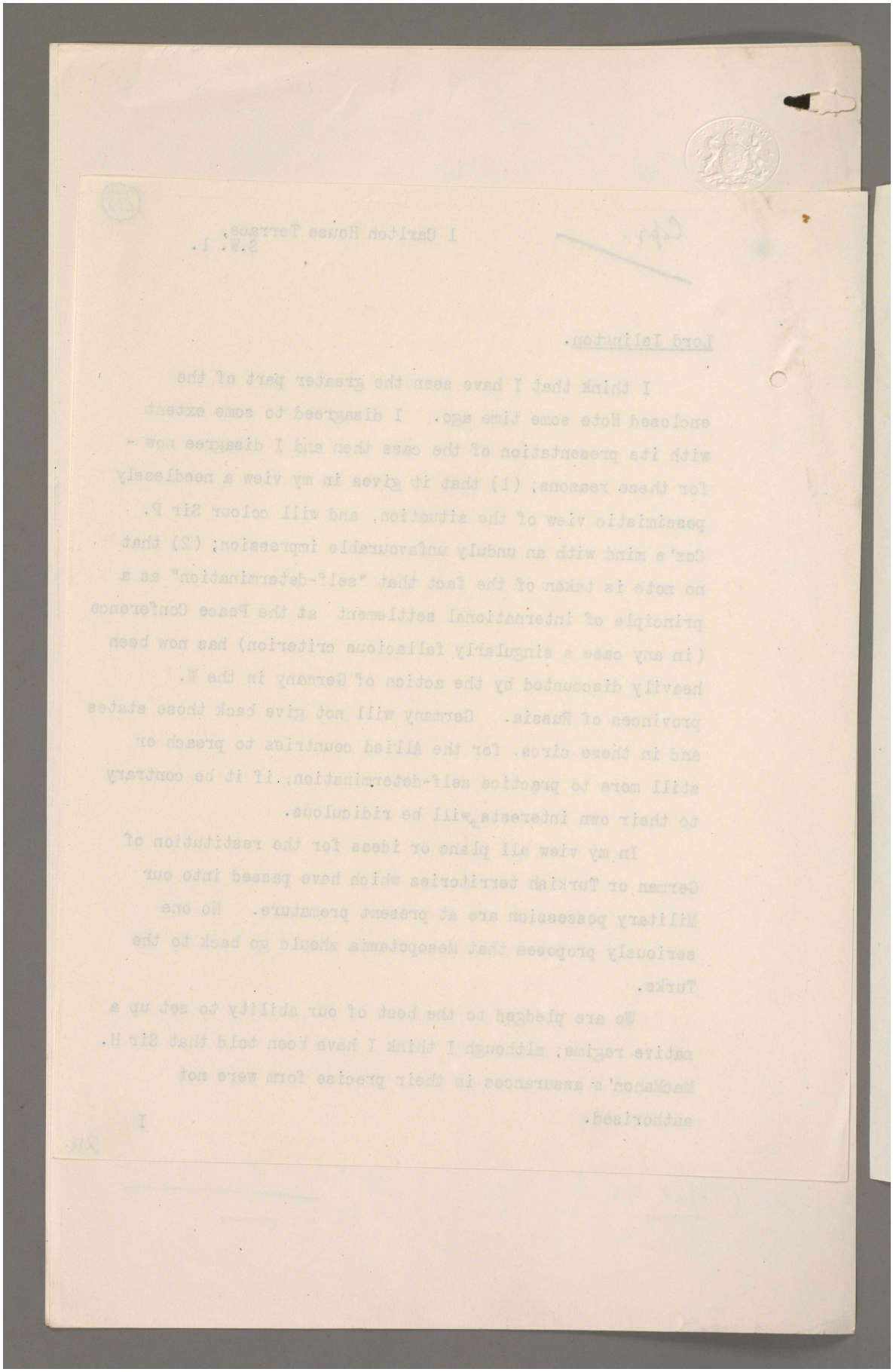

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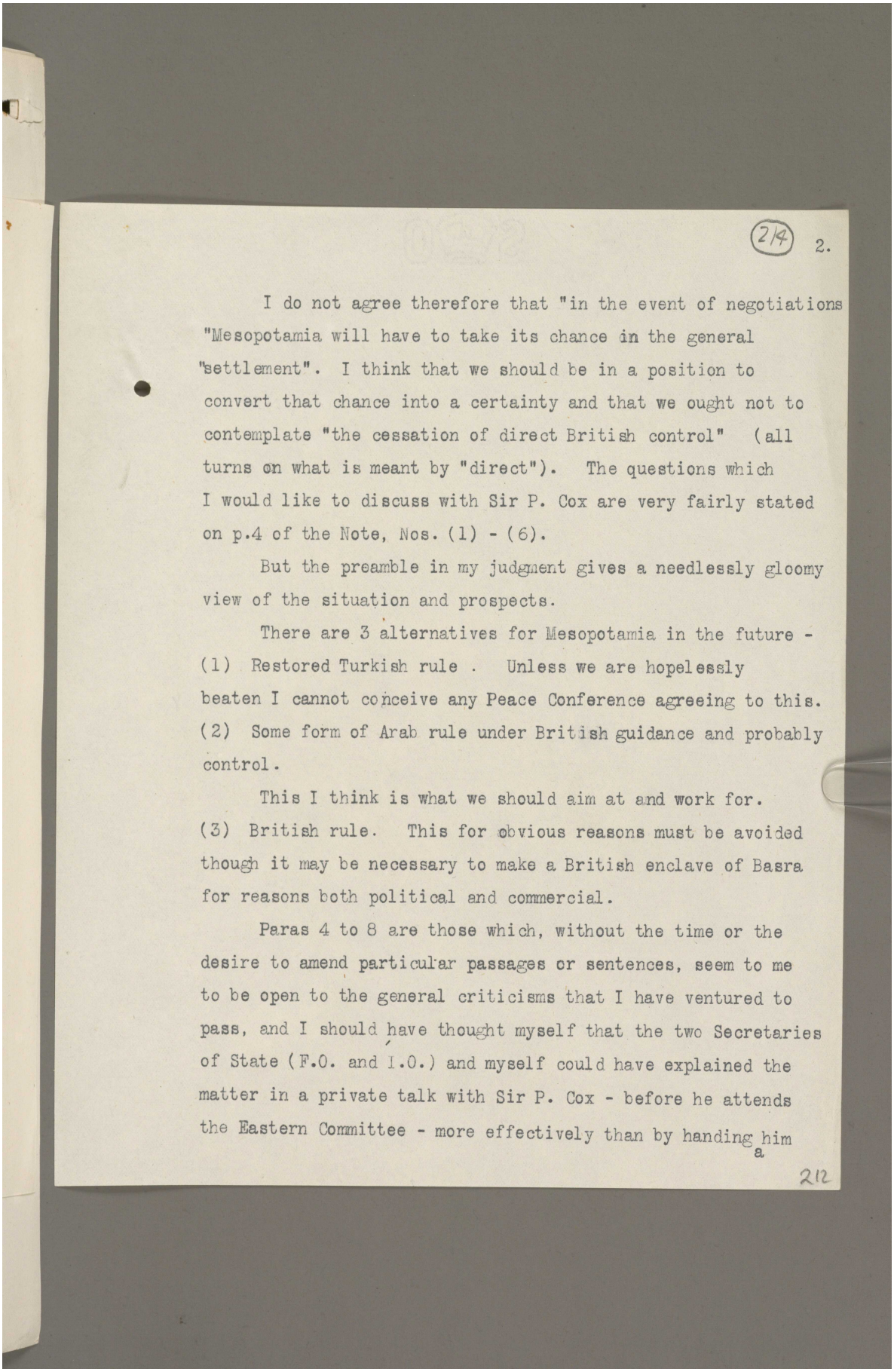

214 2.

I do not agree therefore that "in the event of negotiations "Mesopotamia will have to take its chance in the general "settlement". I think that we should be in a position to convert that chance into a certainty and that we ought not to contemplate "the cessation of direct British control" (all turns on what is meant by "direct"). The questions which I would like to discuss with Sir P. Cox are very fairly stated on p.4 of the Note, Nos. (1) - (6).

But the preamble in my judgment gives a needlessly gloomy view of the situation and prospects.

There are 3 alternatives for Mesopotamia in the future - (1) Restored Turkish rule . Unless we are hopelessly beaten I cannot conceive any Peace Conference agreeing to this. (2) Some form of Arab rule under British guidance and probably control.

This I think is what we should aim at and work for. (3) British rule. This for obvious reasons must be avoided though it may be necessary to make a British enclave of Basra for reasons both political and commercial.

Paras 4 to 8 are those which, without the time or the desire to amend particular passages or sentences, seem to me to be open to the general criticisms that I have ventured to pass, and I should have thought myself that the two Secretaries of State (F.O. and I.O.) and myself could have explained the matter in a private talk with Sir P. Cox - before he attends the Eastern Committee - more effectively than by handing him a

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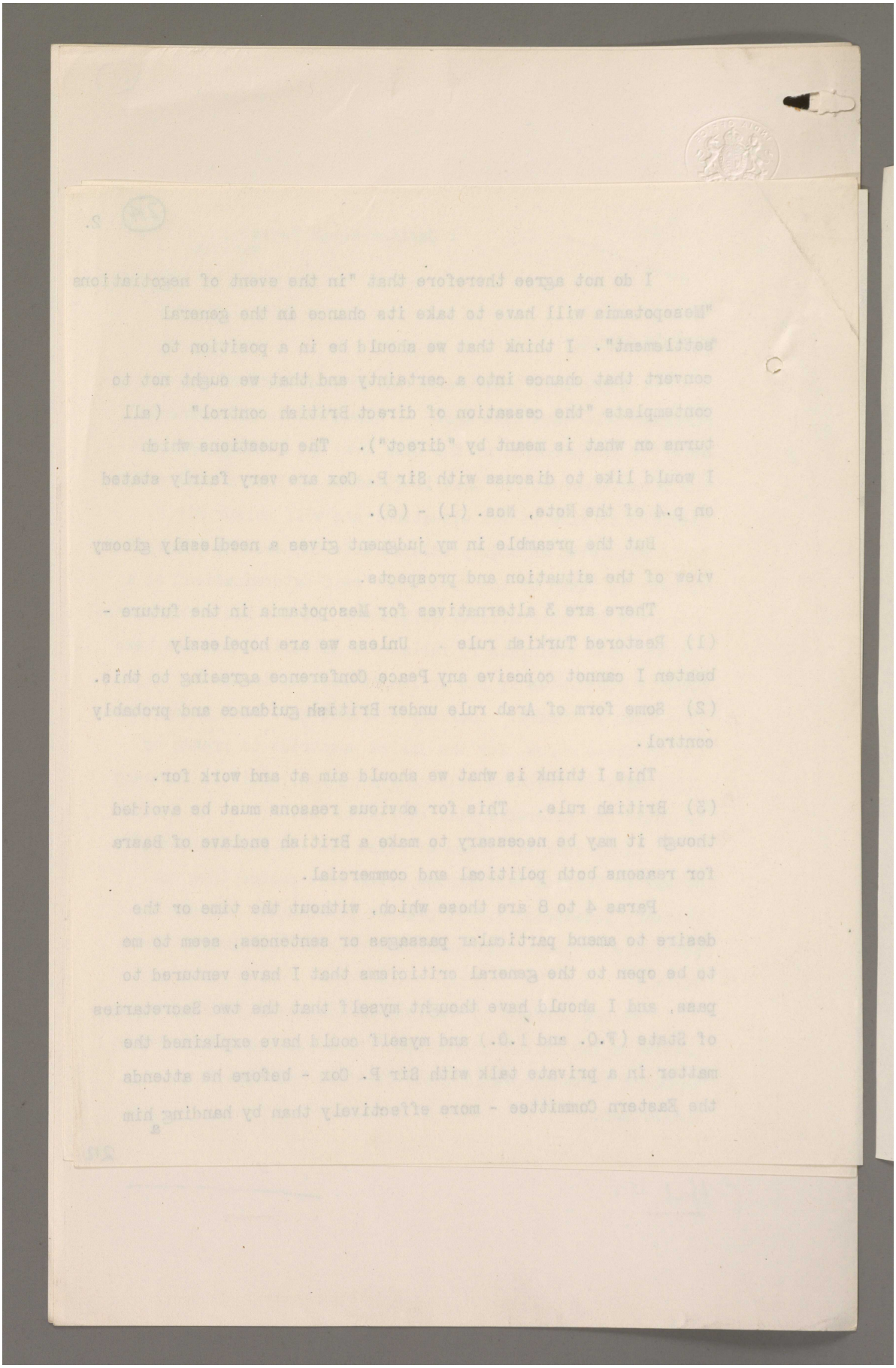

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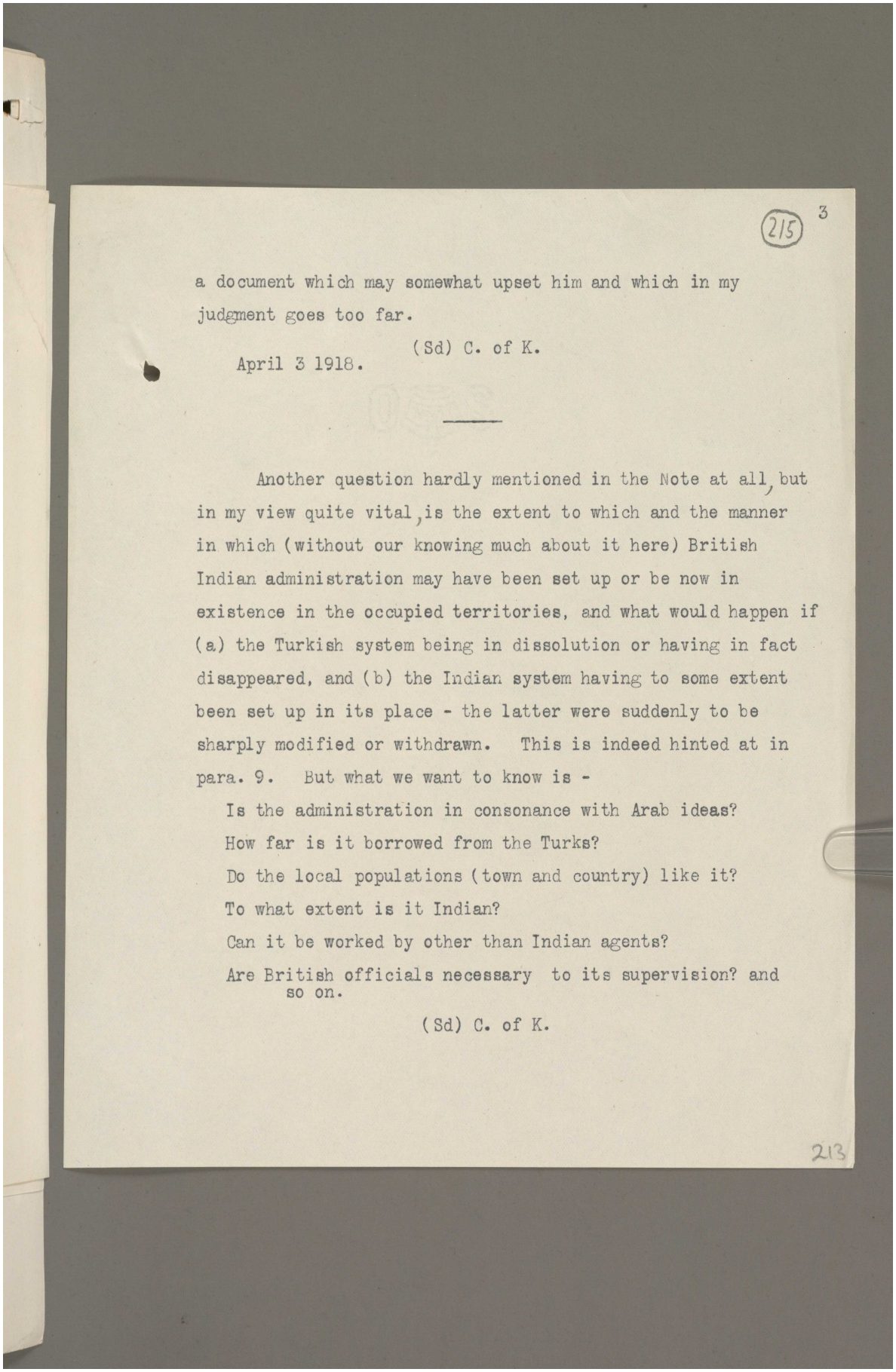

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a document which may somewhat upset him and which in my judgment goes too far.

(Sd) C. of K.

April 3 1918.

Another question hardly mentioned in the Note at all, but in my view quite vital, is the extent to which and the manner in which (without our knowing much about it here) British Indian administration may have been set up or be now in existence in the occupied territories, and what would happen if (a) the Turkish system being in dissolution or having in fact disappeared, and (b) the Indian system having to some extent been set up in its place - the latter were suddenly to be sharply modified or withdrawn. This is indeed hinted at in para. 9. But what we want to know is -

Is the administration in consonance with Arab ideas?

How far is it borrowed from the Turks?

Do the local populations (town and country) like it?

To what extent is it Indian?

Can it be worked by other than Indian agents?

Are British officials necessary to its supervision? and so on.

(Sd) C. of K.

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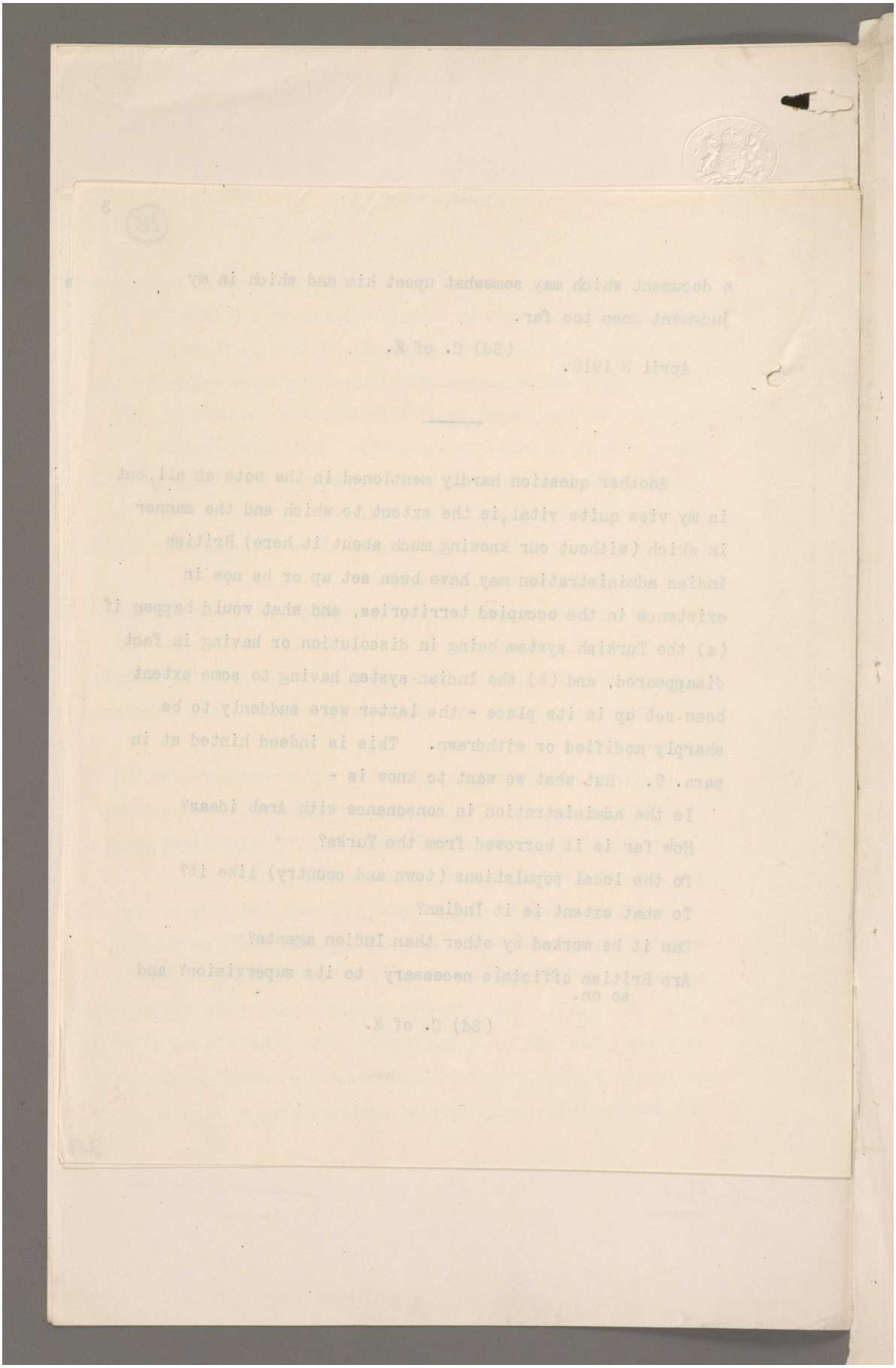

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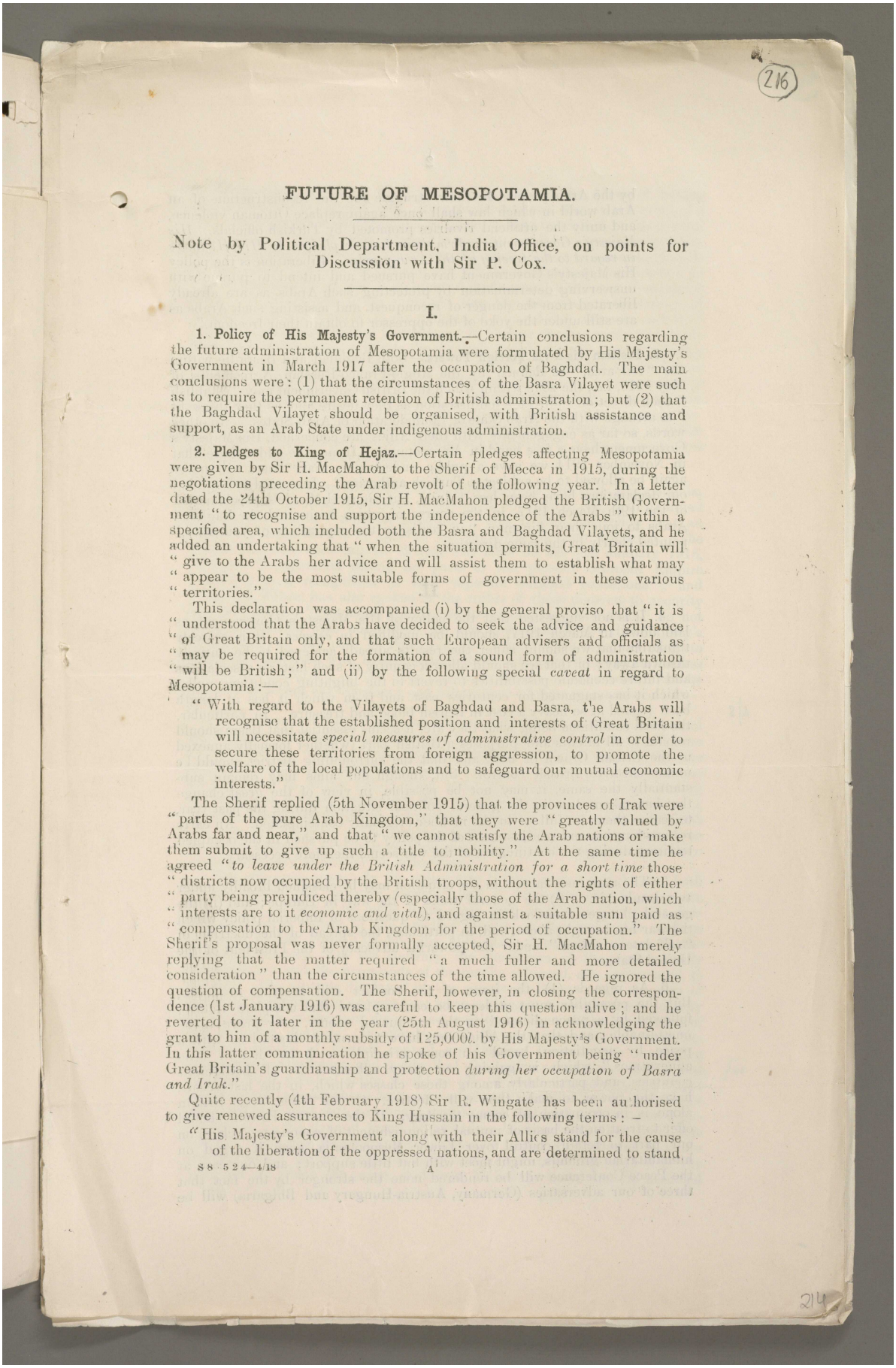

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FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA.

Note by Political Department, India Office, on points for Discussion with Sir P. Cox.

I.

1. Policy of His Majesty's Government.—Certain conclusions regarding the future administration of Mesopotamia were formulated by His Majesty's Government in March 1917 after the occupation of Baghdad. The main conclusions were: (1) that the circumstances of the Basra Vilayet were such as to require the permanent retention of British administration; but (2) that the Baghdad Vilayet should be organised, with British assistance and support, as an Arab State under indigenous administration.

2. Pledges to King of Hejaz.—Certain pledges affecting Mesopotamia were given by Sir H. MacMahon to the Sherif of Mecca in 1915, during the negotiations preceding the Arab revolt of the following year. In a letter dated the 24th October 1915, Sir H. MacMahon pledged the British Government "to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs" within a specified area, which included both the Basra and Baghdad Vilayets, and he added an undertaking that "when the situation permits, Great Britain will "give to the Arabs her advice and will assist them to establish what may "appear to be the most suitable forms of government in these various "territories."

This declaration was accompanied (i) by the general proviso that "it is "understood that the Arabs have decided to seek the advice and guidance "of Great Britain only, and that such European advisers and officials as "may be required for the formation of a sound form of administration "will be British;" and (ii) by the following special *caveat* in regard to Mesopotamia:—

> "With regard to the Vilayets of Baghdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognise that the established position and interests of Great Britain will necessitate *special measures of administrative control* in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of the local populations and to safeguard our mutual economic interests."

The Sherif replied (5th November 1915) that the provinces of Irak were "parts of the pure Arab Kingdom," that they were "greatly valued by Arabs far and near," and that "we cannot satisfy the Arab nations or make them submit to give up such a title to nobility." At the same time he agreed "*to leave under the British Administration for a short time* those "districts now occupied by the British troops, without the rights of either "party being prejudiced thereby (especially those of the Arab nation, which "interests are to it *economic and vital*), and against a suitable sum paid as "compensation to the Arab Kingdom for the period of occupation." The Sherif's proposal was never formally accepted, Sir H. MacMahon merely replying that the matter required "a much fuller and more detailed consideration" than the circumstances of the time allowed. He ignored the question of compensation. The Sherif, however, in closing the correspondence (1st January 1916) was careful to keep this question alive; and he reverted to it later in the year (25th August 1916) in acknowledging the grant to him of a monthly subsidy of 125,000*l.* by His Majesty's Government. In this latter communication he spoke of his Government being "under Great Britain's guardianship and protection *during her occupation of Basra and Irak*."

Quite recently (4th February 1918) Sir R. Wingate has been authorised to give renewed assurances to King Hussain in the following terms:—

> "His Majesty's Government along with their Allies stand for the cause of the liberation of the oppressed nations, and are determined to stand

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by the Arab peoples in their struggle for the reconstruction of an Arab world in which law shall once again replace Ottoman violence, and unity the artificial rivalries promoted by Turkish officials. *His Majesty's Government reaffirm their former pledges to His Highness in regard to the freeing of the Arab peoples.* Liberation is the policy His Majesty's Government have pursued and intend to pursue with unswerving determination by protecting such Arabs as are already liberated from the danger of reconquest, and assisting such Arabs as are still under the yoke of the oppressor to obtain their freedom."

3. **Position vis-à-vis Foreign Powers.**—Both Baghdad and Basra lie within the "red area," as defined by the Anglo-Franco-Russian Agreements of May 1916, *i.e.*, the zone within which the British Government may "establish "such direct or indirect administration as they desire and as they think fit "to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States." In other words, so far as engagements with their Allies are concerned, His Majesty's Government have a free hand in Mesopotamia. It may be added here that in November 1914 we gave a public undertaking that "Basra will never again be allowed to be subject to Turkish authority." In regard to Baghdad our declarations have been less definite, but General Maude's proclamation of the 19th March 1917, in the course of which he invited the Baghdad Arabs to join their kinsmen "in realising the aspirations of your race," pointed clearly in the same direction.

II.

4. It is not suggested that the policy of His Majesty's Government, as laid down in March 1917, should be modified *in essence*. It is scarcely thinkable that we should suffer the results already achieved to be entirely thrown away; or that we should allow a country of such historic associations and future economic possibilities to revert to the blighting conditions under which it has stagnated for centuries past, and from which it has at length been rescued at so heavy a cost in British blood and treasure. In particular, the local conditions being what they are, it seems essential that Basra should remain to all intents and purposes a British port (whether formally annexed to the British Crown or not), and that the surrounding district should be under effective British control. But, though our aims may remain substantially the same, it may not be possible, in view of the great change that has taken place in the general political situation during the past year, to realise them in full or in the manner originally contemplated. An early reconsideration and readjustment of the policy to be pursued in the occupied territory during the continuance of the war seems therefore necessary.

5. The main new factors in the situation may be classified broadly under two heads, viz.:—(i) the general trend of the war in Europe; and (ii) the general change of outlook in regard to questions of imperial policy which the war has brought about, and, in particular, the spread of the doctrine of "self-determination" under the powerful advocacy of the President of the United States.

6. As regards (1), the issue of the conflict still remains in doubt. But the possibility must at least be contemplated that complete victory, followed by a peace dictated to the conquered enemy, may prove to be unattainable; and that the Allies may have to content themselves with a peace by negotiation based on some principle such as that of "no annexations," which is gaining so many adherents in all belligerent countries, and particularly among those classes which, in the last resort, have the power to make their will effective. Of the Allies, Great Britain alone is in occupation of enemy territory. If the Central Powers should offer to treat on the basis of mutual relinquishment of conquests, a claim on our part to retain control over Lower Mesopotamia, even if urged on humanitarian grounds, might meet with but little support; and our case at the Peace Conference will be rendered none the stronger by the fact that three of our adversaries (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria) will be

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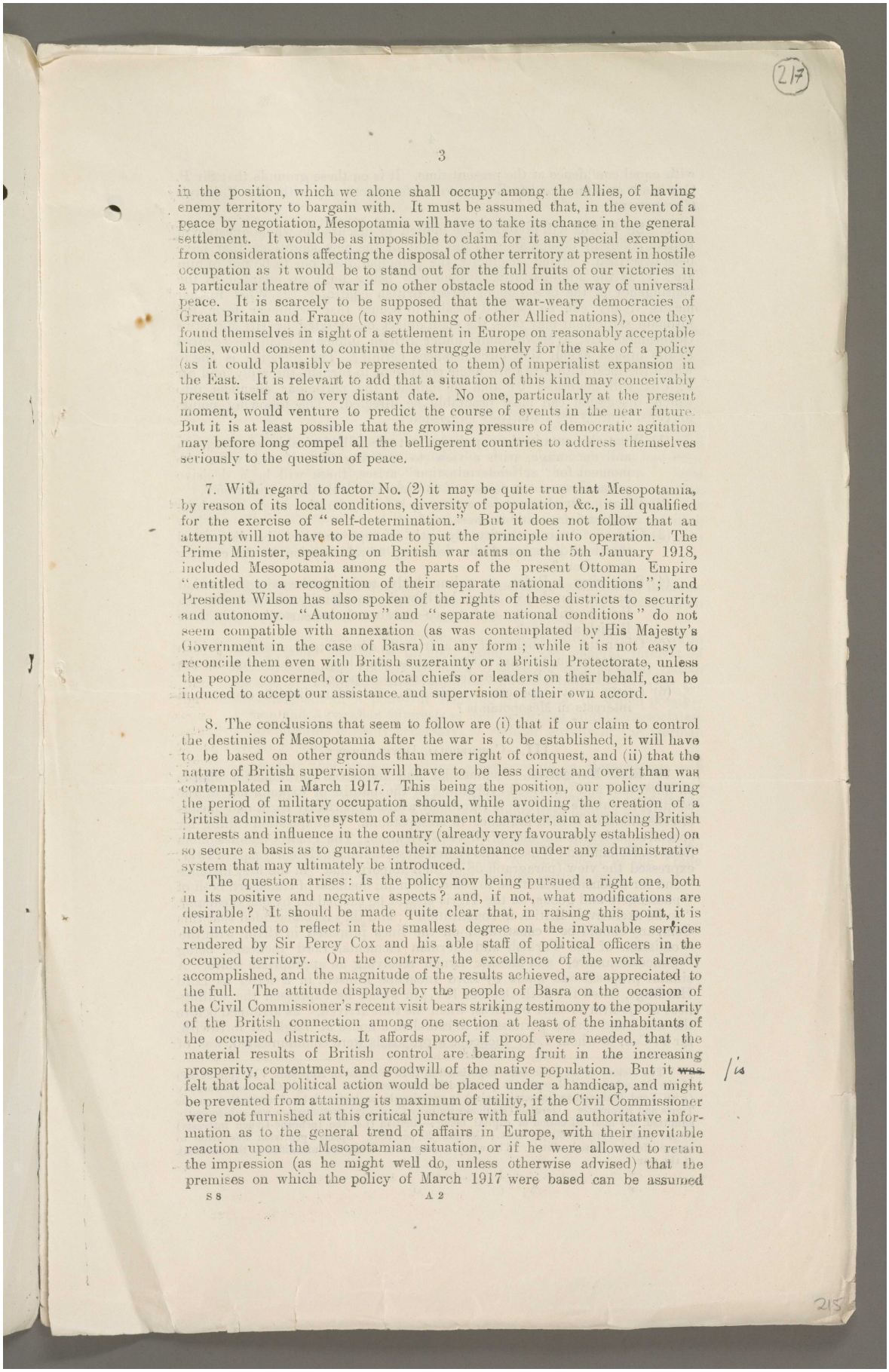

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in the position, which we alone shall occupy among the Allies, of having enemy territory to bargain with. It must be assumed that, in the event of a peace by negotiation, Mesopotamia will have to take its chance in the general settlement. It would be as impossible to claim for it any special exemption from considerations affecting the disposal of other territory at present in hostile occupation as it would be to stand out for the full fruits of our victories in a particular theatre of war if no other obstacle stood in the way of universal peace. It is scarcely to be supposed that the war-weary democracies of Great Britain and France (to say nothing of other Allied nations), once they found themselves in sight of a settlement in Europe on reasonably acceptable lines, would consent to continue the struggle merely for the sake of a policy (as it could plausibly be represented to them) of imperialist expansion in the East. It is relevant to add that a situation of this kind may conceivably present itself at no very distant date. No one, particularly at the present moment, would venture to predict the course of events in the near future. But it is at least possible that the growing pressure of democratic agitation may before long compel all the belligerent countries to address themselves seriously to the question of peace.

7. With regard to factor No. (2) it may be quite true that Mesopotamia, by reason of its local conditions, diversity of population, &c., is ill qualified for the exercise of "self-determination." But it does not follow that an attempt will not have to be made to put the principle into operation. The Prime Minister, speaking on British war aims on the 5th January 1918, included Mesopotamia among the parts of the present Ottoman Empire "entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions"; and President Wilson has also spoken of the rights of these districts to security and autonomy. "Autonomy" and "separate national conditions" do not seem compatible with annexation (as was contemplated by His Majesty's Government in the case of Basra) in any form; while it is not easy to reconcile them even with British suzerainty or a British Protectorate, unless the people concerned, or the local chiefs or leaders on their behalf, can be induced to accept our assistance and supervision of their own accord.

8. The conclusions that seem to follow are (i) that if our claim to control the destinies of Mesopotamia after the war is to be established, it will have to be based on other grounds than mere right of conquest, and (ii) that the nature of British supervision will have to be less direct and overt than was contemplated in March 1917. This being the position, our policy during the period of military occupation should, while avoiding the creation of a British administrative system of a permanent character, aim at placing British interests and influence in the country (already very favourably established) on so secure a basis as to guarantee their maintenance under any administrative system that may ultimately be introduced.

The question arises: Is the policy now being pursued a right one, both in its positive and negative aspects? and, if not, what modifications are desirable? It should be made quite clear that, in raising this point, it is not intended to reflect in the smallest degree on the invaluable services rendered by Sir Percy Cox and his able staff of political officers in the occupied territory. On the contrary, the excellence of the work already accomplished, and the magnitude of the results achieved, are appreciated to the full. The attitude displayed by the people of Basra on the occasion of the Civil Commissioner's recent visit bears striking testimony to the popularity of the British connection among one section at least of the inhabitants of the occupied districts. It affords proof, if proof were needed, that the material results of British control are bearing fruit in the increasing prosperity, contentment, and goodwill of the native population. But it ~~was~~ is felt that local political action would be placed under a handicap, and might be prevented from attaining its maximum of utility, if the Civil Commissioner were not furnished at this critical juncture with full and authoritative information as to the general trend of affairs in Europe, with their inevitable reaction upon the Mesopotamian situation, or if he were allowed to retain the impression (as he might well do, unless otherwise advised) that the premises on which the policy of March 1917 were based can be assumed

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with equal confidence at the present time. It is on these grounds that Sir P. Cox has been summoned to Europe to confer personally with His Majesty's Government.

9. Sir P. Cox will doubtless be invited to discuss the whole question of British policy in Mesopotamia in the light of the new conditions that have been described. Stated succinctly, the principal questions to be put to him are: (1) Is the administrative system now being built up adapted to the contingency of the cessation of direct British control? (2) What further means, if any, can be devised locally to secure that, whatever form the ultimate settlement may take, the main object desiderated by His Majesty's Government, viz., a Mesopotamia under British influence, shall be secured to the utmost extent that circumstances permit? The question is one to which the local authorities are alone competent to furnish the reply, and Sir P. Cox will doubtless be able to indicate the particular channels into which discussion can most profitably be directed. The following points for consideration are tentatively suggested:—

(1) What elements in the population is it specially desirable to strengthen and encourage, with a view to ensuring that, if and when the moment for "self-determination" arises, there will be a decisive pronouncement in favour of continuing the British connection?

(2) What materials exist for setting up a local administration or administrations of a suitable character?

(3) Can any Arab authority, dynastic or representative, be discovered that would command the necessary moral sanction in the country as a whole?

(4) Supposing a Ruler, or ruling body, to be forthcoming, by what means can he, or they, be brought to identify themselves with British interests, and to co-operate whole-heartedly with their British advisers?

(5) Given the establishment of a friendly administration under British supervision, to what extent, and for how long, would it require the assistance of British or Indian troops or police?

(6) Lastly, what steps can be taken to consolidate British commercial interests in Mesopotamia?

III.—Commercial Development.

10. River Navigation. Commercial and industrial development affords an important and (provided everything in the nature of *exploitation* of the country in outside interests is rigorously avoided) perfectly legitimate means of consolidating British influence in Mesopotamia. One question calling for special consideration is that of River Navigation. The Trade Commissioners (Messrs. Holland and Wilson) who visited Mesopotamia in the early part of 1917, expressed the view (paragraph 58 of their Report) that "in the first instance "and for a considerable time to come, the main business of transport, both of "passengers and goods, on the Tigris should be carried on by *one Company*, "to be exclusively British in constitution"; and they recommended that this Company should be "constituted on the lines proposed in 1913,[1] with the "omission of the Turkish and German elements, Lord Inchcape being "Concessionnaire," and Messrs. Lynch receiving an appropriate share. A similar proposal was made by Lord Inchcape himself, in a letter to Lord Hardinge, dated the 20th October 1917, in which he expressed the willingness of his firm to start business, when the time arrived, "as arranged before the war," and sought permission to establish a house at Baghdad forthwith. Sir P. Cox, to whom Lord Inchcape's proposals were communicated, was of

[1] The history of the Concession negotiated in 1913 is stated in Appendix VII. (pp. 94–97) of the Commissioners' Report. It provided for the creation of an Anglo-Ottoman Company (with Lord Inchcape as Concessionnaire) to exercise the exclusive right of navigation on the Tigris and Euphrates. German (Baghdad Railway Company) participation was subsequently admitted, the final allocation of capital being:—British (*i.e.*, the Inchcape-Lynch interests) 50 per cent.; Turkish 30 per cent.; German 20 per cent. Special provision was made to secure effective British control. The whole arrangement remained unratified at the outbreak of the war.

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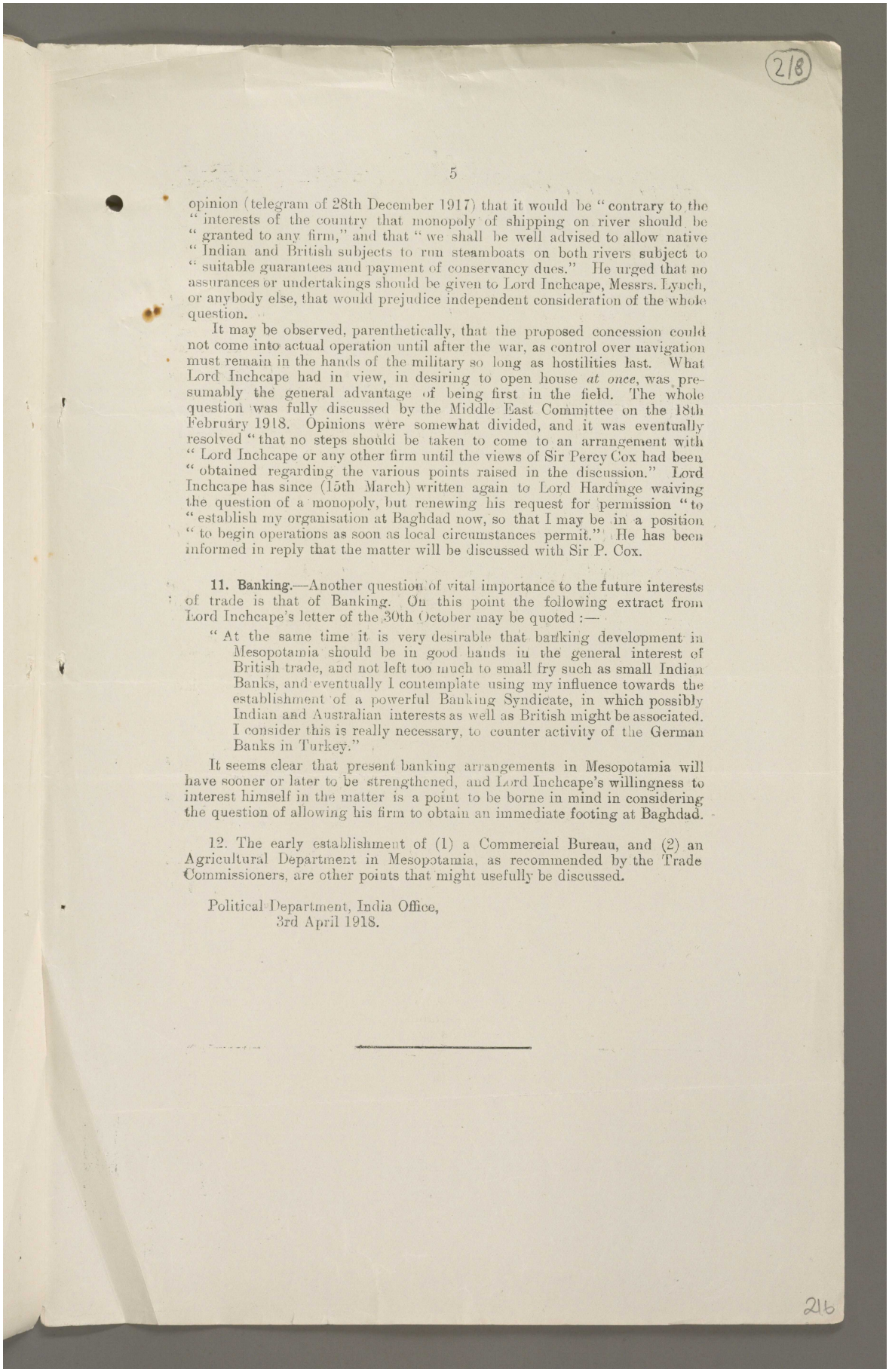

opinion (telegram of 28th December 1917) that it would be "contrary to the "interests of the country that monopoly of shipping on river should be "granted to any firm," and that "we shall be well advised to allow native "Indian and British subjects to run steamboats on both rivers subject to "suitable guarantees and payment of conservancy dues." He urged that no assurances or undertakings should be given to Lord Inchcape, Messrs. Lynch, or anybody else, that would prejudice independent consideration of the whole question.

It may be observed, parenthetically, that the proposed concession could not come into actual operation until after the war, as control over navigation must remain in the hands of the military so long as hostilities last. What Lord Inchcape had in view, in desiring to open house *at once*, was presumably the general advantage of being first in the field. The whole question was fully discussed by the Middle East Committee on the 18th February 1918. Opinions were somewhat divided, and it was eventually resolved "that no steps should be taken to come to an arrangement with "Lord Inchcape or any other firm until the views of Sir Percy Cox had been "obtained regarding the various points raised in the discussion." Lord Inchcape has since (15th March) written again to Lord Hardinge waiving the question of a monopoly, but renewing his request for permission "to "establish my organisation at Baghdad now, so that I may be in a position "to begin operations as soon as local circumstances permit." He has been informed in reply that the matter will be discussed with Sir P. Cox.

11. Banking.—Another question of vital importance to the future interests of trade is that of Banking. On this point the following extract from Lord Inchcape's letter of the 30th October may be quoted :—

> "At the same time it is very desirable that banking development in Mesopotamia should be in good hands in the general interest of British trade, and not left too much to small fry such as small Indian Banks, and eventually I contemplate using my influence towards the establishment of a powerful Banking Syndicate, in which possibly Indian and Australian interests as well as British might be associated. I consider this is really necessary, to counter activity of the German Banks in Turkey."

It seems clear that present banking arrangements in Mesopotamia will have sooner or later to be strengthened, and Lord Inchcape's willingness to interest himself in the matter is a point to be borne in mind in considering the question of allowing his firm to obtain an immediate footing at Baghdad.

12. The early establishment of (1) a Commercial Bureau, and (2) an Agricultural Department in Mesopotamia, as recommended by the Trade Commissioners, are other points that might usefully be discussed.

Political Department, India Office,
3rd April 1918.

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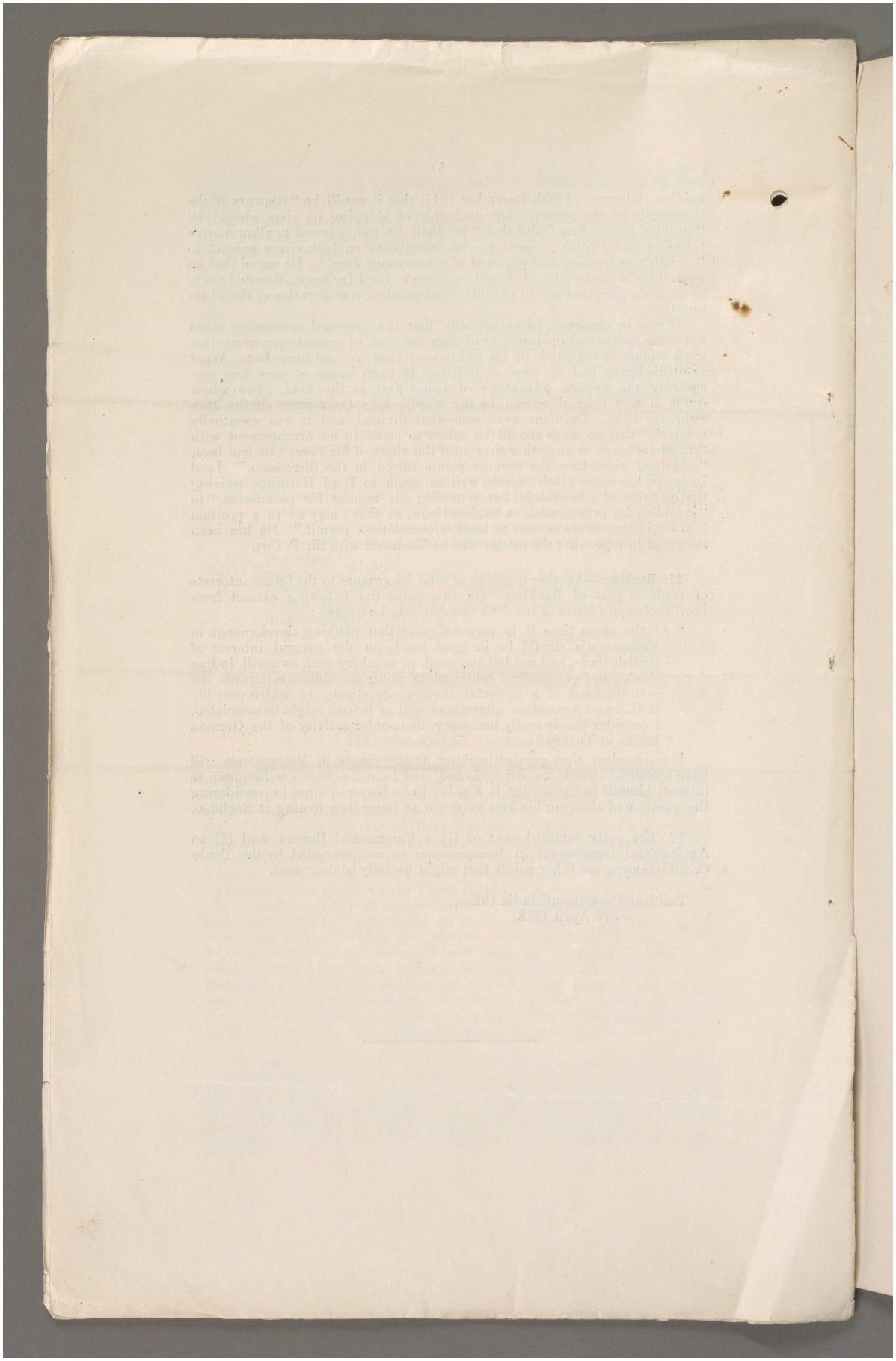

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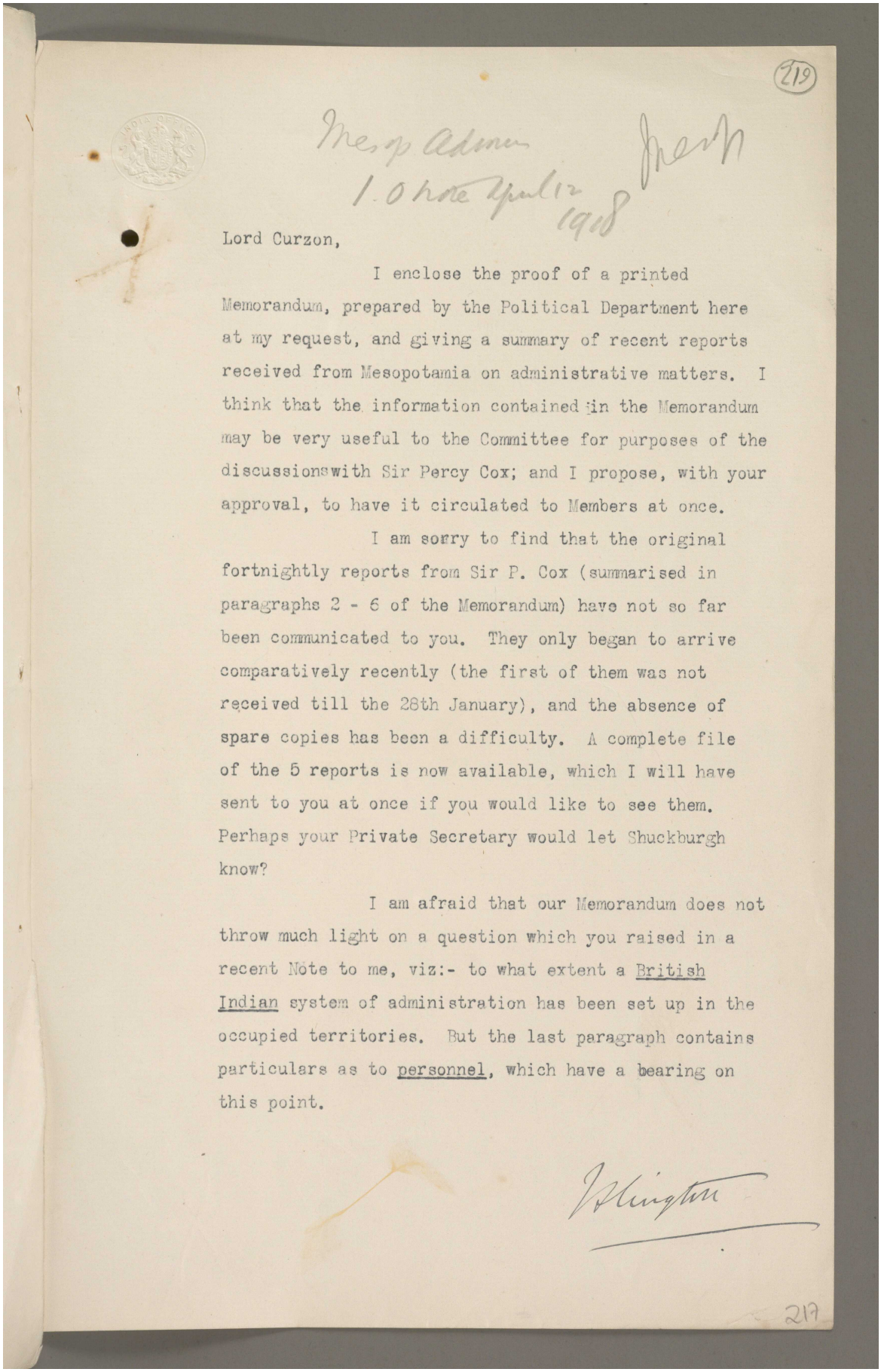

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Mesop Admin
1.0 note April 12
1918

Lord Curzon,

I enclose the proof of a printed Memorandum, prepared by the Political Department here at my request, and giving a summary of recent reports received from Mesopotamia on administrative matters. I think that the information contained in the Memorandum may be very useful to the Committee for purposes of the discussions with Sir Percy Cox; and I propose, with your approval, to have it circulated to Members at once.

I am sorry to find that the original fortnightly reports from Sir P. Cox (summarised in paragraphs 2 - 6 of the Memorandum) have not so far been communicated to you. They only began to arrive comparatively recently (the first of them was not received till the 28th January), and the absence of spare copies has been a difficulty. A complete file of the 5 reports is now available, which I will have sent to you at once if you would like to see them. Perhaps your Private Secretary would let Shuckburgh know?

I am afraid that our Memorandum does not throw much light on a question which you raised in a recent Note to me, viz:- to what extent a British Indian system of administration has been set up in the occupied territories. But the last paragraph contains particulars as to personnel, which have a bearing on this point.

Islington

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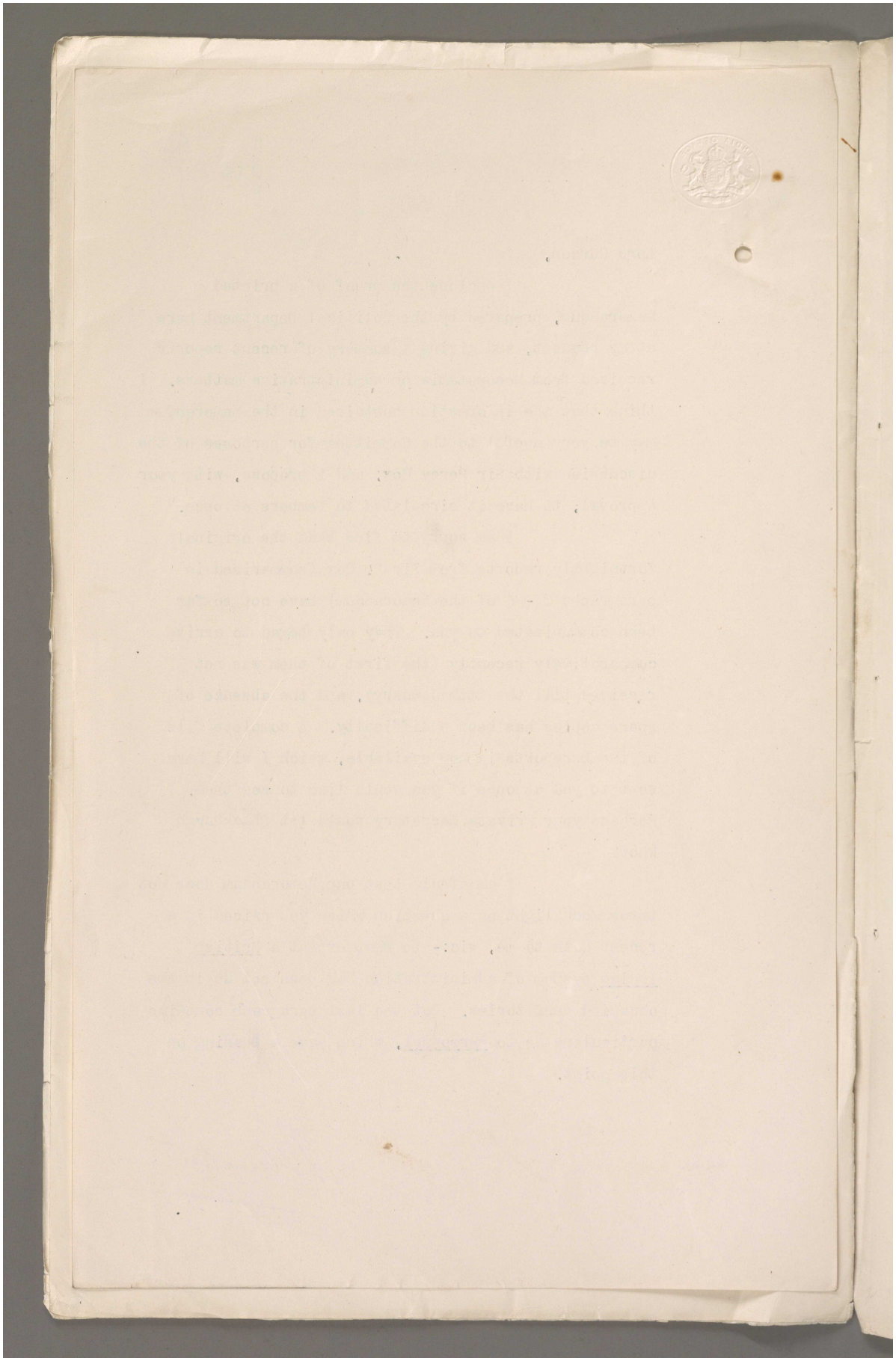

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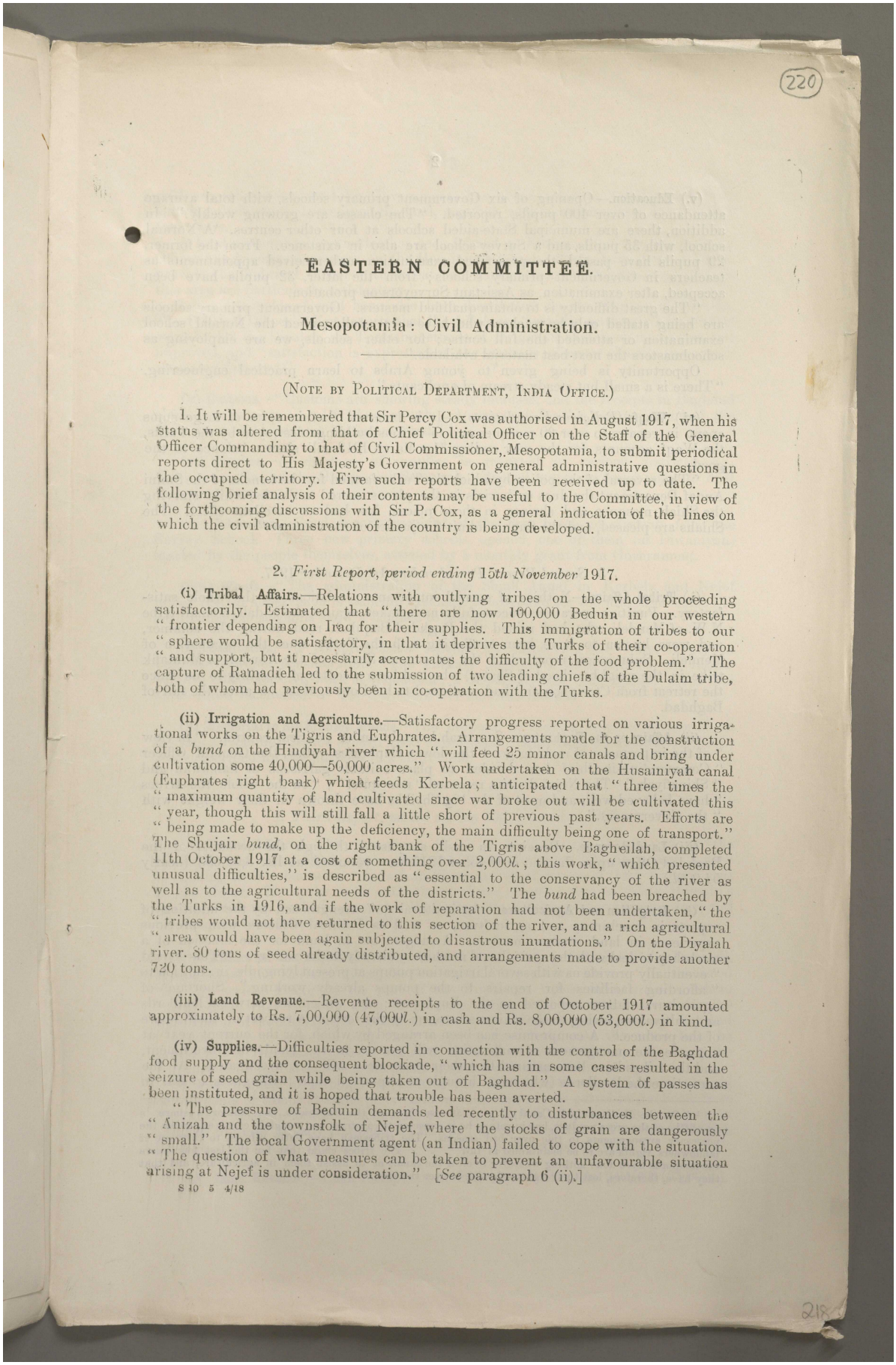

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EASTERN COMMITTEE.

Mesopotamia: Civil Administration.

(Note by Political Department, India Office.)

1. It will be remembered that Sir Percy Cox was authorised in August 1917, when his status was altered from that of Chief Political Officer on the Staff of the General Officer Commanding to that of Civil Commissioner, Mesopotamia, to submit periodical reports direct to His Majesty's Government on general administrative questions in the occupied territory. Five such reports have been received up to date. The following brief analysis of their contents may be useful to the Committee, in view of the forthcoming discussions with Sir P. Cox, as a general indication of the lines on which the civil administration of the country is being developed.

2. *First Report, period ending 15th November 1917.*

(i) **Tribal Affairs.**—Relations with outlying tribes on the whole proceeding satisfactorily. Estimated that "there are now 100,000 Beduin in our western "frontier depending on Iraq for their supplies. This immigration of tribes to our "sphere would be satisfactory, in that it deprives the Turks of their co-operation "and support, but it necessarily accentuates the difficulty of the food problem." The capture of Ramadieh led to the submission of two leading chiefs of the Dulaim tribe, both of whom had previously been in co-operation with the Turks.

(ii) **Irrigation and Agriculture.**—Satisfactory progress reported on various irrigational works on the Tigris and Euphrates. Arrangements made for the construction of a *bund* on the Hindiyah river which "will feed 25 minor canals and bring under cultivation some 40,000—50,000 acres." Work undertaken on the Husainiyah canal (Euphrates right bank) which feeds Kerbela; anticipated that "three times the "maximum quantity of land cultivated since war broke out will be cultivated this "year, though this will still fall a little short of previous past years. Efforts are "being made to make up the deficiency, the main difficulty being one of transport." The Shujair *bund*, on the right bank of the Tigris above Bagheilah, completed 11th October 1917 at a cost of something over 2,000*l.*; this work, "which presented unusual difficulties," is described as "essential to the conservancy of the river as well as to the agricultural needs of the districts." The *bund* had been breached by the Turks in 1916, and if the work of reparation had not been undertaken, "the "tribes would not have returned to this section of the river, and a rich agricultural "area would have been again subjected to disastrous inundations." On the Diyalah river, 80 tons of seed already distributed, and arrangements made to provide another 720 tons.

(iii) **Land Revenue.**—Revenue receipts to the end of October 1917 amounted approximately to Rs. 7,00,000 (47,000*l.*) in cash and Rs. 8,00,000 (53,000*l.*) in kind.

(iv) **Supplies.**—Difficulties reported in connection with the control of the Baghdad food supply and the consequent blockade, "which has in some cases resulted in the seizure of seed grain while being taken out of Baghdad." A system of passes has been instituted, and it is hoped that trouble has been averted.

"The pressure of Beduin demands led recently to disturbances between the "Anizah and the townsfolk of Nejef, where the stocks of grain are dangerously "small." The local Government agent (an Indian) failed to cope with the situation. "The question of what measures can be taken to prevent an unfavourable situation arising at Nejef is under consideration." [*See* paragraph 6 (ii).]

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(v.) **Education.**—Opening of six Government primary schools, with total average attendance of over 400 pupils, reported. "The classes are growing weekly." In addition, there are municipal State-aided schools at four other centres. A Normal school, with 35 pupils, and a Survey school are also in existence. From the former, 29 pupils have passed the prescribed examination and received appointments as teachers in Government primary schools; from the latter, 32 pupils have been accepted, after examination, as Assistant Surveyors on probation.

"The great difficulty is to obtain qualified masters. Government primary schools are being staffed only by teachers who have successfully passed the Normal school examination or attended the full course; for other schools, we are employing as schoolmasters the next-best material available."

Opportunity is being given to young Arabs to learn practical engineering. "There is a small but steady stream of applicants."

(vi.) **Waqfs** (*Religious Foundations*).—It is believed that, in spite of large sums spent in repairs to over 20 mosques and to various buildings destroyed by the Turks, the Waqf accounts for the year ending 31st March 1918 will show a balance to the good.

"The reversal of the policy by which the Turks farmed for the benefit of the Sunni Auqaf Department the dues on burials in the places sacred to Shiahs, while starving the Shiah mosques and shrines in those places, has had an excellent effect. The Shiahs are pleased, and the Sunnis admit the justice of the measure."

3. *Second Report, Period ending 1st December 1917.*

(i.) **Tribal Affairs.**—Nothing of special importance; relations on the whole satisfactory. Punitive operations successfully undertaken against the Nidah, a small tribe N.W. of Mendeli, who had raided the Baghdad-Baqubah road during the summer, and were known to have been trafficking with the Turks since the occupation of Mendeli. Submission reported of the paramount Sheikh of the Abudah (a Muntafik tribe in the neighbourhood of Shatra) who had been a centre of hostility to us since the retreat from Ctesiphon and had continued to hold out against us after the fall of Baghdad.

(ii) **Affairs on the Euphrates.**—Samawah brought under political control. "In view "of the importance of making good the lower Euphrates valley, the General Officer "Commanding-in-Chief has decided to place suitable garrisons at Samawah and "Shinafiyah." The Nejef district reported "now quiet"; "on the whole the tribes "have behaved well, and most of the big Sheikhs have thrown in their weight with "the Government."

(iii) **Land Revenue.**—Receipts in cash, as passed through the accounts of the Baghdad Office up to the end of October 1917, now returned at Rs. 8,09,658 (nearly 54,000*l.*)

(iv) **Irrigation and Agriculture.**—Agricultural staff strengthened by the addition of experts in machinery and agriculture, as well as Political Officers with previous experience in land revenue matters. Arrangements in hand for the erection of a workshop to deal with the agricultural machinery already in the country. "This should "eventually provide us with several irrigation pumps at present lying idle, in addition to "affording facilities for repairs to the pumps already working." Shortage of agricultural labour reported on the Euphrates; also difficulties between landlords and cultivators, owing to the claims advanced by the former in respect of their share of the produce.[1] A compromise has been arranged by which, for the current year at any rate, the management of cultivation will remain in the hands of Government, and the tribes have been assured that their grievances will be investigated. At the same time the landlords (who have throughout expressed their willingness to fall in

[1] "On the Radhwaniyah Canal . . ., as elsewhere on the Euphrates, the landlord's share is two-fifths of the gross produce, but in return he is expected to construct and maintain canals and make the neceesary arrangements to tide over bad seasons. The tribesmen have flatly refused to cultivate if landowners' rights are to be maintained in full . . . The tribes claim that for the last four years the landlords have done nothing whatever to clear the canals or to assist them in agriculture, and that they have, therefore, lost their right as landlords over the land."

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with any scheme approved by Government) have been asked to submit documents showing their exact claims upon the land, together with their accounts for the past four years.

A local agricultural committee has been formed at Kerbela to advise the Political Officer in agricultural matters on the Husainiyah Canal. Steps have been taken to provide the Political Officer with wheat and barley seed. "Progress reports from this area are particularly satisfactory."

Large quantities of seed have also been distributed on the Tigris and Diyalah. The Political Officer at Kut reports that the *fellah* are "rapidly settling to agricultural work." On the Diyalah, the Turkish methods of irrigation have been developed and improved, and "satisfaction is expressed at the methods of water distribution which are being followed."

(v) Customs.—"Customs are showing steady increase, and the receipts in Baghdad alone now average over 1,000*l.* a month. A proposal for the reorganisation of the Customs establishment is being prepared."

(vi) Supplies.—A shortage of supplies is reported in various districts, *e.g.*, Kadhimain, Ramadieh, Hillah, and Samawah. Special steps are being taken to deal with the situation.

(vii) Education.—Good reports received of the first batch of students from the Survey School. Three new primary schools opened, one of them (at Diwaniyah) started by the people themselves, assisted by a monthly grant from Government.

(viii) Waqfs.—"The administration of the Shiah Auqaf in Kerbela and Nejef under British supervision is showing excellent results, and for the first time since the occupation the accounts show a balance to credit."

(ix) Sanitation.—A comprehensive scheme for improving the water-supply at Baghdad is under consideration. The military authorities have detailed an Indian medical officer for civil work at Ramadieh; a dispensary has been opened there and all children vaccinated. "The townsfolk welcome vaccination."

(x) Memorial to Sir Stanley Maude.—The proposal to erect a suitable memorial to the late Sir Stanley Maude evoked great enthusiasm. More than Rs 150,000 (10,000*l.*) was subscribed for the purpose in a short time.

4. *Third Report, period ending* 15*th December* 1917.

(i) **Tribal Affairs.**—The paramount Chief of the Zubaid, the Sheikh of the Khafajah and other chiefs approached the Political Officer, Nasiriyeh, with a view to making their submission. A Jazirah Shammar chief returned from a year's visit to the Hejaz. He spoke with enthusiasm of his reception and of King Hussain's dealings with the Arabs in general. He visited Bin Saud on his return journey, and was hospitably entertained at Riadh.

(ii) **Affairs on the Euphrates.**—The Civil Commissioner visited Hillah, Tuwairij, Kufah, Nejef, and Kerbela during the first week of December. He saw "no likelihood "of any serious rising on the part of the Euphrates tribes, nine-tenths of whom "appreciate what is being done to promote agriculture, and are anxious for the "provision of administrative arrangements strong enough to ensure tranquillity and "enable them to sow and reap their crops undisturbed." At the same time he considered it "necessary to have sufficient show of effective authority to overawe the "unruly tenth and strengthen the position of the well-disposed majority."

It was decided in principle to control the Shinafiyah-Samawah line by placing detachments of troops at these places and maintaining a river patrol by gunboats from Nasiriyah; also to locate detachments at Hillah, Kifl, Kufah and Abu Sukhair, in addition to those already stationed at Mufraz (above Musaiyih) and at the Hindiyah Barrage. Sir P. Cox considered it undesirable to place troops at Nejef.

(iii) **Land Revenue.**—Cash receipts up to date amounted to Rs. 940,000 (63,000*l.*).

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(iv) Irrigation and Agriculture.—Estimate for the "forward area":—600,000 acres under cultivation with an estimated yield of 280,000 tons of grain. Question of providing a separate workshop for agricultural machinery under consideration.

Canals on the Euphrates reported to be "now almost all flowing," though there is still a shortage of cultivators in the Minor Canals district. Reports from the Diyalah valley less satisfactory; "in spite of all efforts to encourage cultivation, the amount "of land sown this year will not compare favourably with that which was under "cultivation last season." The area suffered from Turkish depredations during the summer, and the tribes consequently migrated from the canals. Many have not yet returned, and "agricultural labour is insufficient."

Measures have been taken to develop vegetable cultivation.

(v) Cotton.—A cotton expert (Mr. J. Thomas) arrived from India, and is touring the country to select a site for a cotton farm.

(vi) Education.—2,000 books received from India for use in schools.

A municipal primary school opened at Kadhimain, under the auspices of the Political Officer, the teachers being men selected by the local notables; 88 boys have been registered, and the average attendance is 78. The notables consider that, *if English were taught*, the number of scholars would at once increase. "In order to "supply the lack of teachers both for Kadhimain and for other places where a "Shiah teacher would be more acceptable than a Sunni, the Political Officer, "Kadhimain, has induced seven or eight young Shiahs to enter the Teachers' "Training School,[1] and is paying the cost of "their daily journey to Baghdad and back out "of private funds. Several of these students "show promise and should do well; and in any case, to have broken with the "tradition that only Sunnis should attend the Government Training School is a "notable advance."

[1] Apparently the "Normal School" mentioned above.

(vii) Sanitation.—Large numbers of children have been vaccinated in the Baqubah district (Diyalah valley).

5. *Fourth Report, period ending 31st December 1917.*

(i) Tribal Affairs.—Lieut.-Col. Magniac murdered near Mufraz on the Euphrates while engaged on a reconnaissance. Two of the principal culprits (belonging to a section of the Dulaim tribe) arrested.

Continued progress reported in the Hammar Lake region. "Some time must "elapse before the tribes of the Lower Euphrates can be described as model "agricultural communities, but the advance in that direction, which has been made "during the past year, is encouraging." These tribes were completely out of hand for many years before the war, and the condition of the marsh country was one of chaos. Thanks to the efforts of the British Political officers, order is being slowly restored, and inter-tribal disputes and blood-feuds are being successfully dealt with. "The closing of the Akaikah dam, which had been removed in order to facilitate our "transport, has been of the greatest benefit to the cultivators . . . . and the "appreciation which it has earned from the tribes is an asset politically." The crying need of the district is an experienced engineer to direct local irrigation schemes.

Conditions in Suq town generally satisfactory; but additional sanitary conveniences are required, and the Civil Dispensary lacks competent medical assistants.

A good deal of difficulty has been experienced at Chabaish (on the old Euphrates channel above its junction with Qurnah). The local Sheikh, whom we found in possession on our arrival, was a strong and popular Chief. But he persisted in pro-Turkish activities and had to be deported to India. His brother, whom we set up in his stead, was promptly murdered; and his nephew, to whom we next had recourse, proved quite incompetent. He was accordingly replaced by a *Mudir*; the latter was favourably received, and the situation at Chabaish "is already beginning to improve." The exiled Sheikh has behaved well in India, where he has been well treated, and it is hoped that it may be found possible to reinstate him after the war.

(ii) Affairs on the Persian Frontier.—Following on the occupation of Khaniqin, Major Soane was posted there as Political Officer and arrived on the 7th December.

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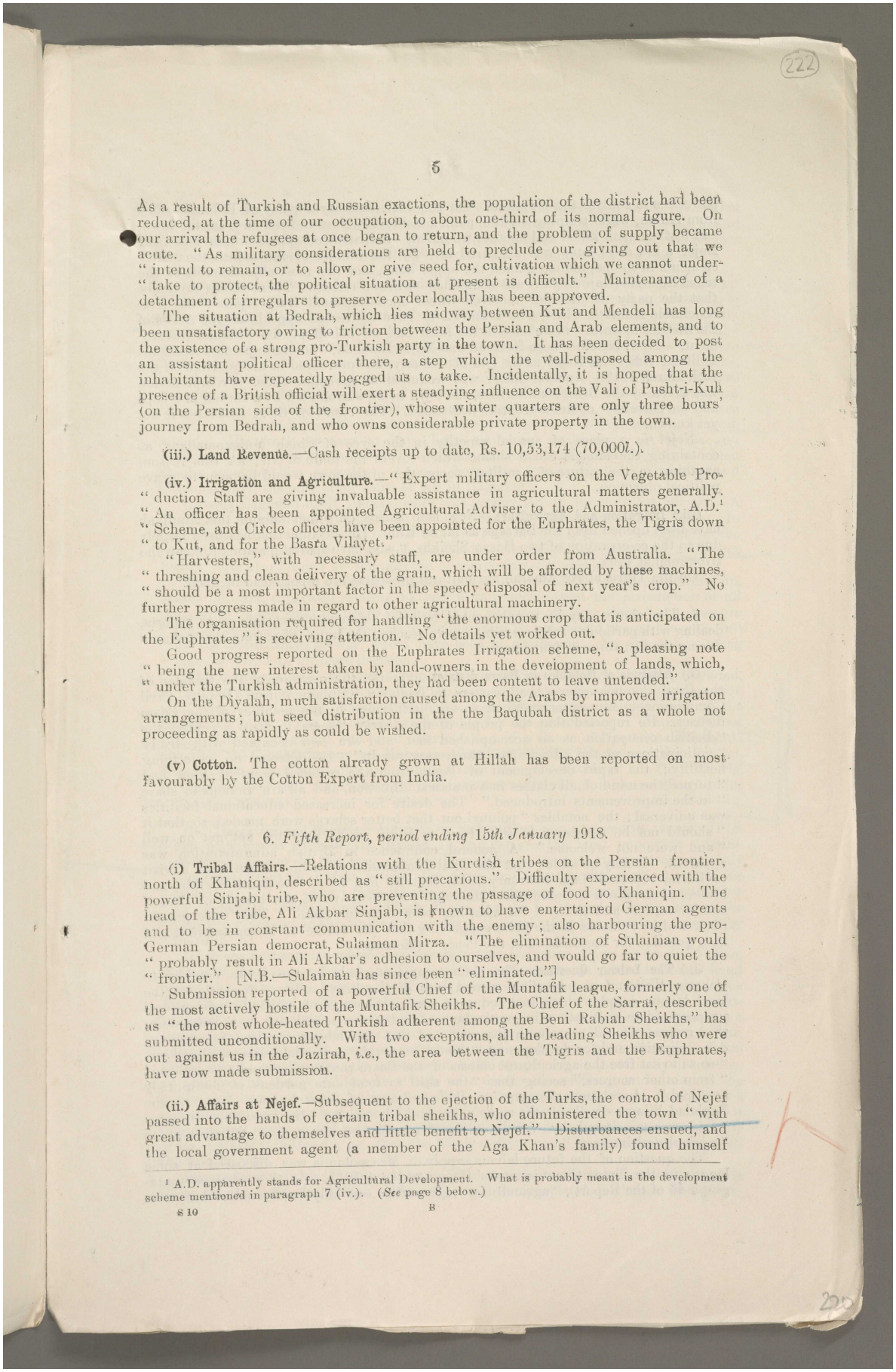

As a result of Turkish and Russian exactions, the population of the district had been reduced, at the time of our occupation, to about one-third of its normal figure. On our arrival the refugees at once began to return, and the problem of supply became acute. "As military considerations are held to preclude our giving out that we "intend to remain, or to allow, or give seed for, cultivation which we cannot under-"take to protect, the political situation at present is difficult." Maintenance of a detachment of irregulars to preserve order locally has been approved.

The situation at Bedrah, which lies midway between Kut and Mendeli has long been unsatisfactory owing to friction between the Persian and Arab elements, and to the existence of a strong pro-Turkish party in the town. It has been decided to post an assistant political officer there, a step which the well-disposed among the inhabitants have repeatedly begged us to take. Incidentally, it is hoped that the presence of a British official will exert a steadying influence on the Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh (on the Persian side of the frontier), whose winter quarters are only three hours' journey from Bedrah, and who owns considerable private property in the town.

(iii.) Land Revenue.—Cash receipts up to date, Rs. 10,53,174 (70,000*l.*).

(iv.) Irrigation and Agriculture.—"Expert military officers on the Vegetable Pro-"duction Staff are giving invaluable assistance in agricultural matters generally. "An officer has been appointed Agricultural Adviser to the Administrator, A.D.[1] "Scheme, and Circle officers have been appointed for the Euphrates, the Tigris down "to Kut, and for the Basra Vilayet."

"Harvesters," with necessary staff, are under order from Australia. "The "threshing and clean delivery of the grain, which will be afforded by these machines, "should be a most important factor in the speedy disposal of next year's crop." No further progress made in regard to other agricultural machinery.

The organisation required for handling "the enormous crop that is anticipated on the Euphrates" is receiving attention. No details yet worked out.

Good progress reported on the Euphrates Irrigation scheme, "a pleasing note "being the new interest taken by land-owners in the development of lands, which, "under the Turkish administration, they had been content to leave untended."

On the Diyalah, much satisfaction caused among the Arabs by improved irrigation arrangements; but seed distribution in the the Baqubah district as a whole not proceeding as rapidly as could be wished.

(v) Cotton. The cotton already grown at Hillah has been reported on most favourably by the Cotton Expert from India.

6. *Fifth Report, period ending 15th January 1918.*

(i) Tribal Affairs.—Relations with the Kurdish tribes on the Persian frontier, north of Khaniqin, described as "still precarious." Difficulty experienced with the powerful Sinjabi tribe, who are preventing the passage of food to Khaniqin. The head of the tribe, Ali Akbar Sinjabi, is known to have entertained German agents and to be in constant communication with the enemy; also harbouring the pro-German Persian democrat, Sulaiman Mirza. "The elimination of Sulaiman would "probably result in Ali Akbar's adhesion to ourselves, and would go far to quiet the "frontier." [N.B.—Sulaiman has since been "eliminated."]

Submission reported of a powerful Chief of the Muntafik league, formerly one of the most actively hostile of the Muntafik Sheikhs. The Chief of the Sarrai, described as "the most whole-heated Turkish adherent among the Beni Rabiah Sheikhs," has submitted unconditionally. With two exceptions, all the leading Sheikhs who were out against us in the Jazirah, *i.e.*, the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates, have now made submission.

(ii.) Affairs at Nejef.—Subsequent to the ejection of the Turks, the control of Nejef passed into the hands of certain tribal sheikhs, who administered the town "with great advantage to themselves and little benefit to Nejef." Disturbances ensued, and the local government agent (a member of the Aga Khan's family) found himself

[1] A.D. apparently stands for Agricultural Development. What is probably meant is the development scheme mentioned in paragraph 7 (iv.). (*See* page 8 below.)

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powerless to control the situation. On the 12th January a party of Indian cavalry from Kufah, while training in the plain outside Nejef, were fired on from the town, and lost one man killed and another wounded. A British aeroplane which flew over Nejef a few days later was also fired at. By the middle of the month the better elements in the population gained the upper hand, and the most objectionable of the tribal Sheikhs (Haji Atiyah) was compelled to beat a retreat. There seems no doubt that the party of disorder received direct encouragement from Ajaimi, the irreconcilable Muntafik Chief, who is known to have addressed appeals to the Arabs of the district to unite "in defence of the faith and on behalf of the Ottoman Government." News has since been received that Major Marshall, who was appointed Assistant Political Officer at Nejef at the end of January, was murdered in his quarters on the 19th March 1918. Another officer was wounded at the same time. Prompt action was taken by the British authorities, the town being surrounded by a cordon of troops and the surrender of the murderers demanded. The result of these measures is not yet known.

Nejef is a place of special sanctity in the eyes of Shiah Muhammadans, as containing the famous Shiah shrine which covers the tomb of Ali; for this reason, anything in the nature of a military occupation of the town would be open to grave political objection.

(iii.) Irrigation and Agriculture.—New loop canals on either side of the Hindiyah have been opened from the Barrage as far as Kifl. Their completion has been largely due to the co-operation of two Hasan Sheikhs, "who have spared no pains to keep the tribesmen at work."

On the Tigris above Amarah agricultural prospects are reported to be good.

7. The above may be supplemented by brief references to certain other reports, dealing with particular subjects, which have reached the India Office from Mesopotamia during the last three or four months.

(i.) **Attitude of Notables in Basra district.** On the the occasion of the transfer of the Civil Commissioner's headquarters to Baghdad, Captain Wilson (Deputy Civil Commissioner) was entertained at several gatherings by the notables of the Basra district. He reported that the people of the district "seem to have accepted the "British occupation as an accomplished fact, and are now occupied with lively "anticipations of the advantages which may result." He detected no underlying hostility; the rapid development of Basra from the material point of view had "turned the mind of all classes in a practical direction, and all are anxious to share "in the improvements introduced." The desire for increased educational facilities was universal; the notables "pointed out that better schools were needed, so that it "should not be necessary to send boys to India where they did not get on well "and were not welcome." A general confidence in British administration was apparent. It may be added that the Civil Commissioner, on his return from a visit to Basra, reported (14th February 1918) that he had found the local Sheikhs and leaders of the town communities "thoroughly appreciative of the benefit of British administration and grateful for what has been done for them." They were greatly disturbed by rumours in the press suggesting that the future of Mesopotamia would be a question for the decision of the Peace Conference.

(ii.) The Labour Question.—The main complaint made by the Basra notables to Captain Wilson (*see* preceding section) was of the heavy military demands on the local labour supply, which had led to a serious shortage of labour for agricultural purposes (date cultivation in particular). Landowners urged that our demands in this respect should cease with the war, and that the labour required for military demobilisation and for development "should be sought in Persia, India, or elsewhere, "so as to set free the agricultural classes of the Basra *sanjaq* who cannot be replaced "from other sources," seeing that "the skill to tend date gardens is not quickly acquired." A subsequent report on the enrolment of local Labour Corps in the Baghdad Vilayet dwells on the same point, and admits that "the inevitable drain on "labour necessitated by war conditions cannot be other that detrimental to "agricultural interests."

The question of the future labour supply of Mesopotamia was discussed at some length in the Trade Commissioners' Report of June 1917. As they observe (paragraph 46 of the Report), "agricultural regeneration can only be effected if labour is

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" available, not only for the construction of large irrigation works and for the excavation " of canal systems, but for the constant and exacting work upon the land, year in and " year out, which the extension of cultivation will involve." The problem is one that seems to require very careful handling if a satisfactory solution is to be reached.

(iii) Administration of Justice, Baghdad Vilayet.—A report was received in March 1918 describing the arrangements provisionally made for the judicial administration of the Baghdad Vilayet, pending the arrival of the Senior Judicial Officer (Mr. Bonham Carter) appointed from the Soudan. The following is a brief summary:—On the occupation of Baghdad nearly the whole personnel of the Turkish judiciary was found to have fled, and even the buildings and furniture of the Courts had been looted or destroyed. Most of the records of the Turkish *Tapu* (Land Administration) Department had also disappeared. It soon became necessary to introduce some form of judicial machinery, and a start was accordingly made by reopening a "Peace Court" at Baghdad, for which a suitable Judge was found in the person of an Arab notable. His work appears to have been eminently satisfactory. A *Qadhi* and Assistant *Qadhi* were also appointed to act in all Sunni cases, and in cases in which Shiahs accepted him as judge. Appeals from these Courts lay to that of the Civil Commissioner, the only other court of law in Baghdad.

Outside Baghdad itself, judicial work was largely left to the Political officers. A *Qadhi* was appointed at Baqubah to decide "Shara" (*i.e.*, religious law) cases. In the Hillah district the Political Officer was provided with a judicial assistant in the person of a young Arab of one of the leading Baghdad families; and a "Peace Board" was also formed for the purpose of composing disputes out of court.

Owing to the many difficulties arising out of questions of tenure, proprietorship, claims for rent, &c., cases relating to *land* were removed from the jurisdiction of all the courts. Land suits are heard exclusively by political officers, whose "enquiries are " limited to an endeavour to restore to, or maintain in, possession the person who, but " for the disturbances of war, would have been in possession. No attempt is being " made to reach an ultimate decision."

[Mr. Bonham Carter actually assumed charge as Senior Judicial Officer, Baghdad, in October 1917, and before the end of the year (28th December 1917) a proclamation was issued by General Marshall formally re-establishing the Civil Courts of the Baghdad Vilayet. The proclamation provides for the institution of Courts of First Instance in the Baghdad and other districts, and of a Court of Appeal at Baghdad: also for the establishment of Muhammadan Law Courts throughout the Vilayet. Criminal cases and land suits are excluded from the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts. It is understood that the Court of First Instance at Baghdad is now sitting under a British President.]

(iv) Irrigation and Supply.—A report on this subject was received in January 1918. "The distribution of water is beyond all comparison the most important admini- " strative problem in the Iraq. Scientific control of the two rivers means not only " economic progress but it is also the first step towards the pacification of the " tribes . . . . Apart from its administrative aspect, the irrigation question has " an immediate bearing upon military needs, and the food-supplying capacity of the " Iraq is an element in the universal problem of combating the shortage caused by " the war."

Of the comprehensive scheme for Mesopotamian irrigation drawn up by Sir William Willcocks, the construction of the Hindiyah barrage was the only item taken in hand before the war. The barrage itself had been completed and handed over to the Turkish authorities early in 1914, but the supplementary works on which its irrigational value depended had barely been begun. After the British occupation, an engineering expert was sent to examine the barrage in May 1917. He reported that, unless the existing works received proper care and supervision, great damage and loss would result; and he strongly recommended the completion of the Hindiyah scheme, as planned by Sir W. Willcocks, "both as a means of satisfying and quieting the tribes and because of the increase of food and revenue that would result." His recommendations were sanctioned by the military authorities. It was estimated that the proposed works would cost Rs. 1,000,000 (67,000*l.*), but would bring in a revenue of Rs. 1,400,000 (93,000*l.*), *i.e.*, that the whole outlay would be more than covered by the first harvest.

Improvements in the Husainiyah canal, from which the Kerbela district derives its water supply, were undertaken at the request of the people of Kerbela. The recon-

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struction of the dam on the Sakhlawiyah river, which joins the Euphrates midway between Feluja and Ramadieh, has also been carried out.

As the summer of 1917 advanced the problem of food supply became increasingly urgent; and it was found necessary, both in the interests of the Army of Occupation and of the native population, to devise means of developing agriculture so as to ensure a good harvest in 1918. After careful consideration a scheme was sanctioned providing for the survey of canals commanding an area of 600,000 acres, mainly in the Hindiyah vicinity, and for advances to cultivators both in seed and in cash for the purchase of agricultural implements. Expenditure was limited to a maximum of 400,000*l*. The probable production of grain was estimated at over 300,000 tons, of which the total value of the Government share would be not less than 500,000*l*. "After the needs of the cultivators have been supplied there will still be a large "surplus, amounting to rather more than a third of the whole crop, which will be "available for sale." Supervision of the working of the scheme was entrusted to the Revenue Department, with a *personnel* strengthened by additional political officers and native employés, and working locally through the existing system of *Mamurs* in sub-divisions of districts.

It may be added that the general control of irrigation in the occupied territories was placed in January 1918 under a military Directorate, subordinate the General-Officer Commanding in Chief. This step was taken with the concurrence of the Civil Commissioner, who considered that it would "adequately safeguard the interests of the Civil administration."

(v) **Restriction of Alienation of Land.**—A notification was issued by the Civil Commissioner in November 1917, prohibiting the alienation of immovable property to persons "other than Arabs of the occupied territories," except with the previous sanction in writing of the military authorities. The object of this measure was "to prevent far-reaching changes in land ownership, until the agrarian question can be studied and dealt with as a whole." The whole agrarian question is full of difficulties, owing partly to the uncertainty of title-deeds, &c., registered under the Turkish régime, and partly to the conflicting claims of the tribes on the one hand and the landlords on the other. "All who have come into touch with this difficulty are agreed that it lies at the bottom of the ultimate pacification of tribal areas." It is considered essential not to complicate the issue by allowing estates to pass out of the hands of Arab landlords into those of foreign speculators or of the money-owing classes, which consist almost entirely of Jewish and Christian merchants.

8. On the 1st February 1918 (the latest date for which returns have been received) the number of gazetted officers serving under the Civil Commissioner, Mesopotamia, or attached to the civil side of the administration of the occupied territories, amounted to something over 100. The table below gives particulars as to the sources from which these officers were drawn:—

——	Indian Army (including Reserve of Officers).	British Army.	Indian Civil Departments.	Non-Indian Services and Miscellaneous.
Central Administration	1	—	5	1
Baghdad Vilayet	28	9	8	5[1]
Basra	17	13	9	—
South-West Persia	2	—	6	1
Total	48	22	28	7

[1] Including four officers from Egypt and the Soudan.

J. E. S.

Political Department, India Office,
12th April 1918.

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Sir P Cox April 22 1918

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EASTERN COMMITTEE.

The Future of Mesopotamia.

CABINET [E.C. 173.] WHITEHALL GARDENS

(Note by Sir Percy Cox.)

I.

1. Before dealing with lesser issues I should like to state the position as I understand it to be at present, to make sure that I start from the right premises.

(i) In the proclamation which we issued on our arrival at Baghdad we announced to the people, and, in the Press, to the world at large, that we came as friends and not as conquerors, to emancipate the inhabitants of the country from the oppressive rule of the Turks, and to assist them to work out their destiny on more auspicious lines. Incidentally we invited them to come forward and take part in the administration.

(ii) In the announcement of policy made by His Majesty's Government in the telegram of 29th March 1917, from the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy, it was stated that, whereas it was contemplated that the Basrah Vilayet (as then defined) should "remain permanently under British administration" and annexation was definitely indicated, the Baghdad Vilayet, on the other hand, was to be formed into an Arab State or Province under British protection, in everything but name.

2. During the year that has since elapsed the general situation has undergone considerable development, an important feature of which has been the entry of America into the war, and in the latter connection certain fundamental principles have been enunciated for which America in particular and the other Allies in general are considered to be fighting. Of these principles the one which particularly concerns us at the moment requires that the peoples of the countries interested or affected should be allowed to determine their own form of Government. Recently the Prime Minister has publicly stated that the destinies of Palestine, Mesopotamia, &c., will be decided at the Peace Conference.

3. I gather that it is now proposed to deliberate as to what particular steps or line of action are advisable in order to square our working policy with the above principle and announcements, in case we should have to adhere to them in spite of the fact that Germany has not respected them in dealing with conquered territory in Russia.

4. I assume that, if at the end of the war we find ourselves in a sufficiently strong position, and in effective administrative control, we should still hope to annex the Basrah Vilayet and exercise a veiled protectorate over the Baghdad Vilayet; but it is recognised that the question of annexation has become exceedingly difficult *vis-à-vis* the President of the United States, who will presumably exercise the most potent influence at the Peace Conference. Our original proposals must consequently be regarded as a counsel of perfection, and we must be prepared to accept something less. At any rate, however, we have the strongest grounds, in view of our assurances to the inhabitants and the millions of money we have sunk in making the Port, for standing out for the annexation of Basrah and from thence to the sea, with a small block of territory necessary to round off the enclave. As regards the rest of the occupied territories, the essential aim must be to effect the complete elimination of Turkish suzerainty, and it is assumed that we shall leave no stone unturned to achieve that end, only tolerating its retention in the last resort.

5. In any case we must set our faces against the admission of the slightest Turkish element or participation in the administration. In this connection, I should mention that when I was in Cairo it was suggested that, as events were shaping, we

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might be obliged or decide to come to some compromise with Turkey at any moment; I also learnt there of Sherif Faisal's secret overtures to the Turks; and when asked my opinion I expressed the view that if in the last resort we were compelled to come to some compromise with Turkey I did not consider that the retention of nominal Turkish suzerainty need be considered altogether incompatible with the realisation of our practical aims, always provided that the country were safeguarded against the least control or interference by Turkey in the administration. As cases in point we have the precedent of Egypt and the more pertinent one of Koweit. The fact is that the bulk of the people of the country are not concerned with abstract theories or niceties of international principle; for example, as long as the Shaikh of Koweit feels assured that his interests are under our practical protection, and are safe in our hands, he does not trouble his head as to whether in the distance Turkish suzerainty exists or not. I think the position would be the same in the case of the inhabitants of Iraq, where nine-tenths of them are altogether inarticulate, and all they are concerned with is the manner of their treatment by the Government actually in control of Baghdad. As regards the remaining tenth, who are capable of understanding the real issues, they would of course not be completely reassured (supposing that the fiction of Turkish suzerainty were being maintained) unless they were absolutely safeguarded against the participation of Turkey in the administration. I assume, therefore, that we are on common ground in considering that if the Turks were to be allowed to retain the suzerainty of Mesopotamia (*minus* Basrah) they must, at any rate, be completely eliminated from the administration, and that it must be our mission to ensure that Iraq obtains the administration which the country needs and which her future demands. There must be no Turkish Commissioner and no Turkish flag. A special flag must be devised.

