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## Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee

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|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Holding Institution</b>    | British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers |
| <b>Reference</b>              | Mss Eur F112/272                                         |
| <b>Date(s)</b>                | 19 Mar 1917-12 Jan 1918 (CE, Gregorian)                  |
| <b>Written in</b>             | English in Latin                                         |
| <b>Extent and Format</b>      | 1 file (39 folios)                                       |
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### About this record

This file mostly consists of minutes of meetings of the War Cabinet's Mesopotamian Administration Committee (later renamed the Middle East Committee), chaired by George Curzon.

The papers are chiefly concerned with current and future British policy in Mesopotamia, which during the period covered was under British military occupation. However, the minutes also discuss matters relating to the wider Middle Eastern region, as reflected in the change of name to Middle East Committee in August 1917.

In addition to minutes, the file includes the following: a draft report by the committee, dated March 1917, containing recommendations regarding future British policy in Mesopotamia and the wider region (ff 1-2); a letter to George Curzon from Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Sykes, dated 2 July 1917, recommending that the committee be renamed, in order to define its scope and work (ff 24-25).

SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIAN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

DRAFT REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

1. 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 Shials 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.

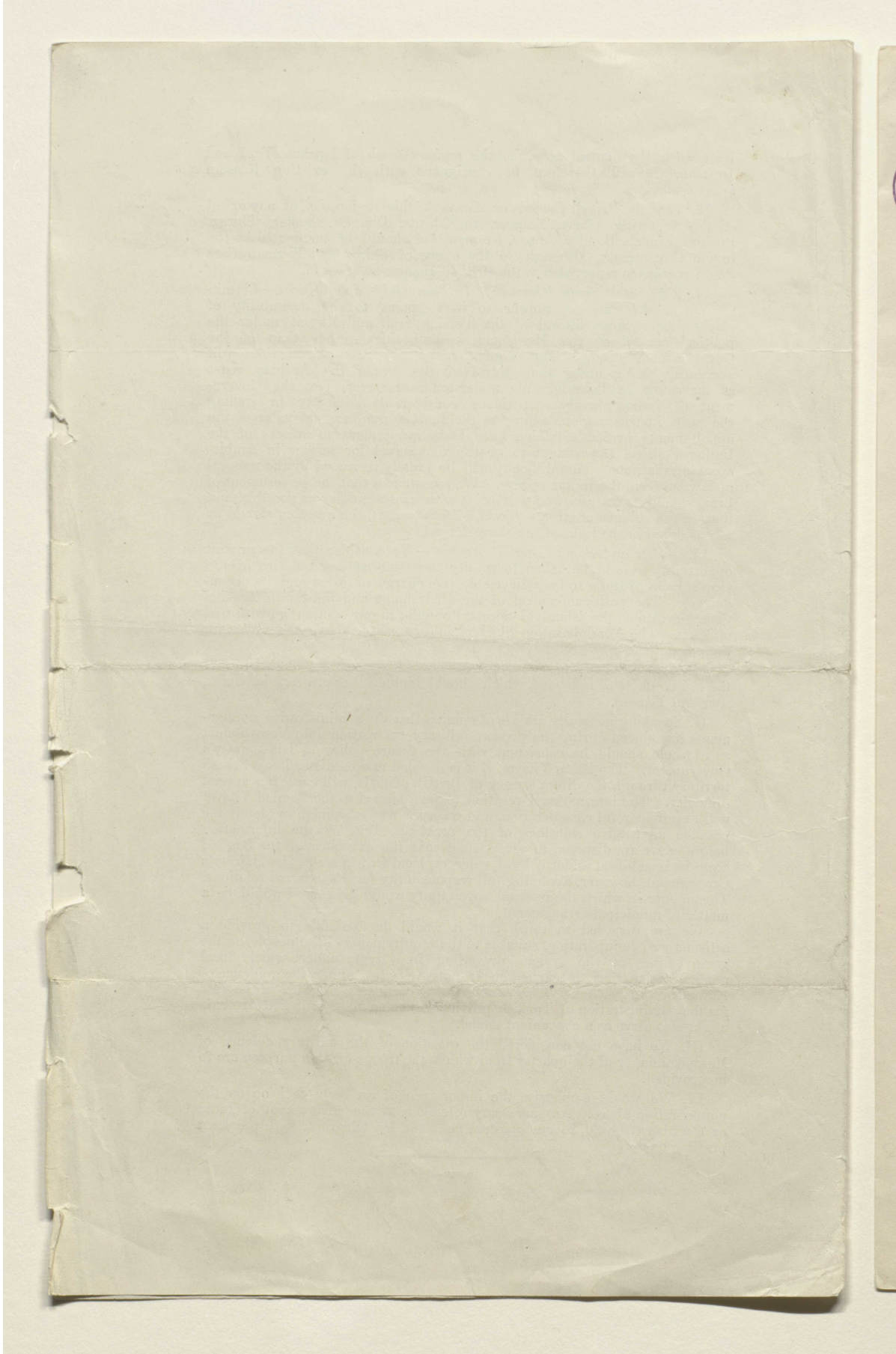
We are disposed to think that it would be possible to provide a satisfactory administration, suitable to the requirements of the people, on the general lines of the system prevailing in Egypt, under which local administrative work is carried on by native *Mudirs* under the guidance of European "Inspectors." 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.

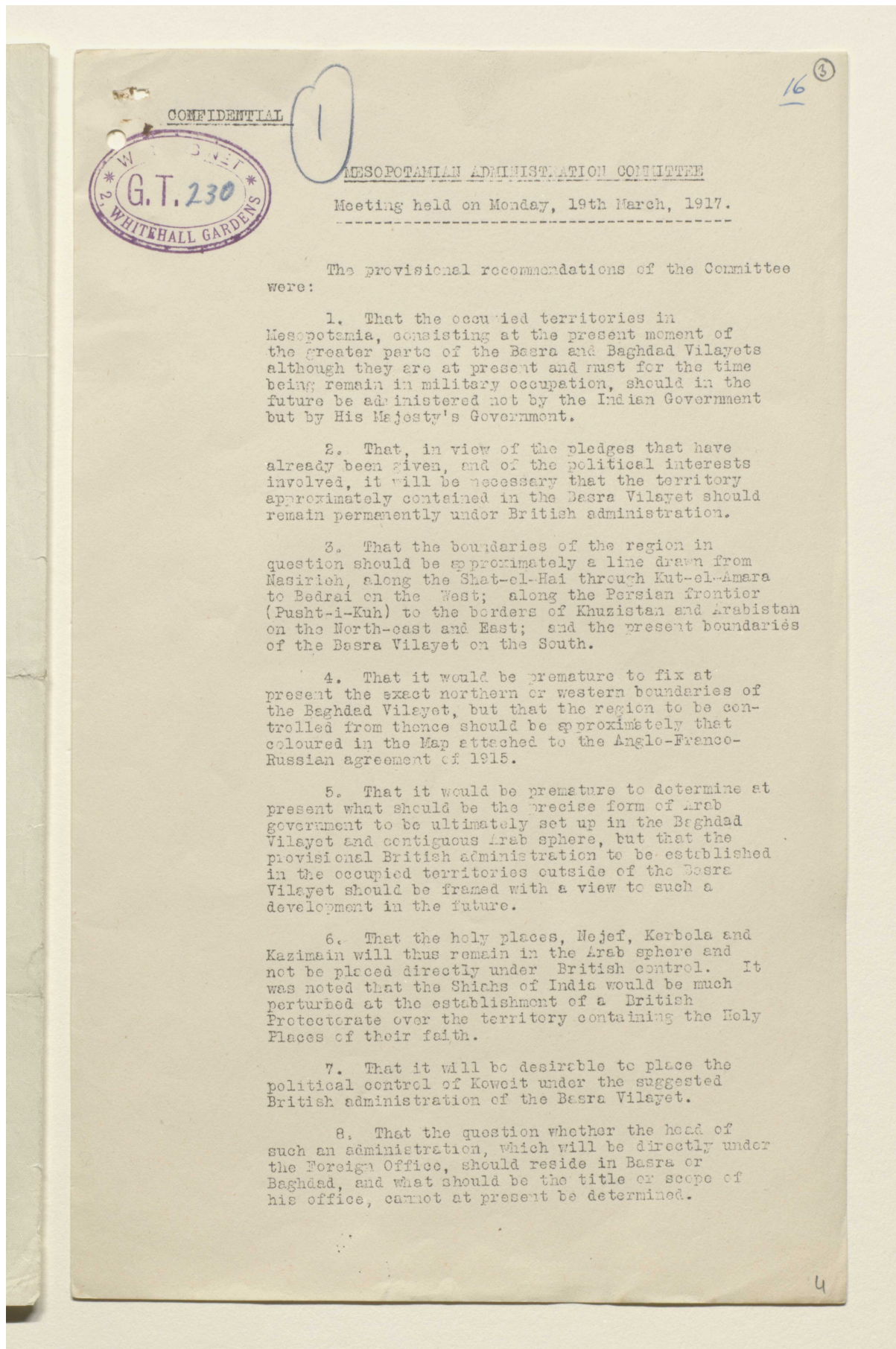
IV. We would emphasise the importance of an early decision on the points raised above. Any necessary reference to the Government of India or elsewhere should, in our opinion, be made by telegraph with the least possible delay.



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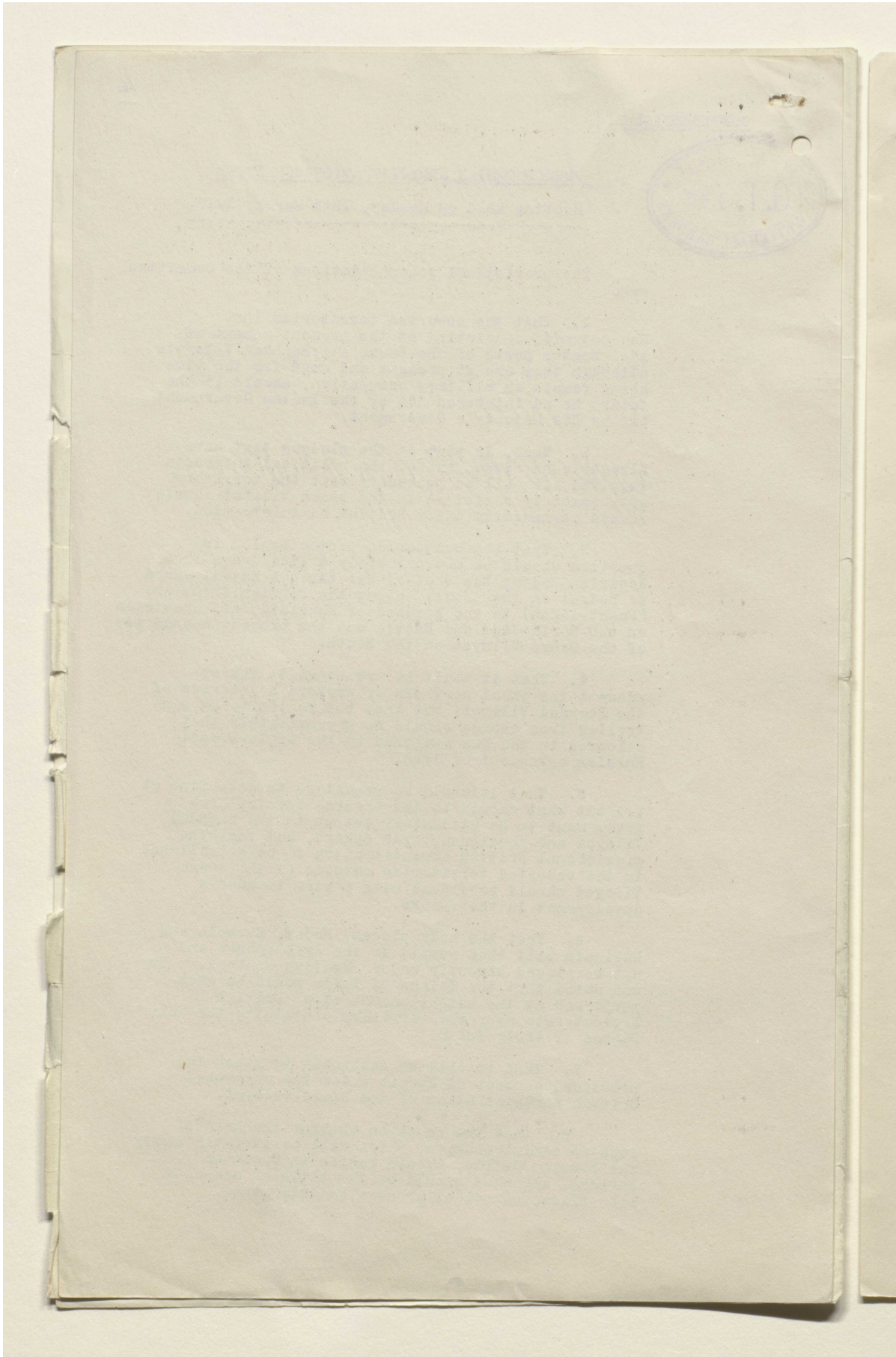


Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [3r]  
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Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [3v]  
(6/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [4r]  
(7/80)

- 2 -

9. That the British service which will administer the new Mesopotamian province or sphere should be, not the Indian Civil Service but a special service, either independent or connected with the Levant or other British services.- Doubtless in the initial stages Indian officers will be required.

10. That Arabistan being a Persian Province, the Sheikh of Mohammara 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 S. 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 included in the neutral zone, i.e. the regions South of Ispahan, Yazd 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: Mohammara, Ahwaz, Dizful, Shushter, Shiraz, Bushire, Lingah, Bunder Abbas, Kerman, etc. 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. That the Arab tribes on the West and Southern shores of the Persian Gulf from the Southern borders of Kowit to and including Muscat should remain as now under the Indian Government, i.e. under a British Resident at Bushire.

15. That the sphere of the Government of India should for the present include as now the Southern coasts of Arabia and the Hadramaut, leaving over the question of the future of Aden.

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).

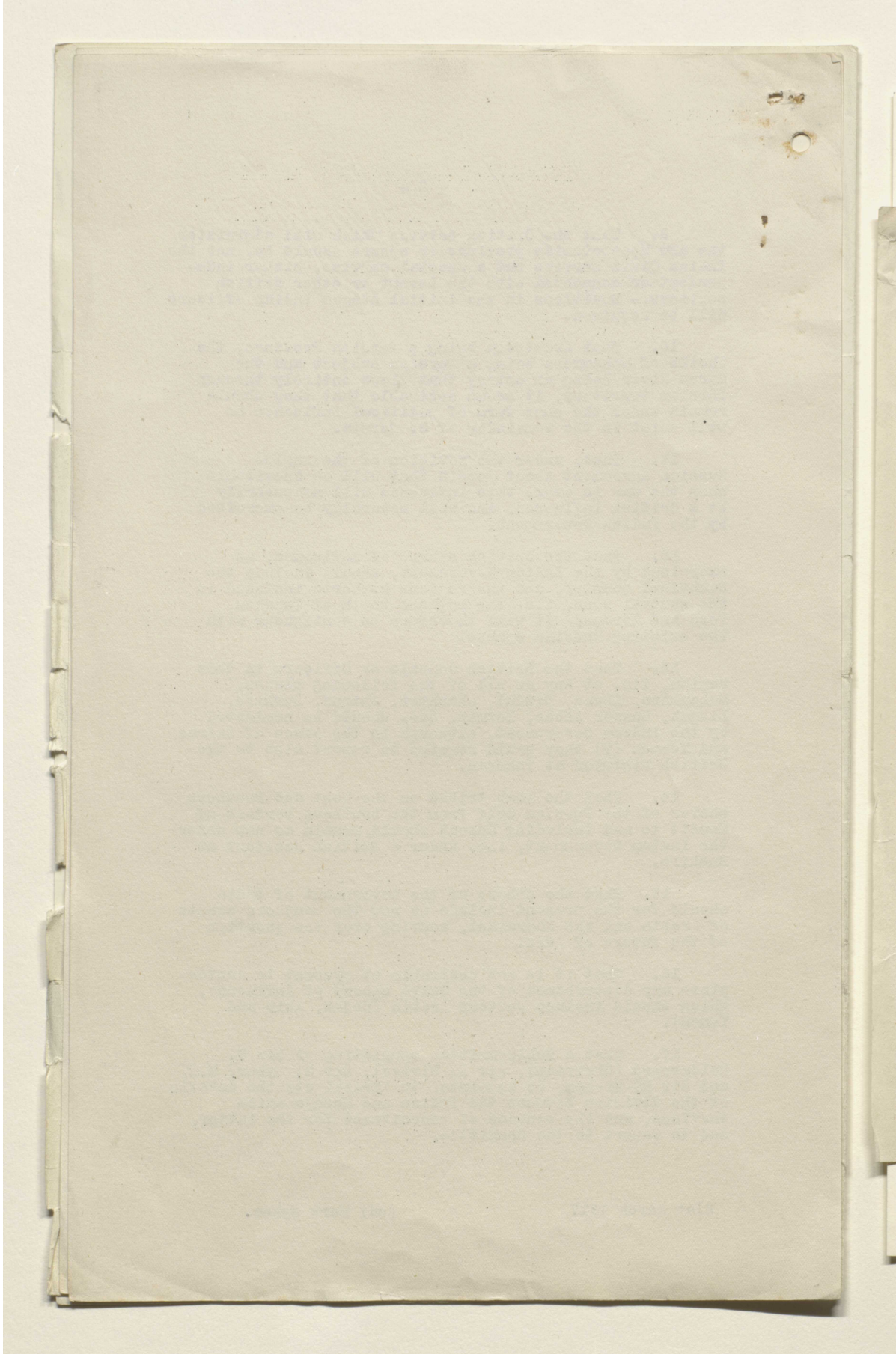
17. That a Sub-Committee consisting of Sir T. Holderness (Chairman), Sir A. Hirtzel, Sir M. Sykes, M.P. and Sir R. Graham, be appointed to investigate the details of the division between the Indian and Mesopotamian services, and the sources of recruitment for the latter, and to report to the Committee.

21st March 1917

(sd) Mark Sykes.



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(9/80)

DRAFT EXTRACT FROM WAR CABINET 98, MINUTE 11.

MESOPOTAMIA. (11) The War Cabinet decided that:-

In view of the occupation of Baghdad and the necessary increase of political staff involved, a Committee composed as follows:-

Lord Curzon (in the Chair)  
Lord Milner,  
The Secretary of State for India,  
The Under Secretary of State for  
Foreign Affairs,

with

Sir F. A. Hirtzel,  
Sir T. W. Holderness,  
Sir R. Graham, and  
Mr. George Clerk

as Associate Members, and

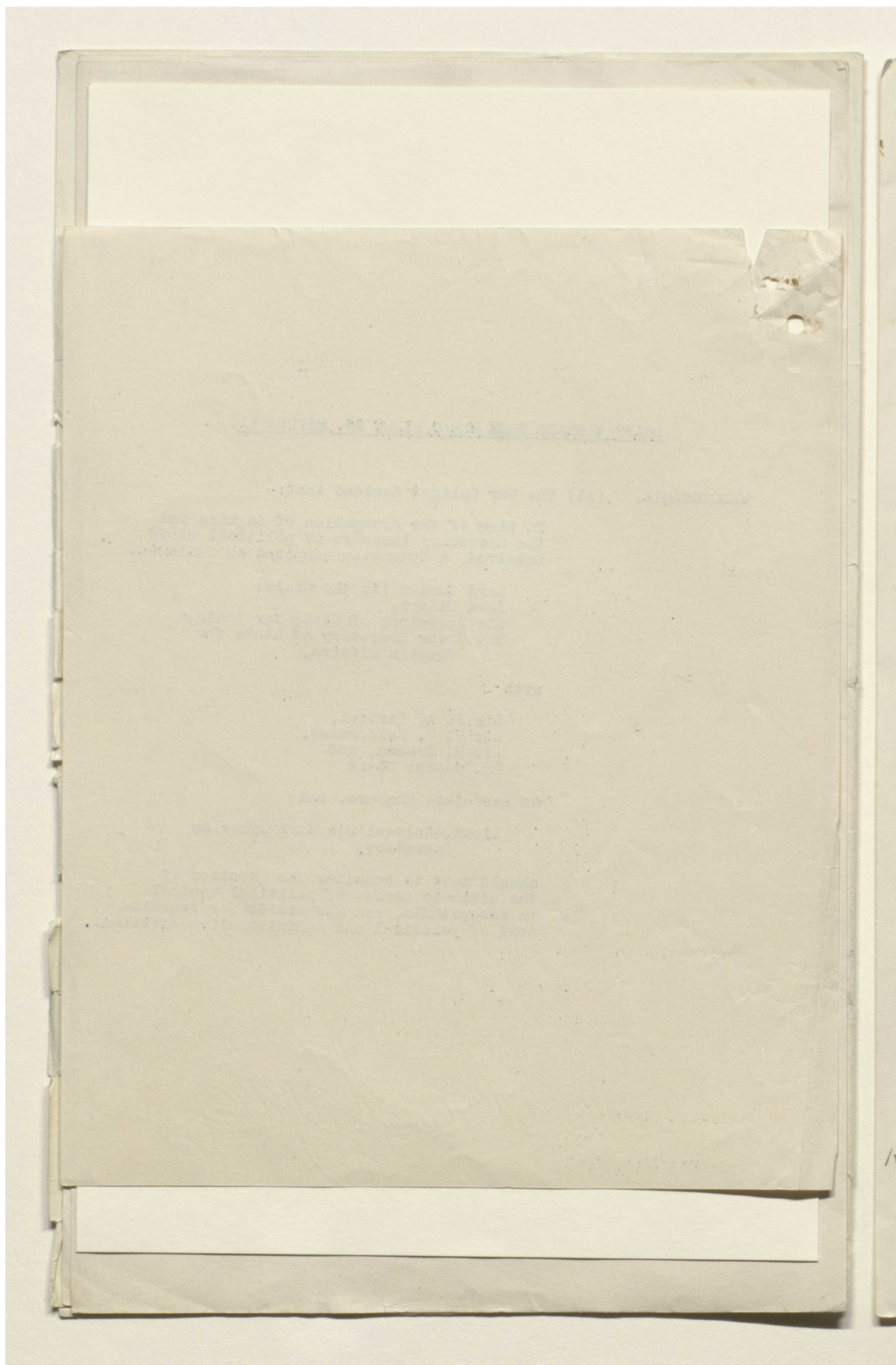
Lieut.-Colonel Sir Mark Sykes as  
Secretary,

should meet to consider the question of the ultimate source of political control in Mesopotamia, and the fields for recruitment of political and administrative civilians.

b



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(10/80)





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(11/80)

SECRET

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The SECOND MEETING of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee was held in the Lord President of the Council's Room at the House of Lords, on TUESDAY, MAY 8, 1917 at 6 p.m.

The following members were present:-

|                                                                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| The Right Hon. Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I.,<br>G.C.I.E. (in the Chair) |                |
| Sir Ronald W. Graham, K.C.M.G., C.B.                                                | Foreign Office |
| Mr. George Clerk, C.B., C.M.G.                                                      |                |
| The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain<br>(Secretary of State for India)                 | India Office   |
| Sir T.W. Holderness, K.C.B., K.C.S.I.                                               |                |
| Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B.                                                          |                |
| Mr. J.E. Shuckburgh <u>G.C.M.S.</u>                                                 |                |
| Sir Henry McMahon, <u>G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E.</u><br>G.S.I.                              |                |
| Major C.L. Storr, Secretary.                                                        |                |

THE CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had assembled in order to consider the comments of Sir Percy Cox and the Government of India upon the recommendations submitted in the Committee's Draft Report. He suggested that the Committee should investigate the criticisms paragraph by paragraph.

PARAGRAPH I.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN drew attention to the point of view expressed by the Indian Government that restriction of Indian immigration in Irak would cause bitter resentment in India. As regards the desirability of posting an Officer at Basrah to advise on questions of Indian pilgrimage and trade interests, he saw no objection to this being done.

THE CHAIRMAN said that immigrants were of two kinds: settlers and small traders. There was considerable objection, in his opinion, to a sudden rush of small traders who, once planted in any locality, clung tenaciously to it and generally managed to undersell other traders. As it was, the petty trade of Basrah and other ports was almost entirely in the hands of Indian Banias, and these were the people whom he thought should be kept out of Baghdad.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN explained that he had been thinking in terms of Arabian and not Indian administration. He had been considering rather the question of settler immigrants than the restrictions to be placed upon the entry of traders.

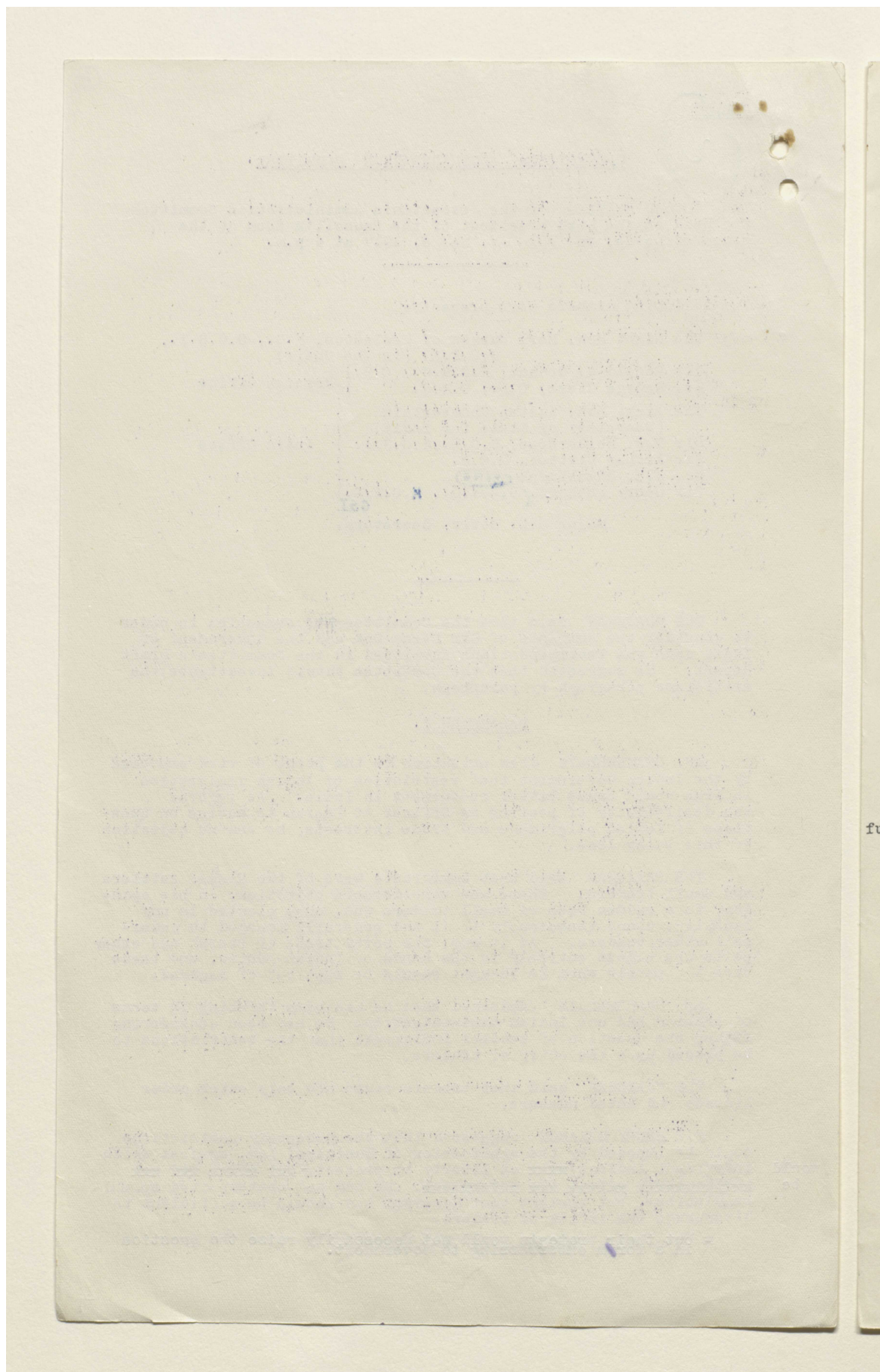
THE CHAIRMAN said that traders could now only enter under licence and noted numbers.

SIR HENRY MCMAHON suggested that the necessary restrictions could be imposed by the application of Municipal Law, against which individual Indians ~~were~~ at liberty to protest, ~~but which did not~~ ~~particularly affect the Government.~~ He had not contemplated special regulations, but thought that Municipal Law should be sufficient to discourage the inflow of traders.

\* but their protests would not necessarily raise the question in a form embarrassing to Government.



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(12/80)





THE CHAIRMAN regarded the question of immigration as one standing rather by itself, and thought that it should form the subject of a separate telegram. For his part, he did not at present contemplate admitting either settlers or traders.

SIR A. HIRTZEL thought that this, possibly, was the view of Sir Percy Cox, who had made no comment on this paragraph.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN pointed out that Indian troops had been very largely used in conquering the territory under discussion, and this constituted a strong argument for admitting Indians in a limited degree to those territories.

THE CHAIRMAN thought they should not be permitted to go beyond Basrah. The whole matter, in his opinion, wanted clearing up further.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN agreed that a rush of Indians to the occupied territories would be most undesirable.

THE CHAIRMAN said there were two periods to consider, the period of military occupation and the subsequent period. They must differentiate between them and must ascertain the views of the Government of India in regard to those two periods. Again, in regard to the question of land, they did not know what was in the mind of the Indian Government.

a/ Sir THOMAS HOLDERNESS thought that the Indian Government had in mind restrictions similar to those imposed in Rhodesia, East Africa and elsewhere. India, he was quite certain, would object strongly if they were told that Indians were to be excluded from Iraq.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN suggested that India should be told that at present all immigration was considered undesirable.

THE CHAIRMAN agreed, so long as they were not left with the impression that later there would be unrestricted immigration.

the  
future  
of/ MR. CHAMBERLAIN pointed out that India had no free ingress anywhere. German East Africa had, as a matter of fact, welcomed Indians, but that country was ~~now open to her~~. India could not be excluded everywhere. now in question.

THE CHAIRMAN said his objection was to the phrase free immigration, and reminded the Committee that their policy had been to press for Arab administration. In his opinion it would be better to say that the question did not arise at the moment and that the case must not be prejudged now. Considerations arising later must be regarded in the light of the form of the administration it was decided to adopt.

Sir RONALD GRAHAM said that this was precisely the view taken by the Foreign Office.