6. Alluding for a moment to the question of relative status, as between the Basrah and Baghdad Vilayets respectively, it is my very definite opinion that a homogeneous administration in all practical aspects is not in any way incompatible with a technical difference of political status, and that it is essential in the interests of the country that the administration of both Vilayets should be uniform, that of the Basrah Vilayet being brought into line with Baghdad in due course.

7. In considering the precise form of the administration there are several alternatives to be weighed in the balance, and attached to each alternative are subsidiary difficulties which need consideration. For the moment we will consider the Baghdad Vilayet only, on the hypothesis that Basrah Vilayet can be made to conform to it at a convenient juncture.

8. The question of the "Arab façade" offers no insurmountable difficulties to my mind. The essential problem is the determination of status to be assigned to the province of Iraq. It is agreed that the administration should be under British guidance, and the more complete the British control can be, the better for the country. In fact, unless it is assured the country has no future, for it would be impossible to get money for its development unless investors are satisfied that their interests are fully safeguarded, a condition which cannot be assured except under protective British supervision. How is that supervision to be achieved? The most satisfactory solution would seem to be government by a High Commissioner assisted by a Council, formed partly of the Heads of the most important Departments of State, and partly of representative non-official members from among the inhabitants. But the foreign relations of such a government must obviously lie in British hands, and it would thus be practically a British protectorate.

9. If such an arrangement could be achieved and recognised by the Powers, well and good; but if not, then the existence of a titular native ruler would become a necessity. I do not think it would be impossible to find one, but the difficulty is that if the administration were given such a form it might be difficult for it to avoid being hampered by capitulations, and the right to consular representation by Foreign Powers; the former contingency being one which we should obviously do our utmost to escape.

10. If it is decided that we should have a nominal headpiece to the administration to conduct his own foreign affairs under British guidance, I think, as I have said above, that it would be possible to find a local candidate, and I cannot see the least

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justification or necessity for introducing one of the family of the Sherif of Mecca to play this role. I have always ventured to deplore the fact that the discussion of the future of Iraq with the Sherif, as one of the pawns in the negotiations with him, was ever permitted. I have also expressed my views plainly on the political and practical objections to recognising him as King of Arabia and Sovereign of a group of Confederate States. In my opinion a more reasonable solution would be that he should remain King of Hejaz, and, if desired, have his own representative with Foreign Powers, while the foreign relations of the Iraq State, and of the other confederate Arab Potentates or States, should lie in our hands. For the Arab Ruler of the Iraq State a title might be devised conveying something less than King, *e.g.*, Sultan or Hakim (Ruler), and all the Confederate Rulers would undoubtedly pay appropriate deference to King Hussein as Sherif of the Holy Places in the Hejaz. If considered essential in view of their commitments to the Sherif, His Majesty's Government might even decide to guarantee the payment to him of an annual subsidy in some form from the revenues of Iraq, as recognition of his services to the cause of Arab independence during the war; or, as a religious contribution towards the upkeep of the Holy Places.

II.

Observations on the more Detailed Issues.

11. *Can any Arab authority, dynastic or representative, be discovered that will command the necessary moral sanction in the country as a whole? What weight does King Hussein or his family carry with the local Arabs?*

In my opinion, we have in the Naqib of Baghdad and his family a dynastic element which would carry the necessary moral sanction, in the Baghdad Vilayet undoubtedly, and, in my opinion, in Iraq as a whole. I believe they could be brought to identify themselves with British interests. The present Naqib himself possesses a very great prestige and influence not only in Mesopotamia but among the Mohammedans of India, and I feel sure his selection as Head of the State would be regarded as an appropriate solution, and be received with favour throughout India as well as Mesopotamia. The Naqib considers himself superior, in purity of descent and nobility, to the Sherif, and no less important, and the introduction of a relative of the Sherif of Mecca as Head of the State of Iraq would, in my opinion, be greatly misunderstood and resented by the Naqib and his family, and thus tend to alienate our most potent element of influence over the Arabs of Iraq. King Hussein and his family carry no weight in Iraq, where only the most distant interest is taken in him. In the early days of the Sherif's entry into the lists, when the question of giving him military help was being discussed, the General Officer Commanding, Mesopotamia, was asked by the War Office whether the failure or collapse of the Sherif would prejudice our military or political interests in Mesopotamia. We replied after deliberate consideration that the inhabitants had not been at all moved by his successes, and would, in our opinion, regard his failure with complete indifference.

12. *What materials exist for setting up a Local Administration or Administrations of a suitable character?*

There is adequate Arab or local material available or in the making for the subordinate services of the administration. The difficulty we are confronted with at present, and must be for some time to come, is to find individuals suitable for higher posts in the administration, *e.g.*, Mutessarifs, Qaimaqams, such as would be filled in the Indian administration by gazetted officers—Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners. The reason is that under the Turkish *régime* almost all these posts were filled by pure Turks; these have been eliminated, and there is at present no one to fill their place. Wherever we have tried ex-officers of the late Administration they have almost invariably proved unsatisfactory; they are in fact saturated with the evil traditions of the *régime* in which they have been brought up and trained. Until we can create this element, enlisting as far as we are able the assistance of the Egyptian and Soudan Administrations, we must rely mainly on young British officers. I may mention here that whereas I have done my utmost to employ experimentally any inhabitants of the country at all likely to be suitable, this laudable endeavour finds no favour with the local inhabitants concerned. I am continually appealed to by them not to place the conduct of their affairs in the hands of ex-officials of the late *régime*,

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even though they be Arabs of the country, on the ground that they have all been born and bred in a vicious school of corruption and cannot rise above the evil traditions of the past. The population, from the cultivator to the well-to-do merchant or land-owner, infinitely prefers to be handled by a British officer, who of course employs Arab subordinates.

13. I fully realise the importance of finding or creating a type suitable for employment in the superior posts, but the fact is that it does not at present exist. In the more subordinate posts our personnel is almost entirely indigenous. Where other elements, Indian or English, are employed it is almost entirely in the purely clerical or technical branches of the Headquarter Administration, *e.g.*, clerical and cypher branches, English branch of Government Press, &c. The following is a rough analysis of employees in the Baghdad Vilayet :—

Arab, Armenian, Christian, Jew, ex-employees of the late Government taken over by us	210
Newly sanctioned by us :—	
Mohammedans of Iraq	17
Domiciled Persians of Iraq	16
Jews of Iraq	60
Christians, Syrians, Chaldeans	132
Egyptians	3
Indian Christians	19
British-born Europeans (Government offices, Government Press, &c.)	35

14. The highest type of official corresponding to those who function as Heads of Departments and Ministers of State does not exist in Mesopotamia ; they will have to be imported.

15. *To what extent is the Administration based on Indian models, and to what extent is British supervision indispensable ?*

Except in that the "Iraq Occupied Territories" Code of Law applied in Basrah is based on English and Indian Law (just as the Soudan Code is) the administration is not in any way based on Indian models. We have taken over the structure of the Turkish administrative system as we found it, substituting British officers for Mutessarifs, Qaimaqams, &c., but for the present designating them Political Officers and Assistant Political Officers, while in the posts which, under the Turks, would have been filled by an official of the status of Mudir, we have been able to employ natives of the country subject to the exception that wherever British garrisons or troops are located it is essential, owing to the difficulty of the language question, and the fact that the local product cannot be left to deal with our troops, to use British officers, and we thus require more of them now than will be necessary in the permanent administration, after the troops have left. But apart from that, as I have explained above, until we can produce the necessary type of superior Arab official more extensive and close supervision by British officers will continue to be necessary.

16. In my opinion, with the unavoidable exception of the military *régime* of the Military Governors in the large towns, the administration as carried on now in Basrah and Baghdad Vilayets is that to which the people, both urban and rural, have been accustomed, except that the element of corruption is greatly reduced.

17. The branches of the administration in which we are necessarily most backward, and in regard to which our hands are in a great measure tied during the military occupation by military considerations and exigencies, are the Civil Judicial and Civil Medical.

18. As regards the former, Mr. Bonham Carter, the Judicial Officer who was lately appointed from Egypt, has only been with me a short time, but is now getting into the saddle. I have submitted to the India Office a copy of proposals for a temporary judicial system for the Baghdad Vilayet formulated by him in consultation with me. It seems to me just what is required. Meanwhile, such local law and justice as has been essential has been administered by my district Political Officers with simple civil

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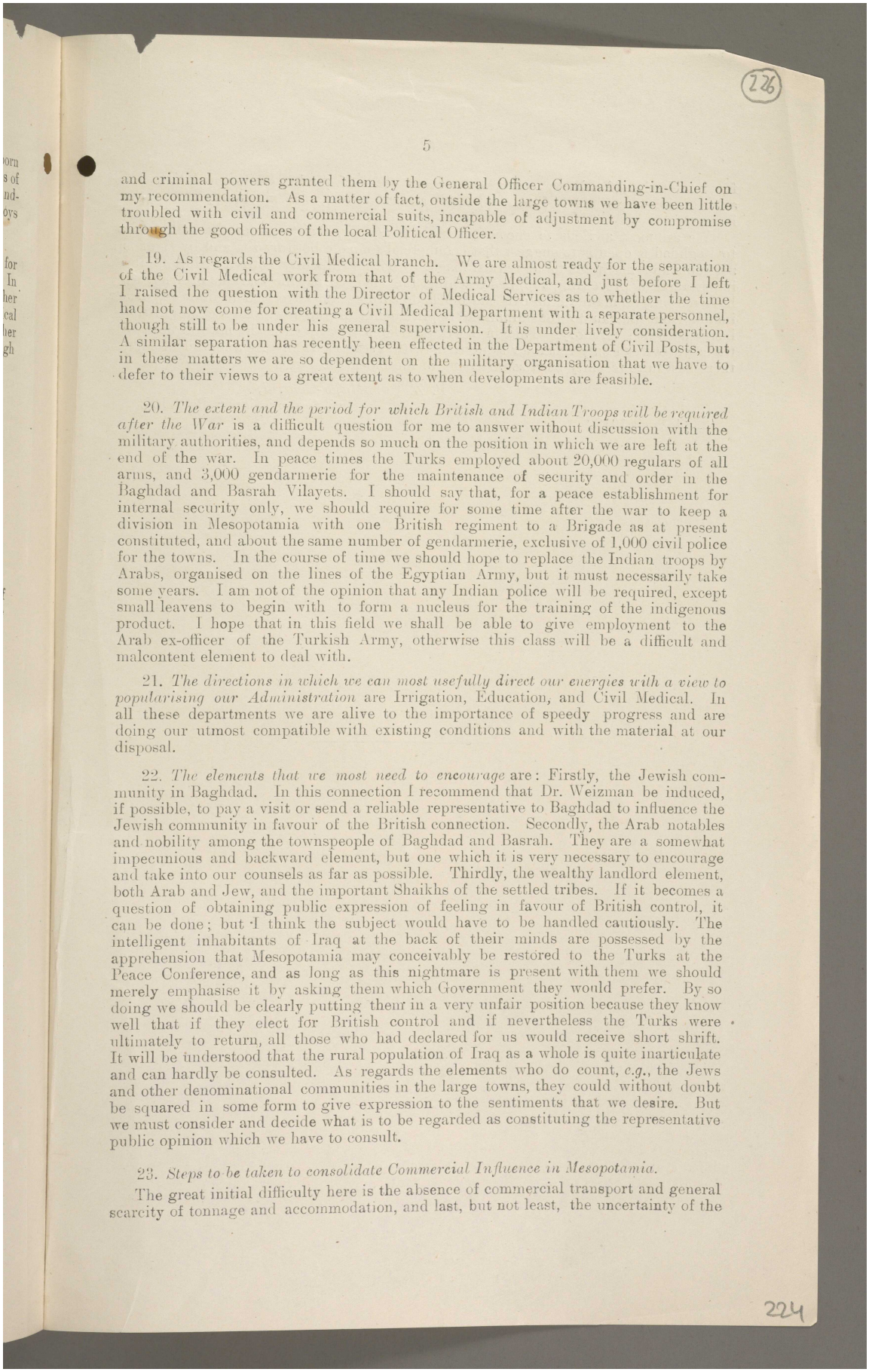

and criminal powers granted them by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief on my recommendation. As a matter of fact, outside the large towns we have been little troubled with civil and commercial suits, incapable of adjustment by compromise through the good offices of the local Political Officer.

19. As regards the Civil Medical branch. We are almost ready for the separation of the Civil Medical work from that of the Army Medical, and just before I left I raised the question with the Director of Medical Services as to whether the time had not now come for creating a Civil Medical Department with a separate personnel, though still to be under his general supervision. It is under lively consideration. A similar separation has recently been effected in the Department of Civil Posts, but in these matters we are so dependent on the military organisation that we have to defer to their views to a great extent as to when developments are feasible.

20. *The extent and the period for which British and Indian Troops will be required after the War* is a difficult question for me to answer without discussion with the military authorities, and depends so much on the position in which we are left at the end of the war. In peace times the Turks employed about 20,000 regulars of all arms, and 3,000 gendarmerie for the maintenance of security and order in the Baghdad and Basrah Vilayets. I should say that, for a peace establishment for internal security only, we should require for some time after the war to keep a division in Mesopotamia with one British regiment to a Brigade as at present constituted, and about the same number of gendarmerie, exclusive of 1,000 civil police for the towns. In the course of time we should hope to replace the Indian troops by Arabs, organised on the lines of the Egyptian Army, but it must necessarily take some years. I am not of the opinion that any Indian police will be required, except small leavens to begin with to form a nucleus for the training of the indigenous product. I hope that in this field we shall be able to give employment to the Arab ex-officer of the Turkish Army, otherwise this class will be a difficult and malcontent element to deal with.

21. *The directions in which we can most usefully direct our energies with a view to popularising our Administration* are Irrigation, Education, and Civil Medical. In all these departments we are alive to the importance of speedy progress and are doing our utmost compatible with existing conditions and with the material at our disposal.

22. *The elements that we most need to encourage* are: Firstly, the Jewish community in Baghdad. In this connection I recommend that Dr. Weizman be induced, if possible, to pay a visit or send a reliable representative to Baghdad to influence the Jewish community in favour of the British connection. Secondly, the Arab notables and nobility among the townspeople of Baghdad and Basrah. They are a somewhat impecunious and backward element, but one which it is very necessary to encourage and take into our counsels as far as possible. Thirdly, the wealthy landlord element, both Arab and Jew, and the important Shaikhs of the settled tribes. If it becomes a question of obtaining public expression of feeling in favour of British control, it can be done; but I think the subject would have to be handled cautiously. The intelligent inhabitants of Iraq at the back of their minds are possessed by the apprehension that Mesopotamia may conceivably be restored to the Turks at the Peace Conference, and as long as this nightmare is present with them we should merely emphasise it by asking them which Government they would prefer. By so doing we should be clearly putting them in a very unfair position because they know well that if they elect for British control and if nevertheless the Turks were ultimately to return, all those who had declared for us would receive short shrift. It will be understood that the rural population of Iraq as a whole is quite inarticulate and can hardly be consulted. As regards the elements who do count, *e.g.*, the Jews and other denominational communities in the large towns, they could without doubt be squared in some form to give expression to the sentiments that we desire. But we must consider and decide what is to be regarded as constituting the representative public opinion which we have to consult.

23. *Steps to be taken to consolidate Commercial Influence in Mesopotamia.*

The great initial difficulty here is the absence of commercial transport and general scarcity of tonnage and accommodation, and last, but not least, the uncertainty of the

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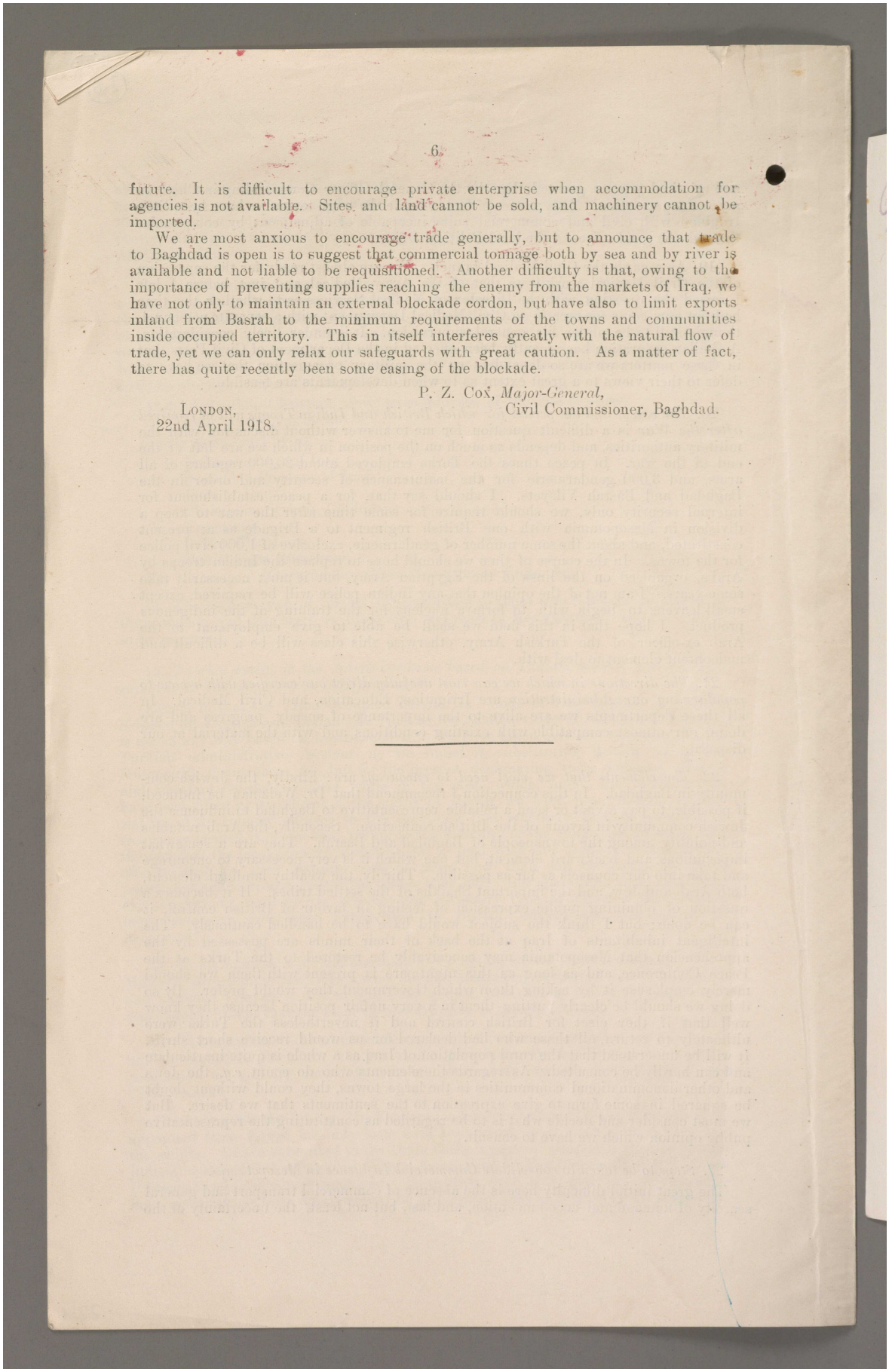
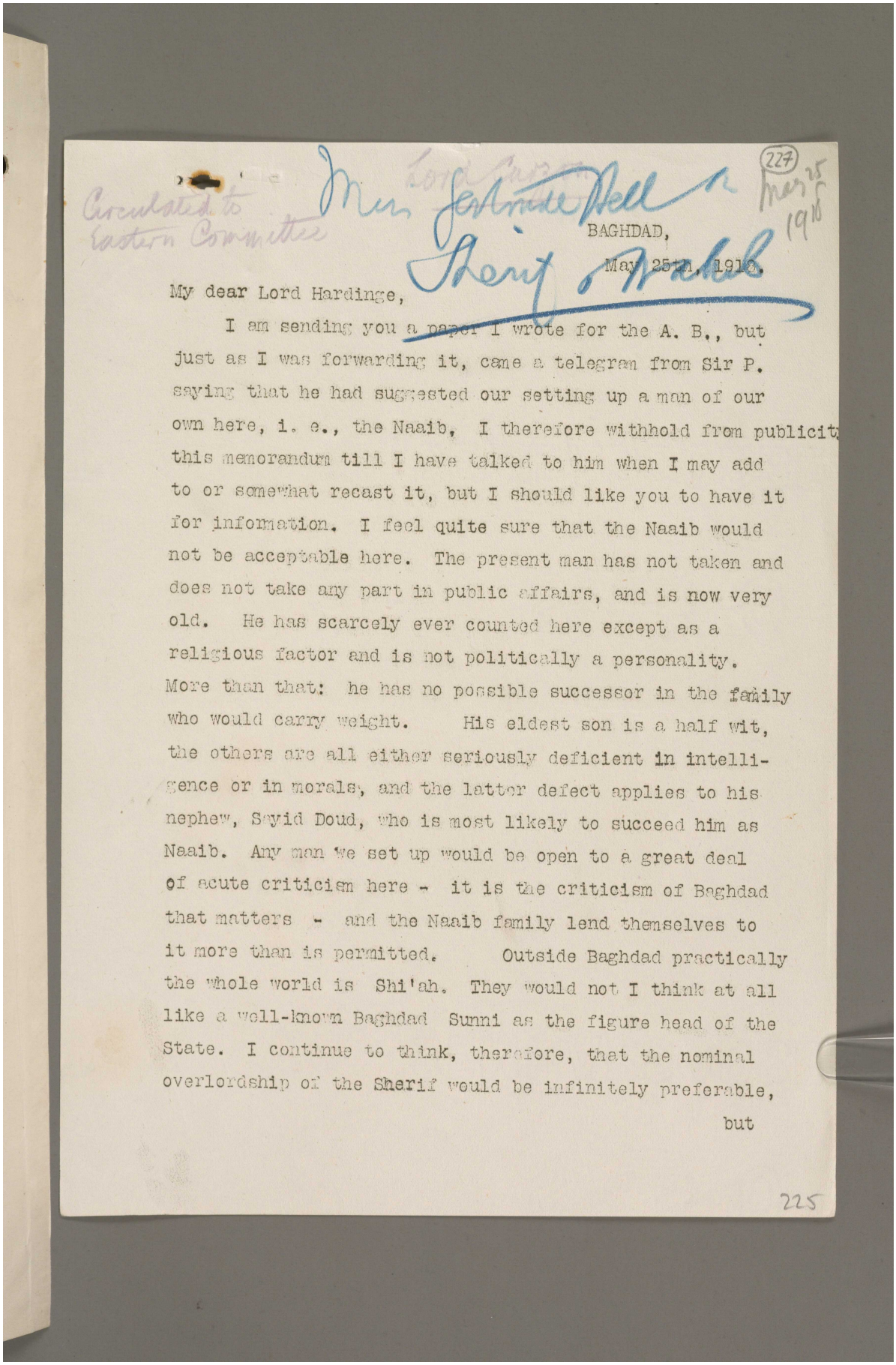


future. It is difficult to encourage private enterprise when accommodation for agencies is not available. Sites and land cannot be sold, and machinery cannot be imported.

We are most anxious to encourage trade generally, but to announce that trade to Baghdad is open is to suggest that commercial tonnage both by sea and by river is available and not liable to be requisitioned. Another difficulty is that, owing to the importance of preventing supplies reaching the enemy from the markets of Iraq, we have not only to maintain an external blockade cordon, but have also to limit exports inland from Basrah to the minimum requirements of the towns and communities inside occupied territory. This in itself interferes greatly with the natural flow of trade, yet we can only relax our safeguards with great caution. As a matter of fact, there has quite recently been some easing of the blockade.

P. Z. Cox, *Major-General*,
Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

London,
22nd April 1918.



Circulated to Eastern Committee

Miss Gertrude Bell

(227) May 25 1916

BAGHDAD,

May 25th, 1916.

My dear Lord Hardinge,

I am sending you a paper I wrote for the A. B., but just as I was forwarding it, came a telegram from Sir P. saying that he had suggested our setting up a man of our own here, i. e., the Naaib. I therefore withhold from publicity this memorandum till I have talked to him when I may add to or somewhat recast it, but I should like you to have it for information. I feel quite sure that the Naaib would not be acceptable here. The present man has not taken and does not take any part in public affairs, and is now very old. He has scarcely ever counted here except as a religious factor and is not politically a personality. More than that: he has no possible successor in the family who would carry weight. His eldest son is a half wit, the others are all either seriously deficient in intelligence or in morals, and the latter defect applies to his nephew, Sayid Doud, who is most likely to succeed him as Naaib. Any man we set up would be open to a great deal of acute criticism here - it is the criticism of Baghdad that matters - and the Naaib family lend themselves to it more than is permitted. Outside Baghdad practically the whole world is Shi'ah. They would not I think at all like a well-known Baghdad Sunni as the figure head of the State. I continue to think, therefore, that the nominal overlordship of the Sherif would be infinitely preferable, but

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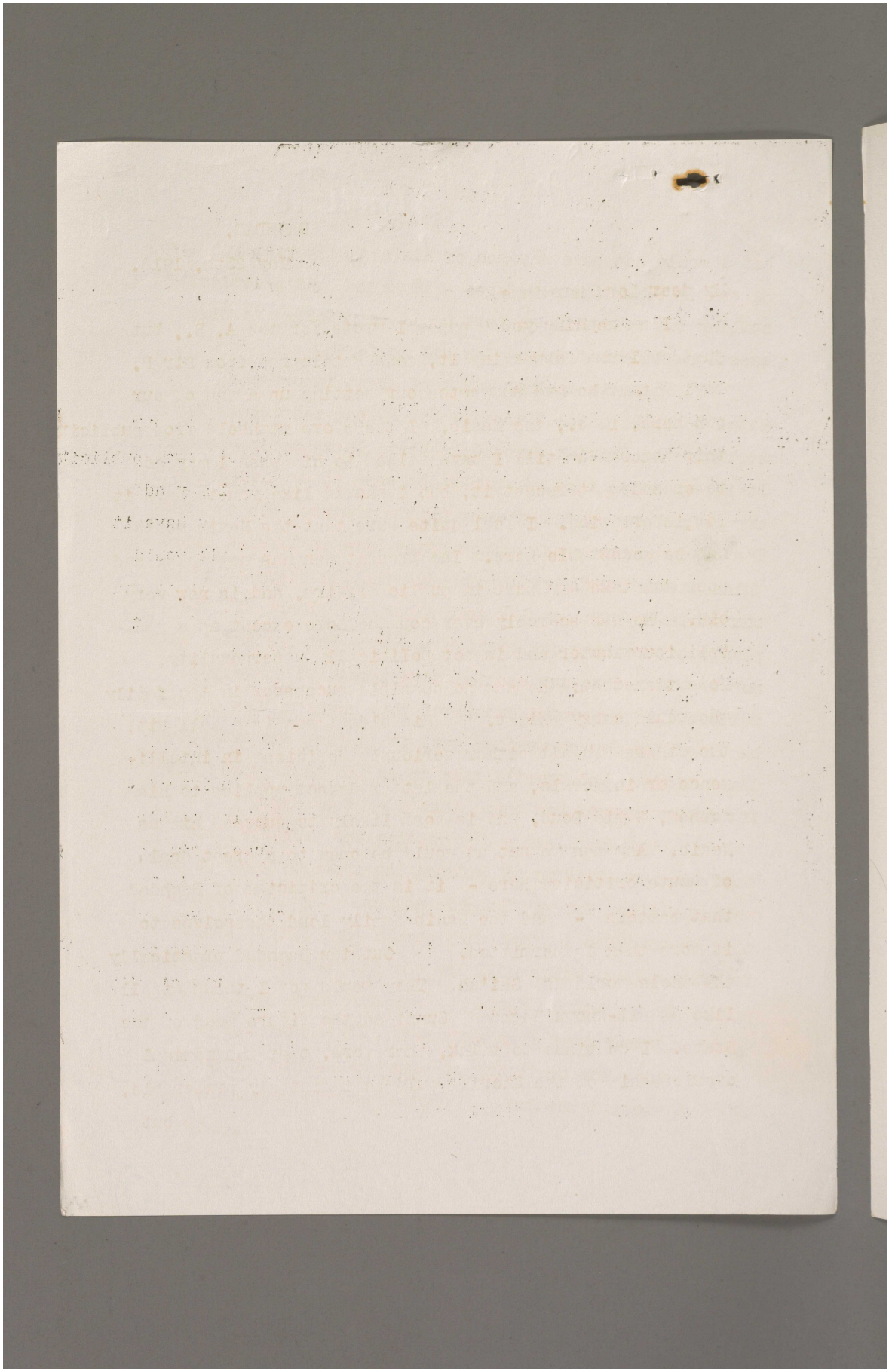

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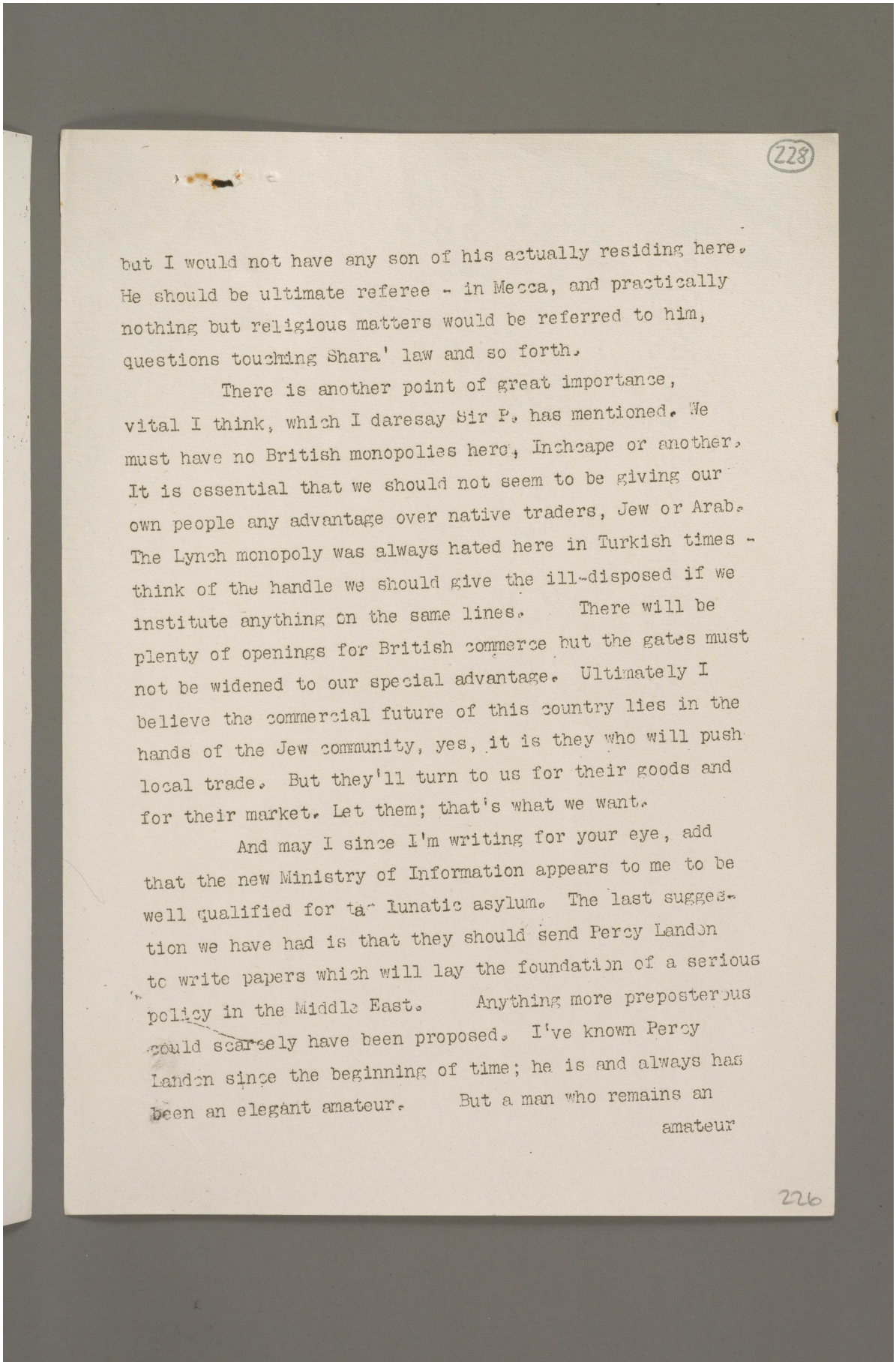

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but I would not have any son of his actually residing here. He should be ultimate referee - in Mecca, and practically nothing but religious matters would be referred to him, questions touching Shara' law and so forth.

There is another point of great importance, vital I think, which I daresay Sir P. has mentioned. We must have no British monopolies here, Inchcape or another. It is essential that we should not seem to be giving our own people any advantage over native traders, Jew or Arab. The Lynch monopoly was always hated here in Turkish times - think of the handle we should give the ill-disposed if we institute anything on the same lines. There will be plenty of openings for British commerce but the gates must not be widened to our special advantage. Ultimately I believe the commercial future of this country lies in the hands of the Jew community, yes, it is they who will push local trade. But they'll turn to us for their goods and for their market. Let them; that's what we want.

And may I since I'm writing for your eye, add that the new Ministry of Information appears to me to be well qualified for ta[illegible] lunatic asylum. The last suggestion we have had is that they should send Percy Landon to write papers which will lay the foundation of a serious policy in the Middle East. Anything more preposterous could scarcely have been proposed. I've known Percy Landon since the beginning of time; he is and always has been an elegant amateur. But a man who remains an amateur

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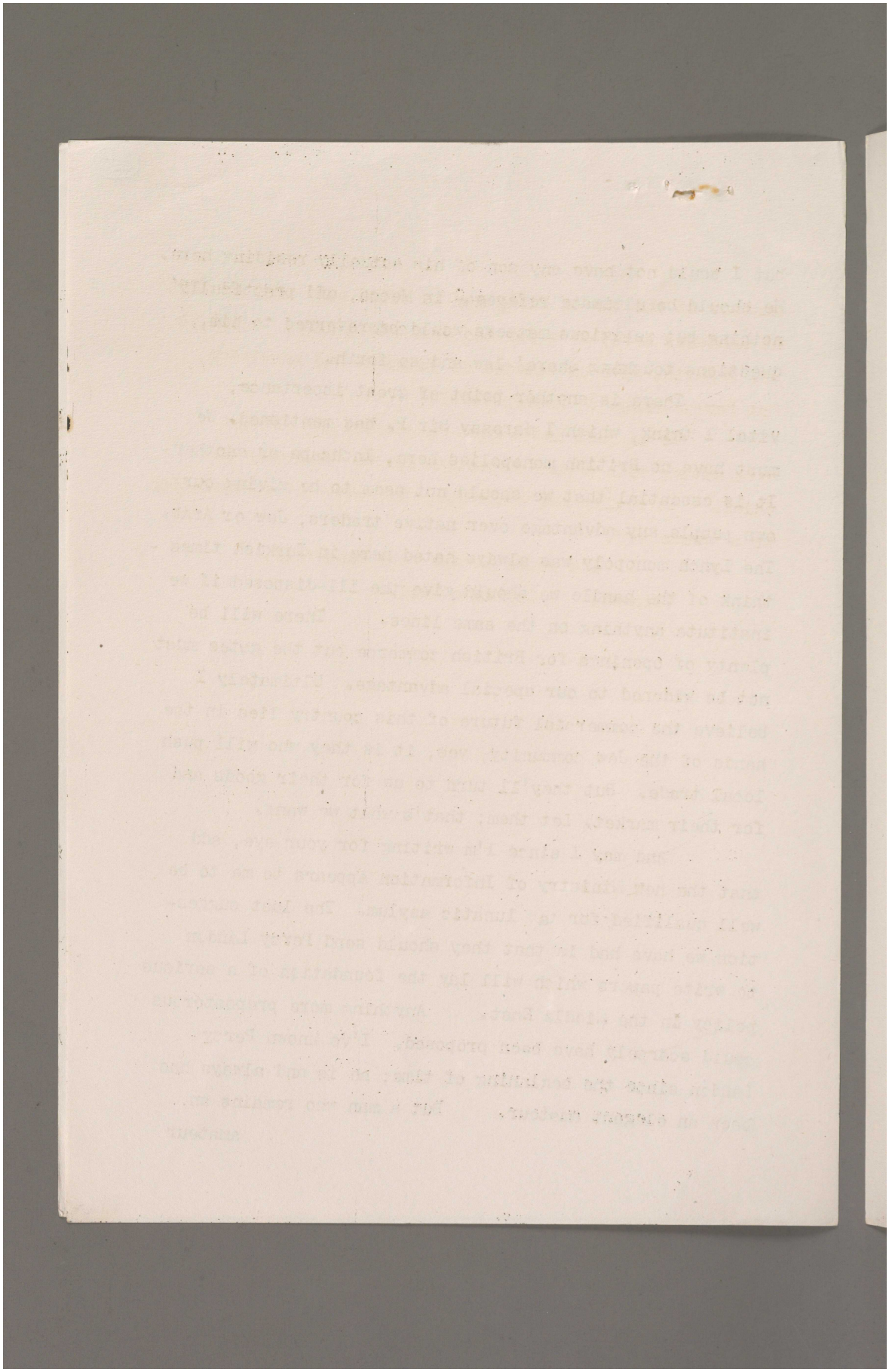

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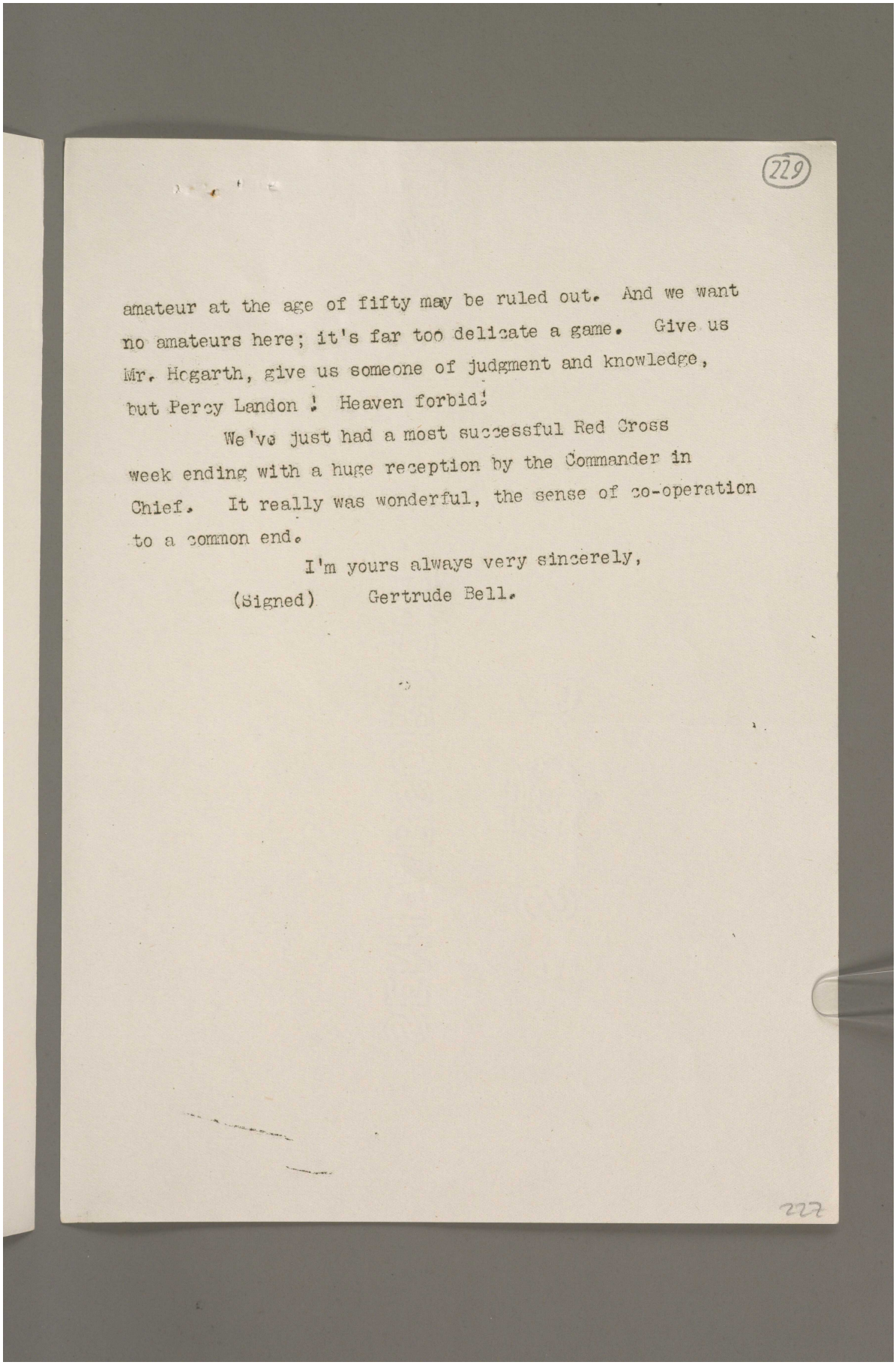

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amateur at the age of fifty may be ruled out. And we want no amateurs here; it's far too delicate a game. Give us Mr. Hogarth, give us someone of judgment and knowledge, but Percy Landon ! Heaven forbid!

We've just had a most successful Red Cross week ending with a huge reception by the Commander in Chief. It really was wonderful, the sense of co-operation to a common end.

I'm yours always very sincerely,

(Signed) Gertrude Bell.

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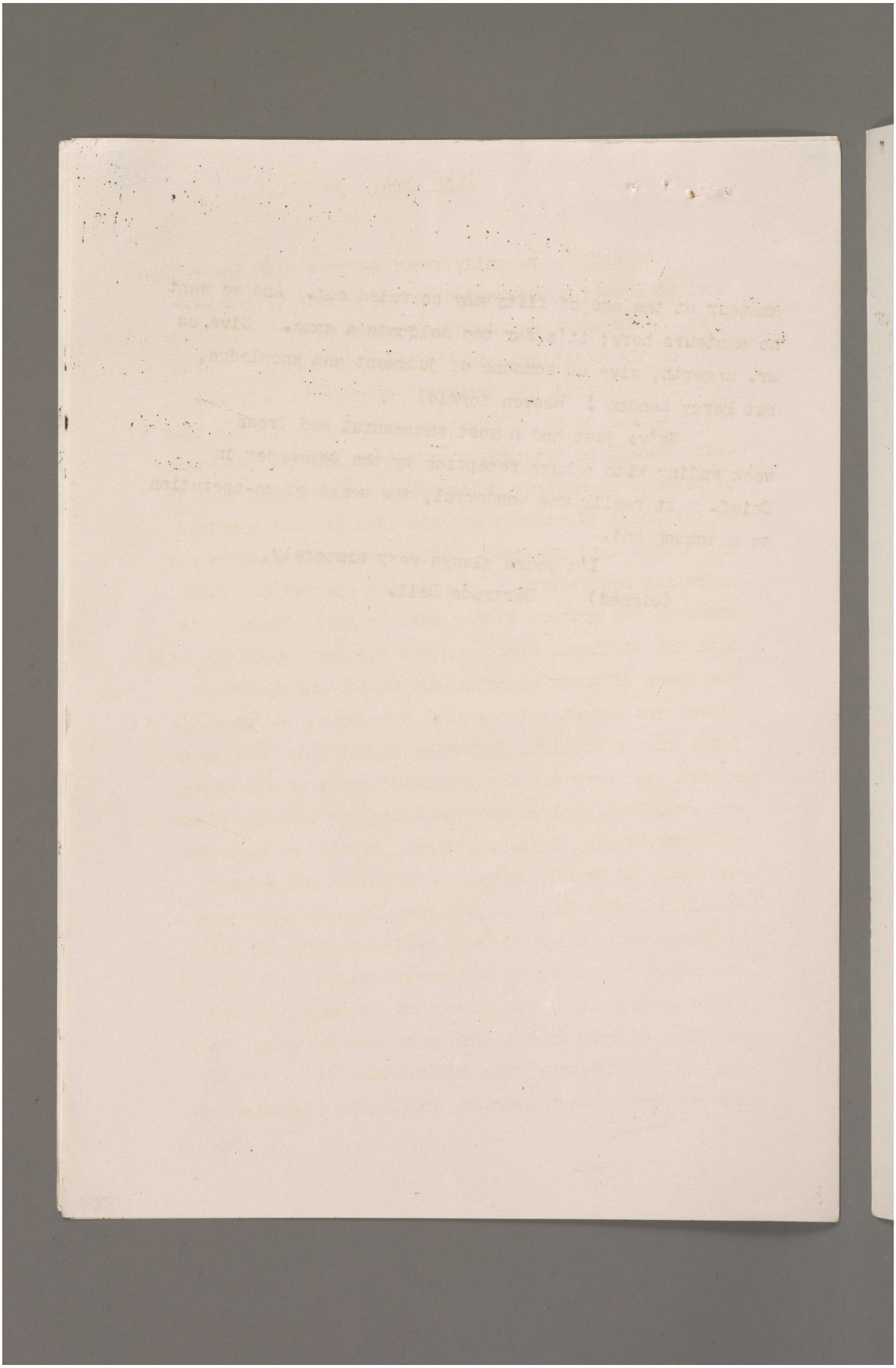

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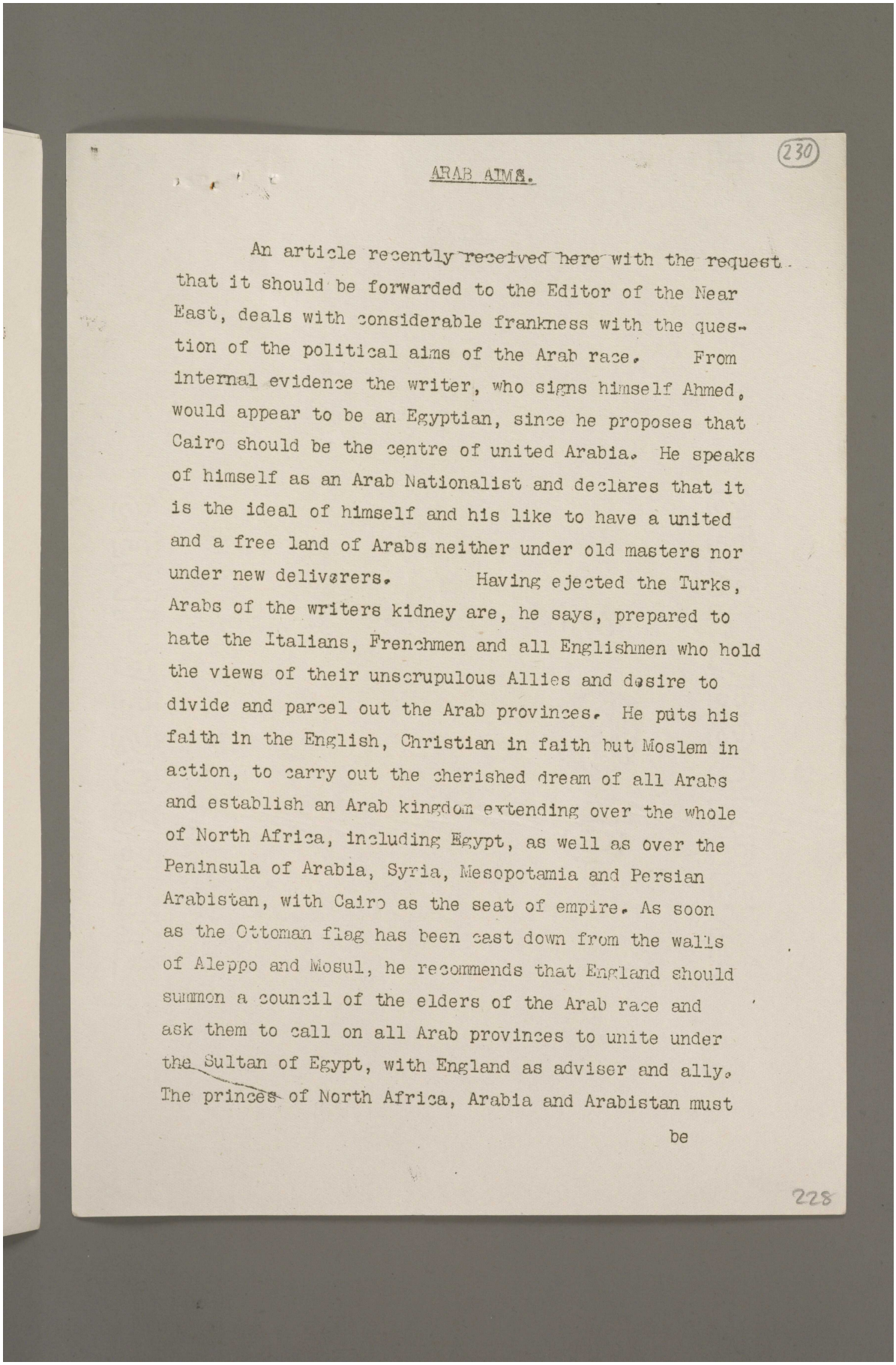

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ARAB AIMS.

An article recently received here with the request that it should be forwarded to the Editor of the Near East, deals with considerable frankness with the question of the political aims of the Arab race. From internal evidence the writer, who signs himself Ahmed, would appear to be an Egyptian, since he proposes that Cairo should be the centre of united Arabia. He speaks of himself as an Arab Nationalist and declares that it is the ideal of himself and his like to have a united and a free land of Arabs neither under old masters nor under new deliverers. Having ejected the Turks, Arabs of the writers kidney are, he says, prepared to hate the Italians, Frenchmen and all Englishmen who hold the views of their unscrupulous Allies and desire to divide and parcel out the Arab provinces. He puts his faith in the English, Christian in faith but Moslem in action, to carry out the cherished dream of all Arabs and establish an Arab kingdom extending over the whole of North Africa, including Egypt, as well as over the Peninsula of Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia and Persian Arabistan, with Cairo as the seat of empire. As soon as the Ottoman flag has been cast down from the walls of Aleppo and Mosul, he recommends that England should summon a council of the elders of the Arab race and ask them to call on all Arab provinces to unite under the Sultan of Egypt, with England as adviser and ally. The princes of North Africa, Arabia and Arabistan must

be

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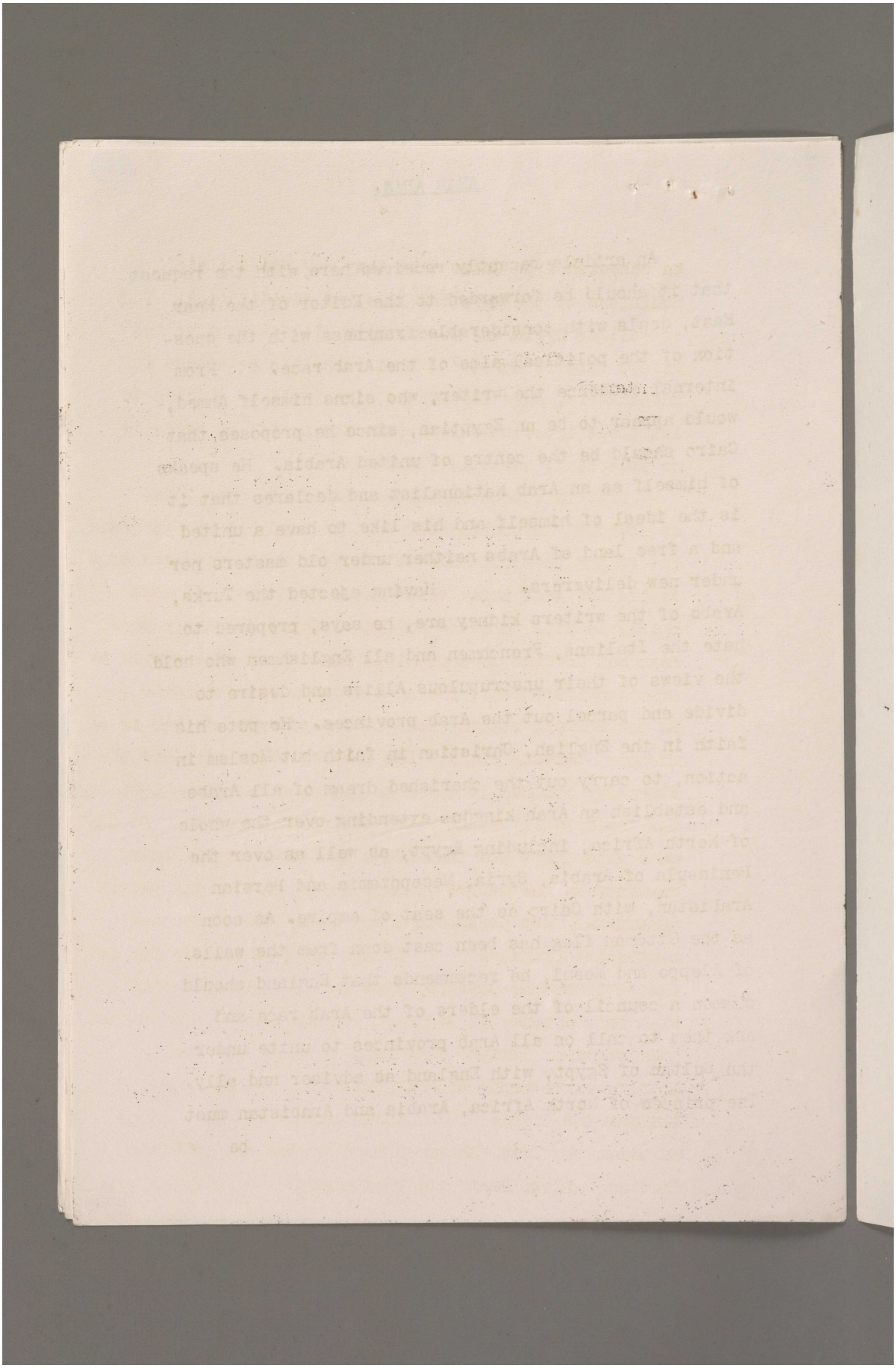

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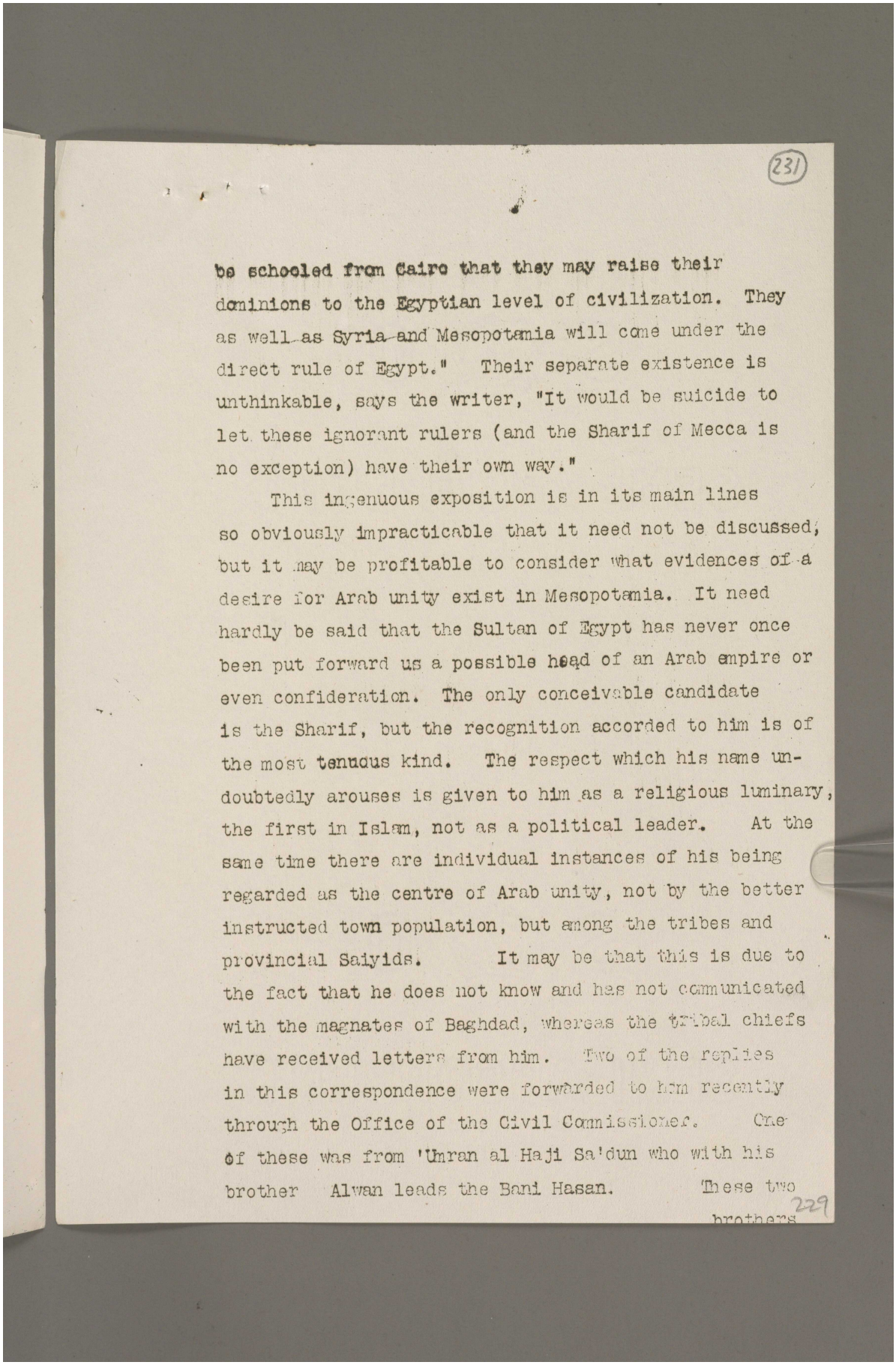

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be schooled from Cairo that they may raise their dominions to the Egyptian level of civilization. They as well as Syria and Mesopotamia will come under the direct rule of Egypt." Their separate existence is unthinkable, says the writer, "It would be suicide to let these ignorant rulers (and the Sharif of Mecca is no exception) have their own way."

This ingenuous exposition is in its main lines so obviously impracticable that it need not be discussed; but it may be profitable to consider what evidences of a desire for Arab unity exist in Mesopotamia. It need hardly be said that the Sultan of Egypt has never once been put forward us a possible head of an Arab empire or even confideration. The only conceivable candidate is the Sharif, but the recognition accorded to him is of the most tenuous kind. The respect which his name undoubtedly arouses is given to him as a religious luminary, the first in Islam, not as a political leader. At the same time there are individual instances of his being regarded as the centre of Arab unity, not by the better instructed town population, but among the tribes and provincial Saiyids. It may be that this is due to the fact that he does not know and has not communicated with the magnates of Baghdad, whereas the tribal chiefs have received letters from him. Two of the replies in this correspondence were forwarded to him recently through the Office of the Civil Commissioner. One of these was from 'Umran al Haji Sa'dun who with his brother Alwan leads the Bani Hasan. These two

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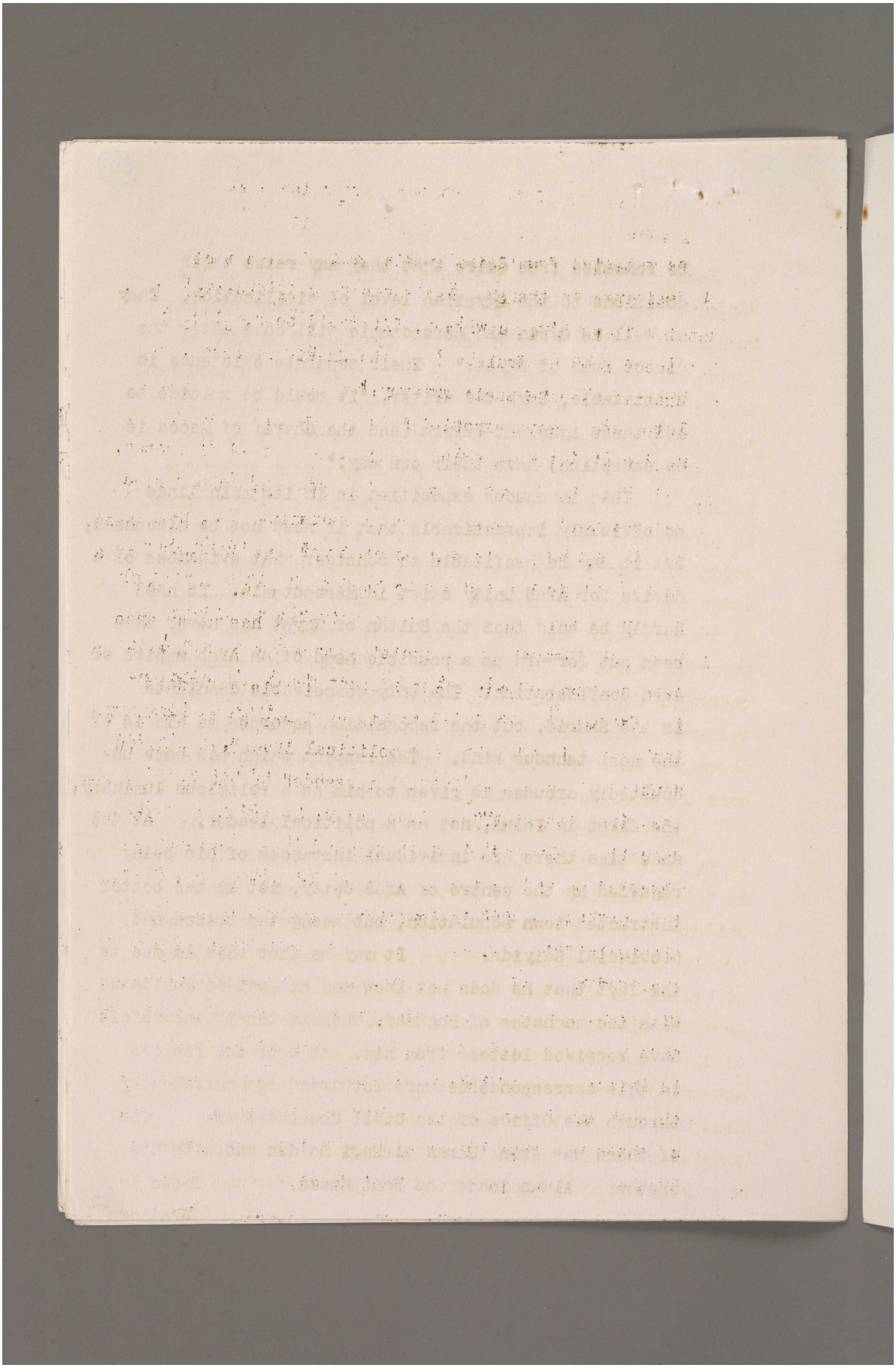
brothers



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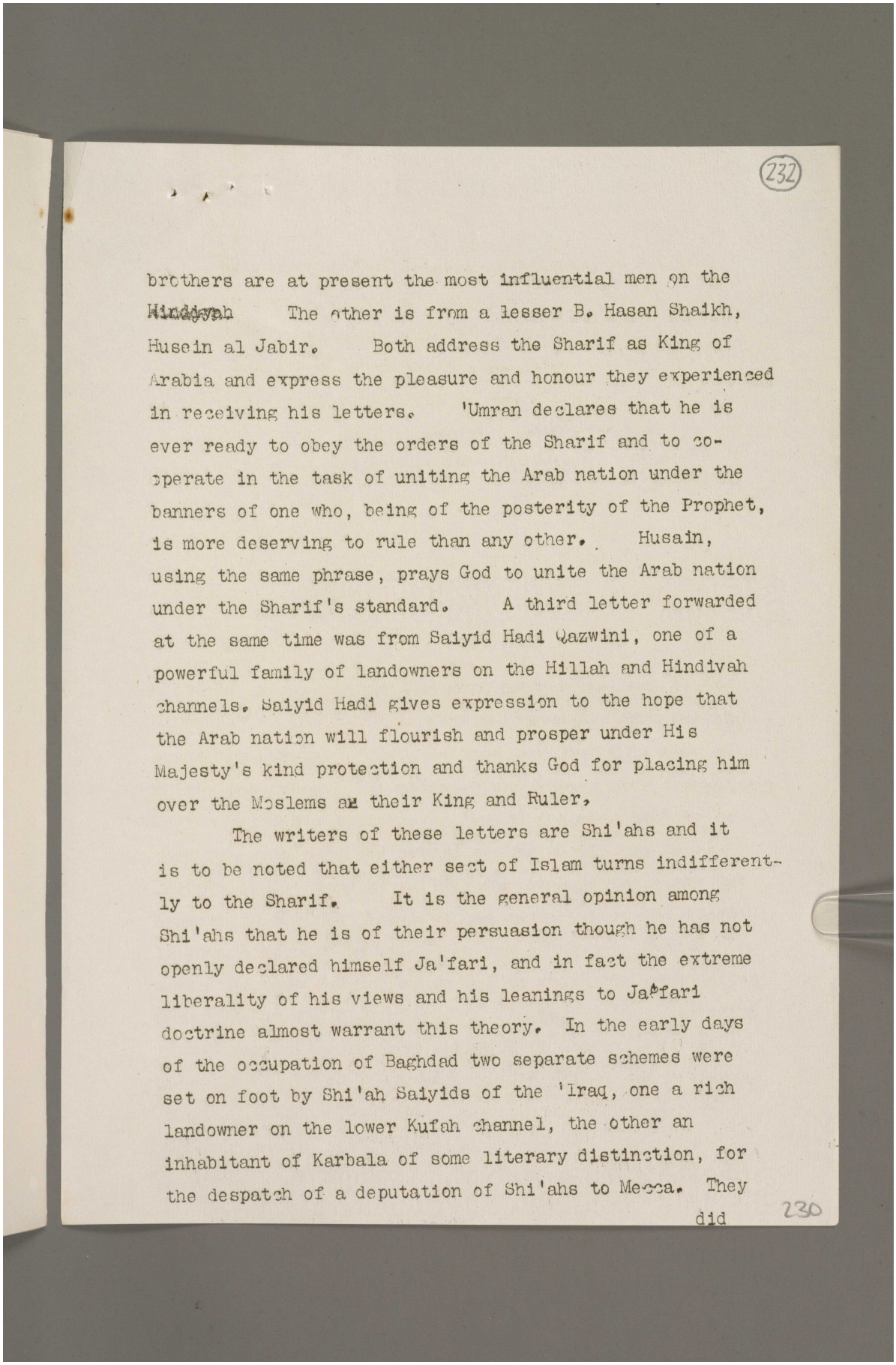

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brothers are at present the most influential men on the Hindiyah The other is from a lesser B. Hasan Shaikh, Husein al Jabir. Both address the Sharif as King of Arabia and express the pleasure and honour they experienced in receiving his letters. 'Umran declares that he is ever ready to obey the orders of the Sharif and to co-operate in the task of uniting the Arab nation under the banners of one who, being of the posterity of the Prophet, is more deserving to rule than any other. Husain, using the same phrase, prays God to unite the Arab nation under the Sharif's standard. A third letter forwarded at the same time was from Saiyid Hadi Qazwini, one of a powerful family of landowners on the Hillah and Hindiyah channels. Saiyid Hadi gives expression to the hope that the Arab nation will flourish and prosper under His Majesty's kind protection and thanks God for placing him over the Moslems as their King and Ruler.

The writers of these letters are Shi'ahs and it is to be noted that either sect of Islam turns indifferently to the Sharif. It is the general opinion among Shi'ahs that he is of their persuasion though he has not openly declared himself Ja'fari, and in fact the extreme liberality of his views and his leanings to Ja'fari doctrine almost warrant this theory. In the early days of the occupation of Baghdad two separate schemes were set on foot by Shi'ah Saiyids of the 'Iraq, one a rich landowner on the lower Kufah channel, the other an inhabitant of Karbala of some literary distinction, for the despatch of a deputation of Shi'ahs to Mecca. They

did

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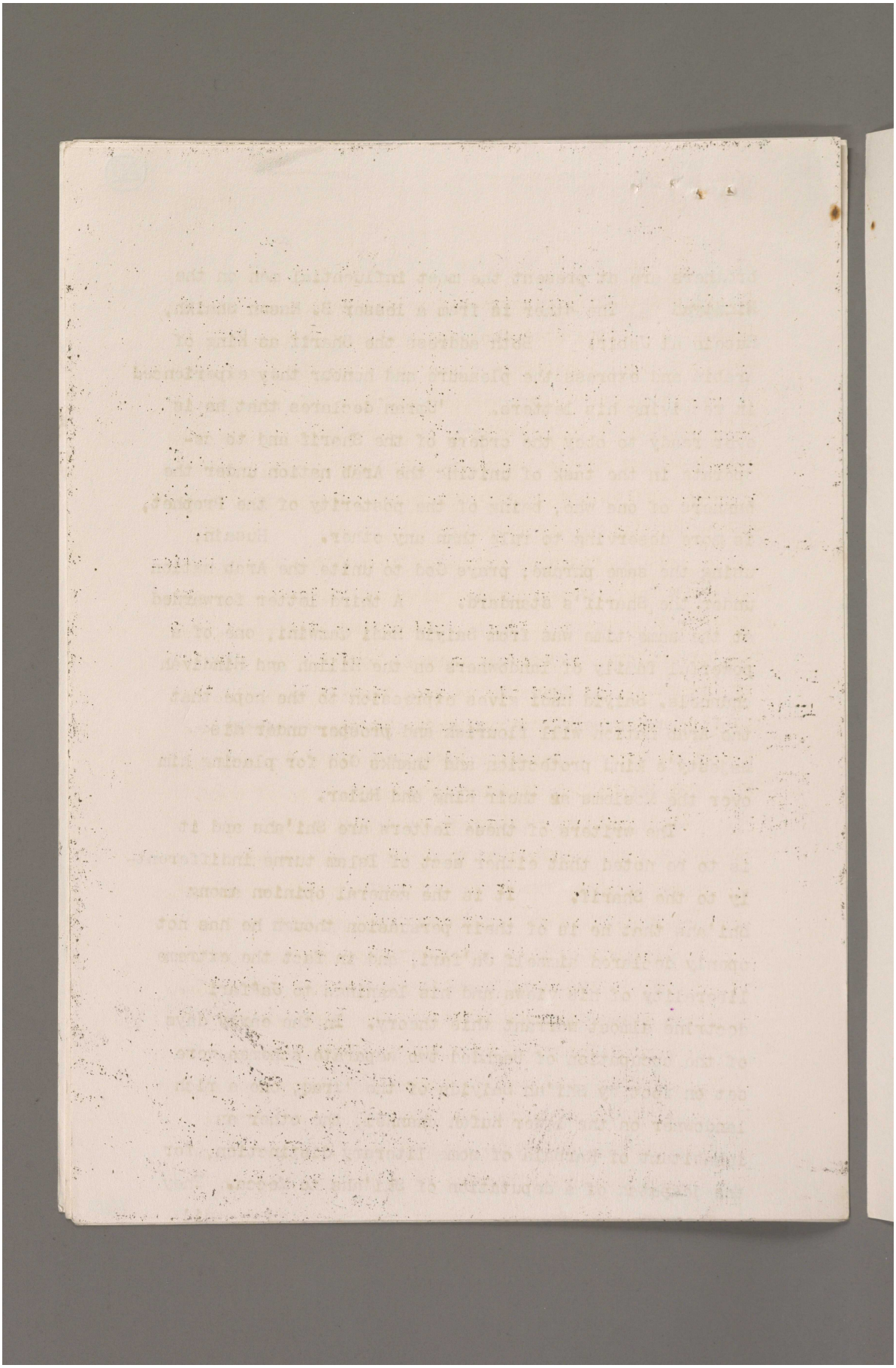

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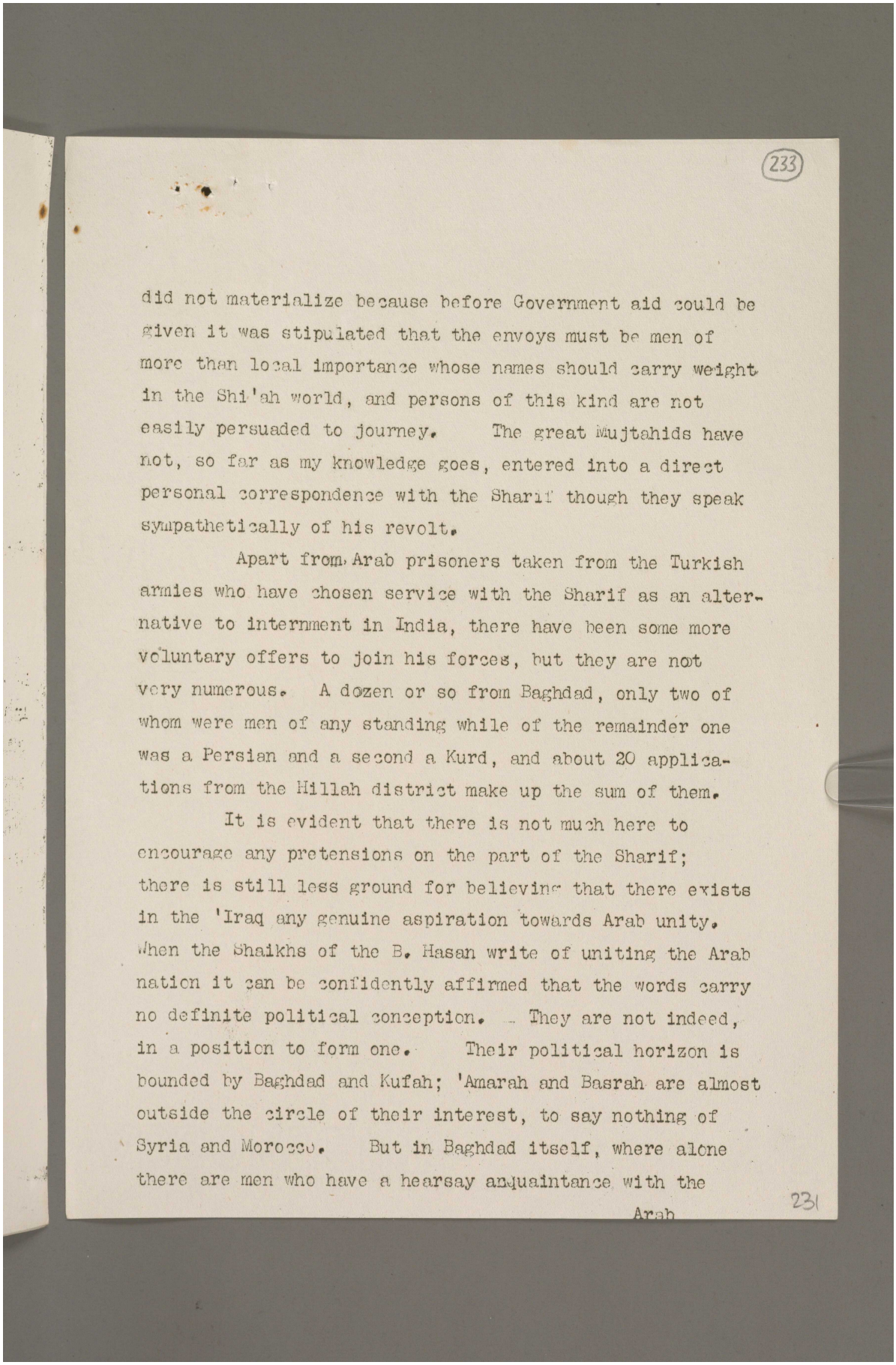

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did not materialize because before Government aid could be given it was stipulated that the envoys must be men of more than local importance whose names should carry weight in the Shi'ah world, and persons of this kind are not easily persuaded to journey. The great Mujtahids have not, so far as my knowledge goes, entered into a direct personal correspondence with the Sharif though they speak sympathetically of his revolt.

Apart from Arab prisoners taken from the Turkish armies who have chosen service with the Sharif as an alternative to internment in India, there have been some more voluntary offers to join his forces, but they are not very numerous. A dozen or so from Baghdad, only two of whom were men of any standing while of the remainder one was a Persian and a second a Kurd, and about 20 applications from the Hillah district make up the sum of them.

It is evident that there is not much here to encourage any pretensions on the part of the Sharif; there is still less ground for believing that there exists in the 'Iraq any genuine aspiration towards Arab unity. When the Shaikhs of the B. Hasan write of uniting the Arab nation it can be confidently affirmed that the words carry no definite political conception. They are not indeed, in a position to form one. Their political horizon is bounded by Baghdad and Kufah; 'Amarah and Basrah are almost outside the circle of their interest, to say nothing of Syria and Morocco. But in Baghdad itself, where alone there are men who have a hearsay anquaintance with the

Arab

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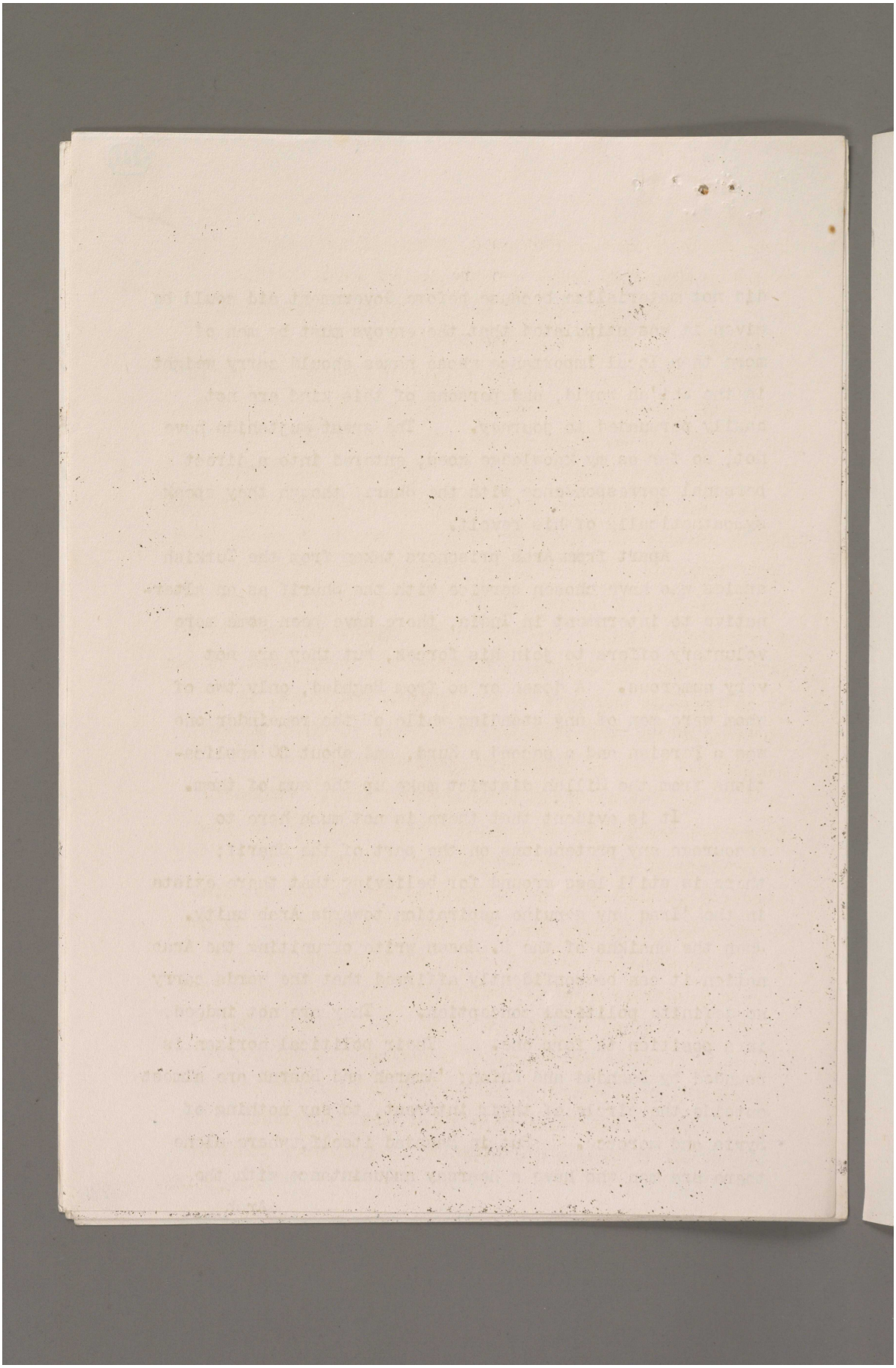

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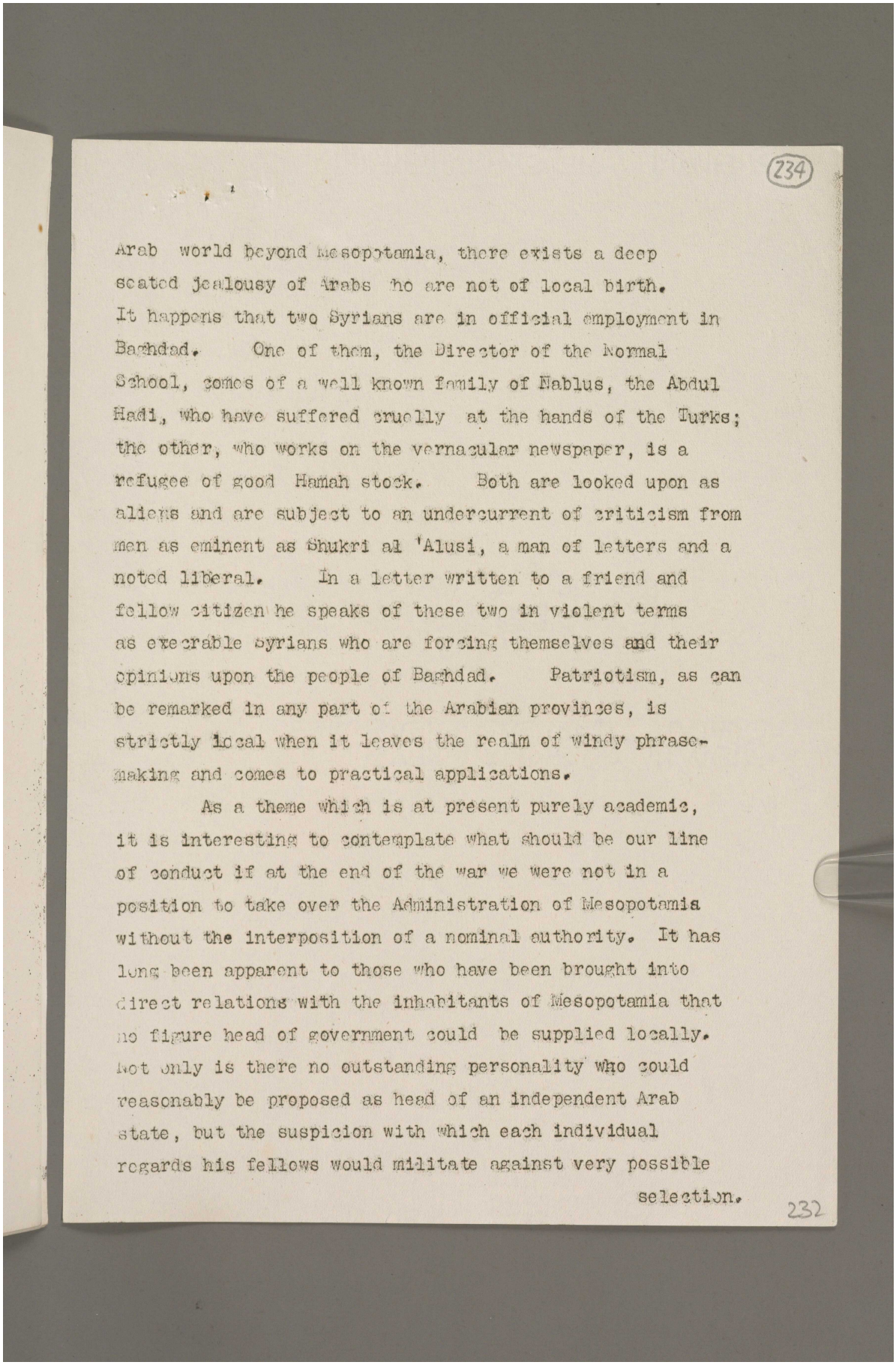

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Arab world beyond Mesopotamia, there exists a deep seated jealousy of Arabs who are not of local birth. It happens that two Syrians are in official employment in Baghdad. One of them, the Director of the Normal School, comes of a well known family of Nablus, the Abdul Hadi, who have suffered cruelly at the hands of the Turks; the other, who works on the vernacular newspaper, is a refugee of good Hamah stock. Both are looked upon as aliens and are subject to an undercurrent of criticism from men as eminent as Shukri al 'Alusi, a man of letters and a noted liberal. In a letter written to a friend and fellow citizen he speaks of these two in violent terms as execrable Syrians who are forcing themselves and their opinions upon the people of Baghdad. Patriotism, as can be remarked in any part of the Arabian provinces, is strictly local when it leaves the realm of windy phrase-making and comes to practical applications.

As a theme which is at present purely academic, it is interesting to contemplate what should be our line of conduct if at the end of the war we were not in a position to take over the Administration of Mesopotamia without the interposition of a nominal authority. It has long been apparent to those who have been brought into direct relations with the inhabitants of Mesopotamia that no figure head of government could be supplied locally. Not only is there no outstanding personality who could reasonably be proposed as head of an independent Arab state, but the suspicion with which each individual regards his fellows would militate against very possible selection.

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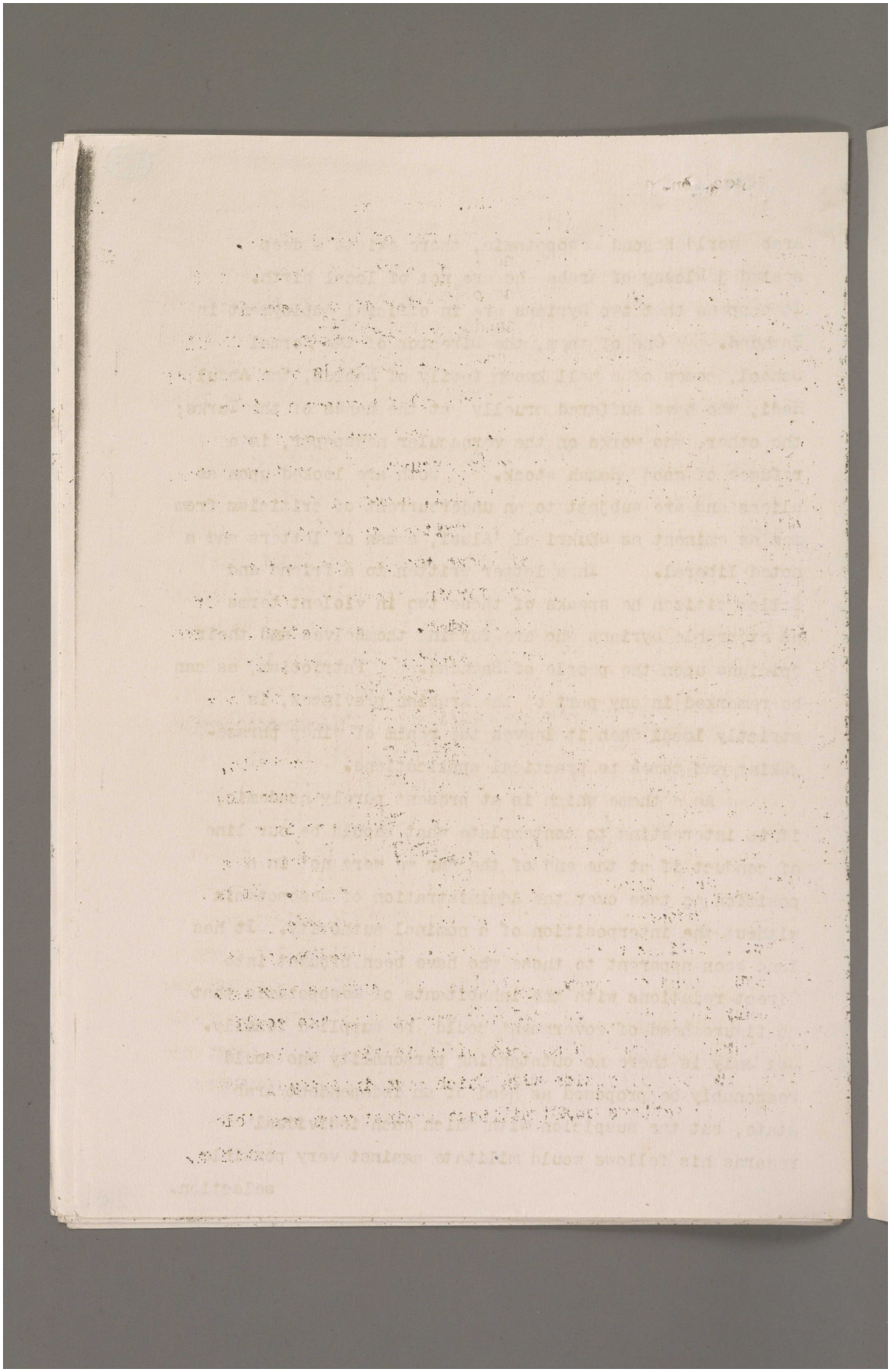

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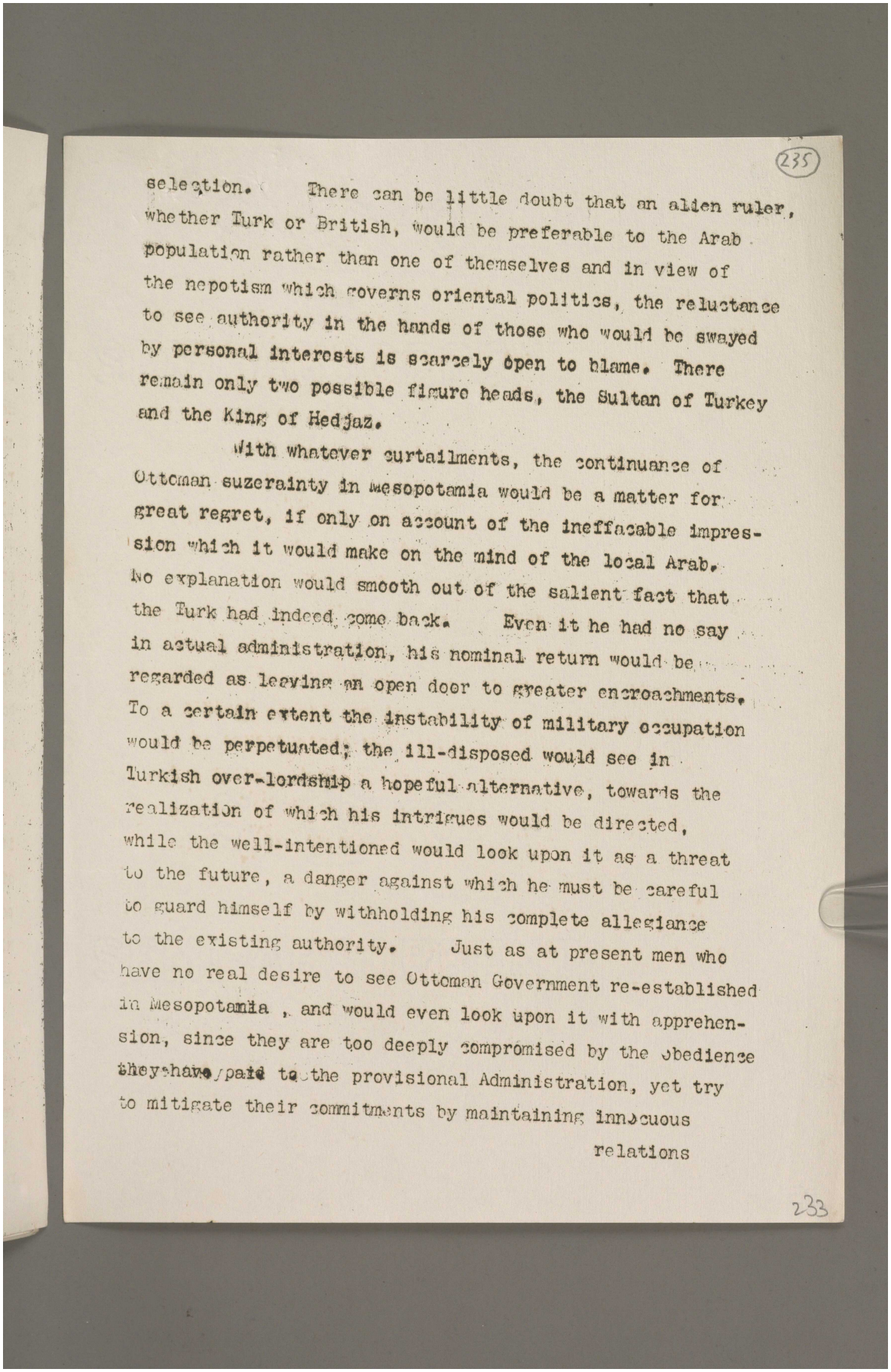

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selection. There can be little doubt that an alien ruler, whether Turk or British, would be preferable to the Arab population rather than one of themselves and in view of the nepotism which governs oriental politics, the reluctance to see authority in the hands of those who would be swayed by personal interests is scarcely open to blame. There remain only two possible figure heads, the Sultan of Turkey and the King of Hedjaz.