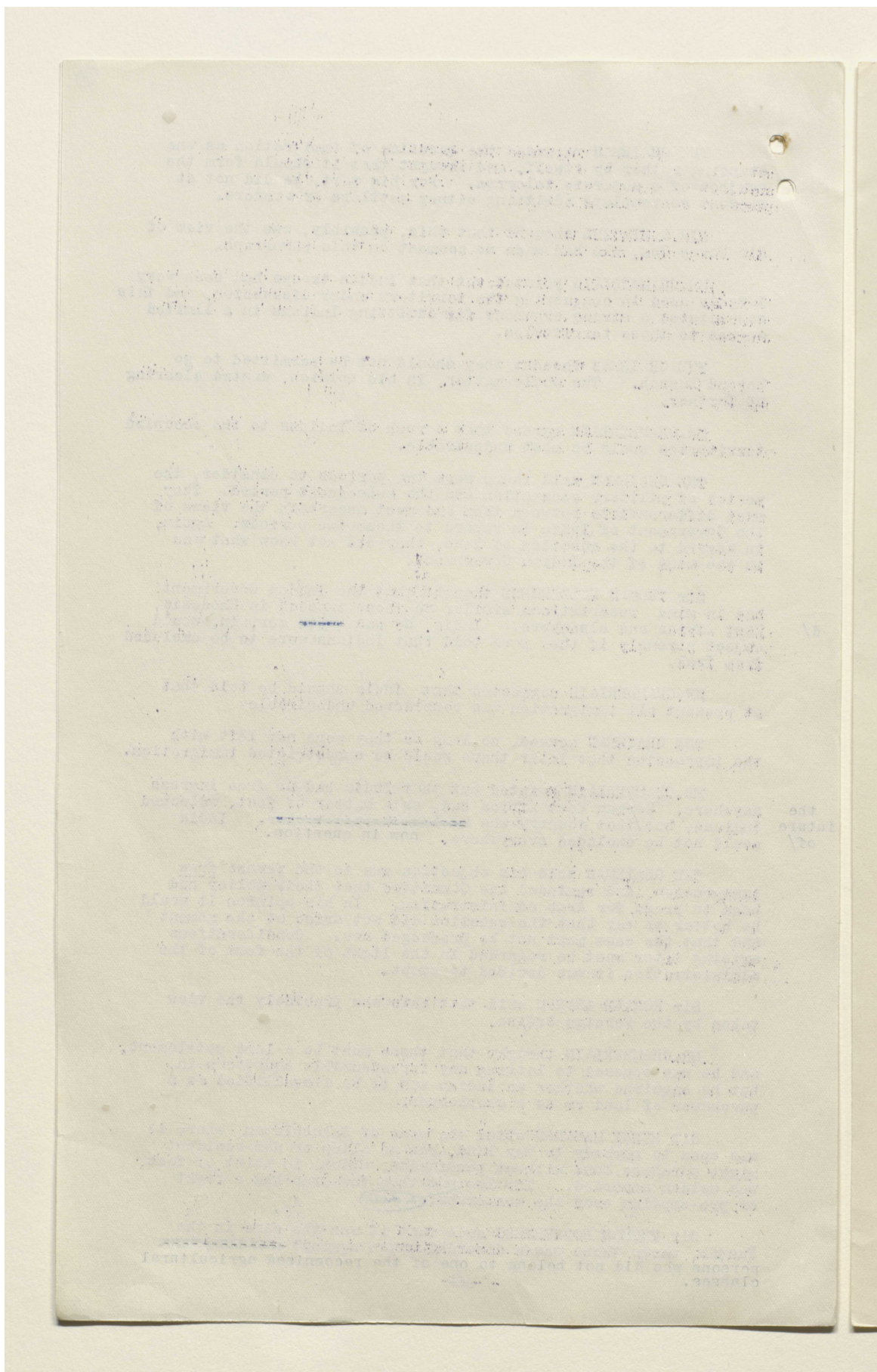
MR. CHAMBERLAIN thought that there must be a land settlement, and he was opposed to letting any irresponsible squatters in, but he enquired whether an Indian was to be disqualified as a purchaser of land or as a shopkeeper.

Sir HENRY McMAHON cited the case of Baluchistan, where it was open to anybody to buy land, but no alien or non-resident might purchase land without permission, which, in point of fact, was seldom accorded. The law was that the Arab had a right of pre-emption over the non-Arabs. *(in Arabic)*

Sir THOMAS HOLDERNESS said that it was the same in the Punjab, where there was a discrimination against ~~non-Arabs~~ persons who did not belong to one of the recognised agricultural classes.



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(14/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [8r]  
(15/80)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN again pressed the point that, having regard to all that the Indian soldiers had done, not only in Persia but in almost every theatre of operations, they could not contemplate a complete vote on Indian immigration.

THE CHAIRMAN thought that it did not matter much letting Indians into Basrah, but as regards the irrigated land in the Baghdad Vilayet the Arabs would resent an excessive influx of Indians to the exclusion of themselves.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN suggested a formula to the effect that special measures were contemplated to protect the Arabs, but not necessarily to exclude Indians.

THE CHAIRMAN repeated that Basrah was now open to an unrestricted influx, and that precautions must be taken that Baghdad was not equally open. He thought that the Committee should await a further expression by the Government of India of their views.

SIR THOMAS HOLDENNESS agreed, and said that in the meanwhile they could ascertain what restrictions were now in force, and what the Indian Government really meant by free immigration.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN further suggested that the question of Officers at Basrah and Baghdad should be held over for the present.

PARAGRAPH II.

The Committee made no comments.

PARAGRAPHS III & IV.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN suggested that the Government of India should be informed to the effect that the Committee's general scheme stood, and the British Government trusted them to work up to its principles.

THE CHAIRMAN drew attention to Sir Percy Cox's comments on this paragraph and on Paragraph XIII. He pointed out that the Administrative Council was one of local administration. He did not quite understand what the position of the Chief Political Officer was to be.

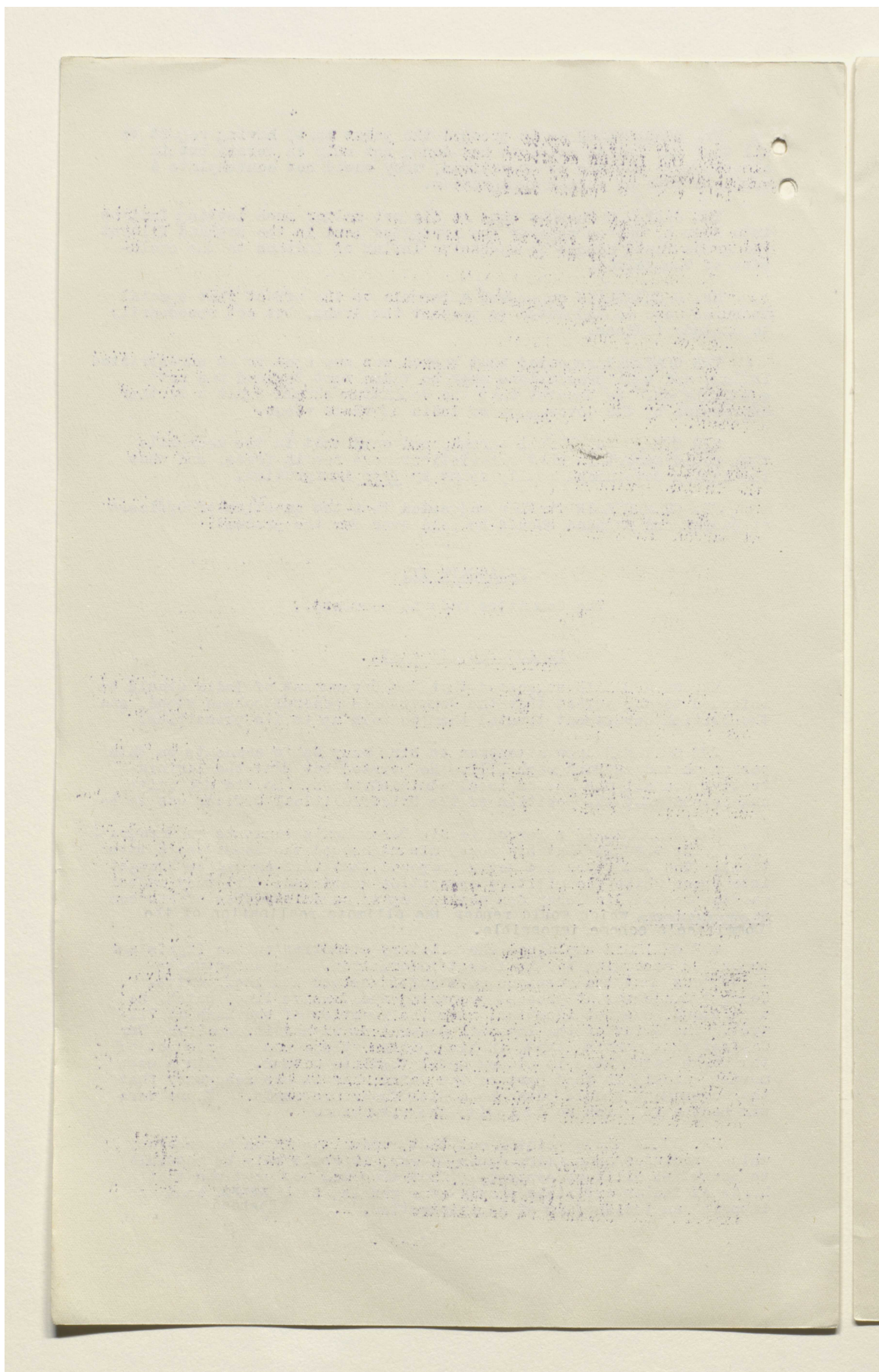
MR. CHAMBERLAIN referred to Sir Percy Cox's comments on Paragraph XII. He thought that Sir Percy misunderstood the Committee's intentions. The Committee had never proposed that this should be brought into force while the military occupation continued. All they wanted was to prevent Sir Percy Cox setting up an administration of his own ~~which would render the ultimate realisation of the Committee's scheme impossible.~~

THE CHAIRMAN explained the military situation on the Tigris and Euphrates according to the latest information. An unfortunate factor was that the Russians were quite useless and ineffective. General Maude was at present preparing a defensive line, which, he understood, was not identical with the frontier of the Baghdad Vilayet. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff had informed the War Cabinet that morning that, in his opinion, there was no prospect of the Turks being able to attack until the late autumn. Things were moving quickly in that part of the world, and it was necessary that the Government should push ahead with their proposals. There were six months in which to deal with the situation.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN pointed out that, under the Hague Convention, which precludes annexation during a war, it would only be possible to establish military control. What they did not want was that a horde of Indian officials should come rushing into ~~Basrah~~ Baghdad bent on imposing an Indian form of administration.



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(16/80)





that he thought quite  
Sir THOMAS HOLDERNESS said that the Indian Government ~~fully~~  
recognised this.

Sir HENRY McMAHON added that it was also accepted by Sir Percy Cox. In his opinion Military Law was, in some respects, an excellent system under which "to make a plunge" in administration.

THE CHAIRMAN referred to the Commission suggested by Sir Percy Cox, and suggested that it was a matter for the India Office to deal with.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN said that the thought it was rather a Foreign Office question.

THE CHAIRMAN considered that it should be a non-Indian Commission. ~~He did not say this. I think it was either Mr Austin Chamberlain or Sir Thomas Holderness~~  
Mr. Chamberlain thought it might be a mixed Commission, with one Indian official, one official from Egypt, and so on.

THE CHAIRMAN said that he felt the question of an Administrative Council must stand over for further detailed investigation.

#### PARAGRAPH V.

Sir THOMAS HOLDERNESS read out Sir Percy Cox's comments on proposal V.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN doubted how far the policy formulated by the Committee would be practicable. He questioned whether Baghdad could produce the nucleus of an administration, and pointed out that up to quite recently that administration had been Turkish and not Arab. He thought the Committee might say that they accepted the suggestions in broad outline, and they would send a Commission to work out details at the proper time. In the meantime India must be warned not to do anything which might later raise difficulties.

THE CHAIRMAN said that in their deliberations the Committee could not ignore the conception that the Allies might possibly come to terms with Turkey, and those terms might include the restoration to Turkey of the Baghdad Vilayet. For this reason he thought it was necessary that the future administration of Basrah and Baghdad must be treated separately. Further, in thinking of our Terms of Peace, it was necessary that our Allies should be considered. It was possible that we might have to pare off bits of Asia as well as of Africa, in order to effect the restoration of Allied territory in Europe now in German hands.

For this reason, care must be taken that Sir Percy Cox did not start working upon the assumption that Baghdad and Basrah were necessarily to be amalgamated. There was a further consideration; supposing that our arms were victorious in Palestine, in order to retain our gains there and to get our Allies to agree to their retention by us, or if, as he had said, we saw an opportunity of making a separate and generally satisfactory peace with Turkey, we might have to surrender Baghdad.

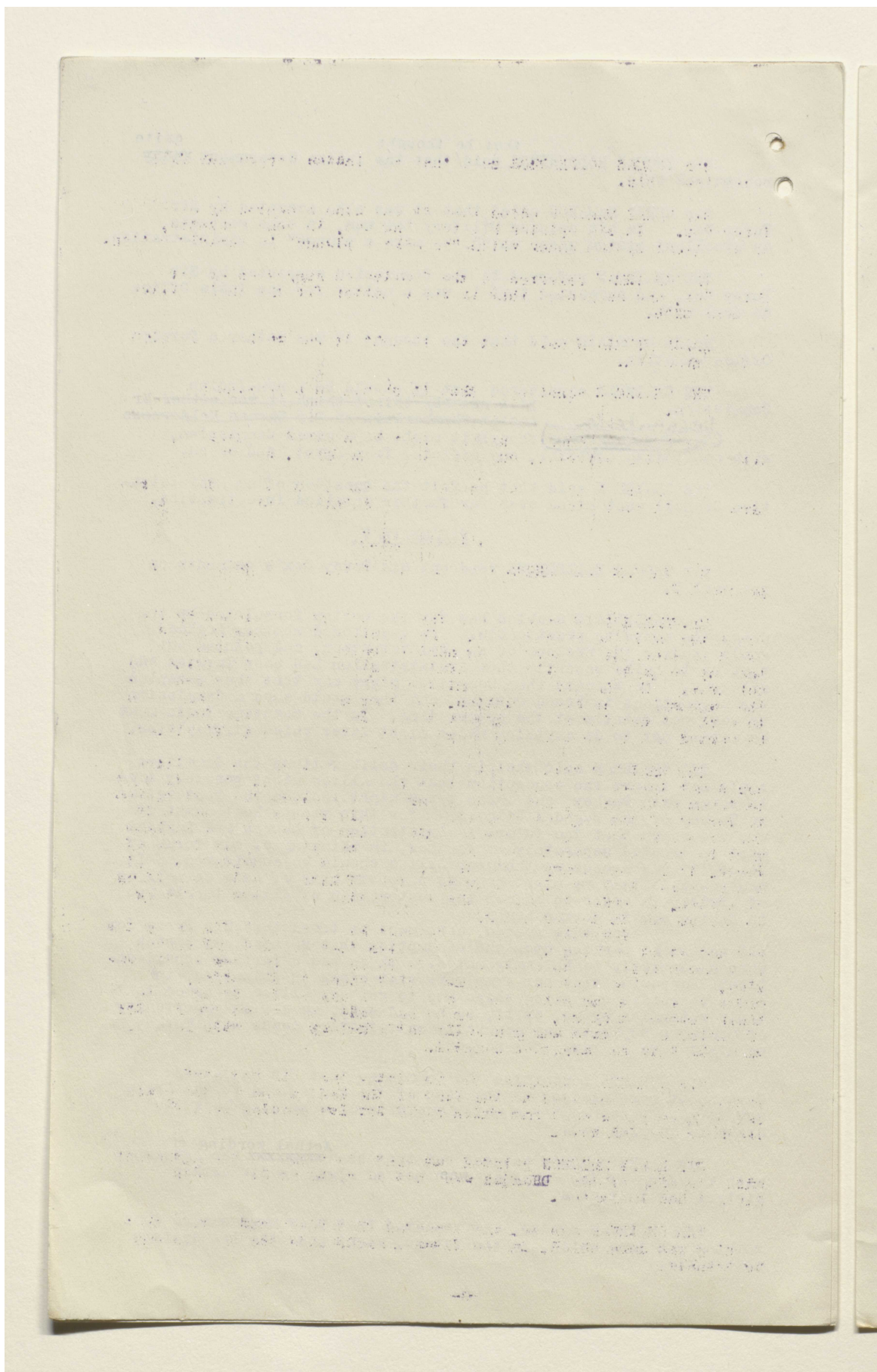
Sir A. HIRTZEL reminded the Committee that His Majesty's Government were pledged to the King of the Hedjaz and to the Arabs not to make peace on terms which would involve handing back the Arabs to Turkish rule.

Sir HENRY McMAHON pointed out that the ~~actual wording of~~ ~~the Agreement~~ with the King of the Hedjaz was not so rigid as Sir Arthur Hirtzel had indicated.

THE CHAIRMAN agreed, and repeated that they must ensure that nothing was done which, in the future, might make the two systems unworkable.



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(19/80)

MR CHAMBERLAIN said that his Department would draft a telegram containing instructions for the Indian Government and Sir Percy Cox, which he thought would be a relief to them both, stating that immigration, land policy and other questions must stand over for the present.

PARAGRAPH VI.

The Committee made no comments.

PARAGRAPH VII.

THE CHAIRMAN said as regards Nejj and Kerbela he gathered that Sir Percy Cox agreed with the views of the Committee, who had only contemplated the Sacred Cities themselves and not a territorial enclave. He personally concurred in Sir Percy's view.

MR CHAMBERLAIN thought that as Holy Places they must be granted independence under a Moslem Committee, but precautions must be taken to prevent their becoming sinks of iniquity or refuges for undesirable characters. He understood that the Committee wished him to let Sir Percy Cox know that their views coincided with his.

PARAGRAPH VIII.

MR CHAMBERLAIN read out the comments of the Government of India contained in the Viceroy's telegram of April 27, 1917.

THE CHAIRMAN said the concluding sentence, "For these reasons we think large schemes are to be deprecated until the country settles down and local labour is available" governed the whole thing.

MR CHAMBERLAIN suggested that if the line they took was that of helping and establishing the Arabs there would not be much room left for Indians.

PARAGRAPHS IX and X.

The Committee made no comments.

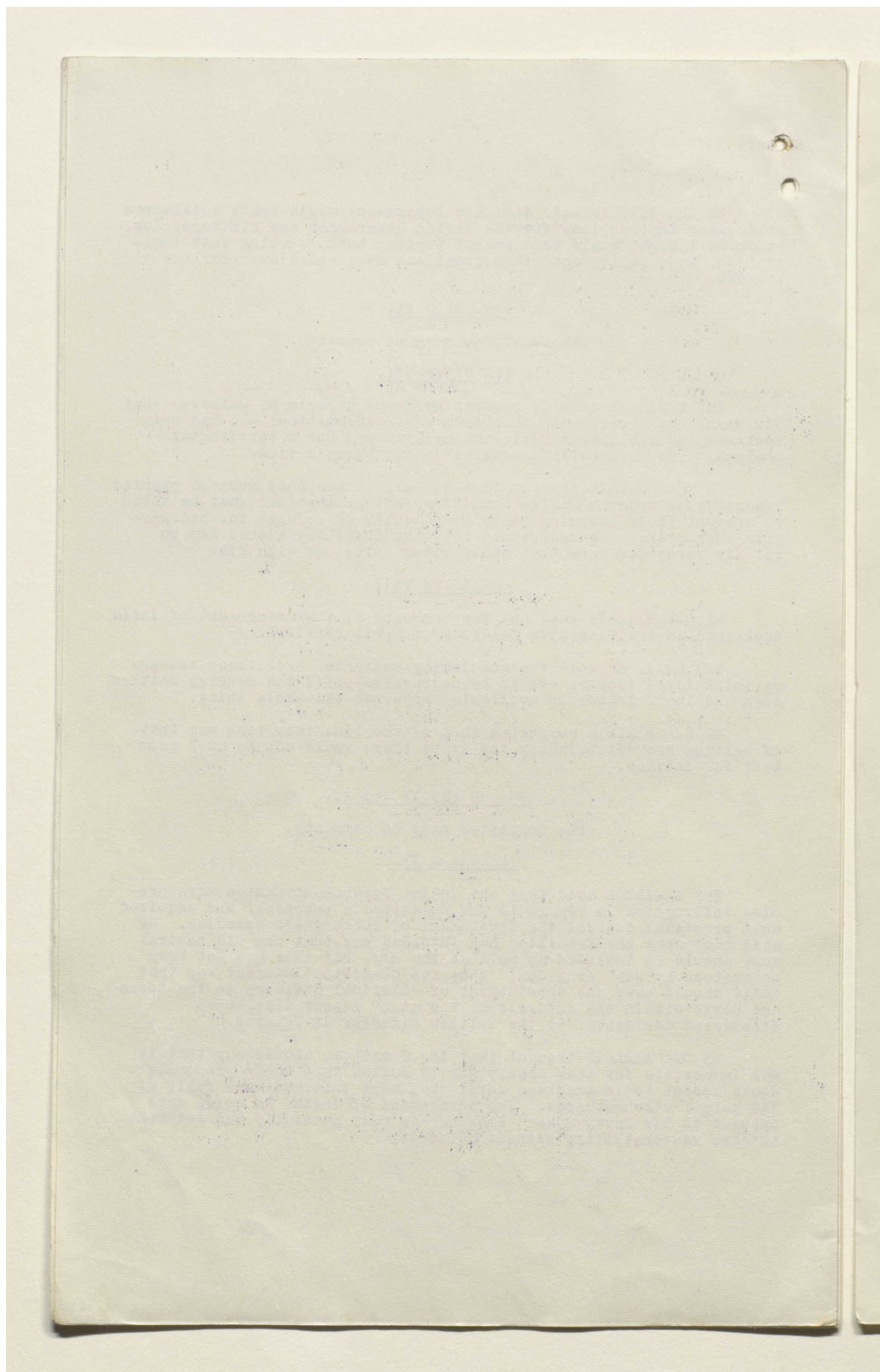
PARAGRAPH XI.

THE CHAIRMAN said that the Indian Government wanted more precise information in regard to the Committee's proposal, and enquired what practical control the Government of India would exercise. He said that what the Committee had intended was that the old neutral zone should be included as well as the new, but this had not been understood by Sir Percy Cox. What the Committee intended was that India should have the appointment of Political Officers to the towns and ports within the entire zone who might report also, when considered advisable, to the British Minister at Teheran.

MR CHAMBERLAIN thought that the Committee should say that it was impossible for them absolutely to define what their proposals would amount to in practice until they were informed more fully of the actual circumstances. The Government of India, he said, were opposed to Sir Percy Sykes' Mission, as they naturally did not want to have responsibility without authority.



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There followed some discussion as to the officials who should be supplied to form the nucleus of the new Administration.

Sir A. HIRTZEL suggested that a "Reminder" telegram should be sent to Sir Percy Cox.

Sir RONALD GRAHAM said the Foreign Office had prepared a list of suitable officials, all of whom had had a grounding of Arabic.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN suggested that Sir Percy Cox might be informed that the Foreign Office had compiled a list of men with the necessary qualifications who would probably be of use to him, and that he might apply to London before he appealed to India. Sir Percy Cox might be invited also to state more explicitly what his needs were.

Sir THOMAS HOLDERNESS considered that men were required who were accustomed and prepared to work under military conditions.

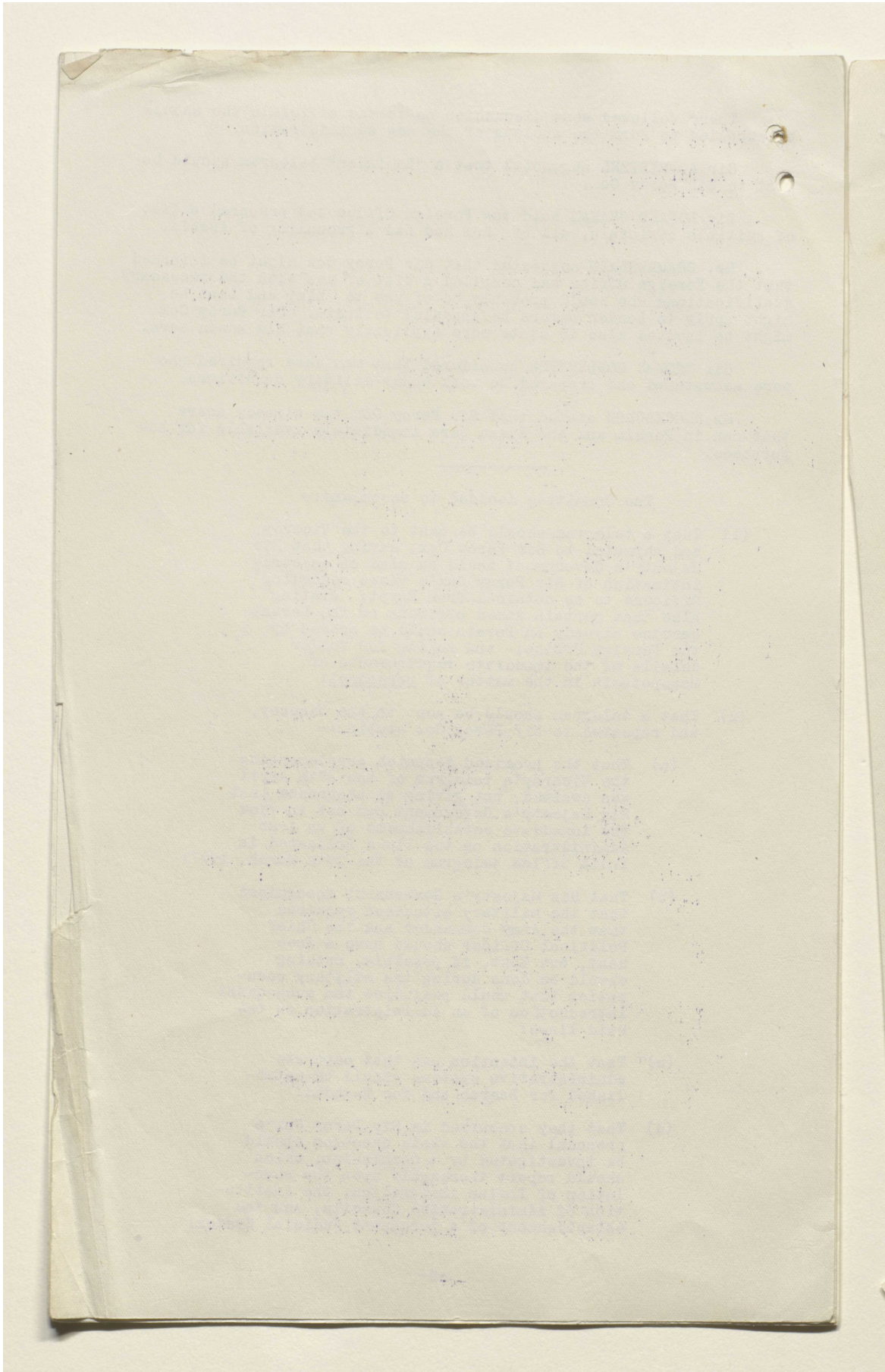
Mr. SHUCKBURGH stated that Sir Percy Cox was already aware that men in Persia and the Sudan were immediately available for his purposes.

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The Committee decided to recommend:-

- (1) That a telegram should be sent to the Viceroy, and repeated to Sir Percy Cox, saying that His Majesty's Government would be glad of an early intimation of Sir Percy Cox's views regarding Officers to be obtained from Egypt; stating also that certain named officers of the Levant Service already in Persia could be spared by the Foreign Office; and asking for fuller details of the immediate requirements of Mesopotamia in the matter of personnel:
- (2) That a telegram should be sent to the Viceroy, and repeated to Sir Percy Cox stating:-
  - (a) That the promised despatch supplementing the Viceroy's telegram of the 27th April was awaited, but giving an assurance that His Majesty's Government had not in view the immediate establishment of an Arab Administration on the lines indicated in India Office telegram of the 29th March, 1917:
  - (b) That His Majesty's Government recognised that the military situation requires that the Army Commander and the Chief Political Officer should have a free hand, but that, if possible, nothing should be done during the military occupation that would prejudice the subsequent introduction of an Administration on the said lines:
  - (c) That the intention was that separate administrative systems should be established for Basrah and for Baghdad:
  - (d) That they concurred in Sir Percy Cox's proposal that the whole question should be investigated by a Commission, which should report thoroughly upon the regulation of Indian immigration, the institution of Administrative Councils, and the establishment of a permanent Judicial System:



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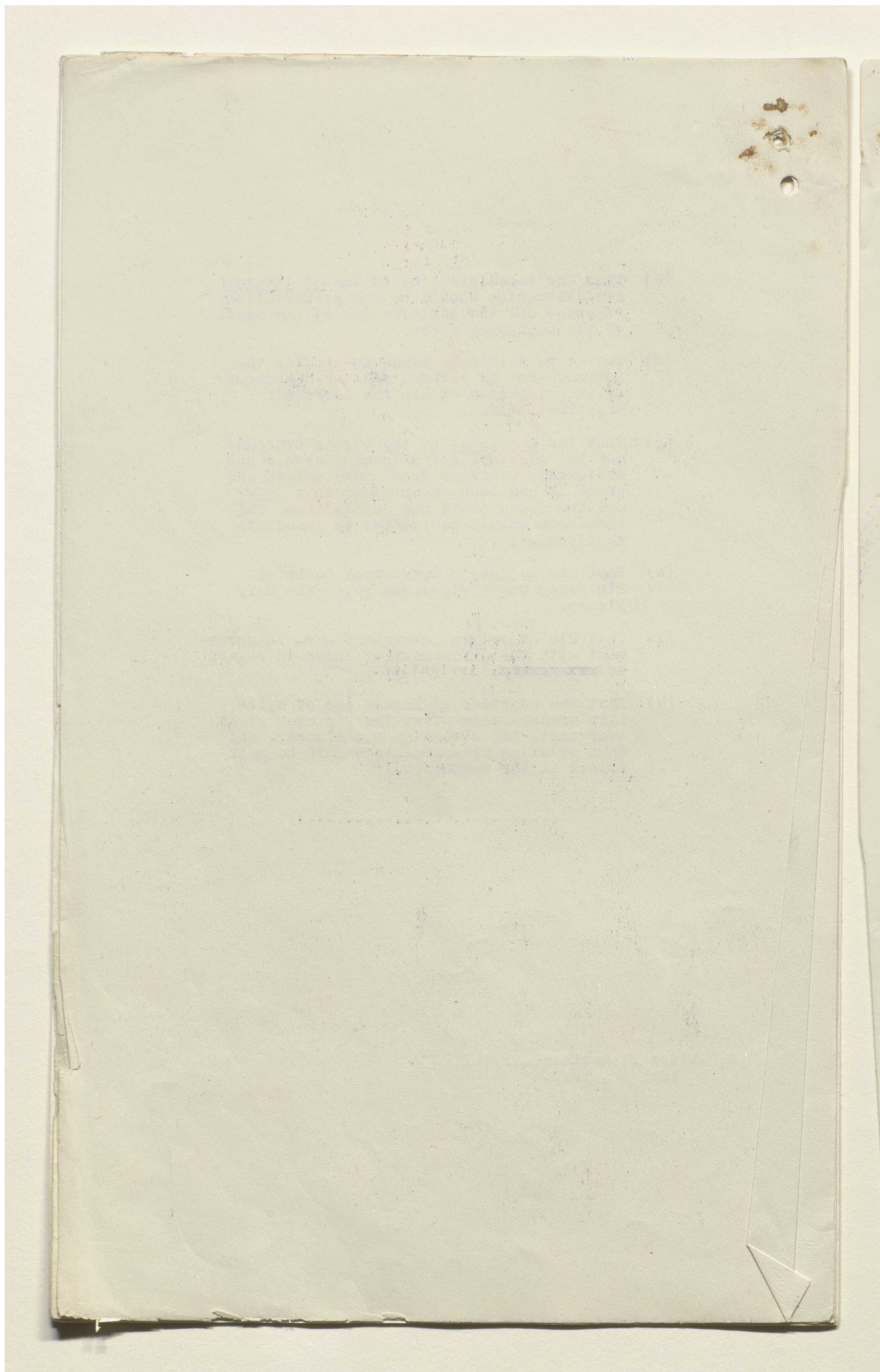
Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [12r]  
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- (e) That the immediate aims of the ad interim Administration should be the preservation of order and the satisfaction of the needs of the occupying force;
- (f) That care should be taken to confine the introduction of reforms and the amendment of existing laws within the narrowest possible limits;
- (g) That the personnel of the higher branches and the clerical establishment should not ordinarily be drawn from India unless and until it had been ascertained that Egypt and the Sudan could not supply them, and that both should be limited to immediate requirements;
- (h) That His Majesty's Government accepted Sir Percy Cox's views regarding the Holy Places;
- (i) That His Majesty's Government were in agreement with the Government of India in regard to ~~the~~ irrigation.
- (k) That the question of Persia and of military arrangements after the War must stand over until the situation was clearer, and that existing arrangements should be maintained in the meanwhile.
- .....

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



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SECRET

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The THIRD Meeting of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee was held in the Lord President of the Council's Room at the House of Lords on Tuesday, June 12th, 1917, at 6 p.m.

The following members were present:-

|         |                                                                                                                 |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | The Right Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.,<br>G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. (in the Chair)                         |
|         | The Right Hon. The Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.                                                            |
| Foreign | (The Right Hon. The Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, K.G.,<br>G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.G.V.O. I.S.O.) |
| Office. | (Sir George Clerk, K.C.M.G., C.B.,<br>Sir R.W. Graham, K.C.M.G., C.B.,                                          |
|         | (The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.                                                                        |
| India   | (Sir T.W. Holderness, G.C.B., K.C.S.I.                                                                          |
| Office  | (Lt.-Gen. Sir H.V. Cox, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.S.I.<br>(Mr. J.E. Shuckburgh.                                         |

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

Major L. Storr, Acting Secretary.

THE CHAIRMAN said that he had assembled the Committee to consider further the question of the Administration in Mesopotamia and the difficulties that had arisen between General Maude and Sir Percy Cox, and, further, the position of Sir Percy Sykes - in other words he invited their consideration that afternoon of two main questions:

- (a) Sir Percy Cox's position vis-à-vis the military authorities.
- (b) The question of river transport and navigation.

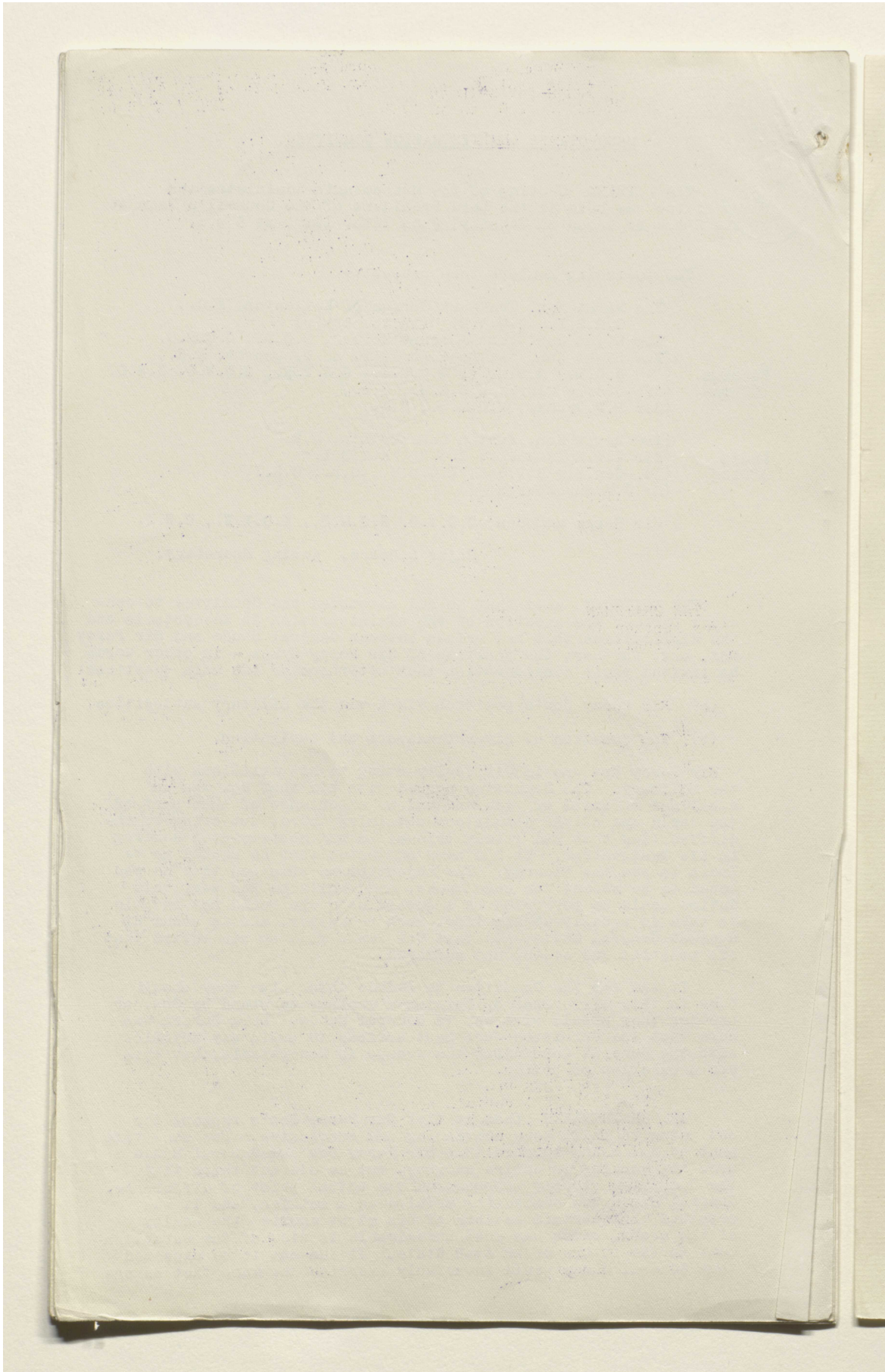
Sir Percy Cox was in difficulty owing to his relations with the military. The Committee agreed with him that Cox was an excellent official of wide and unique experience of that part of the world and of the conditions obtaining there, but owing to the difficulties that had lately arisen, he had contemplated sending in his resignation. It had been suggested that he should go to India to see the Viceroy. The objection to this was that he was bound to be absent for some weeks, and, while he was away, his duties would be performed by a subordinate who would not be able to take an equally strong line, when necessary, and to stand up against General Maude, and that Cox would find on his return that his position and status had suffered.

It was for the Committee to decide which side they should take in this difference of opinion - whether to stand by Cox, or whether they should give way to General Maude. Lord Curzon was sure that the Committee were most anxious to avoid any friction with the General Commanding the troops in Mesopotamia, but this was a question of policy.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN thought that Sir Percy Cox's reasons for not going to India were convincing and conclusive. For some time past he had heard rumours that Sir Percy Cox and General Maude were not working in entire harmony, but he did not think that the Committee clearly apprehended the actual point of difference. General Maude was conducting affairs as a soldier, and it was possible that certain actions of his might excite the enmity of the Arabs, which was most undesirable in view of the establishment in the future of an Arab State. It was not to be expected that General Maude would invariably exercise the same tact as one



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who was conversant with the people and had wide experience of their peculiarities.

Sir Percy Cox had suggested that in future he should correspond direct with the India Office. He was disposed to favour the adoption of this suggestion.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that Sir Percy Cox had made a more important proposal, and that was that, in order to strengthen his hands, he should be appointed High Commissioner. Sir Percy had intimated that he did not think that the Army Commander would raise any serious objections. If that were the fact, Sir Percy should be given an appropriate status.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN thought that it was very necessary to find out what was actually happening. This was only possible if Sir Percy were placed in direct communication with his Department.

LORD MILNER suggested that climatic conditions, which at the present time of year were almost insupportable, might afford a clue to the recent accentuated differences of opinion.

THE CHAIRMAN thought that it was desirable to strengthen the hands of the political officer. His position must be consolidated, and, as time went on, his powers extended, and there was danger of losing ground in this direction. He referred to a telegram that had been received from Mr. Storrs, who, he understood, was reputed to be a very capable official.

LORD HARDINGE suggested that the Administration of Mesopotamia should be made analogous to that obtaining in Egypt - in other words, that martial law should prevail and that Sir Percy should be appointed High Commissioner.

LORD MILNER said that, though their experience of this form of administration in Egypt extended over two years, there were certain difficulties in the way, and it was necessary to proceed deliberately and with caution.

THE CHAIRMAN asked whether the Committee thought there was any objection to Cox's being appointed Provisional High Commissioner. Would the adoption of this suggestion make the position of His Majesty's Government more difficult if, at a Peace Conference, they had to agree to evacuate Baghdad?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN referred to the decisions of the Hague Conference and thought it was doubtful whether any annexations during the War were permissible and would be generally recognised.

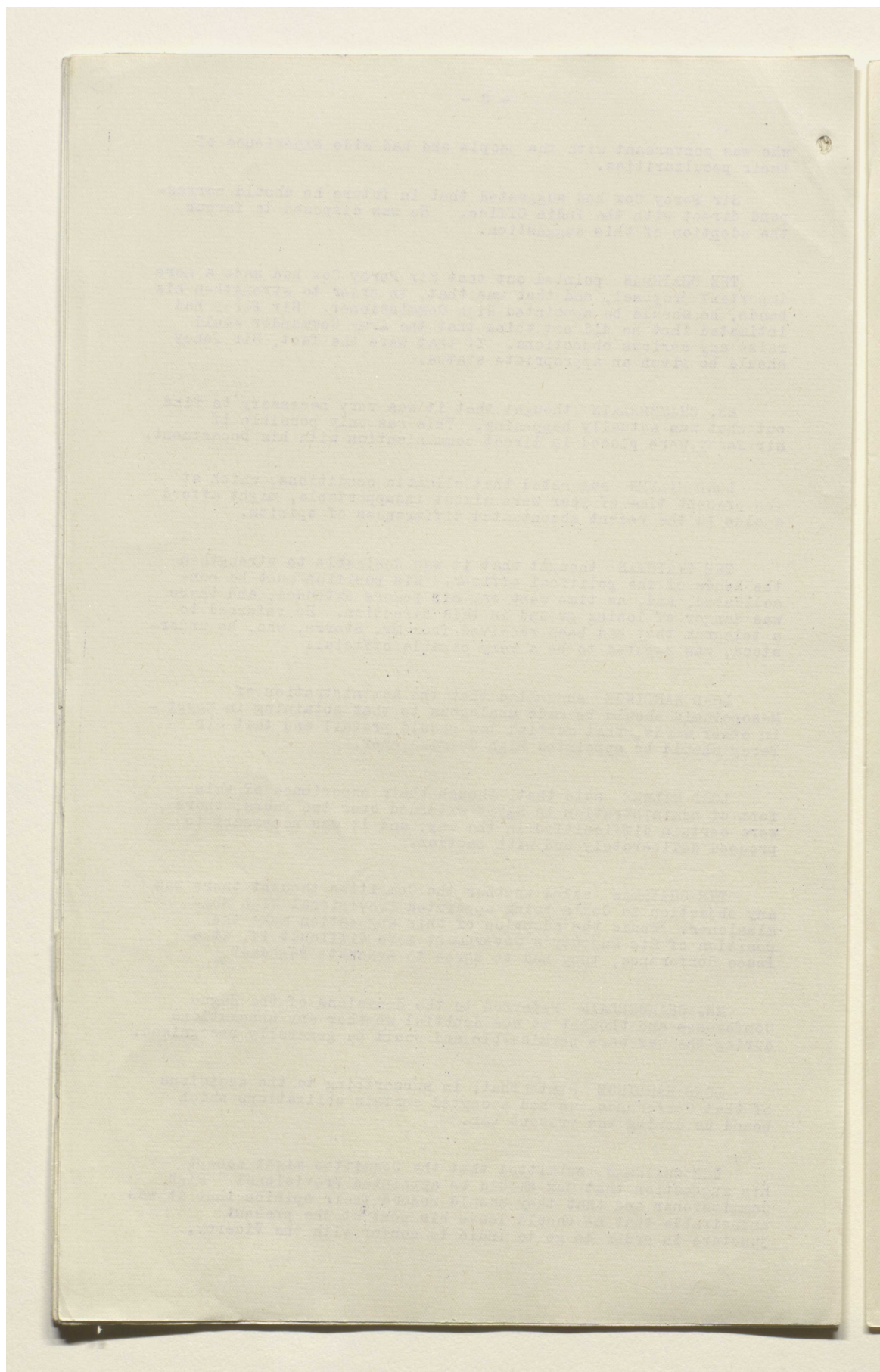
LORD HARDINGE stated that, in subscribing to the decisions of that Conference, we had accepted certain obligations which bound us during the present War.

THE CHAIRMAN submitted that the Committee might accept his suggestion that Cox should be appointed Provisional High Commissioner and that they should record their opinion that it was undesirable that he should leave his post at the present juncture in order to go to India to confer with the Viceroy.

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MR. CHAMBERLAIN thought that they might also recommend that he should submit for the time being a fortnightly Progress Report direct to his Department.

SIR THOMAS HOLDERNESS expressed uncertainty as to what the appointment of High Commissioner would actually involve in practice as regards the position and powers of civil officials. At present any assistant political officers were under the General Officer Commanding. In the terms of the Civil Administration code they were under General Maude in the same way as Sir Percy Cox was.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN said that what Sir Percy desired of His Majesty's Government was merely that they should accord him the right to report to that Government direct.