With whatever curtailments, the continuance of Ottoman suzerainty in Mesopotamia would be a matter for great regret, if only on account of the ineffacable impression which it would make on the mind of the local Arab. No explanation would smooth out of the salient fact that the Turk had indeed come back. Even it he had no say in actual administration, his nominal return would be regarded as leaving an open door to greater encroachments. To a certain extent the instability of military occupation would be perpetuated; the ill-disposed would see in Turkish over-lordship a hopeful alternative, towards the realization of which his intrigues would be directed, while the well-intentioned would look upon it as a threat to the future, a danger against which he must be careful to guard himself by withholding his complete allegiance to the existing authority. Just as at present men who have no real desire to see Ottoman Government re-established in Mesopotamia , and would even look upon it with apprehension, since they are too deeply compromised by the obedience they have paid to the provisional Administration, yet try to mitigate their commitments by maintaining innocuous

relations

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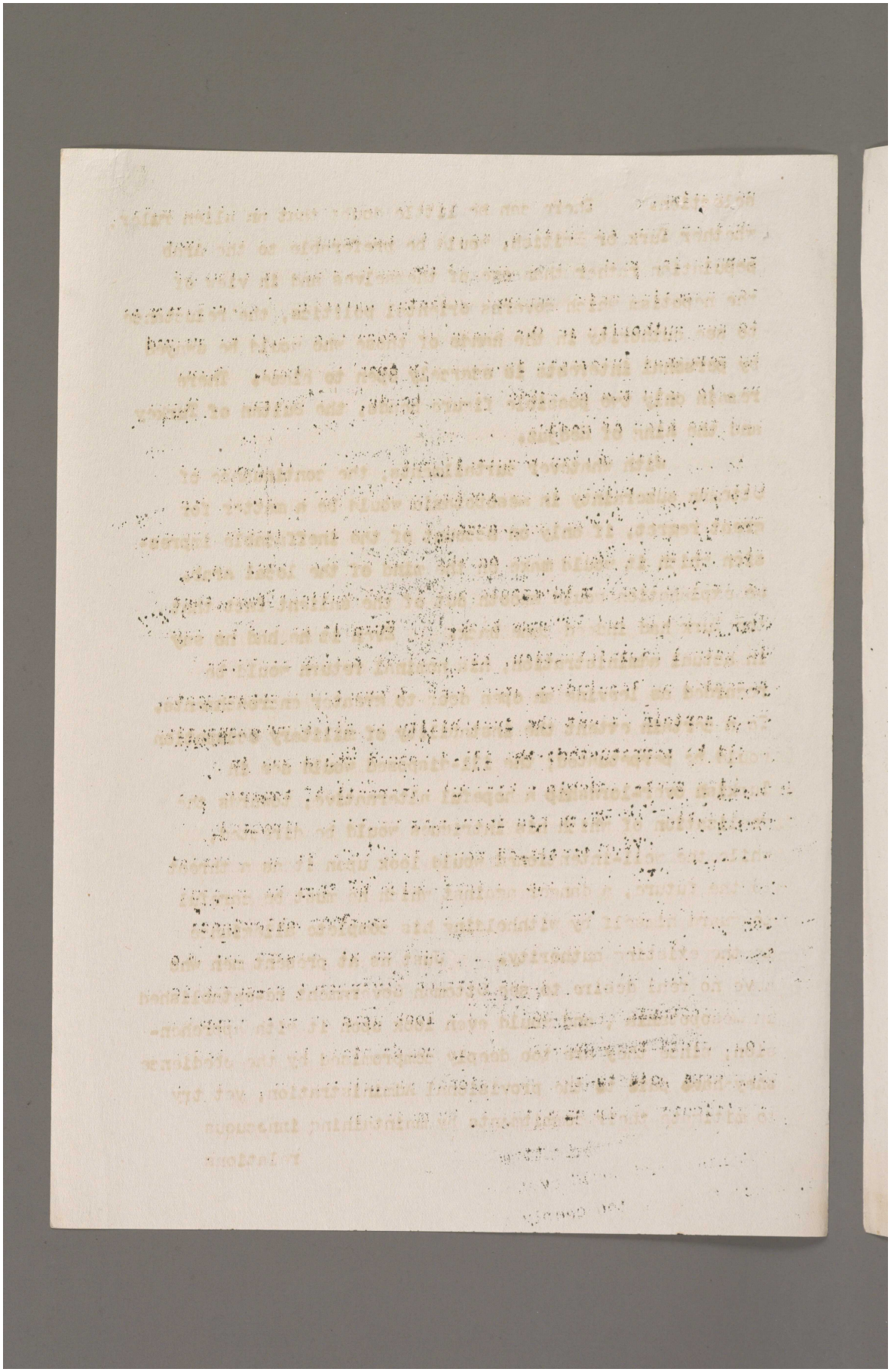

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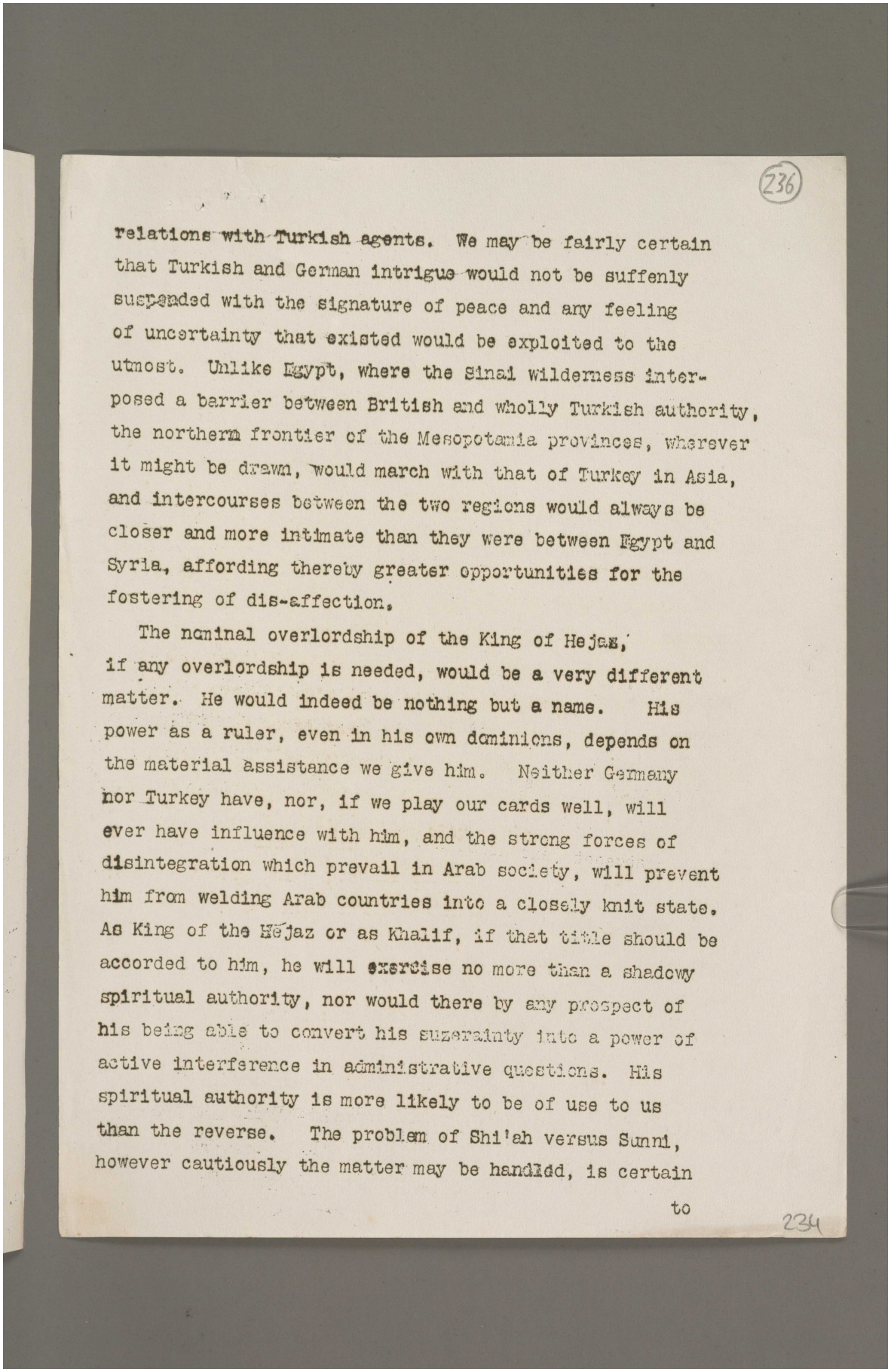

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relations with Turkish agents. We may be fairly certain that Turkish and German intrigue would not be suffenly suspended with the signature of peace and any feeling of uncertainty that existed would be exploited to the utmost. Unlike Egypt, where the Sinai wilderness interposed a barrier between British and wholly Turkish authority, the northern frontier of the Mesopotamia provinces, wherever it might be drawn, would march with that of Turkey in Asia, and intercourses between the two regions would always be closer and more intimate than they were between Egypt and Syria, affording thereby greater opportunities for the fostering of dis-affection.

The nominal overlordship of the King of Hejaz, if any overlordship is needed, would be a very different matter. He would indeed be nothing but a name. His power as a ruler, even in his own dominions, depends on the material assistance we give him. Neither Germany nor Turkey have, nor, if we play our cards well, will ever have influence with him, and the strong forces of disintegration which prevail in Arab society, will prevent him from welding Arab countries into a closely knit state. As King of the Hejaz or as Khalif, if that title should be accorded to him, he will exercise no more than a shadowy spiritual authority, nor would there by any prospect of his being able to convert his suzerainty into a power of active interference in administrative questions. His spiritual authority is more likely to be of use to us than the reverse. The problem of Shi'ah versus Sunni, however cautiously the matter may be handled, is certain

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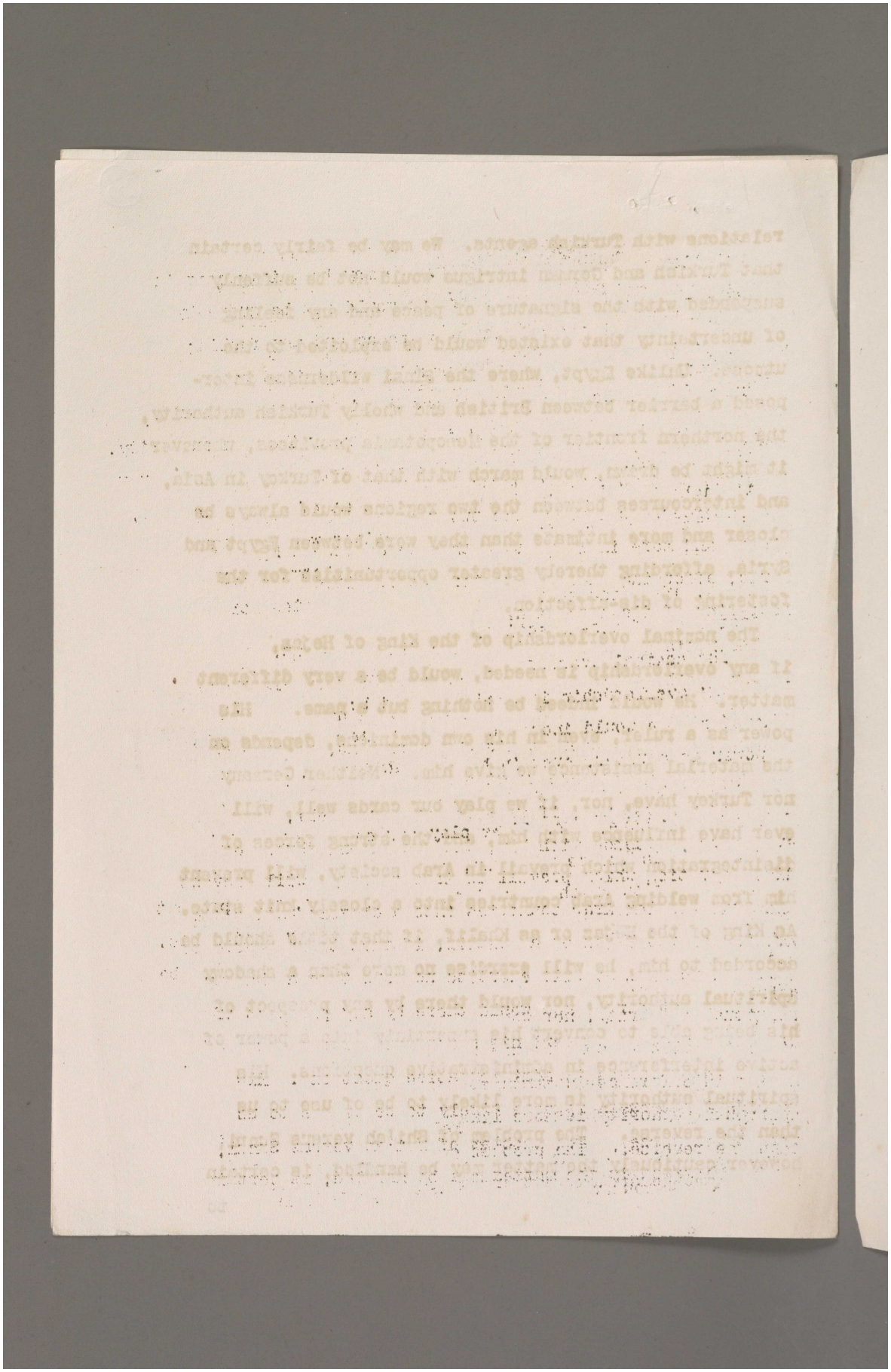

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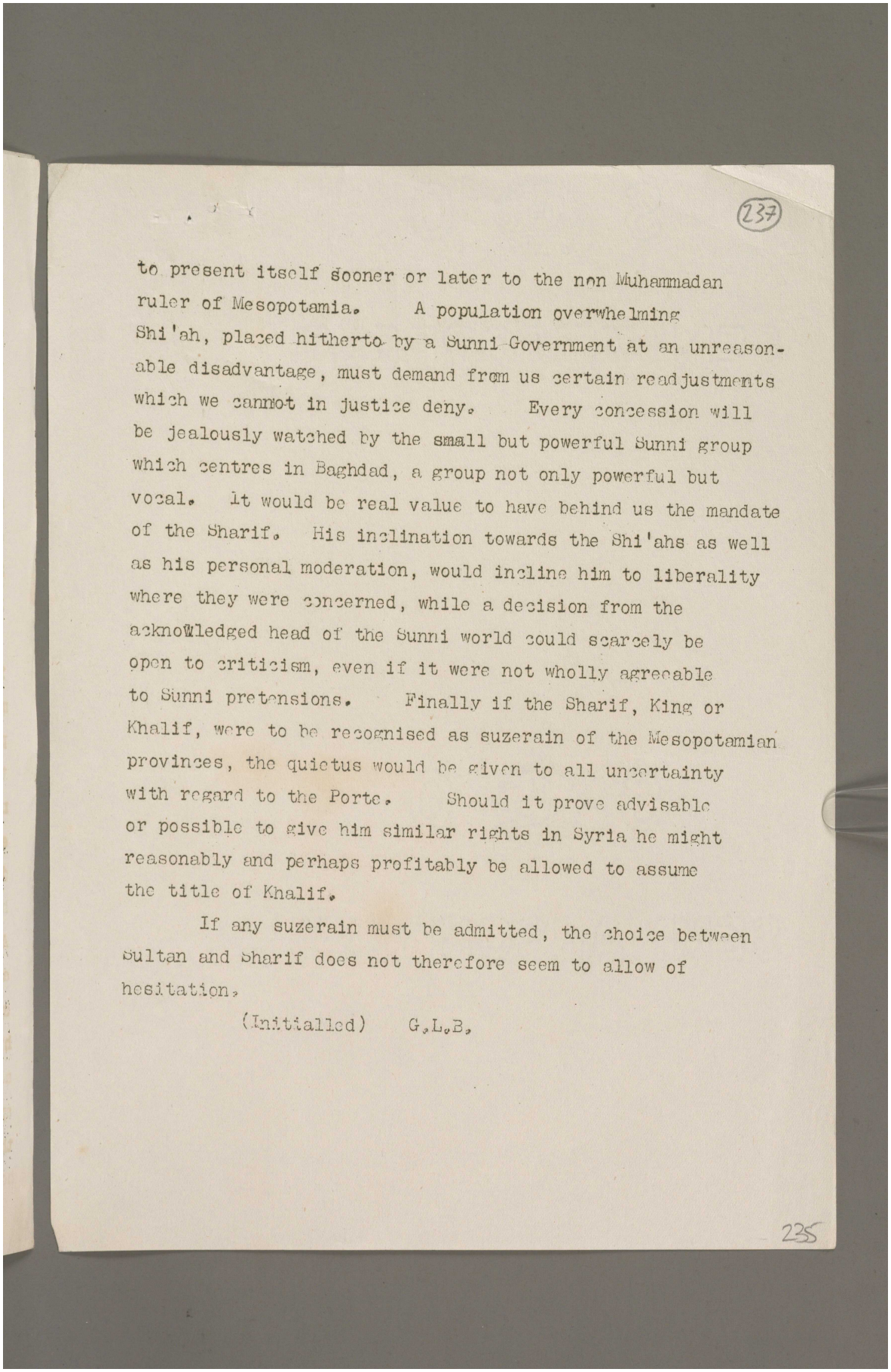

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to present itself sooner or later to the non Muhammadan ruler of Mesopotamia. A population overwhelming Shi'ah, placed hitherto by a Sunni Government at an unreasonable disadvantage, must demand from us certain readjustments which we cannot in justice deny. Every concession will be jealously watched by the small but powerful Sunni group which centres in Baghdad, a group not only powerful but vocal. It would be real value to have behind us the mandate of the Sharif. His inclination towards the Shi'ahs as well as his personal moderation, would incline him to liberality where they were concerned, while a decision from the acknowledged head of the Sunni world could scarcely be open to criticism, even if it were not wholly agreeable to Sunni pretensions. Finally if the Sharif, King or Khalif, were to be recognised as suzerain of the Mesopotamian provinces, the quietus would be given to all uncertainty with regard to the Porte. Should it prove advisable or possible to give him similar rights in Syria he might reasonably and perhaps profitably be allowed to assume the title of Khalif.

If any suzerain must be admitted, the choice between Sultan and Sharif does not therefore seem to allow of hesitation.

(Initialled) G.L.B.

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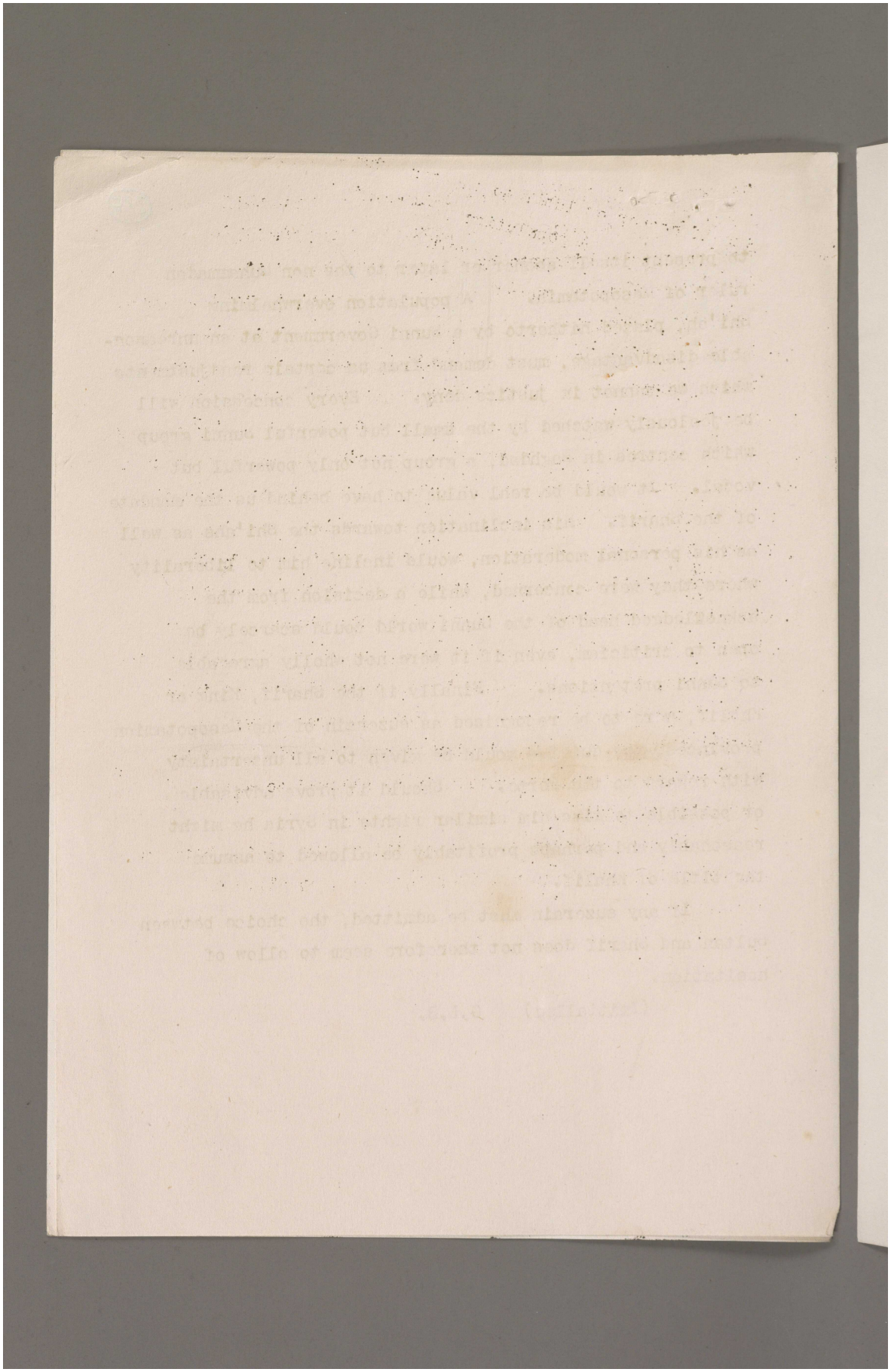

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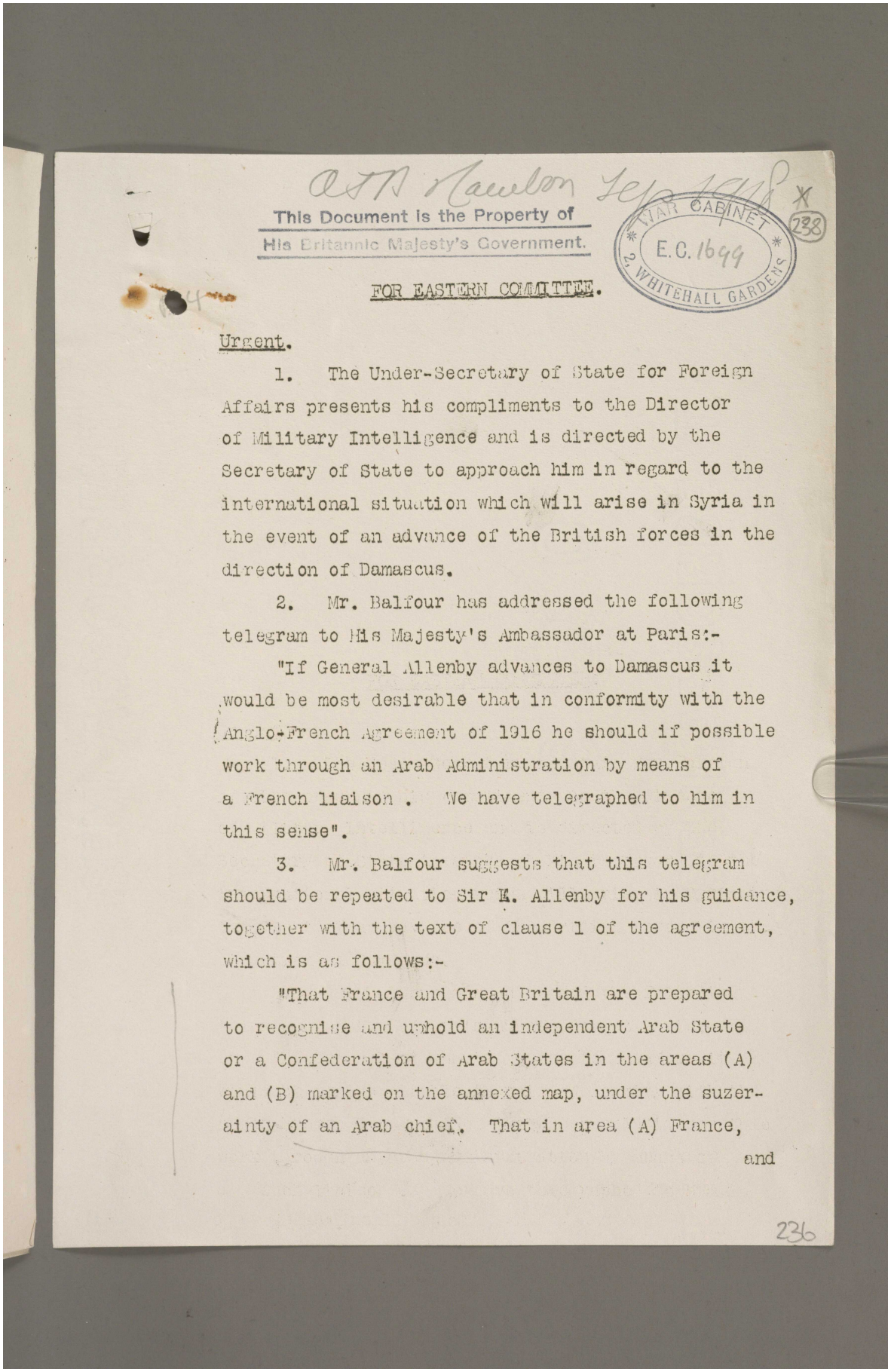

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WAR CABINET
E.C. 1699
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

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FOR EASTERN COMMITTEE.

Urgent.

1. The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the Director of Military Intelligence and is directed by the Secretary of State to approach him in regard to the international situation which will arise in Syria in the event of an advance of the British forces in the direction of Damascus.

2. Mr. Balfour has addressed the following telegram to His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris:-

"If General Allenby advances to Damascus it would be most desirable that in conformity with the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916 he should if possible work through an Arab Administration by means of a French liaison . We have telegraphed to him in this sense".

3. Mr. Balfour suggests that this telegram should be repeated to Sir E. Allenby for his guidance, together with the text of clause 1 of the agreement, which is as follows:-

"That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States in the areas (A) and (B) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. That in area (A) France,

and

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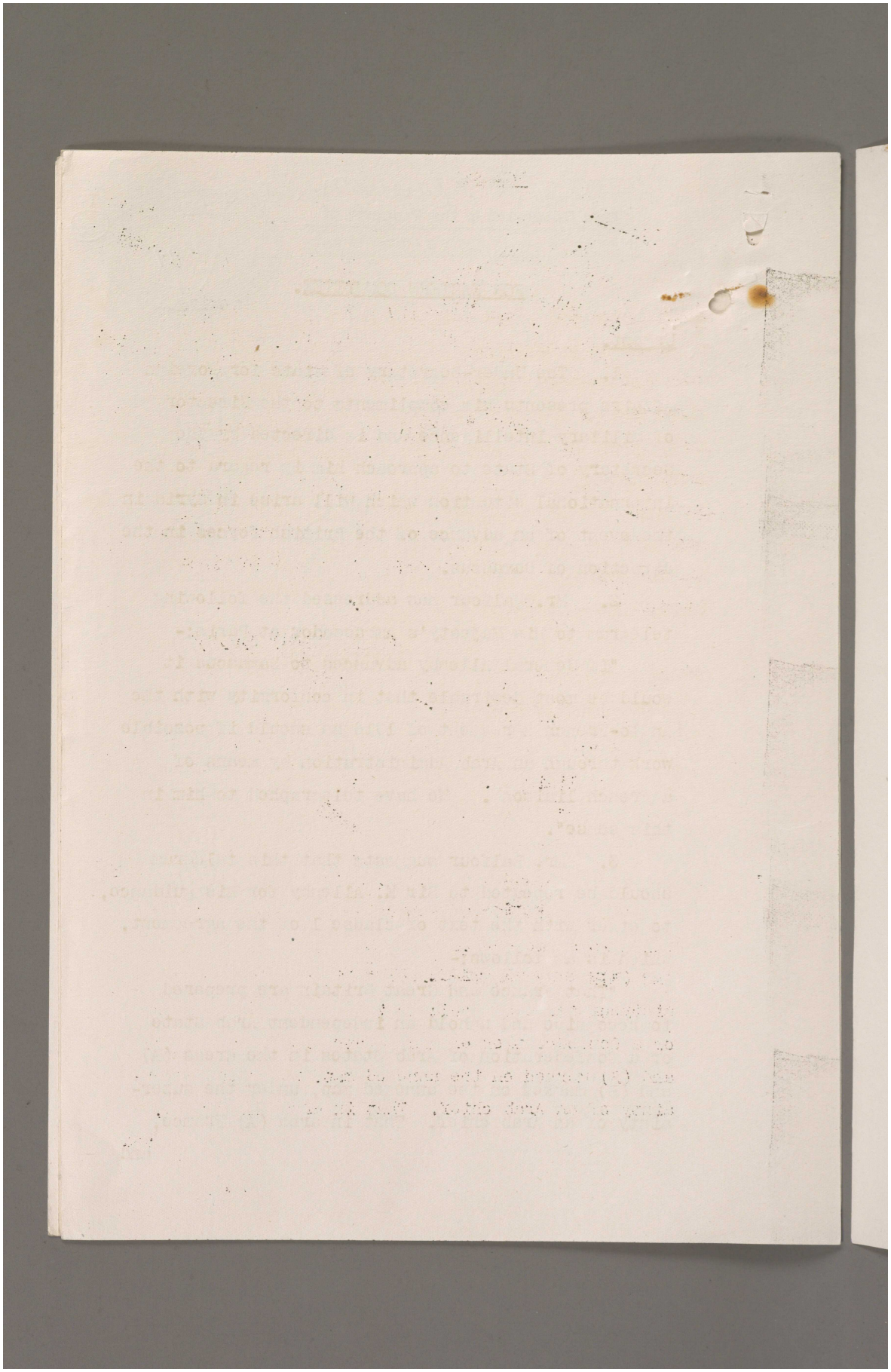

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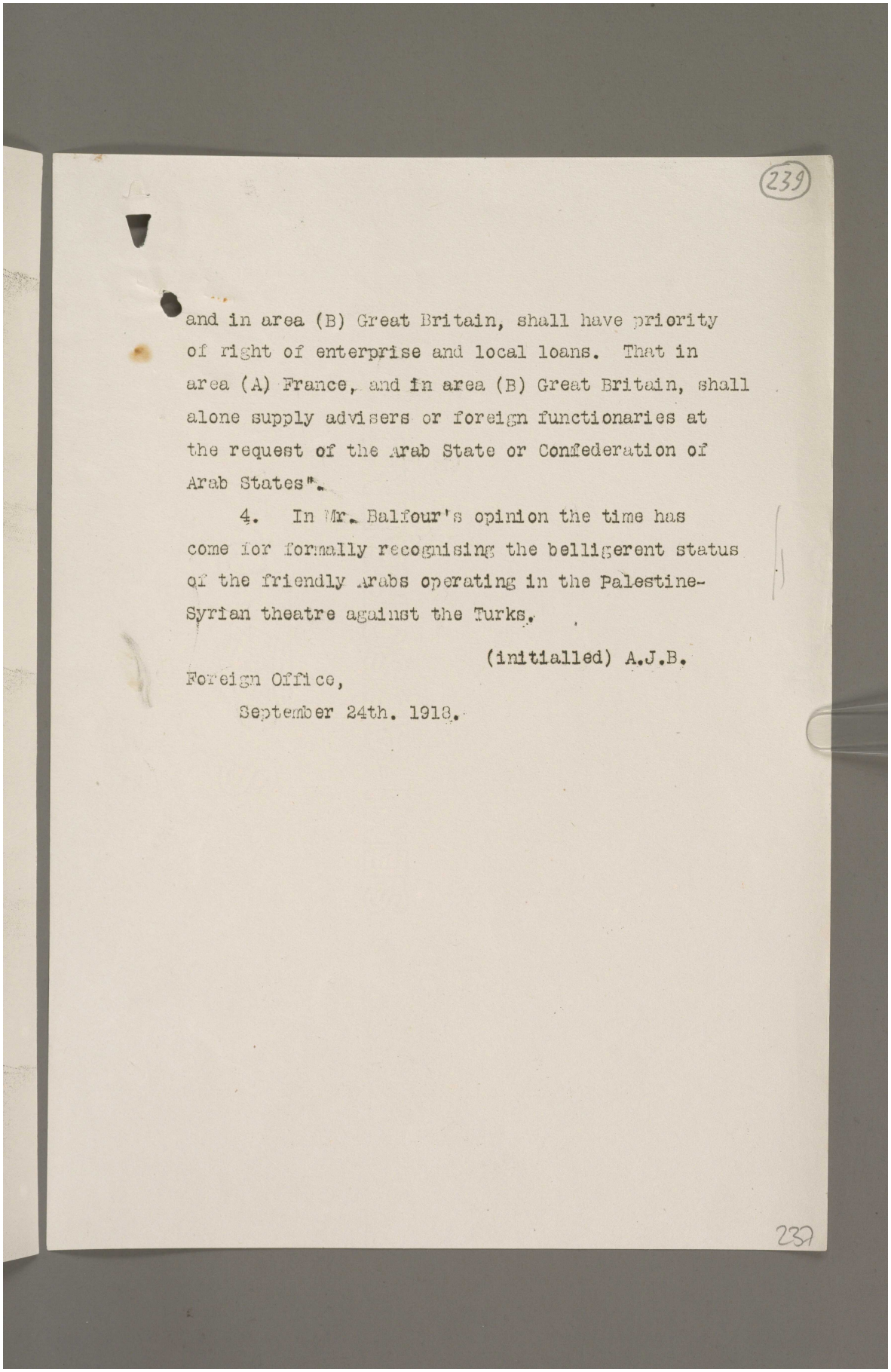

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and in area (B) Great Britain, shall have priority of right of enterprise and local loans. That in area (A) France, and in area (B) Great Britain, shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States".

4. In Mr. Balfour's opinion the time has come for formally recognising the belligerent status of the friendly Arabs operating in the Palestine-Syrian theatre against the Turks.

(initialled) A.J.B.

Foreign Office,
September 24th. 1918.

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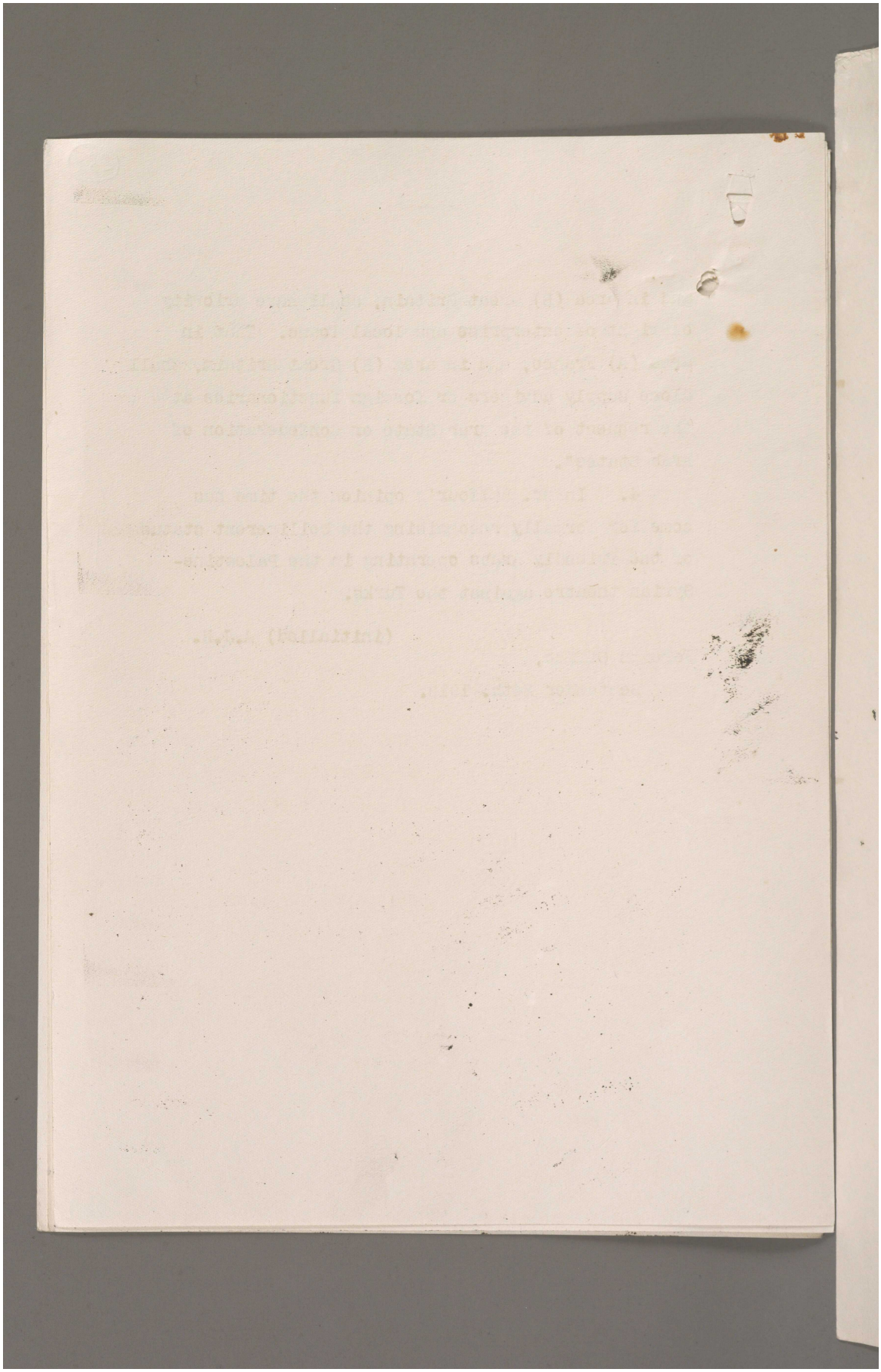

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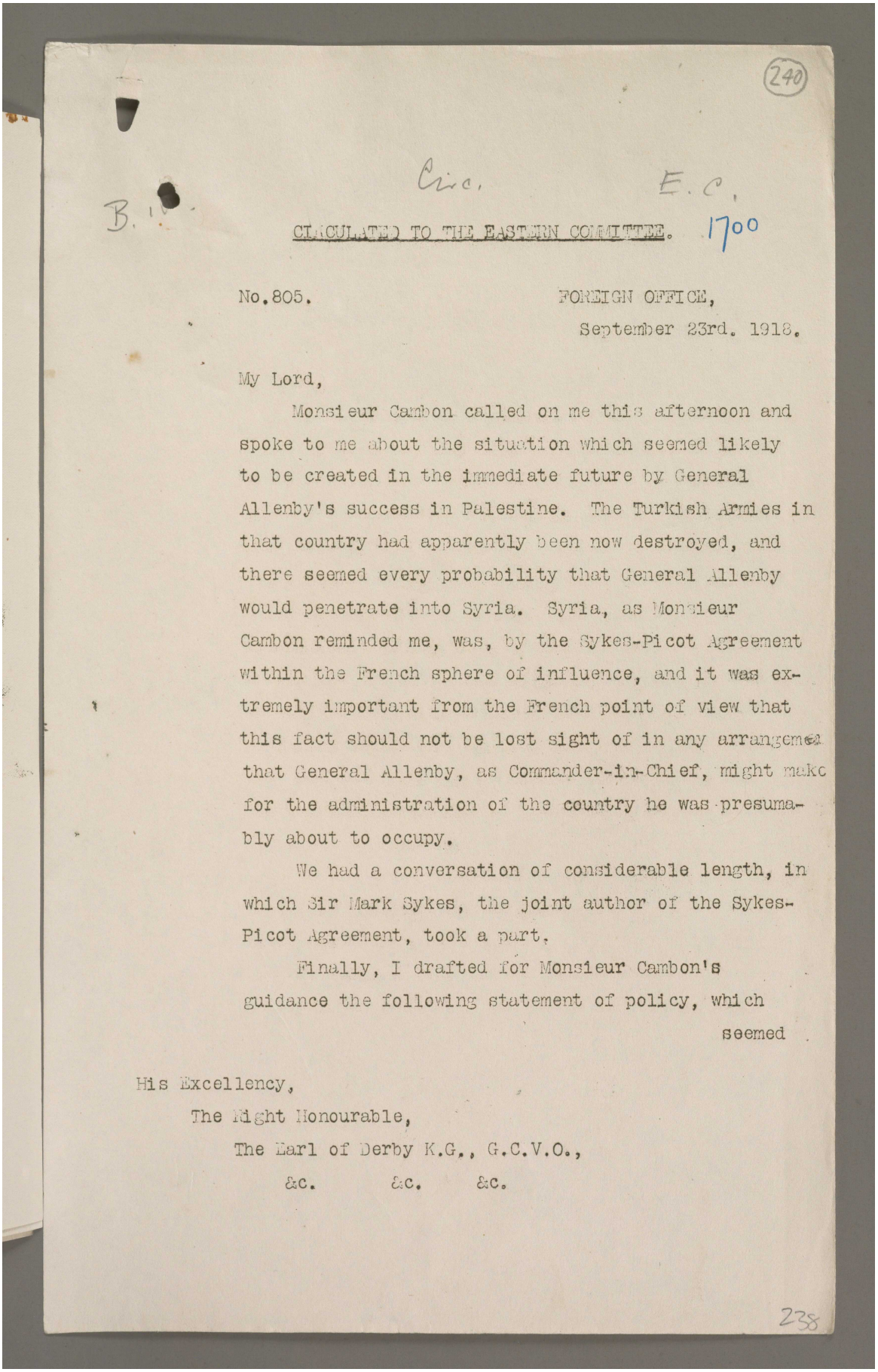

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B. I.

Circ. E.C.

CIRCULATED TO THE EASTERN COMMITTEE. 1700

No.805. FOREIGN OFFICE,
September 23rd. 1918.

My Lord,

Monsieur Cambon called on me this afternoon and spoke to me about the situation which seemed likely to be created in the immediate future by General Allenby's success in Palestine. The Turkish Armies in that country had apparently been now destroyed, and there seemed every probability that General Allenby would penetrate into Syria. Syria, as Monsieur Cambon reminded me, was, by the Sykes-Picot Agreement within the French sphere of influence, and it was extremely important from the French point of view that this fact should not be lost sight of in any arrangement that General Allenby, as Commander-in-Chief, might make for the administration of the country he was presumably about to occupy.

We had a conversation of considerable length, in which Sir Mark Sykes, the joint author of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, took a part.

Finally, I drafted for Monsieur Cambon's guidance the following statement of policy, which seemed

His Excellency,
The Right Honourable,
The Earl of Derby K.G., G.C.V.O.,
&c. &c. &c.

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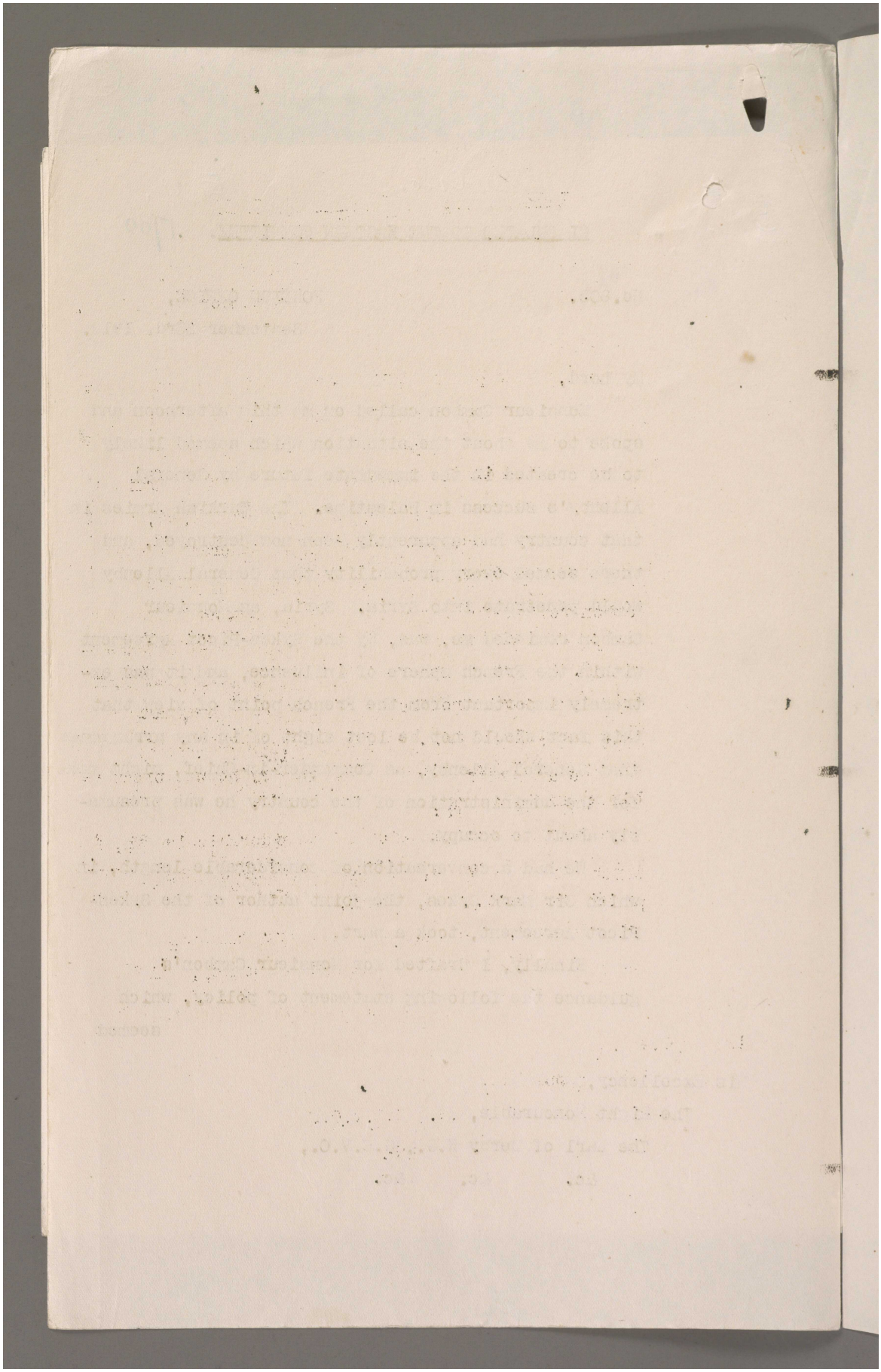

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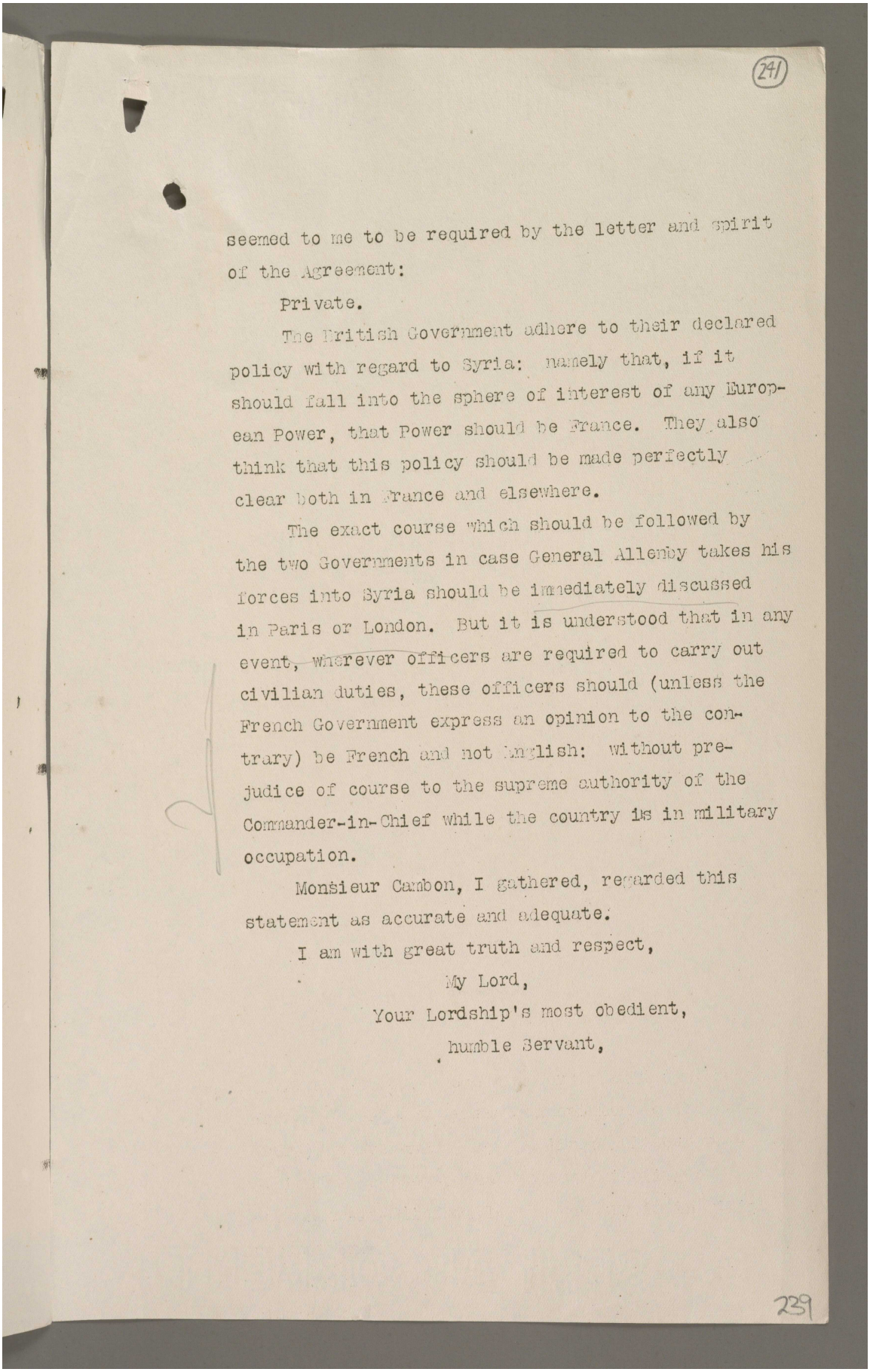

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seemed to me to be required by the letter and spirit of the Agreement:

Private.

The British Government adhere to their declared policy with regard to Syria: namely that, if it should fall into the sphere of interest of any European Power, that Power should be France. They also think that this policy should be made perfectly clear both in France and elsewhere.

The exact course which should be followed by the two Governments in case General Allenby takes his forces into Syria should be immediately discussed in Paris or London. But it is understood that in any event, wherever officers are required to carry out civilian duties, these officers should (unless the French Government express an opinion to the contrary) be French and not English: without prejudice of course to the supreme authority of the Commander-in-Chief while the country is in military occupation.

Monsieur Cambon, I gathered, regarded this statement as accurate and adequate.

I am with great truth and respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble Servant,

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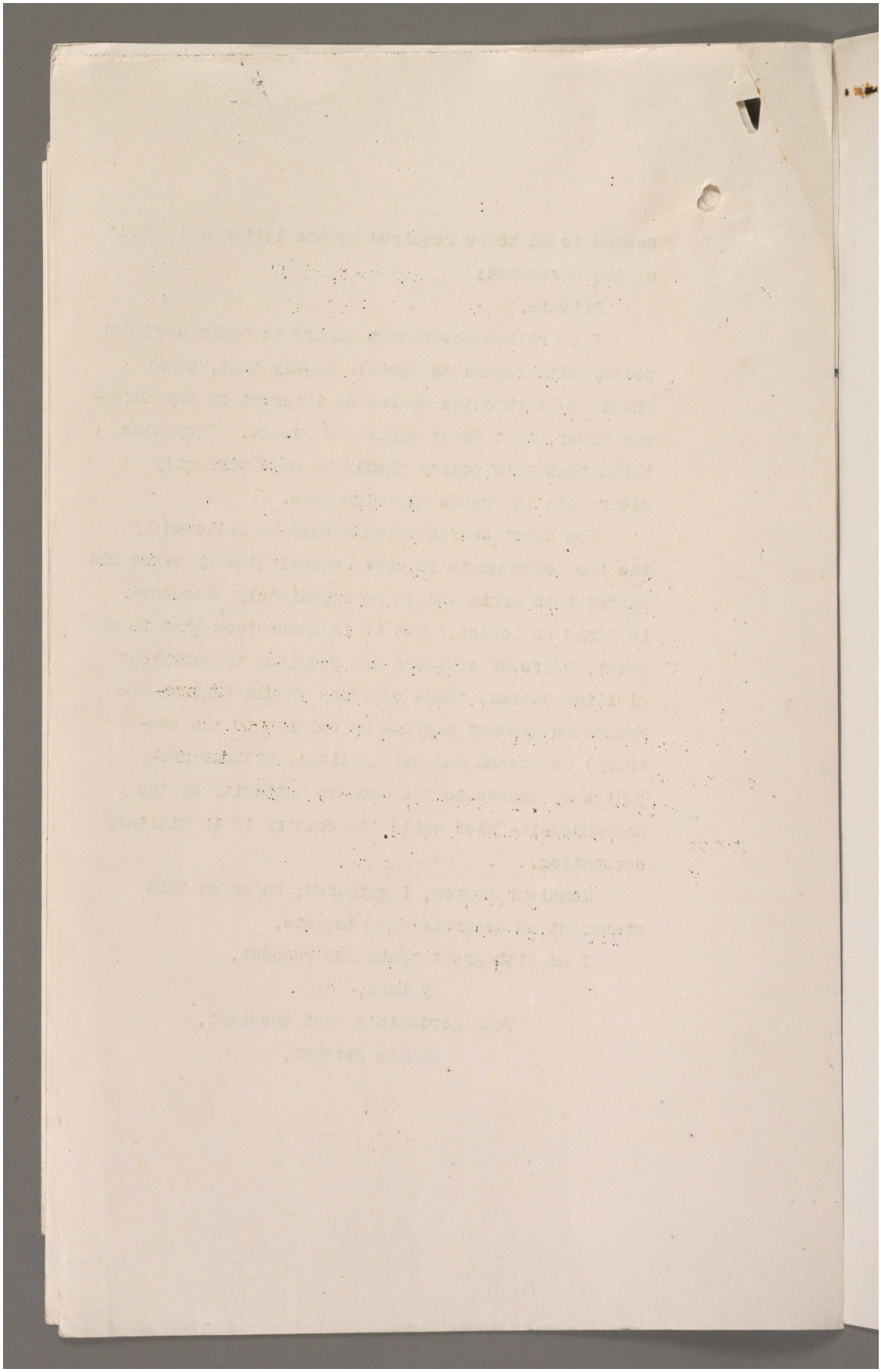

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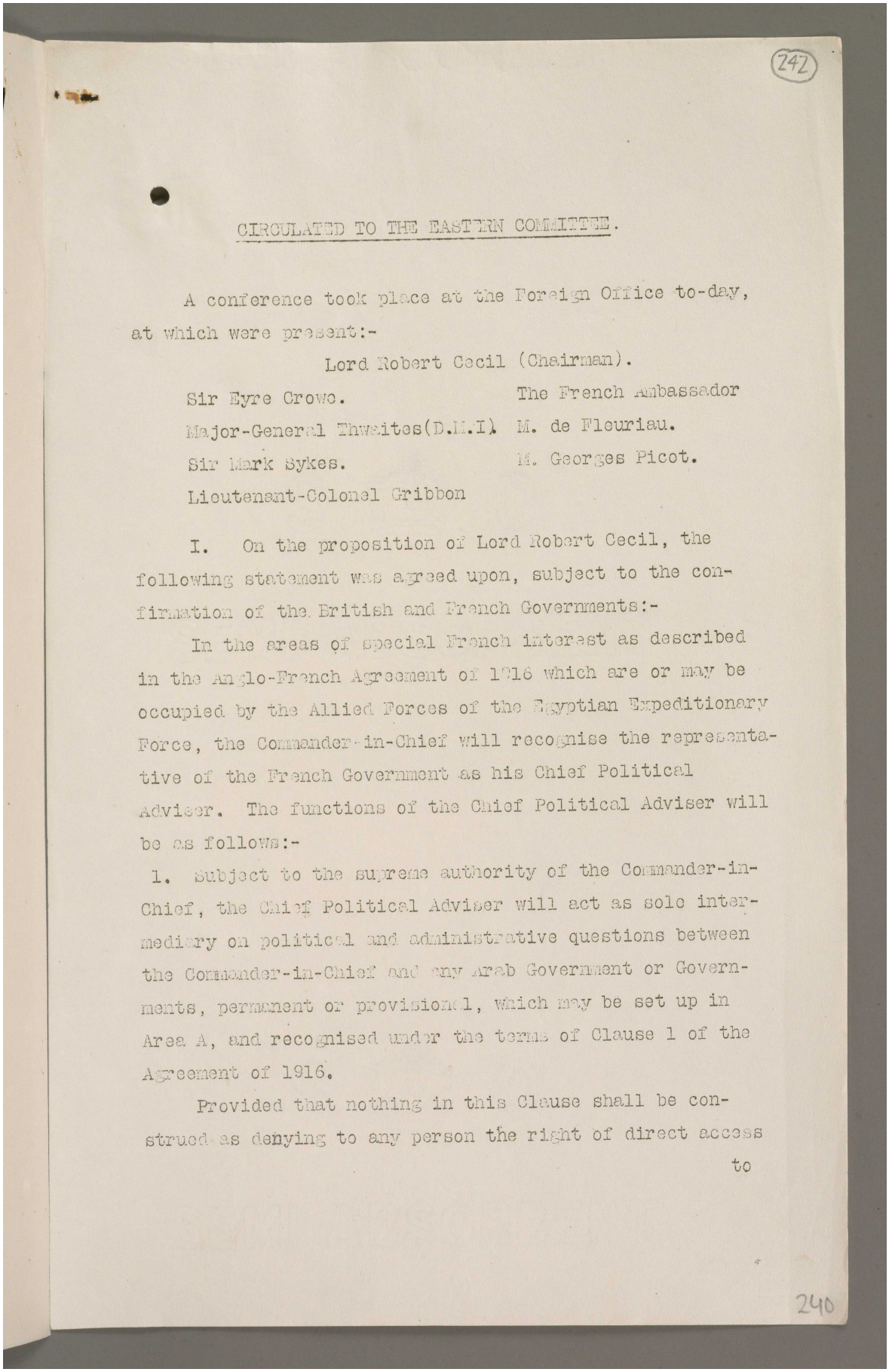

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CIRCULATED TO THE EASTERN COMMITTEE.

A conference took place at the Foreign Office to-day, at which were present:-

Lord Robert Cecil (Chairman).

Sir Eyre Crowe. — The French Ambassador

Major-General Thwaites(D.M.I.) — M. de Fleuriau.

Sir Mark Sykes. — M. Georges Picot.

Lieutenant-Colonel Gribbon

I. On the proposition of Lord Robert Cecil, the following statement was agreed upon, subject to the confirmation of the British and French Governments:-

In the areas of special French interest as described in the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916 which are or may be occupied by the Allied Forces of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, the Commander-in-Chief will recognise the representative of the French Government as his Chief Political Adviser. The functions of the Chief Political Adviser will be as follows:-

1. Subject to the supreme authority of the Commander-in-Chief, the Chief Political Adviser will act as sole intermediary on political and administrative questions between the Commander-in-Chief and any Arab Government or Governments, permanent or provisional, which may be set up in Area A, and recognised under the terms of Clause 1 of the Agreement of 1916.

Provided that nothing in this Clause shall be construed as denying to any person the right of direct access to

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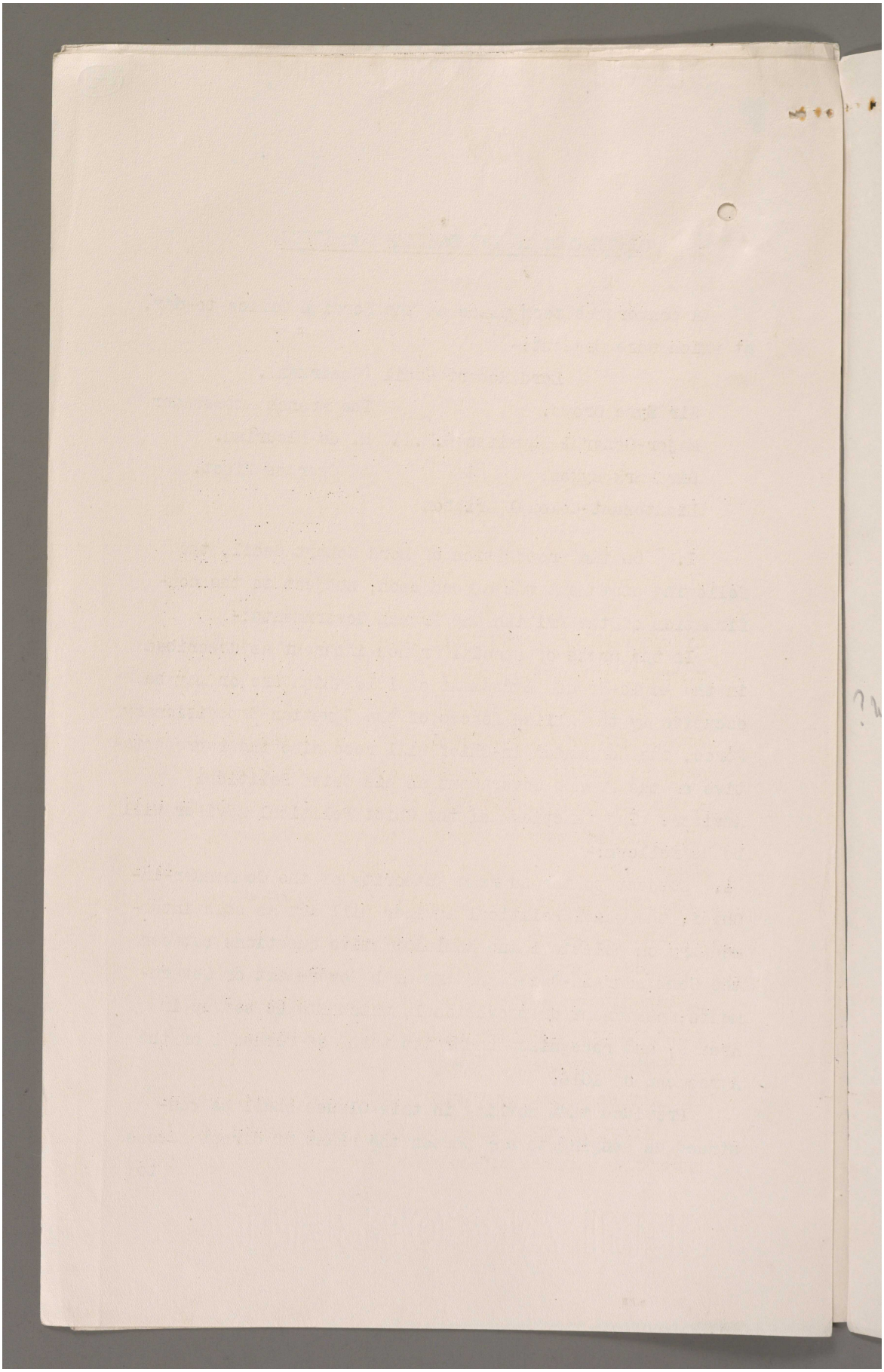

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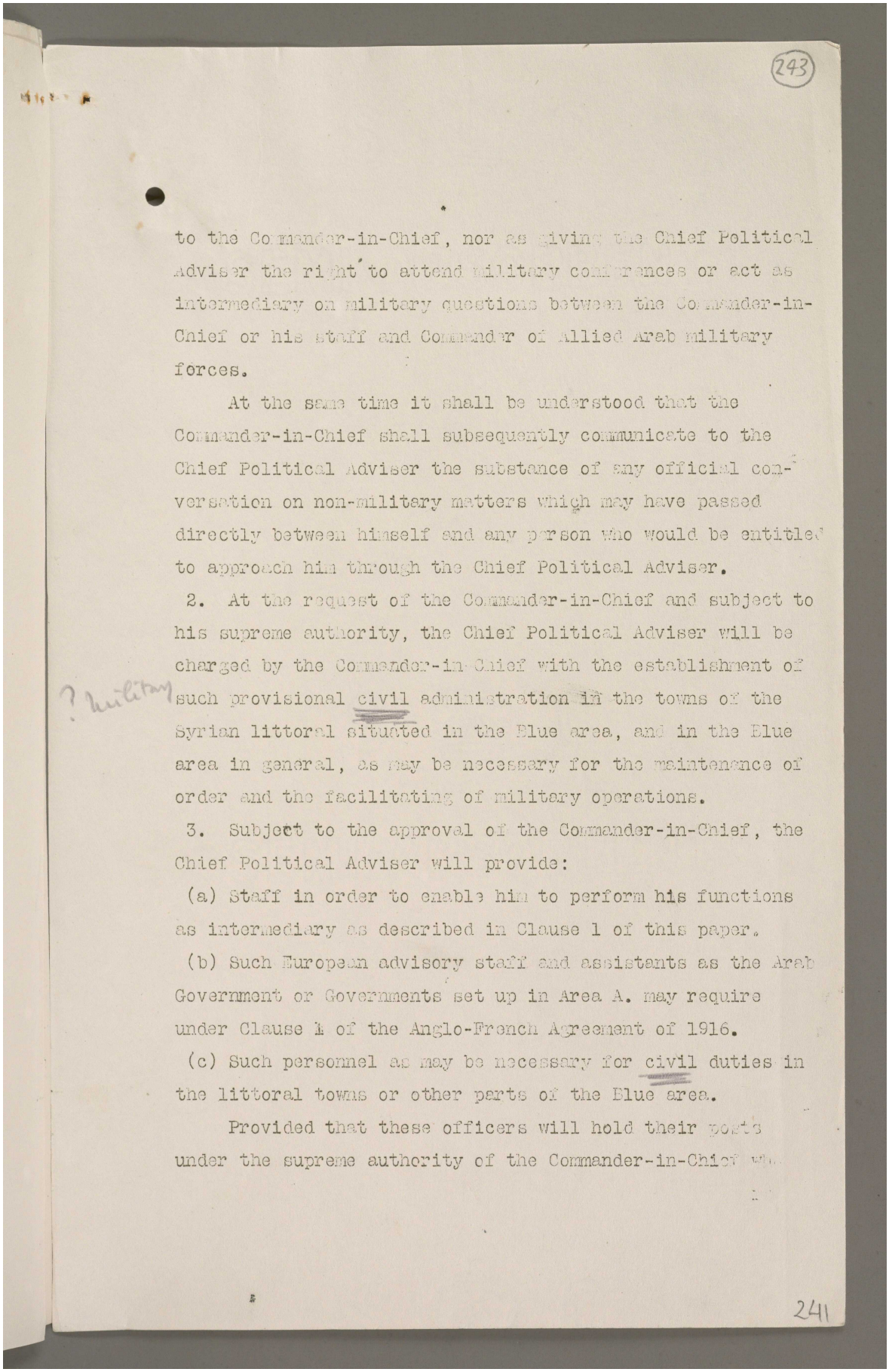

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to the Commander-in-Chief, nor as giving the Chief Political Adviser the right to attend military conferences or act as intermediary on military questions between the Commander-in-Chief or his staff and Commander of Allied Arab military forces.

At the same time it shall be understood that the Commander-in-Chief shall subsequently communicate to the Chief Political Adviser the substance of any official conversation on non-military matters which may have passed directly between himself and any person who would be entitled to approach him through the Chief Political Adviser.

2. At the request of the Commander-in-Chief and subject to his supreme authority, the Chief Political Adviser will be charged by the Commander-in-Chief with the establishment of such provisional civil administration in the towns of the Syrian littoral situated in the Blue area, and in the Blue area in general, as may be necessary for the maintenance of order and the facilitating of military operations.

? military

3. Subject to the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, the Chief Political Adviser will provide:

(a) Staff in order to enable him to perform his functions as intermediary as described in Clause 1 of this paper.

(b) Such European advisory staff and assistants as the Arab Government or Governments set up in Area A. may require under Clause 4 of the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916.

(c) Such personnel as may be necessary for civil duties in the littoral towns or other parts of the Blue area.

Provided that these officers will hold their posts under the supreme authority of the Commander-in-Chief wh...

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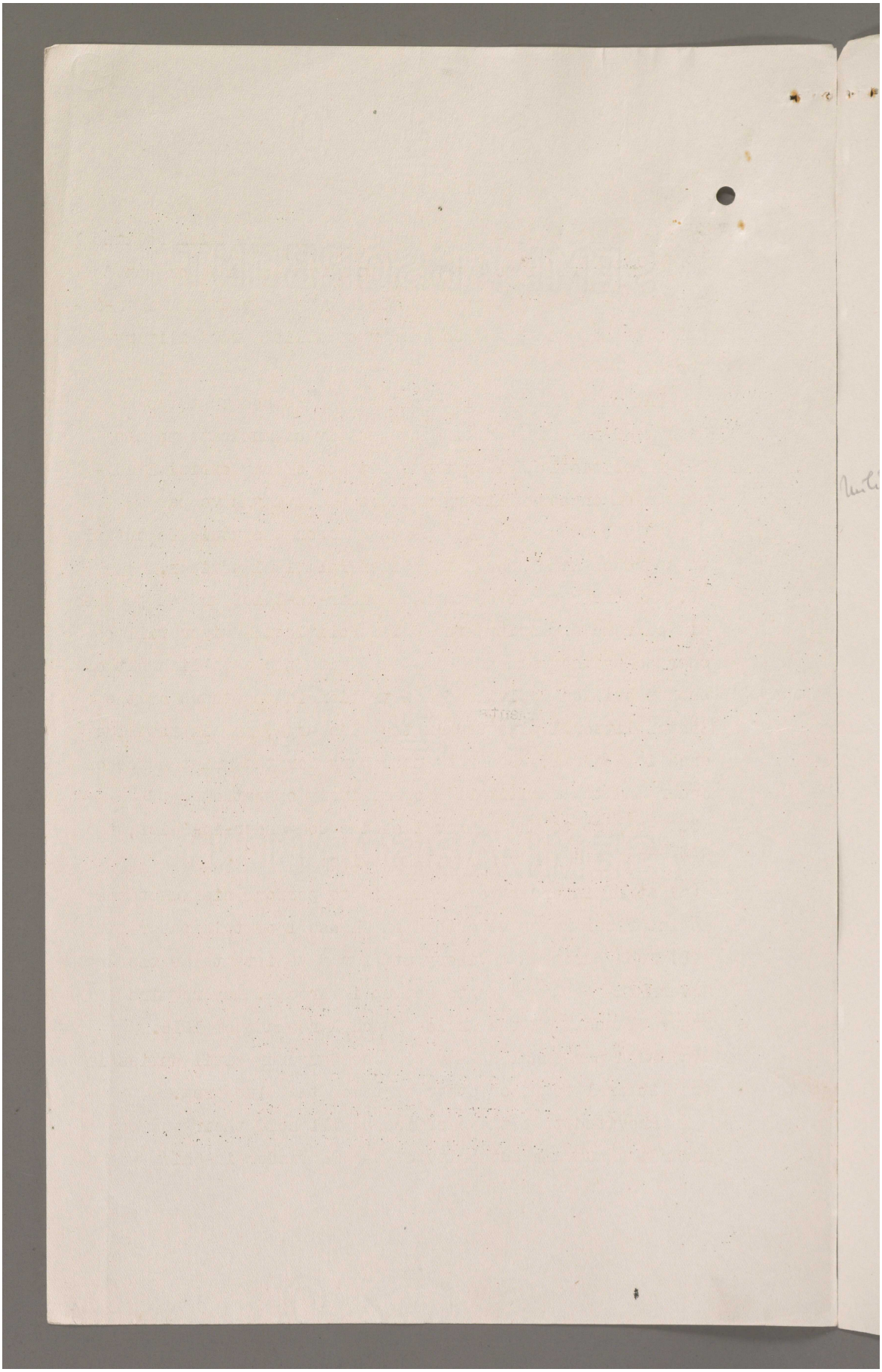

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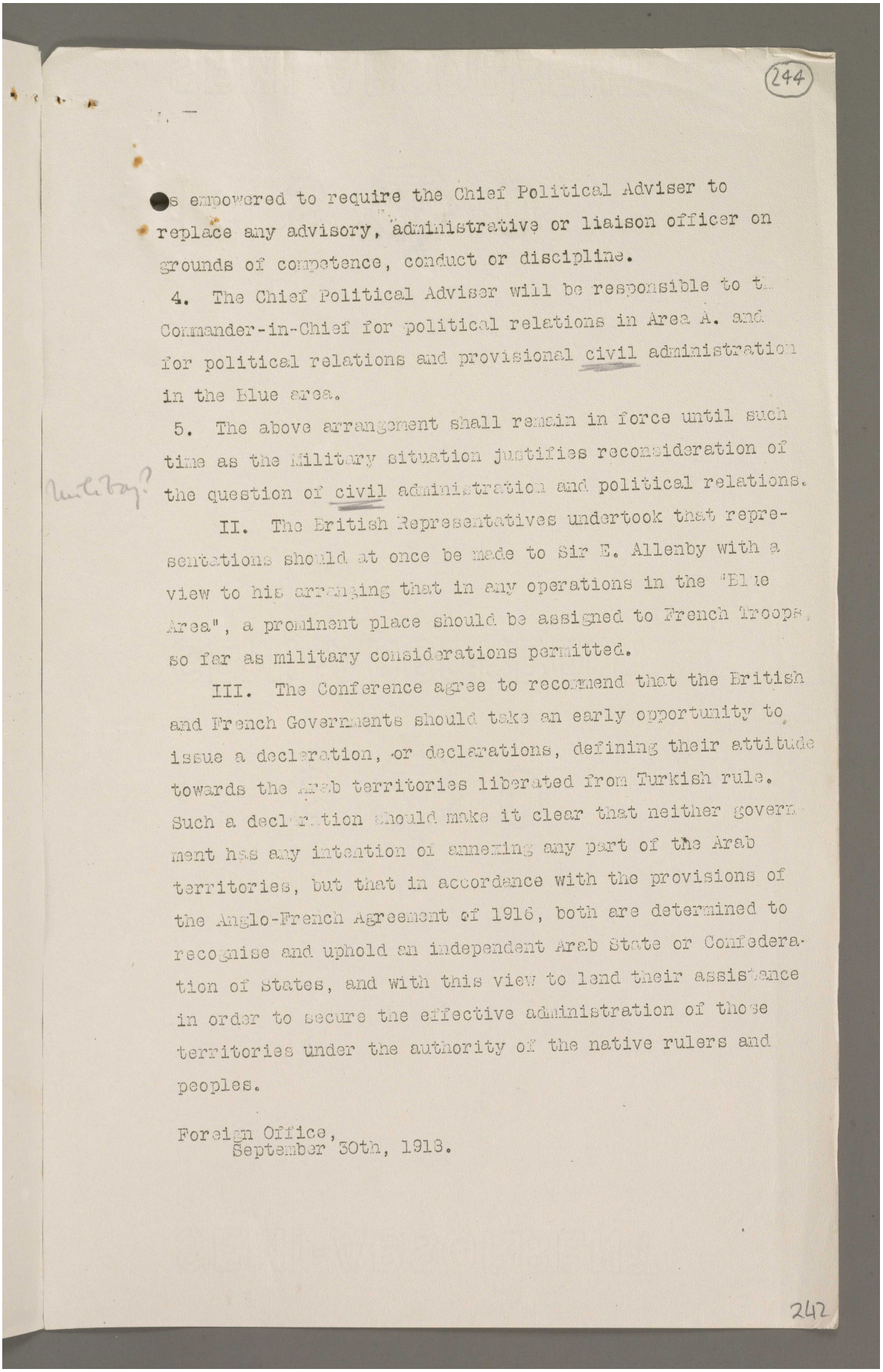

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s empowered to require the Chief Political Adviser to replace any advisory, administrative or liaison officer on grounds of competence, conduct or discipline.

4. The Chief Political Adviser will be responsible to t... Commander-in-Chief for political relations in Area A. and for political relations and provisional civil administration in the Blue area.

5. The above arrangement shall remain in force until such time as the Military situation justifies reconsideration of the question of civil administration and political relations.

II. The British Representatives undertook that representations should at once be made to Sir E. Allenby with a view to his arranging that in any operations in the "Blue Area", a prominent place should be assigned to French Troops, so far as military considerations permitted.

III. The Conference agree to recommend that the British and French Governments should take an early opportunity to issue a declaration, or declarations, defining their attitude towards the Arab territories liberated from Turkish rule. Such a declaration should make it clear that neither government has any intention of annexing any part of the Arab territories, but that in accordance with the provisions of the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916, both are determined to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or Confederation of States, and with this view to lend their assistance in order to secure the effective administration of those territories under the authority of the native rulers and peoples.

Foreign Office,
September 30th, 1918.

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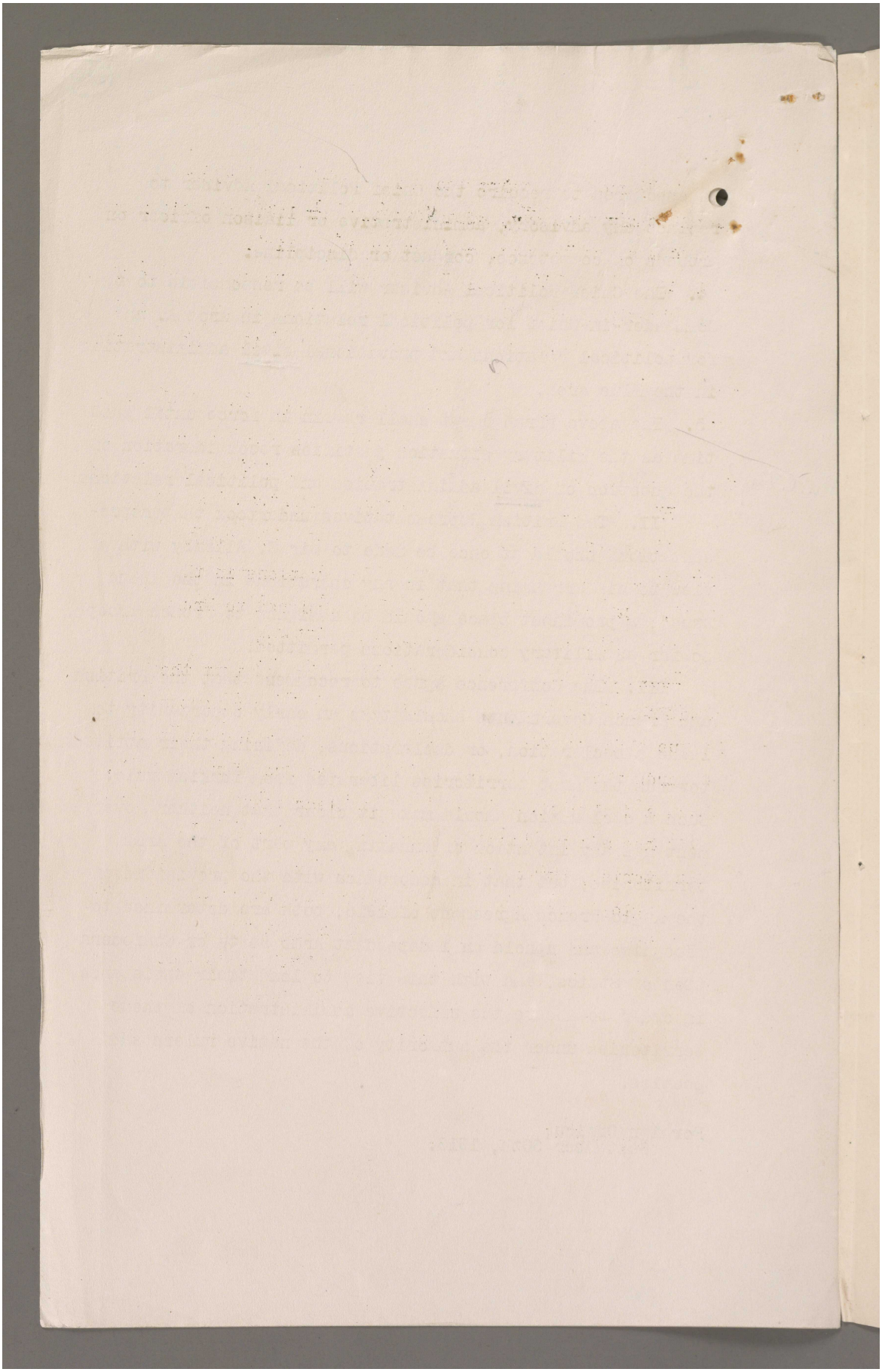

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B. 299.

MESOPOTAMIA.

Note on Demobilisation by Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

(Enclosed in letter to the India Office, No. 20517, dated 28th September 1918.)

1. Demobilisation in Mesopotamia includes not merely the repatriation of the bulk of the fighting forces, but the transference to the Civil Government of the energies of the present military administration, so far as they can be utilised for national ends in time of peace, with the least possible waste of time, money and material. At present there are, under one direction, two installations, so to speak, at work in the country: one military, absorbing nearly all the available power, and directed to military ends, civil needs being served only so far as they are necessary to the attainment of war aims; the other a rudimentary but extensive organisation which had the double duty laid on it of subserving the ends of the military machine, of which it is an integral part, and of paving the way for a Civil Government which shall be able, with the minimum of loss of energy, to take up the reins when peace comes, and administer the country in the manner best calculated to accord with our Imperial policy.

2. The only official literature on the subject that I have seen does not deal, except incidentally, with demobilisation in Mesopotamia, and in any case the many problems which will arise in connection therewith depend for their solution upon factors which must remain unknown until the end of the war.

3. For the purpose of this note it is assumed that whatever form of government is adopted, it will involve effective British control of the country and that it will be uniform throughout Mesopotamia. It is further assumed that His Majesty's Government will, for reasons of strategy and policy, need to retain for a considerable time an organised and highly mobile force in or near Baghdad whose rôle will be to minimise, by the fact of its existence, the risk of anarchical disturbances in the Middle East, and, in the event of such breaking out (*e.g.*, in Persia, Caucasus or Mosul), to restore equilibrium, and will also suffice to maintain internal order.

Strategical and Political Considerations.

4. It is safe to assume that, for a decade after the war, affairs in the Middle East will be in a highly unstable condition and liable to disturbances which, if not kept within bounds, will have a reflex effect upon European peace, and upon law and order in Mesopotamia. No reforms can be carried out in Persia, Armenia or Turkey by European agency unless support can, if need be, be rendered by a military force; and it is in the Middle East that it will be found most difficult to give practical effect to the terms of peace eventually agreed on in Europe.

5. From Baghdad, which will be the ganglion of the railway system of the Middle East, a strong force can, with the aid of modern mechanical transport, be sent within a few weeks across Persia, to Trans-Caucasia, to the Caucasus, to Mosul and Aleppo, and within striking distance of Armenia and Kurdistan. With the nucleus of a strong force in Baghdad, no power could strike at India without first masking or dealing with Baghdad. The presence of a mobile force in Baghdad would enable Great Britain, on behalf of the civilised nations of the world, to give effective support to the new States which may be constituted at the end of the war in Arabia and the Middle East.[1] Without such practical support it seems unlikely that these young States, the first experiments in self-determination, will be able to withstand the forces of anarchy, already so powerful.

[1] *i.e.*, East of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and west of the Indian Frontier.

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6. If Baghdad is strongly held, and ample reserves of war material and the means of transportation be kept on the spot, military requirements for the frontier of India will be correspondingly reduced; the Middle East would be dominated, in a military sense, from Baghdad, and our political influence would be proportionate to our potential military strength. Great Britain alone, as trustee for the civilised nations of the world, can ensure the peace of the Middle East, and Great Britain is the only Power which would be willingly accepted in this capacity by the nations of the Middle East, who, our Treaty of 1907 with Russia notwithstanding, still see in British policy an altruism and tolerance which they fail to discern elsewhere.

7. For political reasons, both local and Imperial, it seems undesirable that the British military forces of Baghdad should consist wholly or mainly of Indian troops; it should, if possible, consist entirely of British troops. Within 12 months of the declaration of peace it should be possible to replace British and Indian military units by Arab levies almost everywhere except at Baghdad, where the climate is far more favourable than most places in India for the health of British troops, provided good quarters are built and arrangements for their comfort made.

8. For the maintenance of law and order in Mesopotamia, reliance should be placed on Arab levies, supported as necessary by aeroplanes and armoured cars; to facilitate the use of these, landing grounds should be maintained near all centres of population, and existing military roads should be maintained. The experience gained during this campaign indicates that this combination is likely to be adequate to deal with any internal troubles likely to arise.

Maintenance in Baghdad of Troops and War Material.

9. If these premises represent to any degree the probable line of policy eventually adopted by His Majesty's Government, it would seem to follow:—

(1) That the formations detailed for the Mesopotamian garrison will be British formations.

(2) That arrangements will be made to retain the bulk of horses and mules now in the country that are fit for use, the balance being disposed of locally; any surplus to military needs can be profitably used for commercial transport, of which there will long be an acute scarcity.

(3) That skilled men in British units will be permitted to take up technical employment in the civil administration or with private firms, and that facilities will be given to them to settle in the country, where there are many openings for skilled European labour and for Europeans generally.

(4) That no considerable quantity of serviceable war material will be shipped from this country to India or elsewhere. This would make rapid remobilisation impossible. Apart from this, the knowledge that large stocks of war material are held at Baghdad will have a powerful effect in maintaining equilibrium in neighbouring States. Our efforts should be directed to storing all war material, including ammunition, under the best possible conditions, in such a way as to make it possible, with a small turnover, to maintain it efficiently. It is understood that large reserves of war material are at present held in this country; it is submitted that these should be retained, and that all the resources of engineering skill and modern science be called in at the end of the war to ensure their preservation in suitable magazines.

(5) That all available mechanical transport in the country be retained and that arrangements be made for its maintenance in an efficient condition. This is a vital consideration. Provided our mechanical transport is maintained at full strength and efficiency, the Baghdad garrison can dominate the Middle East, and even further afield, at will. It is to be hoped that British personnel for mechanical units can be partially replaced by Arab; Indian personnel could be utilised until Arab personnel is available. All available surplus motor transport could be profitably employed by Government in carrying goods on behalf of private firms for some time after the war, as there is all over the Middle East an acute shortage of animal transport and of imported necessaries, though considerable stocks of these are held at Baghdad and Basrah.

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Administrative Considerations.

10. If the assumptions in the foregoing paragraph represent to any degree the probable line of policy to be pursued by Government, it follows that the efficiency of the means of transportation and communication in Mesopotamia will be, no less than the size and composition of the garrison, a matter of Imperial concern; and it will be necessary, when discussing post-war administration, to provide for the retention of effective Government control over the means of transportation developed by military agency in this country during the present war, and for their further development with due regard to strategical requirements.

Thus when the Civil Administration is called on to take over the existing Directorate of Railways it should do so not as a domestic matter but on behalf of the Imperial Government; it should be required to keep such reserves of material as may be decided on, and to build such additional lines and sidings as are needed for military purposes.

In consideration of these obligations being fulfilled the railway lines, rolling stock and other assets might be handed over to the Civil Administration at a lower rate than would otherwise be the case.

I am assuming that in the case of railways, works, power plant and other assets of the kind erected in the country and required for post-war purposes, they will be assessed and handed over at a valuation to the Civil Administration, which will hand to the Treasury an equivalent of Mesopotamian Bonds in lieu, the interest and sinking fund on which will be payable annually.

It is abundantly clear that if this country is to be given a good start, all these assets should be handed over to it.

It would pay the Imperial Government, as a matter of business, to hand them over for one quarter of their book value, for the cost of dismantling the partly used plant, shipping it, storing it and reassembling it, will be very great, and will involve further deterioration; and meanwhile the plant will not be earning money and all the money spent in preparing sites, foundations, embankments, accommodation, &c., will be lost. Left *in situ* in working order, there is little doubt that it will earn enough to pay working expenses, interest and sinking fund on a reduced estimate of capital value.

11. If the above assumptions are correct, no railway material will be returned to India, and the demobilisation of railway staff would consist of the transfer to the Civil Administration of the Directorate, and the continuance in civil employ of all men willing to remain. The Railway Directorate would have to continue to recruit staff from India and probably from Europe for some time to come.

Directorate of Telegraphs.

12. The considerations advanced in paragraphs 10 and 11 apply *mutatis mutandis* to telegraphs. This Directorate is already quasi-civil; it is at present staffed and administered from India; it is a matter for consideration of Government whether it should not be amalgamated with the Indo-European Telegraph Department and given by international arrangement powers to run a line of telegraphs from Baghdad to the Mediterranean, thus connecting India with the United Kingdom more effectively than was possible through Russia and across Europe.

The powerful wireless installations at Basrah and Baghdad would be taken over by this Directorate; the numerous smaller installations being stored in Baghdad, as a strategic reserve, on the principles advocated in paragraphs 5 and 6 *supra*.

A Telegraph Department with effective control over main lines of communication up the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia would be a great Imperial asset; commercially it would probably, like the Indo-European Telegraph Department, pay.

Inland Water Transport.

13. Until there is through communication between Amarah and Baghdad by rail a considerable volume of military river-borne traffic will be required, but railway communication once effected it seems unlikely that the Tigris will be used to any great extent by Government for the transport of troops or material, except perhaps fuel oil and bulk kerosene, coal, and, in times of high river, railway and building materials.

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It is for consideration whether the river steamers best suited for the Tigris should not be retained, with an adequate number of barges, at the disposal of the Civil Department of Railways (which might be merged into a Department of Transportation), in sufficient numbers to meet military emergencies, and to cope with the Government tonnage. This would prevent a monopoly of river transport by any one firm, would give the Department of Transportation a free hand to utilise whatever method of transportation (river or rail) is most economical.

Some steamers and many barges could probably be sold in Mesopotamia to British and to Arab companies; some will in the ordinary course of things be returned to India, others might be sold for export to Burma.

Inland Water Transport docks, buildings at Basrah and elsewhere, constitute a most valuable property, and the best way to ensure its utilisation to the advantage of the State would appear to be to vest the whole in the Civil Department of Transportation (including docks). This done, superfluous assets could be disposed of to other Government Departments, or by sale locally, under suitable supervision by some specially-constituted authority on behalf of the Treasury.

Medical Services.

14. The disposable material of the Medical Services in this country consists, roughly speaking, of—

(1) Buildings.
(2) Ships.
(3) Sanitary installations.
(4) Stores.

As regards buildings, these are of three kinds:—

(1) Permanent buildings requisitioned for war purposes, *e.g.*, the Serai and Military Isolation Hospital at Baghdad, No. 3 B.G.H., at Basrah. It is urgent that these should be evacuated at the earliest practicable date.

(2) Temporary hospital buildings of a more or less substantial nature; these will mostly be required by the military authorities for some considerable time after the declaration of peace, if (1) are evacuated and if troops are concentrated at large centres. Any surplus could probably be advantageously taken over by the Civil Administration.

(3) Sanitary installations, water filtration plant. Much of this will be wanted by the Civil Administration, so far as it can be spared; the balance could probably be advantageously stored (paragraph 9 *supra*).

It is of greatest importance that continuity of medical and sanitary work in this country be so far as possible ensured; this might be done by establishing a Central Medical Department at the earliest possible date, to which all medical records of permanent interest would be transferred, and which would take over and continue the research work now being conducted under military auspices.

A discussion as to the organisation of a Civil Medical Department is, however, not germane to the subject of this Memorandum except in so far as it will afford openings for a number of medical officers and British other ranks of the R.A.M.C. who may be willing to stay in the country.

The principle on which it will be formed will probably be that the personnel should so far as possible be British and Arab; medical schools being instituted with the object of making Mesopotamia independent in the matter of compounders, dressers, pharmacists, sub-assistant-surgeons, and assistant-surgeons.

Works Department.

15. The activities of the Works Department in Mesopotamia have had a profound effect on the civil population, and the activities of no department have been of more direct benefit to them. Politically the installation of electric light and fans, of modern water installations, of ice machines, to mention only a few branches of the Department, have fired the imaginations of all classes, who have benefited indirectly therefrom (as in the case of street lighting and water) or who confidently hope to benefit immediately after the war.

There are strong political reasons against any hasty restriction of the scope of the Works Department, much of which could be taken over *en bloc* by the Civil Administration, with its plant, under the same financial arrangements as railways

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(*vide* paragraph 10 *supra*). It would be unwise and would arouse much resentment to accept specious offers from British or other firms to take over such public installations as now exist, and work them at a profit for the use of the public.

Before long the larger municipalities will be in a position to acquire and work the lighting and water supply installations for themselves, as all such would undoubtedly be commercially profitable and self-supporting. Municipalities will also be glad to take over ice machines and even other assets like flour mills, and there is already a strong current of public opinion in favour of this system, which moreover accords well with our political intentions in this country.

Public works on a large scale will be needed, both permanent and temporary, and for this purpose also the existing Works Department will form an invaluable nucleus.

Remounts.

16. *Vide* paragraph 9 (2) *supra*.

Veterinary Services.

17. *Vide* paragraph 14 *supra*; the same conditions apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Irrigation and Agriculture.

18. These Departments, at present military, will presumably be transferred *en bloc* to the Civil Administration; they can then be recast to suit civil administrative needs.

Surveys.

19. An immense amount of valuable work has been and is being done; continuity is essential. Paragraph 14 *supra* applies *mutatis mutandis*.

Stationery Department.

20. Could usefully be expanded to form a single unit to meet military and civil needs.

Graves Registration.

21. The care and maintenance of military cemeteries is a recognised responsibility of the Civil Administration. This unit might suitably be transferred even before the end of the war to Civil, and thus facilitate arrangements for making district officers responsible for such cemeteries in their districts as it is decided to maintain.

Royal Air Force.

22. For reasons already adduced it would seem most important to maintain at Baghdad a strong wing of the Royal Air Force, with all existing workshops, hangars, stores, &c.; the existence of such a force can scarcely fail to exert a powerful influence in support of British policy and of peace in the whole of Middle East, and the cost of maintaining such a force is small compared to that of other arms.

It seems probable that many supplementary aerial activities could before long be developed from Baghdad as a base which would be of the greatest use to the Civil Administration, *e.g.*—

(1) Photographic surveys, which have already been carried to a high state of efficiency.
(2) Periodical agricultural and marsh surveys, to show areas under cultivation.
(3) Ferry services for high officials on tour.
(4) Rapid postal services between Baghdad and large towns such as Basrah, Mosul, Aleppo, Hamadan and Tehran; this would very possibly be commercially profitable and will not improbably be a recognised branch of Governmental activity in Europe after the war.

Its primary duty would, however, be strategic; a strong air force at Baghdad is the first essential if we are to get full value from our position here. If this be accepted there will be no considerable transfer of stores and no rapid demobilisation of personnel of the Air Force.

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Royal Navy.

23. It is to be doubted whether after the war there will be any need to maintain a detachment of the Royal Navy on the river in Mesopotamia; such police duties can be performed by river boats, and could be managed with military detachments, under the orders of the military authorities, in vessels managed by the Civil Department of Transportation.

On this assumption the demobilisation of the Royal Navy might be complete, boats and stores being handed over to the Civil Department of Transportation.

Repatriation of Prisoners of War now interned in India.

24. Of the 25,000 or more Turkish prisoners of war in British hands understood to be in India, probably not over 5,000 are residents of Iraq; probably another 5,000 are residents of the Mosul Vilayat, and are of Arab or mixed Arab race, or are Kurds of Kirkuk, &c., and would wish to be repatriated *viâ* Baghdad; the remainder can probably be best repatriated *viâ* the Mediterranean. It is possible, and even probable, that of the 10,000 who may be repatriated *viâ* Baghdad, a considerable proportion would be willing to work in Labour Corps, replacing Indian Labour Corps. A great deal of labour will be required both for military and civil purposes after demobilisation, and this source, if it can be tapped, should greatly facilitate the demobilisation of Labour Corps; if it is possible to bring out more prisoners of war labour from India during hostilities, this process would be considerably facilitated.

Amongst the prisoners of war now in India are some, both in class "B" and "C," who cannot suitably be released without security being taken for their good behaviour; this would be arranged with the Civil Administration at the time of repatriation. A certain proportion of the prisoners of war are blind, and maimed, or so diseased as to be incapable of earning a living; some few are from Mesopotamia, but the bulk are from Turkey in Asia. Those who belong to this country should be handed over to the Civil Administration, which will have to arrange for their disposal.

Indian Immigration.

25. It will be necessary on the termination of the war to have a definite policy with regard to Indian immigration. There will be a demand, which might, if encouraged, attain considerable proportions, on the part of certain classes in the Indian Army, for grants of land to enable them to remain here after the war as cultivators.

There has already been a notable influx of Indian, Hindu, Mohammedan and Parsi shopkeepers and small traders into Basrah, and only existing military restrictions prevent their coming to Baghdad.

The question is a many-sided one and is only referred to here as a reminder of a question which will have to be faced in connection with demobilisation.

Arab opinion is undoubtedly opposed to Indian immigration of any sort.

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APPENDIX.

I.—Memorandum by the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to the Chief of General Staff, General Headquarters, Mesopotamia, No. 18791, dated the 8th September 1918.

I attach for the consideration of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief a note on demobilisation in Mesopotamia which, subject to his concurrence, I propose to send to the Secretary of State for India and to the Government of India.

2. The note embodies my personal views on the subjects dealt with, so far as I have been able to formulate them without fuller knowledge of the facts, and without knowledge of the views and intentions of His Majesty's Government. It was written before the return of Sir P. Cox, and has not been altered since.

3. The note is intended to bring to the notice of higher authority some aspects of the urgent local problems that will before long call for solution, and if General Officer Commanding-in-Chief concurs, I would propose, when transmitting the note, to ask His Majesty's Government to consider the despatch to this country of a small but authoritative Commission of, say, three persons, who may be joined by two members from the Staff of this Force, to consider the questions raised in this memorandum and other allied topics relating less to the political status of this country than to the practical administrative problems connected with post-war adjustments.

4. This Committee should have power to co-opt heads of departments, and to call for information on all subjects. It might usefully come out in December, and sit for three months.

I attach papers from which it will be seen that the proposal for such a Commission was made in 1917 and accepted by His Majesty's Government, but postponed for military reasons.

A. T. Wilson, Lieut.-Col. I.A.,
Officiating Civil Commissioner.

II.—Memorandum No. A./2120/31, dated 26th September 1918, from Deputy Adjutant-General, General Headquarters, to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

Your No. 18791 of 8th September and enclosed paper is returned herewith.

The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief wishes his observations to be forwarded with the letter, and I am to state that he has no objection to a telegram being sent regarding the advisability of a Commission to enquire into the question of reconstruction of Irak. It is desirable their work should commence this winter.

III.—Observations by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief.

With reference to the Civil Commissioner's paper on demobilisation, I am entirely in accord that, given the retention of Irak by the British Government on the cessation of hostilities, all assistance should be given to the new administration that is possible in the handing over of institutions and establishments at present under the control of the Army which would be of utility in the reconstruction of the country. The question of payment could no doubt be settled equitably. Till, however, the terms of peace are settled, general principles may be suggested, but laying down of details must prove of doubtful value.

I agree that Baghdad should be the headquarters of the post-war garrison, but I consider the hopes expressed in paragraphs 3 and 5 regarding its mobility as optimistic. Such mobility could only be ensured by a very great improvement of existing communications and development of means of transportation. The necessity for sending troops to the various districts mentioned will depend, moreover, on the political results obtained from peace.

The expression "strong force" in paragraph 5 is somewhat indeterminate, and it seems to me very doubtful if in peace time it would be possible to maintain sufficient mechanical transport to send a force as large as a division across Persia

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into Trans-Caucasia or the Caucasus. In this connection, and with reference also to paragraph 9 (5), I do not think it would be possible to retain all the mechanical transport that we shall shortly have in the country in peace time; such an amount could not normally be usefully employed, and it is very doubtful if any Government would agree to keep up 32 companies of Ford vans and the large number of Peerless lorries in peace time. I am doubtful also whether all available surplus motor transport could be profitably employed by the Government in carrying goods on behalf of private firms for some time after the war. Ford vans are not economical enough for commercial use.

I do not think it feasible or desirable to keep up a garrison of entirely British troops in Mesopotamia. Such a garrison would entail the provision of hill stations, and would be handicapped by considerations of health. The provision of an entirely British garrison of the size suggested (two divisions) might also be difficult, taking into consideration our probable responsibilities in other parts of the world.

With reference to paragraph 9 (4), it is clear that all raw material should be stored under the best possible conditions, and this is done now as far as possible. It is open to question whether we should retain as large a reserve of ammunition in peace time as we have now, since modern ammunition deteriorates quickly and it would be difficult to obtain a turnover.

With reference to paragraph 13, the development of irrigation and the utilisation of the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates for that end will have to be considered. River navigation by steamers of any size will undoubtedly be affected, and the establishing of through railway communication will also be an important factor.

I am particularly impressed with the importance of the last paragraph. If the Indian agriculturist is to be encouraged, he must be protected until he is settled. This is a point that must be treated with especial care; Indian labour questions in Africa and other countries emphasise the necessity. If the Indian is introduced he should at first be confined to such areas as are newly brought under irrigation, and where the Arab or other population is either very scanty or does not exist. It would appear advisable in the first place to encourage more Arabs to settle on the land.

With the remainder of the remarks of the Civil Commissioner, which I have read with the greatest of interest, I am in general agreement.

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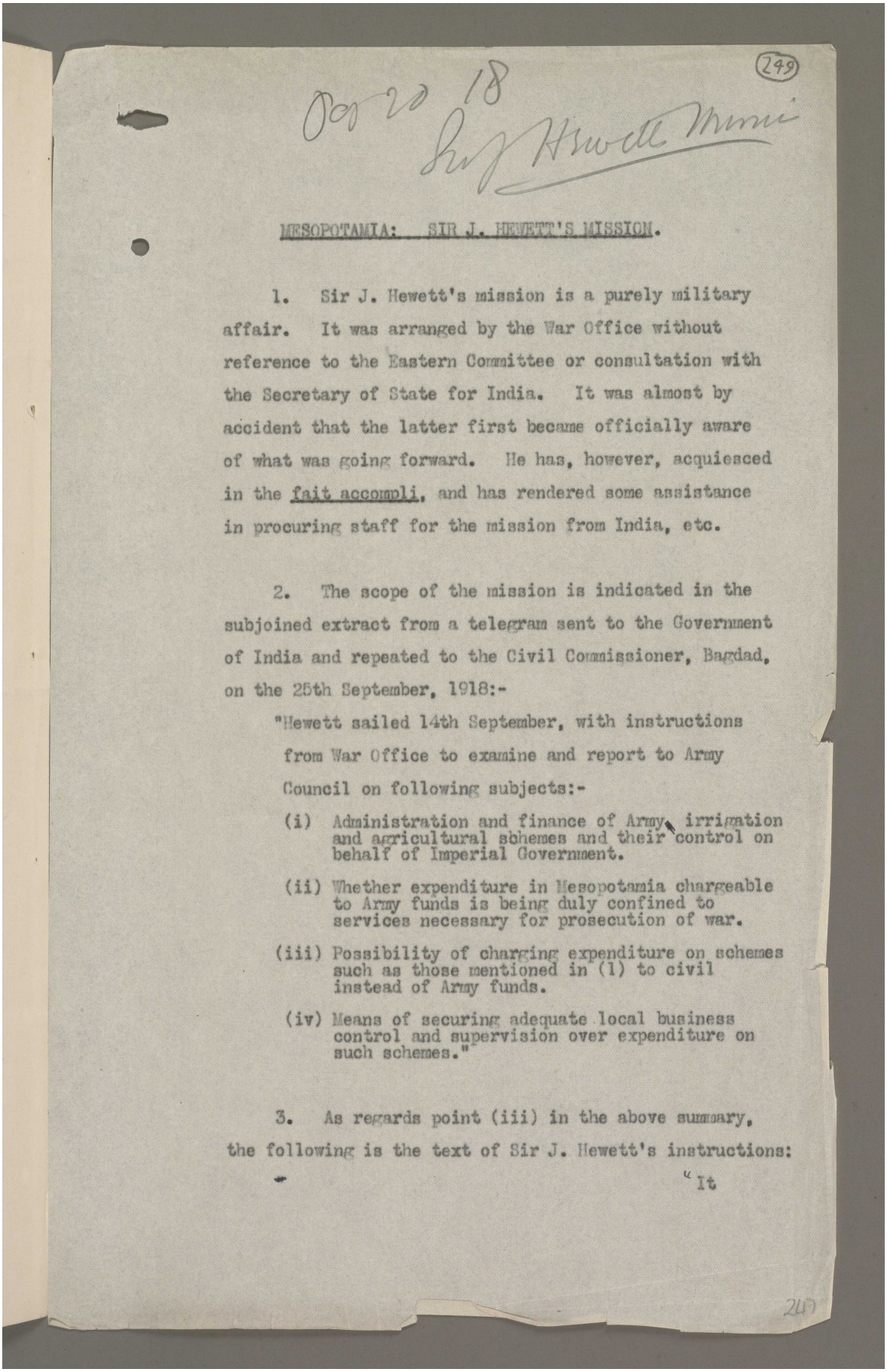

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Sir J. Hewett Mission

MESOPOTAMIA: SIR J. HEWETT'S MISSION.

1. Sir J. Hewett's mission is a purely military affair. It was arranged by the War Office without reference to the Eastern Committee or consultation with the Secretary of State for India. It was almost by accident that the latter first became officially aware of what was going forward. He has, however, acquiesced in the fait accompli, and has rendered some assistance in procuring staff for the mission from India, etc.

2. The scope of the mission is indicated in the subjoined extract from a telegram sent to the Government of India and repeated to the Civil Commissioner, Bagdad, on the 25th September, 1918:-

"Hewett sailed 14th September, with instructions from War Office to examine and report to Army Council on following subjects:-

(i) Administration and finance of Army, irrigation and agricultural schemes and their control on behalf of Imperial Government.

(ii) Whether expenditure in Mesopotamia chargeable to Army funds is being duly confined to services necessary for prosecution of war.

(iii) Possibility of charging expenditure on schemes such as those mentioned in (1) to civil instead of Army funds.

(iv) Means of securing adequate local business control and supervision over expenditure on such schemes."

3. As regards point (iii) in the above summary, the following is the text of Sir J. Hewett's instructions:

"It

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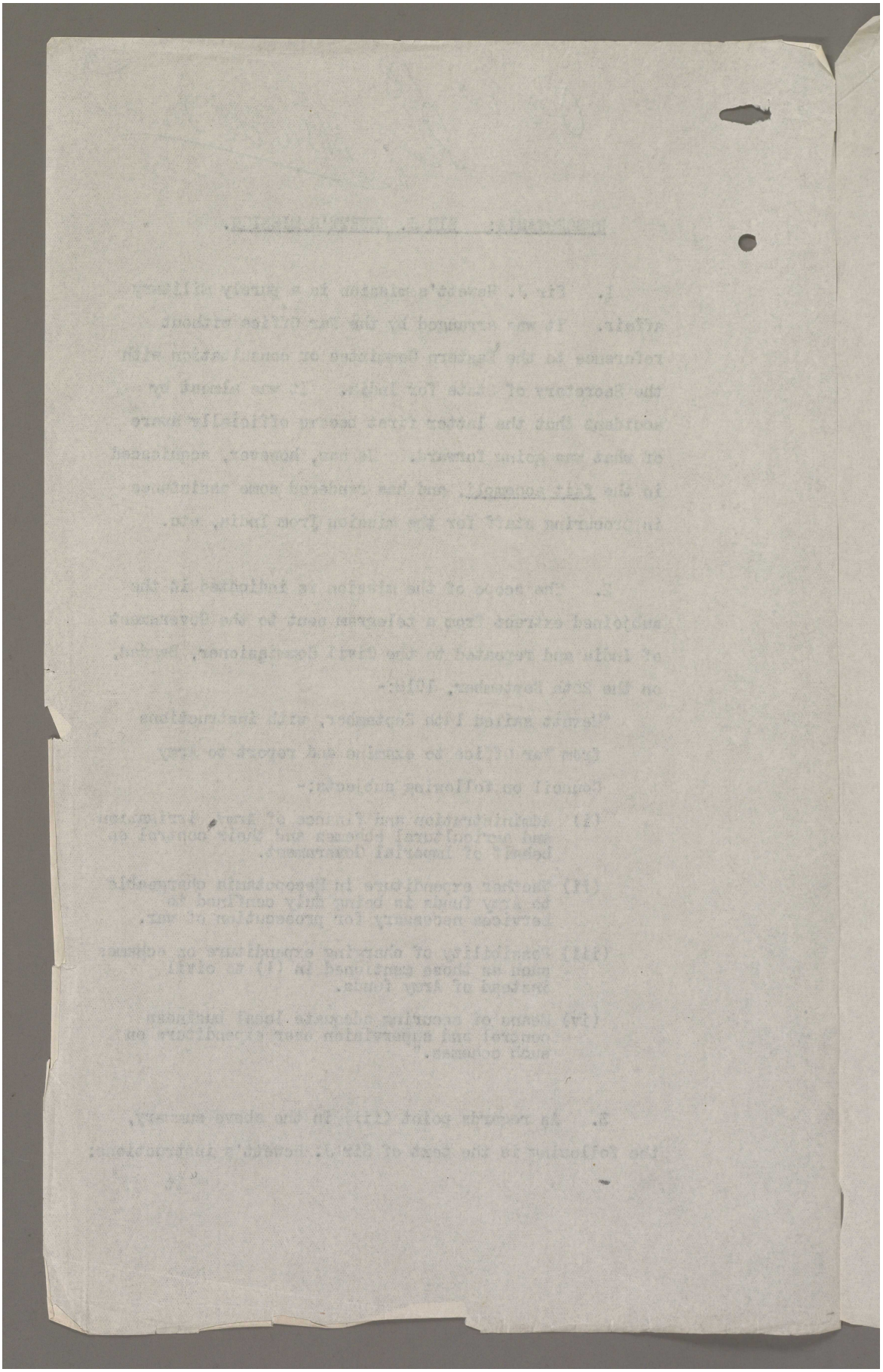

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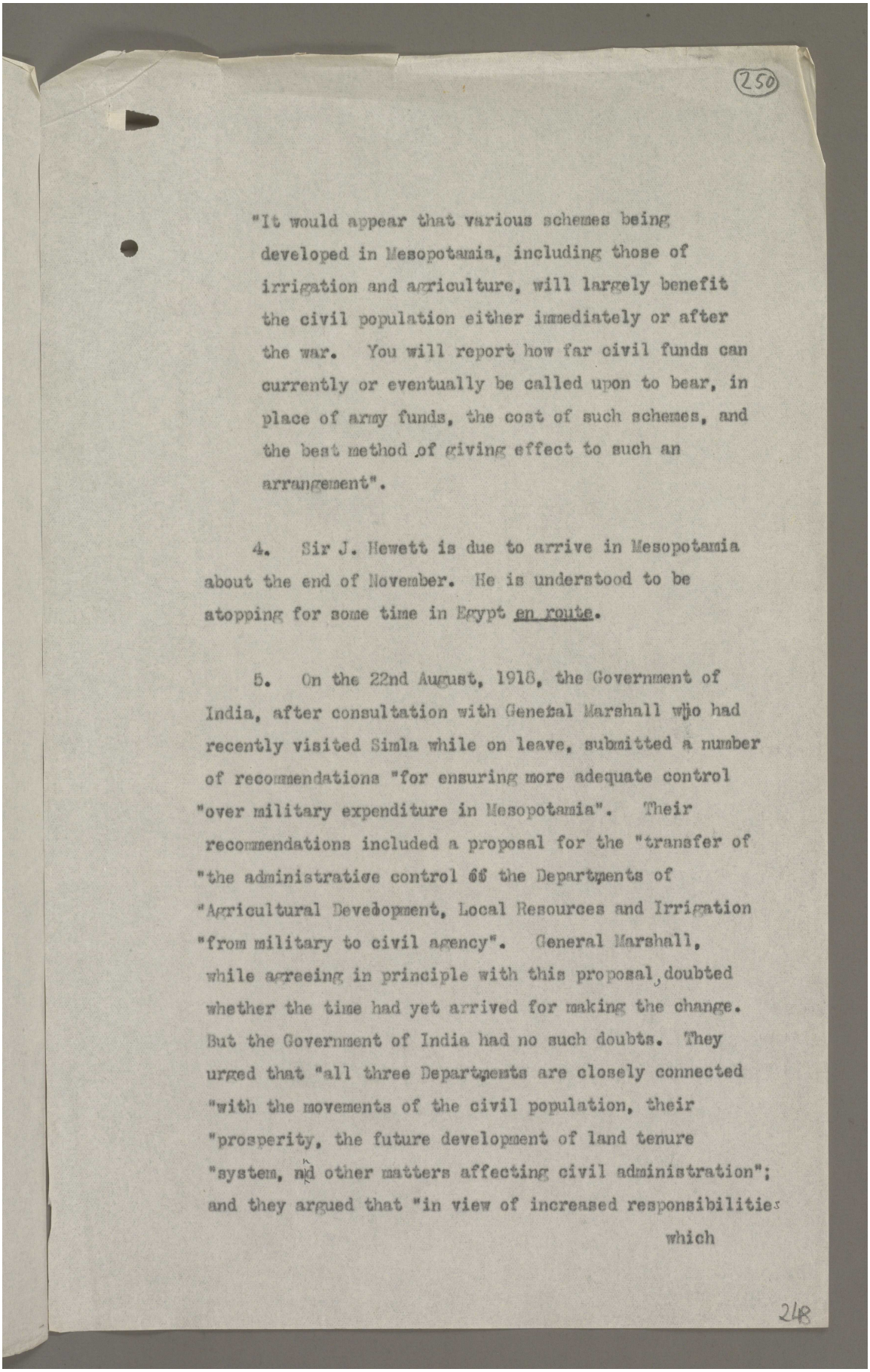

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"It would appear that various schemes being developed in Mesopotamia, including those of irrigation and agriculture, will largely benefit the civil population either immediately or after the war. You will report how far civil funds can currently or eventually be called upon to bear, in place of army funds, the cost of such schemes, and the best method of giving effect to such an arrangement".

4. Sir J. Hewett is due to arrive in Mesopotamia about the end of November. He is understood to be stopping for some time in Egypt en route.

5. On the 22nd August, 1918, the Government of India, after consultation with General Marshall who had recently visited Simla while on leave, submitted a number of recommendations "for ensuring more adequate control "over military expenditure in Mesopotamia". Their recommendations included a proposal for the "transfer of "the administrative control of the Departments of "Agricultural Development, Local Resources and Irrigation "from military to civil agency". General Marshall, while agreeing in principle with this proposal, doubted whether the time had yet arrived for making the change. But the Government of India had no such doubts. They urged that "all three Departments are closely connected "with the movements of the civil population, their "prosperity, the future development of land tenure "system, and other matters affecting civil administration"; and they argued that "in view of increased responsibilities which

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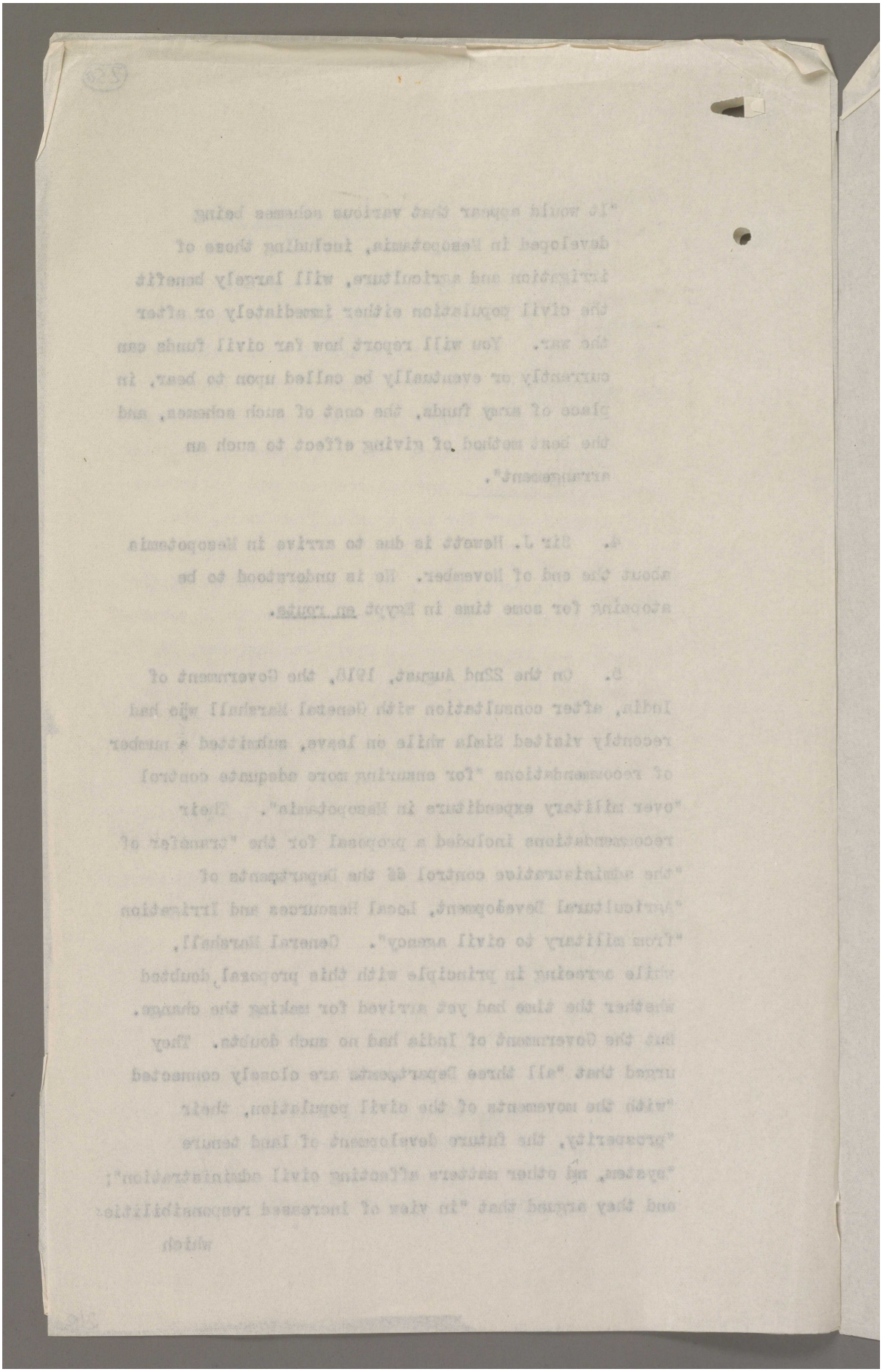

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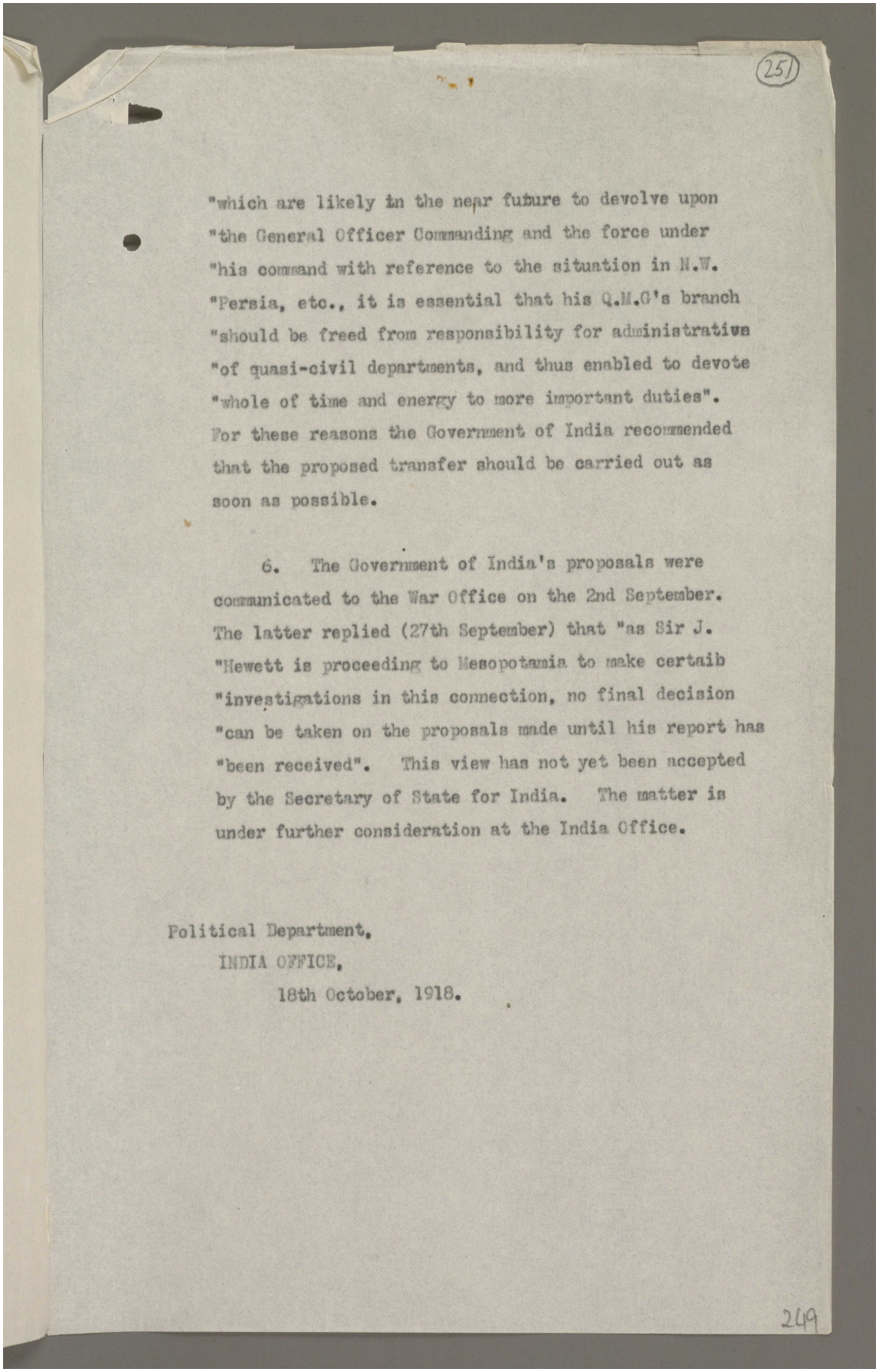

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"which are likely in the near future to devolve upon "the General Officer Commanding and the force under "his command with reference to the situation in N.W. "Persia, etc., it is essential that his Q.M.G's branch "should be freed from responsibility for administrative "of quasi-civil departments, and thus enabled to devote "whole of time and energy to more important duties". For these reasons the Government of India recommended that the proposed transfer should be carried out as soon as possible.

6. The Government of India's proposals were communicated to the War Office on the 2nd September. The latter replied (27th September) that "as Sir J. "Hewett is proceeding to Mesopotamia to make certaib "investigations in this connection, no final decision "can be taken on the proposals made until his report has "been received". This view has not yet been accepted by the Secretary of State for India. The matter is under further consideration at the India Office.

Political Department,
INDIA OFFICE,
18th October, 1918.

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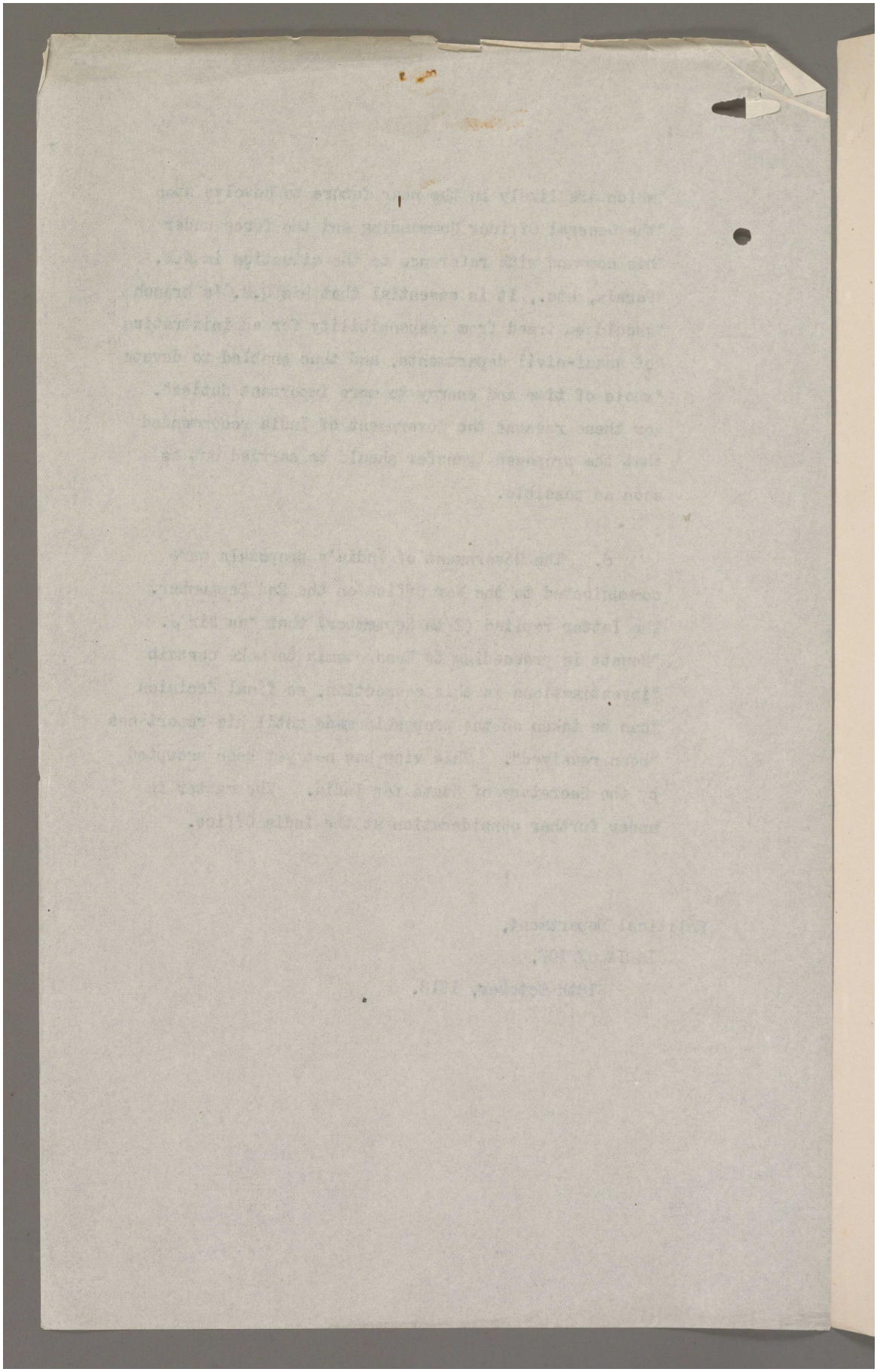

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Oct 21 1918

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Administration of Mesopotamia.

(*Baghdad Telegrams Nos.* 7725, 8031, *and* 8075, *dated* 15*th*, 25*th and* 27*th September* 1918; *Viceroy's Telegram of* 6*th October* 1918.)

NOTE BY POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, INDIA OFFICE.

1. The Secretary of State's telegram of the 29th March 1917, which was framed under the directions of a Committee of the War Cabinet shortly after the British occupation of Baghdad, laid down in some detail the principles which His Majesty's Government, as then advised, proposed to apply to the future administration of the occupied territory. The following clear differentiation was made between the status of the Basra Vilayet and that of the Baghdad Vilayet:—

(1) Basra was "to remain permanently under British administration," its western and northern limits being specifically defined.

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2. In other words, our original policy was (1) to annex Basra, and (2) to set up in Baghdad an Arab State under British protection and supervision. The importance of differentiating between the two vilayets was again emphasised by the Secretary of State on the 10th May 1917, when, in a telegram replying to the criticisms of Sir P. Cox and the Government of India on the proposals of His Majesty's Government, he laid it down that "nothing that can be avoided should be done during military "occupation that would prejudice subsequent introduction of above-mentioned "principles, and *in particular establishment of separate administrative systems for* "*Basra and Baghdad.*" This policy held the field for a considerable time; and, though it is understood that the annexation of Basra is no longer regarded as a practicable measure, the principle of differentiation between the two vilayets has never been formally abandoned.

3. It was originally proposed, at Sir P. Cox's suggestion, that a Commission from England should visit Mesopotamia during the cold weather of 1917–18 to examine the whole administrative problem on the spot, and submit detailed recommendations for the approval of His Majesty's Government. Owing to circumstances connected with the then military situation it was not found practicable to carry this project into execution, and it has remained in abeyanee ever since, until revived by Captain Wilson in his telegram of the 27th September 1918. In the early part of the present year Sir P. Cox was summoned to England to discuss the whole question of the future of Mesopotamia with His Majesty's Government. While in England Sir P. Cox embodied his views and recommendations in a memorandum which was submitted to the Eastern Committee, and which, after personal discussion with the writer, received their full approval. This document, which has been forwarded to the Government of India by formal despatch for the information and guidance of the political authorities at Baghdad, may presumably be regarded as the authorised statement of the Mesopotamian policy of His Majesty's Government.

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"Alluding for the moment to the question of relative status as between the Basra and Baghdad Vilayets respectively, it is my very definite opinion that

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a homogeneous administration in all practical aspects is not in any way incompatible with a technical difference of political status, and that it is *essential in the interests of the country that the administration of both vilayets should be uniform*, that of the Basra Vilayet being brought into line with ~~Basra~~ Baghdad in due course."

5. In view of the above passage, Captain Wilson seems to be justified in claiming (telegram No. 7725 of 15th September) that his decision to combine the administration of the two vilayets under a single headquarters office at Baghdad is "in conformity with the general instructions given by the Eastern Committee" to Sir P. Cox, provided it is understood that, where differences of sytem exist, Basra methods must be assimilated to those of Baghdad, and not *vice versâ*. There is force in the Civil Commissioner's contention that the "maintenance of an artificial distinction, *where* "*in reality none exists*,[1] would necessarily involve some lack of co-ordination." That the distinction is a purely artificial one was pointed out by Sir P. Cox as long ago as the 7th April 1917. He then telegraphed:—

"I feel convinced . . . that no attempt to differentiate fundamentally in regard to working principles and details of the two administrations will produce satisfactory results, and that they should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. The difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature which need not make itself felt on the spot. To attempt to run the two vilayets, *which are from every point of view inseparable*, on conflicting lines and inconsistent principles would, I am sure, result in great prejudice to all interests concerned."

Up to a comparatively recent period there was this practical point of difference between the two vilayets, that Baghdad was still a war area, whereas Basra was being administered under what were, to all intents and purposes, peace conditions. To-day, as Captain Wilson intimates, this distinction has largely disappeared; and recent events have rendered its reappearance in the highest degree improbable. There remains the question of the post-war settlement. Will the ultimate differentiation of status between the two vilayets—supposing this forms part of the settlement—be prejudiced by uniform administration during the period of military occupation? In 1917 it was feared that this might be the case. But Sir P. Cox, speaking from more than a year's experience of the actual administration of the two vilayets, is evidently of opinion that the fear was groundless. His views having been generally adopted by His Majesty's Government, we need not cavil at the steps taken, primarily on grounds of administrative convenience, to carry them into effect.

6. Captain Wilson has revived the question of a *Commission from England* at what seems to the Department a rather opportune moment. Last year the proposal was dropped because of the likelihood, as it then appeared, that serious military operations would take place during the winter season. No such likelihood exists now. Moreover, the prospect of peace discussions has been brought within measurable distance by the events of the last few weeks. We may find ourselves, much sooner than we expected, called upon to argue and justify our Mesopotamian case. We shall plainly be in a position to do so with much greater effect if we have a considered and coherent policy to place before the world. It is true that the Government of India (who have criticised adversely several of Captain Wilson's recent recommendations) regard the proposal as "altogether premature," and consider that "no useful purpose would be served by the despatch of a Commission at the present stage." But their criticism appears to be directed rather against the choice of subjects for investigation by the Commission than against the principle of the Commission itself. What seems to be required is, not to tie down the Commission to particular lines of enquiry, but to give them a free hand to examine and report, in consultation with the local authorities, on the wider aspects of administrative policy in the occupied territories. We want to form a clearer idea in our own minds as to the main lines on which we are to proceed. The lack of a clear-cut programme will not only hamper us at the Peace Conference; it is already hampering us in regard to a number of practical questions that arise from day to day. To take a few examples: proposals were recently submitted for the improvement of banking facilities in Mesopotamia; the British Trade Corporation has raised the question of sending out an unofficial

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Mission to study the commercial development of the country; and overtures have been received from a number of individual firms, some of them of high standing, who desire to enter the new field for commercial enterprise that is being opened out. In all these matters, the importance of which cannot be disregarded, the uncertainty of the future makes it very difficult to take any decided line. The Department, it need hardly be said, has no desire to place the Government of India at a disadvantage in regard to "questions vitally affecting Indian interests." But the Government of India will be directly represented on the proposed Commission; and it would perhaps meet the case if their representative were given a discretion to remove from the scope of the enquiry, or at any rate to reserve for subsequent reference to his Government, any points on which the interests of India were directly concerned.

7. *Composition of the Commission.*—As already indicated, the Department supports Captain Wilson's suggestion that one member of the Commission should be nominated by the Government of India. Perhaps the Egyptian Administration might be asked to nominate another, leaving the Chairman and Secretary to be appointed by His Majesty's Government. A representative of the General Officer Commanding, Baghdad, could be added after the arrival of the Commission in Mesopotamia. The proposal that an officer on the spot should be deputed to clear the ground in advance seems a very good one, as also the suggestion that the Commission should be empowered, at its discretion, to co-opt heads of local administrative Departments. It is submitted that, as a first step, the proposed Commission should be approved in principle. Details of its composition, terms of reference, &c., will then be taken up without delay.

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(2) that the proposal to send a small Commission from England to Mesopotamia during the present autumn to examine administrative problems on the spot, and make detailed recommendations to His Majesty's Government, be approved in principle, subject to the reservation of the rights of the Government of India in regard to questions affecting Indian interests, and that the Government of India and the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, be informed accordingly; and

(3) that, pending the appointment and arrival of this Commission, Captain Wilson be authorised to place an officer on special duty in Mesopotamia to make preliminary arrangements for the Commissioners' investigations.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, J. E. S.
INDIA OFFICE,
21st October 1918.

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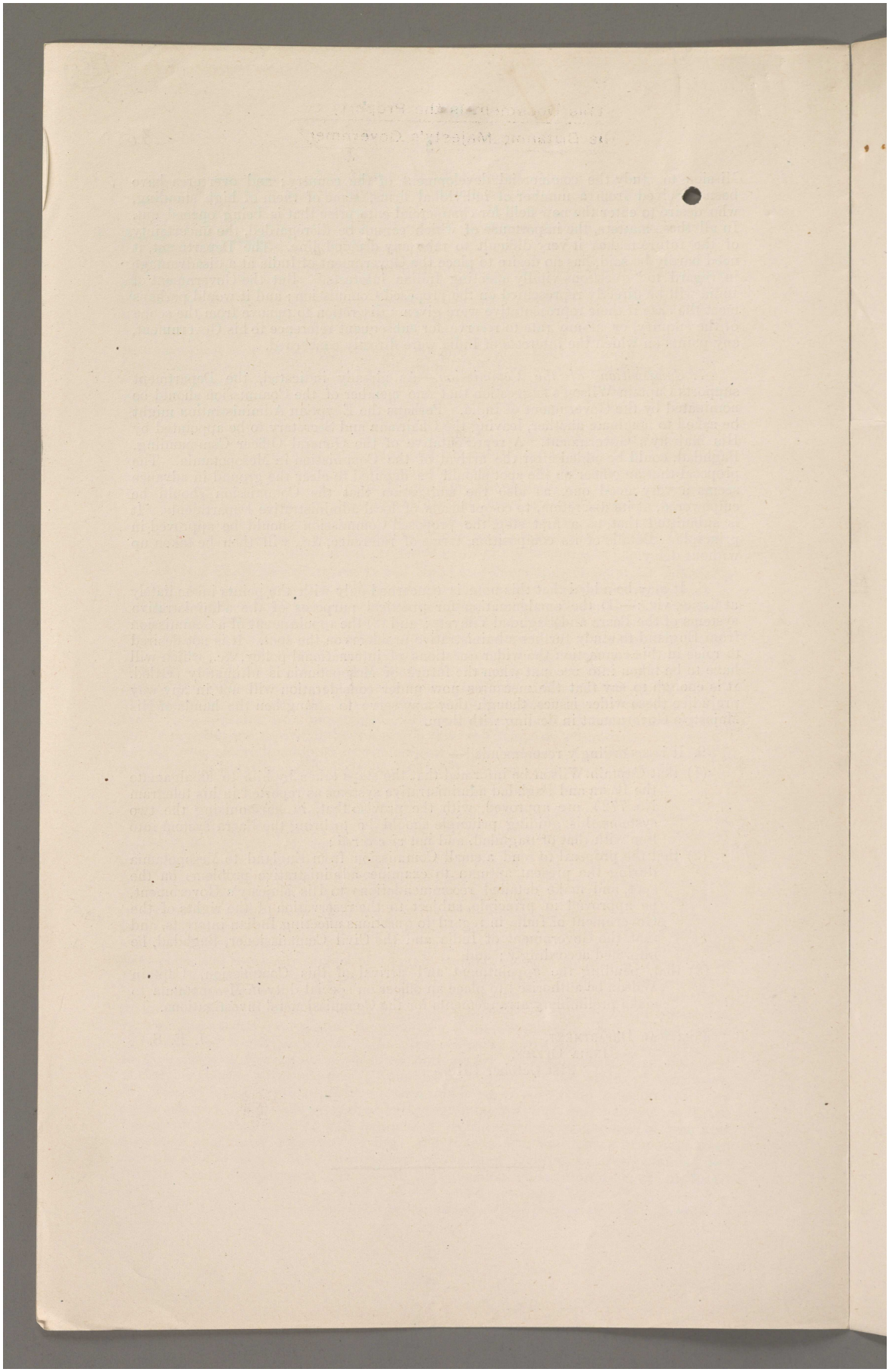

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Administration of Mesopotamia.

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POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, J. E. S.
INDIA OFFICE,
21st October 1918.

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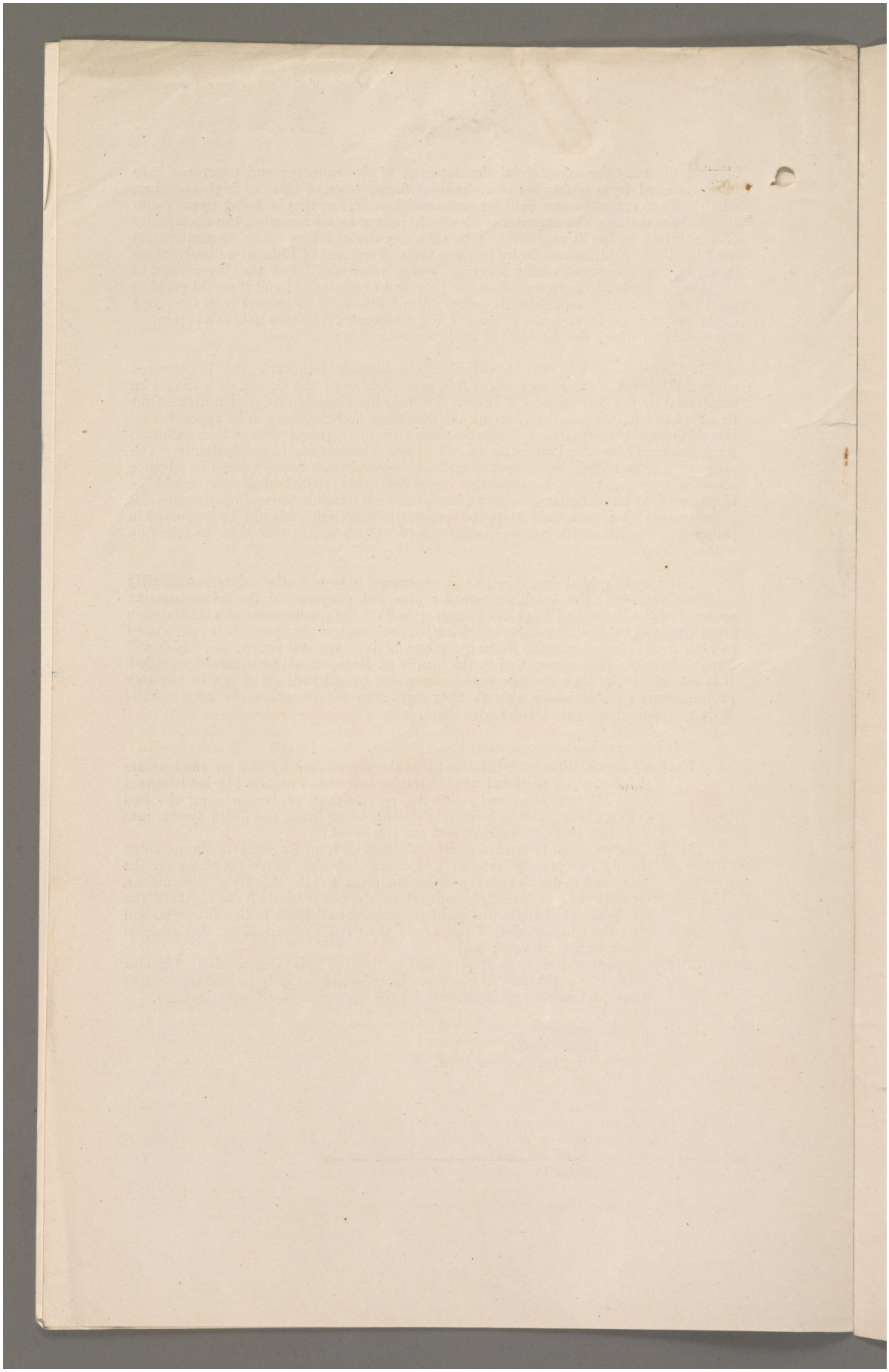

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Administration of Mesopotamia.

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a homogeneous administration in all practical aspects is not in any way incompatible with a technical difference of political status, and that it is *essential in the interests of the country that the administration of both vilayets should be uniform*, that of the Basra Vilayet being brought into line with Basra in due course."

5. In view of the above passage, Captain Wilson seems to be justified in claiming (telegram No. 7725 of 15th September) that his decision to combine the administration of the two vilayets under a single headquarters office at Baghdad is "in conformity with the general instructions given by the Eastern Committee" to Sir P. Cox, provided it is understood that, where differences of sytem exist, Basra methods must be assimilated to those of Baghdad, and not *vice versâ*. There is force in the Civil Commissioner's contention that the "maintenance of an artificial distinction, *where* "*in reality none exists*,[1] would necessarily involve some lack of co-ordination." That the distinction is a purely artificial one was pointed out by Sir P. Cox as long ago as the 7th April 1917. He then telegraphed:—

"I feel convinced . . . that no attempt to differentiate fundamentally in regard to working principles and details of the two administrations will produce satisfactory results, and that they should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. The difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature which need not make itself felt on the spot. To attempt to run the two vilayets, *which are from every point of view inseparable*, on conflicting lines and inconsistent principles would, I am sure, result in great prejudice to all interests concerned."

Up to a comparatively recent period there was this practical point of difference between the two vilayets, that Baghdad was still a war area, whereas Basra was being administered under what were, to all intents and purposes, peace conditions. To-day, as Captain Wilson intimates, this distinction has largely disappeared; and recent events have rendered its reappearance in the highest degree improbable. There remains the question of the post-war settlement. Will the ultimate differentiation of status between the two vilayets—supposing this forms part of the settlement—be prejudiced by uniform administration during the period of military occupation? In 1917 it was feared that this might be the case. But Sir P. Cox, speaking from more than a year's experience of the actual administration of the two vilayets, is evidently of opinion that the fear was groundless. His views having been generally adopted by His Majesty's Government, we need not cavil at the steps taken, primarily on grounds of administrative convenience, to carry them into effect.

6. Captain Wilson has revived the question of a *Commission from England* at what seems to the Department a rather opportune moment. Last year the proposal was dropped because of the likelihood, as it then appeared, that serious military operations would take place during the winter season. No such likelihood exists now. Moreover, the prospect of peace discussions has been brought within measurable distance by the events of the last few weeks. We may find ourselves, much sooner than we expected, called upon to argue and justify our Mesopotamian case. We shall plainly be in a position to do so with much greater effect if we have a considered and coherent policy to place before the world. It is true that the Government of India (who have criticised adversely several of Captain Wilson's recent recommendations) regard the proposal as "altogether premature," and consider that "no useful purpose would be served by the despatch of a Commission at the present stage." But their criticism appears to be directed rather against the choice of subjects for investigation by the Commission than against the principle of the Commission itself. What seems to be required is, not to tie down the Commission to particular lines of enquiry, but to give them a free hand to examine and report, in consultation with the local authorities, on the wider aspects of administrative policy in the occupied territories. We want to form a clearer idea in our own minds as to the main lines on which we are to proceed. The lack of a clear-cut programme will not only hamper us at the Peace Conference; it is already hampering us in regard to a number of practical questions that arise from day to day. To take a few examples: proposals were recently submitted for the improvement of banking facilities in Mesopotamia; the British Trade Corporation has raised the question of sending out an unofficial

[1] The text of the telegram is rather corrupt in this passage, but the sense appears to be as given here.

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Mission to study the commercial development of the country; and overtures have been received from a number of individual firms, some of them of high standing, who desire to enter the new field for commercial enterprise that is being opened out. In all these matters, the importance of which cannot be disregarded, the uncertainty of the future makes it very difficult to take any decided line. The Department, it need hardly be said, has no desire to place the Government of India at a disadvantage in regard to "questions vitally affecting Indian interests." But the Government of India will be directly represented on the proposed Commission; and it would perhaps meet the case if their representative were given a discretion to remove from the scope of the enquiry, or at any rate to reserve for subsequent reference to his Government, any points on which the interests of India were directly concerned.

7. *Composition of the Commission.*—As already indicated, the Department supports Captain Wilson's suggestion that one member of the Commission should be nominated by the Government of India. Perhaps the Egyptian Administration might be asked to nominate another, leaving the Chairman and Secretary to be appointed by His Majesty's Government. A representative of the General Officer Commanding, Baghdad, could be added after the arrival of the Commission in Mesopotamia. The proposal that an officer on the spot should be deputed to clear the ground in advance seems a very good one, as also the suggestion that the Commission should be empowered, at its discretion, to co-opt heads of local administrative Departments. It is submitted that, as a first step, the proposed Commission should be approved in principle. Details of its composition, terms of reference, &c., will then be taken up without delay.

8. It may be added that this note is concerned only with the points immediately at issue, viz.:—(1) the amalgamation for practical purposes of the administrative systems of the Basra and Baghdad Vilayets; and (2) the appointment of a Commission from England to study further administrative problems on the spot. It is not desired to raise in this connection the wider questions of international policy, &c., which will have to be taken into account when the future of Mesopotamia is ultimately settled. It is enough to say that the measures now under consideration will not in any way prejudice these wider issues, though they may serve to strengthen the hands of His Majesty's Government in dealing with them.

9. It is accordingly recommended—

(1) that Captain Wilson be informed that the steps taken by him to amalgamate the Basra and Baghdad administrative systems as reported in his telegram No. 7725, are approved, with the proviso that, in harmonising the two systems, his guiding principle should be to bring the Basra system into line with that of Baghdad, and not *vice versâ*;

(2) that the proposal to send a small Commission from England to Mesopotamia during the present autumn to examine administrative problems on the spot, and make detailed recommendations to His Majesty's Government, be approved in principle, subject to the reservation of the rights of the Government of India in regard to questions affecting Indian interests, and that the Government of India and the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, be informed accordingly; and

(3) that, pending the appointment and arrival of this Commission, Captain Wilson be authorised to place an officer on special duty in Mesopotamia to make preliminary arrangements for the Commissioners' investigations.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, INDIA OFFICE,
21st October 1918.

J. E. S.

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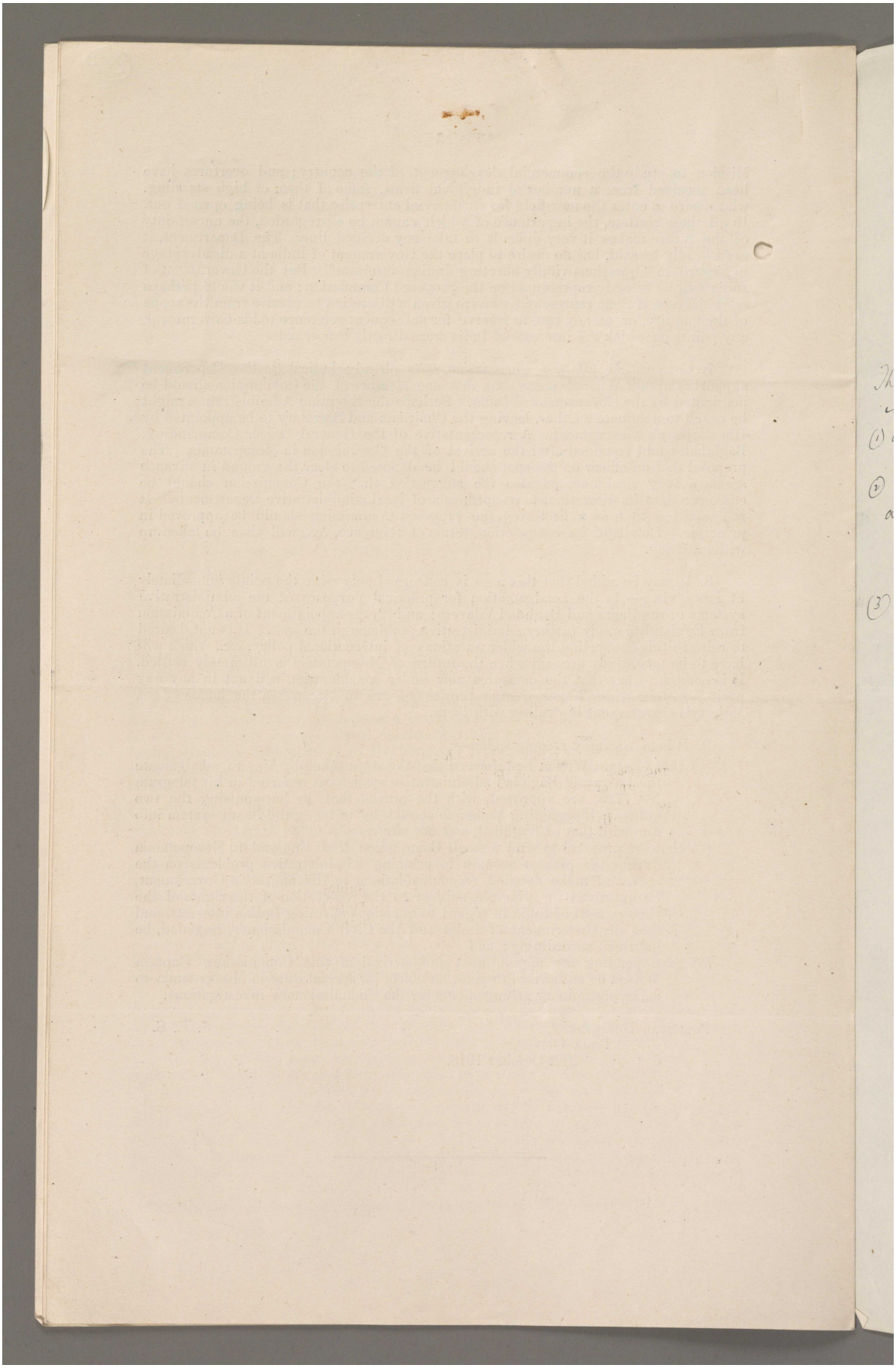

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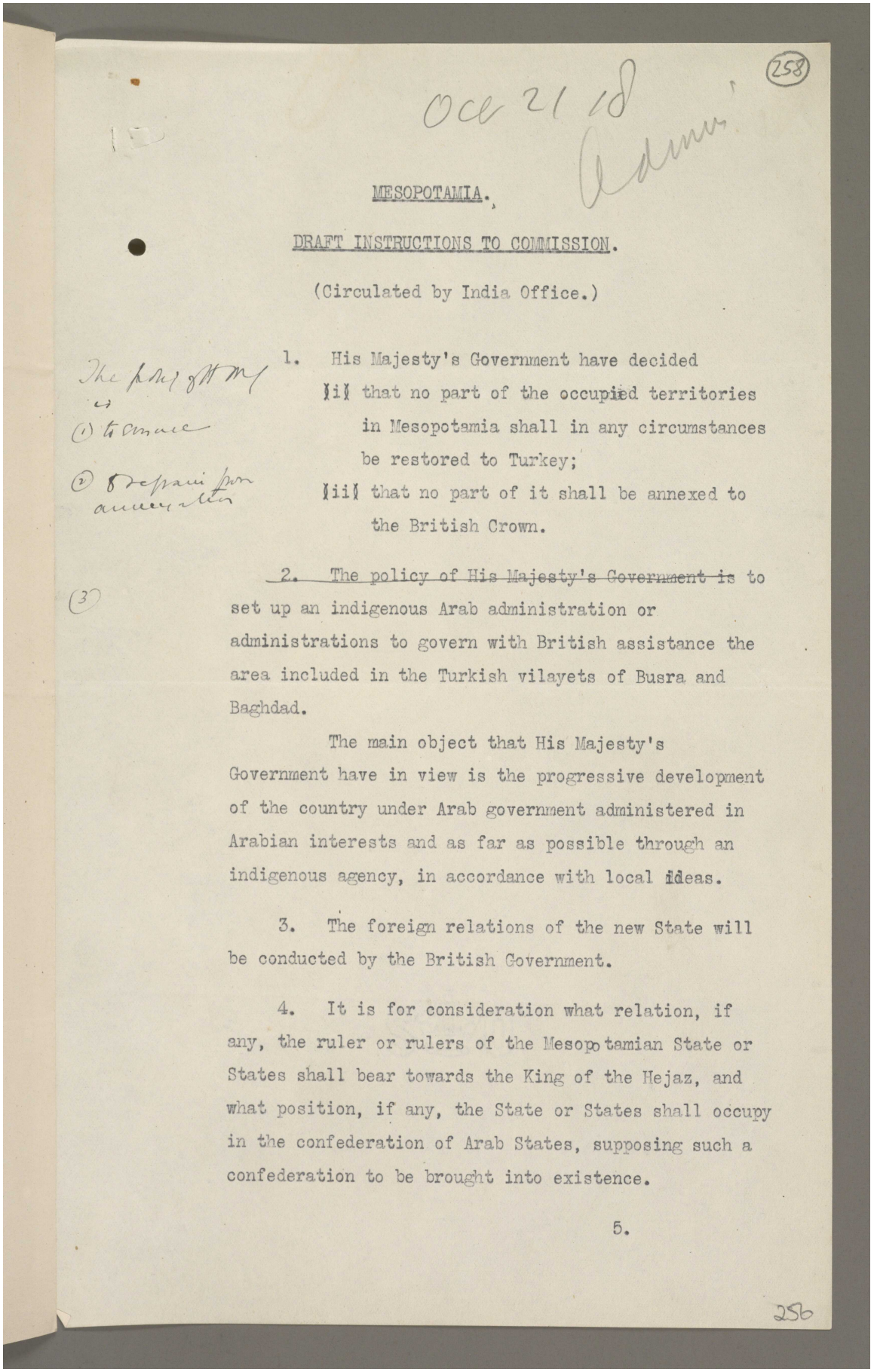

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Oct 21 18

Admin

MESOPOTAMIA.

DRAFT INSTRUCTIONS TO COMMISSION.

(Circulated by India Office.)

The policy of H M is
(1) to ensure
(2) to repair from annexation

1. His Majesty's Government have decided
(i) that no part of the occupied territories in Mesopotamia shall in any circumstances be restored to Turkey;
(ii) that no part of it shall be annexed to the British Crown.

(3) ~~2. The policy of His Majesty's Government is~~ to set up an indigenous Arab administration or administrations to govern with British assistance the area included in the Turkish vilayets of Busra and Baghdad.

The main object that His Majesty's Government have in view is the progressive development of the country under Arab government administered in Arabian interests and as far as possible through an indigenous agency, in accordance with local ideas.

3. The foreign relations of the new State will be conducted by the British Government.

4. It is for consideration what relation, if any, the ruler or rulers of the Mesopotamian State or States shall bear towards the King of the Hejaz, and what position, if any, the State or States shall occupy in the confederation of Arab States, supposing such a confederation to be brought into existence.

5.

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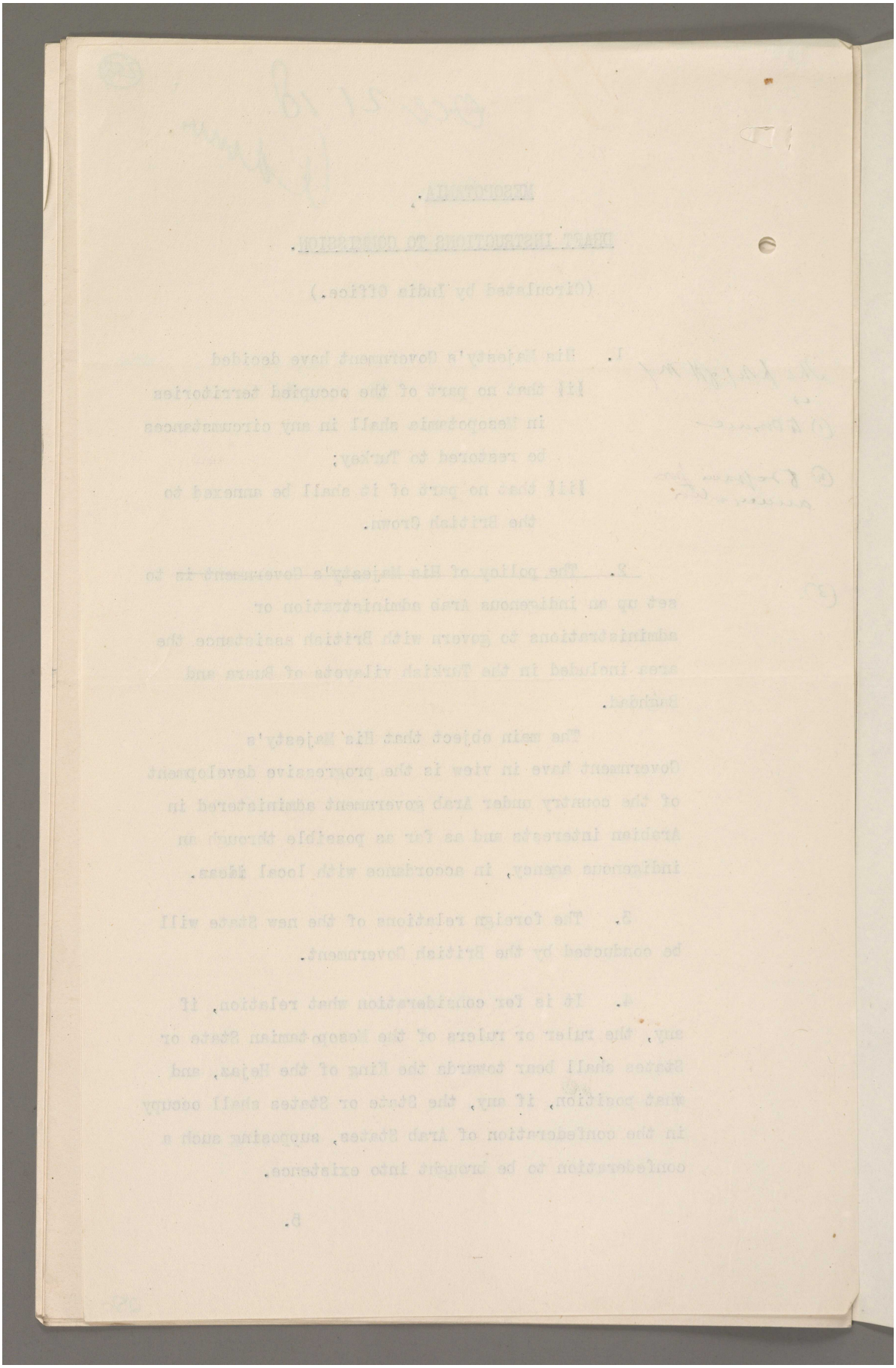

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5. His Majesty's Government desire to give the Commission a wide discretion in conducting their investigations, rather than to tie them down to particular lines of enquiry. The following, however, are some of the points to which special attention may suitably be directed:-

(i) Port of Basra. Some special measure of administrative control may be necessary in the town and port of Basra. Its position as a port of call for ocean-going steamers, and the large sums expended by the British Government on ~~extension~~ port improvement, place it in a different category from the rest of the occupied territory.

(ii) Jurisdiction over Europeans. It will probably be necessary to keep this in exclusively British hands. The provision of courts that will command the confidence of Europeans is a corollary to the policy of encouraging British firms to interest themselves in the country.

(iii) Mosul Vilayet. The question of the future status of the Mosul Vilayet will have to be considered. Captain Wilson has recently argued in favour of placing Mosul under the same administration as Baghdad.

(iv). The question of the future strength, disposition, etc., of British troops in Mesopotamia is reserved for discussion with the Government of India. But His Majesty's Government would be glad of a provisional expression of the Commission's views on this point.

(v) Economic and Agricultural development. His Majesty's Government attach special importance to this, and desire to encourage British firms of high standing to interest themselves in the country. They consider, however, that progress in this direction should be carefully regulated in accordance with the capacity of the Arab population to keep pace with it. They would be opposed, for example, to any measure necessitating the importation of foreign labour on a considerable scale.

6. The Commission will consider and report to His Majesty's Government on the best means of giving practical effect, at as early a date as possible, to the policy

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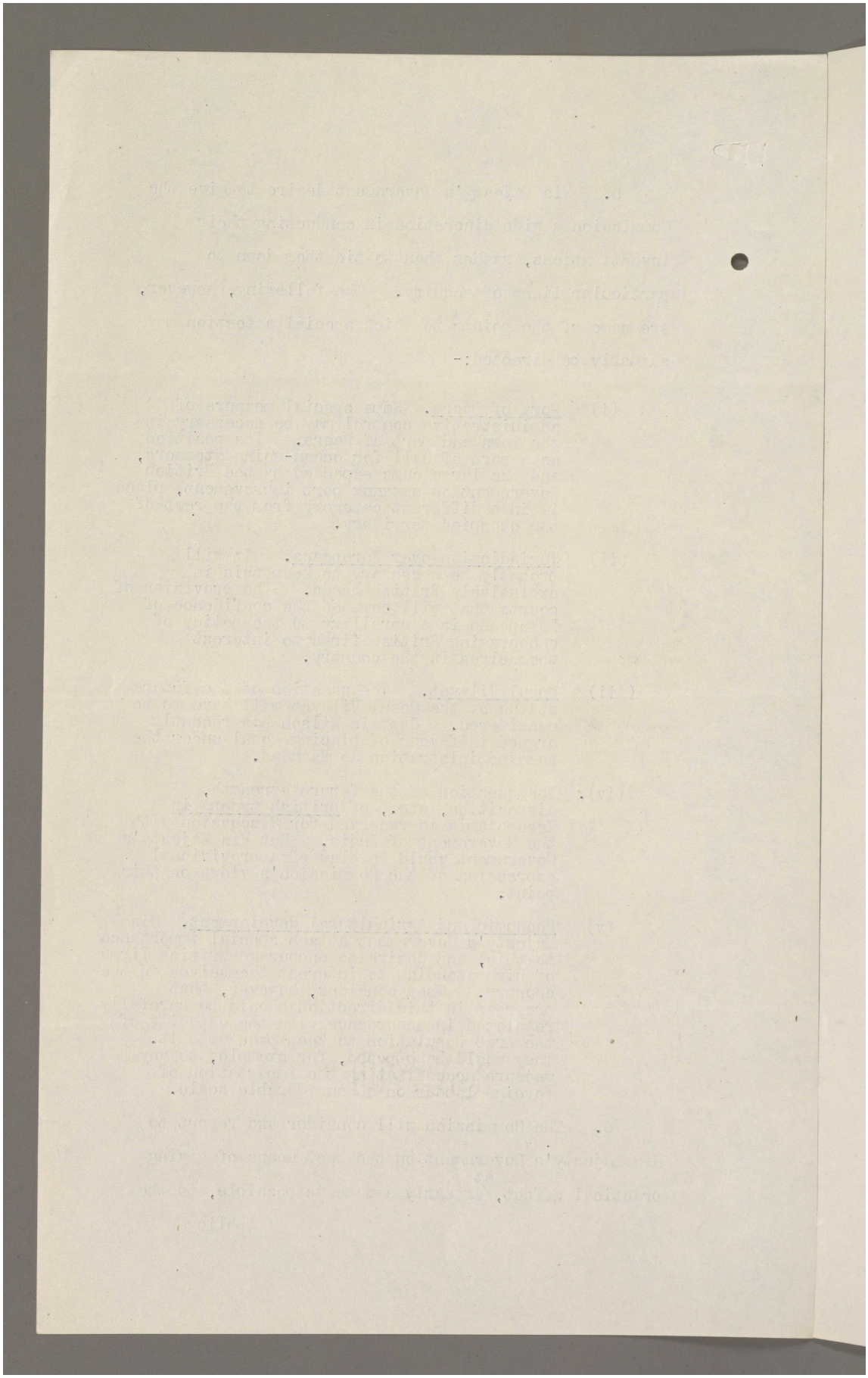

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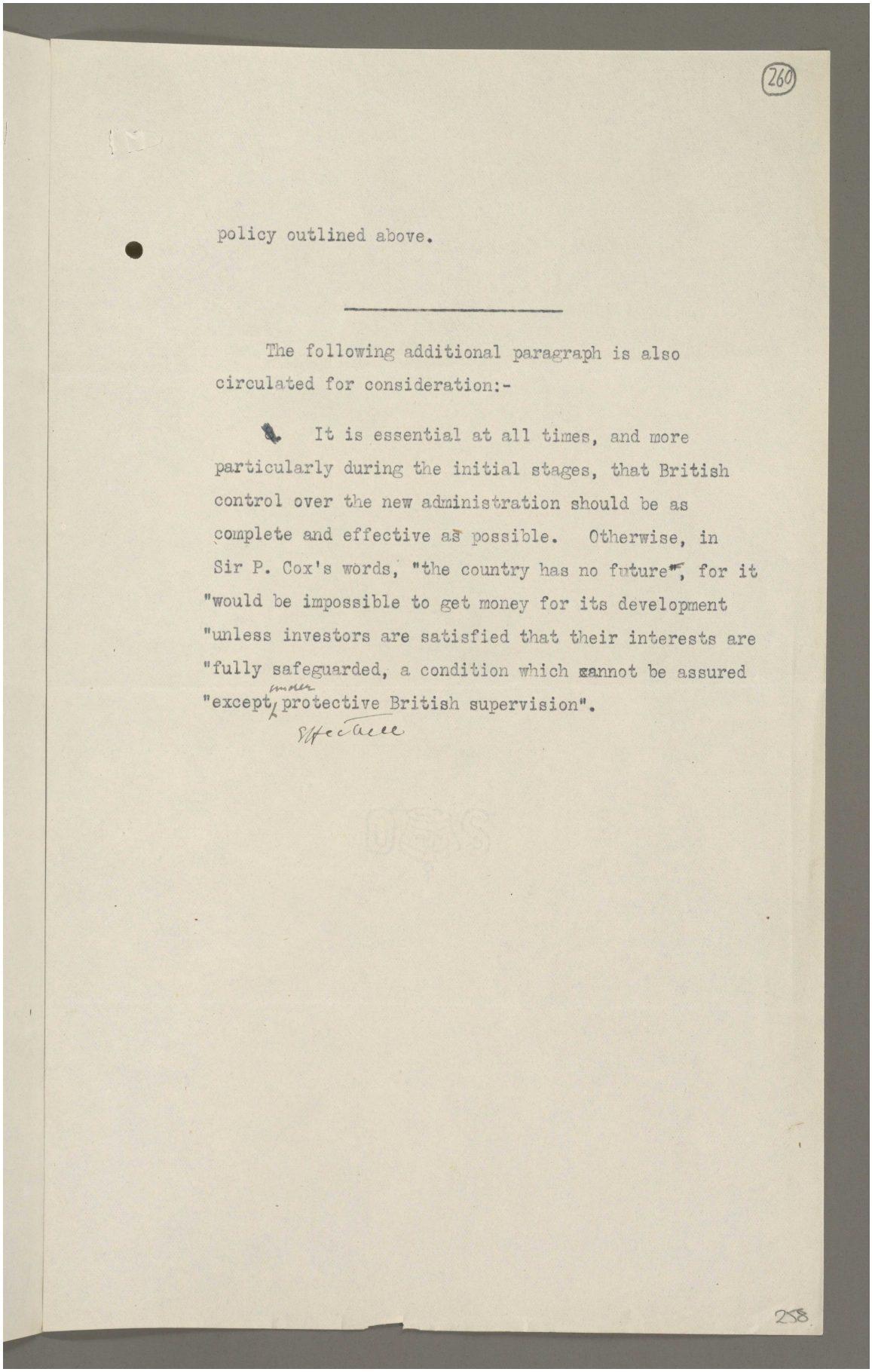

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policy outlined above.

The following additional paragraph is also circulated for consideration:-

It is essential at all times, and more particularly during the initial stages, that British control over the new administration should be as complete and effective as possible. Otherwise, in Sir P. Cox's words, "the country has no future", for it "would be impossible to get money for its development "unless investors are satisfied that their interests are "fully safeguarded, a condition which cannot be assured "except under effective British supervision".

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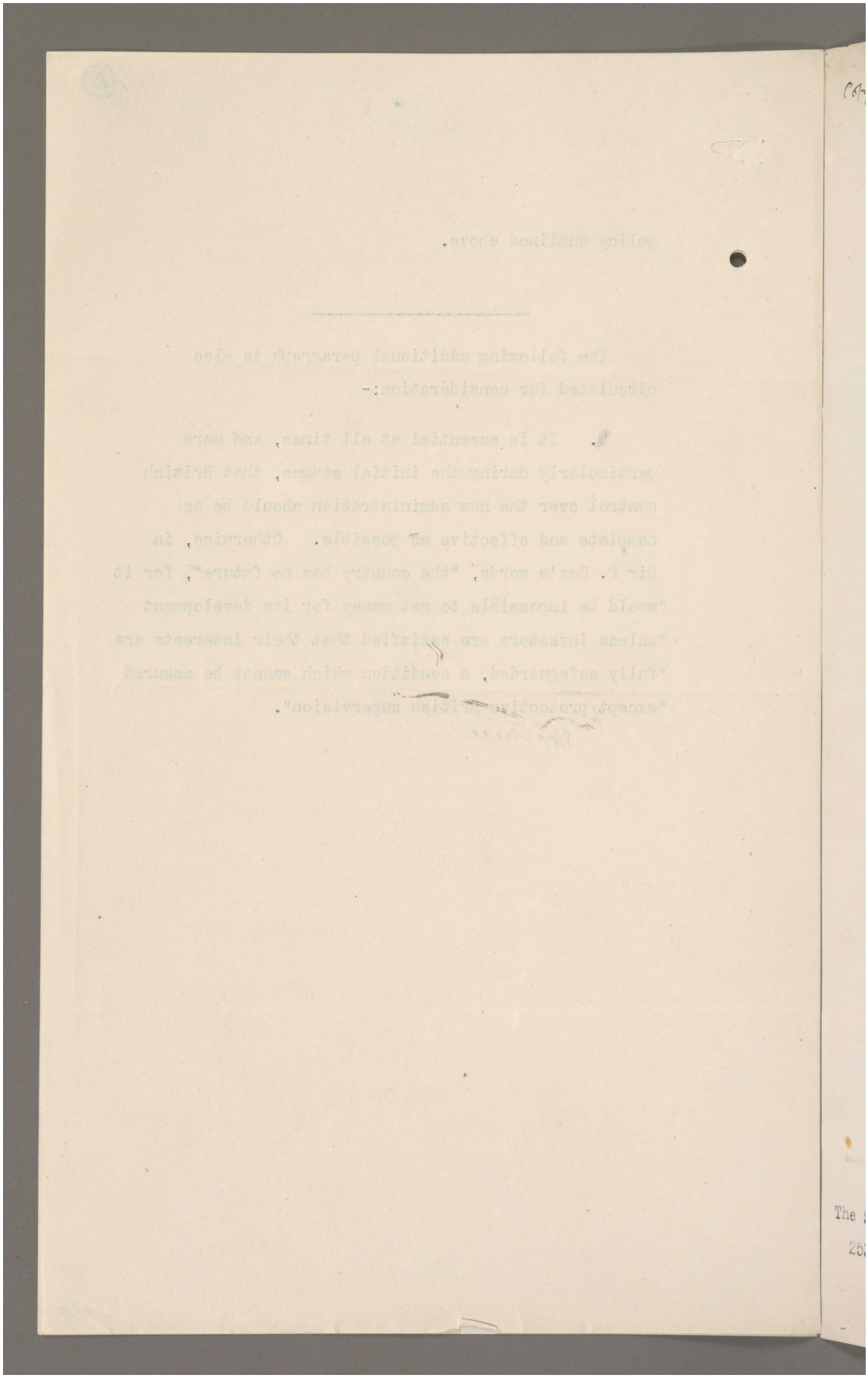

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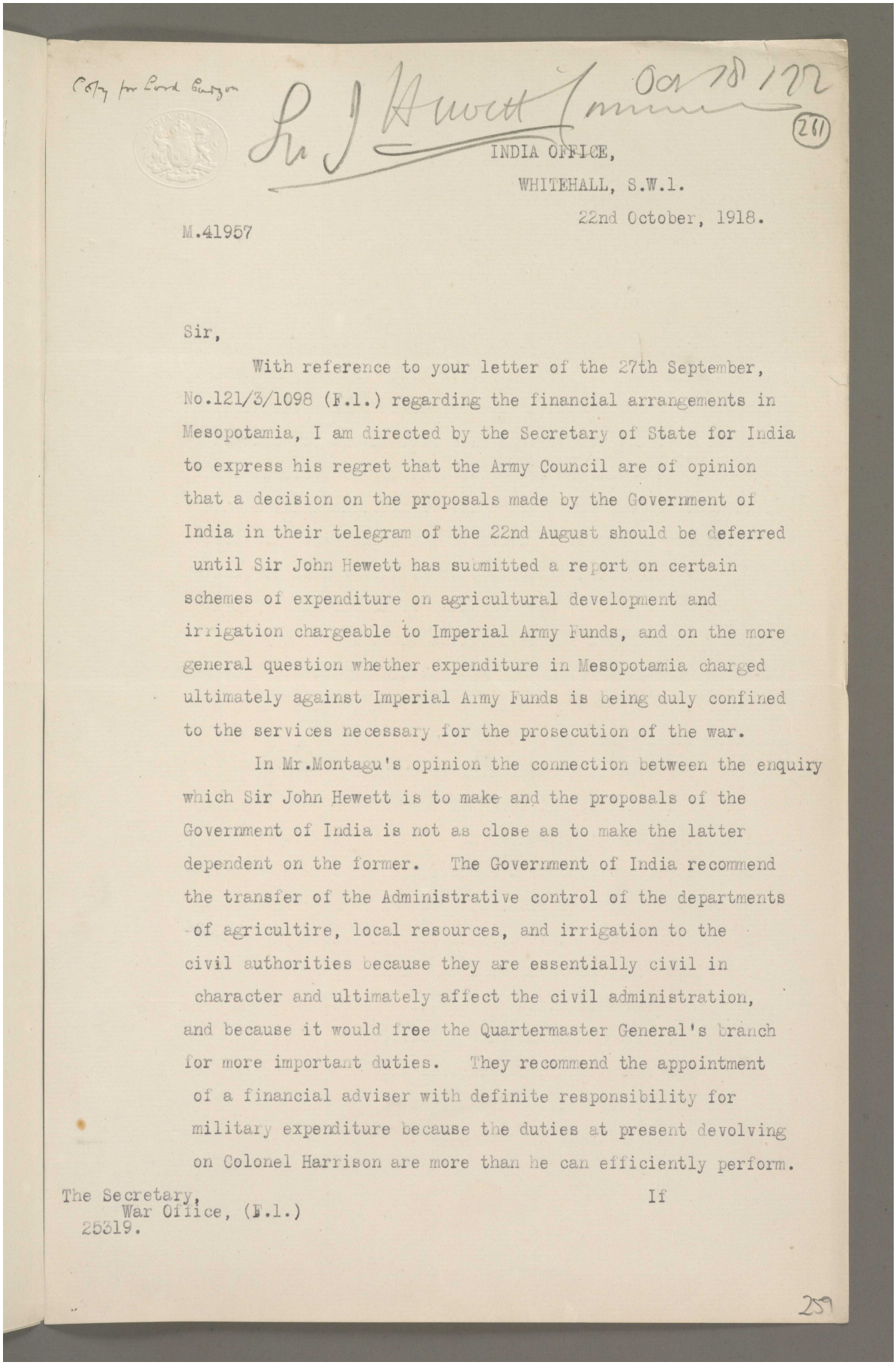

Copy for Lord Curzon

Oct 28 1918

(261)

INDIA OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, S.W.1.
22nd October, 1918.

M.41957

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 27th September, No.121/3/1098 (F.1.) regarding the financial arrangements in Mesopotamia, I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to express his regret that the Army Council are of opinion that a decision on the proposals made by the Government of India in their telegram of the 22nd August should be deferred until Sir John Hewett has submitted a report on certain schemes of expenditure on agricultural development and irrigation chargeable to Imperial Army Funds, and on the more general question whether expenditure in Mesopotamia charged ultimately against Imperial Army Funds is being duly confined to the services necessary for the prosecution of the war.

In Mr.Montagu's opinion the connection between the enquiry which Sir John Hewett is to make and the proposals of the Government of India is not as close as to make the latter dependent on the former. The Government of India recommend the transfer of the Administrative control of the departments of agricultire, local resources, and irrigation to the civil authorities because they are essentially civil in character and ultimately affect the civil administration, and because it would free the Quartermaster General's branch for more important duties. They recommend the appointment of a financial adviser with definite responsibility for military expenditure because the duties at present devolving on Colonel Harrison are more than he can efficiently perform.

The Secretary,
War Office, (F.1.)
25519.

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If the grounds on which these recommendations are made by the Government of India are adequate and are the result of a full and careful examination of the situation, as they would seem to be, Mr.Montagu thinks that it would be unfortunate if their consideration were delayed until Sir Jihn Hewett has reported on the questions which have been referred to him.

I am to call attention to a further telegram from the Government of India (copy enclosed), in which reasons are given (No. 1126. Accts. dated 11th October) for separating the functions of financial adviser and chief accounts officer without delay. It will be seen that these reasons are to a large extent quite unconnected with Sir John Hewett's mission.

I am to suggest that as the best means of reaching an agreement a conference on the matter should be held by representatives of the two departments. He hopes to receive the favour of a very early reply.

I have, etc.,

(SD.) T.W.HOLDERNESS.

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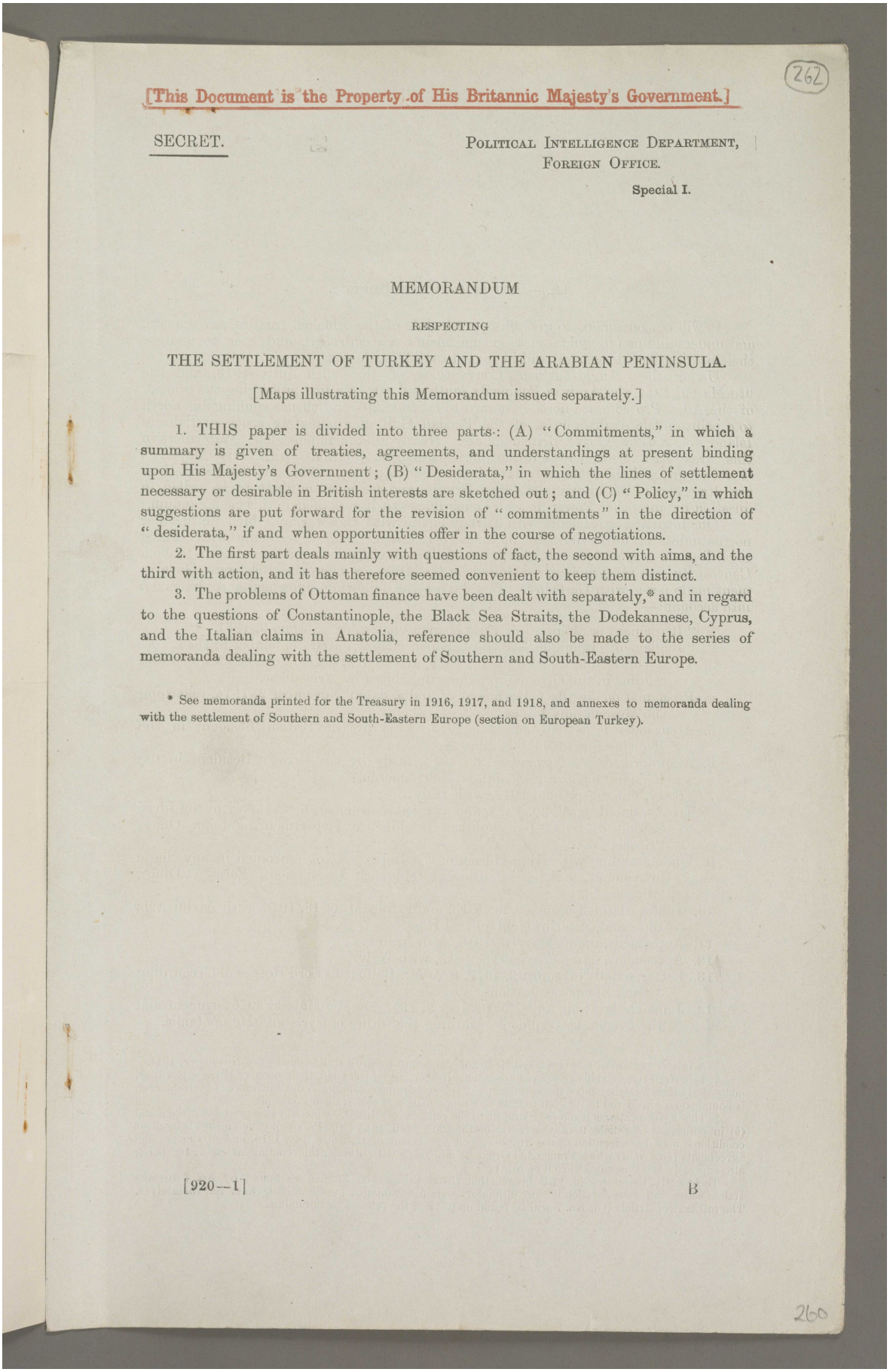

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SECRET.

POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT,
FOREIGN OFFICE.

Special I.

MEMORANDUM

RESPECTING

THE SETTLEMENT OF TURKEY AND THE ARABIAN PENINSULA.

[Maps illustrating this Memorandum issued separately.]

1. THIS paper is divided into three parts: (A) "Commitments," in which a summary is given of treaties, agreements, and understandings at present binding upon His Majesty's Government; (B) "Desiderata," in which the lines of settlement necessary or desirable in British interests are sketched out; and (C) "Policy," in which suggestions are put forward for the revision of "commitments" in the direction of "desiderata," if and when opportunities offer in the course of negotiations.

2. The first part deals mainly with questions of fact, the second with aims, and the third with action, and it has therefore seemed convenient to keep them distinct.

3. The problems of Ottoman finance have been dealt with separately,* and in regard to the questions of Constantinople, the Black Sea Straits, the Dodekannese, Cyprus, and the Italian claims in Anatolia, reference should also be made to the series of memoranda dealing with the settlement of Southern and South-Eastern Europe.

* See memoranda printed for the Treasury in 1916, 1917, and 1918, and annexes to memoranda dealing with the settlement of Southern and South-Eastern Europe (section on European Turkey).

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(A.)—Part One. Commitments.

It will be convenient to give, first, a schedule of the principal treaties, agreements, and understandings in which these commitments are embodied, and then to analyse their bearing both in general and in regard to different areas.

Under the Anglo-Turkish Conventions of the 29th July, 1913, and the 9th March, 1914, the Arabian Peninsula south and east of a line prolonging the frontier of the Aden Protectorate north-eastward to latitude 20°, and thence running due north to a point on the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf approximately south of Bahrein Island, was recognised as a British sphere. Nearly all the independent Arab rulers in this area had previously entered into permanent relations with His Majesty's Government, and the remainder have done so subsequently. And since these relations are altogether in the interests of Great Britain, and are most unlikely to be called in question by any other Power, it seems superfluous to discuss them in this memorandum.

Our bipartite agreements with Turkey lapsed with the war, and bind neither her nor us unless or until they are specifically renewed. Our agreements with Russia regarding the war and the peace settlement lapsed either when there ceased to be a Central Russian Government recognised by the Allies, or when the Bolshevik Government made peace with Germany. This leaves the following agreements to be taken into account:—

1. "Règlement organique" of the Lebanon vilayet, dated June 9, 1861.
2. "Règlement organique" of the Lebanon vilayet, dated September 6, 1864.
3. Treaty of Berlin, dated July 13, 1878, article 61, relative to ameliorations and reforms in the Ottoman provinces inhabited by Armenians.
4. Proclamation by the Government of India, dated November 2, 1914, regarding the Moslem holy places.*
5. Assurance, dated November 3, 1914, made by the British Resident in the Persian Gulf to the Sheikh of Koweit.
6. Assurance, dated November 22, 1914, made by the British Resident in the Persian Gulf to the Sheikh of Mohammerah.†
7. Treaty, dated April 26, 1915, with Italy.
8. Treaty, dated April 30, 1915, and ratified November 6, 1915, with the Idrisi Sayyid of Sabia (see Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, "Special" 4).
9. Understanding with King Husein of the Hejaz. (Not embodied in any single instrument, but see Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, "Special" 3.)
10. Treaty, dated December 26, 1915, and ratified July 18, 1916, with Abdul-Aziz Bin Saud, Amir of Nejd and Al Hasa.
11. Agreement, dated May 16, 1916, with France.
12. Agreement, dated August 18, 1917, with Italy.‡
13. Letter, dated November 2, 1917, from Mr. Balfour to Lord Rothschild, regarding Jewish Zionist aspirations.
14. Joint Declaration, dated November 9, 1918, by His Majesty's Government and the French Government regarding the future of Syria and Mesopotamia.

* A briefer version of this proclamation was circulated to the Gulf Chiefs on the 3rd November, 1914.

† This Arab ruler and his tribesmen are nominally Persian subjects and their country Persian territory, and strictly therefore they fall outside the scope of the present memorandum. But the future of Mohammerah is bound to be considered in relation to that of Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula.

‡ This agreement was made (*a*) "subject to the consent of Russia," which has never been given; and (*b*) in pursuance of article 9 of the treaty of the 26th April, 1915 (No. 7 above), which makes it in effect conditional upon the execution of the Anglo-French Agreement of the 16th May, 1916, and of the parallel agreements (now void) which France and Great Britain made with Russia, this contingent character being also expressly laid down in article 8 of No. 12.

Technically, therefore, No. 12 is invalid, but Great Britain and France are bound by No. 7 to take Italian claims into consideration if they ultimately obtain advantages in the Middle East for themselves. The full text of Article 9 of No. 7 will be found on p. 17 of the present memorandum.

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I.—*General Commitments.*

(i.) His Majesty's Government have not committed themselves to giving up any of their pre-existing rights, relations, facilities, or other interests, political or economic, in this region (*e.g.*, territorial possessions, protectorates, capitulations, concessions to British subjects, &c.).

(ii.) They have declared in a general way that the non-Turkish populations shall be liberated from Turkish misrule, and given an opportunity of national life and economic development.

(iii.) They have pledged themselves, in general or specifically, that the legitimate interests of the Moslem world, Jewry, the Roman Catholic Church, and other international bodies in shrines and holy cities situated in this region, or in territories in this region where they have traditional claims, shall not be prejudiced in the settlement, or even that they shall be secured more satisfactorily than hitherto.

They have also pledged themselves to the satisfaction, if possible, of specific desiderata of their Allies, and they are morally bound to take all legitimate interests of their Allies into consideration.

(iv.) They have entered into positive permanent liabilities, both military and political, towards certain independent Arab rulers, and have assured the inhabitants of certain occupied territories specifically that they shall not be put back under Turkish rule.

II.—*Commitments in Different Areas.*

(1.) As regards *European Turkey and Anatolia*, His Majesty's Government are not pledged to the extinction of an independent Turkish National State, but they did provisionally agree (see Schedule, No. 12) that Italy shall establish such direct or indirect administration or control as she desires in the Green Area, and shall have political and economic priority in Area C, though the latter is to form part of an independent State (presumably Turkey). Italian rights in the Green Area and Area C are subject to the following limitations: Smyrna is to be a free port for British and French trade; the existing Ottoman customs tariff is to remain in force for twenty years; and there are to be no internal customs barriers between any of the "coloured" or "lettered" areas.

The British-owned Aidin Railway in the Green Area is protected by a mutual undertaking on the part of Great Britain, Italy, and France (No. 12) that the interests of each Power in the areas assigned to the others shall be scrupulously respected.

His Majesty's Government have not consented to any modification of the Capitulation Treaties in European Turkey or Anatolia, or in any other part of the former territories of the Ottoman Empire; but since these treaties are bipartite only, they have lapsed with the war and will have to be renewed specifically if their maintenance is desired.

As regards the control of the *Black Sea Straits*, His Majesty's Government are no longer bound by their qualified acceptance of the Russian circular telegram of the 4th March, 1915, in which Russia claimed those portions of the littoral of the Straits which are coloured yellow on the map. Their hands are now entirely free in regard both to the control of the Straits and to the disposal of *Constantinople*.

(2.) As regards the *Dodekannese* group of islands, which are still nominally Ottoman territory, but have been occupied by Italy since 1911, we have pledged ourselves that Italy shall obtain complete sovereignty over them (No. 7, article 8).

As regards *Cyprus*, we are pledged not to cede it to any third Power without the previous consent of France (No. 11, article 4.)

(3.) As regards *Armenia*, we are bound, perhaps juridically and certainly morally, by article 61 of the Berlin Treaty (No. 3), under which Turkey is pledged to "introduce ameliorations and reforms into the provinces inhabited by Armenians." This article was substituted, at our instance, for article 16 of the superseded Treaty of San Stephano, which provided that the Russian troops should remain in occupation of these provinces until satisfactory reforms were carried out. Turkey has actually omitted to carry out her pledge for forty years, in spite of repeated protests from His Majesty's Government, and has added the massacres of 1895–7, 1909, and 1915 (the worst of all) to her record of misrule.

It is clearly incumbent upon us to put an end to these wrongs to humanity and violations of an international treaty to which we are a party, now that it lies within our power to do so.

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We are, however, committed in regard to the south-western half of Armenia (Sivas, Kharput, Diarbekir, Cilicia) by its inclusion in the Blue Area, where we have agreed (No. 11) that France shall establish such direct or indirect administration or control as she desires.* But we have a free hand in the Yellow Area, which was assigned to Russia, and in those districts west of the Yellow Area and north of the Blue which equitably should be included in an Armenian State.

We are also parties to an undertaking, made to Italy by France, that Mersina and all other harbours on the Cilician coast shall be free ports for Italian trade with the Green Area.

Note.—The future of Russian Armenia will have to be considered in connection with that of Turkish Armenia, but it falls outside the scope of the present memorandum.

(4.) *Arab Countries and Kurdistan.*

The Arab countries concerned are the Arab provinces of Turkey and the Independent States of the Arabian Peninsula—the Aden Protectorate on the mainland and islands, especially the Protectorate of Bahrein, being excluded.

Our commitments in this area are as follows :—

(*a.*) His Majesty's Government are parties to the "Règlements organiques" of the Lebanon vilayet (Nos. 1 and 2 in the Schedule).

(*b.*) They have treaties, agreements, and understandings with the Sultans of Mokalla and Maskat, Chiefs of "Trucial Oman," Sheikhs of Koweit and Al Katar, Bin Saud, the Idrisi and other independent Arab rulers, and with the Sheikh of Mohammerah, who is an autonomous ruler under the sovereignty of Persia.

Some of these commitments are nearly a century old, others (including the most important) have been entered into during the war. They vary greatly in scope and strictness, as the parties to them differ in power and in the closeness of their contact with Great Britain; but there is a standard "trucial" pattern (see below) to which they more or less approximate.

(*c.*) Subject to the maintenance of all the above obligations and rights, and so long as there is no detriment to the interests of France, His Majesty's Government are pledged to King Husein (by a letter to him dated the 24th October, 1915, from the High Commissioner (Cairo)) that not merely his own dominions in the Hejaz, but also the Red and Brown Areas, the Akka-Haifa Enclave, Areas A and B, and the whole mainland of the Arabian Peninsula south of Area B, with the exception of the Aden Protectorate, shall be "Arab" and "Independent."

We are not committed to the establishment of a unitary State or of a Confederation of States in this area, nor to any suzerainty of King Husein outside the Hejaz. King Husein claimed the boundaries of Arab independence to which we have assented, not in his own name, but as the spokesman of the various populations, and our pledge was given to him in this capacity only.

Nor are we committed to him, or to anyone, in regard to the Caliphate. His Majesty's Government have consistently maintained that this is a question to be decided by the Moslems themselves, and they have merely expressed a pious hope that "an Arab of true race *will assume* the Caliphate at Mecca and Medina."†

As a result of agreements with King Husein, other independent rulers, and our Allies, we have obtained a special position for ourselves, to the exclusion of other outside Powers, in the greater part of the Arab area, with certain important exceptions, which appear when our commitments are analysed province by province.

* Subject to the same limitations regarding customs tariffs as Italy has agreed to in the Green Area, and to an undertaking not to cede her rights (except to the Arab State or Confederation!) without the previous consent of Great Britain. France has also agreed that Alexandretta (which is included in the Blue Area and should probably be reckoned to Armenia) shall be a free port for British and Italian trade with the Red Area and Areas A and B.

† Message from Lord Kitchener to Sherif Abdullah, son of King Husein, despatched on the 31st October, 1914, the date on which war broke out between Great Britain and Turkey.