LORD MILLNER agreed that this was the point to which Sir Percy attached the most importance.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN said that if this sanction were accorded either General Maude or Sir Percy Cox would submit recommendations, but that, in urgent cases, where time did not admit of reference to His Majesty's Government, General Maude's opinion would hold. He added that of course Sir Percy Cox would always send General Maude a copy of any report he might send to England.

SIR HENRY McMAHON stated that, in his opinion, nothing short of appointing Sir Percy Cox High Commissioner would meet the case. He already had the power to report direct to the Indian Government, and he only asked now for formal permission to report to England in order that his status might be clearly defined. It had been definitely stated that all political officials were under the Military Commander, and it was evident that Sir Percy wished to place himself on a new footing.

SIR ROMANUS GRAHAM wondered whether this new departure was desirable so far as our position vis à vis Russia in that part of the world was concerned.

THE CHAIRMAN considered that, so far from weakening, it would in reality strengthen our hands. He suggested that the Committee might take the following action:-

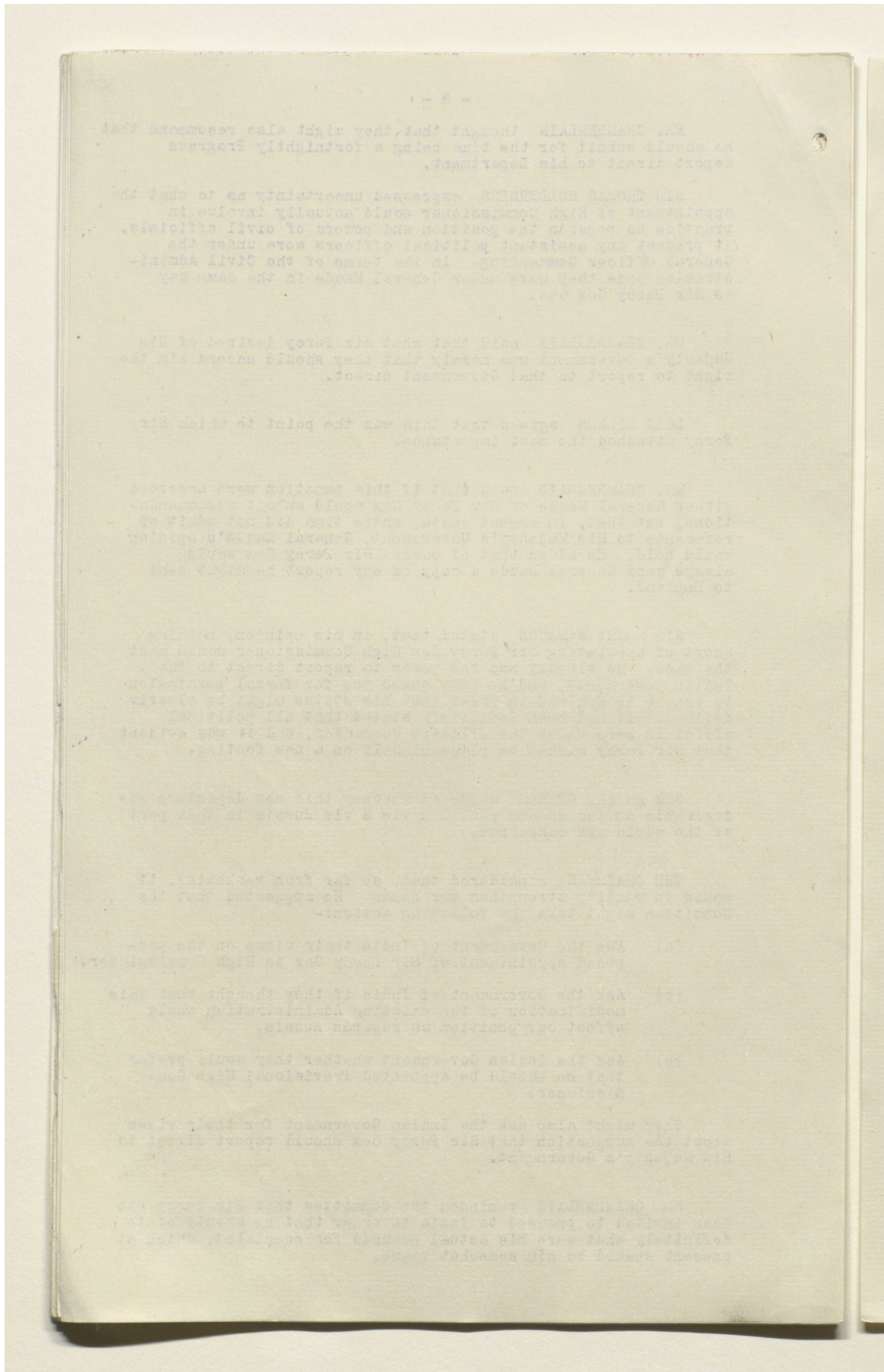
- (a) Ask the Government of India their views on the proposed appointment of Sir Percy Cox as High Commissioner.
- (b) Ask the Government of India if they thought that this modification of the existing Administration would affect our position as regards Russia.
- (c) Ask the Indian Government whether they would prefer that he should be appointed Provisional High Commissioner.

They might also ask the Indian Government for their views about the suggestion that Sir Percy Cox should report direct to His Majesty's Government.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN reminded the Committee that Sir Percy had been invited to proceed to India in order that he should state definitely what were his actual grounds for complaint, which at present seemed to him somewhat vague.

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THE CHAIRMAN said that he understood that he had the support of Lord Hardinge and Sir Henry McMahon to his proposal that Sir Percy Cox should be made High Commissioner.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN inquired how his position should be precisely defined.

SIR GEORGE CLEEK suggested that he should be called "Civil Commissioner", with the right to report direct to England.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that Sir Percy was still under the Government of India who certainly should be consulted in the matter.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN suggested that he might be called "Civil Commissioner of Mesopotamia".

THE CHAIRMAN added, "with a duty to report".

LORD MILNER considered that perhaps the War Office should be first consulted, or it might be better for the decision of the Committee merely to be communicated to them.

THE CHAIRMAN inquired who exactly was the "higher authority" to whom Sir Percy wished to submit a weekly report.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN understood that he wished to report to the Secretary of State for India, for the information of the British Government, and that he proposed to send copies of his report to General Maude.

LORD MILNER pointed out that Sir Percy was still under the orders of the Military Commander in Mesopotamia.

SIR THOMAS HOLDERNESS suggested that he should report under "flying seal" through General Maude.

THE CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that before the War Sir Percy Cox was a man of much higher standing than the Commander of the Mesopotamia Expedition. He was a senior man, 55 years of age, of unique experience, holding a very high position.

Lord Curzon thought it very necessary that the Committee should be quite clear that they were proposing what Sir Percy Cox himself wanted. He put it to the Committee whether they thought Sir Percy should be first consulted in order to clear up any doubts, any telegram that might be sent to him being repeated to the Viceroy.

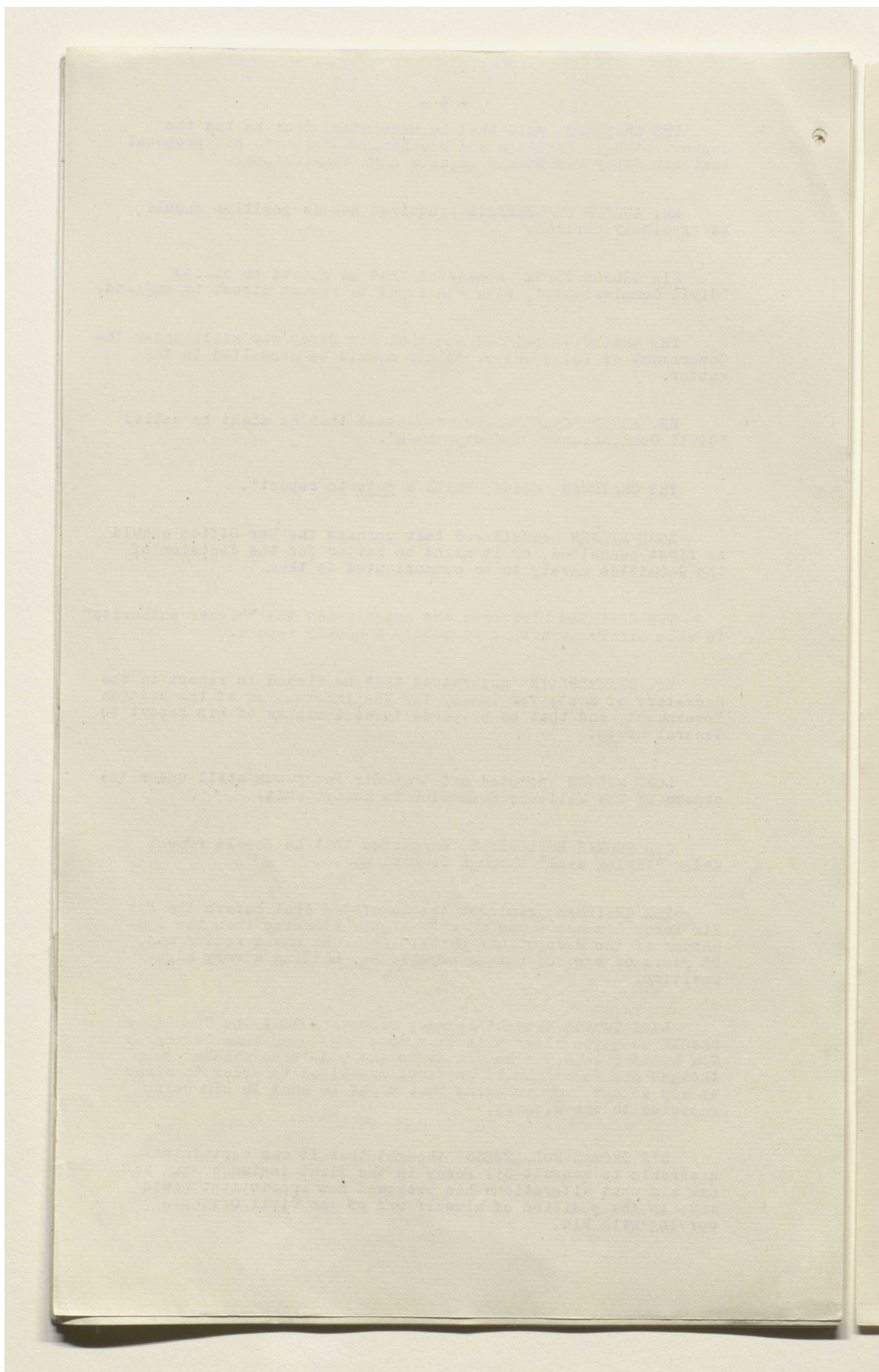
SIR THOMAS HOLDERNESS thought that it was certainly desirable to consult Sir Percy in the first instance, and to ask him what alterations his proposed new appointment would make in the position of himself and of the Civil Officers serving with him.

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(The Secretary of State for India was requested to draft a telegram for the approval of the Chairman, a copy of which is recorded below).

THE CHAIRMAN referred to the Foreign Office telegram No. 616 of the 11th June, 1917 from Sir Reginald Wingate regarding instructions that had been received that General Clayton's services should be placed at the disposal of the authorities entrusted with our Administration of Mesopotamia, and that he should proceed to Baghdad for administrative work in that vilayet.

Sir Reginald Wingate expressed the hope that General Clayton's candidature for the Baghdad appointment should be withdrawn, as a suitable successor was urgently required to Sir Mark Sykes as Chief Political Officer in the Anglo-French Mission. He pointed out the importance of having a first-rate man to succeed Sir Mark, who is now on his way to England, and that General Clayton's knowledge and experience rendered him uniquely qualified for the post. Sir Reginald said that he was unable to suggest a substitute for General Clayton, but he suggested that Sir Percy Cox might desire to retain Mr. Storrs at Baghdad, where his knowledge of Orientals and his Egyptian experience would make him a valuable assistant.

SIR HENRY McMAHON, in response to an inquiry as to whether in his opinion Mr. Storrs possessed the requisite qualifications, stated that, although Mr. Storrs was a very capable and useful officer, he did not regard him as really suitable and competent to undertake the work.

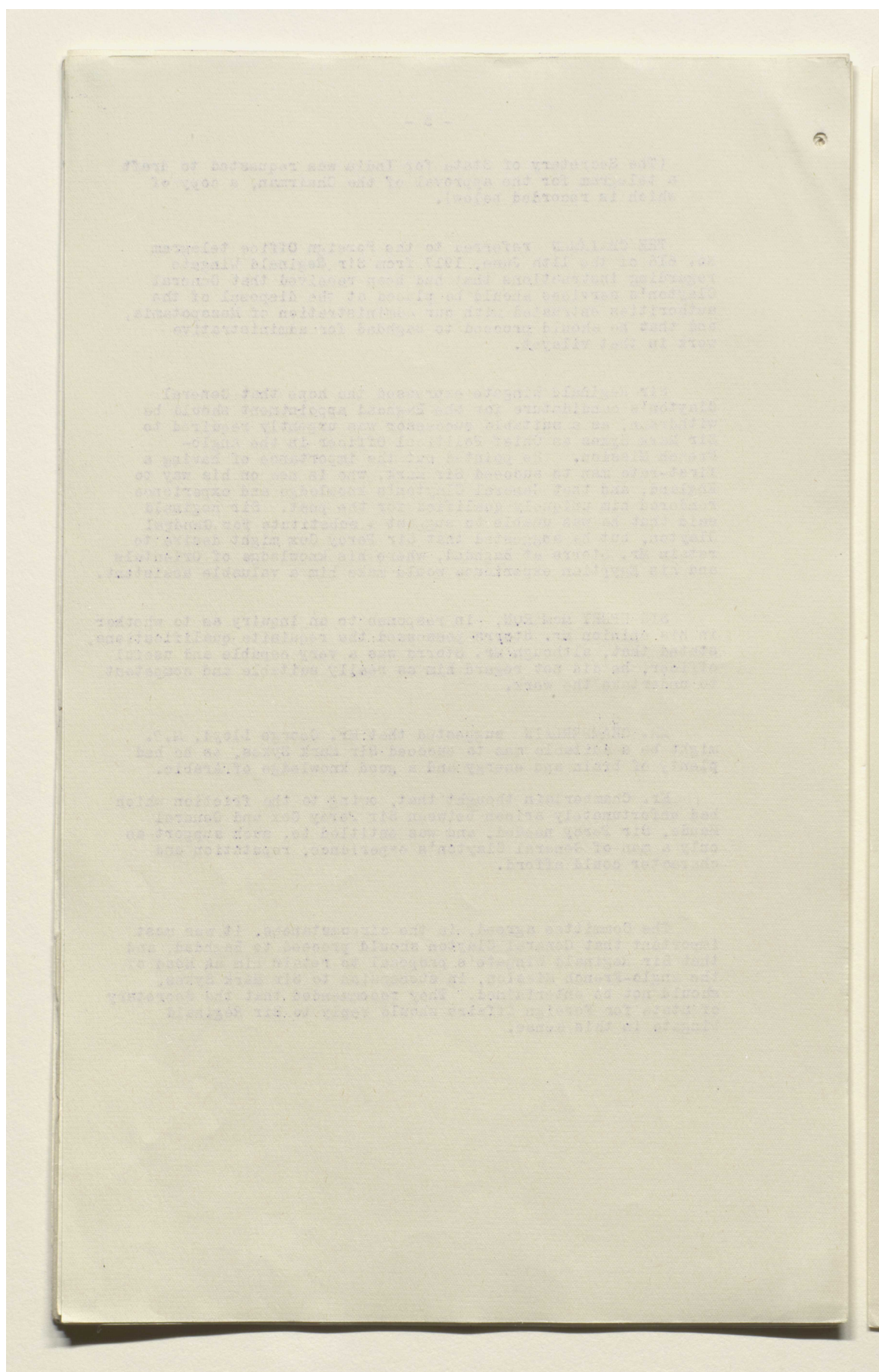
MR. CHAMBERLAIN suggested that Mr. George Lloyd, M.P. might be a suitable man to succeed Sir Mark Sykes, as he had plenty of brain and energy and a good knowledge of Arabic.