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III.—*Commitments in the different Arab Countries (including Kurdistan).*

1. *The Arabian Peninsula, excluding the Hejaz.*

(*a.*) We have treaties with the independent rulers enumerated above (Part I, section 4), the standard of which has been set by the series concluded in the years 1820, 1839, 1853, and 1892 with the "Trucial Chiefs" of the Oman coast.

The fundamental points in a "trucial treaty" are the following:—

(1.) The native Governments agree to keep the peace, and to refer their disputes with one another to the arbitration of His Majesty's Government.

(2.) His Majesty's Government undertake to arbitrate, to enforce their awards, and to watch over the peace.

(3.) The native Governments undertake to abstain from relations with outside Powers other than Great Britain, and not to receive representatives of such Powers without His Majesty's Government's consent; further, that they will not alienate or lease territory to any outside Power except Great Britain, nor grant concessions to any foreigners except British subjects.

(4.) His Majesty's Government undertake to protect the native Governments against unprovoked aggression by outside Powers.

It may be noted that it has been the practice of His Majesty's Government to limit their obligations to the keeping of the peace and defence against unprovoked aggression *at sea*, but that this limitation has not been specified in the treaty concluded during the war with Bin Saud (No. 10). This is an important departure from precedent.

Our treaty with the Idrisi (No. 8) is much looser than the "trucial" kind. We also made an agreement in 1915 with the Sheikh of Mavia, who rules a district of great strategical importance immediately beyond the frontier of the Aden Protectorate, but it has become void through his siding with the Turks. We have no commitments to Imam Yahya of Sanaa (Yemen), or to Bin Rashid, Amir of Jebel Shammar; and Bin Rashid's recent act in acknowledging the overlordship of King Husein probably precludes the establishment of direct relations hereafter between him and His Majesty's Government.

(*b.*) We have pledged ourselves to King Husein (No. 9) that the whole mainland of the peninsula with the exception of the Aden Protectorate (within its pre-war limits) shall be "independent" and "Arab"; in other words, we have pledged ourselves to the expulsion of the Turks, but in other respects to the *status quo*. We have declared further, in a Foreign Office statement dated the 11th June, 1918, in reply to a memorial from Syrians resident in Egypt, that, "in regard to areas in Arabia which were free and independent before the outbreak of war, and areas emancipated from Turkish control by the action of the Arabs themselves during the present war, His Majesty's Government recognise the complete and sovereign independence of the Arabs inhabiting these areas, and support them in their struggle for freedom."

(*c.*) We are pledged to France and provisionally to Italy, and they to us (No. 11, article 10, and No. 12, article 7), that we "will not ourselves acquire and will not consent to a third Power acquiring territorial possessions in the Arabian Peninsula, nor consent to a third Power installing a naval base either on the east coast, or on the islands, of the Red Sea. This, however, shall not prevent such adjustment of the Aden frontier as may be necessary in consequence of recent Turkish aggression."

In subsequent discussions the French Government have recognised that Great Britain has "special political interests" in the Arabian Peninsula.

The three Powers are also pledged to consider measures regarding the arms traffic. No definite arrangement has yet been agreed upon, but there have been discussions between French and British representatives, in which the French proposed to leave it to the discretion of His Majesty's Government to take the necessary steps for stopping "any trade capable of fomenting disturbances, such as the arms trade, slave trade, &c.," in the Arabian Peninsula.

2. *The Hejaz.*

The Hejaz is covered by our general commitments to France, Italy, King Husein, and the Syrian memorialists regarding the independence of the Arabian Peninsula (see above), and we were pledged specifically that the Holy Places, including Jeddah, should be immune from attack during the war (No. 4).

We have also recognised Husein as an independent ruler with the style and title of "His Lordship the King of the Hejaz."

Husein, on his part, has never accepted this title, and regards himself as "His Majesty the King of the Arabs" (the style and title under which he was crowned at Mecca in 1916). Our understanding with him, in his capacity of local ruler, amounts to little more than a recognition of independence and a provisional arrangement for the joint conduct of the war.

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The French Government have consented (No. 11, article 11) that "the negotiations with the Arabs as to the boundaries of the Arab State or Confederation (*i.e.*, the negotiations with King Husein) shall be continued through the same channel as before" the Agreement of 1916 (*i.e.*, through His Majesty's Government), and they have observed this understanding in practice—for instance, in the negotiations regarding King Husein's title, referred to above.

On the other hand, there has been a French military mission at Jeddah and a French Moslem agent at Mecca. And the latter was not only instructed to deal with the Hejaz Government regarding pilgrimage facilities for the Moslem subjects of France (a matter in which His Majesty's Government could not, and would not desire to, prevent the maintenance of direct relations between the Hejaz and other outside Powers), but was given written instructions regarding certain purely political questions, which were communicated at the time to His Majesty's Government by the French Ambassador. This has created an awkward precedent, and in subsequent negotiations (which were not, however, carried to a conclusion) we virtually admitted that France has a status in the Hejaz which is in some manner an exception to the general political priority of Great Britain in the Arabian Peninsula.

It may be expected, moreover, that Italy will claim any privileges that are acquired by France.

3. *Mesopotamia* (*Irak and parts of Jezireh*).

(*a.*) His Majesty's Government are pledged to King Husein that the whole of this area shall be "independent" and "Arab," but King Husein has consented that Great Britain shall take "special measures of administrative control" in the former Turkish vilayets of Basra and Bagdad (together = Irak). King Husein suggested that this régime should be short, and that he should be compensated for it by a contribution from Mesopotamian revenues, but His Majesty's Government have not committed themselves to any such payment, nor to any limitations on their control, either of period or function.

As regards those parts of Jezireh which go naturally with Irak (see below), King Husein has neither been asked to concede, nor has conceded, any reservations in regard to the independence assented to by us.

(*b.*) France and Italy have agreed (No. 11, article 2, and No. 12, article 1) that Great Britain shall establish such direct or indirect administration or control in the Red Area as she desires and may think fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation (see below), and that she shall have political and economic priority in Area B (which covers part of Mesopotamia).* France has also agreed to guarantee to Great Britain a "given supply" of water from the Tigris and Euphrates in Area A for Area B.

His Majesty's Government on their part are pledged to France to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or Confederation, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief, in Area B; not to cede their rights in the Red Area to any third Power, except the Arab State or Confederation, without the previous consent of the French Government (No. 11, article 9); and not to extend the Bagdad Railway northwards beyond Samarra, until a railway connecting Bagdad with Aleppo viâ the Euphrates Valley has been completed.

Further, that in the Red Area and Area B the existing Ottoman customs tariff is to remain in force for twenty years, and that there are to be no internal customs barriers between any of the "coloured" or "lettered" areas.

Moreover, those parts of Jezireh which go naturally with Irak (that is, at least the parts east of the line Verdi–Jeziret Ibn Omar, including Jebel Sinjar and Mosul) are included in Area A, in which we have agreed that France shall have political and economic priority, under the same conditions as we in Area B.

(*c.*) We are also pledged to the Sheikh of Koweit (No. 5), the Sheikh of Mohammerah and Bin Saud, that Basra shall never again be subject to Turkish authority. The same assurance has been given verbally to the notables of Basra vilayet, and the Viceroy of India, in a speech delivered at Basra on the 3rd February, 1915, to a local deputation, indicated plainly, though not expressly, that Turkish administration would not be restored.

(*d.*) As regards the (Shia) Holy Cities in Mesopotamia, they were included specifically in the Government of India's Proclamation concerning Moslem Holy Places (No. 4), and in the similar assurance to the Gulf Chiefs, but reference to them was carefully avoided in our negotiations with King Husein. Lord Grey of Fallodon also avoided discussion of their status in his conversation with the Aga Khan on the subject

* Including the country of the Amarat-Anazeh tribe, on the Mesopotamian side of the Syrian steppe.

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of the Arab movement and the Caliphate in 1915.* On the occasion of the occupation of the Bagdad district by the British forces in 1917, His Majesty's Government informed the Persian Government that the British military authorities would do all in their power to protect the Shia Holy Places.†

Our commitments, written, verbal, or implicit, to the "Mujtahids" and inhabitants of these Holy Cities since our occupation of Bagdad vilayet can only be reported upon adequately by the Chief Political Officer attached to General Marshall's Army, and this is also true of our commitments to the rest of the population in Mesopotamian occupied territory.

(*e.*) In reply to a memorial by Syrians resident in Egypt, His Majesty's Government declared on the 11th June, 1918, that, "in areas formerly under Ottoman dominion occupied by the Allied forces during the present war, it is the wish and desire of His Majesty's Government that the future government should be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed," and that "this policy has and will continue to have the support of His Majesty's Government." We have since declared jointly with France (No. 14) that :—

"The aim which France and Great Britain have in view in prosecuting in the East the war let loose by German ambition is the complete and final liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the native populations.

"In order to give effect to these intentions, France and Great Britain have agreed to encourage and assist the establishment of native governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia already liberated by the Allies, and in the territories which they are proceeding to liberate, and they have agreed to recognise such governments as soon as they are effectively established. So far from desiring to impose specific institutions upon the populations of these regions, their sole object is to ensure, by their support and effective assistance, that the governments and administrations adopted by these regions of their own free will shall be exercised in the normal way. The function which the two Allied Governments claim for themselves in the liberated territories is to ensure impartial and equal justice for all; to facilitate the economic development of the country by encouraging local initiative; to promote the diffusion of education; and to put an end to the divisions too long exploited by Turkish policy."

4. *Kurdistan.*

This country may be defined as the territory south of the Bohtan River, and east of the Tigris and the Jebel Hamrin, which has hitherto belonged to Turkey, and is bounded on the east by the Persian frontier.

We are pledged to King Husein that the parts of this territory south of a line running west-and-east from Jeziret-ibn-Omar, on the Tigris, through Amadia to the Persian frontier, shall be "independent" and "Arab."

We are also pledged to France (No. 11, Article 1) that the same parts shall be included in the independent Arab State or Confederation which is to be recognised and upheld by us, and this pledge has been adhered to provisionally by Italy (No. 12, Article 1).

It has also been agreed that in these parts France shall have political and economic priority north of a line running up the Lesser Zab River, through Khoi Sanjak to the Persian frontier and Great Britain a similar priority south of that line.

We have a free hand in the parts of Kurdistan north of the Jeziret–Amadia line, since they were included in the Yellow Area assigned to Russia. These parts contain the settlements of the Nestorian Christians (Assyrians) in the upper valley of the Greater Zab, and we are under a certain obligation to secure their future, since they were under the auspices of an Anglican Mission before the war, and have suffered atrocities during it at the hands of the Turks and Kurds.

We are thus committed to the partition of Kurdistan into three sections, in the two largest of which certain rights are secured to ourselves, the French, and the Arabs, but none to the Kurds.

5. *Syria* (including parts of Jezireh that do not go with Irak).

(*a.*) *Lebanon*: In the protocol signed at Constantinople on the 6th September, 1864, by the representatives of Turkey, Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia,

* 164776/34982/15. † 60225/55826/17.

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the Ottoman Government declared, "in accord with the representatives of the other Powers," that they maintained all the provisions of the Règlement organique of the Lebanon, and of the additional Act, of the 9th June, 1861. The text of the Règlement, with certain modifications, was attached to the above protocol.

The Règlement defines the boundaries of the Lebanon vilayet, provides that it shall be administered by a Christian Governor, calls into being an Administrative Council, and lays down details of local government, justice, finance, and contributions to the Ottoman Treasury.

Since the protocol to which this Règlement is attached is not a mere bipartite agreement between Great Britain and Turkey, it cannot be regarded as having simply lapsed with the war. His Majesty's Government are probably bound by it juridically as regards, at any rate, the other parties to it who are at present their Allies, and morally as regards the inhabitants of the Lebanon, in the sense that the specific rights of autonomy secured to them under the Règlement ought not to suffer detriment through the abolition of Ottoman suzerainty, but ought to be secured to them, if they so desire, under whatever régime may be established in this and other adjoining territories which Turkey will have to cede at the peace.

It may be noted that these obligations to the Lebanon might be incompatible with the rights that have been accorded by His Majesty's Government to France in the Blue Area (see below), though this of course would depend upon the use France chose to make of them.

(*b.*) We are pledged to King Husein that Syria and Syrian Jezireh east and south of the boundary between the Blue Area and Area A shall be "independent" and "Arab," so long as there is no detriment to the interests of France.

(*c.*) In that part of Syria which is covered by the Blue Area (*i.e.*, in the Blue Area south of the Alexandretta–Killis line) we have agreed that France shall establish such direct or indirect administration or control as she desires and may think fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation, and that she shall have political and economic priority in Area A (which includes the whole of Syrian Jezireh and part of the Bedouin country that depends on Syria).*

The French Government, on their part, are pledged to us to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or Confederation, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief, in Area A; not to cede their rights in the Blue Area to any third Power, except the Arab State or Confederation, without the previous consent of Great Britain (No. 11, article 9); and not to extend the Bagdad Railway southwards beyond Mosul, until a railway connecting Bagdad with Aleppo, viâ the Euphrates Valley, has been completed.

Further, that, in the Blue Area and Area A, the existing Ottoman customs tariff is to remain in force for twenty years, and that there are to be no internal customs barriers between any of the "coloured" or "lettered" areas.

Moreover, the Trans-Jordan country, and part of the Bedouin country that depends on Syria (that is, the districts along the Hejaz Railway from Deraa to Maan, and the Ruweilah-Anazeh country round the Wady Sirhan), are included in Area B, in which France has agreed that His Majesty's Government shall have political and economic priority, under the same conditions as France in Area A. Part of the Syrian Bedouin country, again, lies south of Area B, and is presumably reckoned to the Arabian Peninsula, in which the "special political position" of Great Britain has been recognised by France in subsequent discussions (see III, 1 above).

Besides this, France has agreed (No. 11, article 5) that there shall be free railway transit across the Blue Area from Alexandretta for British trade with Areas A and B and the Red Area, and that His Majesty's Government may carry a railway from Haifa to Bagdad (see Palestine below) through Area A.

(*d.*) Our statement to the Syrian memorialists and our joint declaration with France (No. 14) apply to the future of Syria as well as that of Mesopotamia (see above).

6. *Palestine* (west of Jordan).

(*a.*) We are pledged to King Husein that this territory shall be "Arab" and "independent."

(*b.*) France (No. 11, Article 4) and provisionally Italy (No. 12, Article 4) have "accorded" the ports of Akka and Haifa to Great Britain, but His Majesty's Govern-

* That is, the countries of the Fedaan Anazeh (between Homs and the Euphrates), the Sibaa Anazeh (between Damascus and Der-el-Zor), and a corner of the Wuld Ali and Ruweilah-Anazeh country, which is mostly included in Area B and the Peninsula Area south of it.

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ment have agreed, on their part, that these ports shall be free for French and Italian trade with the Blue Area and Areas A and B.

(*c.*) France has agreed (No. 11, Article 7) that Great Britain may build, administer, and be sole owner of a railway from Haifa to Bagdad, and that she shall have a perpetual right to transport troops along such a line at all times.

(*d.*) In the Brown Area,* Great Britain, France (No. 11, Article 3), and provisionally Italy (No. 12, Article 3) have agreed that an "international administration" shall be established, the form of which shall be decided upon in consultation with the other Allies and the representatives of King Husein.

(*e.*) Moslem Holy Places in Palestine (*i.e.*, the Mosque of Omar, and Abraham's Tomb at Hebron, the latter of which is excluded from the Brown Area) are implicitly included in the Government of India's proclamation (No. 4).

(*f.*) His Majesty's Government have conveyed (No. 13) to the Zionist Federation the statement that "they view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

(*g.*) The draft proclamation prepared for General Allenby's entry into Jerusalem was not issued officially, either on that occasion or subsequently, but it has been published in the English press, and was referred to in the statement of British policy issued by the Foreign Office on the 11th June, 1918, in reply to a memorial from Syrians resident in Egypt.

IV.—*Summary.*

(i.) *European Turkey and Anatolia:* Free hand in Constantinople and on the littoral of the Straits; commitments to Italy in Anatolia (No. 12).
(ii.) *Black Sea Straits:* Free hand.
(iii.) *Dodekannese:* Commitment to Italy (No. 7).
(iv.) *Cyprus:* Commitment to France (No. 11).
(v.) *Armenia:* Commitments under Treaty of Berlin (No. 3) and to France (No. 11) and Italy (No. 12) in parts; in remainder, free hand.
(vi.) *Arab Countries in General and Kurdistan:* Commitments under the "Règlements organiques" of the Lebanon Vilayet (Nos. 1 and 2) and to various independent Arab rulers, King Husein (No. 9), France (No. 11), and Italy conditionally (No. 12).
(vii.) *Arab Federation:* Free hand.
(viii.) *Caliphate:* Free hand.
(ix.) *Arabian Peninsula, excluding Hejaz:* Commitments to various independent Arab rulers, King Husein (No. 9), France (No. 11), and Italy (No. 12).
(x.) *Hejaz:* Commitments to King Husein (No. 9), France (No. 11), and Italy (No. 12), and (regarding Holy Places) to Moslem world (No. 4).
(xi.) *Mesopotamia:* Commitments to King Husein (No. 9), France (No. 11), Notables of Basra Vilayet, Sheikhs of Koweit (No. 5) and Mohammerah, Bin Saud, Moslem world (No. 4) as regards Moslem Holy Places in general, Persia as regards Shia Holy Places in particular.
(xii.) *Kurdistan:* Commitments in parts to King Husein and France; in parts free hand.
(xiii.) *Syria:* Commitments under "Règlements organiques" of the Lebanon (Nos. 1 and 2), and to King Husein (No. 9) and France (No. 11).
(xiv.) *Palestine:* Commitments to King Husein (No. 9), France (No. 11), Italy (No. 12), the Moslem world regarding Moslem Holy Places (No. 4), and the Zionist Federation (No. 13).

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* The Brown Area covers practically all the rest of Palestine west of Jordan, with the exception of a few square miles at either extremity.

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(B.)—Part Two. Desiderata.

I.—*General Desiderata.*

(1.) Maintenance of pre-existing British rights, relations, facilities, and other British interests, political and economic, in this region.

(2.) A settlement of the whole of this region (which as lying between Egypt and India is of direct interest to the British Empire) on a stable and friendly basis.

"Stability" means the establishment of an effective Government, or Governments, acceptable to the populations; "friendliness" means the intention of such Governments neither to pursue a policy hostile to the British Empire nor to serve the interests of a third Power pursuing such a policy.

(3.) That in carrying out such a settlement no arrangements shall be entered into that are likely to prejudice seriously the good relations of the British Empire with the Moslem world, Jewry, the Roman Catholic Church, or any other international body legitimately interested in the future of this region or in shrines or holy cities situated in it.

A fortiori, all new arrangements, however desirable in themselves, are subordinate to the maintenance of good relations with our Allies, so long as our own vital interests are preserved.

(4.) That, in view of the above considerations, the desired settlement shall be secured with the least possible increase of political and military liabilities for the British Empire.

II.—*Desiderata in Different Areas.*

(1.) *In European Turkey and Anatolia* His Majesty's Government have no interest in preventing the maintenance of an independent Turkish National State, and the substitution of some satisfactory alternative for the Capitulations in this area; but some effective safeguard must be found for the non-Turkish elements in the population, and especially for the Greeks in Smyrna and other important centres on the west coast of Anatolia.

With regard to the *Black Sea Straits*, it is indispensable that they should be under effective international control; but His Majesty's Government are prepared to discuss the methods by which this control is to be established and have not committed themselves to any particular solution in advance.

With regard to the future of *Constantinople*, the establishment of such control over the Straits would satisfy British strategical and economic desiderata. But since the prestige with which the Ottoman Sultan is invested by the possession of Constantinople is one of his chief supports in the retention of the Caliphate, and since the transference of the Caliphate from the Turks to the Arabs is distinctly desirable from the British point of view (see below), the expulsion of Turkey from Constantinople may perhaps be regarded as a British desideratum on political grounds. In view, however, of ancient rivalries for the possession of Constantinople, there are considerable and, it may be, convincing objections to this course.

(2.) As regards the *Dodekannese* group of islands, it is desirable that they should be accorded to Greece by some friendly arrangement between the Greek and Italian Governments, since they are purely Greek in population. And as regards Cyprus, it would be well that His Majesty's Government should recover freedom to offer it if they desire, and if that is the desire of the inhabitants, to Greece.

(3.) *In Armenia* it is desirable to establish an independent State that would secure equal justice for all religions and nationalities; this State eventually to be self-governing, but to be reconstructed for a term of years by a third Power; this Power to be friendly to Great Britain, and to be capable of building up Armenia into an effective barrier against Pan-Turanianism, and also against the aggression of foreign Powers in the direction of the Arab countries.

For the reconstruction of Armenia by an outside Power to be effective, Armenia would need a coast-line on the Mediterranean from which access to the interior would be feasible. So long as equality for all elements in the population is secured, it is desirable that Armenia should be given a wide extension in the direction of Anatolia, and that the frontiers of the latter country should be confined to districts where the Turks undoubtedly constitute the bulk of the population.

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(4.) *Arab Countries* (as enumerated in Part One, Section (4)) *and Kurdistan*:—

(*a.*) Subject to the maintenance of existing British interests and obligations ("Règlements organiques" of the Lebanon Vilayet, Aden and Bahrein protectorates, possible enlargement of Aden protectorate (see article 10 of No. 11: Anglo-French Agreement of the 16th May, 1916) and treaties with Sultans of Mokalla and Maskat, Chiefs of "Trucial Oman," Sheikhs of Koweit, Mohammerah, and Al Katar, Bin Saud, the Idrisi, &c.), that the Arab countries should, as far as possible, be independent under effective Governments, acceptable to the British Empire, and at peace with one another and with outside Powers.

The federation of the independent Arab States is a question for the Arabs themselves. It is a British desideratum in so far as the establishment of a united independent Arab Power (even though merely nominal) might counteract any odium we may incur with Moslem opinion as the chief agents in the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire (the sole remaining representative of Islamic power and independence before the war). On the other hand, this rather imponderable advantage would have to be balanced against the possible detriment to the peacefulness and effectiveness of the independent Governments which a premature attempt at federation might involve. And Great Britain could not allow a precarious federal scheme to prejudice the "trucial" relations between herself and various independent Arab rulers, by which the peace is effectively kept already over a considerable part of the Arabian peninsula. Nor could she admit that the establishment of a federation should prevent the extension of "trucial" relations to other local Arab Governments with which she is not yet in treaty relationship, if such extension appeared necessary for the effective maintenance of peace over the whole Arab area.

The reassumption of the Caliphate by an Arab house is a question for the Arabs to settle with other Moslems, and His Majesty's Government can take no open initiative in the matter. At the same time, it is desirable from the British point of view that the Caliphate should be transferred by a consensus of Moslem opinion from the Turks to the Arabs. The only other British desideratum in regard to it is that it should be kept distinct from the questions of Arab independence and Arab federation, discussed above.

(*b.*) In the independent Arab countries, whether federated or not, it is a British desideratum that there should be the least possible intervention, both in internal administration and in inter-State relations, by outside Powers.

But where outside intervention is necessary—as, for example, in the administration of Syria, Irak, and Jezireh, and in the relations between Arab Governments involving questions of tribal allegiance or the demarcation of boundaries (*i.e.*, questions calculated to disturb the peace)—it is desirable that, except in Syria, where the question must be left open for the moment, this intervention should as far as possible be the monopoly of the British Empire.

Arabia

The grounds of this claim are as follows: The peace of the Arab countries is a vital interest of the British Empire; it can only be maintained by a trucial system; a trucial system to be effective must be in the hands of a single Power, since, if the responsibility is divided, the local rulers who are to be kept in order will attempt to maintain anarchy by playing off one mediator against the other; and if this position is to be a monopoly, Great Britain has an overwhelming claim to it as the Power with the greatest interests in this area and the neighbourhood, and as the only Power which has established a trucial system in any part of Arabia hitherto.

On the other hand, this claim to a special political position in the Arab countries does not imply a similar economic claim in the same area. His Majesty's Government will continue to take all legitimate official action for preserving and increasing British trade and concessions in their Arabian territories and protectorates, and in the independent Arab countries, but they do not aim at securing a paramount economic position in the whole of this area by means of a political monopoly.

British desiderata in the Arab countries may be summed up as a British Monroe Doctrine for Arabia, but with certain qualifications, which appear when these desiderata are analysed province by province.

III.—*Desiderata in the different Arab Countries (including Kurdistan).*

1. *The Arabian Peninsula, excluding the Hejaz.*

Independence for all effective local Governments, and the conclusion of treaties, on the "trucial pattern" (see Part One, Section III), with all that have not already made treaties or agreements with Great Britain.

It is to be noted that the rulers with whom His Majesty's Government had treaties before the war were nearly all coastal chiefs, with no hinterland except the uninhabited south-eastern desert, and therefore without suzerainty over Bedouin tribes. Their subjects lived by pearl fishing and coastal trade, and breaches of the peace on their part generally occurred at sea.

His Majesty's Government therefore made it their practice to limit their rights and obligations, under these treaties, to the keeping of the peace at sea.

On the other hand, the rulers with whom His Majesty's Government have made treaties during the war, are mostly chiefs of inland tribes and oases, drawing their power from the interior and apt to

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break the peace over questions of demarcation and tribal allegiance, over which sea-power gives us no control.

If we undertake to keep the peace throughout the Peninsula, we must therefore be prepared, in the last resort, to intervene directly on land, not only in case of aggression by outside Powers, but for the enforcement of our awards between the Arab rulers themselves.

This problem has already been raised by our Treaty with Bin Saud, and by the difficulties that have arisen in the interior between him and King Husein.

2. *The Hejaz.*

It is extremely desirable that the Hejaz Government should accept a treaty with His Majesty's Government embodying an arbitration clause, since, if any one Government in the Peninsula remains outside the trucial system, the effectiveness of the whole system is endangered.

On the other hand, Great Britain would find it difficult to apply the same sanctions as in other parts of the Peninsula, since any landing of troops in the Hejaz, or even a blockade of the coast (especially in the pilgrimage season) would excite Moslem feeling against us everywhere; and a treaty giving us the right to do this would be regarded as a betrayal of independence on the part of any ruler of the Hejaz who concluded it.

As regards the renunciation of relations with any outside Power except His Majesty's Government, there would be less occasion for a clause providing against alienations of territory or concessions, since the ruler of the Hejaz would be debarred from alienating any of the sacred territory to a non-Moslem Power by Moslem opinion, and concessions to foreign subjects, even if they were operated through Moslem employees, would also be very unpopular (though the case might arise if other districts, *e.g.*, Maan, Akaba, Kunfida, were added to his direct dominions). Our main object might be obtained by a clause debarring the ruler of the Hejaz from leasing or alienating the sacred territory to any Power whatever, without that exception in favour of ourselves which, in the case of the Hejaz, would be offensive to Moslem opinion. But the question of concessions is more difficult, since public works will be needed in the Hejaz, and demanded by the inhabitants, which it will be impossible to carry out without foreign participation.

The elimination of all political relations with outside Powers except through His Majesty's Government is of course entirely out of the question in the case of the Hejaz. This element in a trucial treaty can only be reconciled with independence in cases in which the external relations of the local Government contracting are in fact almost exclusively with the British Empire. But in the Hejaz the presence of the Holy Cities, and the annual pilgrimage to them, creates relations of the highest importance between the Hejaz Government and every Power in the world which has Moslem subjects. The fact of these relations constantly puts the independence of the Hejaz to the test, and an attempt by Great Britain to become a recognised intermediary in these relations would not be tolerated by other Powers, or by the Islamic world, even if the ruler of the Hejaz were willing to countenance it himself. On the other hand, it would be unfortunate if His Majesty's Government's special trucial rights were to be confined to relations between the ruler of the Hejaz and his Arab neighbours, and we should aim rather at obtaining a clear recognition from other outside Powers that their direct relations with the Hejaz should extend to questions affecting the Pilgrimage, and to these alone.

In the Hejaz, then, British desiderata seem to be limited to the conclusion of a "trucial treaty" on a restricted basis, and for the maintenance of predominant influence we have to depend in part upon our present relations with King Husein, our position in Egypt and the Red Sea, and the relations we hope to establish with the surrounding Arab countries.

3. *Mesopotamia* (*Irak and parts of Jezireh*).

In this country the backward state of the population, its religious and social disunity and past misgovernment, combined with the potential resources of the country, their present neglect, and the great undertakings necessary to develop them, make a "trucial" system inadequate, and necessitate the conduct of internal administration by a foreign Power—at any rate, for a transitional period, the duration of which it is impossible to define.

It is a British desideratum that this should devolve, to the exclusion of all other Powers, upon Great Britain. And since the necessity is as great in Jezireh as in Irak, and parts of Jezireh are geographically hardly separable from Irak, it is a British desideratum that British administration in Mesopotamia should extend to such parts of Jezireh also.

On the other hand, His Majesty's Government have stated that they do not desire to annex Mesopotamia, partly because they do not wish to commit themselves beforehand to permanent political and military liabilities of such wide scope, and partly because they are anxious to give play to the Arab national revival when and where it is accompanied by the capacity to realise itself in an effective way.

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His Majesty's Government therefore desire to administer Mesopotamia for an indefinite period as mandatories of the Arabs, which may be done in several different ways:—

(*a.*) As mandatories of the local population (a method which might involve the rather objectionable sham of a titular local sovereign).

(*b.*) As mandatories of the head of an Arab Federation, if such were to be formed (a method which would avoid the embarrassments of (*a*), since the head of the Federation would presumably be the local sovereign of the Hejaz, and would not be seated in the administered provinces).

(*c.*) A possible compromise between the above alternatives would be the appointment of one of King Husein's sons as local ruler of Mesopotamia, with British administrative assistance. It is understood that Sherif Abdullah may be a candidate for this office.

4. *Kurdistan* (within the boundaries specified above in Part One, III, 4).

The Power paramount in this country will command the strategic approaches to Mesopotamia and control the water supply of the eastern affluents of the Tigris, on which the irrigation of Mesopotamia largely depends. It is therefore essential that the paramount Power in Kurdistan and Mesopotamia should be the same; in other words, that Great Britain should have an exclusive position in Kurdistan as opposed to any other outside Power.

At the same time, the arguments against annexation apply even more strongly to Kurdistan than to Mesopotamia. It is desirable that the county should form an independent confederation of tribes and towns, and that His Majesty's Government should assume functions intermediate between the administrative assistance, amounting to direct responsibility for the conduct of government, which they intend to undertake in Mesopotamia, and the mere control of external relations, to which they propose to limit themselves in the case of the independent rulers of the Arabian Peninsula. In the hills British control should be exerted with the least direct intervention possible. In the lowlands bordering on Mesopotamia, where there are important oil-fields and other natural resources, it may have to approximate to the Mesopotamian pattern.

The Nestorian settlements in the upper valley of the Greater Zab, where the Kurds, under Turkish instigation, have worked havoc during the war, should be formed into an autonomous enclave, under the Government of the Nestorian Prince-Patriarch, with a constitution modelled on that of the Lebanon—the necessary outside assistance to be given by Great Britain.

5. *Syria* (including parts of Jezireh not assigned to Mesopotamia).

His Majesty's Government have less direct political interest in Syria than in any other of the Arab countries. So far as its internal affairs are concerned, they merely desire that it shall be independent under an effective Government friendly to the British Empire. But the inhabitants of the Lebanon vilayet, who as Ottoman subjects enjoyed administrative autonomy under guarantee of the Powers, ought not to be forced into any relation with the rest of Syria of which they do not approve.

Syria is more capable than other Arab countries of providing such a Government for itself on European lines. But if foreign assistance is needed in the internal administration (and it will in any case be needed to a lesser degree and for a shorter time than in Mesopotamia), His Majesty's Government are content, as in the case of Armenia, to see this assistance given by a friendly Power on the invitation of the native inhabitants. This disinterestedness in the internal affairs of Syria, however, does not hold if the conduct of them is found to affect prejudicially the relations between Syria and other Arab countries in which Great Britain is interested—particularly Mesopotamia, the Ruweilah–Anazeh country (through which a British railway from Haifa to Irak would run), and the Hejaz:—

(*a.*) Economic relations: Alexandretta is the natural Mediterranean port for Jezireh, and Tripoli might become so for Irak, while Damascus is the focus of trade for a large part of the Ruweilah–Anazeh country, Jebel Shammar, and Hejaz. It is a British desideratum that there should be free transit across Syria between these ports and centres and their hinterlands.

(*b.*) Political relations: Syria has an open frontier towards the desert, and is therefore bound to be involved in the demarcation and allegiance controversies of the Arabian Peninsula. Whether Syria be self-governing or assisted in her internal administration by a foreign Power other than Great Britain, it seems important, for the reasons advanced above in the case of the Hejaz, that the "trucial" relations of those

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independent Peninsula rulers whose spheres border upon Syria should be so arranged as to preclude the possibility of a Power which gave administrative assistance to Syria interfering in purely Peninsula affairs.

The interaction of tribal politics throughout the Arab countries has been put forcibly in a memorandum of the 20th January, 1917, by Sir Arthur Hirtzel :—*

"No part of Arabia can be completely indifferent to Great Britain, which is the only Power that at present has a foothold in the country. Our hold is limited to a narrow fringe along the coast . . . ; its security depends ultimately upon the tranquillity of the interior. Since we are unable to intervene in or control the interior, it is essential to exclude all possible seeds of disturbance.

"Arabia is not a State in any effective sense, but a fortuitous concourse of tribes . . . . under chiefs, the limits of whose sway are determined not by frontiers, but by the tribes which they for the time being control. *Their politics are closely interwoven, and a quarrel may run right across the continent.*"

These considerations were embodied in a memorandum of the 29th August, 1917, on French and British interests in the Arabian Peninsula by Lord R. Cecil :—†

"There exists no more fruitful source of trouble in these semi-civilised countries than a condition of things in which tribal combinations can entertain the hope of enlisting one European Power against another. . . . .

"His Majesty's Government are convinced that the avoidance of internal strife in Arabia can only be secured through the retention by Great Britain of the influence which this country has so long held throughout the Peninsula as the European Power most closely concerned with the internal peace and external politics of Arabia."

These principles clearly apply to Syria, in so far as her open frontier on the east and south-east makes her a party to the tribal politics of the Peninsula; and this is the point at which the question of French administration in Syria touches vital British interests.

6. *Palestine* (including Safed and Hebron, but excluding Akaba and the country east of Jordan).

British desiderata may be analysed as follows :—

(*a.*) Strategic : Palestine adjoins the Sinai Peninsula, the Suez Canal, and Akaba, and a British railway from Akka-Haifa to Irak would traverse Palestine in its first section. It is therefore a British desideratum that if the effective government of Palestine demands the intervention of a single outside Power in its administration, that Power should be either Great Britain or, failing that, the United States. An international administration would not, perhaps, have the same drawbacks as a single foreign (even though friendly) administering Power, but it may be doubted whether it would secure the political desiderata set out below.

(*b.*) Political : In view of the interests, often conflicting, of several international religious communities in Palestinian holy places, it is a British desideratum that there should be an administration capable of conciliating these interests, and this for two reasons : (1) To ensure orderly government in a country where disorder would react upon neighbouring countries in which Great Britain is interested ; and (2) to prevent the possibility of any of the international bodies interested in Palestine feeling resentment against Great Britain as a party to an arrangement there which they might consider unfair to themselves.

In particular, His Majesty's Government desire to insure reasonable facilities in Palestine for Jewish colonisation, without giving Arab or general Moslem opinion an opportunity for considering that Great Britain has been instrumental in handing over free Arab or Moslem soil to aliens.

From this point of view it is desirable that Palestine, whatever its administration and whatever the facilities granted to non-Arab elements in its population, should nominally be included in an Arab Confederation ; so that in Palestine, as well as in Mesopotamia, the establishment of such a confederation is from one point of view a British interest.

(*c.*) Economic : It is a British desideratum that there should be free transit across Palestine between Akka-Haifa and the Anazeh country, the Hejaz, Jebel Shammar, and Irak.

(*d.*) Trucial : In this one respect British desiderata in Palestine are less exacting than in Syria. The frontiers of Palestine specified above would lie entirely in settled territory, and a Palestinian Government would not therefore be involved in perpetual demarcation and allegiance disputes with its neighbours. A trucial treaty with Great Britain for the settlement of disputes with adjoining Arab States might therefore be

* Foreign Office/132784/93808/1917.
† Foreign Office/165801/93808/1917.

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dispensed with, but this would no longer be the case if the area of Palestine were extended to the east and south.

This raises the question of the future frontier between Palestine and Egypt. On the one hand, it seems desirable that all cultivated or cultivable land on the southern borders of Palestine, in the neighbourhood of Gaza, Rafa, and Beersheba, should go to Palestine. But, on the other hand, it would be preferable, for the reasons suggested above, that the Palestinian State should not have jurisdiction over Bedouin tribes. The tribes south of the Rafa–Beersheba line and west of the Wady Arabah go naturally with those of the Sinai Peninsula, and the pre-war frontier between Turkey and Egypt, which separated them, was a quite arbitrary line.

It might be desirable, therefore, to attach this triangle of formerly Turkish territory to Egypt. But the consent of the inhabitants would have first to be manifested in some clear form, in order to preclude any possibility of misinterpretat on For, since Egypt is a British Protectorate, the attachment of these tribes to Egypt might otherwise be represented as an annexation of free Arabs to the British Empire.

IV.—*Summary.*

(i.) *European Turkey and Anatolia:* Sovereign independence (the balance of advantage, as regards Constantinople, remaining in doubt).
(ii.) *Black Sea Straits:* Effective international control.
(iii.) *Dodekannese:* Friendly settlement between Italy and Greece.
(iv.) *Cyprus:* A free hand for ourselves.
(v.) *Armenia:* Independence, with equal rights for all nationalities, and with assistance of an outside Power for a term of years.
(vi.) *Arab Countries in General:* Maintenance of existing British possessions, protectorates, and treaties; widest local independence compatible with this; widest extension of British trucial system to independent Arab States; least possible interference of outside Powers in local internal administration.
(vii.) *Arab Federation:* Desirable, but without prejudice to (vi).
(viii.) *Caliphate:* To be settled by the Moslems themselves.
(ix.) *Arabian Peninsula, excluding Hejaz:* British trucial treaties with all independent States.
(x.) *Hejaz:* Independence; British trucial treaty to cover all foreign relations except those involved in the pilgrimage.
(xi.) *Mesopotamia:* Independence, with British administrative assistance (subject to no limitations of period or function).
(xii.) *Kurdistan:* Same desiderata as in Mesopotamia.
(xiii.) *Syria:* Independence, with outside administrative assistance if necessary; free transit for trade between Syrian ports and hinterland; independent Peninsula rulers whose spheres border on Syria, to have trucial treaties with Great Britain.
(xiv.) *Palestine:* Independence; administrative assistance to be either American or preferably British; free transit for trade between Palestinian ports and hinterland; British trucial treaty only in case Palestine includes country east of Jordan.

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(C.)—Part Three. Policy.

I.—*General Lines.*

1. It would appear from the survey given in Parts One and Two above that the greatest discrepancies between British commitments and desiderata are those which arise out of the claims of Italy in Anatolia and of France in Syria and Jezireh.

2. The entry of Italy into the Green Area and Area C would be bitterly and justifiably opposed by the inhabitants. The majority are Turks, there is an important Greek minority, and most nationalities of the Levant are represented at Smyrna; but the Italian colony is only one among many, the Italians have no traditional claim and no vested interests, and there is nothing to show that they are capable of looking after the country. On the contrary, their record in colonial enterprises elsewhere indicates that they would be oppressive and incompetent. The population would probably oppose Italian intervention on the plea of self-determination, and are quite capable of driving them into the sea, or at any rate confining them to a few strategical points on the coast. As parties to the Italian claim we, and the other Allies, would suffer the greatest moral damage from such a situation, and the results of Italian reverses in Tripoli have shown how dangerously the Pan-Islamic movement would be fostered by a similar reaction against an invader on the part of the Turks in Anatolia. It may be added that Great Britain has important material stakes in the Green Area in the shape of the Smyrna trade and the Aidin Railway (the only railway enterprise in Turkey which has paid its own way). In spite of Italy's undertakings under the Agreement (No. 12, see above), it is practically certain that, if the Italians came on the scene, the Aidin Railway as a British enterprise would be doomed.

3. In Syria (leaving the Lebanon vilayet on one side) the difficulty regarding the French claims is equally serious. The French are not wanted by the Arabs, the Arabs have established an effective administration there, not only in the four Syrian towns (Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo) assigned to Area A, but in considerable portions of the Blue Area—for instance, the Anti-Lebanon district and Latakia. It is fairly clear that they would resist the imposition upon them of any foreign "assistance" which they did not ask for themselves, and the idea of French assistance is obnoxious to them.

As regards British interests, they are much more directly affected by our pledges to France in this region than by our provisional pledges in Anatolia to Italy. Area A includes part of Kurdistan and Jezireh, and these territories—at least as far west as a line drawn across Jezireh roughly from Jeziret-Ibn-Omar on the Tigris to Verdi on the Euphrates—go naturally with Lower Mesopotamia, and are perhaps essential for the irrigation and general development of that country. Again, the boundary between Areas A and B separates the settled country east of Jordan (between Deraa and Maan) from Syria, though the population on either side is inseparable in social relations and political sympathy. And it also partitions into three arbitrary sections the country of the Ruweilah-Anazeh tribe, whose Chief, Nuri Shaalan, is one of the most powerful independent rulers in Arabia. If the line between Areas A and B were to be maintained, we should have the choice between carrying out this arbitrary partition (a solution which it would probably be impossible to enforce) or allowing Trans-Jordania and the Ruweilah country to realise their natural destiny and gravitate towards Syria. The latter solution is indeed bound to come to pass, but if this were combined with the enforcement of French claims under the Agreement, the result would be to carry French influence into the heart of the Arabian peninsula, and to give France such a footing in all tribal disputes concerning demarcation and allegiance as would make the establishment of a British "trucial" system in Arabia impossible.

4. It seems most desirable, therefore, that we should attempt, at least in these two cases, to obtain a thorough revision of the Agreements as they stand, and this leads on to a consideration of any contingent elements there may be in the text of the documents.

In the Agreement with France (No. 11) there is nothing contingent at all, but the Agreements with Italy (Nos. 7 and 12) both contain contingent clauses. Moreover, in the latter agreement* (No. 12) the contingent clause refers not merely to the Italian claims but to the whole series of Agreements regarding Turkey, and France, in subscribing to the document in which this clause is contained, would appear to have

* It is assumed in the following paragraphs, for the purposes of argument, that No. 12 is valid. But if its validity is not recognised (see footnote on p. 2 above), then the contingent clause in it falls to the ground like the other articles, and article 9 of No. 7 alone has to be taken into account in this connection.

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admitted thereby that the clause applies retrospectively to the earlier Agreement between her and Great Britain (No. 11).

5. In the two Agreements with Italy the following contingencies were provided for:—

(a.) *Total or Partial Partition of Turkey.*

"In a general way France, Great Britain (and Russia) recognise that Italy is interested in the balance of power in the Mediterranean, and that, in case of the total or partial partition of Asiatic Turkey, she ought to obtain an equitable share in the Mediterranean region adjoining the province of Adalia, where Italy has already acquired rights and interests which have been dealt with in an Anglo-Italian Convention. The zone which will eventually be attributed to Italy will be delimited, when the time comes, with consideration for the existing interests of France and Great Britain." (No. 7, Article 9.)

This article came into operation with the conclusion of the Anglo-French Agreement (No. 11), and was duly carried out in a second Agreement with Italy (No. 12).

(b.) *The incomplete realisation of arrangements provided for in the several Agreements concerning Turkey.*

"The interests of Italy have equally to be taken into consideration in case modifications are made in the zones of interest of the Powers." (No. 7, Article 9.)

This was duly taken into account in the second Agreement:—

"It is understood that, if at the conclusion of peace the advantages contemplated in the agreements made between the Allied Powers regarding the attribution to each of them of a part of the Ottoman Empire cannot be secured in their entirety to one or more of the said Powers, then in any alteration or arrangement of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire which takes place at the conclusion of the war, the maintenance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean shall receive equitable consideration in conformity with Article 9 of the Agreement of London, dated the 26th April, 1915." (No. 12, Article 8.)

(c.) *Maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.*

"The interests of Italy shall equally be taken into consideration in case the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire is maintained." (No. 7, Article 9.)

6. Of these three contingencies (*c*) (the maintenance of Turkish integrity) is already ruled out, and (*a*) (the total or partial partition of the Ottoman Empire among the Allied Powers) is an anachronism.

The falling out of Russia, the intervention of America, and the general development of the international situation have made the principles of nationality and democracy and the right of self-determination, in which these principles are translated into action, not merely one element among others in the aims of the Allies, but the essential aim and expression of their cause.

This general development has profoundly affected the local situation in the Middle East, and the native peoples themselves—Arabs, Armenians, Jewish colonists, Nestorians, and latterly also the Greeks—who in the earlier stages of the war, and during the greater part of the period during which the Agreements were made, were contributing comparatively little towards their own liberation—have taken a constantly greater part, while the Allied Powers, with the single exception of Great Britain, have shouldered less and less of the burden of war against Turkey. (Russia has fallen out altogether, France has contributed practically nothing since the Dardanelles, Italy nothing at all at any stage.) Under these circumstances the only conceivable satisfactory settlement of the countries formerly subjected to Turkey lies along the lines of the joint declaration recently made by the French Government and His Majesty's Government. The liberated peoples of Turkey are bound to have "national Governments and administrations, deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the native populations." Outside Powers cannot impose specific institutions

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upon the populations of these regions, and will have to limit themselves to "ensuring by their support and effective assistance that the Governments and administrations adopted by these regions of their own free will shall be exercised in a normal way."

In other words, the peoples must be free to form what political groupings they choose, to establish what Governments they choose within these groupings, and to invite whatever outside Power they choose to assist them, without their freedom of choice being hampered by dictation or compulsion at any point.

This being established, it will be convenient to consider the situation with regard to contingency (*b*), which was that the arrangements agreed upon among the Allies might have to be altered or only realised in part. This contingency has, in fact, been brought into operation by the changes in the situation discussed above, and it is now incumbent upon His Majesty's Government to give "equitable consideration to the maintenance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean" in whatever "alteration or arrangement of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire" will result, under the new order of things, from the war.

It is, indeed, almost certain that this new order in Turkey will itself automatically maintain the balance of power in the Mediterranean as between the Allies. For, in place of the Ottoman Empire, as it existed before the war, there will arise no French, Italian, or British dominions or protectorates assigned to each Power on some ratio, whether equitable or not, but entirely new and independent national States, and the frontiers of the Allied Powers towards Turkey will remain where they stood under the *status quo*.* Some, or even all, of these new States will no doubt desire foreign assistance for setting them on their feet, and will be at liberty to ask for the good offices of whatever Power they choose; but, in accepting such an invitation, the Power which is freely chosen will in no sense be obtaining any of the "advantages" mutually agreed upon in the various treaties, even though that Power is invited voluntarily by the inhabitants of an area which had been pledged to it under the Agreements over the inhabitants' heads. The choice will be theirs, not ours, and we cannot be responsible for maintaining the balance of power where it is affected by action other than our own.

7. The above considerations suggest a line of policy which might be taken, in regard to French and Italian claims, by His Majesty's Government. Our Allies cannot in principle contest that the populations of Turkey, including the Turks themselves, are to constitute their own Governments, as this is specifically accepted in the joint Anglo-French Declaration, from which Italy cannot dissent. Nor are any of them likely to propose that the new independent national States shall be left severely to themselves in case they ask for foreign assistance. It seems to follow inevitably that there should not only be freedom for the Arabs, Turks, Armenians, &c., to invite what Power they like, but that the various Powers should be free towards each other to accept such invitations. Any private arrangements among the Powers by which some agreed to refuse invitations of assistance for the benefit of others, would obviously be simply a roundabout method of imposing those very restrictions on the liberties of the new States which we are professing to rule out.

At the same time, we are bound in loyalty to take the balance of power into equitable consideration in any manner which the new circumstances may permit, and we can at least make sure that, in the areas allocated to each Power under the Agreements, that Power shall have the fullest opportunity for obtaining the suffrages of the inhabitants, and shall have no impediment placed in its way by the other Powers. We should do well, however, to make it clear from the outset that we cannot either practise or countenance any form of coercion, and that, as we shall not exert pressure upon the inhabitants of the areas originally assigned to us to opt for our assistance, so also we shall not consider ourselves debarred from accepting an invitation from the inhabitants of other areas, if they genuinely and spontaneously turn to us.

The upshot, then, is this. The contingency calling for a revision of the Agreements has in fact arisen owing to the general consensus that the peoples of Turkey must determine their destinies themselves, and by the terms of our pact we are bound to give equitable consideration to the maintenance of the balance of power in adapting the Agreements to the new circumstances. We propose to do so by preserving equality of opportunity for the several Allies to secure, by the free choice of the inhabitants of their respective areas, such part of the rights accorded to them in these areas under the

* This applies only to the balance of power in respect of Turkey, since, when the whole Mediterranean is taken into account, Italy's gains in the Adriatic will upset the balance to her advantage and to the disadvantage of Great Britain and France.

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Agreements as is compatible with the liberties of the inhabitants laid down in the Joint Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918.

These suggestions are put forward tentatively, but there is a genuine case for revision, and these are lines on which we might be able to present it without placing ourselves at any stage in a false position.

Proposals in detail for the different regions are given in Section II below.

II.—*Detail.*

(i.) *European Turkey and Anatolia.*

(a.) *Constantinople.*—From the point of view of British interests, the arguments for and against leaving Constantinople under Turkish sovereignty are very evenly balanced. Against leaving it is the fact that its retention might enable the Ottoman Sultan to retain the Caliphate. In favour of leaving it is the rivalry among traditional claimants, which a transfer of ownership might bring to a head. We shall see more clearly when the question is actually under discussion, and we should not be too hasty in making up our minds.

(b.) *Anatolia.*—A policy in regard to the Italian claims has been suggested in Section I above. We should hold firmly to our general principles of "no annexations" and "self-determination," and let the local application follow of itself. Smyrna and the Ægean littoral, which are largely inhabited by Greeks, will be certain to oppose any suggestion of Italian ascendancy. But it is perhaps not inconceivable that the Turks in the region adjoining Adalia, which alone was contemplated as the Italian zone originally, might seek Italian support and assistance.

(ii.) *Black Sea Straits.*

The control of the Straits, as a strategic and commercial highway, is a separate question from that of the territorial sovereignty over the littoral and Constantinople, and we should not allow the settlement of the latter question to prejudice the former, which is of greater importance to us.

Our interests require effective international control, that is, control by a single mandatory Power, and the Power designated must of course be acceptable to us. We shall be well advised to work for the appointment of the United States, failing which, some mixed International Board of Control, on the model of the Danube Commission, may become inevitable.

(iii.) *Dodekannese.*

If we were not bound to Italy by the Treaty of 1915 (No. 7), we could, and perhaps should, use our friendly offices with Italy to secure the transfer of the sovereignty over these islands from Turkey to Greece. Italy has no more moral justification for remaining there than for entering Anatolia, but His Majesty's Government are not free to take this line, since we have promised Italy "complete sovereignty" over the Dodekannese under the original treaty (No. 7, Article 8), on the strength of which Italy entered the war.

The best way to approach the solution of this question might be to deal with it in connection with the settlement of the Northern Epirus question and others outstanding between Italy and Greece: in other words, to treat it as a South-East European rather than a Middle Eastern problem.

(iv.) *Cyprus.*

The disposal of Cyprus may be treated either as a Middle Eastern or a South-East European problem. It was not included in the Middle-Eastern Agreements (except for the servitude to France, which was entered into by His Majesty's Government under No. 11, Article 4), but it was involved in the earlier negotiations with Greece. The population of the island is Greek, with a small Turkish minority. On the other hand, it has to be considered geographically in relation to the Anatolian, Cilician, and Syrian coastline.

Juridically, Great Britain's title to possess Cyprus is perfectly good. We acquired the right to "occupy and administer" it under the Cyprus Convention with Turkey, of the 4th June, 1878, in the event of Kars–Ardahan–Batum being retained by Russia, and on the condition of assisting the Ottoman Government by force of arms to defend their remaining Asiatic territories against any subsequent Russian aggression.

This Convention, being bipartite only, lapsed with the outbreak of war, and Cyprus, as an occupied enemy territory, was annexed by His Majesty's Government.

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Nevertheless, it will be well to bear in mind (*a*) that the population is Greek, and (*b*) that we have already offered the island to Greece during the war, and that at a time when Greece was not yet an ally or a belligerent.

His Majesty's Government are not, indeed, called upon to make any sacrifice of territory which is legitimately under British sovereignty. It is only if a political situation should arise in which it would be useful for His Majesty's Government to have in hand a pawn convenient for negotiating a general settlement that a possible cession of Cyprus to Greece might come up for consideration. To what extent, however, such cession would affect important strategical interests of this country is a question which could only be answered by the naval and military authorities. In this connection it may be noted that, when the functions of an "assisting Power" are defined, it must be laid down clearly that an invitation to provide assistance shall not carry with it the right to make use of strategic points in the assisted country. For instance, if France assists Armenia (see below), there must be no question of a French naval base being established at Alexandretta.

(v.) *Armenia.*

The general principle of "self-determination" applies to Armenia, but in this particular case the principle of "equal rights for all nationalities" should take priority, since throughout the country there is a mixed population with divergent economic interests and traditional feuds, which cannot be got rid of so easily as the Turkish administration that fomented them. The maintenance of this principle should be the first duty of the mandatory Power.

It would be expedient to extend the area of Armenia as widely as possible, so as to include all territories north of the Arab boundary in which there is a mixed population of Turks, Armenians, and Kurds. This would at the same time conduce to a stable settlement, and would indirectly be of advantage to His Majesty's Government. The choice of a mandatory virtually lies between France and America. If France were chosen, she would obtain a sphere of activity in this direction far wider than that accorded to her under the Agreement of 1916 (see the boundaries of the Blue Area), and this should make her more ready to forgo her claims, under that Agreement, in Syria, in case these claims were not confirmed by the choice of the Syrians themselves. It would be to our advantage, for the same reason, to encourage Russian Armenia to unite with Turkish Armenia under a single régime, and to favour the extension of French assistance to the other Caucasian countries, which will be in need of help from outside and will hardly be able to obtain it from Russia.*

The attitude of the Armenians may be gathered from the communication recently addressed to the French and the British Governments by their National Delegation at Paris. They claim the right to set up an independent Armenian State under the joint protection of the "Allied Great Powers,"† one of whom is to be asked to act as a mandatory "for the organisation and administration of the new State for a term of years. An organic statute drawn up by the Protecting Powers would lay down the main lines of the administration of the new State during the period of transition, sanctioning the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, at a date approximately defined, which would determine the form of government to be adopted permanently, subject to the approval of the Protecting Powers. The provisional administration to last long enough, but only so long, as will be necessary to enable the survivors of the deported Armenians, and Armenians from other parts, to return to their 'National Home.'"

The principle of equality for all elements in the population is not disputed. On the other hand, in settling the proportional claims of these various elements to a voice in the government of the country, it should be laid down in Armenia that the dead and the exiles should be taken into account, and Armenian immigrants from other parts of the world into Armenia should be given the same facilities as Jewish immigrants into Palestine (see below) for settling down in their ancestral homes.

(vi.) *Arab Countries in General and Kurdistan.*

We should apply the general principles of self-determination and free choice of assisting Power, and should ask King Husein formally to accept these principles in lieu of the territorial boundaries of "Arab Independence" which we are pledged to him to

* See memorandum by Sir Eyre Crowe, circulated to the Eastern Committee.
† Presumably this formula is intended to include the United States.

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obtain. On the new basis the Arabs would gain more in Syria than they would lose in Kurdistan, and we shall have an opportunity of suggesting it if and when we recognise King Husein as "King of the Arabs," which will be a change from a territorial to a national title. If he subscribes to "self-determination," His Majesty's Government will be in a stronger position for handling the difficulties between him and the other independent Arab rulers to whom they are committed—especially Bin Saud.

(ii.) *Arab Federation.*

We should be well advised not to make up our minds on this question till we see whether the different Arab countries opt for the same assisting Power or for different Powers in different cases. If both Syria and Mesopotamia opted for us, it would be an advantage to have some very loose political connection between them and the Hejaz. This could be arranged by obtaining the appointment of sons of King Husein to the Syrian and Mesopotamian thrones.

(viii.) *Caliphate.*

We should abstain from all direct action, whether covert or avowed; but we can influence the choice of the Moslem world indirectly—for example, by our policy in regard to Constantinople.

(ix.) *Arabian Peninsula, excluding Hejaz.*

The principles of self-determination and free choice of assistance apply here also, but we should make it clear that our existing treaties and relations with various independent chiefs are pre-eminently applications of this principle, since we have never exercised coercion in establishing them. We should obtain a formal recognition from the other parties to the Peace Conference of such existing treaties, and of our exclusive right to make similar treaties with the remaining rulers of the Peninsula, if they on their side are willing to make them with us.

(x.) *Hejaz.*

We shall have to take up again with the French Government the abortive negotiations of 1917, and endeavour to obtain their agreement to the principle that their direct relations with the Hejaz Government shall be restricted entirely to pilgrimage affairs.

If the French can be induced to agree to this, a precedent will be set against which it will be difficult for Italy, Holland, and lesser Moslem Powers to stand out.

The French will probably try to obtain our assent to French economic penetration of the Hejaz (and especially to the installation of a French bank at Jeddah) in return for a recognition on their part of our political priority. But we should be well advised to resist such suggestions, since they would open the way for a return of French influence by another channel.

It may be impossible to embody any of these arrangements regarding the Hejaz in formal instruments binding upon all parties concerned.

(xi.) *Mesopotamia.*

We shall be on safe ground here in taking our stand upon the principle of free option, since it is evident that the inhabitants do not wish us to withdraw.

We could also put forward our ancient commercial relations with the country, and claim our right to extend the Pax Britannica from the Persian Gulf, where the benefits of our presence are admitted by all, to its Mesopotamian hinterland. This historical line of argument might, it is true, give an opening to the traditional claims of France in Syria and Palestine, and would in appearance traverse our general line of policy, which is to rest the settlement, not on the claims of outside Powers, but on the self-determination and free choice of the native populations. Nor would a recital of benefits conferred in the Gulf carry much weight if it did not appear to impress a population that was neighbour to the Gulf and had had an opportunity of witnessing our activities there for the past hundred years.

The desire of the people of Mesopotamia for us to remain there is really the best proof that our past work in the Gulf has been as good as we assert, and our case ultimately stands or falls by it, whichever line of argument we take. We had therefore better take our stand regarding Mesopotamia upon the choice of the inhabitants, which is not, after all, in doubt. Nevertheless, it may become necessary to proclaim a sort of Monroe Doctrine, in our favour, in regard to these regions. It seems imperative

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to leave no doubt that, whatever happens in these territories, Great Britain cannot allow any other Power to acquire predominant rights there.

(xii.) *Kurdistan.*

It would be almost equally safe to rely here too upon the choice of the inhabitants, though it might also be well to point out that the country is bound up with Mesopotamia geographically and economically, and could not lead a satisfactory existence if dissociated from it.

(xiii.) *Syria.*

It will be advisable to draw a distinction between the Lebanon (within the old boundaries of the autonomous vilayet, with the inclusion of the Beirut enclave) and the remainer of the Syrian area.

It is understood that Sherif Feisal and the non-Lebanese Syrian Arabs are willing that the Lebanon should maintain its separate existence, unless, or until, it desires to merge itself in the larger Syrian body politic, and that it should receive assistance from France, so long as it is clearly established that the French are invited by the free choice of the Lebanese. Considerable opposition to the paramountcy of French influence at Beirut may, however, be offered by the United States, since the Presbyterian College at Beirut is one of the most important American missionary institutions in the Middle East, and it would be in danger of being throttled by the rival Jesuit Mission under a French or Francophil régime. British interests, on the other hand, would not suffer appreciably by the acceptance of French assistance in the Lebanon, and we can safely maintain an impartial attitude in case of disagreement between France and America.

It will be all the more important not to thwart French aspirations in the Lebanon if we intend, as regards the remainder of Syria, to pursue the policy suggested in Section I above.

It is understood that the Syrians are determined to assert their right of self-determination and free choice of assistance, that they have no intention of asking for the assistance of France, and that their choice will almost certainly fall upon Great Britain. We, on our part, have simply to affirm the general principle, and to allow the local application to work itself out. But since in Syria, unlike Anatolia, the result may not merely be to the disadvantage of an Ally, but also, in all probability, to our own advantage, it is particularly desirable that in this case our action should be so indisputably loyal and correct as to leave no ground for permanent French ill-feeling.

It may be best, therefore, to be perfectly frank with the French Government, and to tell them beforehand that we insist upon the Syrians exercising a genuinely free choice, and that we shall do nothing on our part to bias their decision, but that we think it not impossible that they will opt for us, and that, if they do, we intend to accept the invitation.

(xiv.) *Palestine.*

The problem of Palestine cannot be solved entirely on the principles of self-determination and free choice of assistance. As in Armenia, there will be a mixed population, and there will be one element in that population, in this case the Jewish colonists, which, for special reasons, will be entitled to a position more than mathematically proportionate to its numbers at the start.

Moreover, in Palestine there are international religious interests so important, and so difficult to reconcile, that they almost overshadow the internal problems of the native inhabitants.

For these reasons, the desires of the inhabitants, or of the several sections of them, will have, to some extent, to take the second place. The assisting Power will be bound to act not merely as their mandatory, but as the mandatory of the world, and in cases where local and international interests conflict, the former may often have to give way.

It is essential, therefore, that the mandatory should be impartial and effective. An "international administration," in the literal sense of mixed executive bodies, would evidently be the very worst régime which could be devised to meet the special Palestinian conditions, and should be decidedly ruled out. The practical choice lies between a mandate to the United States or a mandate to Great Britain.* From the British point of view, the balance of advantage as between these two solutions is not

* It understood that the Arabs would be less opposed to Zionist aspirations in Palestine if these were to be realised under British auspices.

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altogether easy to discern, and it might be wise to keep an open mind on the question till we see how the general discussion of the Middle Eastern settlement goes, and to take the general situation into account in eventually making our decision.

As regards boundaries, the Zionists are certain to ask for the country east of Jordan, but there are no Jewish agricultural colonies there, and the inhabitants have clearly manifested their desire to join the Syrian Arab State.

In the case of the southern frontier there are strong arguments, on grounds of tribal geography, for attaching the triangle south of the Rafa–Beersheba line and west of the Wady Arabah to Egypt (see Desiderata III, 6, above), and it is not improbable that this solution would be favoured by the tribes concerned. But this aim is of minor importance from the British point of view, and would not be worth pressing if it seemed likely to give our Allies an opening for representing that we were making a special exception in our own favour to the principle of "No Annexations" as applied to Ottoman territory, while insisting upon "Independence" in areas which, under the Agreements, had been assigned to them.

The acceptance by all parties of the principle of "free choice" as the general basis of settlement in Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula is the paramount interest from the British point of view.

Foreign Office,
November 21, 1918.

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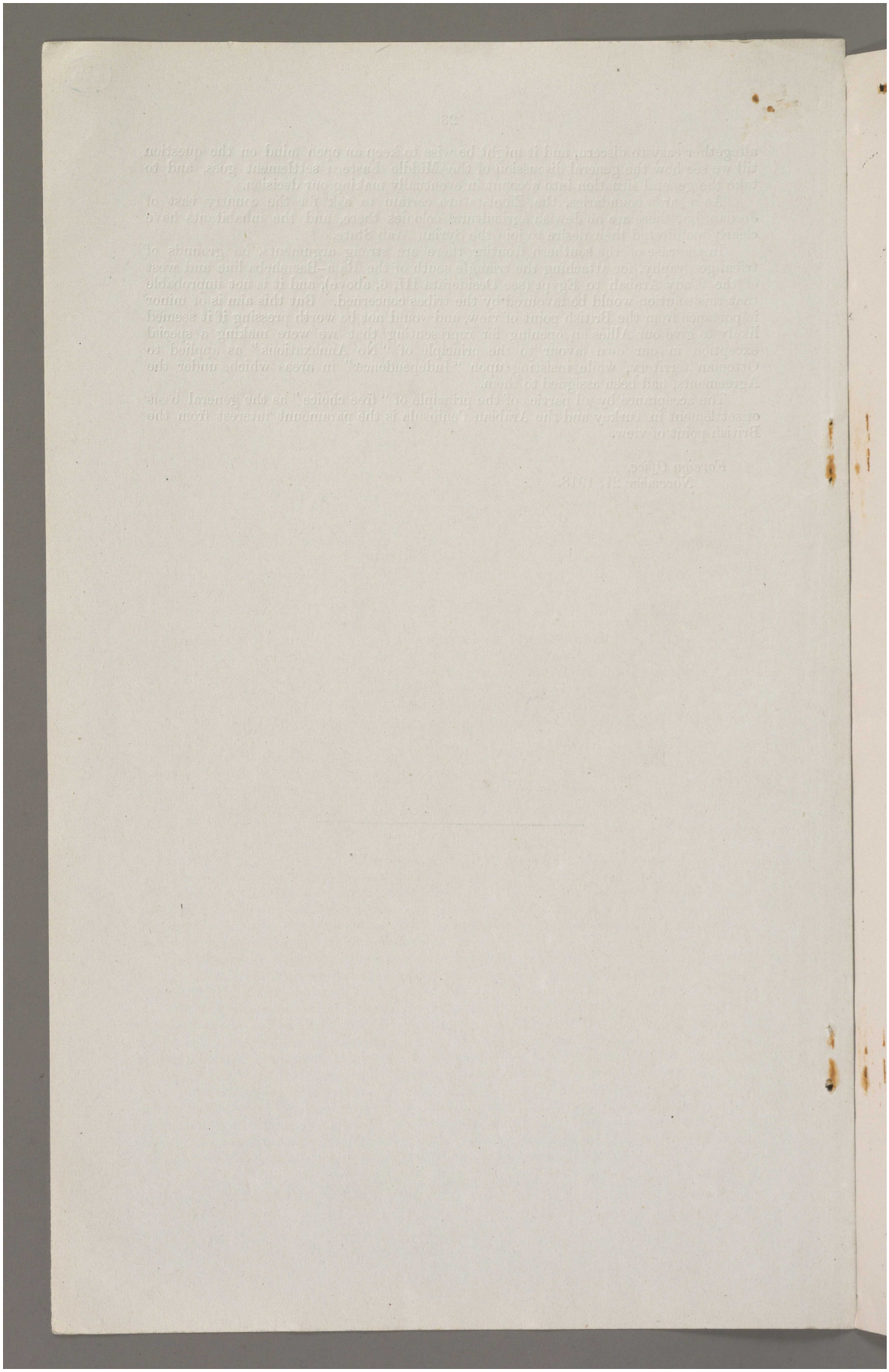

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WAR CABINET

SECRET

EASTERN COMMITTEE

E.C.2467

NOTE BY THE SECRETARY.

The following extracts from a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs entitled "Synopsis of our Obligations to our Allies and Others" (War Cabinet Paper G-203, 14.3.18) are circulated for the information of Members of the Committee.

(signed) L. Storr,
Secretary.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.
25. 11. 18.

.....

TO FRANCE

We are bound —

1. By the Pact of London (5th September, 1914) whereby we undertook not to make peace separately nor to formulate peace terms without the consent of the other signatory Powers.

2. By the Anglo-French Agreements of April-May, 1916 (incorrectly called the Sykes-Picot Agreement), under which we agreed, "provided the Arabs fulfil the conditions, and that they obtain the towns of Homs, Hama, Damascus, and Aleppo" (N.B.- This reservation is to some extent invalidated by our recent assurance to the French that we had no intention of departing from the Agreement), that—

(i) France should have priority of enterprise and local loans, and supply advisers and public functionaries in the zone marked "A" on Map 1 in return for similar privileges being accorded to His Majesty's Government in the zone marked "B". Both the zones were in theory to be included within the territory of the future Arab State.

(ii) France should establish such administration or control as she should desire to arrange with the Arabs in the blue area on Map 1 in return for similar privileges to His Majesty's Government in the red area.

(iii) The brown area to be internationalised under a régime to be decided on after subsequent discussion.

(iv) We undertook not to cede Cyprus to a third Power without the consent of France.

(v) Haiffa, which is attributed to England, to be a free port, and French goods to have free transit through the red area in return for similar assurances as regards Alexandretta and transit of British goods through the blue area.

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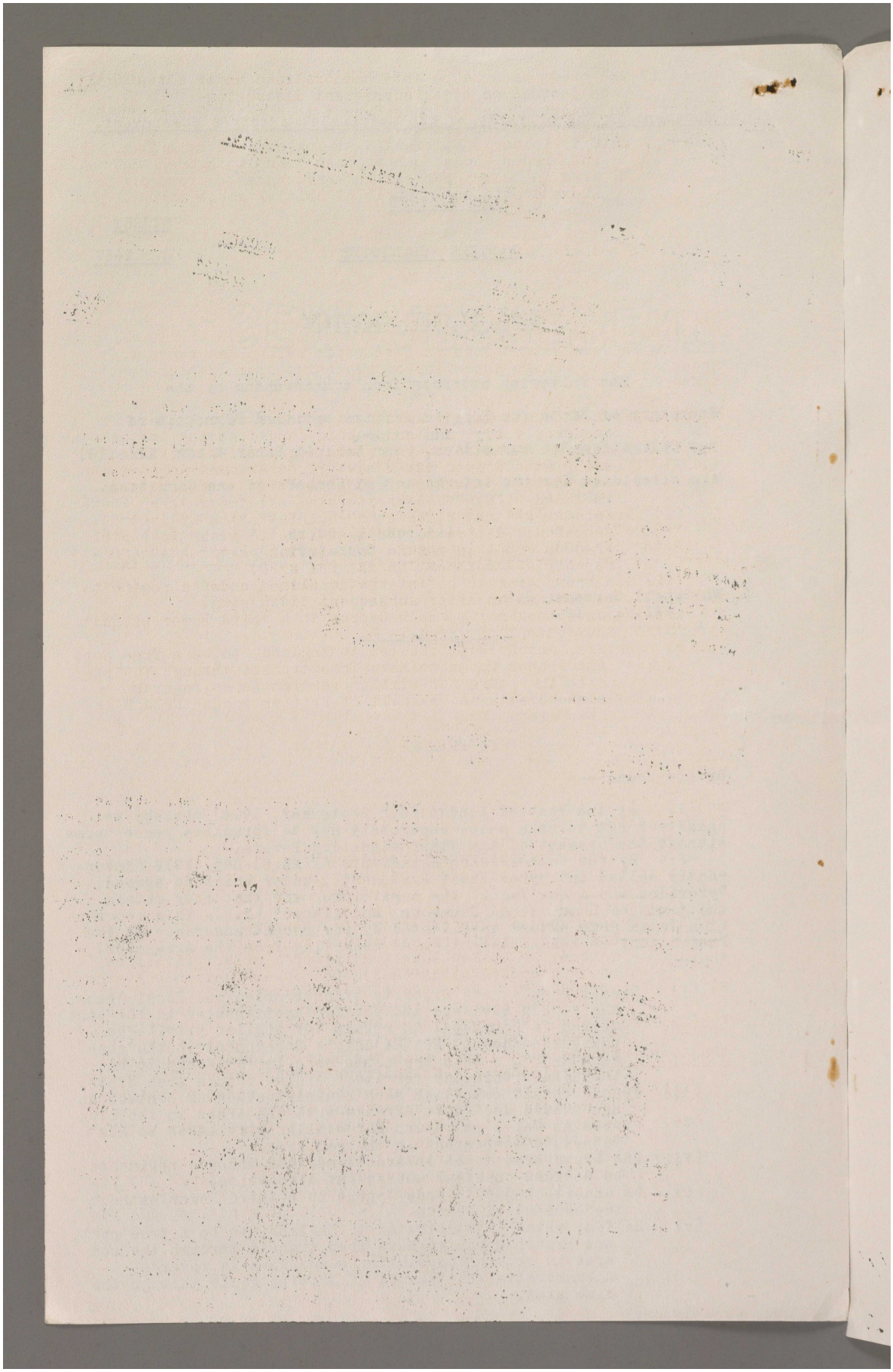

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(vi) We also undertook not to acquire, or to consent to a third party acquiring, any possessions in the Arabian Peninsula and not to cede to any but the Arab State our rights in the red area in return for a similar assurance on the part of France.

(vii) We undertook not to push the Baghdad Railway in area "B" north of Samarra until the completion of a railway from Baghdad to Aleppo, and then only with the concurrence of France. In return France promised on similar conditions not to extend the railway in area "A" south of Mosul.

(viii) The existing Turkish customs tariff was to remain in force throughout the red and blue areas for a period of twenty years.

3. By the Decision of the Paris Economic Conference (17th June, 1917), whereby we undertook —

(i) To prohibit all trading with the enemy during the war.
(ii) To refuse most-favoured-nation treatment to the enemy and to subject his commerce to a special régime during a period to be fixed.
(iii) To reserve for Allies essential raw materials.
(iv) Generally to develop Inter-Allied trade to the detriment of the enemy.

4. By the resolutions of the Conference (Paris, October 1917), whereby the so-called policy of the bloc was decided upon, i.e. enemy private property and interests in Allied or occupied territory at the end of the war is to be held as a pledge for Allied private property in enemy or enemy-occupied territory.

5. Apart from the above contractual obligations, we have made several official statements pledging ourselves to the evacuation of Northern France and the cession of Alsace-Lorraine, e.g. Lord R.Cecil in the House of Commons, 15th November, 1917: "The restitution of Alsace-Lorraine was a well-understood war aim from the moment we entered the war" (and c f. Prime Minister to Trades Unions Delegates, 5th January, 1918).

6. In addition to the above, there are two agreements at present under negotiation with France which may shortly be completed:--

(a.) A Supplementary Agreement is being negotiated whereby we would recognise that the Holy Places of Arabia and their immediate vicinity are open to foreign enterprise, the French recognising in return our predominant interests in the rest of Arabia.

(b) Discussions are proceeding for a mutual agreement by which in substance France will recognise for us a free hand in Egypt, and we for them a free hand in Morocco.

TO ITALY

We are bound —

1. By the Pact of London (see under France (1)).

2. By the Italian Agreement of the 26th April, 1915, whereby we pledged ourselves, subject to Italy employing the totality of her forces against all our enemies (a condition which has technically not been observed), that —

.....

(v) And abolish the rights retained by the Sultan of

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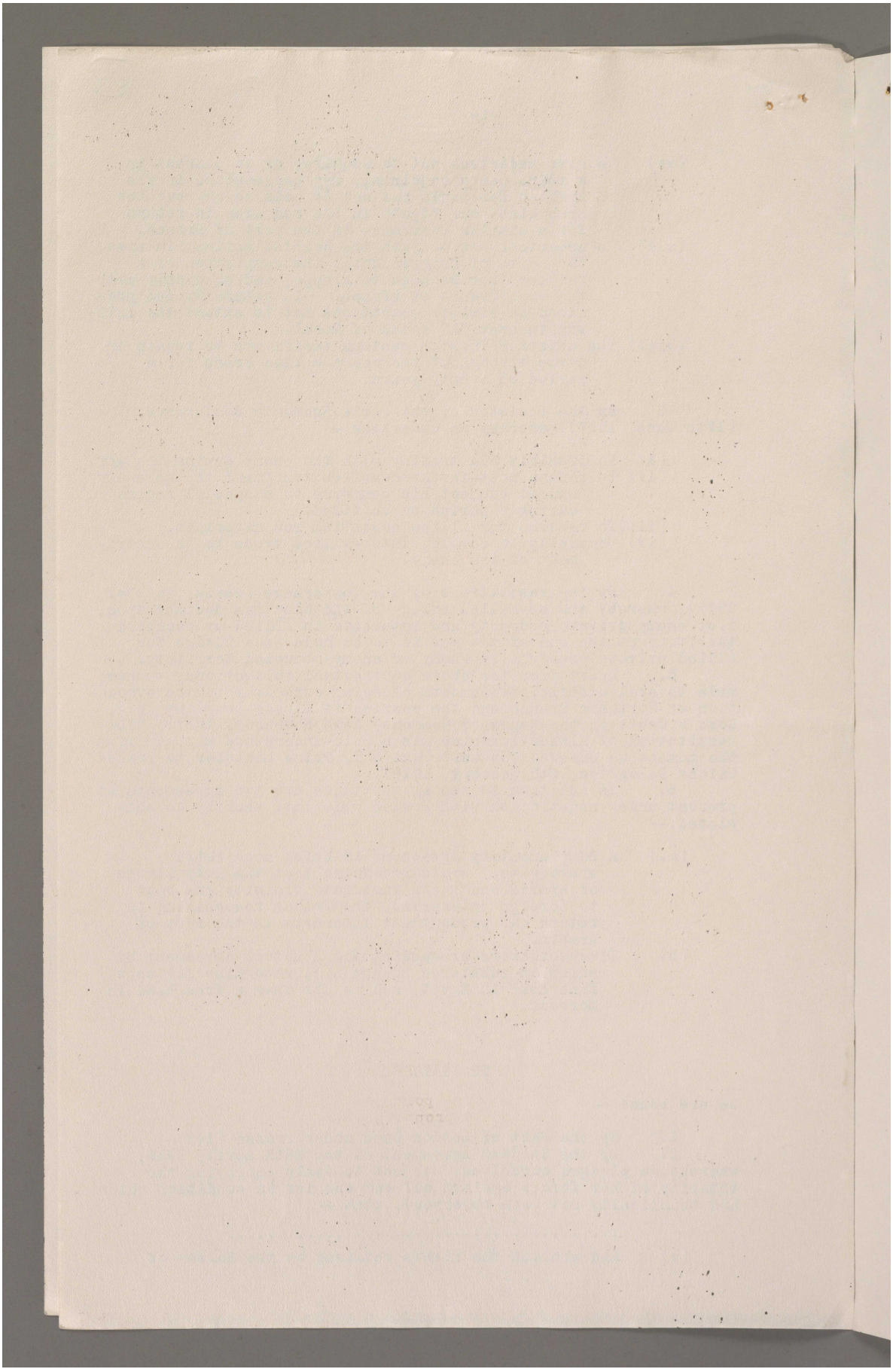

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Turkey over Tripoli and Cyrenaica (i.e. complete annexation).

(vi) That "in a general way" we recognise the interest of Italy in the maintenance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean, and that, in the event of the partition or partial partition of the Ottoman Empire, or even the redistribution of zones of interest in Turkey, Italy should obtain an "equitable share" in the region of Adalia.

.....

3. Under the Agreement with Italy respecting Asia Minor (8th August, 1917), we pledged ourselves, "subject to the consent of Russia" (which has not been obtained), that —

(i) Italy might administer the zone coloured green on Map 1, and appoint functionaries, &c., in the zone marked "C" on the same terms as France and Great Britain were allowed to administer or appoint functionaries in the blue and red zones and the zones "A" and "B" under the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

(ii) Italy to enjoy reciprocal commercial privileges in the Allied zones.

(iii) If, as a result of the war, it were found impossible to partition the Ottoman Empire to the full extent contemplated in the above agreements, then the principle of the balance of power in the Mediterranean will be observed in any distribution which takes place.

.....

TO RUSSIA

We are bound (if bound at all) —

1. By the Pact of London.

2. By the Constantinople Agreement (March 1915) under which we pledged ourselves "subject to the war being brought to a successful conclusion and to the desiderata of France and Great Britain in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere being realised" —

To agree to the incorporation in the Russian Empire of the city of Constantinople and the dependent territory as shown in yellow on Map 1.

3. By the Sykes-Picot Agreement under which we agreed that —

(i) Russia might annex the portion of Asia Minor coloured yellow on Map 1.

(ii) That Powers annexing portions of the Ottoman Empire should assume a proportionate charge of the Ottoman Public Debt.

.....

TO THE KING OF THE HEDJAZ

We are bound —

1. By the Anglo-French Agreements of 1916, which have

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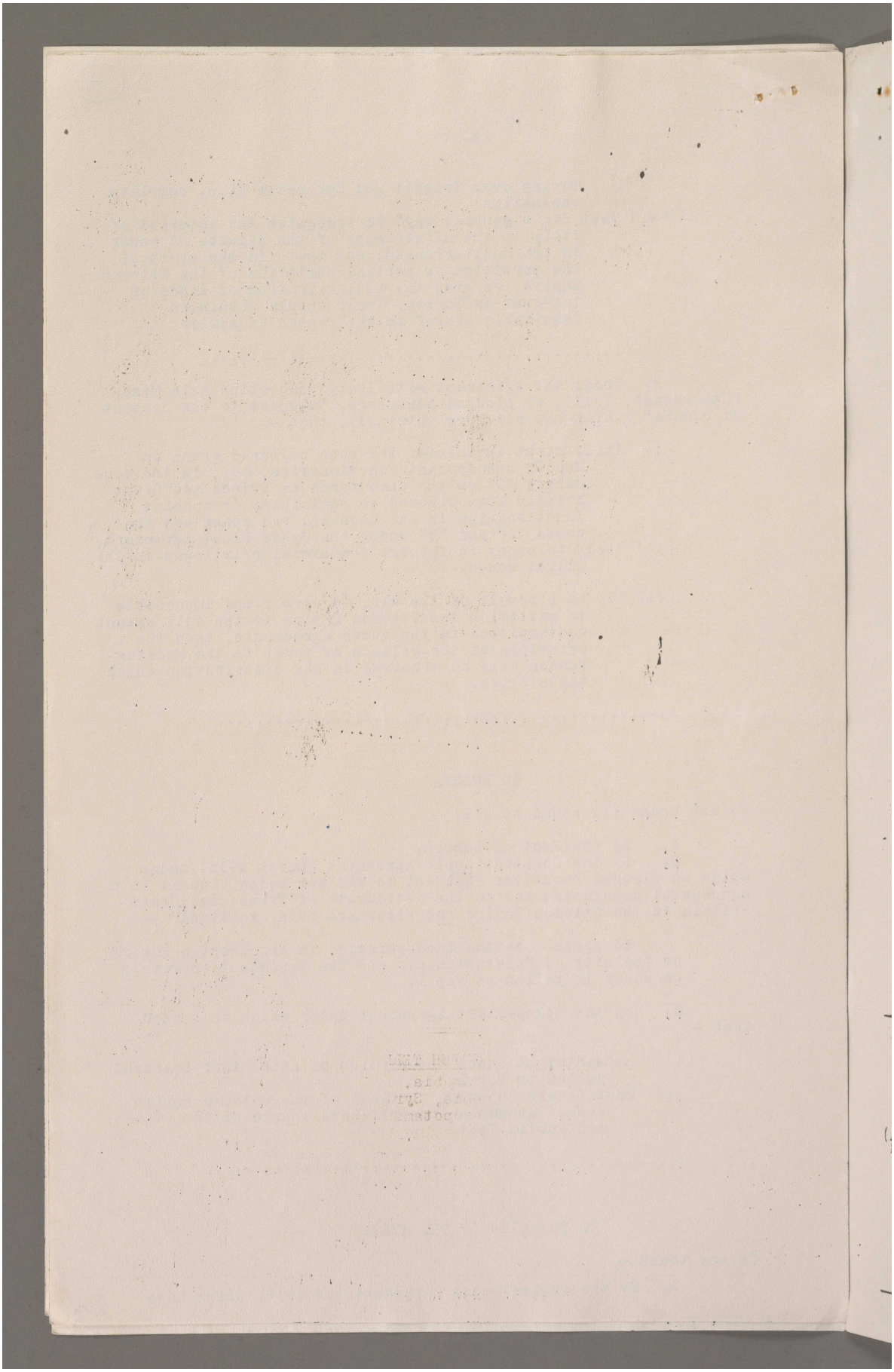

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been communicated to the King.

2. By various written assurances given to the King by the High Commissioner in Egypt, namely:-

(a) (17th December, 1917) that "His Majesty's Government had no intention of concluding any peace in the terms of which the freedom of the Arab people from German and Turkish domination did not form an essential condition."

(b) That His Majesty's Government were prepared to "recognise and support the independence of the Arabs within territories bounded on the west by the Red Sea, on the south by the Indian Ocean, on the east by the Persian Gulf and the Turco-Persian frontier. The northern and north-western to be left for subsequent discussion. As regards Mesopotamia the King was warned that "The established interests of Great Britain would necessitate special measures of administrative control".

(c) That Great Britain would guarantee the Holy Places against external aggression.

We are also bound by subsidiary treaties to Ibn Saud and the Idrissi Saiyid, but these obligations are of a local rather than an international character.

TO THE ARMENIANS

We are not bound by any valid contractual obligations, although we are morally committed to the Armenians not only by article 61 of the Berlin Treaty of 1878, but also by the many public statements made on their behalf. ∅(see Appendix, section 8.)

TO PERSIA

We are not as yet bound by any definite agreements. His Majesty's Minister at Tehran has, however, just been authorised to intimate to the Persian Government that His Majesty's Government would be prepared, in certain circumstances, to regard the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 as being in suspense.

∅	WAR AIMS.			
	AMERICAN TERMS	BRITISH TERMS	FRENCH TERMS	ITALIAN TERMS.
8. Turkey (Armenia, Syria etc.)	Non-Turkish nationalities of Ottoman Empire to be assured autonomous development. Dardanelles to be permanently free to all ships.	Arabia, Armenia, Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine entitled to recognition of their separate nationalities. Black Sea to be opened to a all ships.	Armenia and Syria named as places to which principle laid down in 5a applies.	

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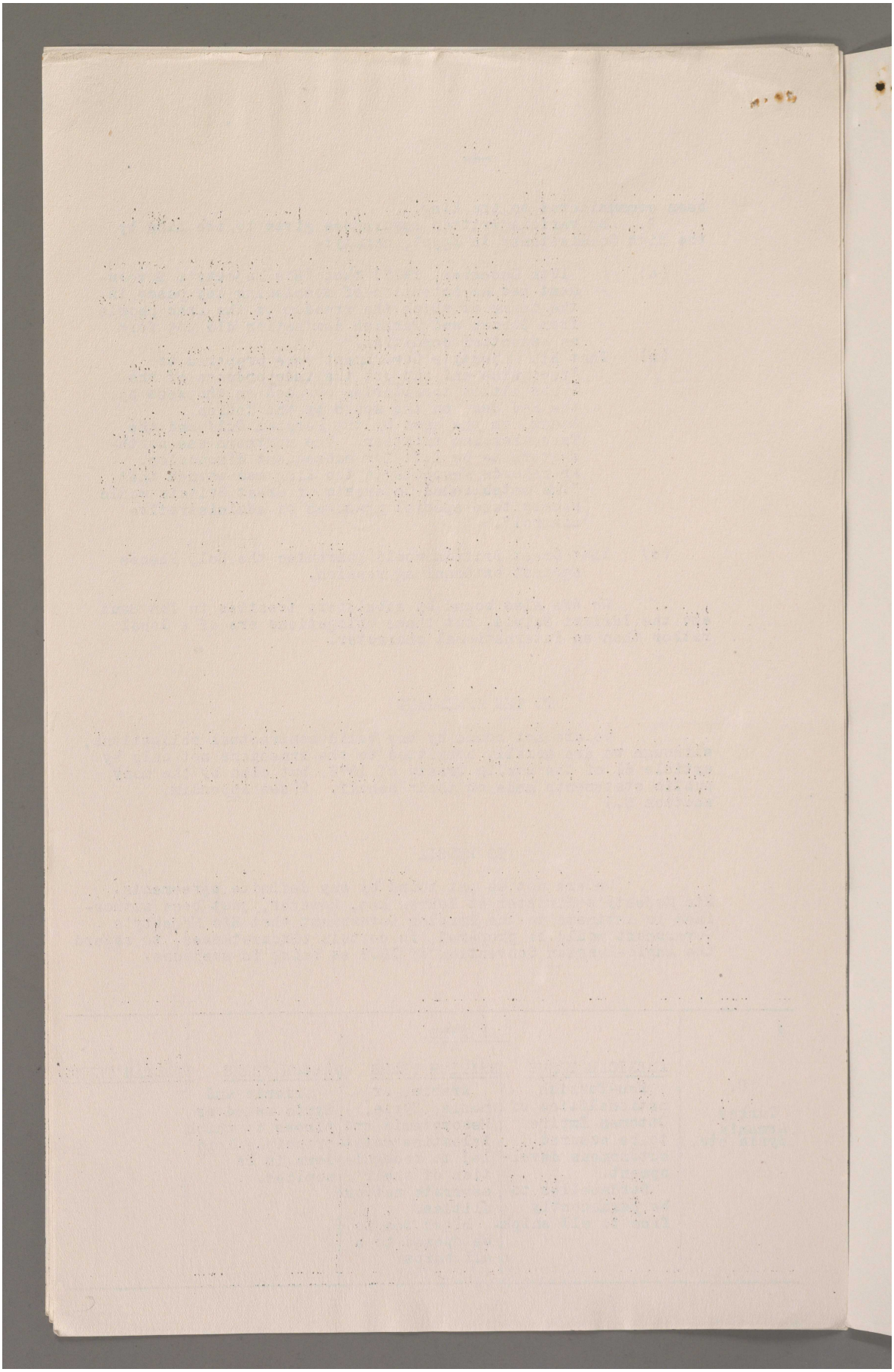

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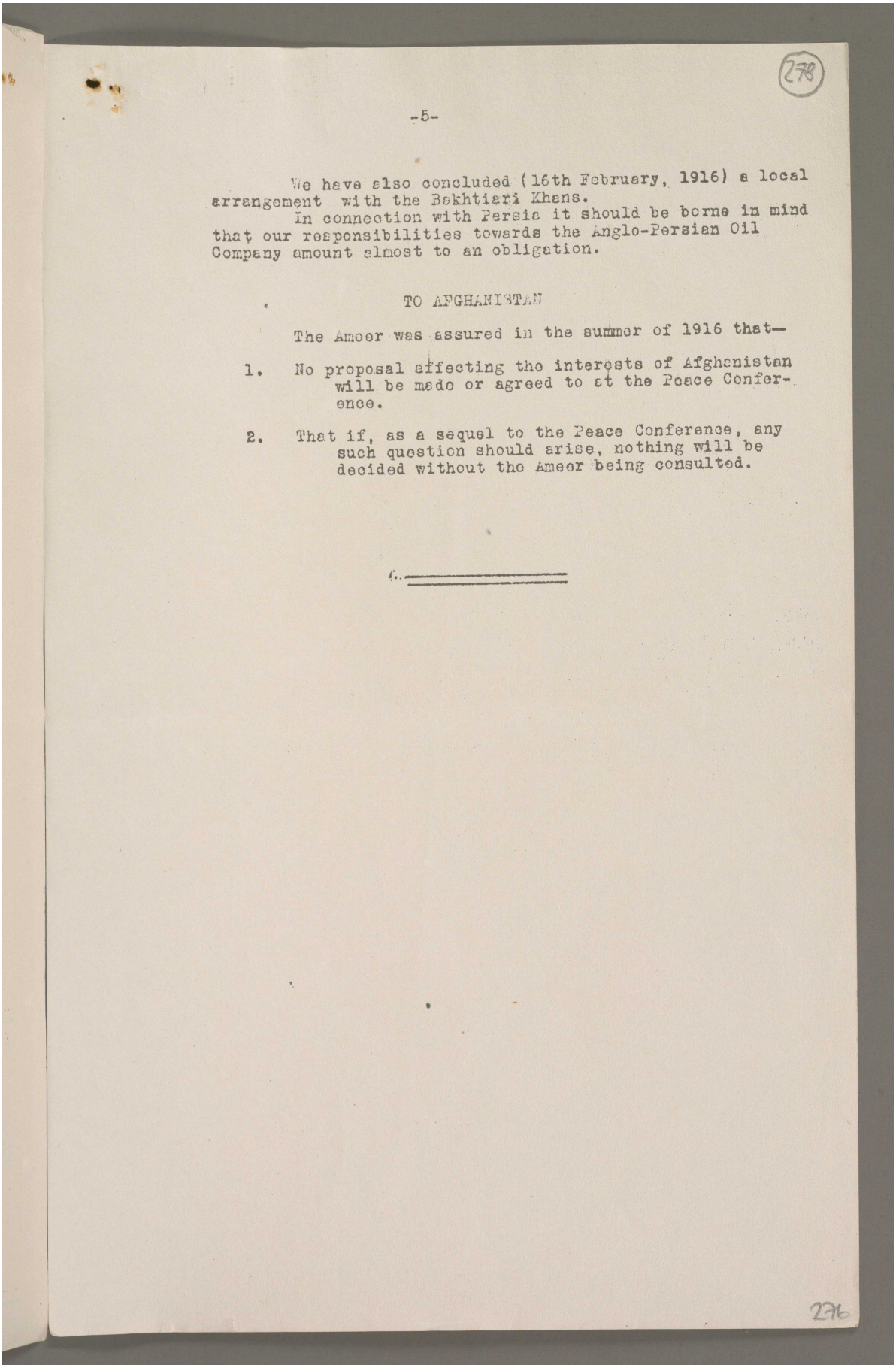

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We have also concluded (16th February, 1916) a local arrangement with the Bakhtiari Khans.

In connection with Persia it should be borne in mind that our responsibilities towards the Anglo-Persian Oil Company amount almost to an obligation.

TO AFGHANISTAN

The Ameer was assured in the summer of 1916 that—

1. No proposal affecting the interests of Afghanistan will be made or agreed to at the Peace Conference.

2. That if, as a sequel to the Peace Conference, any such question should arise, nothing will be decided without the Ameer being consulted.

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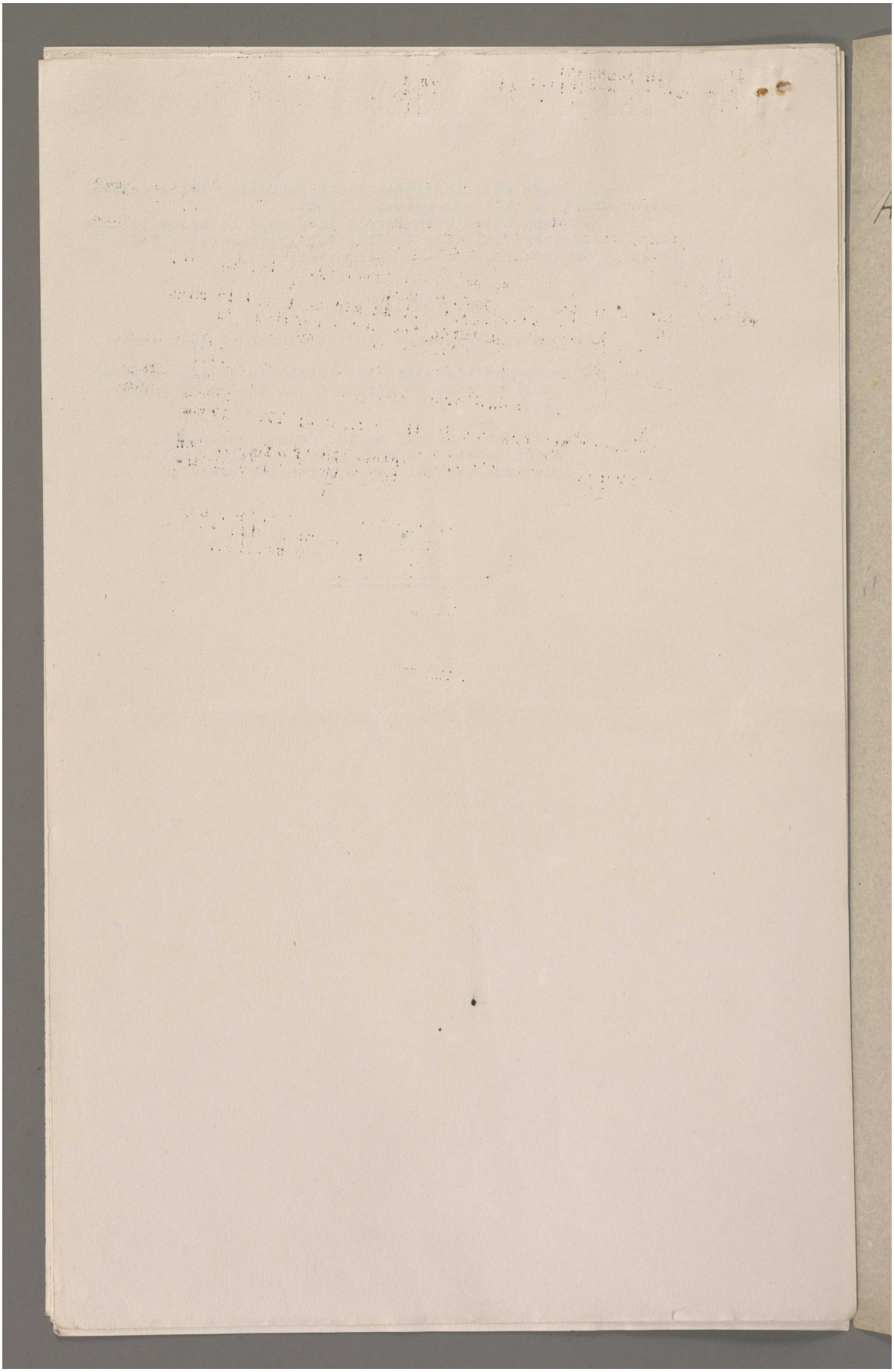

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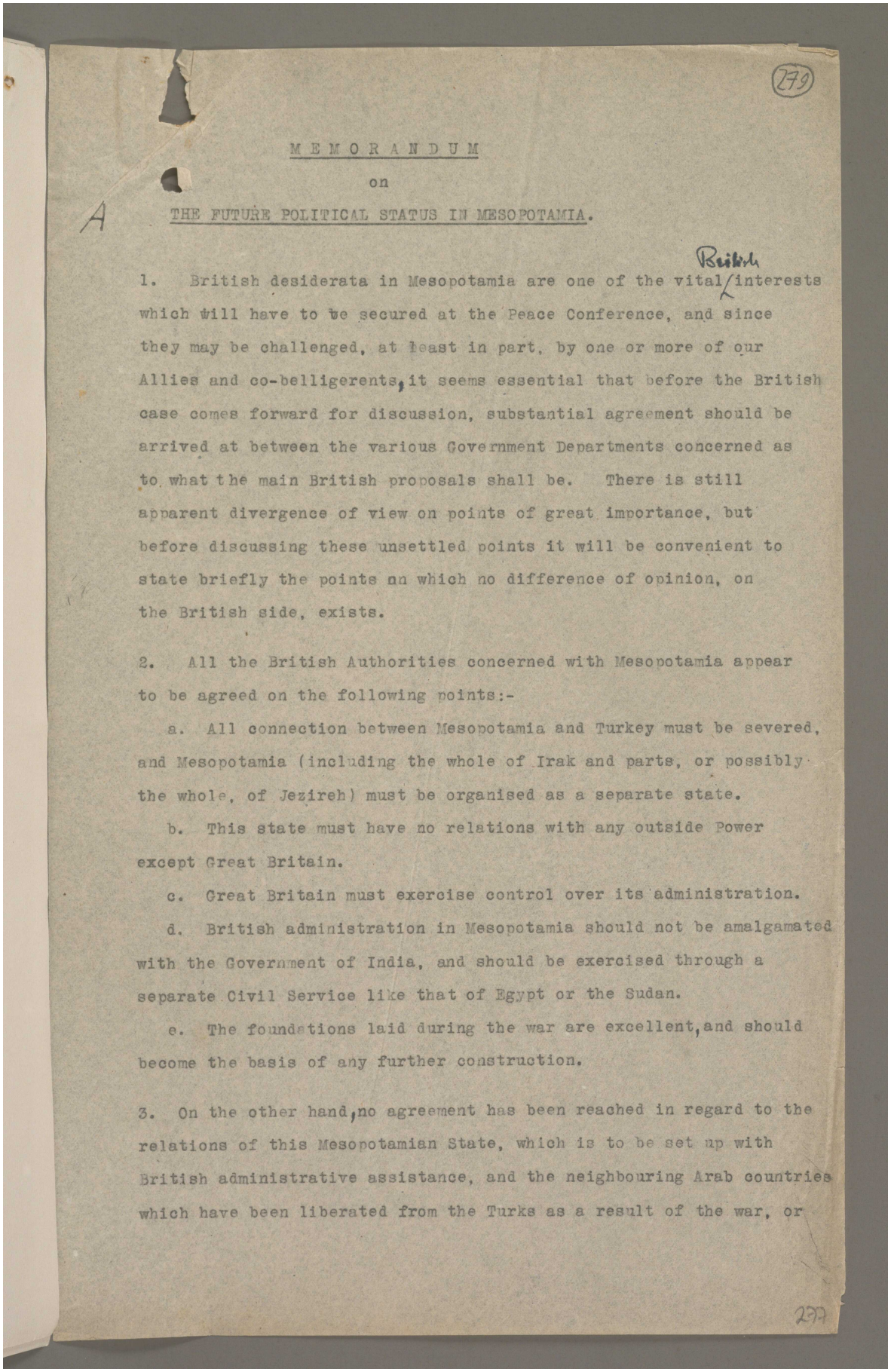

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M E M O R A N D U M

on

THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS IN MESOPOTAMIA.

A

1. British desiderata in Mesopotamia are one of the vital British interests which will have to be secured at the Peace Conference, and since they may be challenged, at least in part, by one or more of our Allies and co-belligerents, it seems essential that before the British case comes forward for discussion, substantial agreement should be arrived at between the various Government Departments concerned as to what the main British proposals shall be. There is still apparent divergence of view on points of great importance, but before discussing these unsettled points it will be convenient to state briefly the points on which no difference of opinion, on the British side, exists.

2. All the British Authorities concerned with Mesopotamia appear to be agreed on the following points:-

a. All connection between Mesopotamia and Turkey must be severed, and Mesopotamia (including the whole of Irak and parts, or possibly the whole, of Jezireh) must be organised as a separate state.

b. This state must have no relations with any outside Power except Great Britain.

c. Great Britain must exercise control over its administration.

d. British administration in Mesopotamia should not be amalgamated with the Government of India, and should be exercised through a separate Civil Service like that of Egypt or the Sudan.

e. The foundations laid during the war are excellent, and should become the basis of any further construction.

3. On the other hand, no agreement has been reached in regard to the relations of this Mesopotamian State, which is to be set up with British administrative assistance, and the neighbouring Arab countries which have been liberated from the Turks as a result of the war, or

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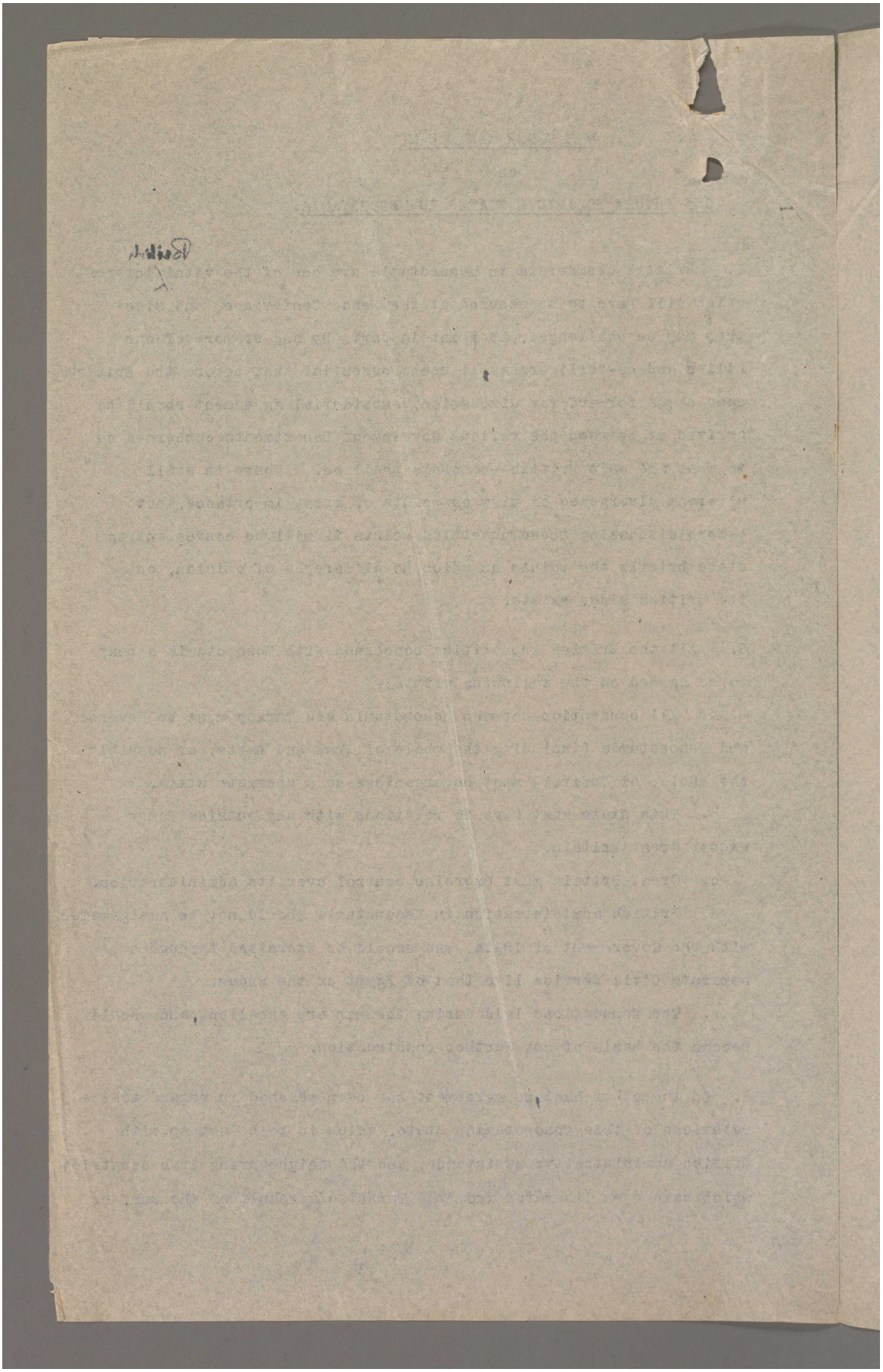

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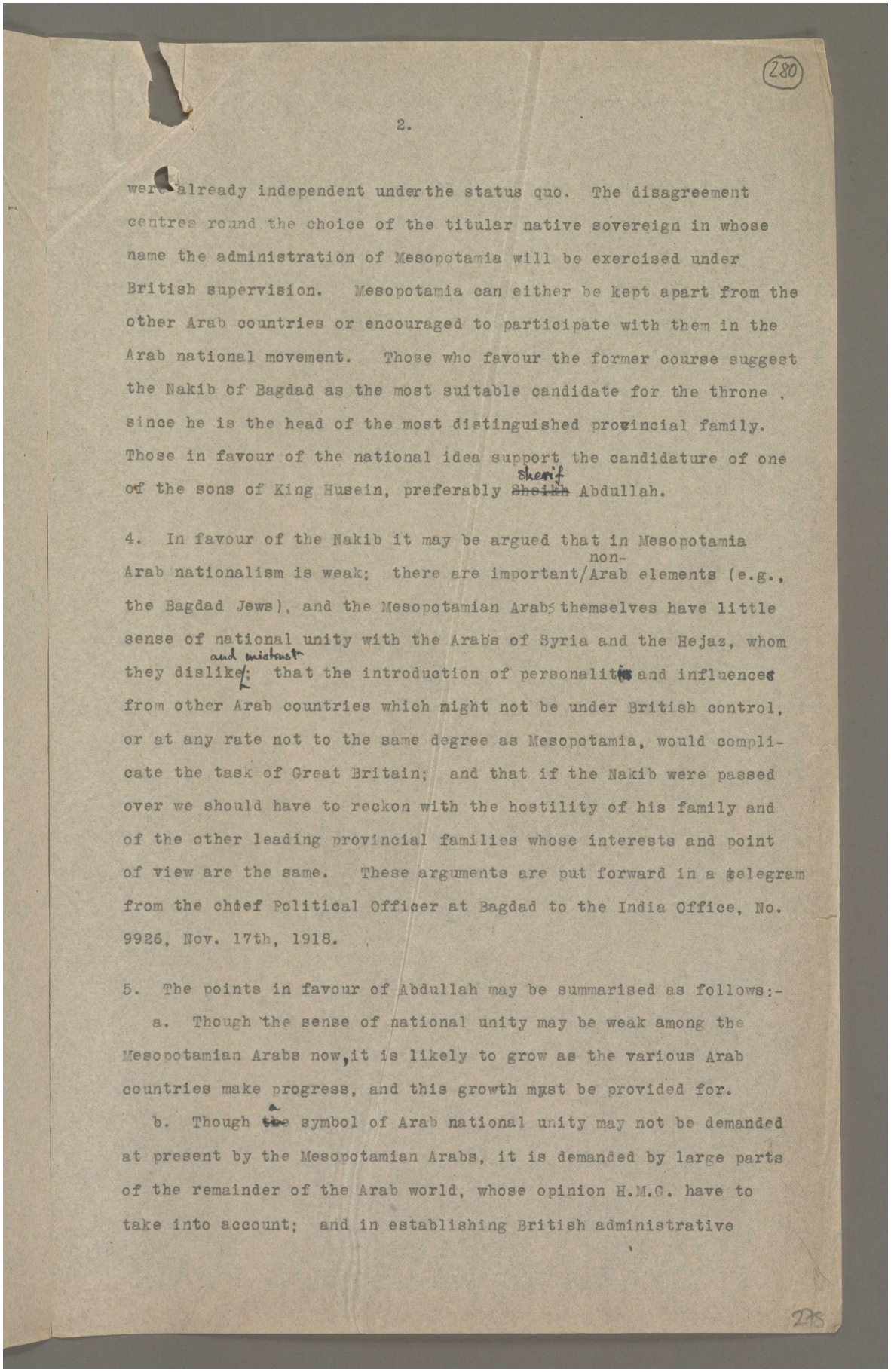

were already independent under the status quo. The disagreement centres round the choice of the titular native sovereign in whose name the administration of Mesopotamia will be exercised under British supervision. Mesopotamia can either be kept apart from the other Arab countries or encouraged to participate with them in the Arab national movement. Those who favour the former course suggest the Nakib of Bagdad as the most suitable candidate for the throne, since he is the head of the most distinguished provincial family. Those in favour of the national idea support the candidature of one of the sons of King Husein, preferably ~~Sheikh~~ Sherif Abdullah.

4. In favour of the Nakib it may be argued that in Mesopotamia Arab nationalism is weak; there are important non-Arab elements (e.g., the Bagdad Jews), and the Mesopotamian Arabs themselves have little sense of national unity with the Arabs of Syria and the Hejaz, whom they dislike and mistrust; that the introduction of personalities and influences from other Arab countries which might not be under British control, or at any rate not to the same degree as Mesopotamia, would complicate the task of Great Britain; and that if the Nakib were passed over we should have to reckon with the hostility of his family and of the other leading provincial families whose interests and point of view are the same. These arguments are put forward in a telegram from the chief Political Officer at Bagdad to the India Office, No. 9926, Nov. 17th, 1918.

5. The points in favour of Abdullah may be summarised as follows:-

a. Though the sense of national unity may be weak among the Mesopotamian Arabs now, it is likely to grow as the various Arab countries make progress, and this growth must be provided for.

b. Though ~~the~~ a symbol of Arab national unity may not be demanded at present by the Mesopotamian Arabs, it is demanded by large parts of the remainder of the Arab world, whose opinion H.M.G. have to take into account; and in establishing British administrative

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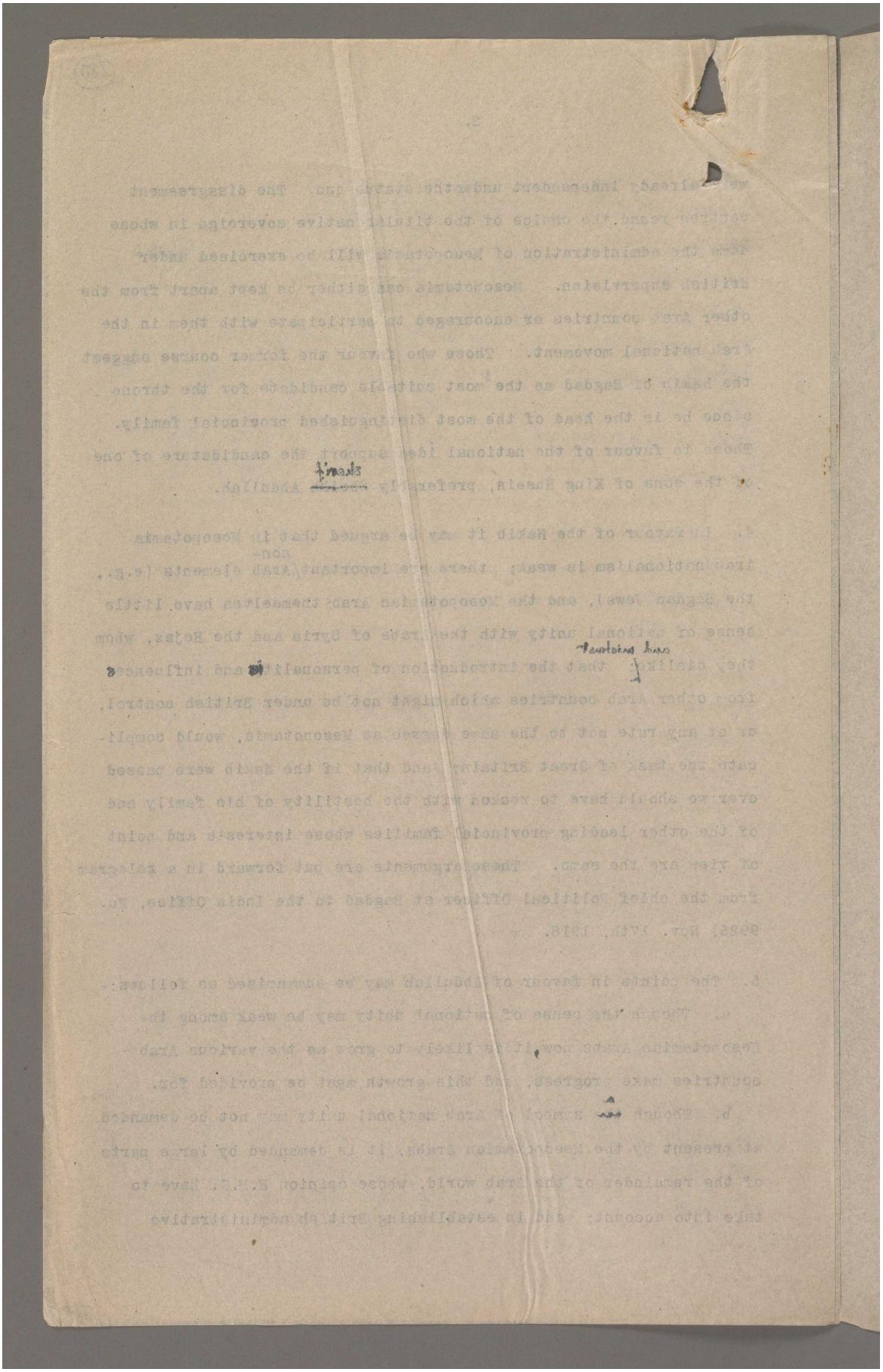

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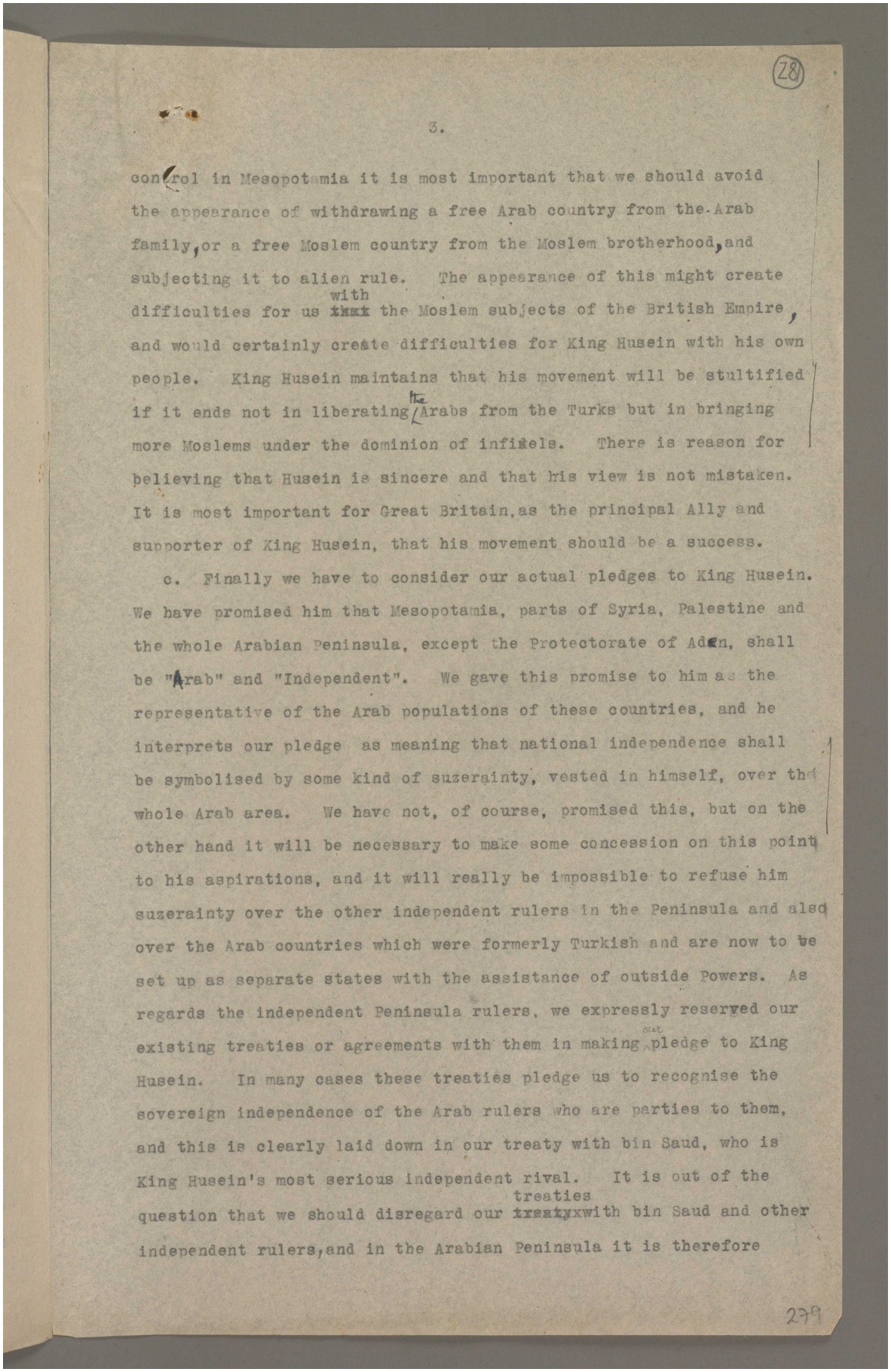

(28)

3.

control in Mesopotamia it is most important that we should avoid the appearance of withdrawing a free Arab country from the Arab family, or a free Moslem country from the Moslem brotherhood, and subjecting it to alien rule. The appearance of this might create difficulties for us with the Moslem subjects of the British Empire, and would certainly create difficulties for King Husein with his own people. King Husein maintains that his movement will be stultified if it ends not in liberating the Arabs from the Turks but in bringing more Moslems under the dominion of infidels. There is reason for believing that Husein is sincere and that his view is not mistaken. It is most important for Great Britain, as the principal Ally and supporter of King Husein, that his movement should be a success.

c. Finally we have to consider our actual pledges to King Husein. We have promised him that Mesopotamia, parts of Syria, Palestine and the whole Arabian Peninsula, except the Protectorate of Aden, shall be "Arab" and "Independent". We gave this promise to him as the representative of the Arab populations of these countries, and he interprets our pledge as meaning that national independence shall be symbolised by some kind of suzerainty, vested in himself, over the whole Arab area. We have not, of course, promised this, but on the other hand it will be necessary to make some concession on this point to his aspirations, and it will really be impossible to refuse him suzerainty over the other independent rulers in the Peninsula and also over the Arab countries which were formerly Turkish and are now to be set up as separate states with the assistance of outside Powers. As regards the independent Peninsula rulers, we expressly reserved our existing treaties or agreements with them in making our pledge to King Husein. In many cases these treaties pledge us to recognise the sovereign independence of the Arab rulers who are parties to them, and this is clearly laid down in our treaty with bin Saud, who is King Husein's most serious independent rival. It is out of the question that we should disregard our treaties with bin Saud and other independent rulers, and in the Arabian Peninsula it is therefore

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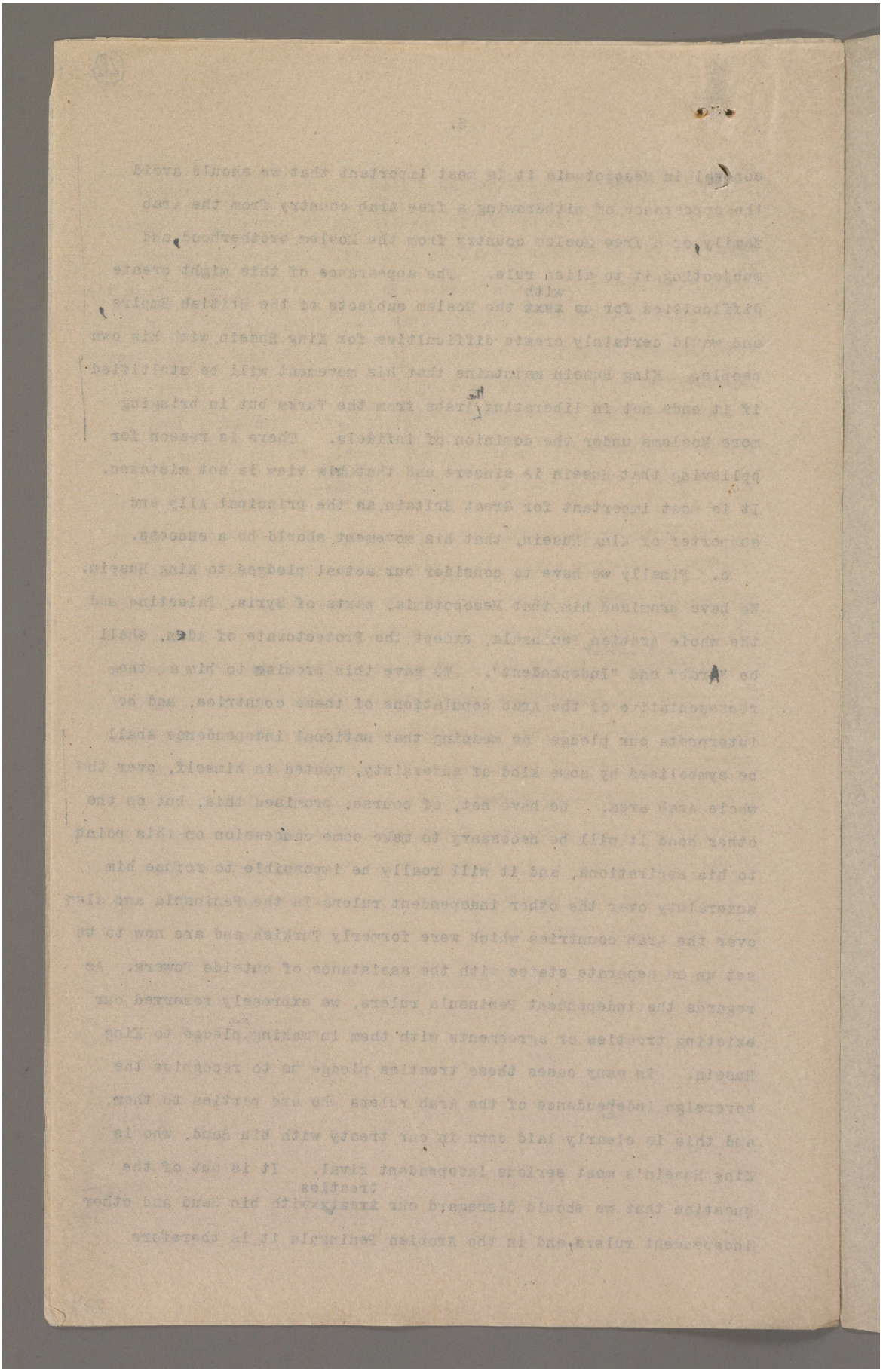

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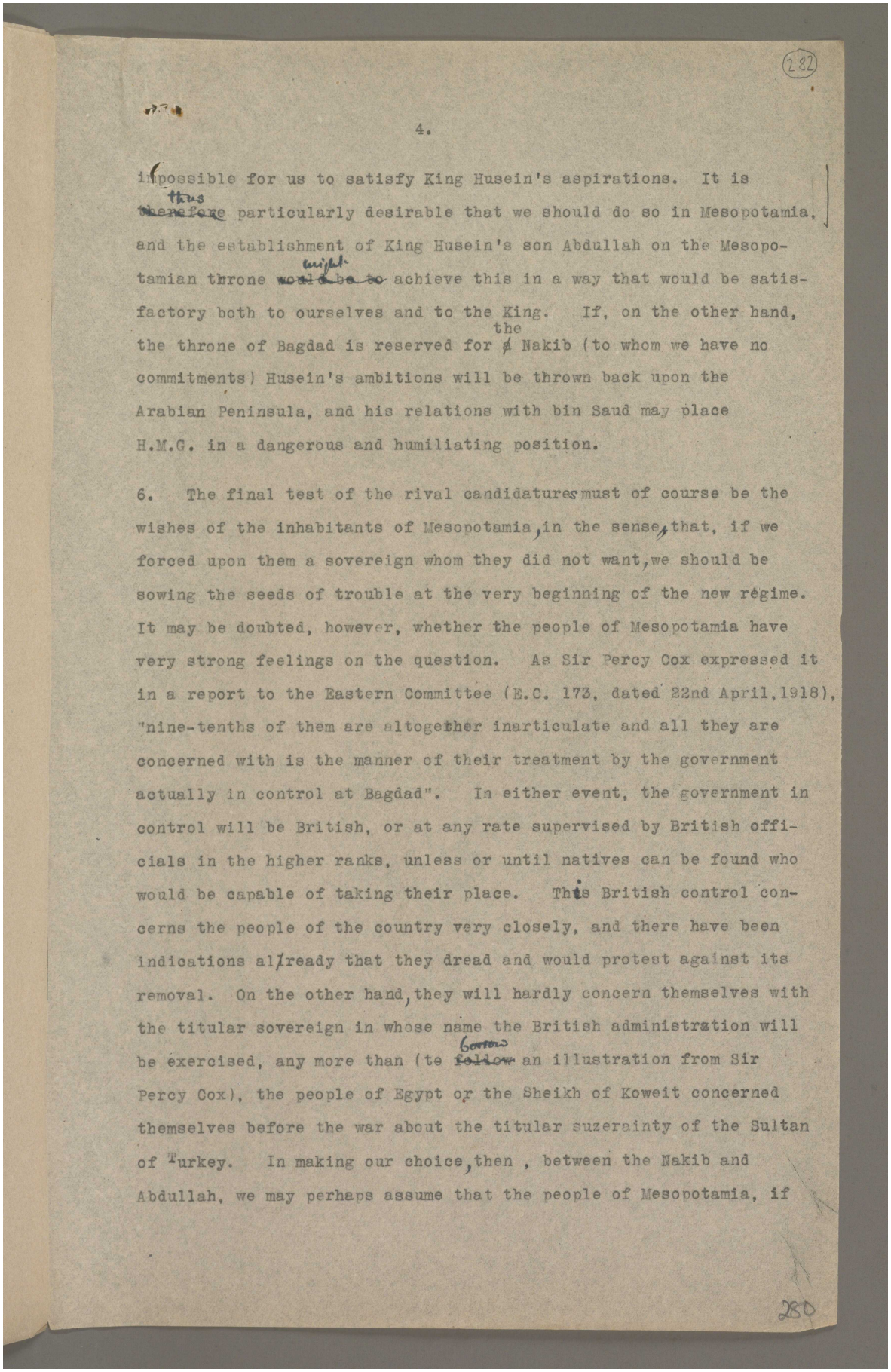

impossible for us to satisfy King Husein's aspirations. It is ~~therefore~~ thus particularly desirable that we should do so in Mesopotamia, and the establishment of King Husein's son Abdullah on the Mesopotamian throne ~~would be to~~ might achieve this in a way that would be satisfactory both to ourselves and to the King. If, on the other hand, the throne of Bagdad is reserved for ~~a~~ the Nakib (to whom we have no commitments) Husein's ambitions will be thrown back upon the Arabian Peninsula, and his relations with bin Saud may place H.M.G. in a dangerous and humiliating position.

6. The final test of the rival candidatures must of course be the wishes of the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, in the sense, that, if we forced upon them a sovereign whom they did not want, we should be sowing the seeds of trouble at the very beginning of the new régime. It may be doubted, however, whether the people of Mesopotamia have very strong feelings on the question. As Sir Percy Cox expressed it in a report to the Eastern Committee (E.C. 173, dated 22nd April, 1918), "nine-tenths of them are altogether inarticulate and all they are concerned with is the manner of their treatment by the government actually in control at Bagdad". In either event, the government in control will be British, or at any rate supervised by British officials in the higher ranks, unless or until natives can be found who would be capable of taking their place. This British control concerns the people of the country very closely, and there have been indications already that they dread and would protest against its removal. On the other hand, they will hardly concern themselves with the titular sovereign in whose name the British administration will be exercised, any more than (to ~~follow~~ Govern an illustration from Sir Percy Cox), the people of Egypt or the Sheikh of Koweit concerned themselves before the war about the titular suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey. In making our choice, then, between the Nakib and Abdullah, we may perhaps assume that the people of Mesopotamia, if

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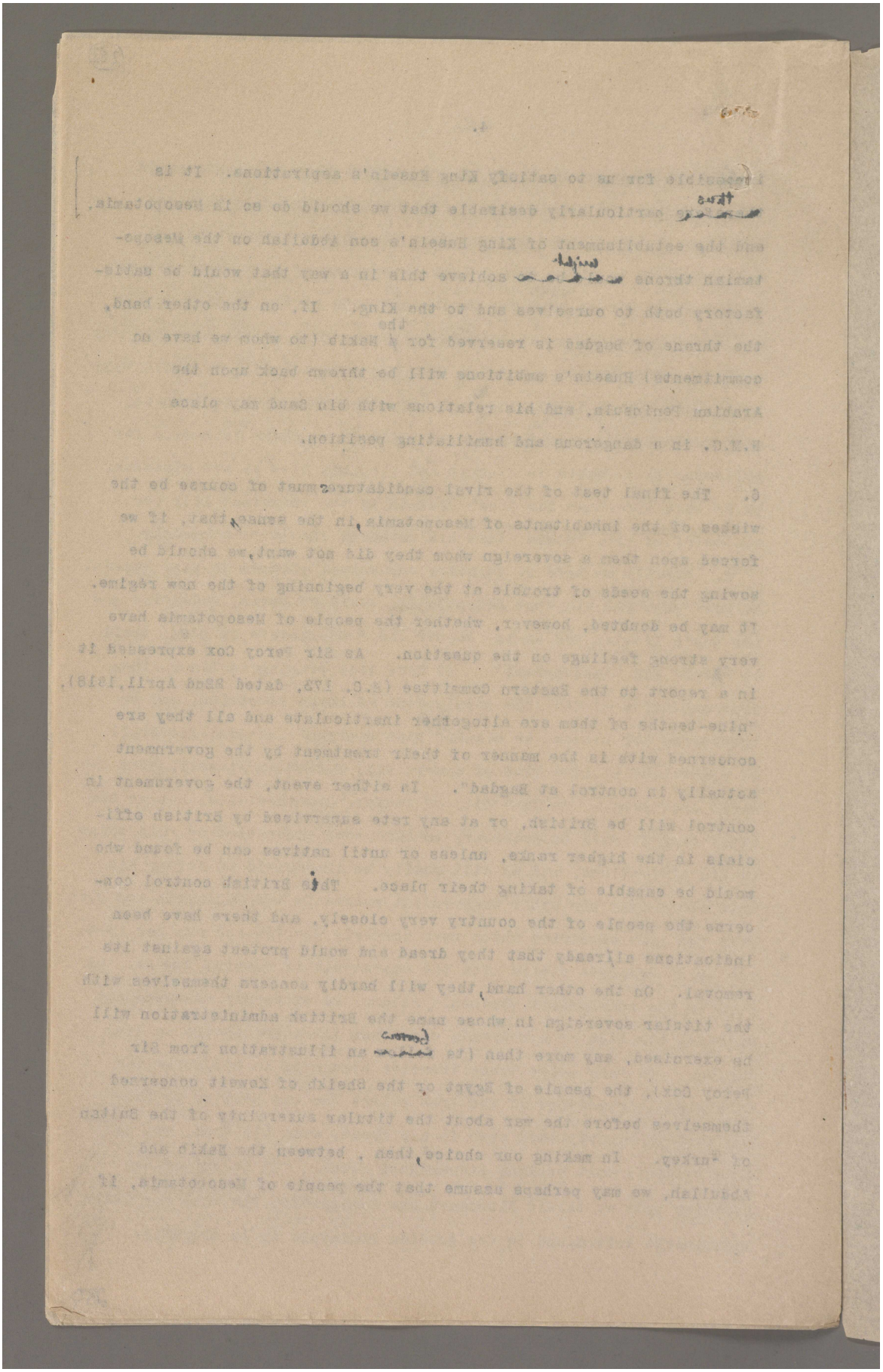

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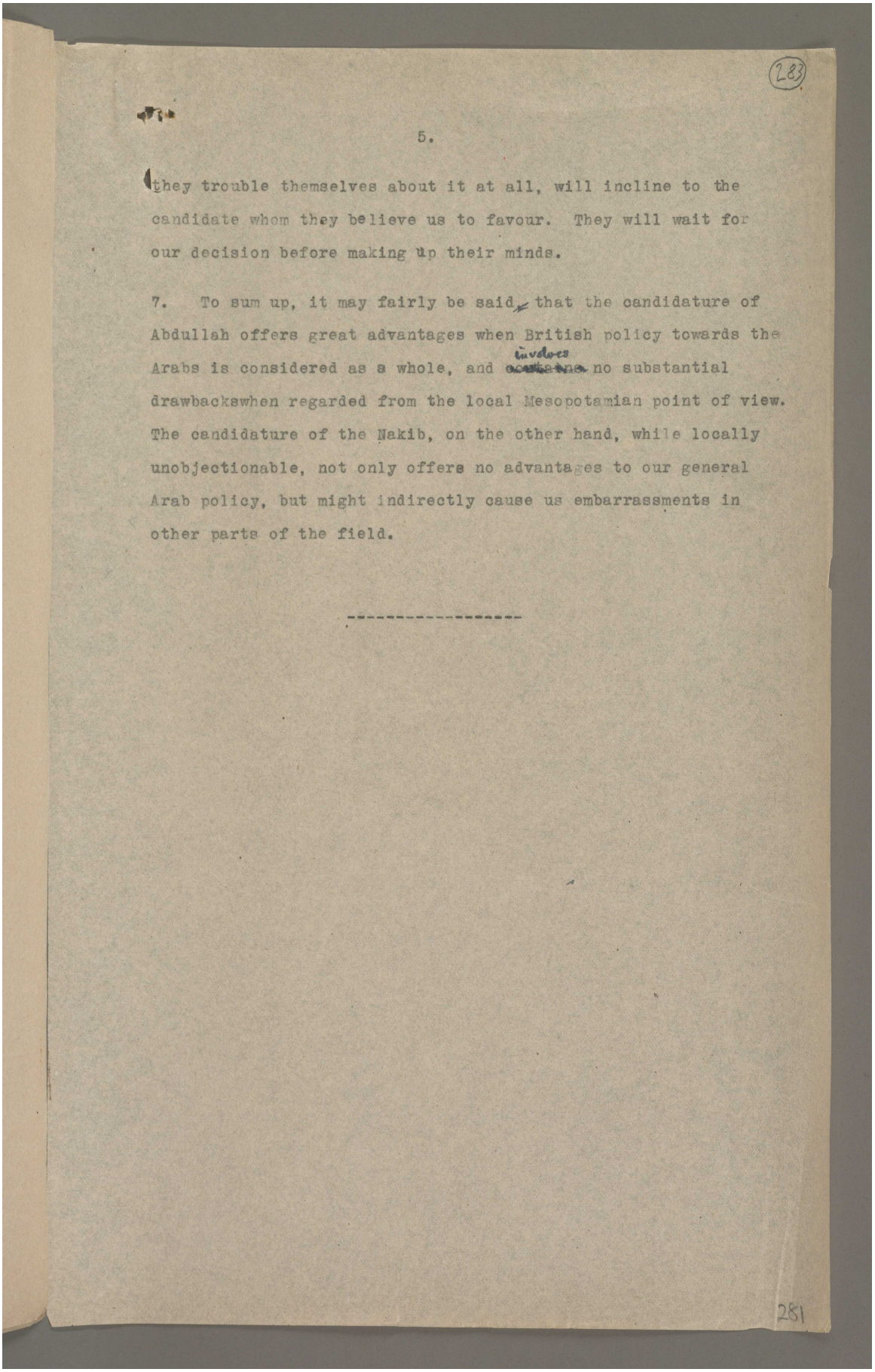

they trouble themselves about it at all, will incline to the candidate whom they believe us to favour. They will wait for our decision before making up their minds.

7. To sum up, it may fairly be said, that the candidature of Abdullah offers great advantages when British policy towards the Arabs is considered as a whole, and involves no substantial drawbackswhen regarded from the local Mesopotamian point of view. The candidature of the Nakib, on the other hand, while locally unobjectionable, not only offers no advantages to our general Arab policy, but might indirectly cause us embarrassments in other parts of the field.

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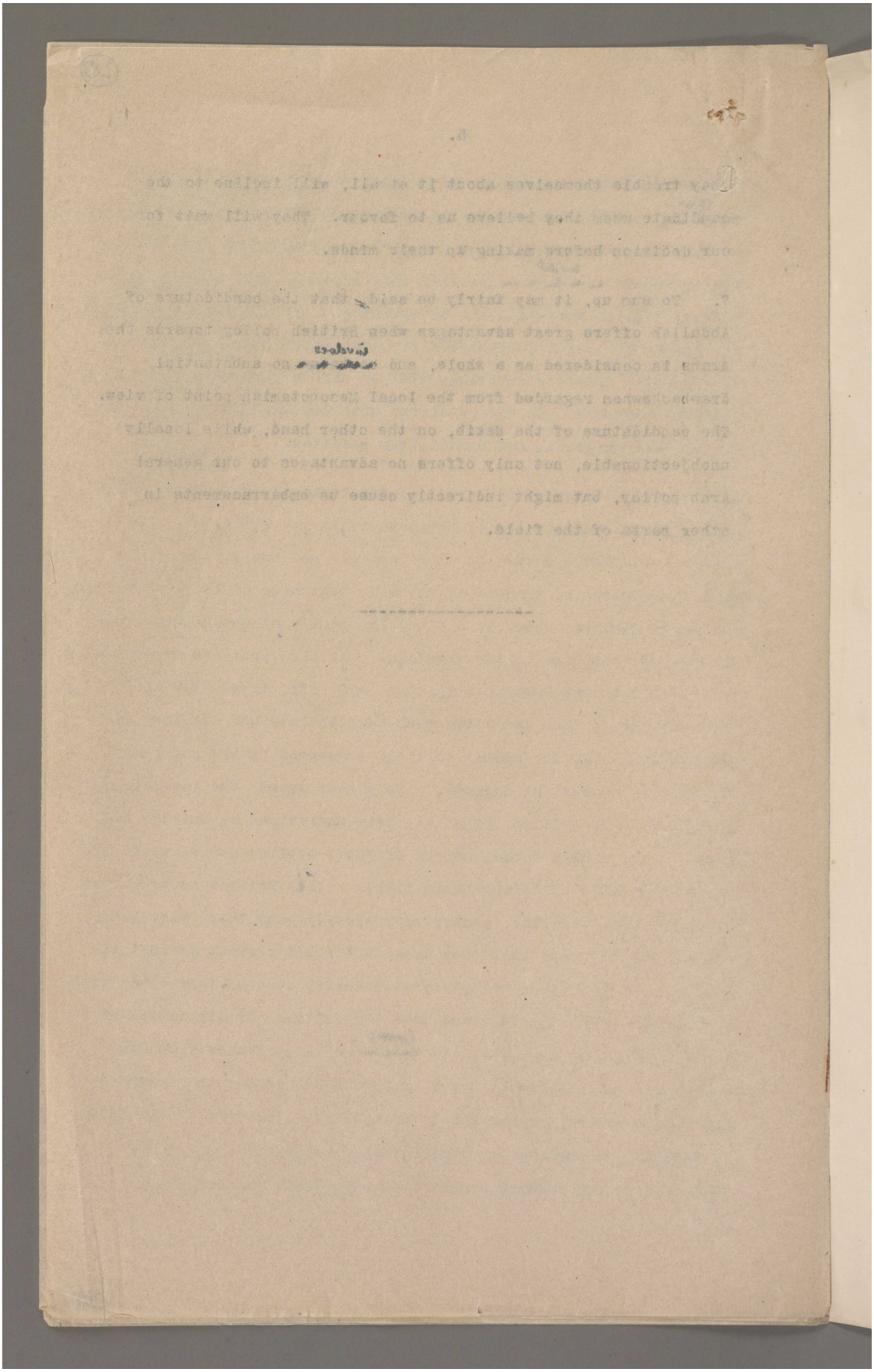

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(P. 5546/18.)

B. 303.

KURDISTAN.

(Note by Political Department, India Office.)

1. Kurdistan (*i.e.*, the Kurdish portion of Asiatic Turkey: there is also a Persian Kurdistan) is defined in the Foreign Office Memorandum on the "Settlement of Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula" as the "territory south of the Bohtan river "[which joins the Tigris near Sert in about lat. 37° 45′, long. 41° 50′], and east of "the Tigris and the Jebel Hamrin [a range of mountains striking S.E. from the "Tigris in the neighbourhood of Shoreimieh, and extending to the Turco-Persian "frontier near Kizil Robat], ... and bounded on the east by the Persian frontier." The area thus defined covers part of the Vilayets of Bitlis, Van and Mosul, but does not include the town of Mosul, which is situated on the western bank of the Tigris. The principal towns in the district are Amadia, Rowanduz, Arbil, Altun Keupri, Suleimanieh, Kerkuk and Kifri. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 had the effect of dividing Kurdistan into three parts, the northern section being assigned to Russia, the central section to Area A. (French sphere of influence), and the southern section to Area B. (British sphere of influence). The Lesser Zab river forms the boundary between the French and British spheres.

2. The population of the country is mainly Kurdish; but there is an admixture of Arabs, Jews and Armenians, and the northern (Russian) section contains settlements of Nestorian Christians in the upper valley of the Greater Zab, who were under the auspices of an Anglican mission before the war. The importance to Great Britain of Kurdistan lies in the fact that (to quote the Foreign Office memorandum) "the power paramount in this country will command the strategic approaches to "Mesopotamia and control the water supply of the eastern affluents of the Tigris, on "which the irrigation of Mesopotamia largely depends." Moreover, a settled and friendly Kurdistan is essential to the peace of Upper Mesopotamia, while the country will be a valuable recruiting ground for military purposes. The low-lying regions bordering on Mesopotamia contain oil-fields and other natural resources. The districts of Suleimaniyeh and Halebja are reported to be susceptible of great development; their products include petroleum, coal and tobacco. Oil is also found in the neighbourhood of Tuz Khurmatu on the road between Kifri and Kerkuk, and at Chia Surkh in the extreme south-east corner of the area. All these places fall within "Area B" (British sphere).

3. The whole Kurdish question is closely bound up with that of Armenia, not only because the latter country offers a sphere of interest which the French Government might possibly be willing to accept as the price of renouncing their claims in the Mosul Vilayet (including part of Kurdistan) and elsewhere, but on the general ground that no settlement of the Armenian question is likely to prove satisfactory or permanent unless some *modus vivendi* between the Kurds and Armenians can be devised. In this connection it is relevant to quote the following extract from a recent message from Sherif Pasha, a Kurdish notable resident in Paris, whom Sir Percy Cox interviewed on his way back from Europe in the spring of 1918:—

> "La haine qui sépare les Arméniens des Kurdes provient des intrigues purement politiques et nullement religieuses et nationales sous le régime hamidien et sous celui du Comité Union et Progrès. Il s'agit aujourd'hui de réconcilier les deux races forcément obligées d'habiter dans la même contrée, les Musulmans avec une majorité écrasante et les Arméniens en forte minorité ayant les mêmes droits."

The same point, viz., the interrelation of the Kurdish and Armenian questions, was made by Captain Wilson in a telegram dated the 27th October 1918, in which he urged the necessity of creating "a Kurdish confederation free from Turkish influence," if an independent Armenian State—which he understood to be contemplated by His Majesty's Government and the Allies—was to have a fair chance. He added

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the significant remark that "it should be within the power of the foreign Government which holds Mosul to create and control such a confederation"; but that "no foreign Power not in control could do so."

4. The future of Kurdistan depends in great measure upon two questions, viz.:—(1) whether we can induce the French Government to forego their claims in the Mosul Vilayet; and (2) whether, if so, it is decided to unite Mosul with the Mesopotamian State, as the Civil Commissioner at Baghdad has strongly recommended, or, as suggested by Colonel Laurence, in his statement before the Eastern Committee, to make it part of a central Arabo-Kurdish kingdom, separate from Syria on one side and from Mesopotamia on the other, with its capital either at Mosul itself or further west at Ras-el-Ain. The present political situation in the region appears to be excellent. We are in military occupation of the southern section of the country, and British political officers have already been posted at Kifri, Kerkuk, Suleimaniyeh, Altun Keupri, and Arbil. The latest reports received indicate that the new régime is welcomed by the Kurds and that a solution on the lines of a separate Kurdish State or federation under British protection would be likely to give general satisfaction to the inhabitants of the country. Indeed, the Political Officer at Suleimaniyeh (Major Noel) recently reported that the "goal of an independent "Kurdistan under British protection stretching up to the shore of Lake Van[1] is one "that can now be easily attained." The Civil Commissioner, in transmitting Major Noel's report (telegram No. 10429, 27th November), asked for early information if it were not desired that ideas of this kind should be encouraged locally, as otherwise he feared that "His Majesty's Government and the Powers may be confronted by a *fait accompli* which it will be very difficult to reverse." Since then the situation has developed rapidly. Colonel Wilson (telegram No. 10628) visited Kifri, Kerkuk, and Suleimaniyeh by aeroplane on the 1st and 2nd December. At the last-named place he received a deputation from the principal Chiefs of South Kurdistan, and discussed the situation fully with a local notable (Sheikh Mahmoud) whom he has appointed British representative in the district. The conclusion at which he arrived is that the "national movement is very strong in South Kurdistan"; and that there is "a substantial unanimity as to the need of British protection," as a condition of future prosperity, though the Chiefs are not all agreed as to the wisdom of placing South Kurdistan "under effective British administration." After much discussion a document was drawn up at Suleimaniyeh on behalf of the assembled Kurdish chieftains in the following terms:—

> "His Britannic Majesty's Government having announced that their intention in this war is the liberation of Eastern peoples from Turkish oppression, and to grant assistance to them to establish their independence, we, the representatives of the people of Kurdistan, ask His Britannic Majesty's Government to accept us also under British protection, and to attach us to Iraq, so that we may not be deprived of benefits of that association; and we hereby request the Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia to send us a representative with necessary assistants to enable Kurdistan people under British auspices to progress peacefully on civilised lines.
>
> "If His Britannic Majesty's Government extend their assistance and protection to us we undertake to accept His Britannic Majesty's orders and advice."[3]

Colonel Wilson, on his part, signed a document to the effect that any Kurdish tribes from the Greater Zab to the Diala,[2] who accepted of their own free will the leadership of Sheikh Mahmoud, would be allowed to do so; and that the Sheikh would have our moral support in controlling the above area on behalf of the British Government, whose orders he undertook to obey. It is to be noted that the tribesmen and townsfolk of the Kifri and Kerkuk Divisions do not accept Sheikh Mahmoud's leadership, and that the latter has agreed not to press for their inclusion. Sheikh

[1] *I.e.*, about 30–40 miles north of the Bohtan river, which forms the northern boundary of Kurdistan as defined in the Foreign Office Memorandum.

[2] The area thus defined includes part of Area A (the French sphere) the southern border of which is the Lesser Zab; the latter river flows into the Tigris about 50 miles south of the Greater Zab. In this connection Colonel Wilson reports that Sheikh Mahmoud and his associates "made it very clear that *they would not accept French tutelage in any shape or form.*"

[3] The following has since been added to the declaration, which, in its amplified form, has received the signature of all the Chiefs concerned:—"We request His Majesty's Government to act as an "intermediary on our behalf to obtain a seat at the Peace Conference for a Kurdish representative who "is an ally [*sic*] of the whole Kurdish people."

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Mahmoud further asked for "British officers for all Government Departments, including officers for Kurdish levies"; stipulating only that, so far as possible, the subordinate staff should be Kurdish and not Arab. Colonel Wilson is arranging to meet these requirements.

5. As it was not entirely clear in what precise relation the Kurds desire to stand towards the Iraq State, the Civil Commissioner was asked for further explanations on this point. He was also consulted as to (1) geographical limits of Kurdish country, and (2) the relations between northern and southern Kurdistan. In reply he urges that Kurdish assent to inclusion in the Iraq States should be "tacitly assumed." He describes the boundaries of South Kurdistan as on the north the Greater Zab; on the south the Diala; on the east the Turco-Persian frontier; on the west an irregular line, to be fixed hereafter, running from the Greater Zab to the Diala and so drawn as to exclude from the confederation the Arbil, Altun Keupri, Kerkuk and Kifri districts. Colonel Wilson does not advocate the inclusion of Middle or North Kurdistan in the South Kurdistan confederation.

6. It is clear that, so far at least as South Kurdistan is concerned, the people have exercised the right of "self-determination," and have elected (with certain exceptions) to form themselves into a separate "confederation" under British guidance. This pronouncement and its formal acceptance by the Civil Commissioner appear to rule out (at any rate as regards the Southern Kurds) Colonel Laurence's suggestion of a central Arabo-Kurdish kingdom. But the difficulty with France remains; and the recent developments in Kurdistan emphasise the necessity of securing a revision at least of that part of the Sykes-Picot Agreement which relates to the Mosul district and the Upper Tigris Valley. The desire for unity manifested by the Kurds at Suleimaniyeh renders it more than ever indefensible to partition their territory into three arbitrary zones. Meanwhile, it is proposed, if the Eastern Committee agree, to approve the Civil Commissioner's proceedings.

J. E. S.

Political Department, India Office,
14th December 1918.

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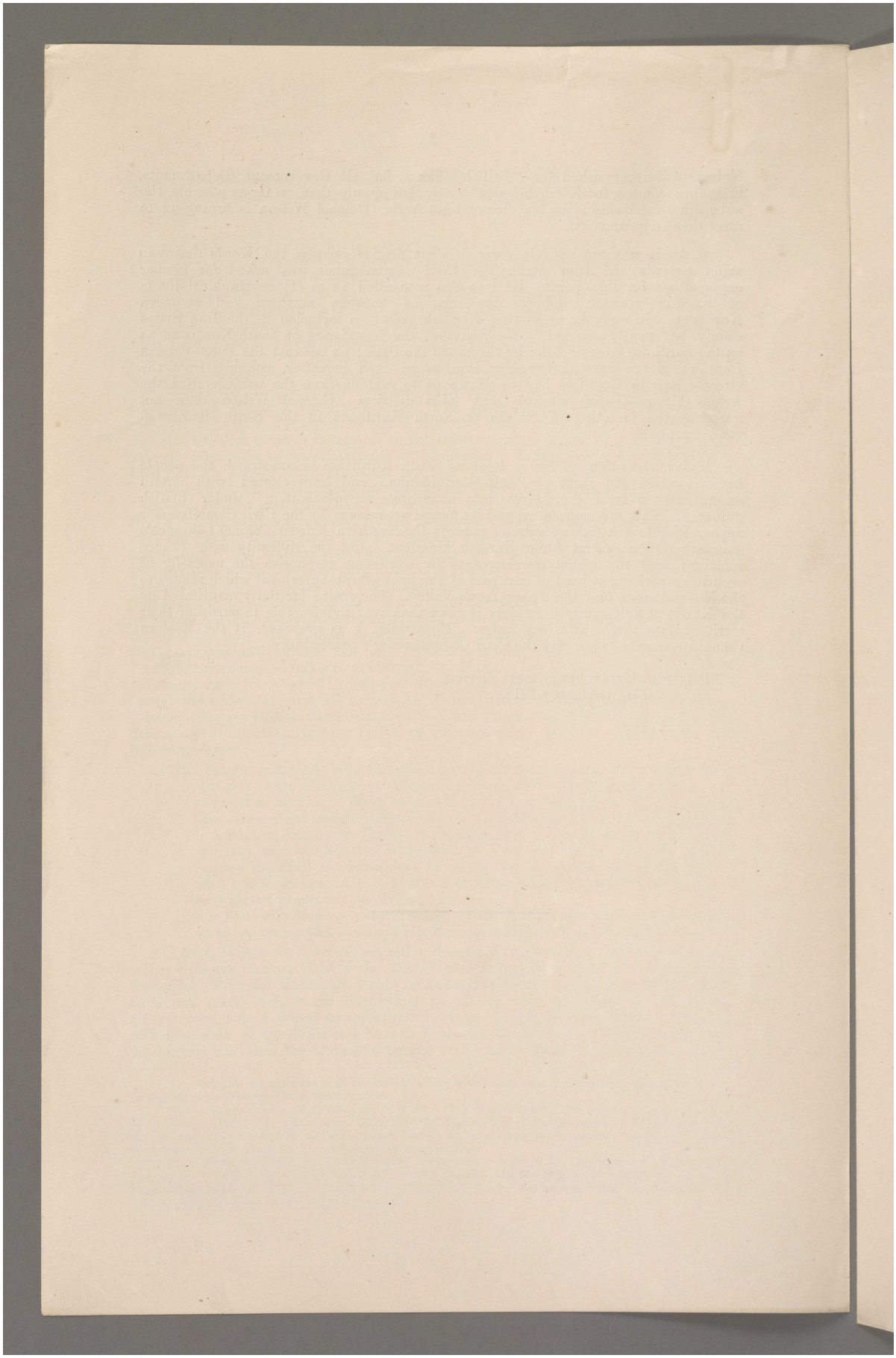

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Colonel Wilson, on his part, signed a document to the effect that any Kurdish tribes from the Greater Zab to the Diala,[2] who accepted of their own free will the leadership of Sheikh Mahmoud, would be allowed to do so; and that the Sheikh would have our moral support in controlling the above area on behalf of the British Government, whose orders he undertook to obey. It is to be noted that the tribesmen and townsfolk of the Kifri and Kerkuk Divisions do not accept Sheikh Mahmoud's leadership, and that the latter has agreed not to press for their inclusion. Sheikh

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[1] *I.e.*, about 30–40 miles north of the Bohtan river, which forms the northern boundary of Kurdistan as defined in the Foreign Office Memorandum.

[2] The area thus defined includes part of Area A (the French sphere) the southern border of which is the Lesser Zab; the latter river flows into the Tigris about 50 miles south of the Greater Zab. In this connection Colonel Wilson reports that Sheikh Mahmoud and his associates "made it very clear that *they would not accept French tutelage in any shape or form.*"

[3] The following has since been added to the declaration, which, in its amplified form, has received the signature of all the Chiefs concerned:—"We request His Majesty's Government to act as an "intermediary on our behalf to obtain a seat at the Peace Conference for a Kurdish representative who "is an ally [*sic*] of the whole Kurdish people."

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Mahmoud further asked for "British officers for all Government Departments, including officers for Kurdish levies"; stipulating only that, so far as possible, the subordinate staff should be Kurdish and not Arab. Colonel Wilson is arranging to meet these requirements.

5. As it was not entirely clear in what precise relation the Kurds desire to stand towards the Iraq State, the Civil Commissioner was asked for further explanations on this point. He was also consulted as to (1) geographical limits of Kurdish country, and (2) the relations between northern and southern Kurdistan. In reply he urges that Kurdish assent to inclusion in the Iraq States should be "tacitly assumed." He describes the boundaries of South Kurdistan as on the north the Greater Zab; on the south the Diala; on the east the Turco-Persian frontier; on the west an irregular line, to be fixed hereafter, running from the Greater Zab to the Diala and so drawn as to exclude from the confederation the Arbil, Altun Keupri, Kerkuk and Kifri districts. Colonel Wilson does not advocate the inclusion of Middle or North Kurdistan in the South Kurdistan confederation.

6. It is clear that, so far at least as South Kurdistan is concerned, the people have exercised the right of "self-determination," and have elected (with certain exceptions) to form themselves into a separate "confederation" under British guidance. This pronouncement and its formal acceptance by the Civil Commissioner appear to rule out (at any rate as regards the Southern Kurds) Colonel Laurence's suggestion of a central Arabo-Kurdish kingdom. But the difficulty with France remains; and the recent developments in Kurdistan emphasise the necessity of securing a revision at least of that part of the Sykes-Picot Agreement which relates to the Mosul district and the Upper Tigris Valley. The desire for unity manifested by the Kurds at Suleimaniyeh renders it more than ever indefensible to partition their territory into three arbitrary zones. Meanwhile, it is proposed, if the Eastern Committee agree, to approve the Civil Commissioner's proceedings.

J. E. S.

Political Department, India Office,
14th December 1918.

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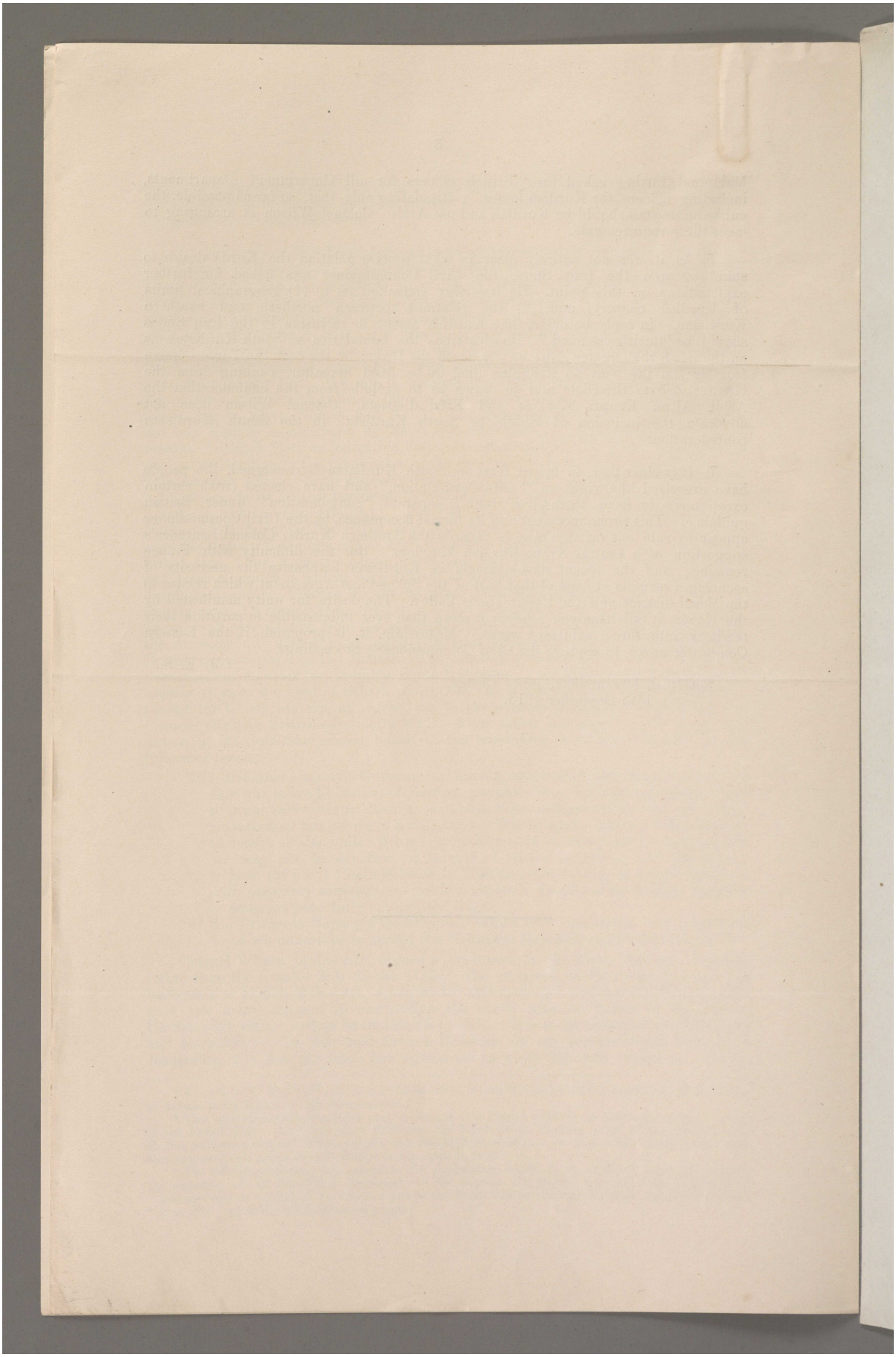

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WAR CABINET
E.C. 2935
2, WHITEHALL GARDENS

MESOPOTAMIA AND THE ARABS.

Captain Wilson proposes a British protectorate.

CAPTAIN WILSON in his telegram of the 11th December gives reasons in favour of establishing a British protectorate over Iraq, but although we do not yet know what exactly is meant by this proposal, I agree with Mr. Toynbee that a declared protectorate could hardly be reconciled with British assurances to King Husein. I think, moreover, that Mr. Toynbee is substantially right in his contention that these proposals imply the establishment of a special régime in Mesopotamia which aims at isolating it from the rest of the Arab countries, and that there is a misunderstanding—based perhaps on the "Times" telegram respecting the re-creation of the ancient Arab Empire, which Colonel Wilson quotes—as to the nature of the policy which has been suggested in Foreign Office memoranda. Our objects are not dissimilar from Captain Wilson's. We both aim at establishing British influence in Mesopotamia. But the Foreign Office consider that His Majesty's Government are precluded from establishing a protectorate or from annexation, and that our object can be effectively attained by the establishment of a native administration controlled by British advisers.

British assurances to King Husein.

I. The following assurances have been given to King Husein on the 14th April, 1915. His Majesty's Government committed themselves to a public declaration that "they will make it an essential condition in the terms of peace that the *Arabian Peninsula should remain in the hands of an independent sovereign State.*" In July 1915 King Husein raised the question of the extent of territory to be included in this State. His terms were the following:—

"*England to acknowledge the independence of the Arab countries, bounded* on the north by Mersina and Adana up to 37° of latitude, on which degree falls Birijik, Urfa, Mardin, Midiat, Amadia Island, up to the border of Persia; *on the east, by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basrah;* on the south, by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Aden to remain as it is; on the west, by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea up to Mersina."

The reply of His Majesty's Government was sent on the 24th October, as follows:—

"Subject to the above modifications, *Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs within the territories included in the limits and boundaries proposed by the Sherif of Mecca.*"

On the 5th November the Sherif agreed to the exclusion of Mersina and Adana, but formally reiterated his claim to the rest:—

"In order to facilitate an agreement and to render a service to Islam, and at the same time to avoid all that may cause Islam troubles and hardships—seeing, moreover, that we have great consideration for the distinguished qualities and dispositions of the Government of Great Britain—we renounce our insistence on the inclusion of the vilayets of Mersina and Adana in the Arab Kingdom.

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But the provinces of Aleppo and Beirout, and their sea coasts, are purely Arab provinces, and there is no difference between a Moslem and a Christian Arab: they are both descendants of one forefather."

We are now only concerned with Mesopotamia, which is clearly included in the undertakings just quoted, subject to the following reservations:—

On the 24th October, 1915, Sir H. McMahon wrote to the Sherif:—

Special position in Mesopotamia reserved by Great Britain.

"With regard to the vilayets of Bagdad and Basrah, the Arabs will recognise *that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitate special measures of administrative control* in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of the local population, and to safeguard our mutual economic interests."

The Sherif took up the question on the 5th November, 1915, in a letter to Sir H. McMahon:—

"As the provinces of Iraq are parts of the pure Arab Kingdom, and were, in fact, the seat of its Government in the time of Ali, and in the time of all the Khalifs who succeeded him; and as in them began the civilisation of the Arabs, and as their towns in those provinces were the first towns built in Islam, where the Arab power became so great; therefore these provinces are greatly valued by all Arabs, far and near, and their traditions cannot be forgotten by them. Consequently we cannot satisfy the Arab nation or make them give up such a title to nobility. But in order to render an accord easy, and taking into consideration the assurances mentioned in the fifth article of your letter, to keep and guard our mutual interests in that country as they are one and the same, for all these reasons *we might agree to leave under the British administration for a short time those districts* that are now occupied by British troops, without the rights of either side being prejudiced thereby (especially those of the Arab nation, whose interests are economic and vital to it), and *against a sum paid as compensation* to the Arab Kingdom for the period of the occupation, in order to meet the expense which every new kingdom is bound to support; at the same time respecting your agreements with the sheikhs of those districts, and especially those which are essential."

Acceded to by King Husein for a short time and against a sum paid in compensation.

As regards compensation, the Sherif left the amount to His Majesty's Government.

On the 30th January, 1916, Sir H. McMahon promised "*To take the matter into careful consideration when the enemy has been defeated and the time for a peaceful settlement arrives.*"

Our promise to take matter into careful consideration.

Now it is quite clear that King Husein did not regard this reservation as entitling us to set up a protectorate, or as an admission that these regions were to be treated quite apart from the rest of the Arab country, for in commenting on a subsequent discussion with M. Picot, who informed him, to his extreme satisfaction, that the French Government would be content in Syria with the same position as that desired by Great Britain in Iraq, he said, "that means a temporary occupation of the country for strategical and political reasons (with probably an annual grant to himself by way of compensation)."

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[Incidentally, it is worthy of notice that at this comparatively recent date (July 1917) the King was quite prepared to accept French assistance in Syria, but that he was "violently disturbed" by Djemal Pasha's allusion to the Sykes-Picot Agreement in November 1917, which he interpreted as apportioning Mesopotamia and Syria to Great Britain and France respectively and as confining King Husein to the Hejaz.]

Form of Administration a matter of importance.

The form of the administration which is set up in Mesopotamia is therefore a matter of great importance if we wish to avoid the accusation of breaking faith with King Husein.

If it be really the case that a sentiment in favour of a purely British administration exists throughout Mesopotamia, we are certainly placed in some difficulty, but I doubt if we should be wise in accepting entirely at their face value the assurances which are made to Captain Wilson by the native authorities whom he visits, and we cannot disregard the influence which it is asserted that the Emir Faisal exercises over the Arab element in Mesopotamia. In this connection it must be remembered that Faisal has said that if he had to choose, he would prefer any form of Moslem rule to the domination of a Christian Power—that the Turkish State, whatever be left of it, will not be well-disposed to Great Britain, and that we shall not get rid of the Young Turk, who, in alliance with the Young Egyptian, would find in Arab disillusionment a fertile field for the creation of a state of chronic disturbance throughout the Arab countries.

I should like here to emphasise the importance that the Foreign Office attaches to Colonel Lawrence's views, which rest upon a thorough knowledge of the Arab countries and character, including Mesopotamia, where he resided when engaged on archæological work. Miss Bell and he are sometimes regarded as rival authorities, but they are, as a matter of fact, in very close substantial agreement, and of one thing there is no doubt, that he has immense influence with Faisal.

Nomination of a son of King Husein as titular ruler.

A way out of our difficulties, namely, the nomination of Abdulla, the son of King Husein, as titular ruler of Mesopotamia has been suggested in memoranda by the Foreign Office.

It is not necessary to re-state the arguments for and against this proposal, as they are well known to the Committee.

The main objection to his canditature lies in the danger to be apprehended from establishing in Mesopotamia an Arab State in close relation with the Hejaz, and with the Emir Faisal.

It is possible that this eventuality has not been sufficiently considered by the Foreign Office, but I think that there is some misunderstanding with Captain Wilson as to our attitude.

The Foreign Office imagines a native ruler with an administration in which British officials would take the largest share, but which would employ as much native talent as possible, supported for some time to come by a British army of occupation, which could probably be reduced by degrees to a comparatively small force. The oilfields alone make it essential that the British should maintain a real, if veiled, control over this country.

The safeguards against the danger of a powerful

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Arab Empire with an anti-European bias would appear to be our presence in the country, the facility with which we could reinforce our position from the sea and by the air; (2) the opening and the freedom of the Straits of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus; and (3) a strict regulation of the arms traffic.

The link between King Husein and the ruler of Mesopotamia would hardly be more than spiritual, although provision for an annual tribute would have to be made. In this connection it is worth recording a conversation which Colonel Lawrence had with King Husein in July 1917, which tends to show that this would satisfy him.

In speaking of the Caliphate, which he was averse from assuming, the King developed the thesis that the spiritual leader of Islam should not aim at being the political sovereign of the Moslem world, but should combine his office with a small temporal sovereignty such as that of the Hejaz.

The difficulties attending the nomination of a ruler who is not more or less generally acclaimed as sovereign, as is the case with the Emir Faisal in Syria are, however, fully recognised, and there certainly appears to be no sign of a general demand for Abdulla, although Captain Wilson has admitted his claim as a candidate acceptable to a considerable party. If we imposed Abdulla on Mesopotamia we should be committing a breach of our undertaking, and if he were not popular it might be necessary to remove him, which would affect our relations with King Husein prejudicially. We know, moreover, very little about Abdulla, who might go to Mesopotamia imbued with his father's ideas as to the limited duration of British control.

All this, is an argument in favour of taking no immediate decision. The most natural course would seem to be to continue our provisional administration of the country for the present, in accordance with our general understanding with King Husein, as recorded in the foregoing paragraphs. From more recent information it seems that the situation may develop on the lines of separate Arab administrations in Mesopotamia, which would suit our requirements.

I venture to suggest, however, that Captain Wilson's attention be drawn to our undertaking, and that he be reminded that, whilst His Majesty's Government are resolved, in accordance with the wishes of the population, to support and assist them, they are precluded by these engagements from setting up a protectorate or protectorates in Iraq.

L. M.

Foreign Office,
December 24, 1918.

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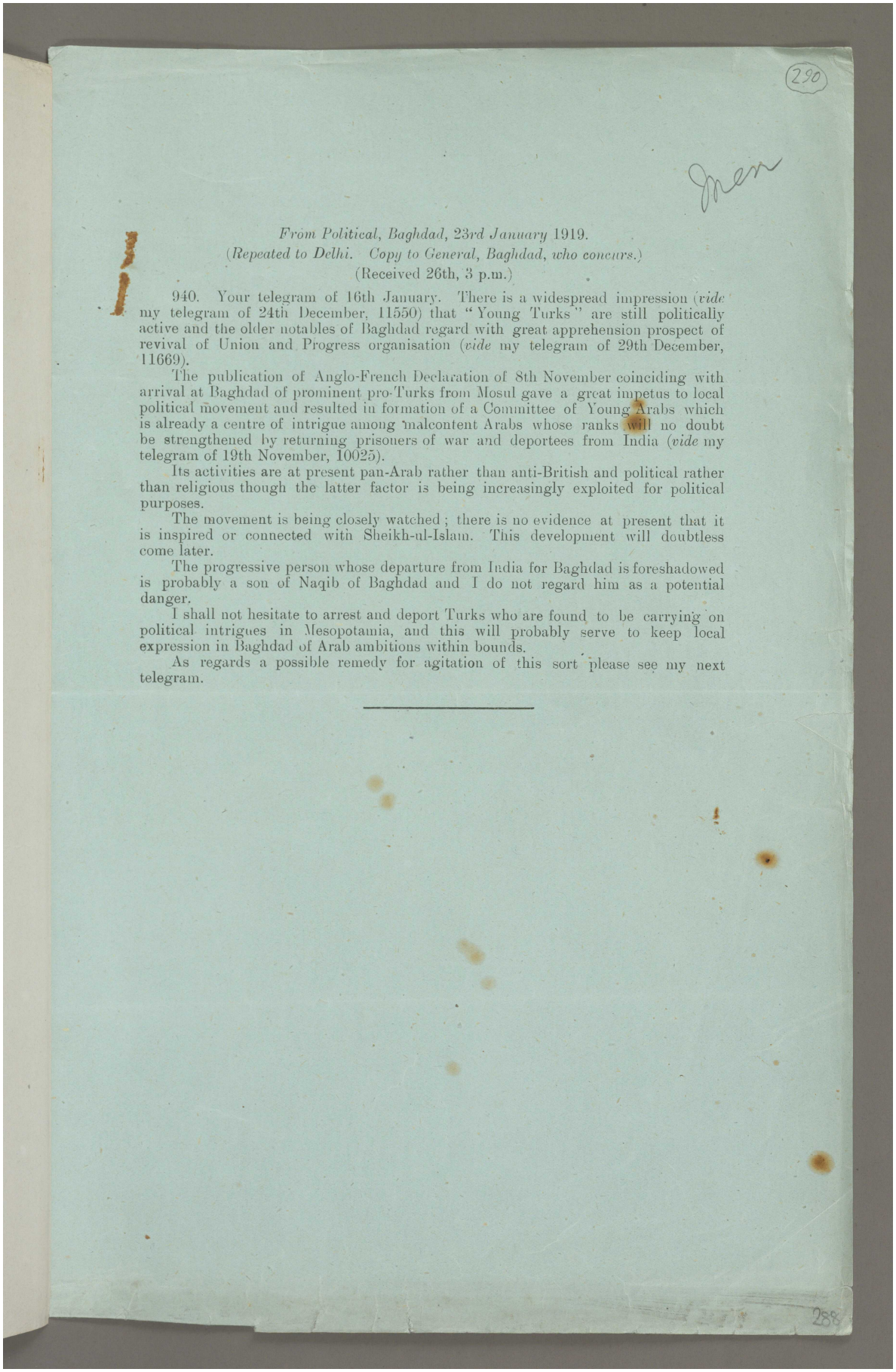

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From Political, Baghdad, 23rd January 1919.
(Repeated to Delhi. Copy to General, Baghdad, who concurs.)
(Received 26th, 3 p.m.)

940. Your telegram of 16th January. There is a widespread impression (*vide* my telegram of 24th December, 11550) that "Young Turks" are still politically active and the older notables of Baghdad regard with great apprehension prospect of revival of Union and Progress organisation (*vide* my telegram of 29th December, 11669).

The publication of Anglo-French Declaration of 8th November coinciding with arrival at Baghdad of prominent pro-Turks from Mosul gave a great impetus to local political movement and resulted in formation of a Committee of Young Arabs which is already a centre of intrigue among malcontent Arabs whose ranks will no doubt be strengthened by returning prisoners of war and deportees from India (*vide* my telegram of 19th November, 10025).

Its activities are at present pan-Arab rather than anti-British and political rather than religious though the latter factor is being increasingly exploited for political purposes.

The movement is being closely watched; there is no evidence at present that it is inspired or connected with Sheikh-ul-Islam. This development will doubtless come later.

The progressive person whose departure from India for Baghdad is foreshadowed is probably a son of Naqib of Baghdad and I do not regard him as a potential danger.

I shall not hesitate to arrest and deport Turks who are found to be carrying on political intrigues in Mesopotamia, and this will probably serve to keep local expression in Baghdad of Arab ambitions within bounds.

As regards a possible remedy for agitation of this sort please see my next telegram.

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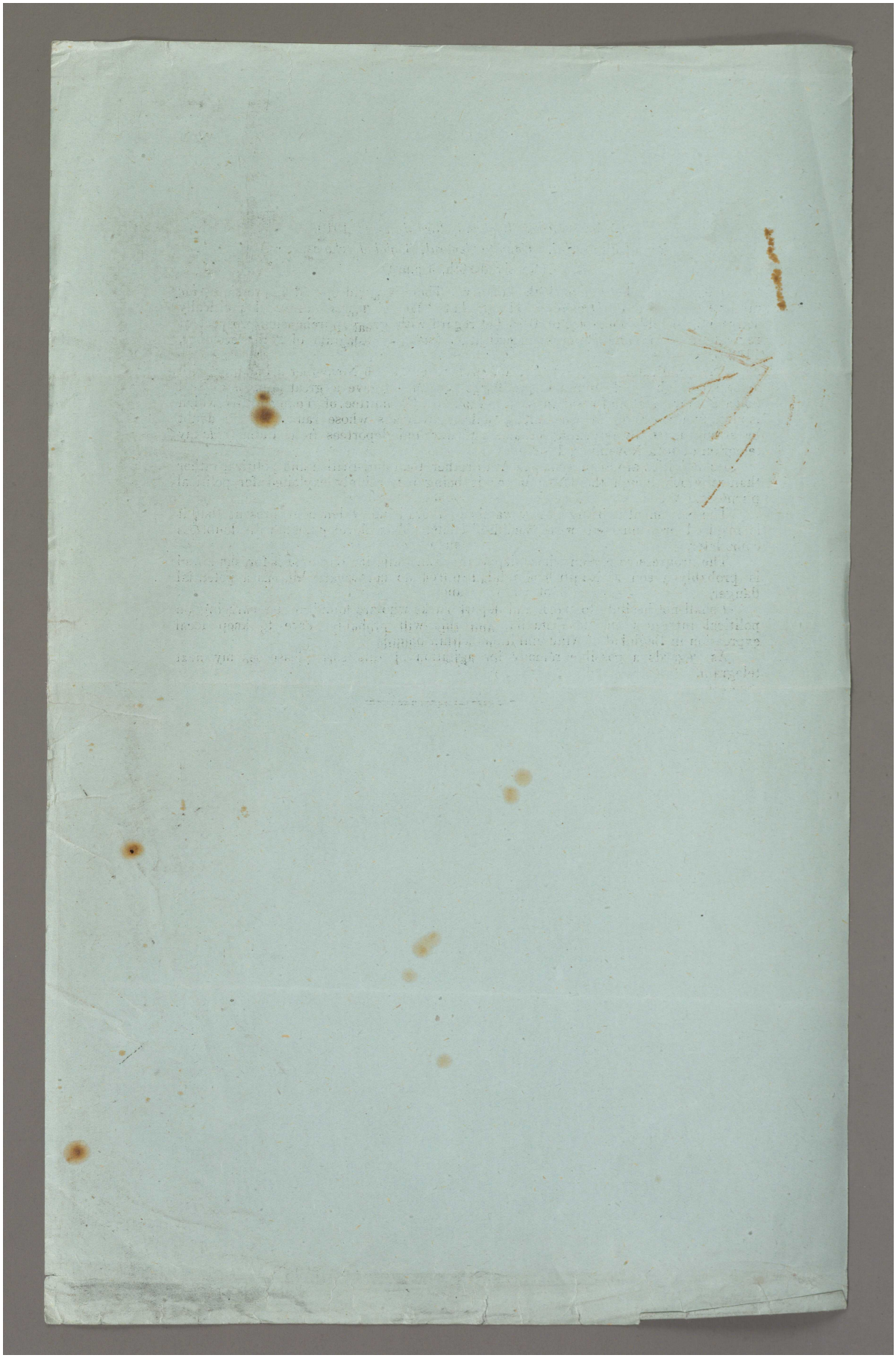

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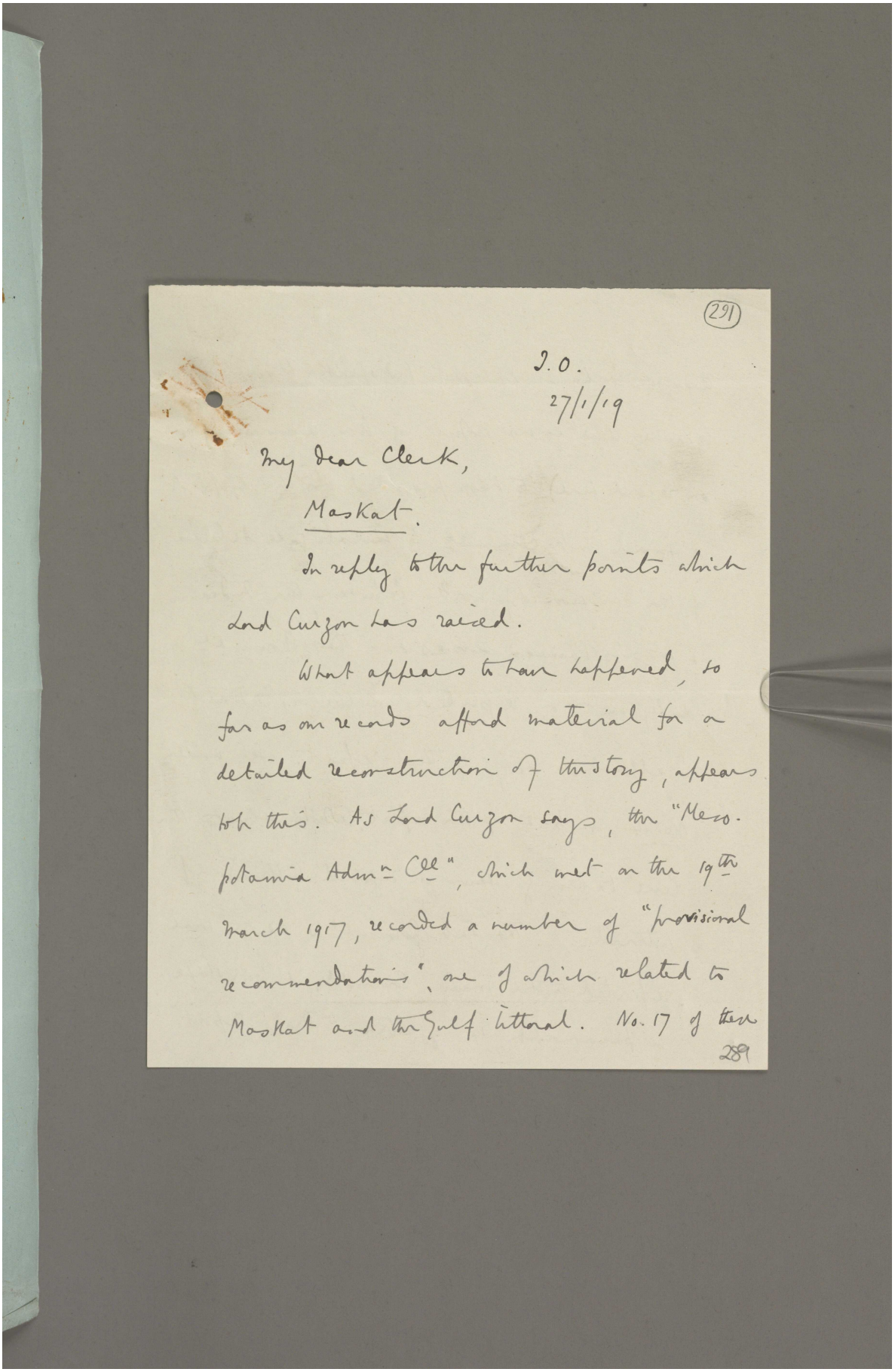

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I.O.
27/1/19

My dear Clerk,

Maskat.

In reply to the further points which Lord Curzon has raised.

What appears to have happened, so far as our records afford material for a detailed reconstruction of this story, appears both this. As Lord Curzon says, the "Mesopotamia Admn Cttee", which met on the 19th March 1917, recorded a number of "provisional recommendations", one of which related to Maskat and the Gulf littoral. No. 17 of these

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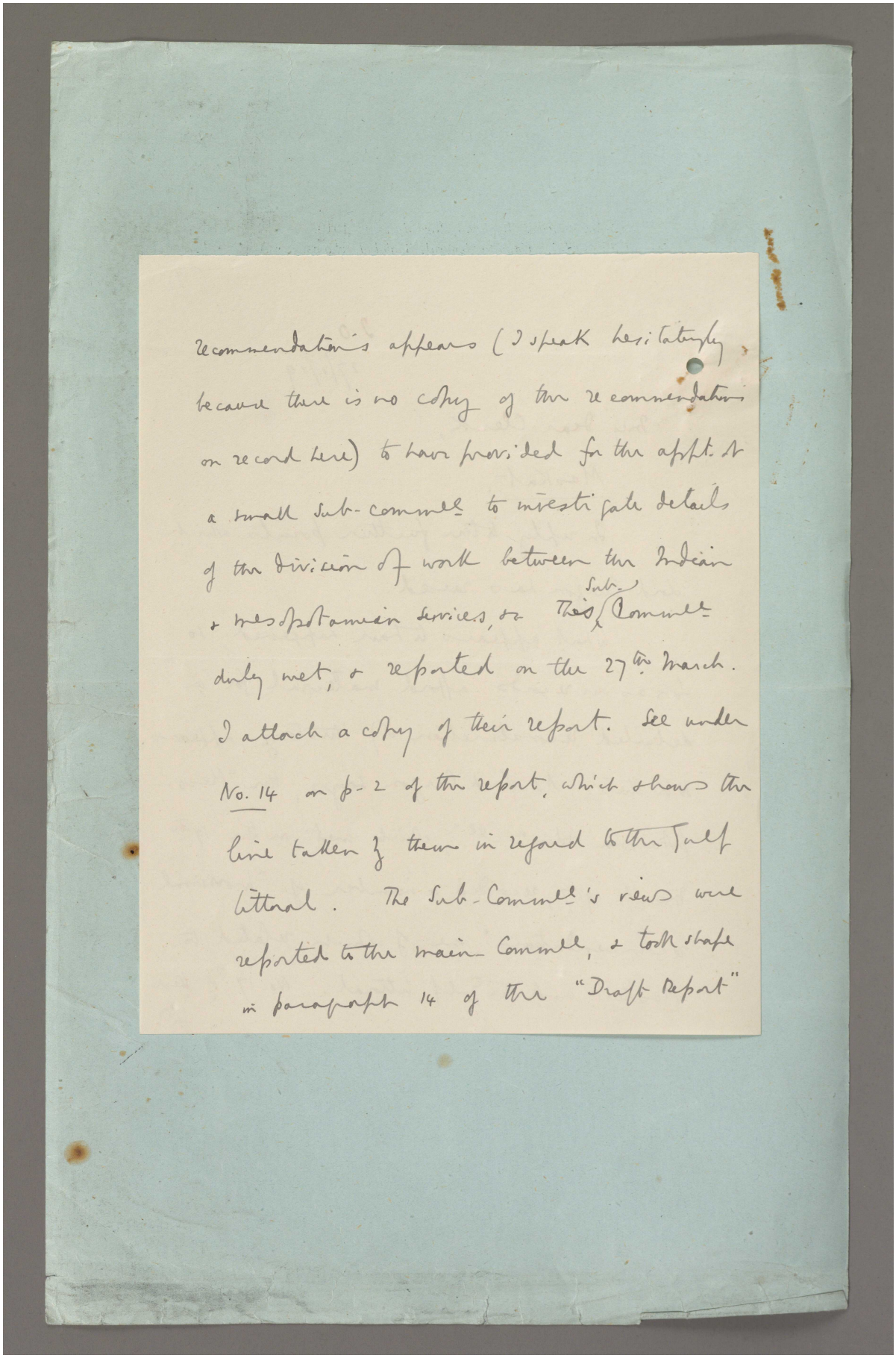

recommendation's appears (I speak hesitatingly because there is no copy of the recommendation on record here) to have provided for the appt. of a small Sub-committee to investigate details of the division of work between the Indian & Mesopotamian services, & This Sub-Committee duly met, & reported on the 27th March. I attach a copy of their report. See under No. 14 on p. 2 of the report, which shows the line taken by them in regard to the Turkish littoral. The Sub-Committee's views were reported to the main Committee, & took shape in paragraph 14 of the "Draft Report"

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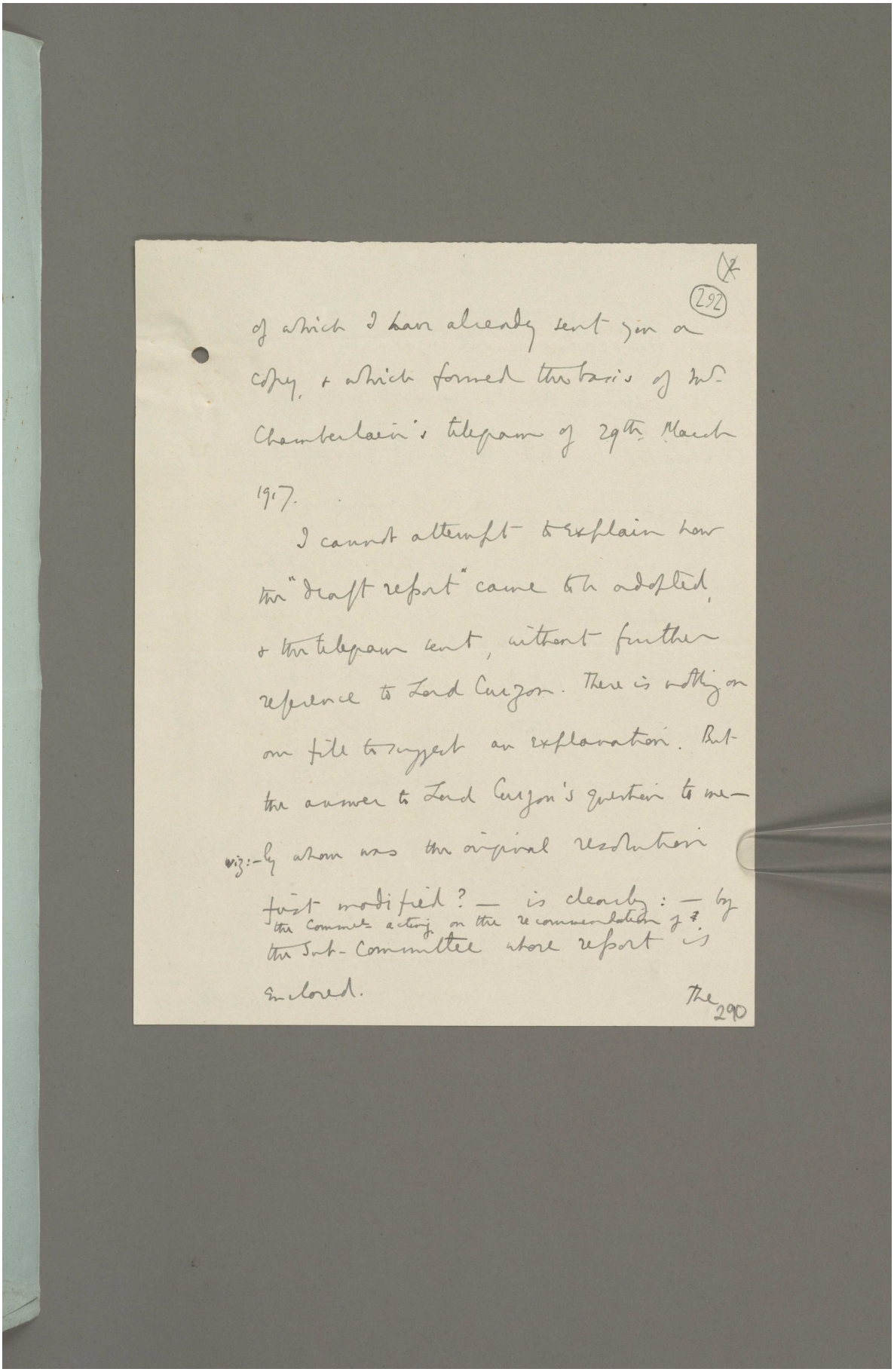

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of which I have already sent you a copy, & which formed the basis of Mr. Chamberlain's telegram of 29th March 1917.

I cannot attempt to explain how the "draft report" came to be adopted, & the telegram sent, without further reference to Lord Curzon. There is nothing on our file to suggest an explanation. But the answer to Lord Curzon's question to me — viz:- by whom was the original resolution first modified? — is clearly: — by the Commee acting on the recommendation of the Sub-Committee whose report is enclosed.