Mr. Chamberlain thought that, owing to the friction which had unfortunately arisen between Sir Percy Cox and General Maude, Sir Percy needed, and was entitled to, such support as only a man of General Clayton's experience, reputation and character could afford.

The Committee agreed, in the circumstances, it was most important that General Clayton should proceed to Baghdad, and that Sir Reginald Wingate's proposal to retain him as Head of the Anglo-French Mission, in succession to Sir Mark Sykes, should not be entertained. They recommended that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should reply to Sir Reginald Wingate in this sense.



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THE CHAIRMAN said that the next point which the Committee had to consider was the question of Mesopotamia irrigation which was more or less linked up with the question of River Conservancy and Inland Water Transport. He quoted from various telegrams on the subject. The services of a highly competent expert Engineer were required as Director of Waterways and Irrigation and the name of Sir George Buchanan had been suggested. It was, however, pointed out that he is not an irrigation expert and the salary he would expect would be excessive for the duties to be carried out.

Lieut-Col. Garrow who had had much experience in South America and Egypt had been sent out to Mesopotamia by the War Office, and both General Maude and Sir Percy Cox agree that Colonel Garrow, if qualified, would be a suitable man for the post. The War Office evidently had a very high opinion of this Officer, but if he were appointed it would be necessary to have it made quite clear whether he would be attached to the Civil Administration or be under the General Officer Commanding, as General Maude desired.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN thought that the Chief of Imperial General Staff should be consulted. He himself agreed with Sir Percy Cox's views. If Colonel Garrow went to Mesopotamia in a purely military capacity difficulties might arise as he might be inclined to disregard Arab water rights and he might not consider fully the permanent effect on irrigation problems of any temporary expedient.

THE CHAIRMAN said he was not quite certain what the actual situation was. He had the impression that General Gray and Colonel Hughes were in Mesopotamia to deal with these questions and he wished to know if they had been superseded.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN explained that Sir George Buchanan had been sent out in the early days but that he had not been able to work cordially with General Nixon. The War Office were now sending out Colonel Garrow to assist General Gray in matters connected with River Conservancy. General Gray was the Local Commanding Officer, Inland Water Transport Department.

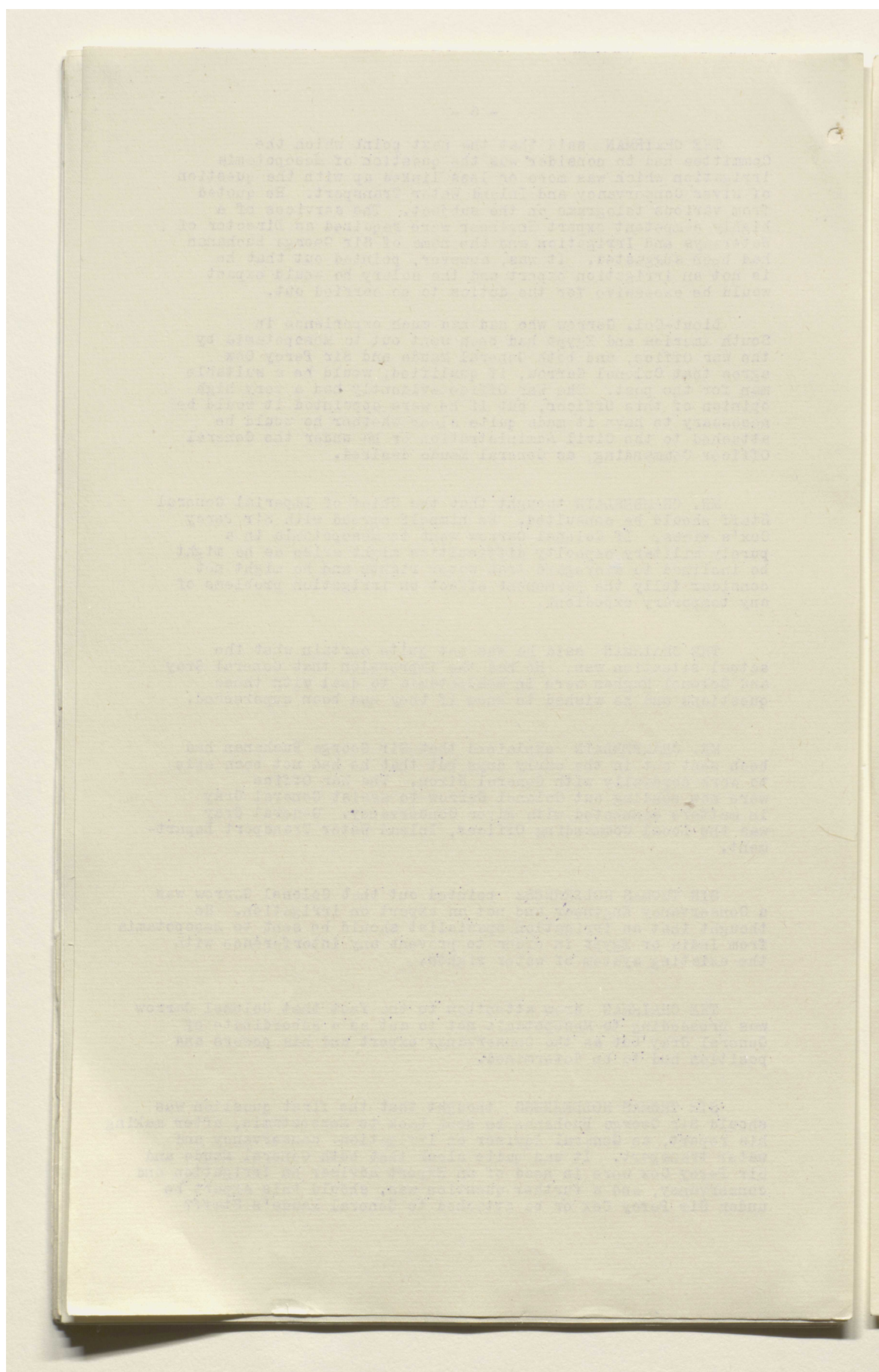
SIR THOMAS HOLDERNESS pointed out that Colonel Garrow was a Conservancy Engineer and not an expert on irrigation. He thought that an irrigation specialist should be sent to Mesopotamia from India or Egypt in order to prevent any interference with the existing system of water rights.

THE CHAIRMAN drew attention to the fact that Colonel Garrow was proceeding to Mesopotamia not to act as a subordinate of General Gray but as the Conservancy expert and his powers and position had to be determined.

SIR THOMAS HOLDERNESS thought that the first question was should Sir George Buchanan be sent back to Mesopotamia, after making his report, as General Adviser on irrigation, conservancy and water transport. It was quite clear that both General Maude and Sir Percy Cox were in need of an Expert Adviser on irrigation and conservancy, and a further question was, should this expert be under Sir Percy Cox or be attached to General Maude's Staff?



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MR. CHAMBERLAIN said that what Sir Percy Cox appeared to have in mind was that, even if it were decided that the expert should be attached to him, he would still be under the General Officer Commanding, but he would be in a more independent position as he would act under Sir Percy's instructions and it would be easier for him to devise special precautions to safeguard existing water rights. If this expert were directly under the orders of General Maude very serious trouble might arise. General Gray was under the General Officer Commanding but so far, Mr. Chamberlain understood, those rights had not been seriously interfered with, or rather that whatever interference had taken place it need not be permanent in its effect.

THE CHAIRMAN said he was rather suspicious of the phraseology employed in the Viceroy's telegram on the subject which he thought was ambiguous. He himself was in favour of placing the expert under Sir Percy Cox's orders.

THE COMMITTEE decided that:-

Mr. Austen Chamberlain should draft telegraphic instructions to meet the case, but, before sending them, should consult the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

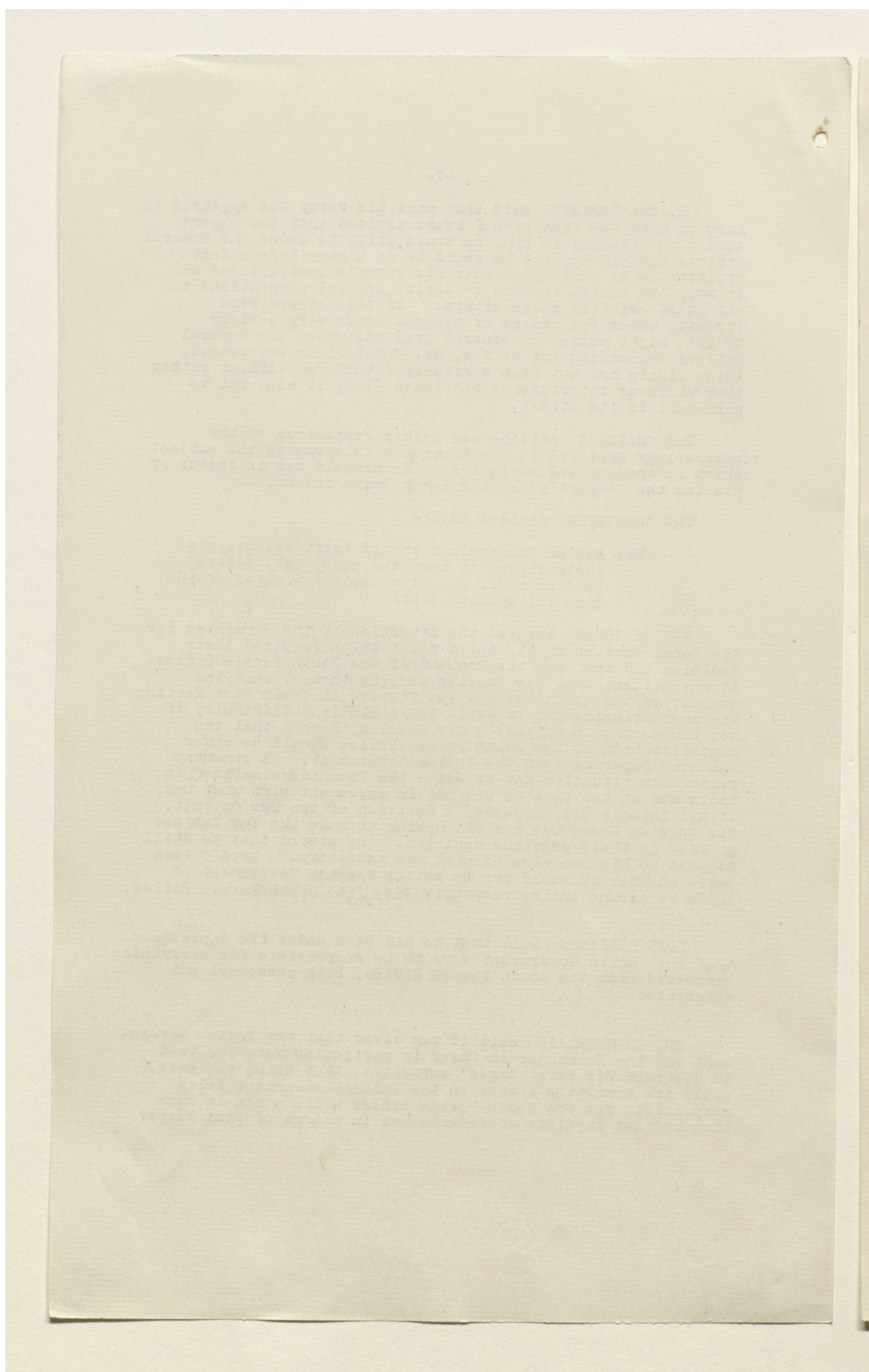
THE CHAIRMAN invited the attention of the Committee for the consideration of the third point which required their decision and that was the Command of the South Persia Rifles. It was evident that Sir Charles Marling thought that the suggestion the Committee had put forward at their last Meeting was impracticable and it would leave him in a difficult, if not impossible, position. Sir Charles thought that the administration of the South Persia Rifles should be under the Army Department of the Indian Government. A somewhat remarkable situation had arisen - the Commander-in-Chief in India had stated that he was not in agreement with what was, to all intents and purposes, a decision of the War Cabinet. Sir Charles Monro was now attempting to make the War Cabinet go back on their previous decision. He stated that he still adhered to his own view of what was necessary. Lord Curzon asked whether it would not be better for the Government of India to assume entire responsibility for the South Persia Rifles.

LORD HARDINGE said that he had been under the impression that the Indian Government were to be responsible for everything connected with the South Persia Rifles, both personnel and material.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN said it was clear that the Indian Government and the Commander-in-Chief in particular were inclined to distrust Sir Percy Sykes' capacity: that being the case, could the Committee insist on the Indian Government being responsible for the South Persia Rifles while a man in whom they had not implicit confidence was in charge of that Force?



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THE CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that Sir Percy Sykes had on his Staff, two experts, on Military matters in the person of a General Staff Officer and an expert on financial questions.

LORD HARDINGE thought that General Maude wanted to ignore the Indian Government and to be entirely independent of it.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN said that it had been arranged that Sir Charles Marling should, as a last resource have the power of veto. The South Persia Rifles were to be utilised for military operations and he thought there was much to be said for the point of view that the man who was responsible for the conduct of the campaign should have charge and control of all the Forces operating under his orders.

LORD HARDINGE referred to the disastrous effect of His Majesty's Government sending the Central Indian Horse to Ispahan against the advice of his Government when he was Viceroy of India.

THE CHAIRMAN was of opinion that the recent instructions of the Committee had not been expressed with sufficient clarity. He thought that they should request the Indian Government to undertake what the Foreign Office had asked in the Secretary of State for India's telegram of 7th May, 1917.

LORD HARDINGE cited the Cossack Brigade and said that he thought that its administration was conducted on sound lines.

LORD MILNER was of the opinion that they should not go back on their previous decision.