The

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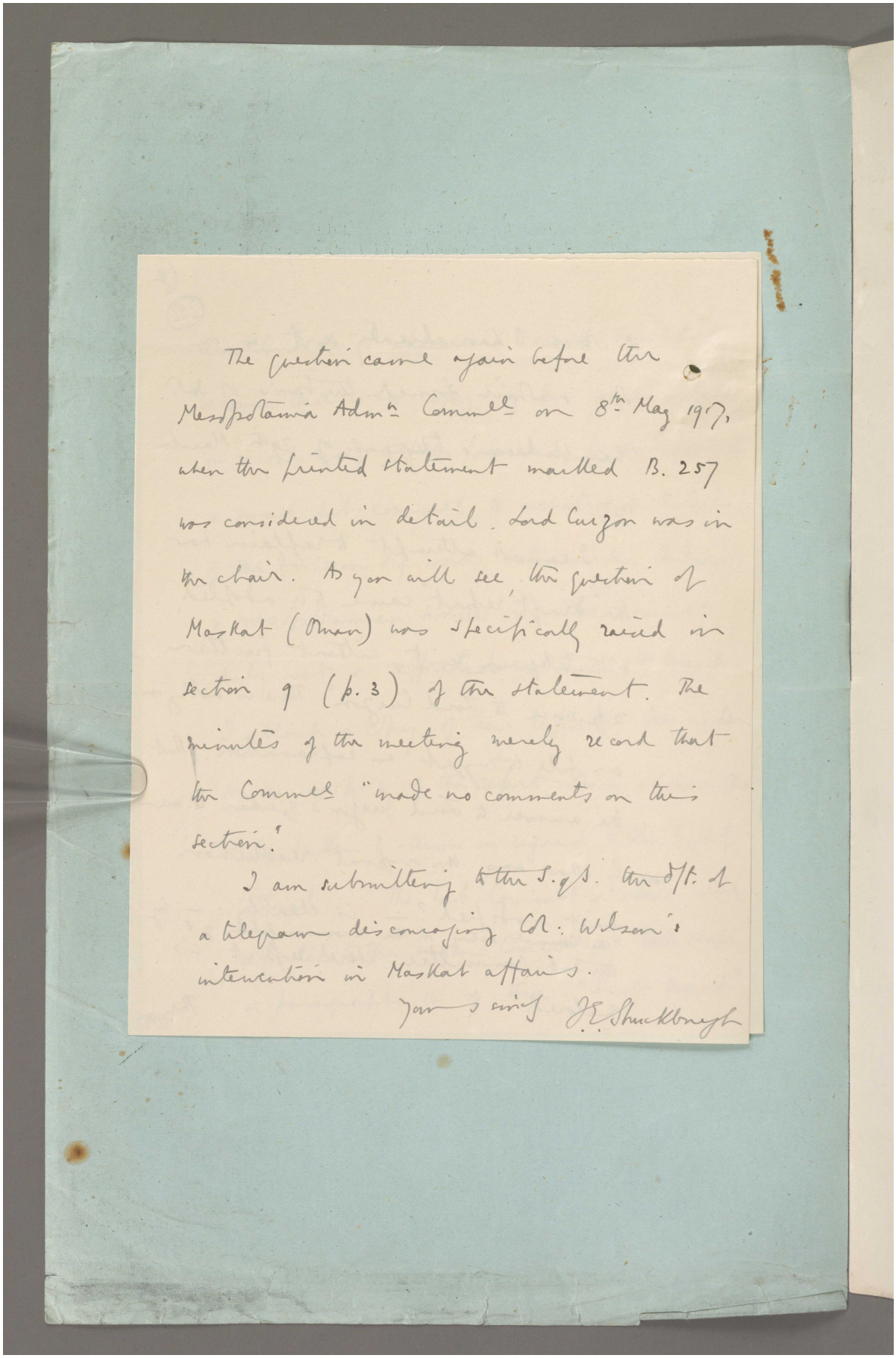

The question came again before the Mesopotamia Admn Committee on 8th May 1917, when the printed statement marked B. 257 was considered in detail. Lord Curzon was in the chair. As you will see, the question of Muskat (Oman) was specifically raised in section 9 (p. 3) of the statement. The minutes of the meeting merely record that the Committee "made no comments on this section."

I am submitting to the S. of S. the d/f. of a telegram disengaging Col. Wilson's intervention in Muskat affairs.

Yours sincerely E. Shuckburgh

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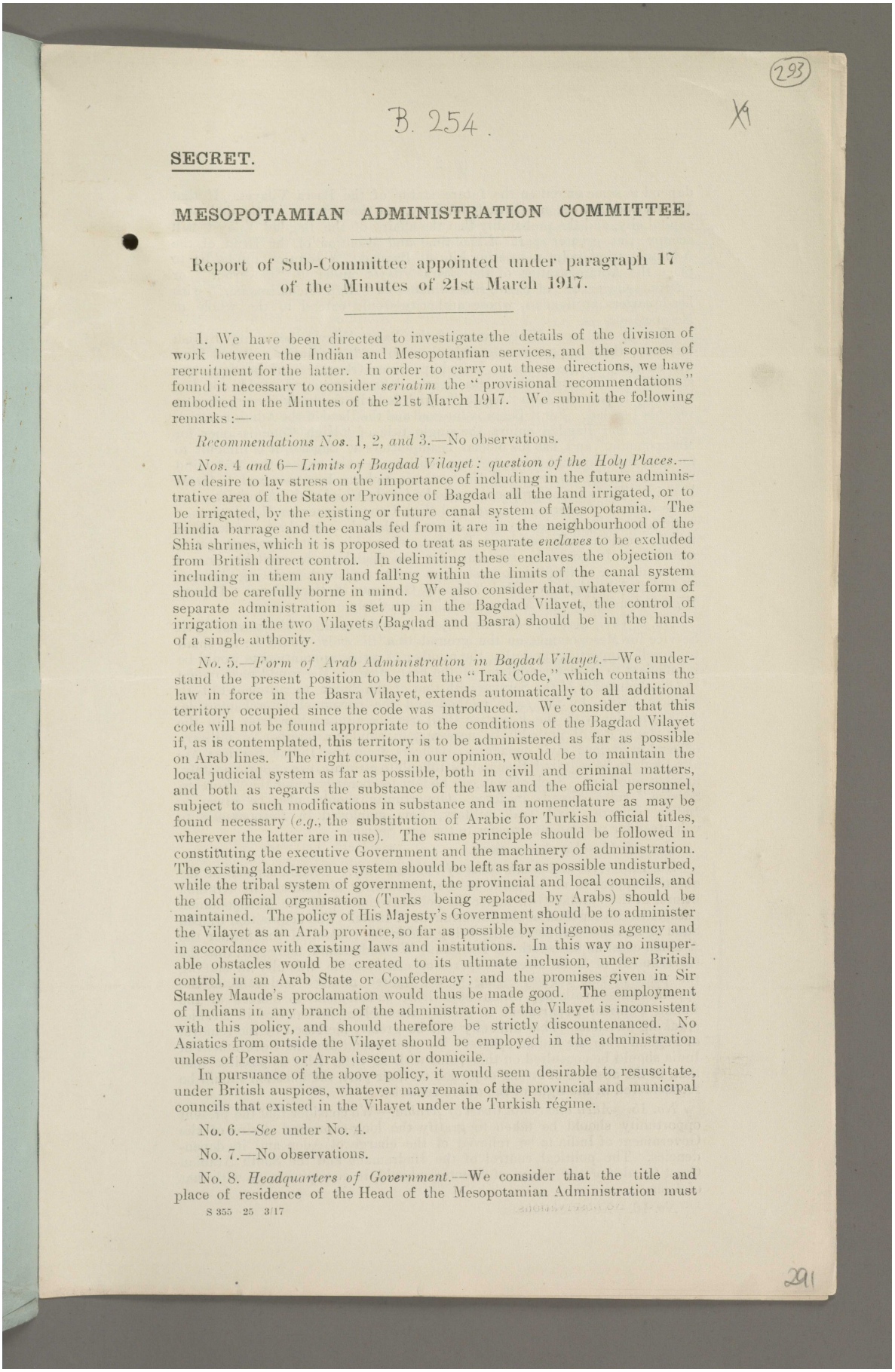

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B. 254.

X9

SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Report of Sub-Committee appointed under paragraph 17 of the Minutes of 21st March 1917.

1. We have been directed to investigate the details of the division of work between the Indian and Mesopotamian services, and the sources of recruitment for the latter. In order to carry out these directions, we have found it necessary to consider *seriatim* the "provisional recommendations" embodied in the Minutes of the 21st March 1917. We submit the following remarks:—

Recommendations Nos. 1, 2, *and* 3.—No observations.

Nos. 4 *and* 6—*Limits of Bagdad Vilayet: question of the Holy Places.*—We desire to lay stress on the importance of including in the future administrative area of the State or Province of Bagdad all the land irrigated, or to be irrigated, by the existing or future canal system of Mesopotamia. The Hindia barrage and the canals fed from it are in the neighbourhood of the Shia shrines, which it is proposed to treat as separate *enclaves* to be excluded from British direct control. In delimiting these enclaves the objection to including in them any land falling within the limits of the canal system should be carefully borne in mind. We also consider that, whatever form of separate administration is set up in the Bagdad Vilayet, the control of irrigation in the two Vilayets (Bagdad and Basra) should be in the hands of a single authority.

No. 5.—*Form of Arab Administration in Bagdad Vilayet.*—We understand the present position to be that the "Irak Code," which contains the law in force in the Basra Vilayet, extends automatically to all additional territory occupied since the code was introduced. We consider that this code will not be found appropriate to the conditions of the Bagdad Vilayet if, as is contemplated, this territory is to be administered as far as possible on Arab lines. The right course, in our opinion, would be to maintain the local judicial system as far as possible, both in civil and criminal matters, and both as regards the substance of the law and the official personnel, subject to such modifications in substance and in nomenclature as may be found necessary (*e.g.*, the substitution of Arabic for Turkish official titles, wherever the latter are in use). The same principle should be followed in constituting the executive Government and the machinery of administration. The existing land-revenue system should be left as far as possible undisturbed, while the tribal system of government, the provincial and local councils, and the old official organisation (Turks being replaced by Arabs) should be maintained. The policy of His Majesty's Government should be to administer the Vilayet as an Arab province, so far as possible by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions. In this way no insuperable obstacles would be created to its ultimate inclusion, under British control, in an Arab State or Confederacy; and the promises given in Sir Stanley Maude's proclamation would thus be made good. The employment of Indians in any branch of the administration of the Vilayet is inconsistent with this policy, and should therefore be strictly discountenanced. No Asiatics from outside the Vilayet should be employed in the administration unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile.

In pursuance of the above policy, it would seem desirable to resuscitate, under British auspices, whatever may remain of the provincial and municipal councils that existed in the Vilayet under the Turkish régime.

No. 6.—*See* under No. 4.

No. 7.—No observations.

No. 8. *Headquarters of Government.*—We consider that the title and place of residence of the Head of the Mesopotamian Administration must

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depend to some extent on the future status of the Basra Vilayet. If that Vilayet does not become British territory, the importance of Bagdad as a capital city, and the probability that the affairs of the Bagdad Vilayet will occupy the greater part of the time and attention of the Head of the Administration, point to locating him at Bagdad. A solution might be to place the Administration of the Basra Vilayet under a "Governor" or "Deputy-Governor" of Basra, subordinate to a "High Commissioner," with headquarters at Bagdad, whose authority would extend to the whole of Mesopotamia.

But in the more likely event of the Basra Vilayet becoming British territory, there appear strong objections to such a solution. Apart from the anomaly of governing a British province (Basra) from headquarters situated in territory with a less clearly defined status, it could not but seriously impair the Arab "façade," which is to be the basis of our policy as regards Bagdad. For if Basra is annexed and the Head of the Administration for Basra and Bagdad enjoys the single title of "High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," and has his official headquarters at Bagdad, it is difficult to imagine that any such "façade" can continue to exist or that the Arab mind will not consider the whole of Mesopotamia to have been annexed to Great Britain. The solution proposed would be for the Chief of the Administration to be termed "Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," with his titular headquarters at Basra; although it would be understood that he would usually reside at Bagdad, where his most important duties would lie. It would be necessary for two officials to be available, one at Basra and one at Bagdad, to assist him and to replace him during absence. These officials might be called "Deputy Governor of Basra" and "Deputy High Commissioner for Mesopotamia," respectively.

No. 9. Civil Service.—We see objection to the creation of a special Civil Service for Mesopotamia, on the ground that the cadre would be too small to be self-supporting, and that the number of prize appointments would be insufficient to attract candidates of the best stamp. We would recommend the amalgamation of the Service with that of the Sudan, recruitment to both services being by the same method and the personnel interchangeable. Amalgamation with the Egyptian Civil Service might follow later. In the early stages it will probably be necessary to employ a number of military officers in various civil capacities. Officers from the Indian Services are also likely to be required, though it is difficult to estimate, even approximately, in what numbers. Such officers can be lent temporarily under the "Foreign Service" rules already in force. Opportunity should also be given to Indian officers, civil and military, now employed in Mesopotamia to volunteer for permanent transfer to the new Service.

Nos. 10–13.—No observations.

No. 14. West and South Coast of Persian Gulf.—Certain aspects of the question appear to us to point to the desirability of placing the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf under the political control of the Mesopotamian authorities rather than of the Government of India. The acquisition by Bin Saud of El Hasa will necessarily bring under the control of the former the Arabian coast as far south as Bahrein. We understand, moreover, that the Government of India already experience considerable difficulty in staffing the posts in this region, owing to the limited number and value of the appointments available, which offer little inducement to officers of the Indian Political Department to qualify themselves for service in Arabic-speaking districts. This difficulty will be greatly increased by the removal of Bagdad from the Indian sphere. We recommend that the Government of India should be consulted on this point with as little delay as possible, and that, in the absence of strong objection on their part, the question should be reconsidered in the light of the above remarks.

No. 15. Aden and South Coast of Arabia.—We consider that the present opportunity should be taken to gratify the long-expressed desire of the Government of India to be relieved of the charge of Aden and its dependencies. The political control of the Hadramaut and the South Arabian Coast (as also of the island of Socotra) should, in our opinion, go with that of Aden.

No. 16.—No observations.

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2. Speaking generally, we are of opinion that the administrative arrangements introduced during the present military occupation into Mesopotamia as a whole should be consistent with the future policy of His Majesty's Government. The Basra Vilayet, if it is decided to administer it as British territory through the direct agency of British officials, will cause no special difficulty. The international position to be assigned to the Bagdad Vilayet will require careful consideration, and we have not examined in detail the possible alternative solutions of the problem; nor are we acquainted with the views of His Majesty's Government on this point. But, roughly speaking, three alternative courses appear to be open, viz.:—

(1) To lease the province, if it is formally included in an Arab State or confederacy of States, from the latter on the basis of a fixed annual payment, in which case, from the point of view of international law, the external sovereignty would presumably be British, though the territory would not form part of the British Dominions.

(2) To recognise the existence of the Bagdad State under a local ruler or local government, and to declare a British protectorate over it; and thereby, by the exclusion of external relations with foreign Powers, to assume, according to international law, the external sovereignty of the protected territory. The manner in which the internal sovereignty would be shared would be a matter of municipal arrangement.

(3) To leave the full sovereignty, external and internal, with the contemplated Arab State, and to conclude with the latter a convention by which it should agree to follow the advice which His Majesty's Government may tender as regards the form and the personnel of the internal administration.

The distinction between (3), and (1) and (2), would be that under (1) and (2) the conduct of foreign relations would exclusively vest in His Majesty's Government, whereas under (3) they would vest in the Arab State. The undesirability of this latter arrangement is obvious.

We are disposed to think that it would be possible to provide a satisfactory administration, suitable to the requirements of the people, on the general lines of the system prevailing in Egypt, under which local administrative work is carried on by native *Mudirs* under the guidance of European "Inspectors." The various reform schemes proposed in the past for the administration of Turkish provinces such as Macedonia and Armenia might also serve as a convenient model.

3. We have not considered the question of the military defence of Mesopotamia, or of the quarter from which the troops for this purpose are to be provided.

4. We would emphasise the importance of an early decision on the points raised above. Any necessary reference to the Government of India or elsewhere should, in our opinion, be made by telegraph with the least possible delay.

T. W. Holderness.
Mark Sykes.
A. Henry McMahon.
A. Hirtzel.
R. Graham.
George R. Clerk.

J. E. Shuckburgh,
Secretary,
27th March 1917.

[Appendix

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APPENDIX.

From Viceroy, Foreign Department, 26th March 1917.
(Repeated to Sir P. Cox.)

Secret. Your telegram of the 17th March. Civil Administration of Bagdad. Although paramount direct British administration may not be contemplated it seems essential that apart from martial law which can merely maintain order steps should be taken to overhaul and replace defunct Turkish administration and to carry on work of civil Departments. For this purpose we understand suitable Arab personnel is not immediately available, and that onus must fall for the time being at any rate on British Officers.

The immediate requirements appear to be—

(1) To secure submission by political means of tribes between Kut-el-Amara and our front line and later between Kut-el-Amara and Nasiriyah and settle them on accustomed lands on revenue paying basis. Latter is of course mostly in Basra Vilayet, but we mention it to show full requirements.

(2) To overhaul and replace civil Departments of Vilayet of Bagdad.

For (1) a few military Assistant Political Officers will be required and we propose to send such suitable Officers as are available from India. We have already sent Major Bailey of Political Department. May we use our discretion up to, say, eight more Officers? For (2) an experienced Revenue Officer with a staff of two or three Officers acquainted with Arabic and if possible Turkish are required. If Dobbs is willing to return to Mesopotamia, and his health admits, we propose to send him. If not we propose Holme of Political Department. One or two Officers from Egypt or London would be useful in this capacity.

Further we propose to send Holland on completion of Trade Report to Basra as Cox's deputy, Wilson moving up to Bagdad in similar capacity.

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B. 257.

Mesopotamia Administration Committee.

For convenience of reference abstracts of (1) the proposals of the War Cabinet Committee; (2) the comments of Sir Percy Cox; and (3) those of the Government of India are printed below in parallel columns.

(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
1. Occupied territories to be administered not by Government of India, but by His Majesty's Government.	1. No comment.	1. Readily accept decision; but India's share in the conquest of these territories, in which her interests, commercial, political, and religious, are already large, must be recognised. Any restriction of free Indian immigration into Irak would cause bitter and legitimate resentment. Provision of a definite field for expansion elsewhere, preferably in East Africa, would tend to satisfy India and check undue flow into Irak; but in any case, in view of Indian pilgrimage and trade interests, desirable to post an officer of Government of India to Basra and perhaps Bagdad to advise local administration on such questions.
2. Basra to remain permanently under British administration: western and northern limits to be Nasiriyeh, Shatt-el-Hai, Kut, Bedrai.	2. Agrees.	2. No remarks.
3. Bagdad to be an Arab state with local ruler or Government under British Protectorate in everything but name. No relations with Foreign Powers; Consuls to be accredited to His Majesty's Government.	3. Ruler not feasible as no outstanding personality to fill part. Proposes an Administrative Council presided over by High Commissioner, either one for each vilayat or a combined one for both vilayats. Combined Council would bring into true perspective divergent interests of each vilayat, and would have unquestionable right to regulate, in accordance with needs of whole country, such questions as Indian immigration and cognate matters.	3. Entirely agree with Sir P. Cox that precise constitution of Arab State at Bagdad under British Protectorate cannot be decided at once. Experience of puppet rulers in India and Afghanistan not encouraging. Endorse Sir P. Cox's suggestion (under head 13) as to appointment of a Commission to examine whole problem on the spot.
4. Behind Arab façade Bagdad to be administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular:—	4.	4.
(a) Irak Code not to be used but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk;	(a) Agrees that territory should be administered in accordance with existing laws and institutions, and convinced of great advantage of having uniform codes for Basra and Bagdad and other Arab provinces under foreign rule or protection. No essential reason why systems established in both vilayats should not be assimilated. Turkish judicial system included final reference to Constantinople, for which substitute must be found by creation of High Court of Mesopotamia with final appeal	(a) No remarks.

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(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	to Privy Council. Civil and criminal codes and land laws require considerable amendment and adjustment of wording to make them interpretable. As regards personnel, sufficient indigenous material not available at present, but can gradually be created.	
(*b*) Similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provincial and local councils, &c., to be resuscitated and maintained;	(*b*) Tribal system of government already adopted where suitable; no objection to provincial and local councils.	(*b*) No remarks.
(*c*) Present land revenue system not to be disturbed;	(*c*) Agrees in principle.	(*c*) No remarks.
(*d*) Employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with above principles, and no Asiatics from outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Basra vilayat.	(*d*) Agrees; but for duration of war must have some latitude, especially in regard to clerical establishments. Urgent requirements of Expeditionary Force and military administration must be met by most expeditious means possible.	(*d*) In practice impossible probably for some time to dispense entirely with Indian Moslems in the administration. No wish to encourage introduction of Indian subordinates, but think it would be a grave mistake to debar them absolutely. Such a course would excite legitimate ill-feeling in India.
5. If Basra is not annexed, head of whole Mesopotamian administration to be High Commissioner residing at Bagdad, Basra being placed under a Governor subordinate to him. If Basra is annexed, head of administration to be styled Governor of Basra and High Commissioner for Mesopotamia with titular headquarters at Basra, but residing generally at Bagdad. Deputy Governor and Deputy High Commissioner at Basra and Bagdad respectively to act for him in his absence.	5. Recognises that both vilayats cannot be annexed, and that importance of annexing Basra makes it necessary to put up with certain disadvantages at Bagdad. Is convinced, however, that two administrations should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. Difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature not felt on the spot. Two vilayats from every point of view inseparable, and could not be run on conflicting lines and inconsistent principles without great prejudice to all interests concerned.	5. No remarks.
6. British Civil Service to be amalgamated with that of Soudan and possibly also of Levant, recruitment being by same method and personnel interchangeable. British officers of Indian services, if required at first, to be lent temporarily under foreign service rules; those now serving there to be permitted to volunteer for permanent transfer.	6. No comment or objection.	6. No remarks.
7. Shiah holy places to form a separate enclave not under direct British control, but not to include any important irrigated or irrigable areas.	7. Nejef and Kerbela should not be treated as an enclave cut off from advantages of enlightened Government, which inhabitants expect and will demand. They should be organised as independent townships as regards municipal administration. Unable at present to form an opinion as to irrigation, river conservancy, navigation, posts, telegraphs and railways, which should come under united administration controlled by High Commissioner. Limits of townships would be existing limits of sacred territory round shrines.	7. Agree with Sir P. Cox's view.

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(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	Both towns to be represented on Administrative Council combining Vilayat Councils of both Vilayats and sitting at Bagdad. *See under* head 3. Towns themselves, apart from precincts of the Holy Places, to remain open to Europeans as in past; but resident officials should be Mohammedans agreeable to communities concerned.	
8. Control of irrigation in both Vilayats to be under single British administration; similarly with navigation and conservancy of rivers.	8. Entirely concurs. Two vital matters, injudicious or inexpert handling of which may do incalculable harm.	8. Agree entirely; but Irrigation Department will doubtless have to indent heavily on India and services of Indian official subordinates will probably also be required. This would militate against rigorous enforcement of 4 (*d*). Quite prepared to meet indents if given full warning. If large irrigation works started at once in Mesopotamia, almost inevitable that labour should come from India. Control of large colonies of Indian labourers will present difficulties. Further, when large schemes have been carried out, good cultivators will be required; do not see how they can be found without indenting upon India. For these reasons large schemes to be deprecated until the country settles down and local labour is available.
9. Koweit and whole Arabian littoral of Persian Gulf, including Oman, to be controlled by Basra.	9. No comment.	9. Necessary corollary of (1); but (*a*) unsettling effect on Gulf Chiefs who are accustomed to and trust Government of India will require tactful handling; (*b*) Japanese commercial penetration will require uniform treatment in Gulf.
10. Aden and Hadramaut to be taken over by Foreign Office.	10. No comment.	10. Gladly agree.
11. South Persia, including Arabistan and Fars, to be sphere of influence of Government of India.	11. Strongly of opinion that sphere of Government of India in Persia should include whole of neutral zone *plus* farthest limit of Kermanshah and Ispahan if possible.	11. Proposal not fully understood and more precise information requested. What practical control would Government of India exercise?
12. *General Remarks.*—It is regarded of utmost importance that administrative arrangements introduced into Bagdad Vilayat should from the very outset strictly conform to above principles.	12. *General remarks.*—As will be seen from foregoing, generally accepts and agrees with proposed lines of policy. Is, however, strongly of opinion (in which Army Commander concurs) that formal introduction of above principles in existing circumstances (*i.e.*, with martial law in force and the military position still insecure) takes too much for granted, and makes demands upon local authorities which may be incompatible with military interests and freedom of action of Army Commander. Nevertheless, accepts policy in principle, and	12. *General remarks.*—Subject to above remarks, readily accept general policy proposed; but fully endorse views of Sir P. Cox under heads 12 and 13. Presume (and strongly urge) that present practice of keeping Commander-in-Chief in India informed of all developments in the military situation in Mesopotamia will be maintained. If kept in ignorance of policy, and merely treated as supplier of materials and personnel, no assurance that India's resources will be utilised and developed to best advantage. Same applies to Aden and other

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(1) War Cabinet Committee.	(2) Sir Percy Cox.	(3) Government of India.
	will, as far as possible, proceed in its spirit and avoid any action, either in matters of principle or detail, likely to prejudice its complete inauguration when the time comes. 13. For the present recommends that Chief Political Officer be permitted to carry on according to his lights in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, and that, as soon as conditions permit, a Commission of first-class men examine whole problem on the spot, and make detailed recommendations as a basis of future policy.	potential theatres of war in area to be transferred. As regards conditions after the war, India will apparently be responsible for some time to come for supplying troops for defence and garrisoning of Mesopotamia; or at any rate for providing reserves for all military operations. Strongly urge, in view of these considerations, that India be kept fully informed of all political developments which may necessitate a call for troops. Otherwise, contemplated policy would, in fact, be giving prospective Government of Mesopotamia a blank cheque on India's military resources.

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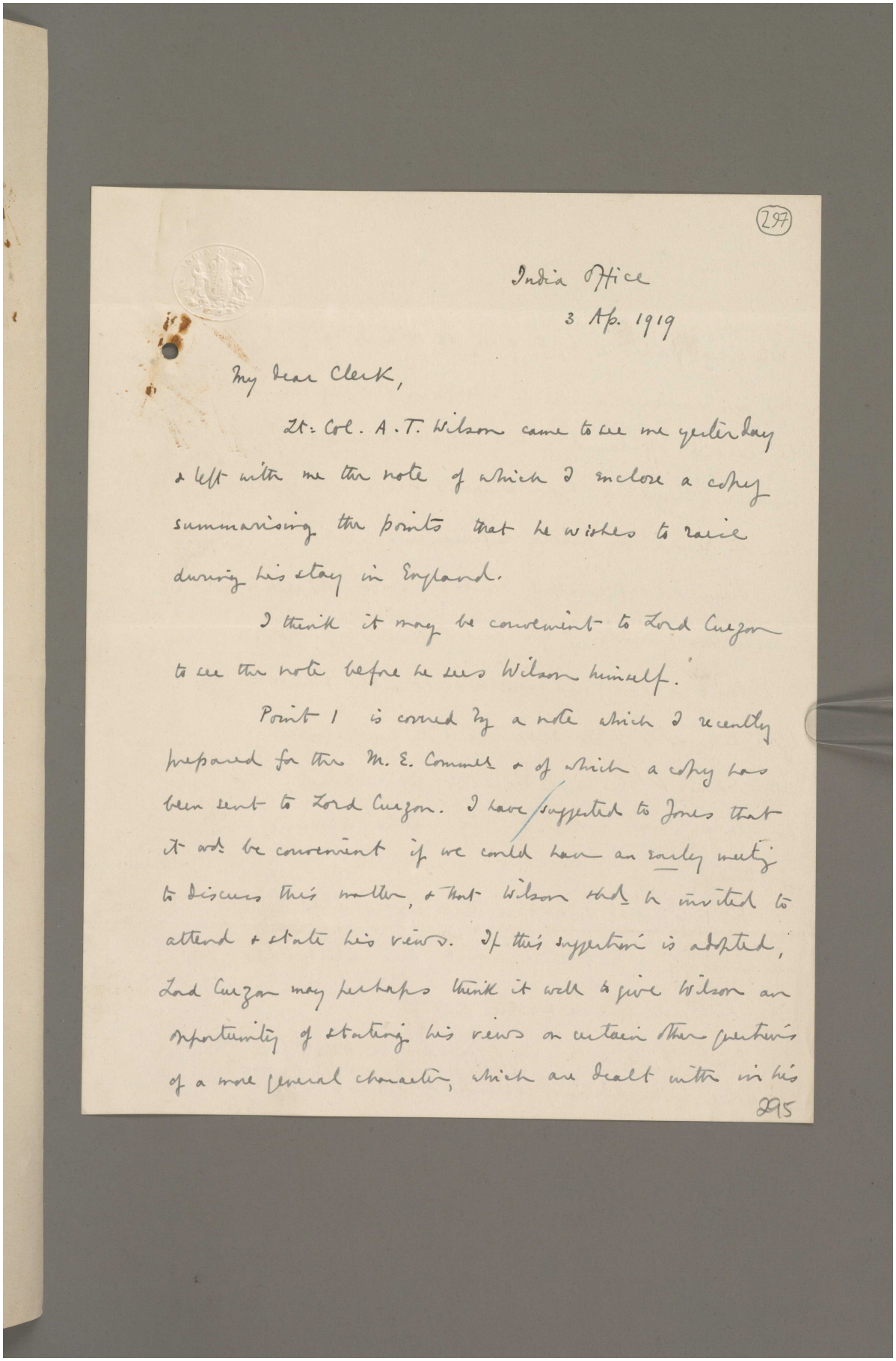

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India Office
3 Apr. 1919

My dear Clerk,

Lt: Col. A.T. Wilson came to see me yesterday & left with me the note of which I enclose a copy summarising the points that he wishes to raise during his stay in England.

I think it may be convenient to Lord Curzon to see the note before he sees Wilson himself.

Point 1 is covered by a note which I recently prepared for the M.E. Committee of which a copy has been sent to Lord Curzon. I have suggested to Jones that it will be convenient if we could have an early meeting to discuss this matter, & that Wilson shd be invited to attend & state his views. If this suggestion is adopted, Lord Curzon may perhaps think it well to give Wilson an opportunity of stating his views on certain other questions of a more general character, which are dealt with in his

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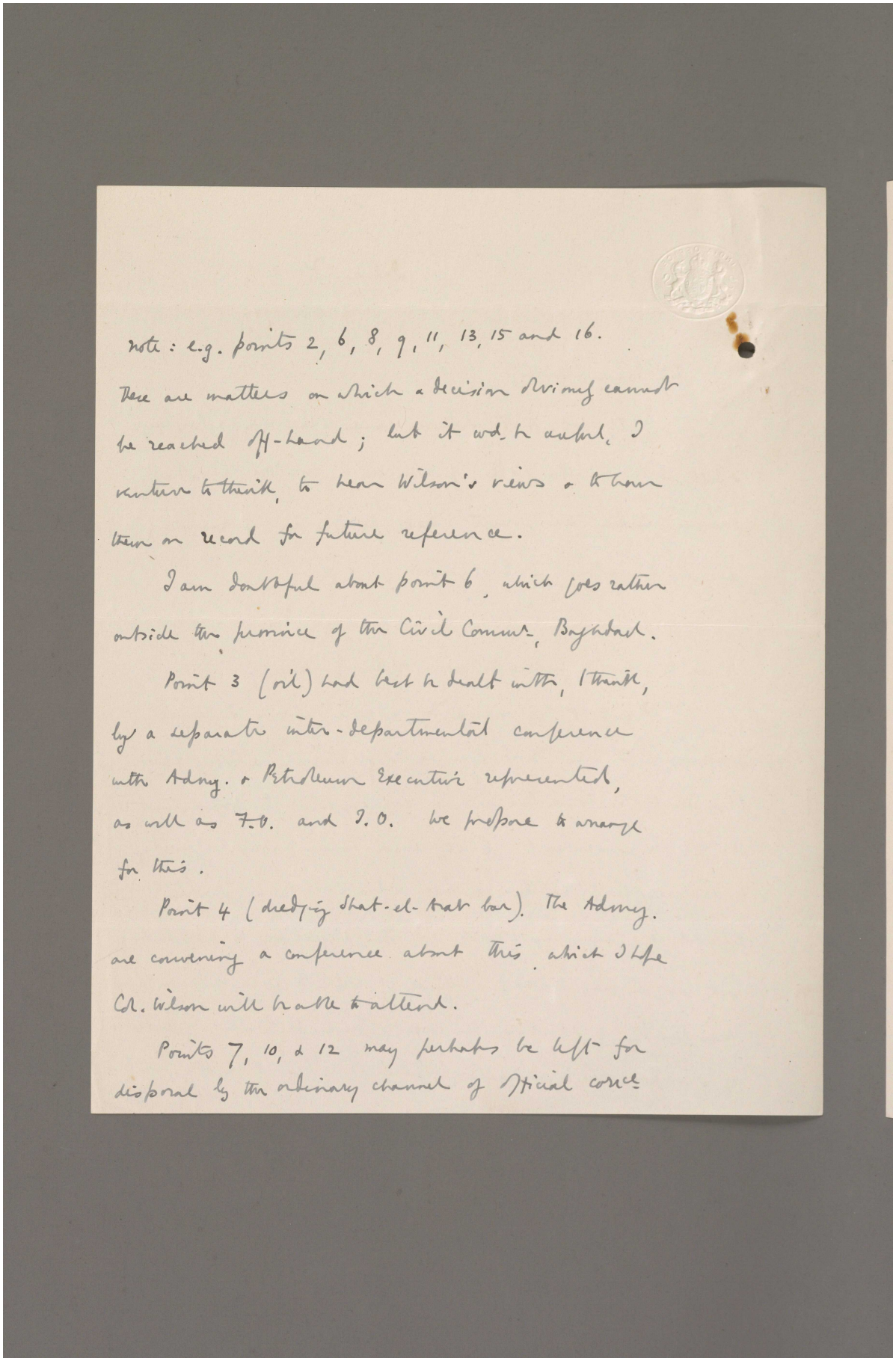

note: e.g. points 2, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 16.

These are matters on which a decision obviously cannot be reached off-hand; but it wd. be useful, I venture to think, to hear Wilson's views & to know them on record for future reference.

I am doubtful about point 6, which goes rather outside the province of the Civil Commr., Baghdad.

Point 3 (oil) had best be dealt with, I think, by a separate inter-departmental conference with Admy. & Petroleum Executive represented, as well as F.O. and I.O. We propose to arrange for this.

Point 4 (dredging Shat-el-Arab bar). The Admy. are convening a conference about this, which I hope Col. Wilson will be able to attend.

Points 7, 10, & 12 may perhaps be left for disposal by the ordinary channel of official corrce.

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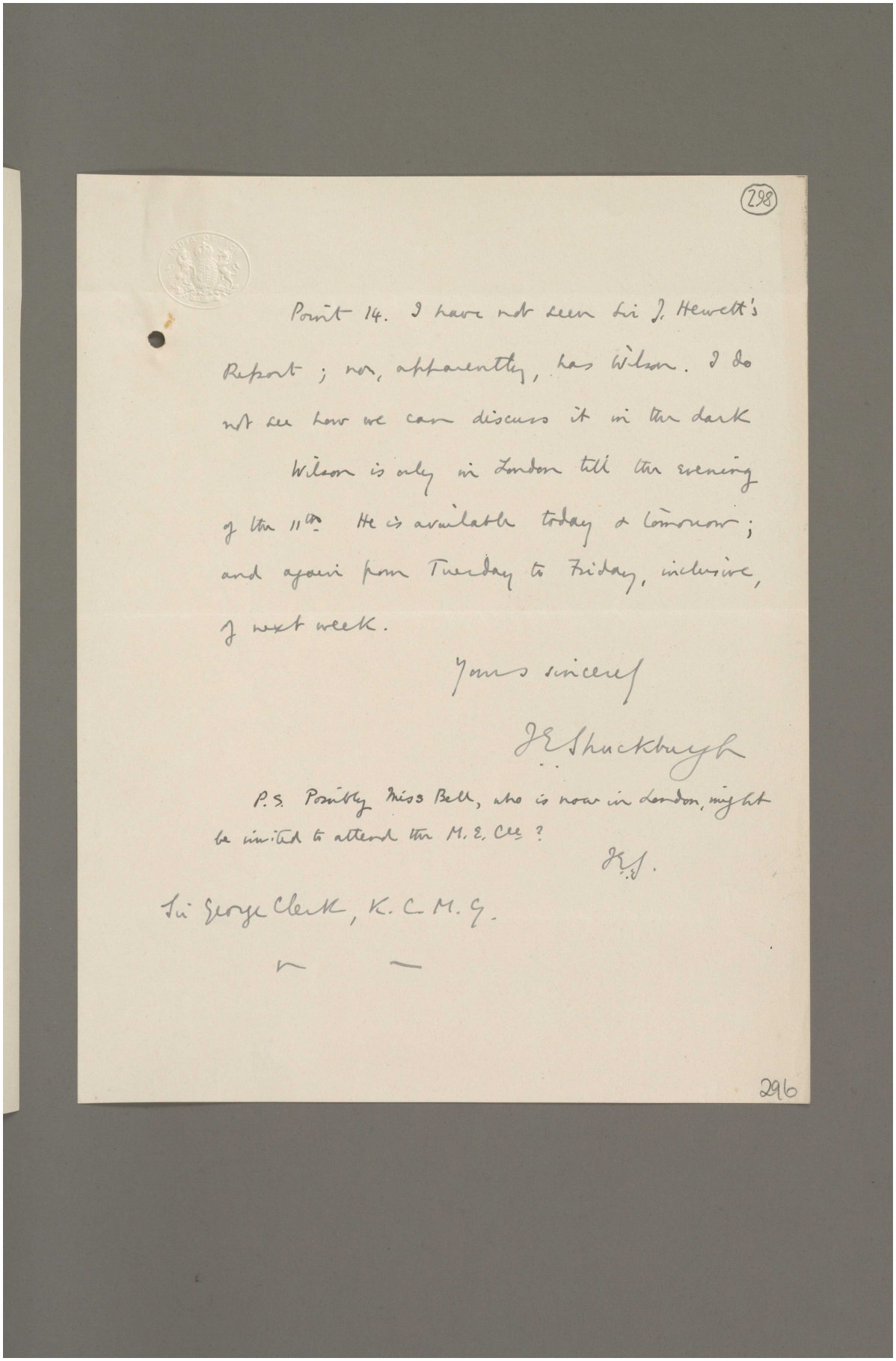

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Point 14. I have not seen Sir J. Hewett's Report; nor, apparently, has Wilson. I do not see how we can discuss it in the dark.

Wilson is only in London till the evening of the 11th. He is available today & tomorrow; and again from Tuesday to Friday, inclusive, of next week.

Yours sincerely

J E Shuckburgh

P.S. Possibly Miss Bell, who is now in London, might be invited to attend the M.E. Cee?

J.E.S.

Sir George Clerk, K.C.M.G.

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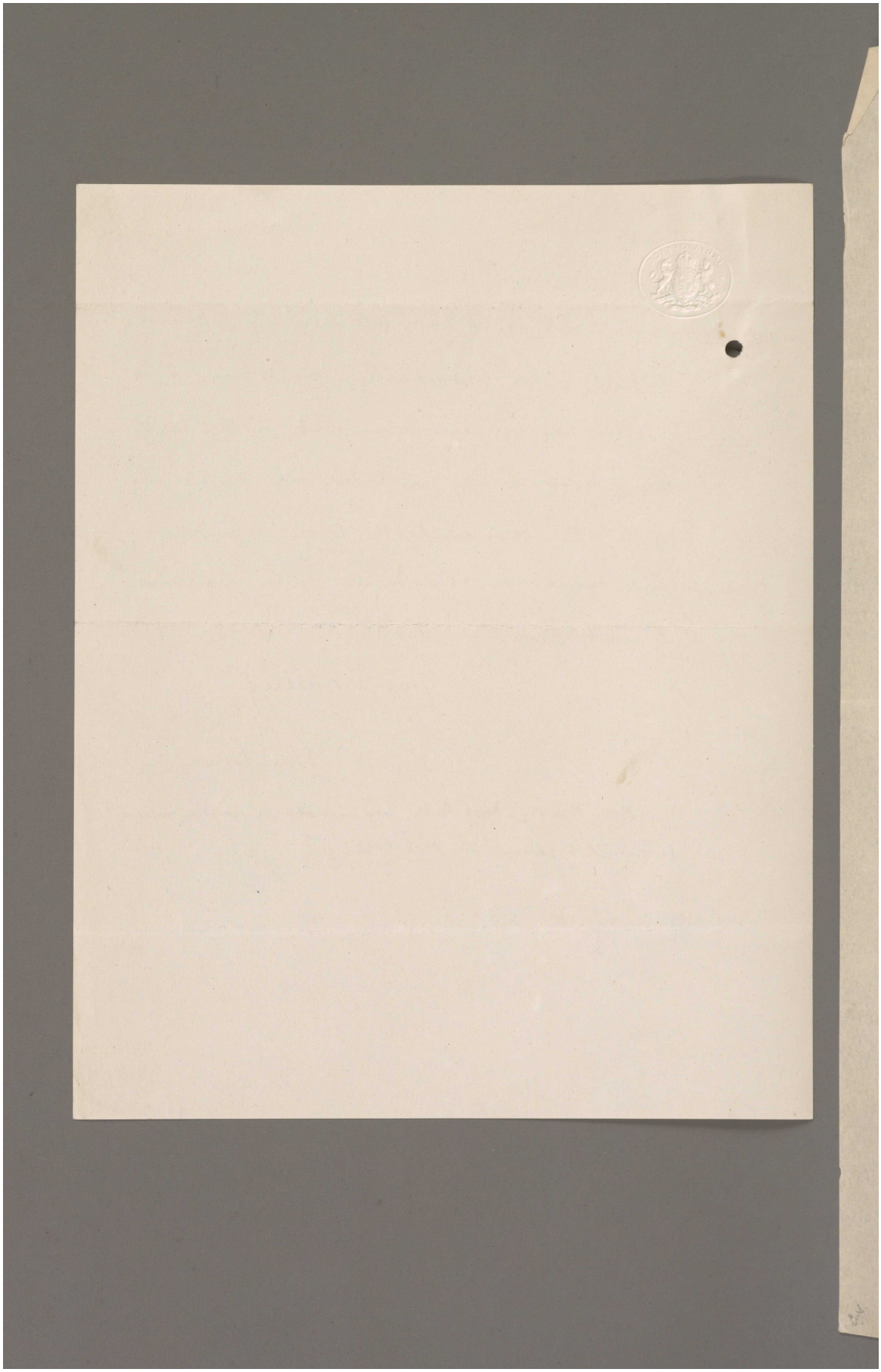

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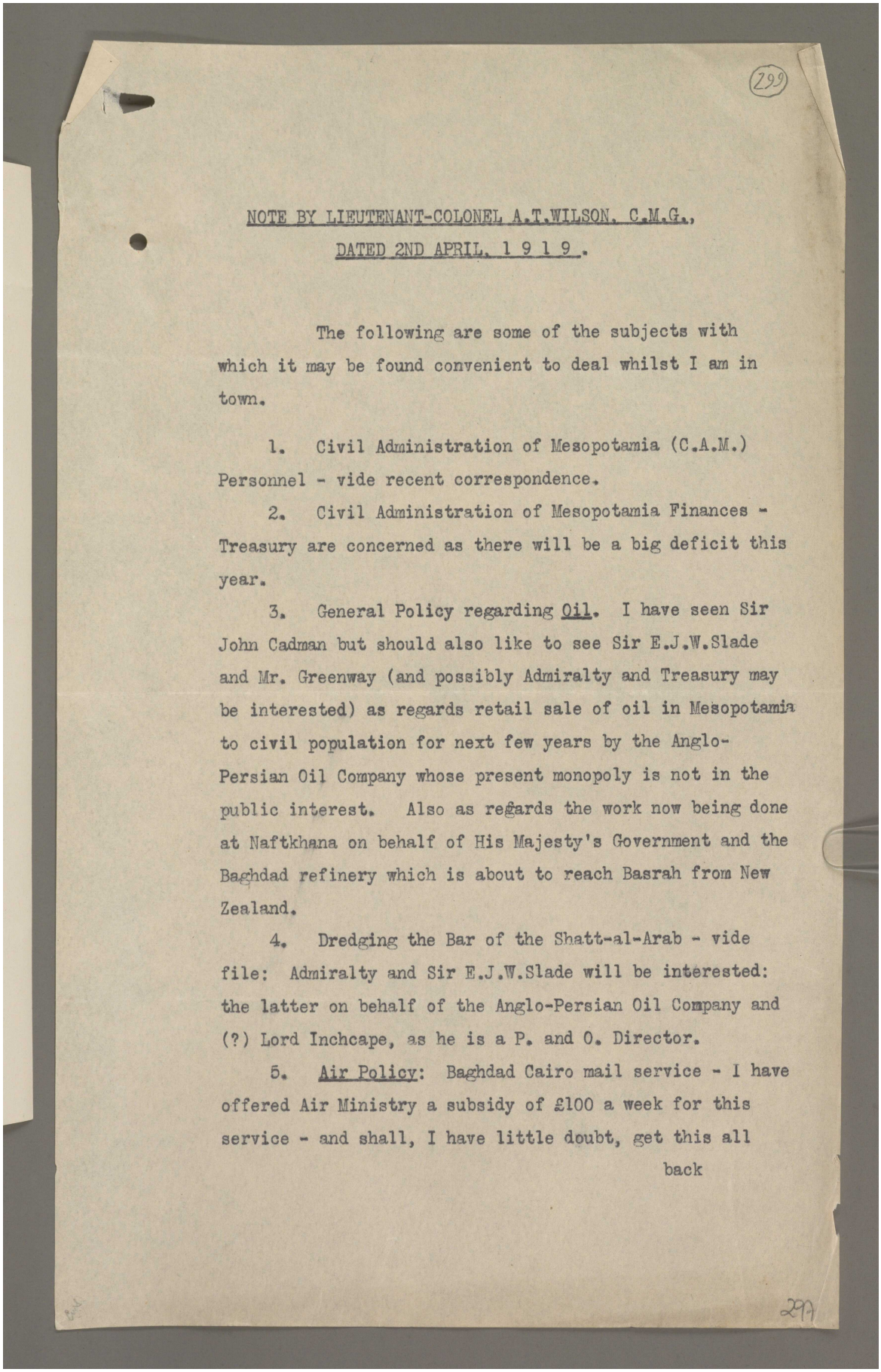

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NOTE BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A.T.WILSON, C.M.G.,
DATED 2ND APRIL, 1 9 1 9 .

The following are some of the subjects with which it may be found convenient to deal whilst I am in town.

1. Civil Administration of Mesopotamia (C.A.M.) Personnel - vide recent correspondence.

2. Civil Administration of Mesopotamia Finances - Treasury are concerned as there will be a big deficit this year.

3. General Policy regarding Oil. I have seen Sir John Cadman but should also like to see Sir E.J.W.Slade and Mr. Greenway (and possibly Admiralty and Treasury may be interested) as regards retail sale of oil in Mesopotamia to civil population for next few years by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company whose present monopoly is not in the public interest. Also as regards the work now being done at Naftkhana on behalf of His Majesty's Government and the Baghdad refinery which is about to reach Basrah from New Zealand.

4. Dredging the Bar of the Shatt-al-Arab - vide file: Admiralty and Sir E.J.W.Slade will be interested: the latter on behalf of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and (?) Lord Inchcape, as he is a P. and O. Director.

5. Air Policy: Baghdad Cairo mail service - I have offered Air Ministry a subsidy of £100 a week for this service - and shall, I have little doubt, get this all back

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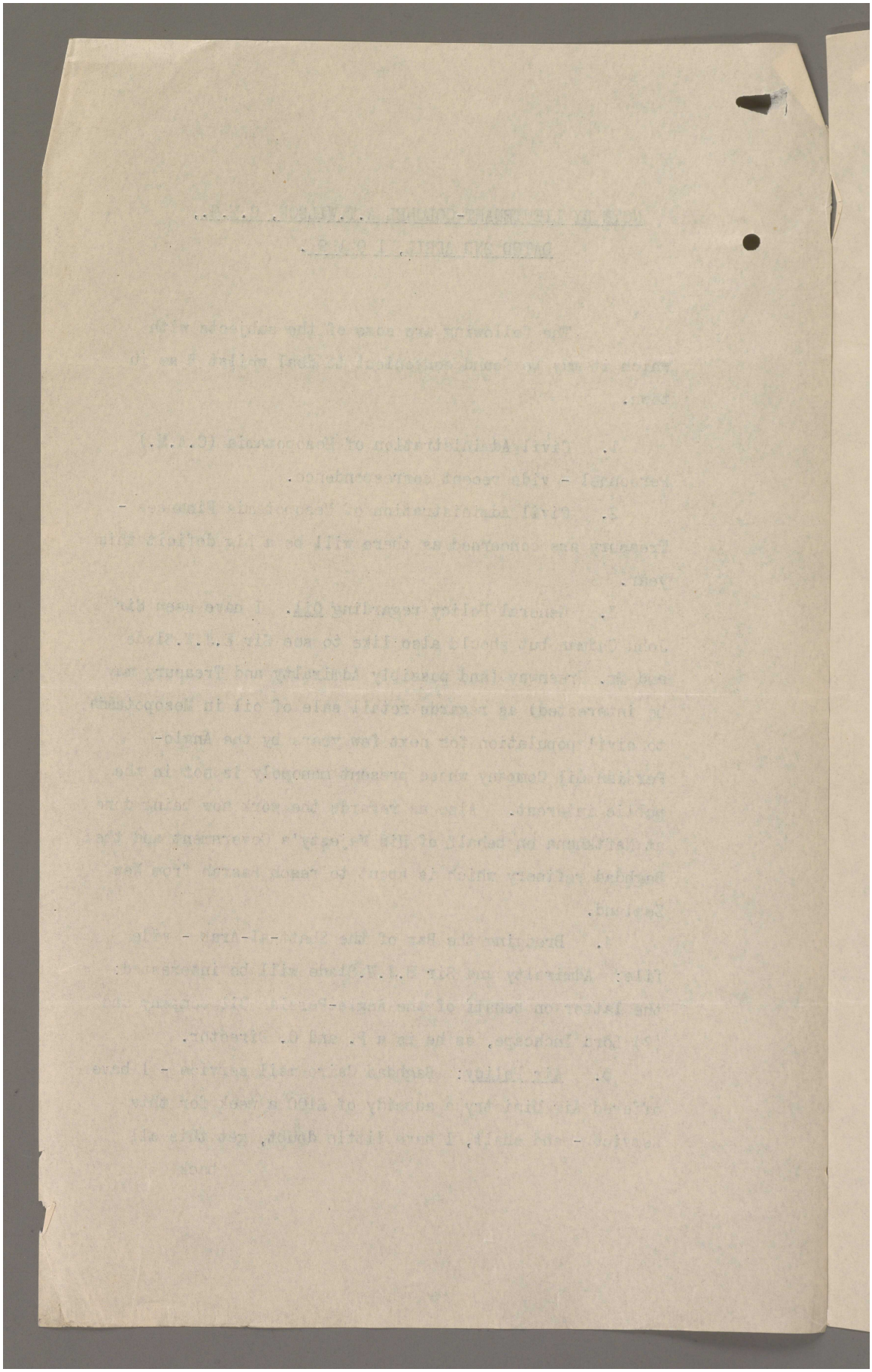

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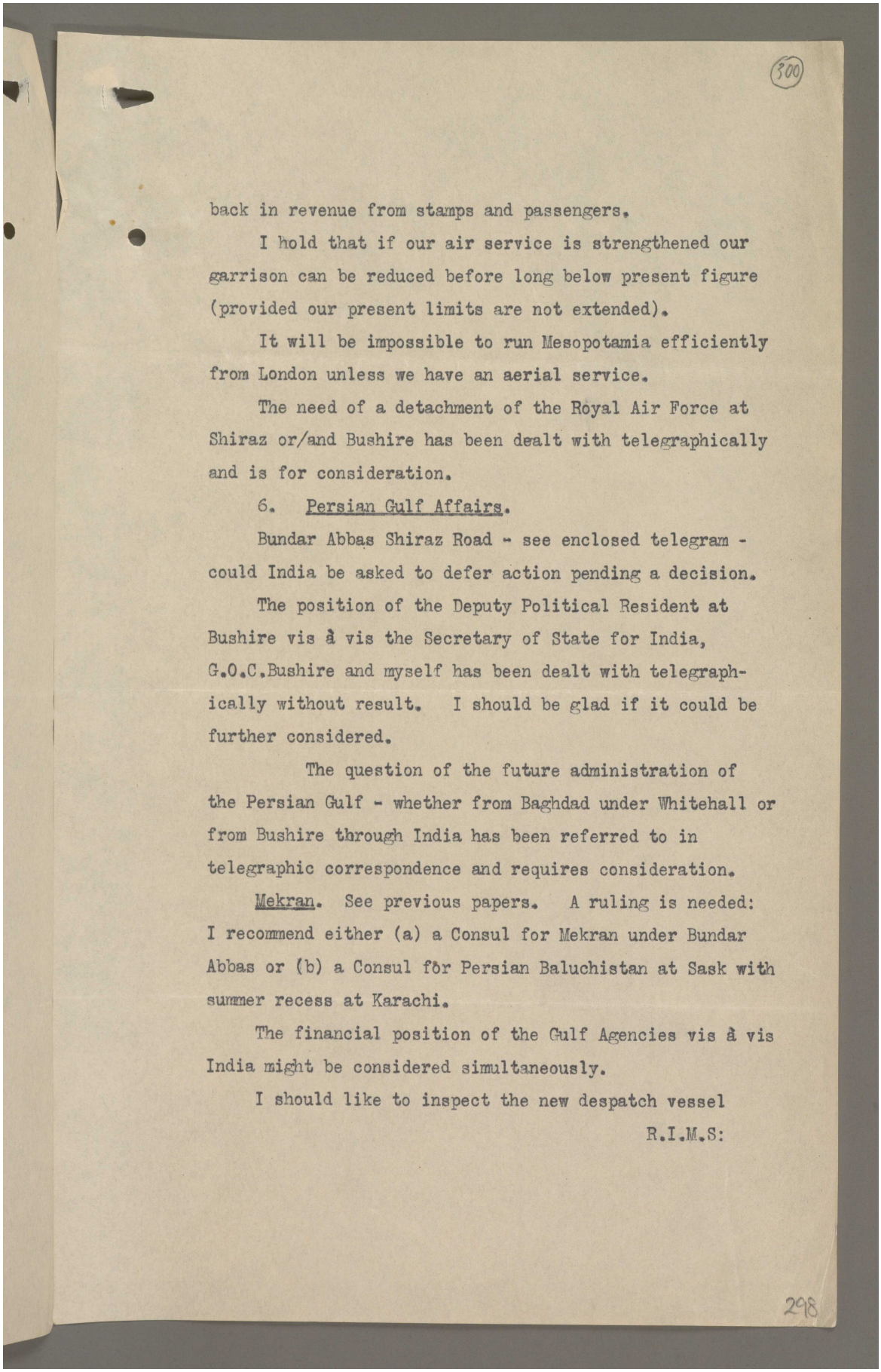

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back in revenue from stamps and passengers.

I hold that if our air service is strengthened our garrison can be reduced before long below present figure (provided our present limits are not extended).

It will be impossible to run Mesopotamia efficiently from London unless we have an aerial service.

The need of a detachment of the Royal Air Force at Shiraz or/and Bushire has been dealt with telegraphically and is for consideration.

6. Persian Gulf Affairs.

Bundar Abbas Shiraz Road - see enclosed telegram - could India be asked to defer action pending a decision.

The position of the Deputy Political Resident at Bushire vis à vis the Secretary of State for India, G.O.C.Bushire and myself has been dealt with telegraphically without result. I should be glad if it could be further considered.

The question of the future administration of the Persian Gulf - whether from Baghdad under Whitehall or from Bushire through India has been referred to in telegraphic correspondence and requires consideration.

Mekran. See previous papers. A ruling is needed: I recommend either (a) a Consul for Mekran under Bundar Abbas or (b) a Consul for Persian Baluchistan at Sask with summer recess at Karachi.

The financial position of the Gulf Agencies vis à vis India might be considered simultaneously.

I should like to inspect the new despatch vessel R.I.M.S:

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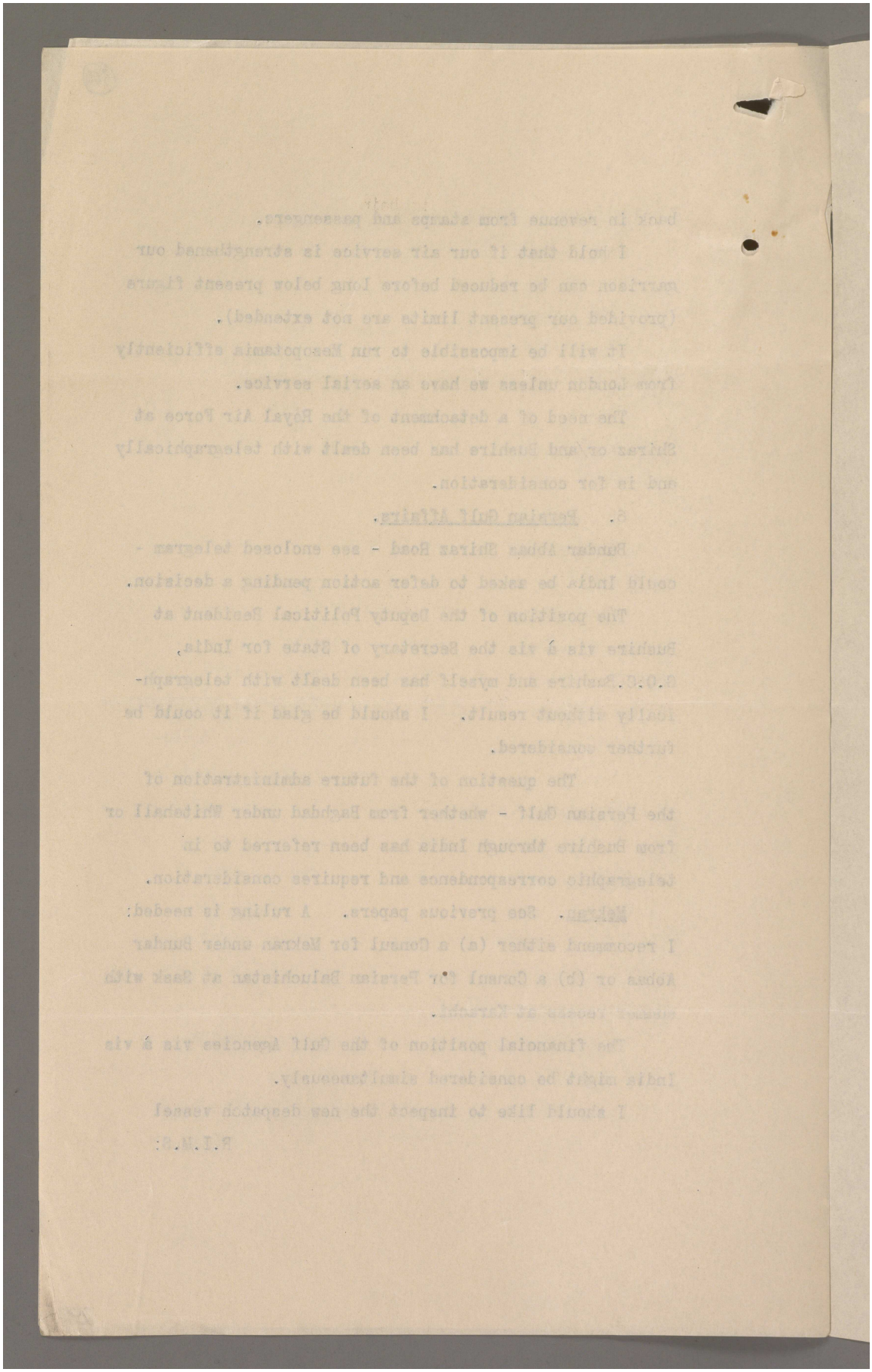

R.I.M.S: Laurence, which is being built for the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

The position of the Shiraz Consulate vis à vis Bushire might well be summarily regulated during the next few months.

I think much good would result from a visit to London on duty of the Deputy Political Resident, Bushire (Mr. Bill) to place the local aspect of these questions before His Majesty's Government.

I see no reason why with or without communications by air the Consul should not be under the Resident as in the case of Bundar Abbas.

7. Central Arabian Affairs.

The position of the American Mission at Bahrein needs to be defined. We cannot accept the position that they have the right to work in Central Asia without the consent both of the local authorities or our local officers.

8. Railway Policy in Mesopotamia - Government versus Company Management.

War Office and Foreign Office will be interested and possibly Board of Trade or Department of Overseas Trade.

9. Colonization and Immigration Policy in Mesopotamia and use of Indian or African labour.

I should like to ventilate subject and learn what attitude in London is on these questions.

10. Telegraph Policy.

Vide my proposals re I.E.T.D.

11. Post-War Garrisons: use of King's African Rifles in

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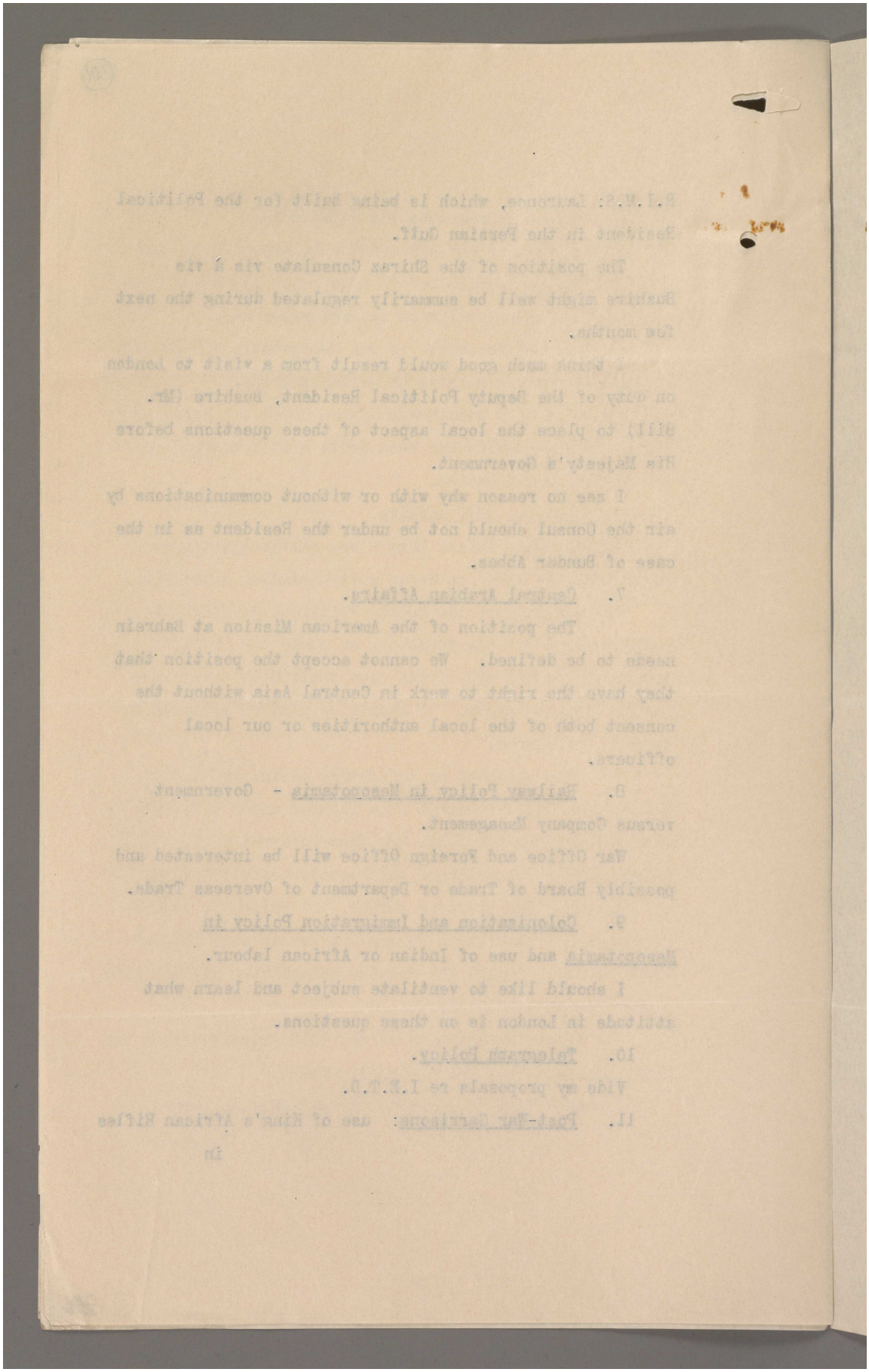

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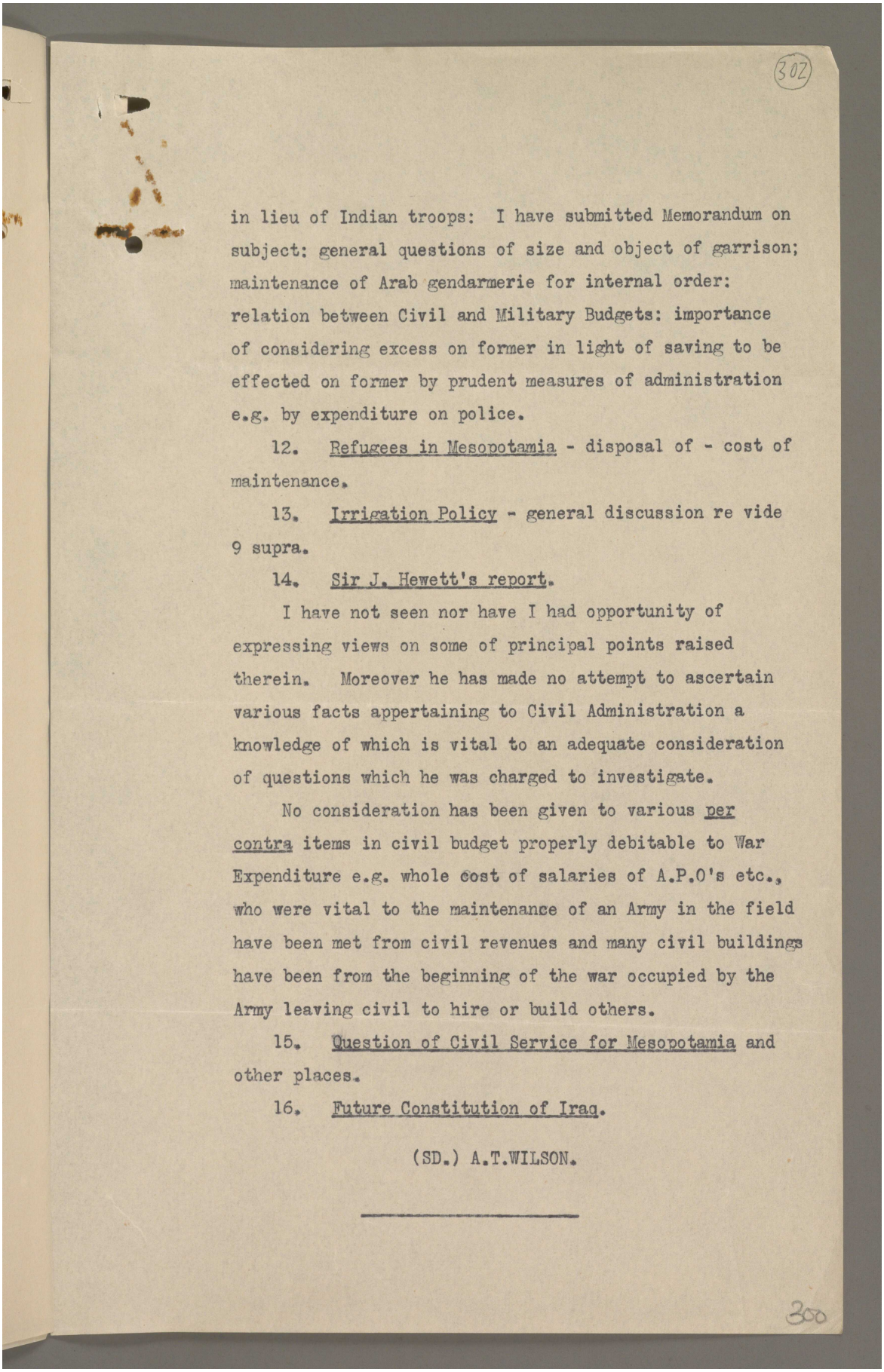

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in lieu of Indian troops: I have submitted Memorandum on subject: general questions of size and object of garrison; maintenance of Arab gendarmerie for internal order: relation between Civil and Military Budgets: importance of considering excess on former in light of saving to be effected on former by prudent measures of administration e.g. by expenditure on police.

12. Refugees in Mesopotamia - disposal of - cost of maintenance.

13. Irrigation Policy - general discussion re vide 9 supra.

14. Sir J. Hewett's report.

I have not seen nor have I had opportunity of expressing views on some of principal points raised therein. Moreover he has made no attempt to ascertain various facts appertaining to Civil Administration a knowledge of which is vital to an adequate consideration of questions which he was charged to investigate.

No consideration has been given to various per contra items in civil budget properly debitable to War Expenditure e.g. whole cost of salaries of A.P.O's etc., who were vital to the maintenance of an Army in the field have been met from civil revenues and many civil buildings have been from the beginning of the war occupied by the Army leaving civil to hire or build others.

15. Question of Civil Service for Mesopotamia and other places.

16. Future Constitution of Iraq.

(SD.) A.T.WILSON.

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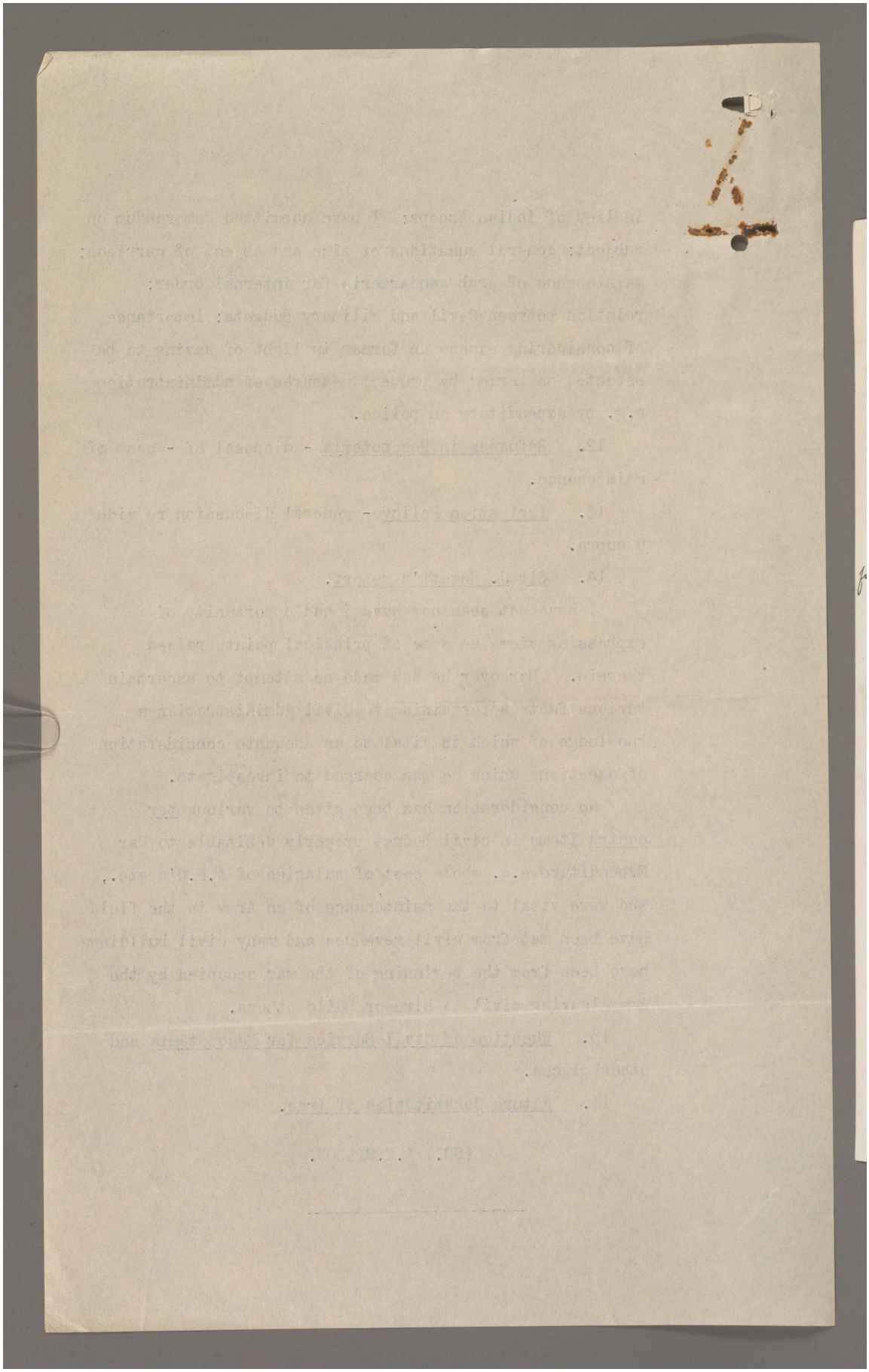

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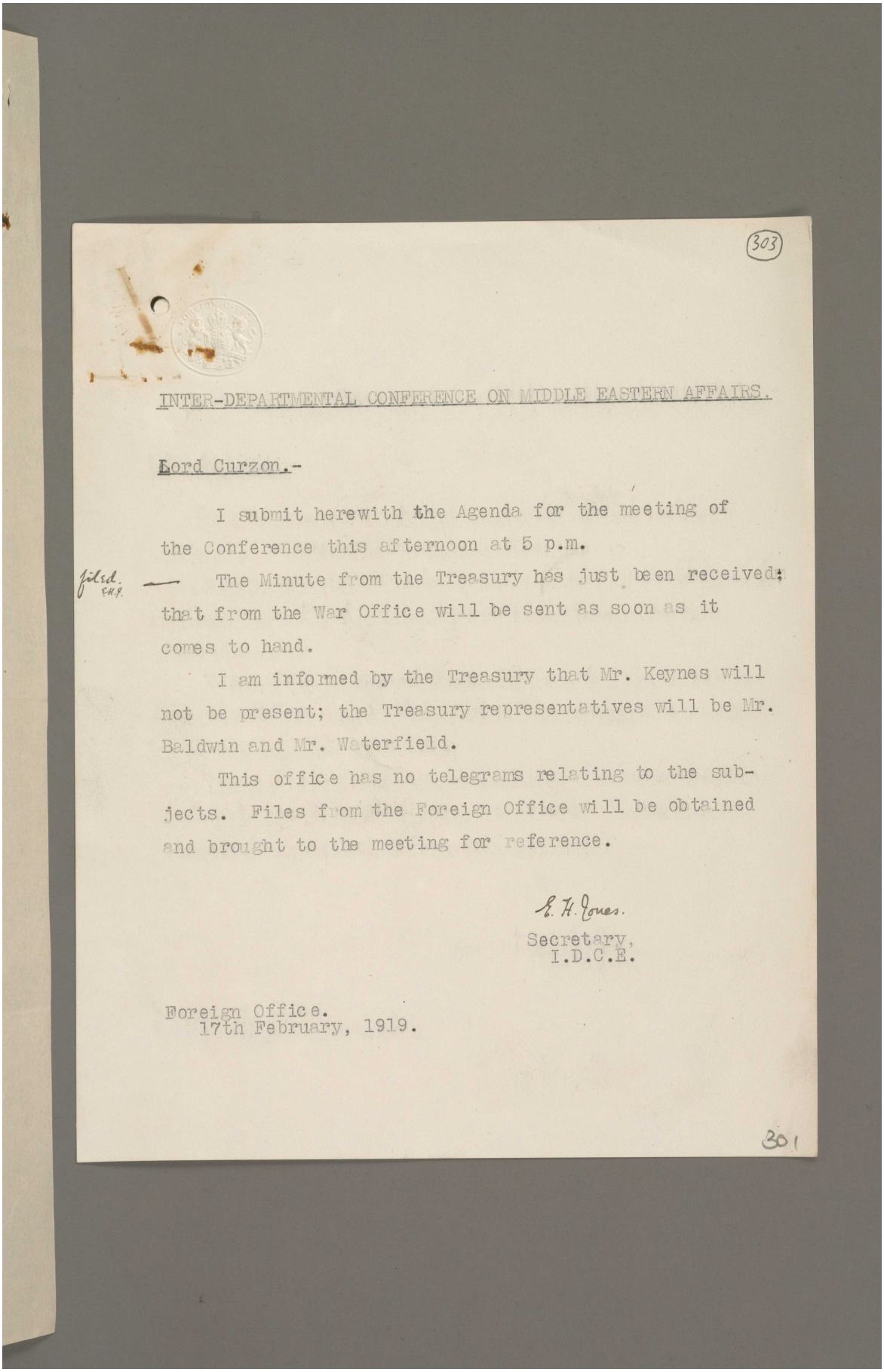

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INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS.

Lord Curzon.-

I submit herewith the Agenda for the meeting of the Conference this afternoon at 5 p.m.

filed. E.H.J. — The Minute from the Treasury has just been received; that from the War Office will be sent as soon as it comes to hand.

I am informed by the Treasury that Mr. Keynes will not be present; the Treasury representatives will be Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Waterfield.

This office has no telegrams relating to the subjects. Files from the Foreign Office will be obtained and brought to the meeting for reference.

E. H. Jones.
Secretary,
I.D.C.E.

Foreign Office.
17th February, 1919.

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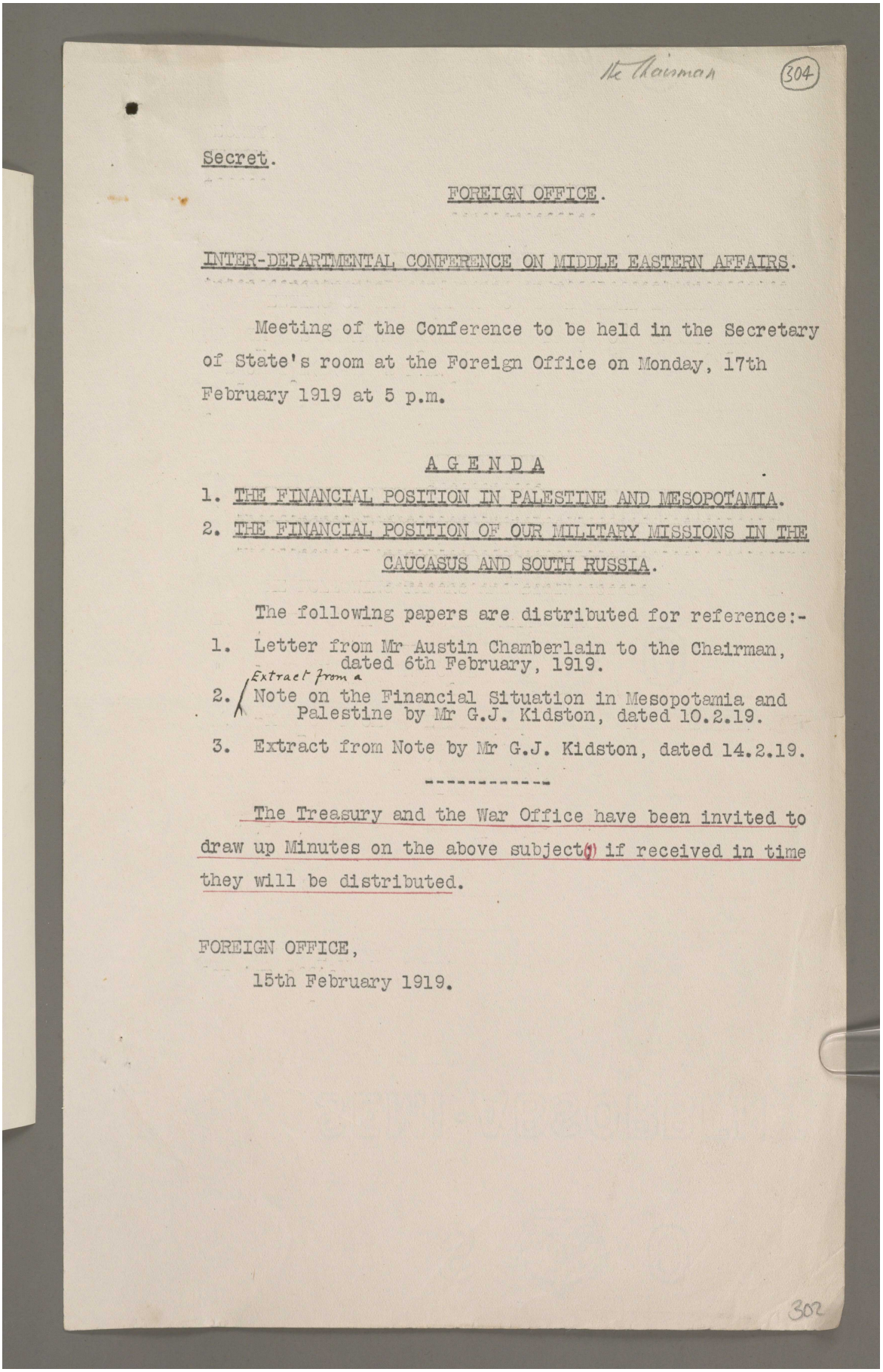

The Chairman (304)

Secret.

FOREIGN OFFICE.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS.

Meeting of the Conference to be held in the Secretary of State's room at the Foreign Office on Monday, 17th February 1919 at 5 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. THE FINANCIAL POSITION IN PALESTINE AND MESOPOTAMIA.
2. THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF OUR MILITARY MISSIONS IN THE CAUCASUS AND SOUTH RUSSIA.

The following papers are distributed for reference:-

1. Letter from Mr Austin Chamberlain to the Chairman, dated 6th February, 1919.
2. Extract from a Note on the Financial Situation in Mesopotamia and Palestine by Mr G.J. Kidston, dated 10.2.19.
3. Extract from Note by Mr G.J. Kidston, dated 14.2.19.

The Treasury and the War Office have been invited to draw up Minutes on the above subject(s) if received in time they will be distributed.

FOREIGN OFFICE,
15th February 1919.

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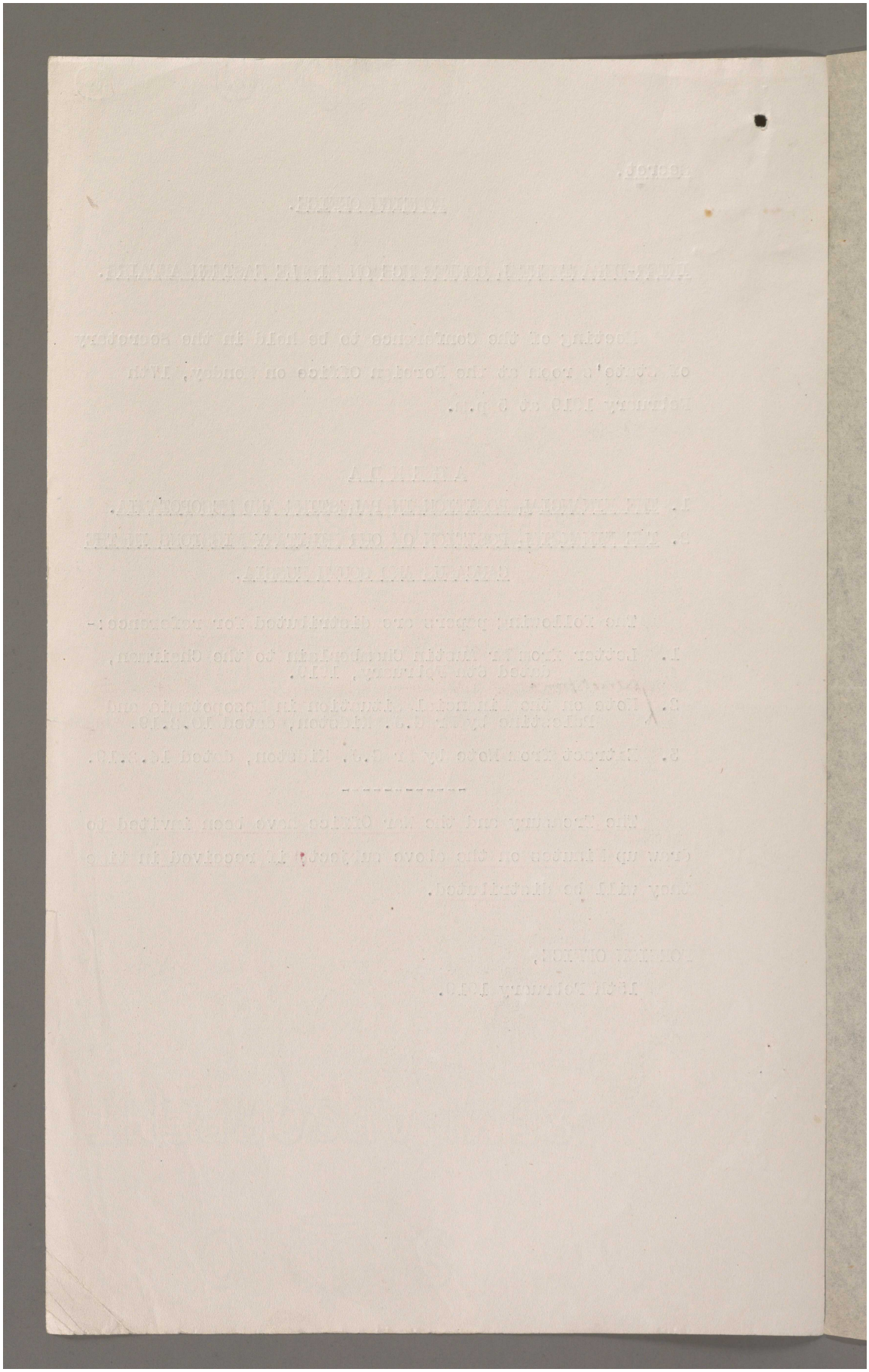

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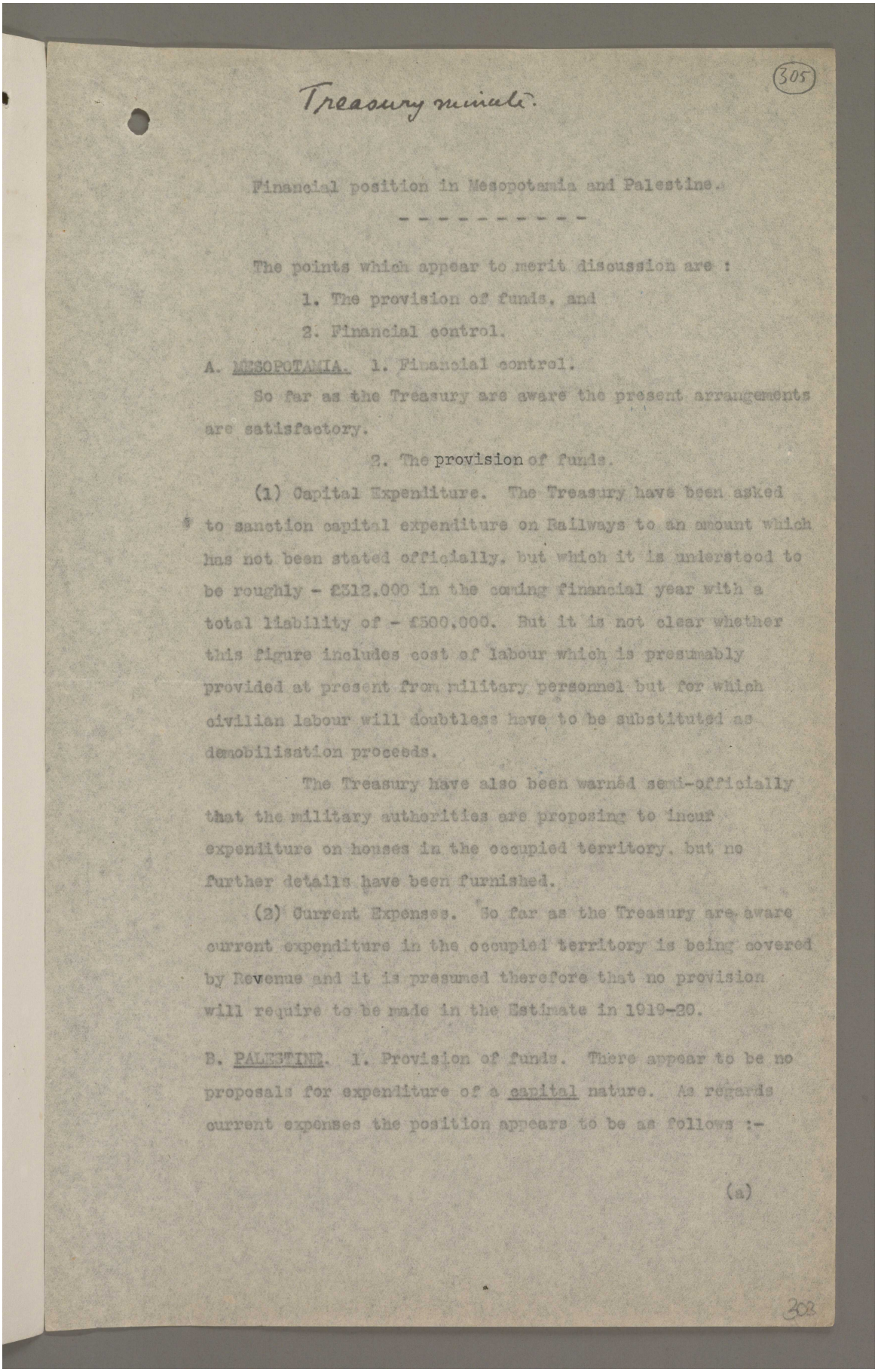

Treasury minute.

(305)

Financial position in Mesopotamia and Palestine.

- - - - - - - - - - -

The points which appear to merit discussion are :

1. The provision of funds, and
2. Financial control.

A. MESOPOTAMIA. 1. Financial control.

So far as the Treasury are aware the present arrangements are satisfactory.

2. The provision of funds.

(1) Capital Expenditure. The Treasury have been asked to sanction capital expenditure on Railways to an amount which has not been stated officially, but which it is understood to be roughly - £312,000 in the coming financial year with a total liability of - £500,000. But it is not clear whether this figure includes cost of labour which is presumably provided at present from military personnel but for which civilian labour will doubtless have to be substituted as demobilisation proceeds.

The Treasury have also been warned semi-officially that the military authorities are proposing to incur expenditure on houses in the occupied territory, but no further details have been furnished.

(2) Current Expenses. So far as the Treasury are aware current expenditure in the occupied territory is being covered by Revenue and it is presumed therefore that no provision will require to be made in the Estimate in 1919-20.

B. PALESTINE. 1. Provision of funds. There appear to be no proposals for expenditure of a capital nature. As regards current expenses the position appears to be as follows :-

(a)

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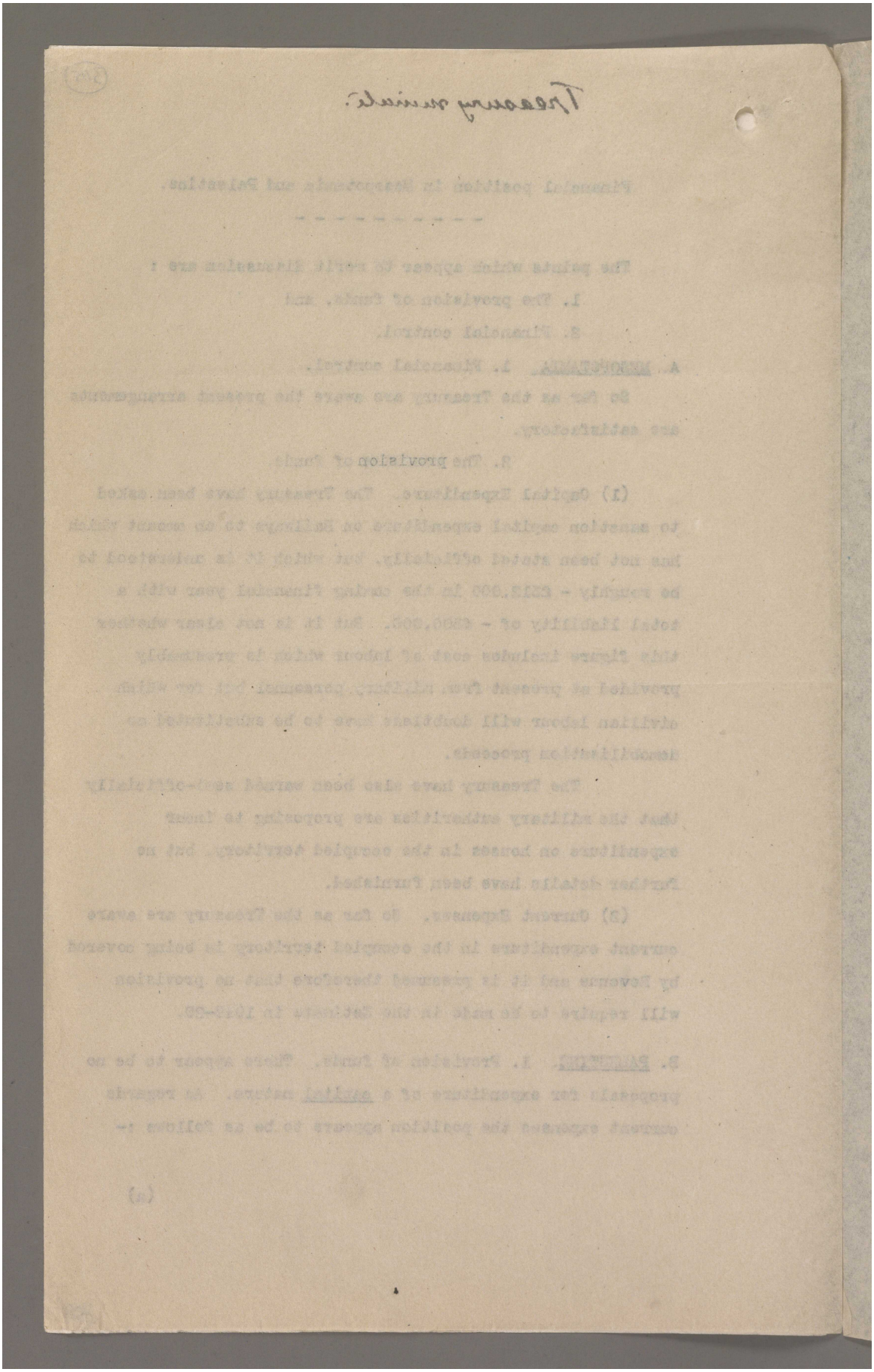

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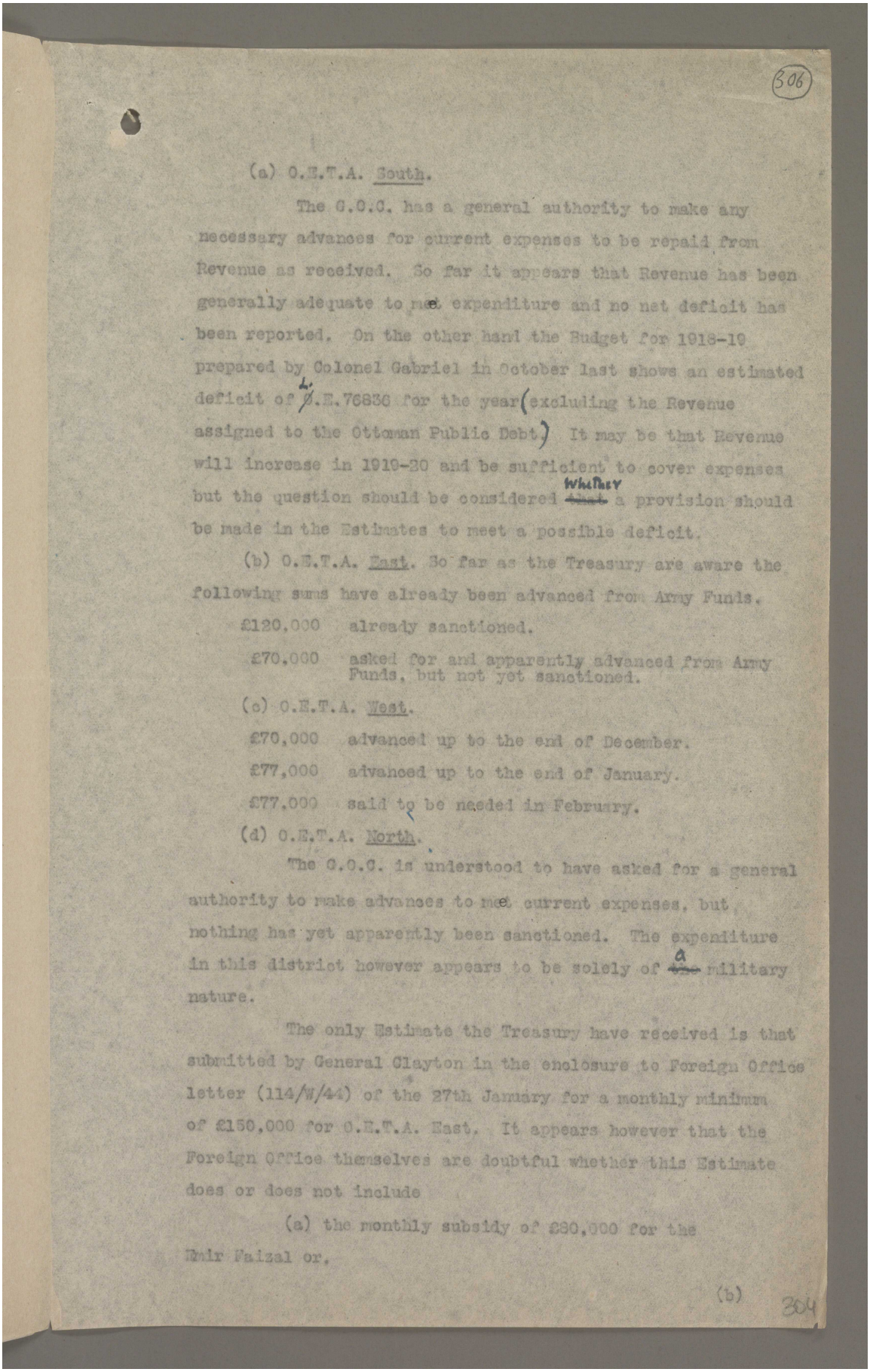

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(a) O.E.T.A. South.

The G.O.C. has a general authority to make any necessary advances for current expenses to be repaid from Revenue as received. So far it appears that Revenue has been generally adequate to meet expenditure and no net deficit has been reported. On the other hand the Budget for 1918-19 prepared by Colonel Gabriel in October last shows an estimated deficit of £.E.76836 for the year (excluding the Revenue assigned to the Ottoman Public Debt) It may be that Revenue will increase in 1919-20 and be sufficient to cover expenses but the question should be considered whether a provision should be made in the Estimates to meet a possible deficit.

(b) O.E.T.A. East. So far as the Treasury are aware the following sums have already been advanced from Army Funds.

£120,000 already sanctioned.

£70,000 asked for and apparently advanced from Army Funds, but not yet sanctioned.

(c) O.E.T.A. West.

£70,000 advanced up to the end of December.

£77,000 advanced up to the end of January.

£77,000 said to be needed in February.

(d) O.E.T.A. North.

The G.O.C. is understood to have asked for a general authority to make advances to meet current expenses, but nothing has yet apparently been sanctioned. The expenditure in this district however appears to be solely of a military nature.

The only Estimate the Treasury have received is that submitted by General Clayton in the enclosure to Foreign Office letter (114/W/44) of the 27th January for a monthly minimum of £150,000 for O.E.T.A. East. It appears however that the Foreign Office themselves are doubtful whether this Estimate does or does not include

(a) the monthly subsidy of £80,000 for the Emir Faizal or,

(b)

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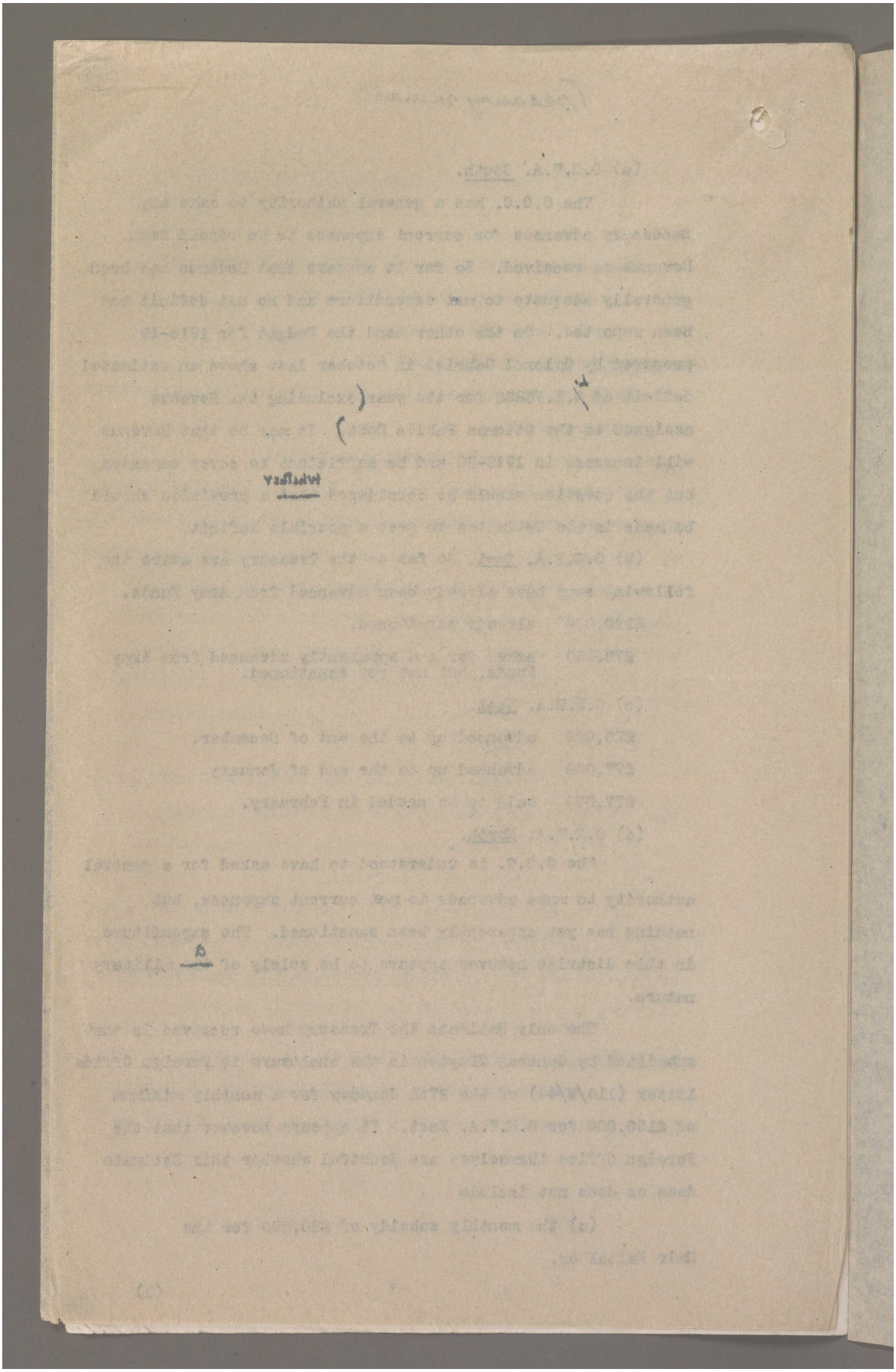

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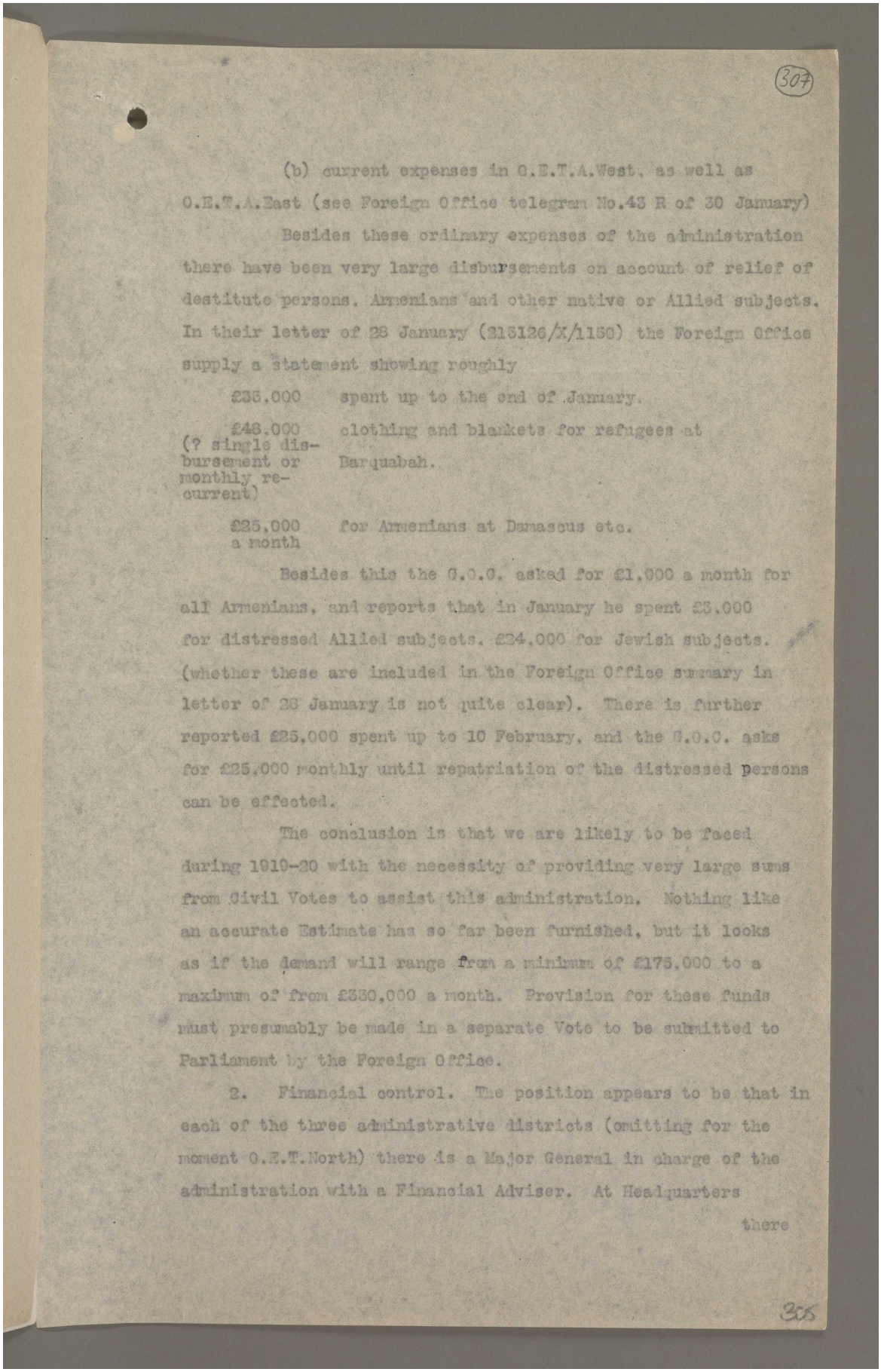

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(b) current expenses in O.E.T.A.West, as well as O.E.T.A.East (see Foreign Office telegram No.43 R of 30 January)

Besides these ordinary expenses of the administration there have been very large disbursements on account of relief of destitute persons, Armenians and other native or Allied subjects. In their letter of 28 January (215126/X/1150) the Foreign Office supply a statement showing roughly

£35,000 spent up to the end of January.

£48,000 (? single disbursement or monthly recurrent) clothing and blankets for refugees at Barquabah.

£25,000 a month for Armenians at Damascus etc.

Besides this the G.O.C. asked for £1,000 a month for all Armenians, and reports that in January he spent £3,000 for distressed Allied subjects, £24,000 for Jewish subjects. (whether these are included in the Foreign Office summary in letter of 28 January is not quite clear). There is further reported £25,000 spent up to 10 February, and the G.O.C. asks for £25,000 monthly until repatriation of the distressed persons can be effected.

The conclusion is that we are likely to be faced during 1919-20 with the necessity of providing very large sums from Civil Votes to assist this administration. Nothing like an accurate Estimate has so far been furnished, but it looks as if the demand will range from a minimum of £175,000 to a maximum of from £330,000 a month. Provision for these funds must presumably be made in a separate Vote to be submitted to Parliament by the Foreign Office.

2. Financial control. The position appears to be that in each of the three administrative districts (omitting for the moment O.E.T.North) there is a Major General in charge of the administration with a Financial Adviser. At Headquarters there

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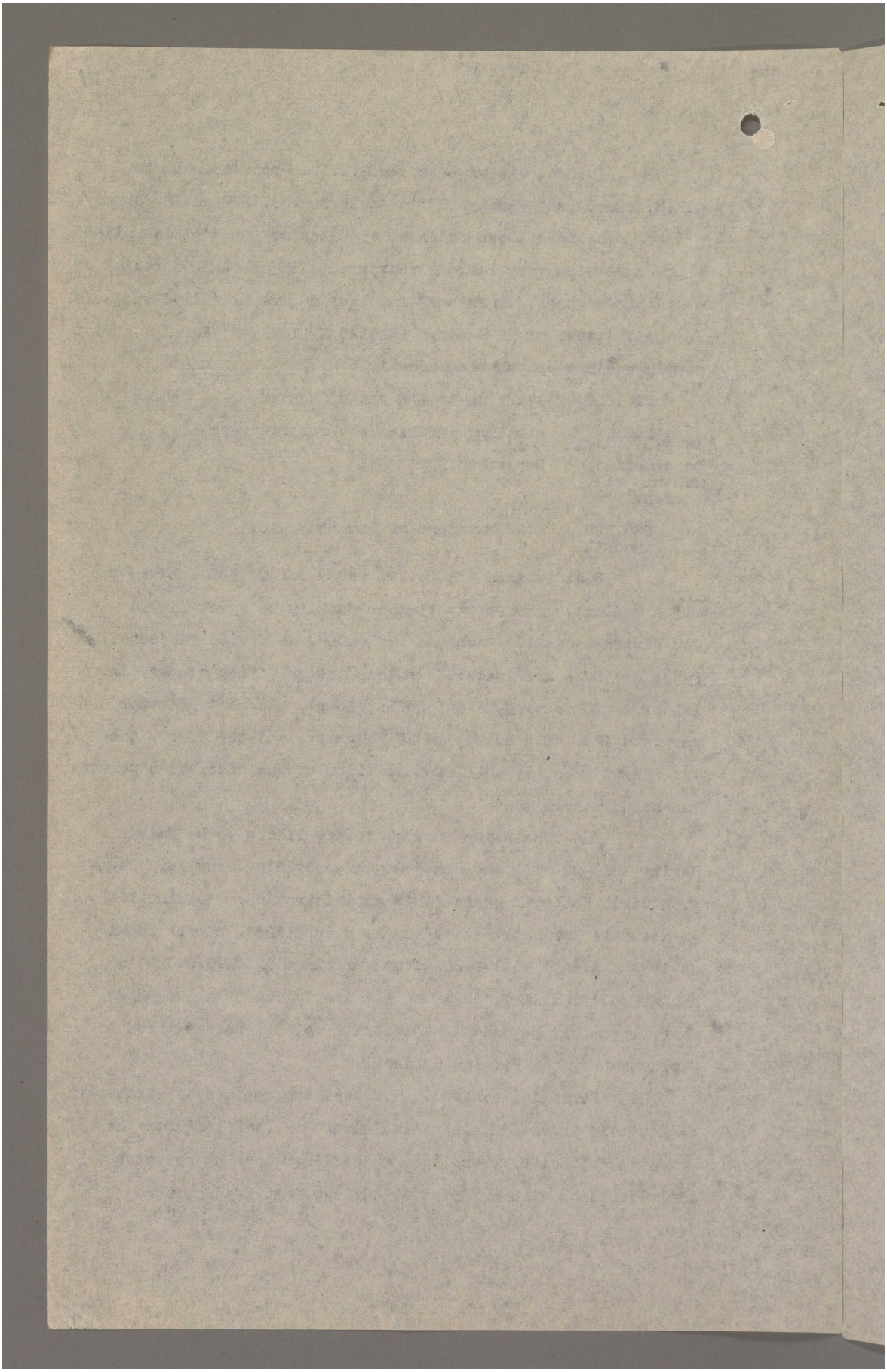

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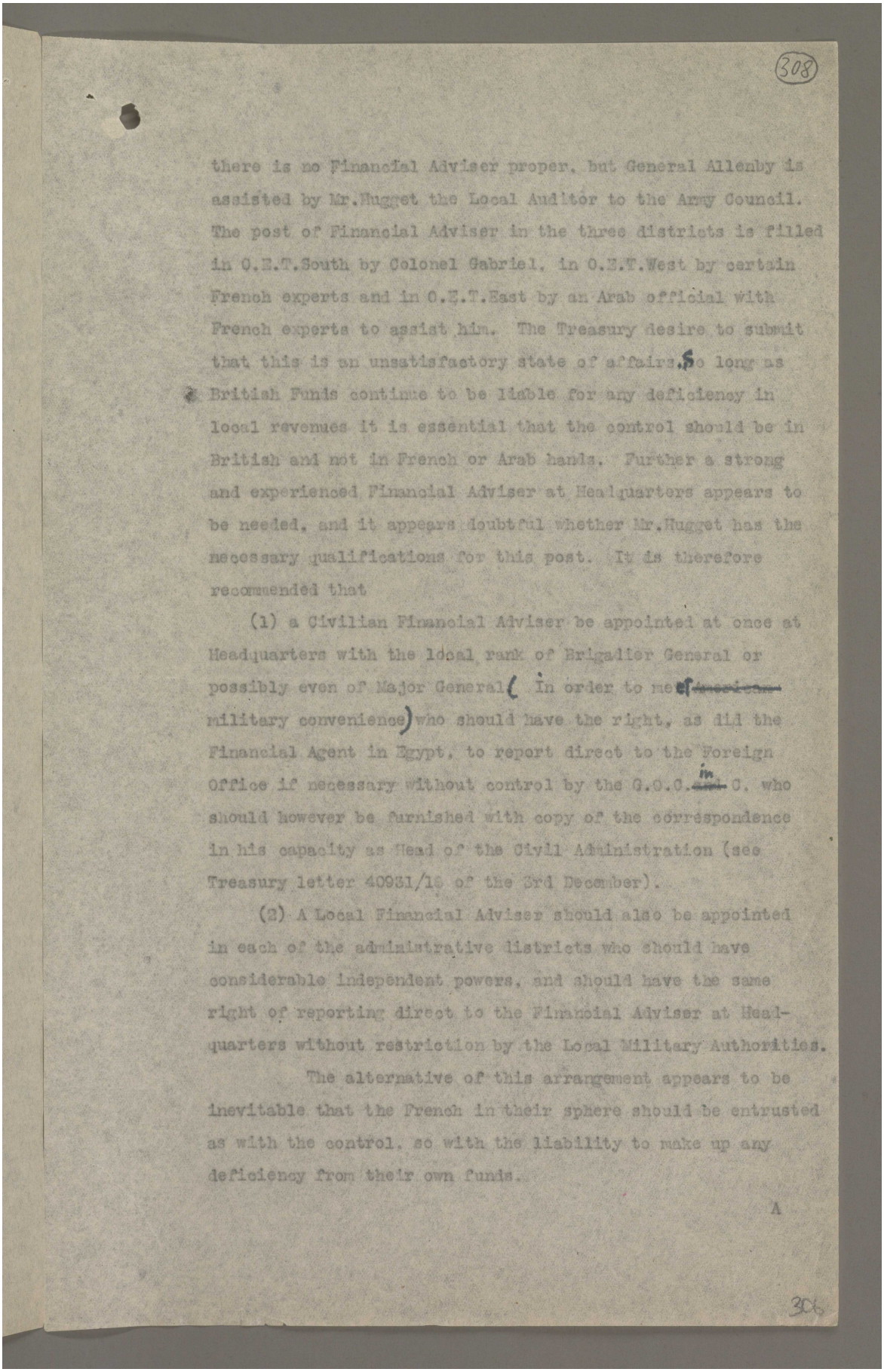

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there is no Financial Adviser proper, but General Allenby is assisted by Mr.Nugget the Local Auditor to the Army Council. The post of Financial Adviser in the three districts is filled in O.E.T.South by Colonel Gabriel, in O.E.T.West by certain French experts and in O.E.T.East by an Arab official with French experts to assist him. The Treasury desire to submit that this is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. So long as British Funds continue to be liable for any deficiency in local revenues it is essential that the control should be in British and not in French or Arab hands. Further a strong and experienced Financial Adviser at Headquarters appears to be needed, and it appears doubtful whether Mr.Nugget has the necessary qualifications for this post. It is therefore recommended that

(1) a Civilian Financial Adviser be appointed at once at Headquarters with the local rank of Brigadier General or possibly even of Major General (In order to meet ~~American~~ military convenience) who should have the right, as did the Financial Agent in Egypt, to report direct to the Foreign Office if necessary without control by the G.O.C.~~in~~ C. who should however be furnished with copy of the correspondence in his capacity as Head of the Civil Administration (see Treasury letter 40931/16 of the 3rd December).

(2) A Local Financial Adviser should also be appointed in each of the administrative districts who should have considerable independent powers, and should have the same right of reporting direct to the Financial Adviser at Headquarters without restriction by the Local Military Authorities.

The alternative of this arrangement appears to be inevitable that the French in their sphere should be entrusted as with the control, so with the liability to make up any deficiency from their own funds.

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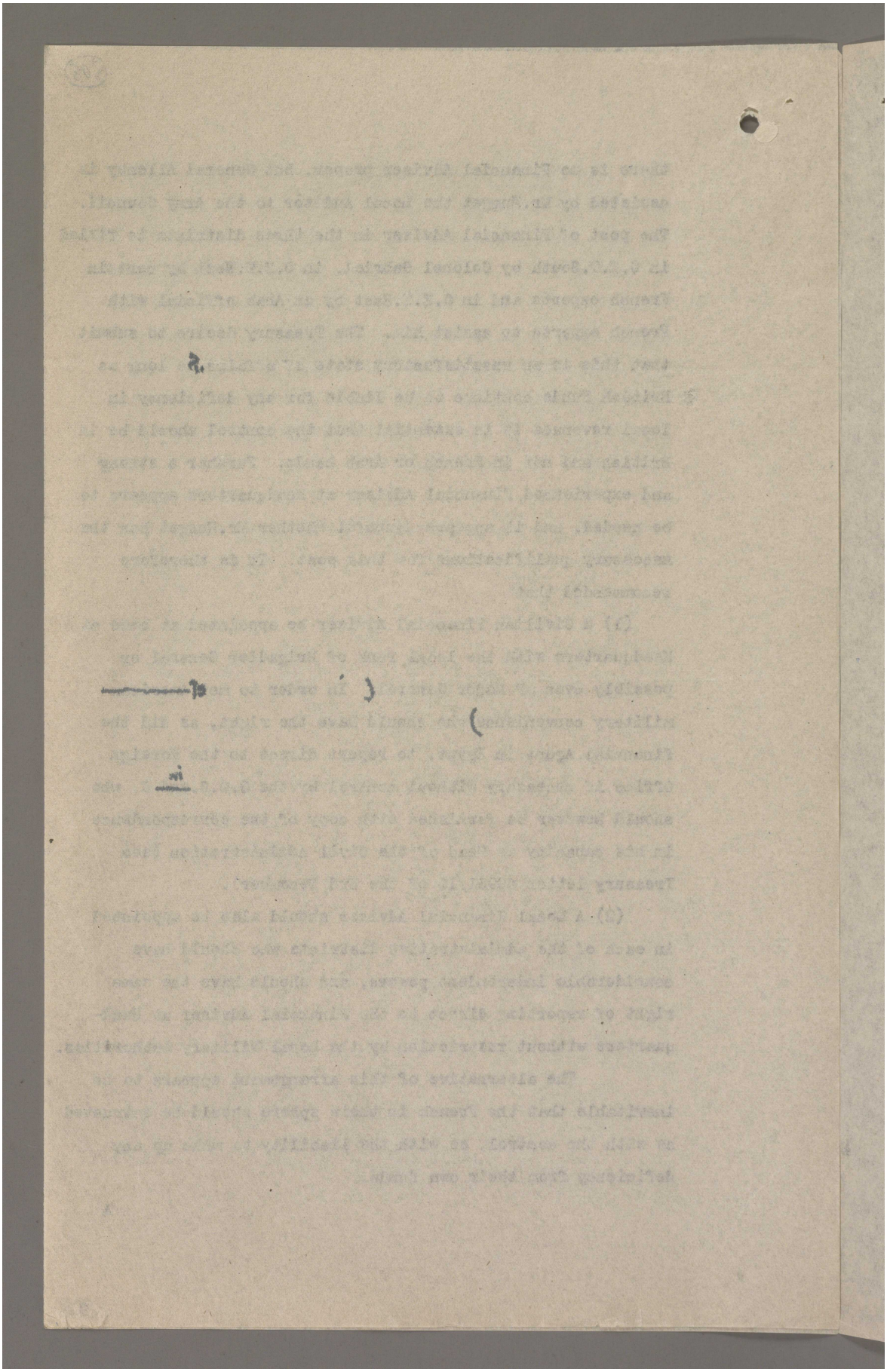

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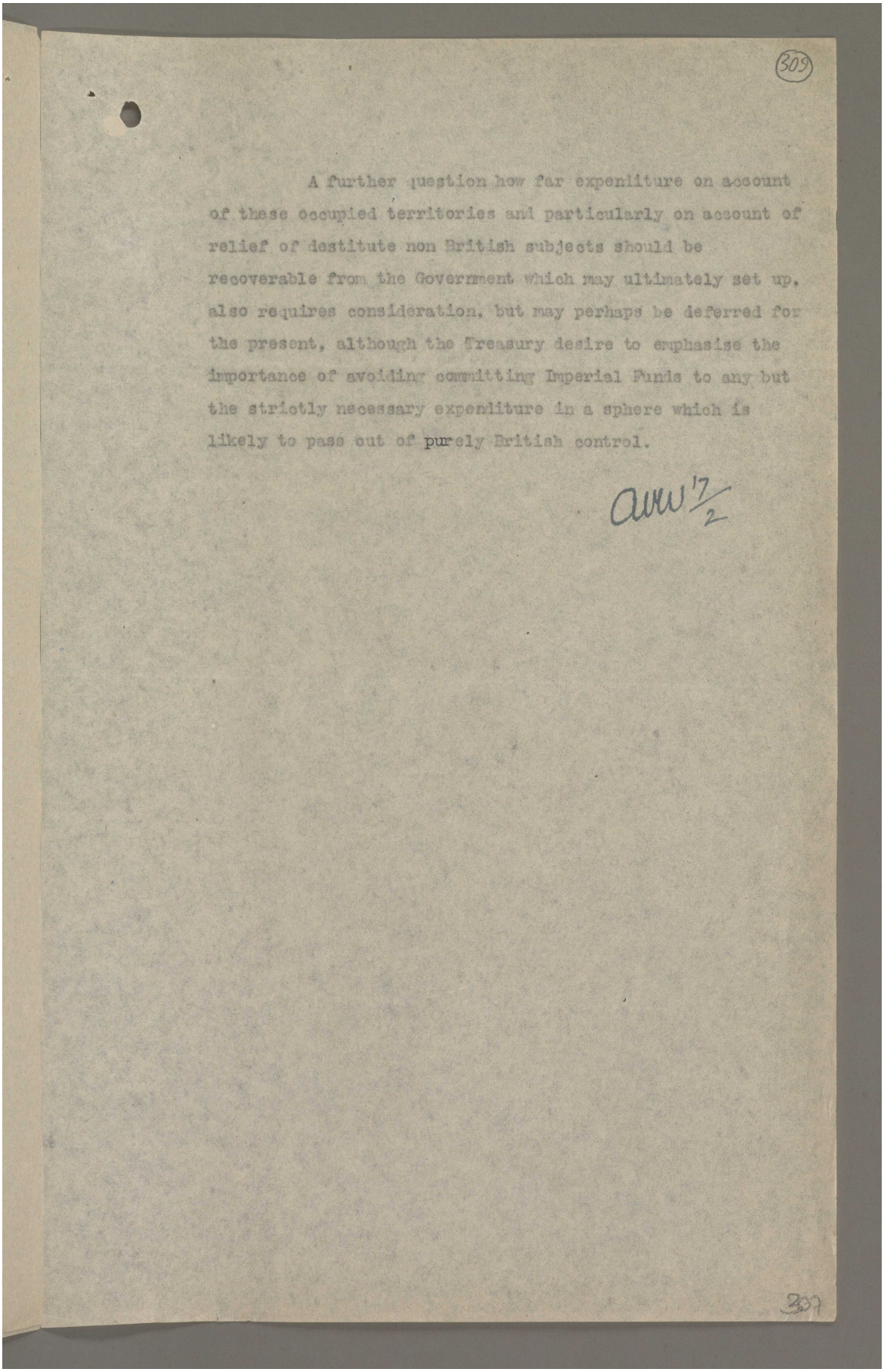

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A further question how far expenditure on account of these occupied territories and particularly on account of relief of destitute non British subjects should be recoverable from the Government which may ultimately set up, also requires consideration, but may perhaps be deferred for the present, although the Treasury desire to emphasise the importance of avoiding committing Imperial Funds to any but the strictly necessary expenditure in a sphere which is likely to pass out of purely British control.

AWW 17/2

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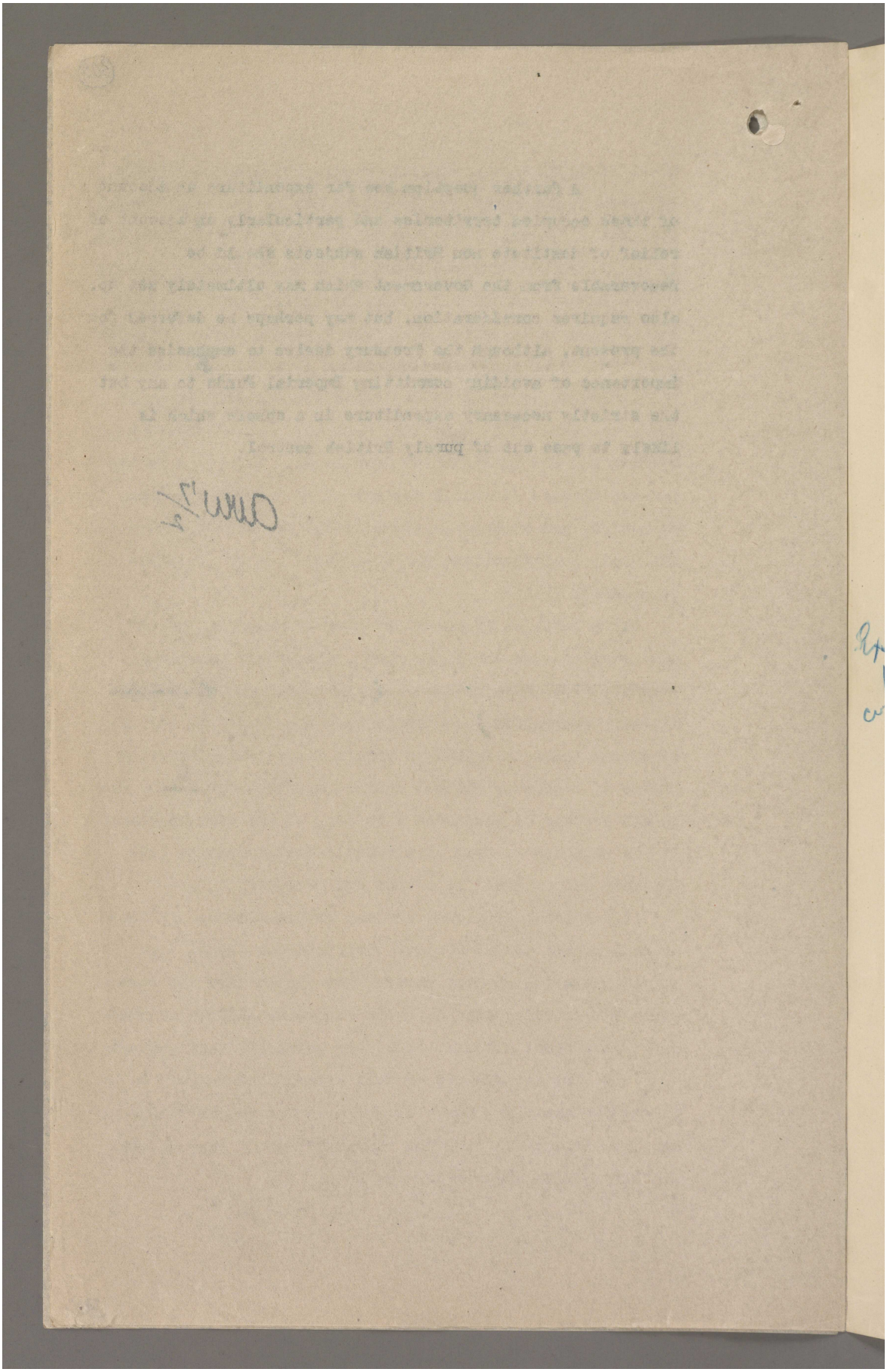

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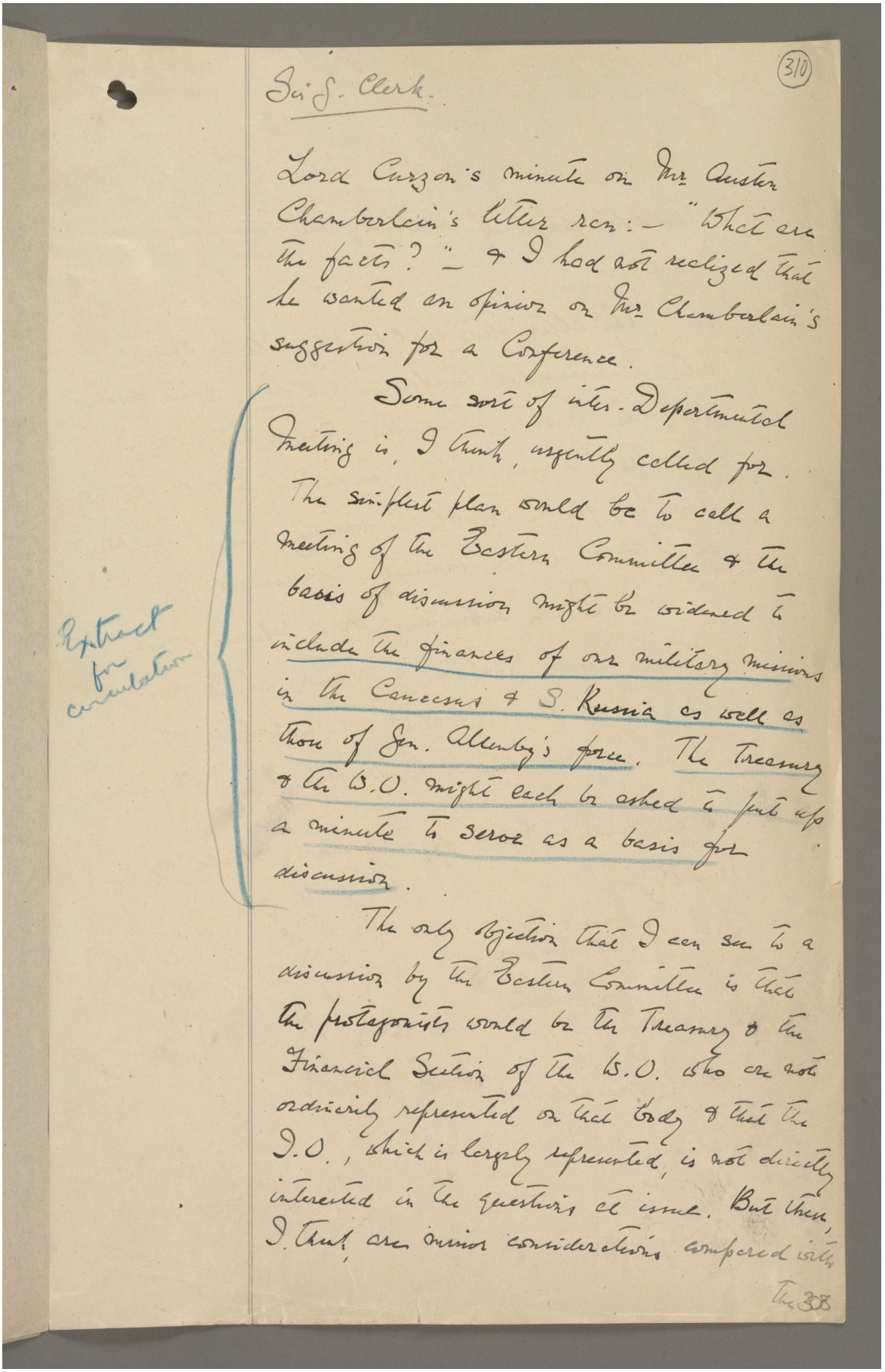

Sir S. Clerk.

(310)

Lord Curzon's minute on Mr Austen Chamberlain's letter runs:— "What are the facts?" — & I had not realized that he wanted an opinion on Mr Chamberlain's suggestion for a Conference.

Some sort of inter-Departmental meeting is, I think, usefully called for. The simplest plan would be to call a meeting of the Eastern Committee & the basis of discussion might be widened to include the finances of our military missions in the Caucasus & S. Russia as well as those of Gen. Allenby's force. The Treasury & the W.O. might each be asked to put up a minute to serve as a basis for discussion.

Extract for consultation

The only objection that I can see to a discussion by the Eastern Committee is that the protagonists would be the Treasury & the Financial Section of the W.O. who are not ordinarily represented on that body & that the I.O., which is largely represented, is not directly interested in the questions at issue. But then, I think, are minor considerations compared with

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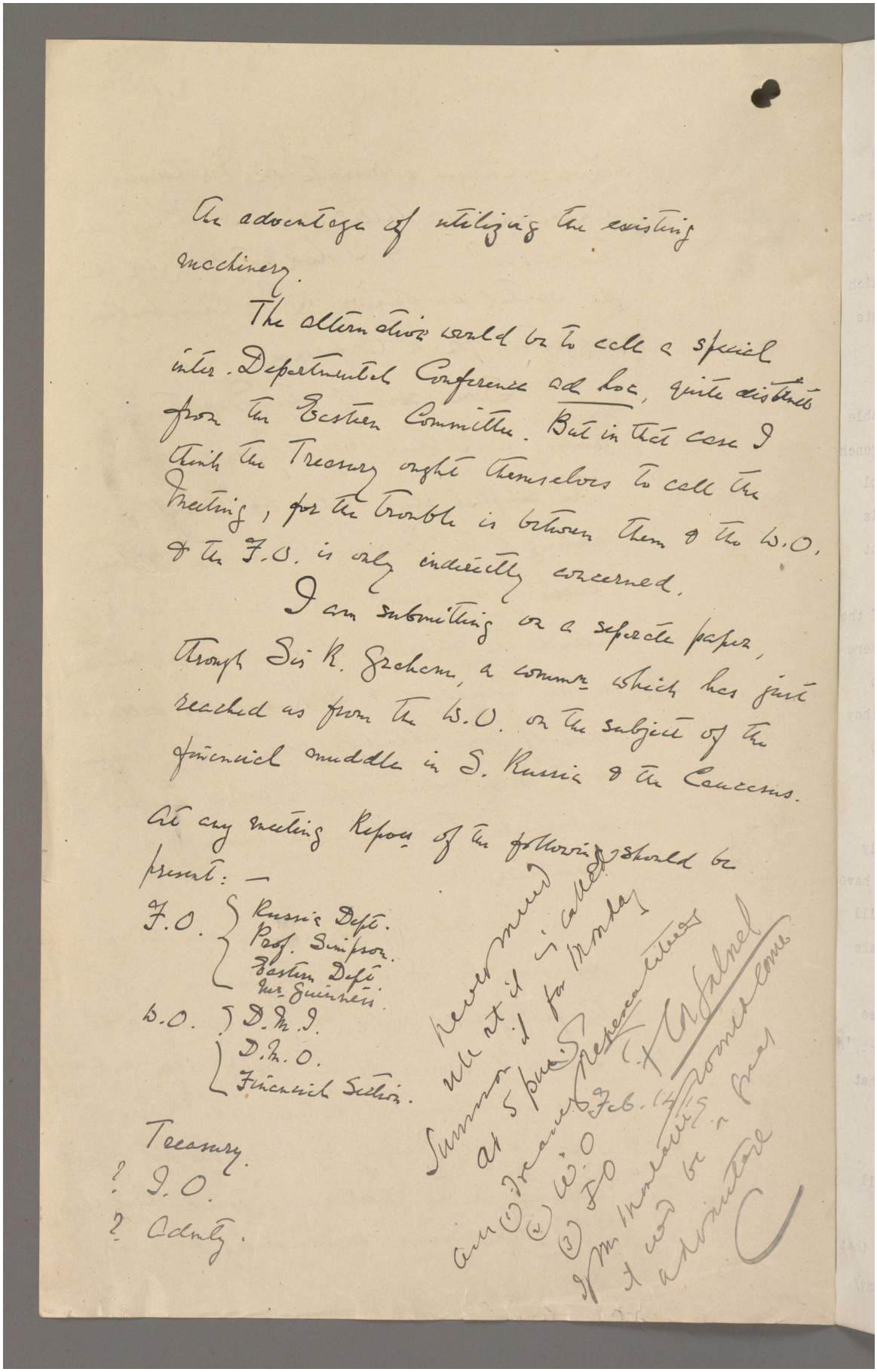

the advantage of utilizing the existing machinery.

The alternative would be to call a special inter-Departmental Conference ad hoc, quite distinct from the Eastern Committee. But in that case I think the Treasury ought themselves to call the meeting, for the trouble is between them & the W.O. & the F.O. is only indirectly concerned.

I am submitting on a separate paper, through Sir R. Graham, a commn which has just reached us from the W.O. on the subject of the financial muddle in S. Russia & the Caucasus.

At any meeting Repres of the following should be present:—

F.O. { Russia Dept. / Prof. Simpson. / Eastern Dept. / Mr Guinness.

W.O. { D.M.I. / D.M.O. / Financial Section.

Treasury.

? I.O.

? Admty.

Never mind ule at it is called Summon it for Monday at 5 pm. Representatives

Feb. 14/19

(1) Treasury
(2) W.O
(3) F.O

If Mr Montagu would come it would be a great advantage

C

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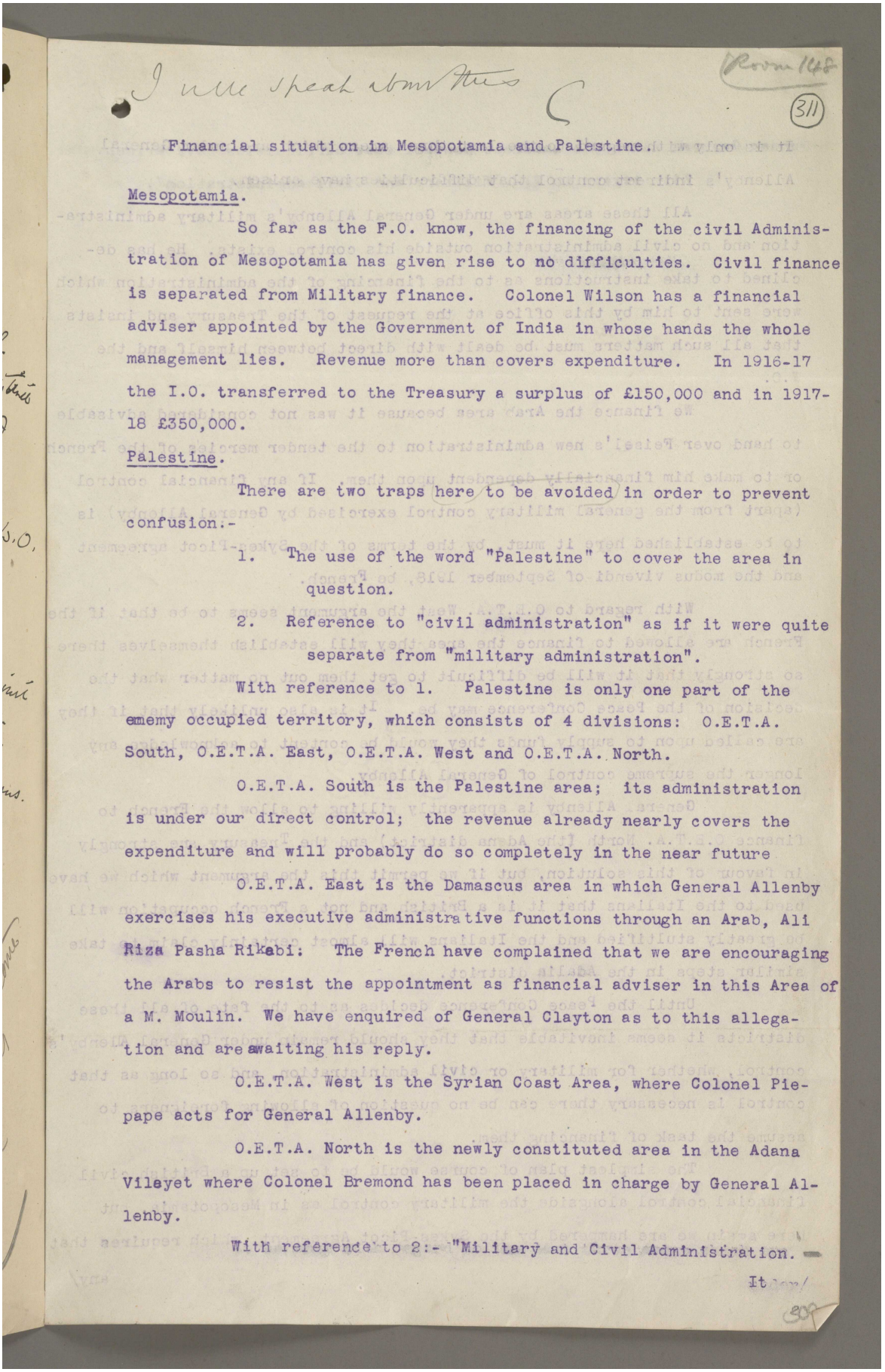

I will speak about this C

Room 148

311

Financial situation in Mesopotamia and Palestine.

Mesopotamia.

So far as the F.O. know, the financing of the civil Administration of Mesopotamia has given rise to no difficulties. Civil finance is separated from Military finance. Colonel Wilson has a financial adviser appointed by the Government of India in whose hands the whole management lies. Revenue more than covers expenditure. In 1916-17 the I.O. transferred to the Treasury a surplus of £150,000 and in 1917-18 £350,000.

Palestine.

There are two traps here to be avoided in order to prevent confusion.-

1. The use of the word "Palestine" to cover the area in question.
2. Reference to "civil administration" as if it were quite separate from "military administration".

With reference to 1. Palestine is only one part of the ememy occupied territory, which consists of 4 divisions: O.E.T.A. South, O.E.T.A. East, O.E.T.A. West and O.E.T.A. North.

O.E.T.A. South is the Palestine area; its administration is under our direct control; the revenue already nearly covers the expenditure and will probably do so completely in the near future

O.E.T.A. East is the Damascus area in which General Allenby exercises his executive administrative functions through an Arab, Ali Riza Pasha Rikabi: The French have complained that we are encouraging the Arabs to resist the appointment as financial adviser in this Area of a M. Moulin. We have enquired of General Clayton as to this allegation and are awaiting his reply.

O.E.T.A. West is the Syrian Coast Area, where Colonel Piepape acts for General Allenby.

O.E.T.A. North is the newly constituted area in the Adana Vilayet where Colonel Bremond has been placed in charge by General Allenby.

With reference to 2:- "Military and Civil Administration. —

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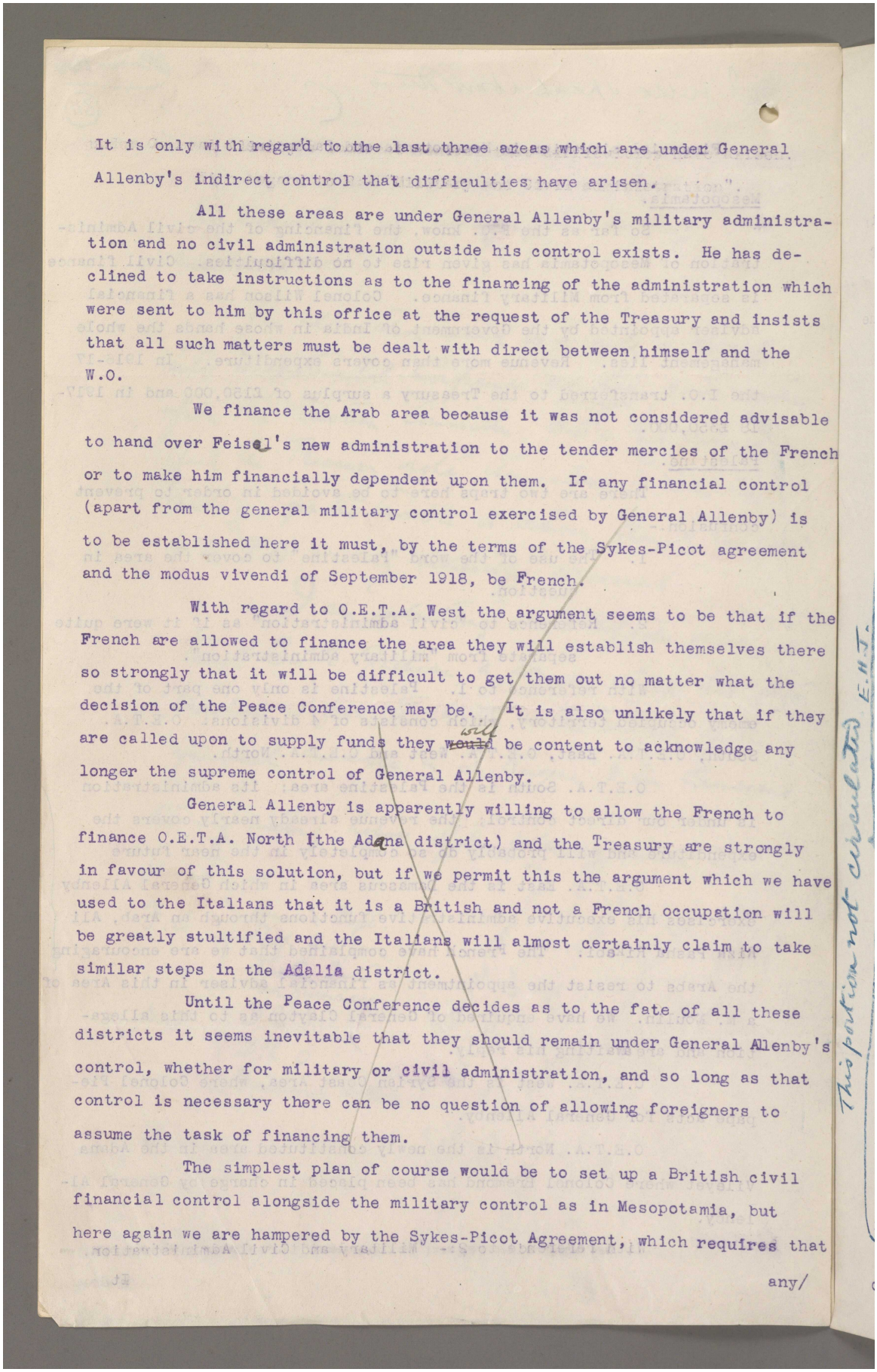

It is only with regard to the last three areas which are under General Allenby's indirect control that difficulties have arisen.

All these areas are under General Allenby's military administration and no civil administration outside his control exists. He has declined to take instructions as to the financing of the administration which were sent to him by this office at the request of the Treasury and insists that all such matters must be dealt with direct between himself and the W.O.

We finance the Arab area because it was not considered advisable to hand over Feisal's new administration to the tender mercies of the French or to make him financially dependent upon them. If any financial control (apart from the general military control exercised by General Allenby) is to be established here it must, by the terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement and the modus vivendi of September 1918, be French.

With regard to O.E.T.A. West the argument seems to be that if the French are allowed to finance the area they will establish themselves there so strongly that it will be difficult to get them out no matter what the decision of the Peace Conference may be. It is also unlikely that if they are called upon to supply funds they ~~would~~ will be content to acknowledge any longer the supreme control of General Allenby.

General Allenby is apparently willing to allow the French to finance O.E.T.A. North (the Adana district) and the Treasury are strongly in favour of this solution, but if we permit this the argument which we have used to the Italians that it is a British and not a French occupation will be greatly stultified and the Italians will almost certainly claim to take similar steps in the Adalia district.

Until the Peace Conference decides as to the fate of all these districts it seems inevitable that they should remain under General Allenby's control, whether for military or civil administration, and so long as that control is necessary there can be no question of allowing foreigners to assume the task of financing them.

The simplest plan of course would be to set up a British civil financial control alongside the military control as in Mesopotamia, but here again we are hampered by the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which requires that

any/

This portion not circulated E.H.T.

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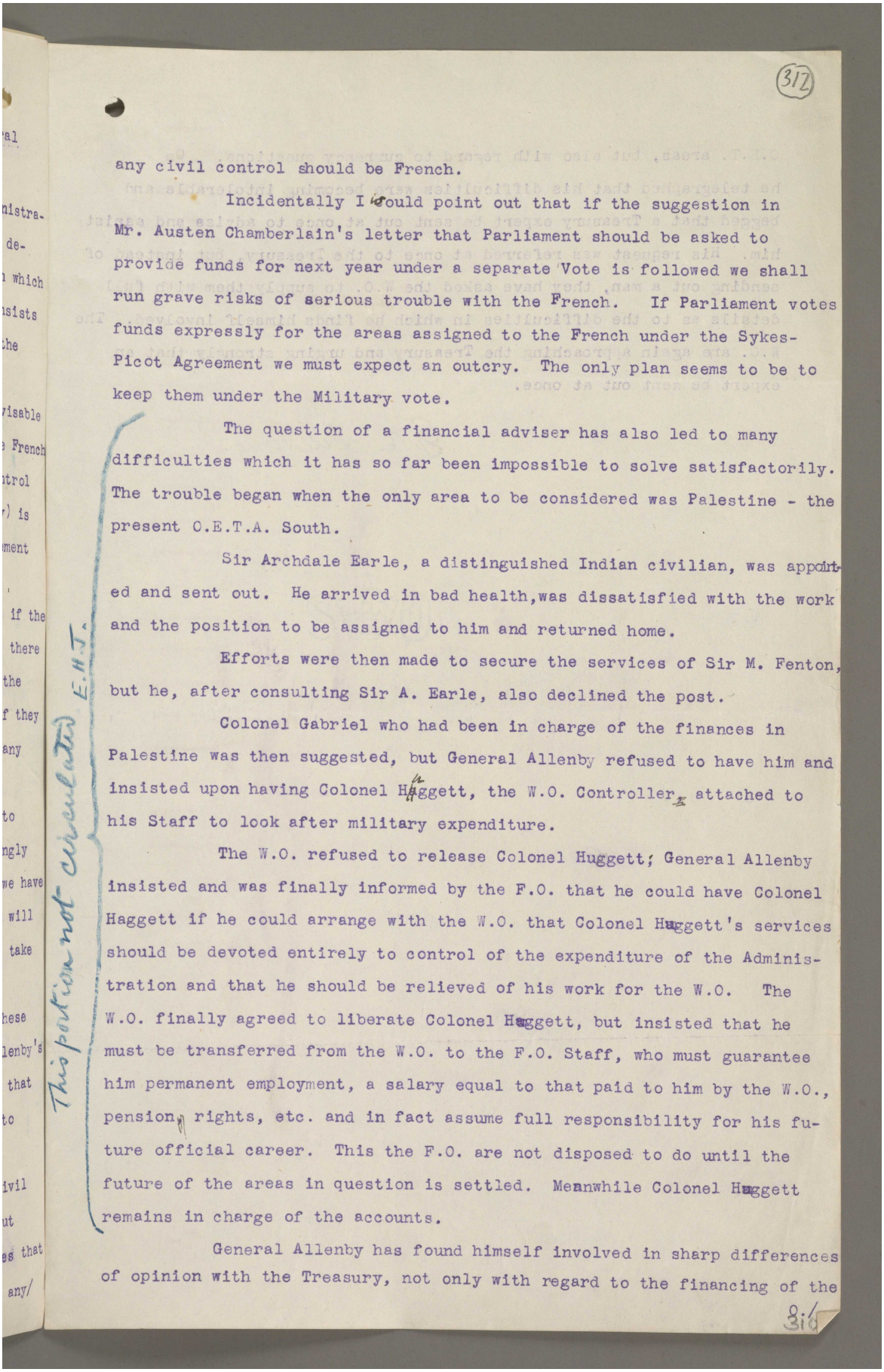

any civil control should be French.

Incidentally I would point out that if the suggestion in Mr. Austen Chamberlain's letter that Parliament should be asked to provide funds for next year under a separate Vote is followed we shall run grave risks of serious trouble with the French. If Parliament votes funds expressly for the areas assigned to the French under the Sykes-Picot Agreement we must expect an outcry. The only plan seems to be to keep them under the Military vote.

This portion not circulated E.H.J.

The question of a financial adviser has also led to many difficulties which it has so far been impossible to solve satisfactorily. The trouble began when the only area to be considered was Palestine - the present O.E.T.A. South.

Sir Archdale Earle, a distinguished Indian civilian, was appointed and sent out. He arrived in bad health, was dissatisfied with the work and the position to be assigned to him and returned home.

Efforts were then made to secure the services of Sir M. Fenton, but he, after consulting Sir A. Earle, also declined the post.

Colonel Gabriel who had been in charge of the finances in Palestine was then suggested, but General Allenby refused to have him and insisted upon having Colonel Huggett, the W.O. Controller, attached to his Staff to look after military expenditure.

The W.O. refused to release Colonel Huggett; General Allenby insisted and was finally informed by the F.O. that he could have Colonel Haggett if he could arrange with the W.O. that Colonel Huggett's services should be devoted entirely to control of the expenditure of the Administration and that he should be relieved of his work for the W.O. The W.O. finally agreed to liberate Colonel Huggett, but insisted that he must be transferred from the W.O. to the F.O. Staff, who must guarantee him permanent employment, a salary equal to that paid to him by the W.O., pension, rights, etc. and in fact assume full responsibility for his future official career. This the F.O. are not disposed to do until the future of the areas in question is settled. Meanwhile Colonel Huggett remains in charge of the accounts.

General Allenby has found himself involved in sharp differences of opinion with the Treasury, not only with regard to the financing of the

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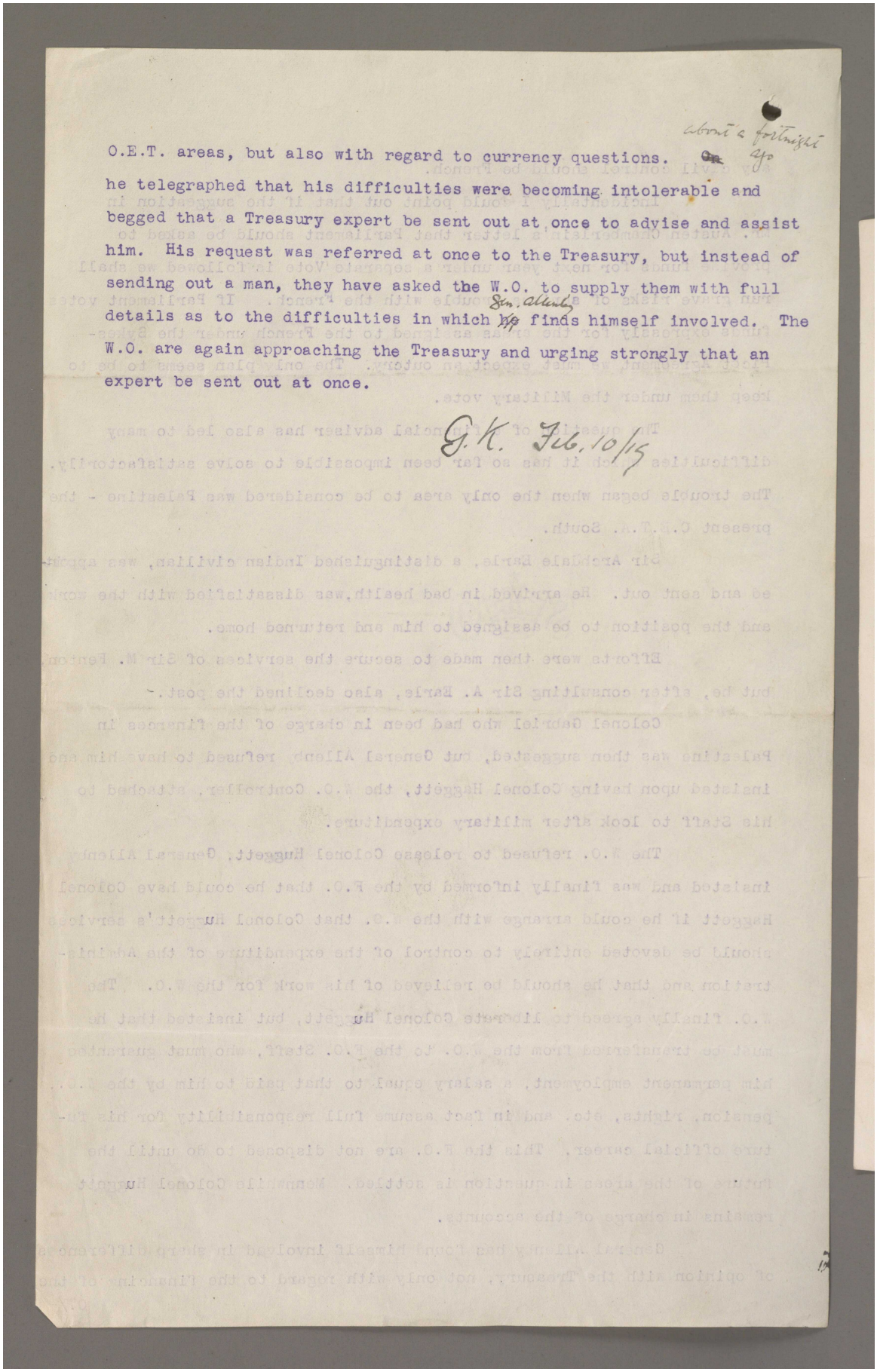

about a fortnight ago

O.E.T. areas, but also with regard to currency questions. ~~On~~ he telegraphed that his difficulties were becoming intolerable and begged that a Treasury expert be sent out at once to advise and assist him. His request was referred at once to the Treasury, but instead of sending out a man, they have asked the W.O. to supply them with full details as to the difficulties in which ~~he~~ Sir. Allenby finds himself involved. The W.O. are again approaching the Treasury and urging strongly that an expert be sent out at once.

G. K. Feb. 10/15

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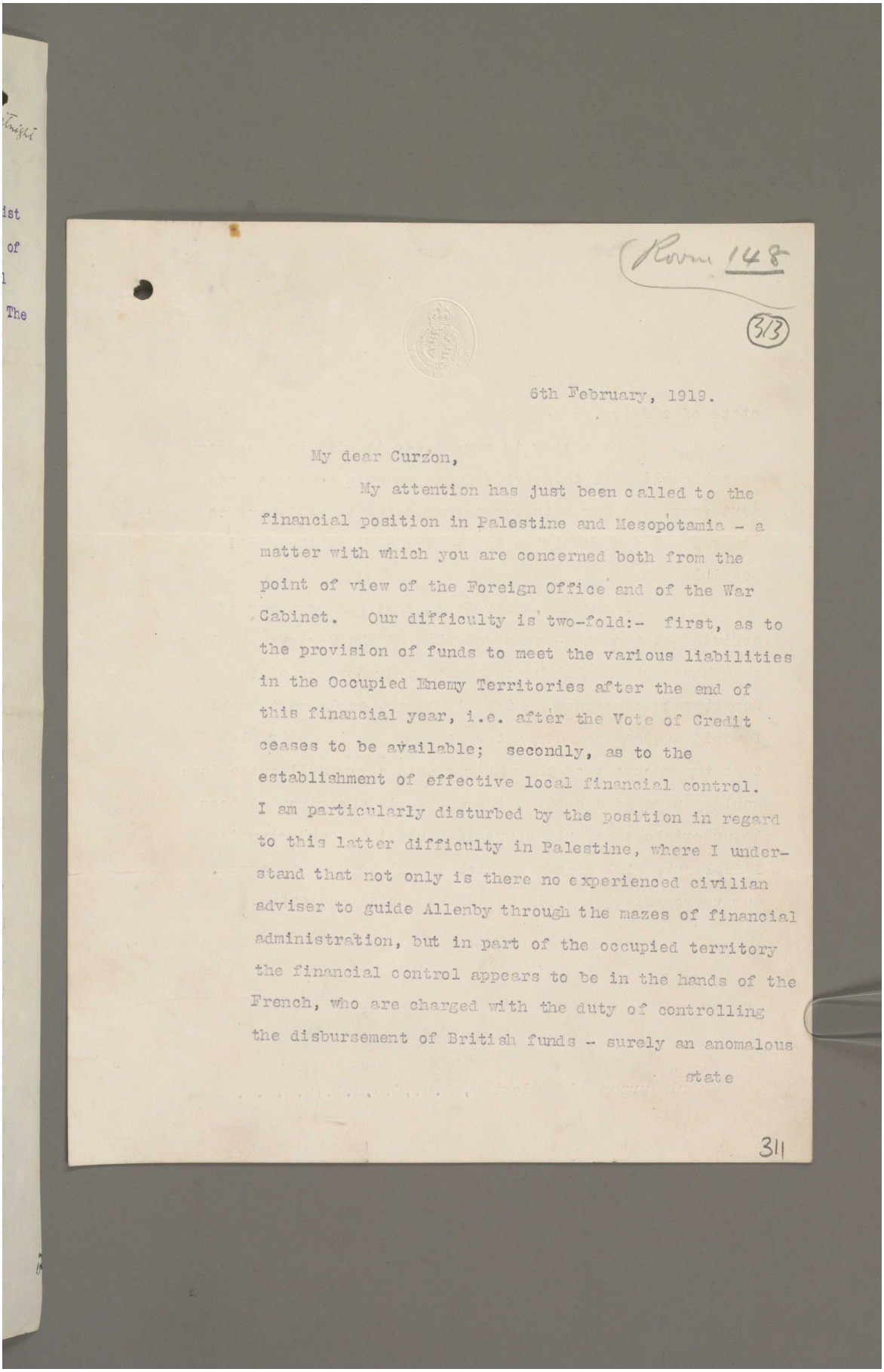

Room 148

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6th February, 1919.

My dear Curzon,

My attention has just been called to the financial position in Palestine and Mesopotamia - a matter with which you are concerned both from the point of view of the Foreign Office and of the War Cabinet. Our difficulty is two-fold:- first, as to the provision of funds to meet the various liabilities in the Occupied Enemy Territories after the end of this financial year, i.e. after the Vote of Credit ceases to be available; secondly, as to the establishment of effective local financial control. I am particularly disturbed by the position in regard to this latter difficulty in Palestine, where I understand that not only is there no experienced civilian adviser to guide Allenby through the mazes of financial administration, but in part of the occupied territory the financial control appears to be in the hands of the French, who are charged with the duty of controlling the disbursement of British funds - surely an anomalous

state

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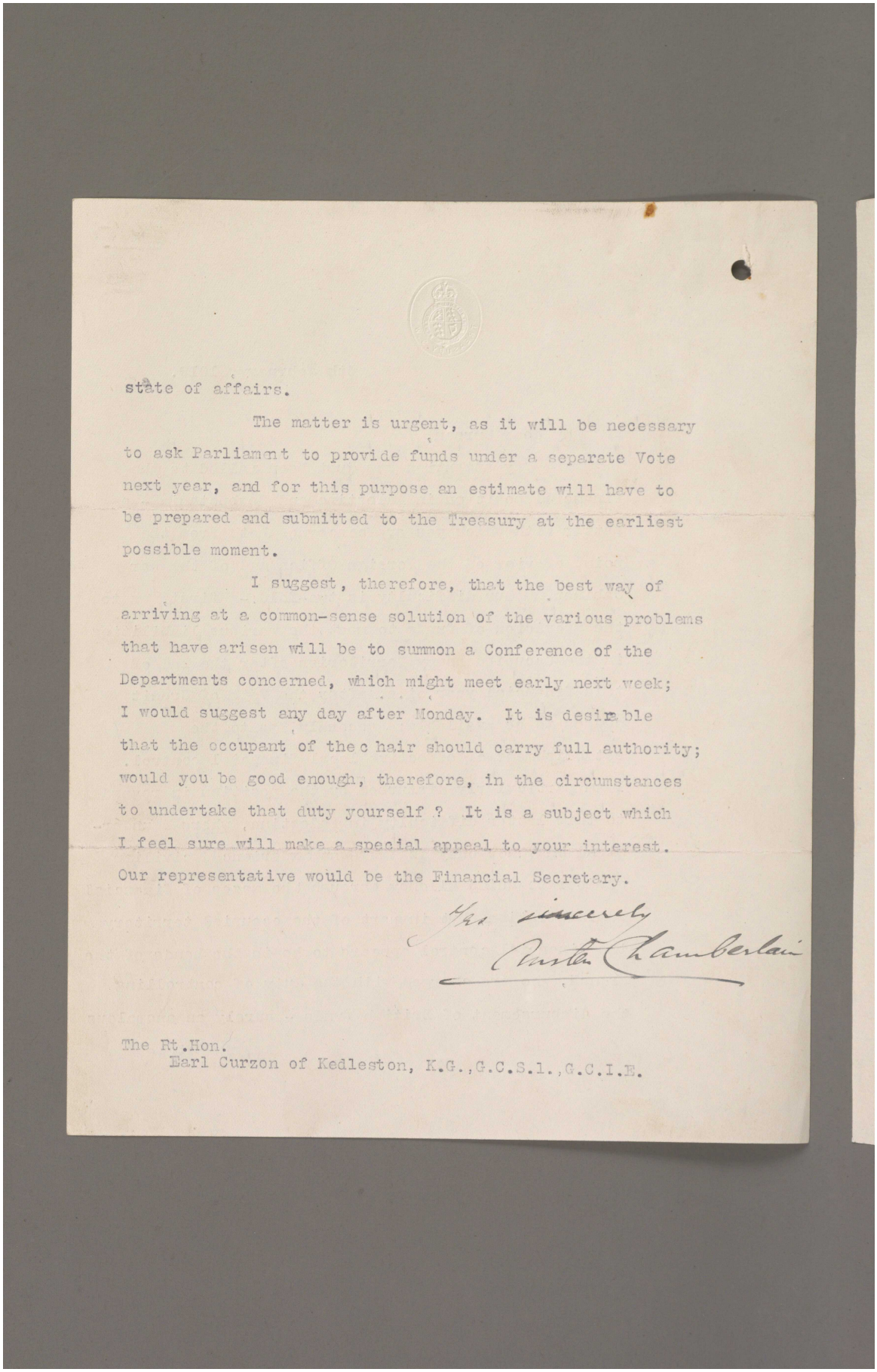


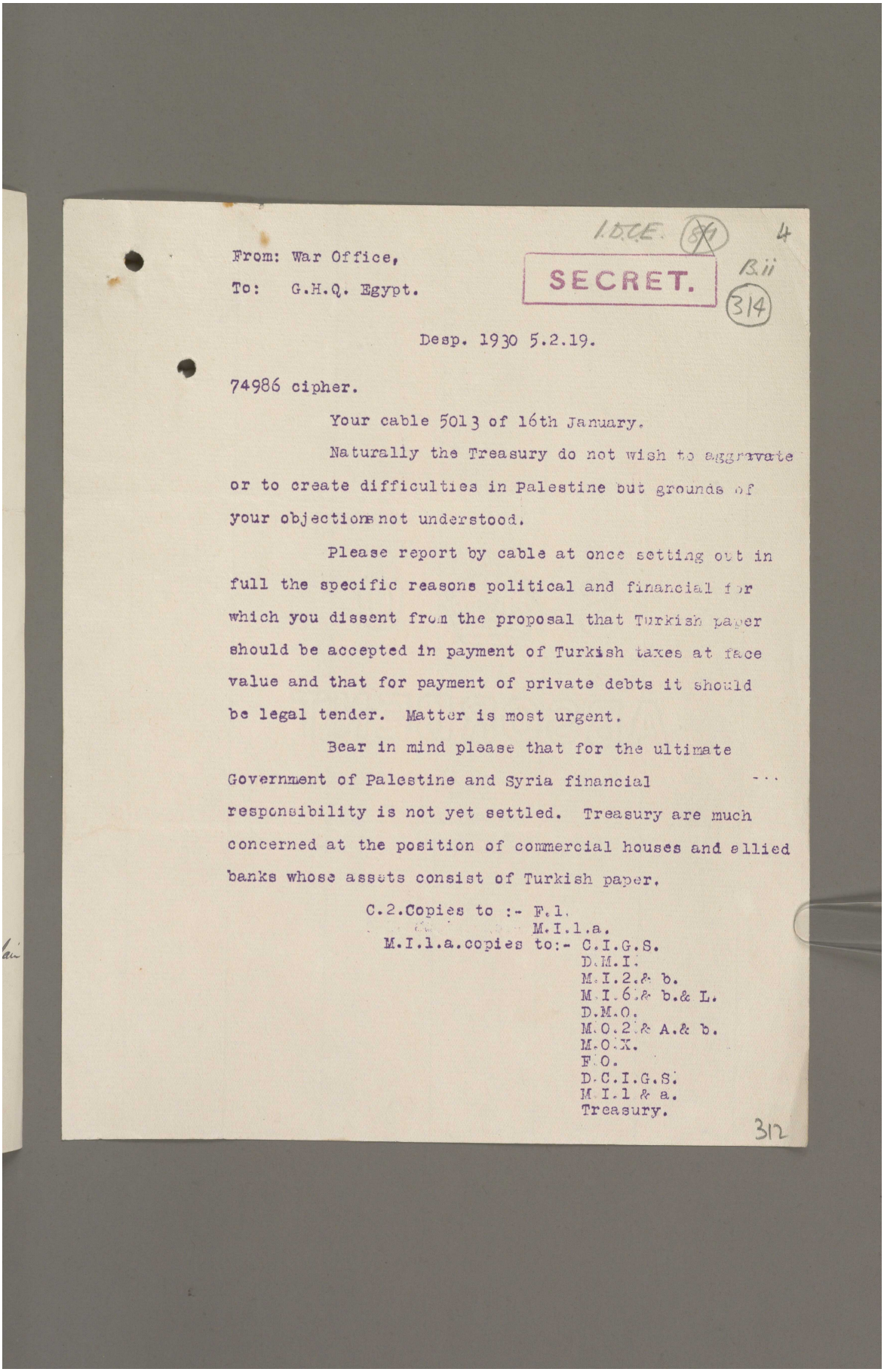
state of affairs.

The matter is urgent, as it will be necessary to ask Parliament to provide funds under a separate Vote next year, and for this purpose an estimate will have to be prepared and submitted to the Treasury at the earliest possible moment.

I suggest, therefore, that the best way of arriving at a common-sense solution of the various problems that have arisen will be to summon a Conference of the Departments concerned, which might meet early next week; I would suggest any day after Monday. It is desirable that the occupant of the chair should carry full authority; would you be good enough, therefore, in the circumstances to undertake that duty yourself ? It is a subject which I feel sure will make a special appeal to your interest. Our representative would be the Financial Secretary.

Yrs sincerely
Austen Chamberlain

The Rt.Hon.
Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.,G.C.S.I.,G.C.I.E.



I.D.C.E. (5/1) 4

From: War Office,
To: G.H.Q. Egypt.

SECRET.

B.ii (314)

Desp. 1930 5.2.19.

74986 cipher.

Your cable 5013 of 16th January.

Naturally the Treasury do not wish to aggravate or to create difficulties in Palestine but grounds of your objections not understood.

Please report by cable at once setting out in full the specific reasons political and financial for which you dissent from the proposal that Turkish paper should be accepted in payment of Turkish taxes at face value and that for payment of private debts it should be legal tender. Matter is most urgent.

Bear in mind please that for the ultimate Government of Palestine and Syria financial ... responsibility is not yet settled. Treasury are much concerned at the position of commercial houses and allied banks whose assets consist of Turkish paper.

C.2.Copies to :- F.l.
M.I.l.a.
M.I.l.a.copies to:- C.I.G.S.
D.M.I.
M.I.2.& b.
M.I.6.& b.& L.
D.M.O.
M.O.2.& A.& b.
M.O.X.
F.O.
D.C.I.G.S.
M.I.l & a.
Treasury.

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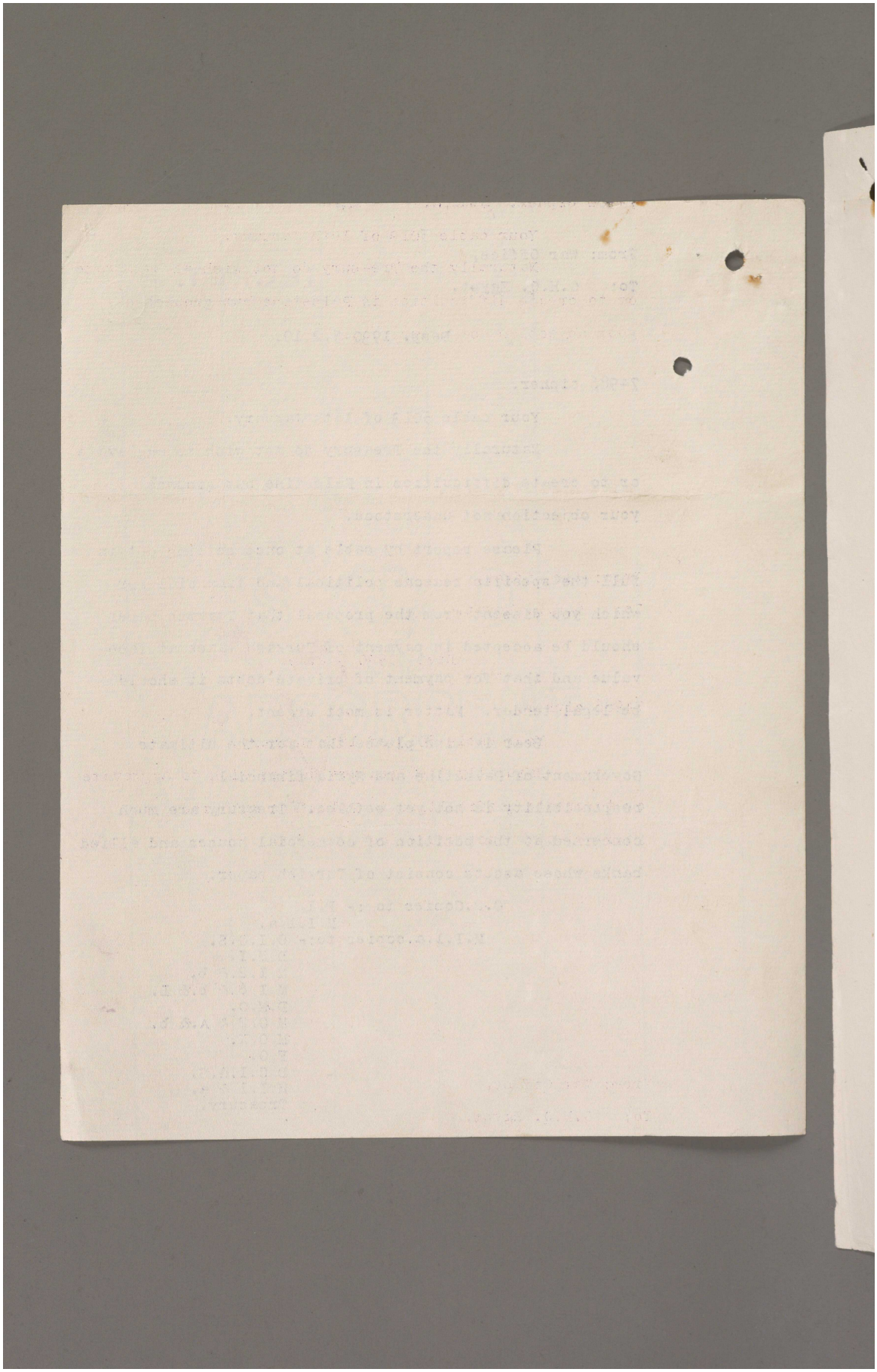

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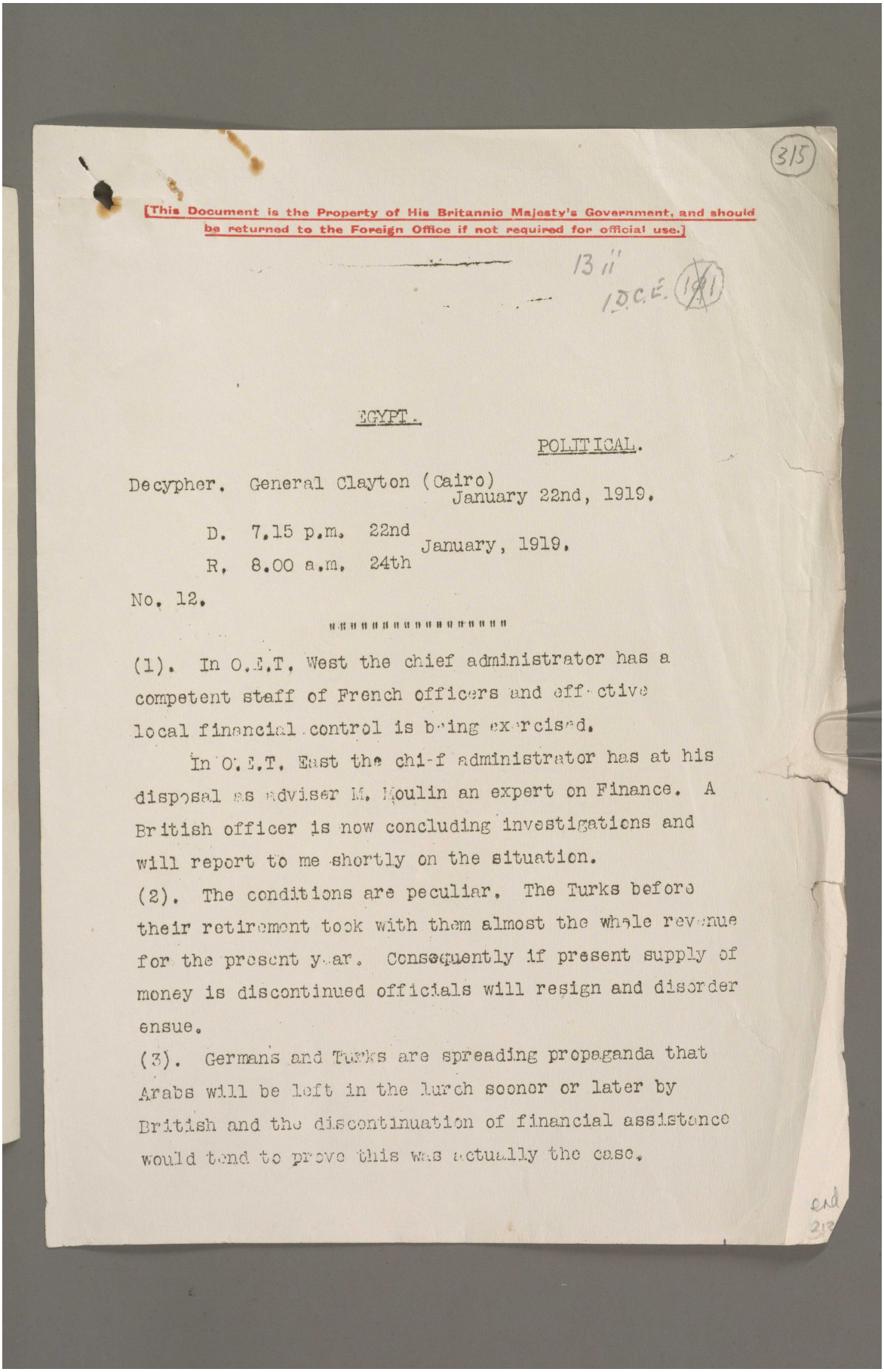

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13 II
I.D.C.E. 181

EGYPT.

POLITICAL.

Decypher. General Clayton (Cairo) January 22nd, 1919.

D. 7.15 p.m. 22nd
R. 8.00 a.m. 24th January, 1919.

No. 12.

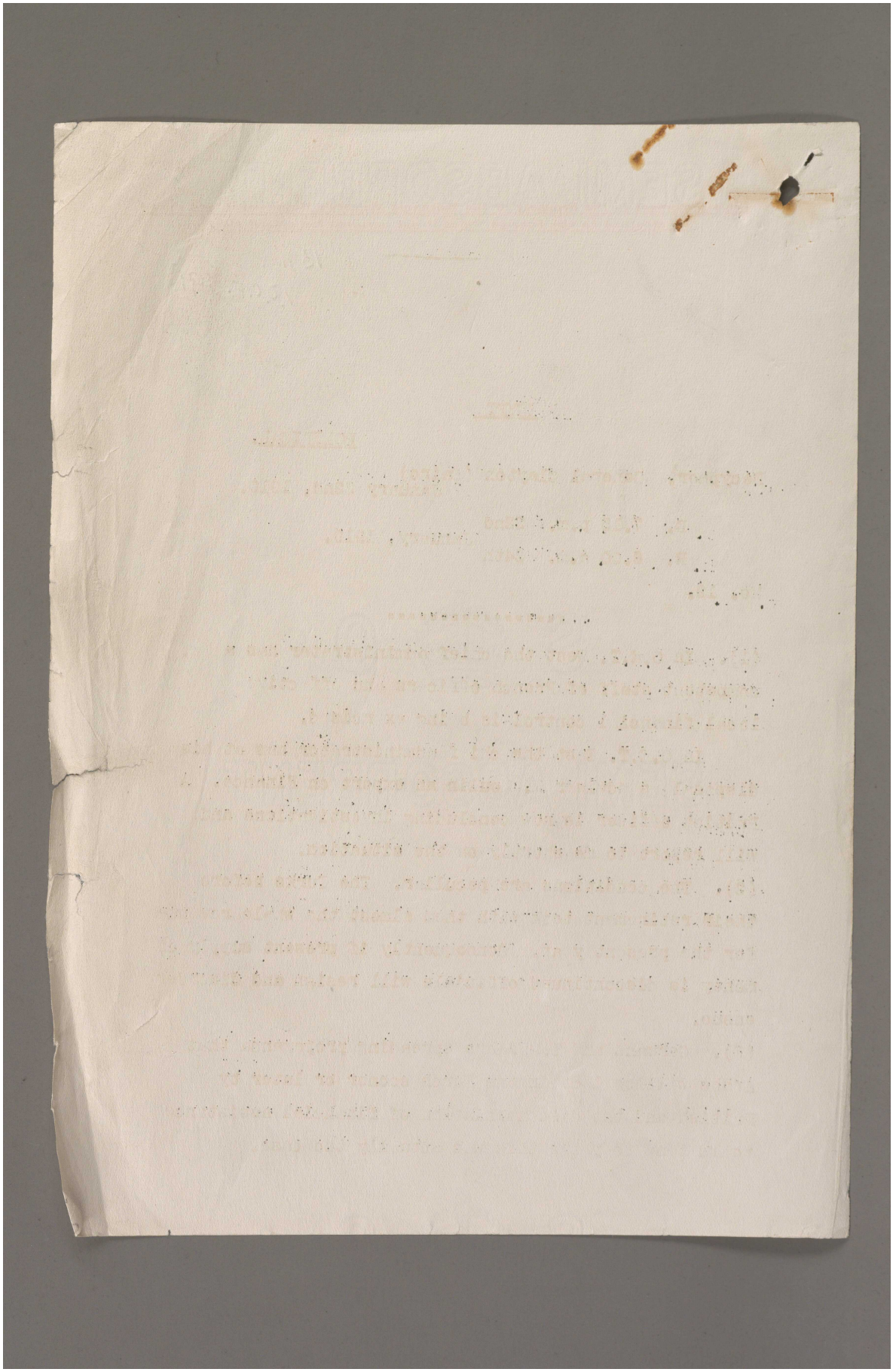
****

(1). In O.E.T. West the chief administrator has a competent staff of French officers and effective local financial control is being exercised.

In O.E.T. East the chief administrator has at his disposal as adviser M. Moulin an expert on Finance. A British officer is now concluding investigations and will report to me shortly on the situation.

(2). The conditions are peculiar. The Turks before their retirement took with them almost the whole revenue for the present year. Consequently if present supply of money is discontinued officials will resign and disorder ensue.

(3). Germans and Turks are spreading propaganda that Arabs will be left in the lurch sooner or later by British and the discontinuation of financial assistance would tend to prove this was actually the case.



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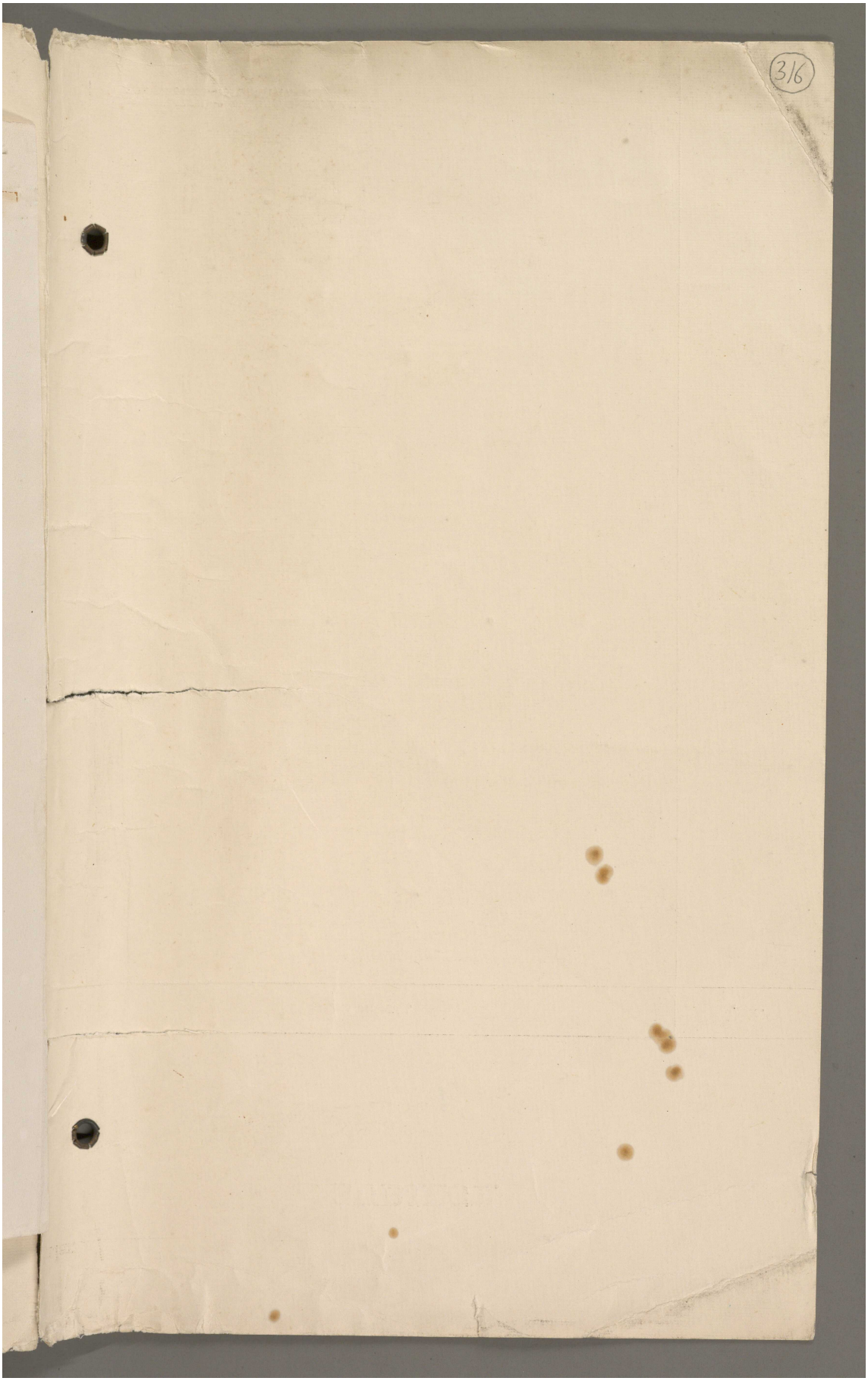

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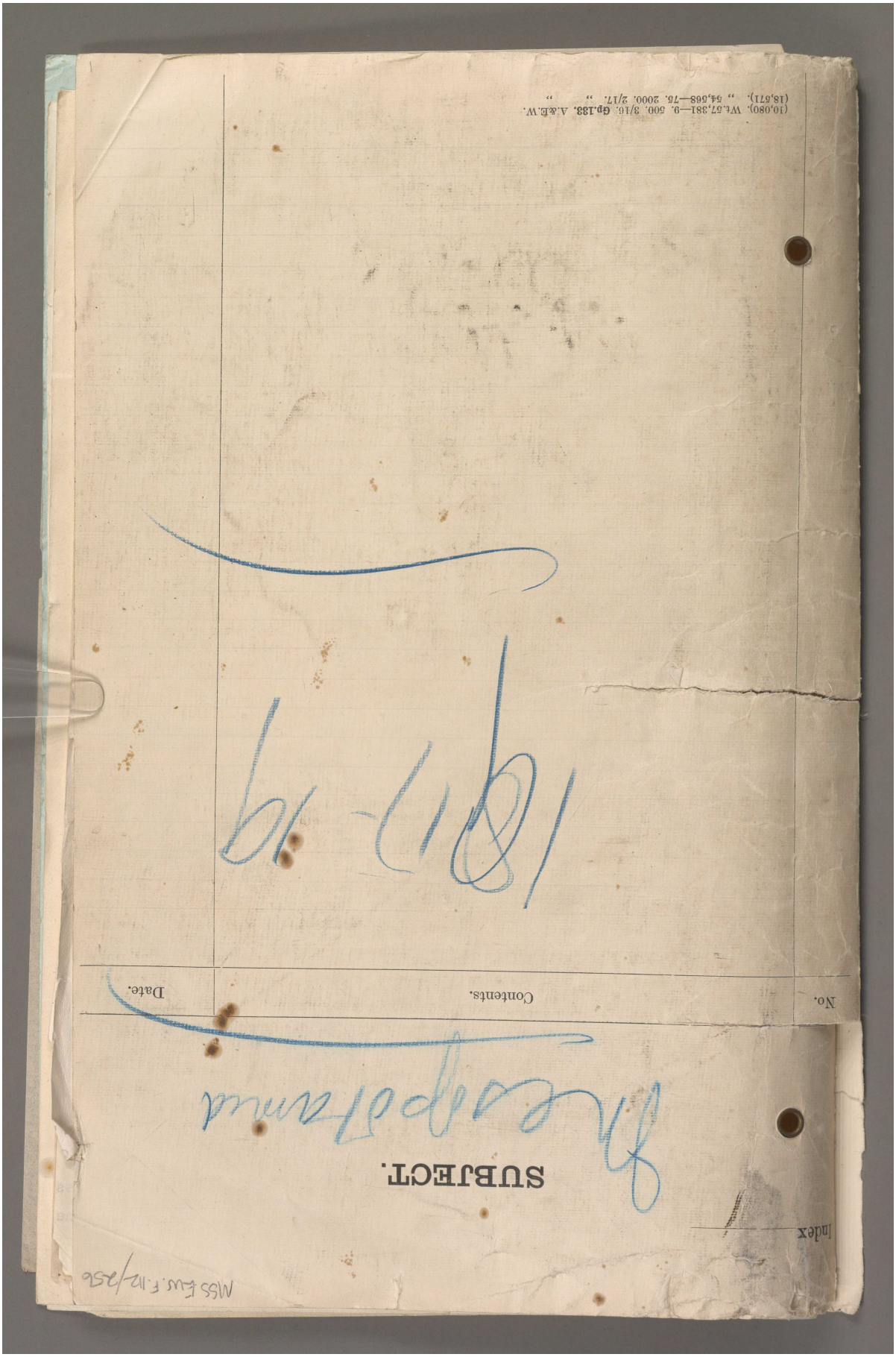

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