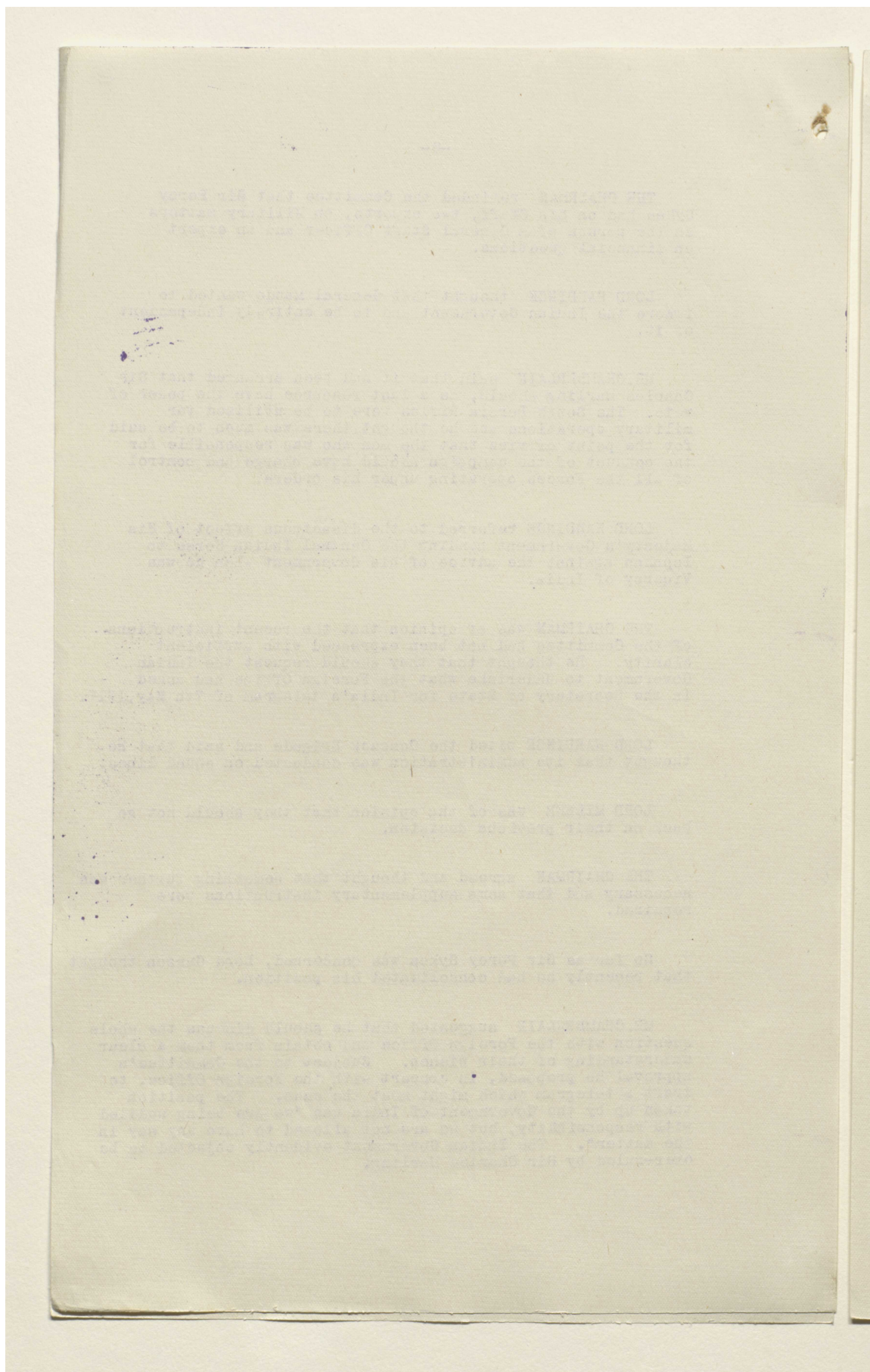
THE CHAIRMAN agreed and thought that something further was necessary and that some supplementary instructions were required.

So far as Sir Percy Sykes was concerned, Lord Curzon thought that recently he had consolidated his position.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN suggested that he should discuss the whole question with the Foreign Office and obtain from them a clear understanding of their wishes. Subject to the Committee's approval he proposed, in concert with the Foreign Office, to draft a telegram which might meet the case. The position taken up by the Government of India was "we are being saddled with responsibility, but we are not allowed to have any say in the matter". The Indian Government evidently objected to be over-ruled by Sir Charles Marling.



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LORD HARDINGE pointed out that Sir C. Marling was responsible not for the Military but for the Civil Administration of the district, and for the peace and contentment of the inhabitants. The Military point of view should only prevail when military considerations rendered it necessary that that view should prevail.

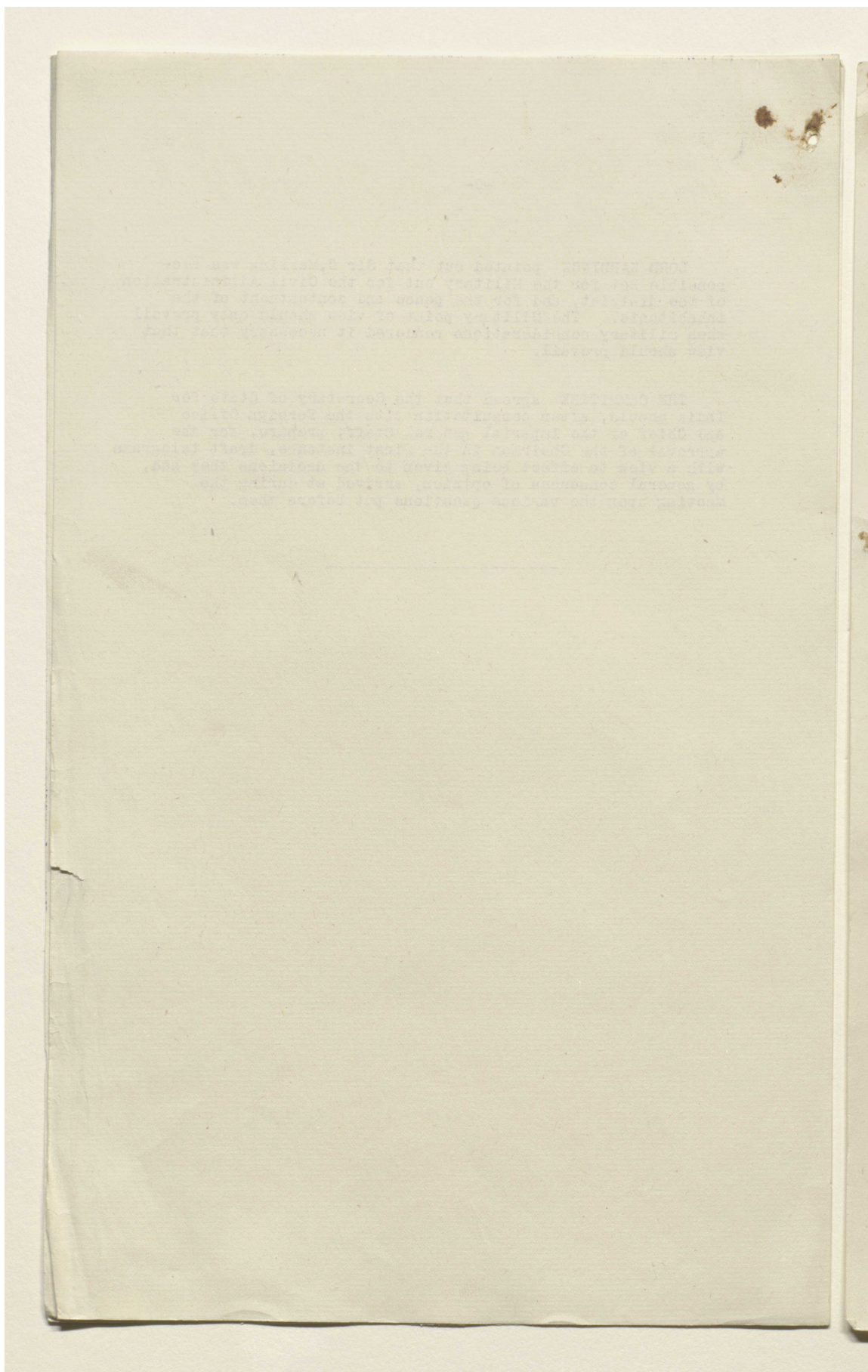
THE COMMITTEE agreed that the Secretary of State for India should, after consultation with the Foreign Office and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, prepare, for the approval of the Chairman in the first instance, draft telegrams with a view to effect being given to the decisions they had, by general consensus of opinion, arrived at during the Meeting upon the various questions put before them.

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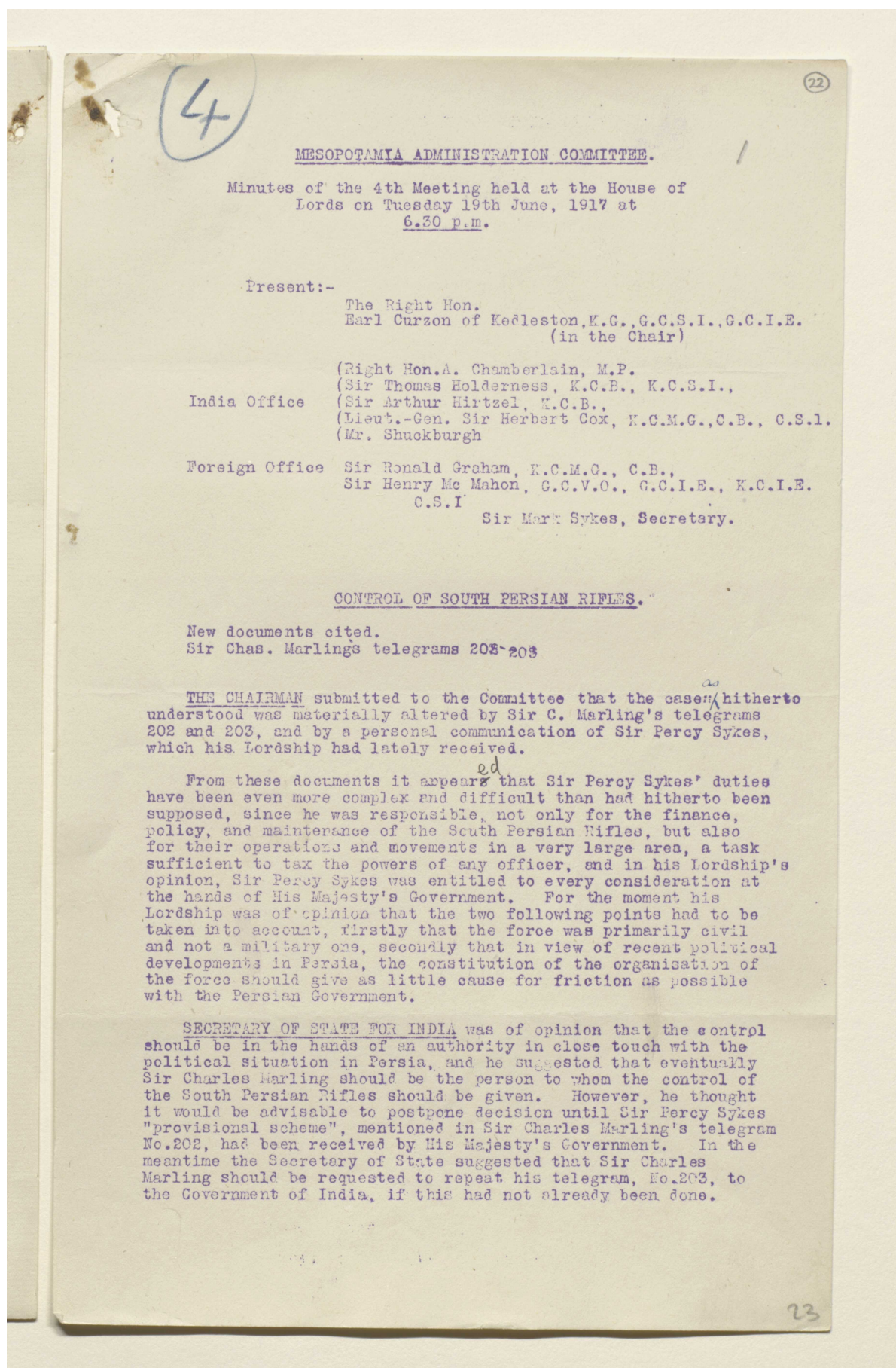


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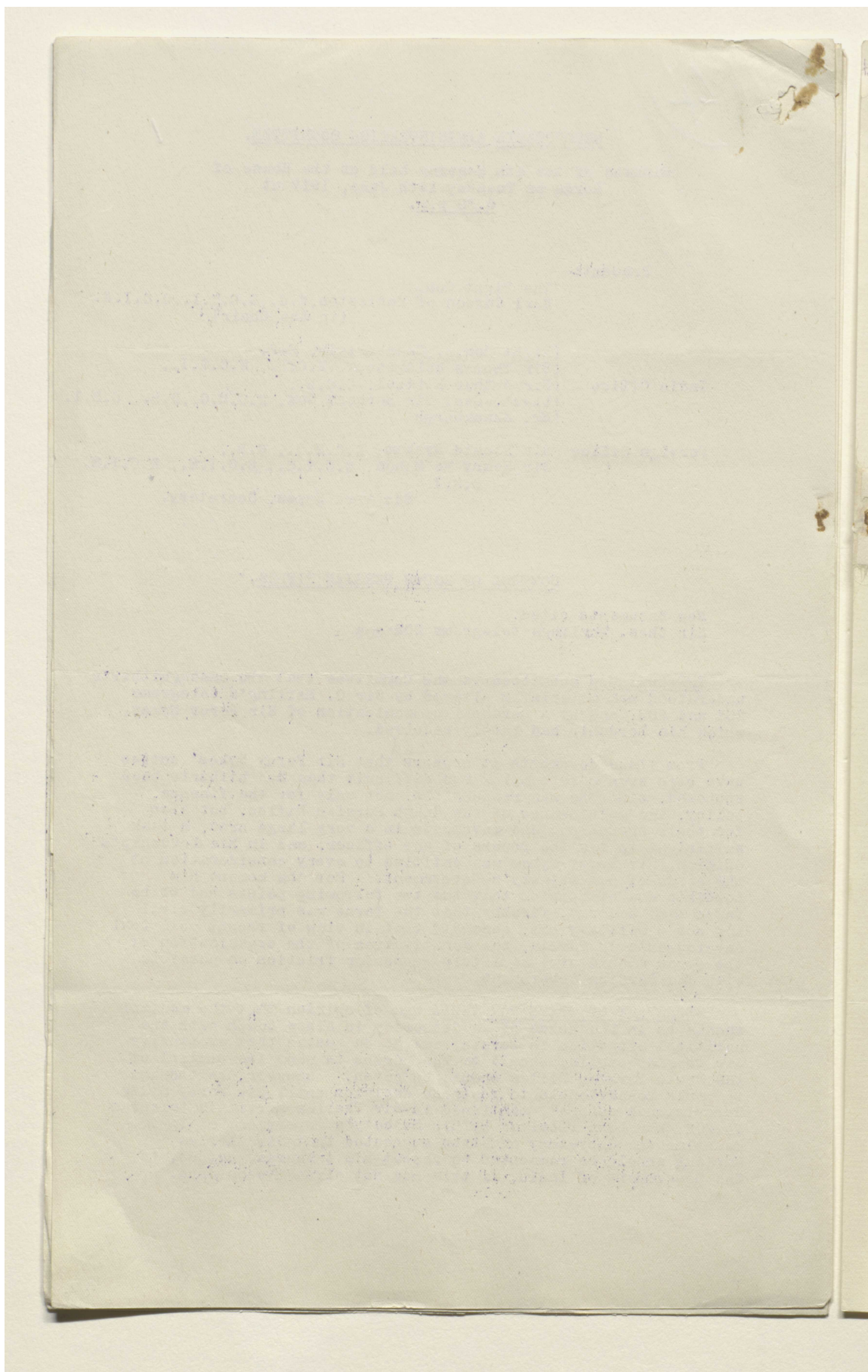


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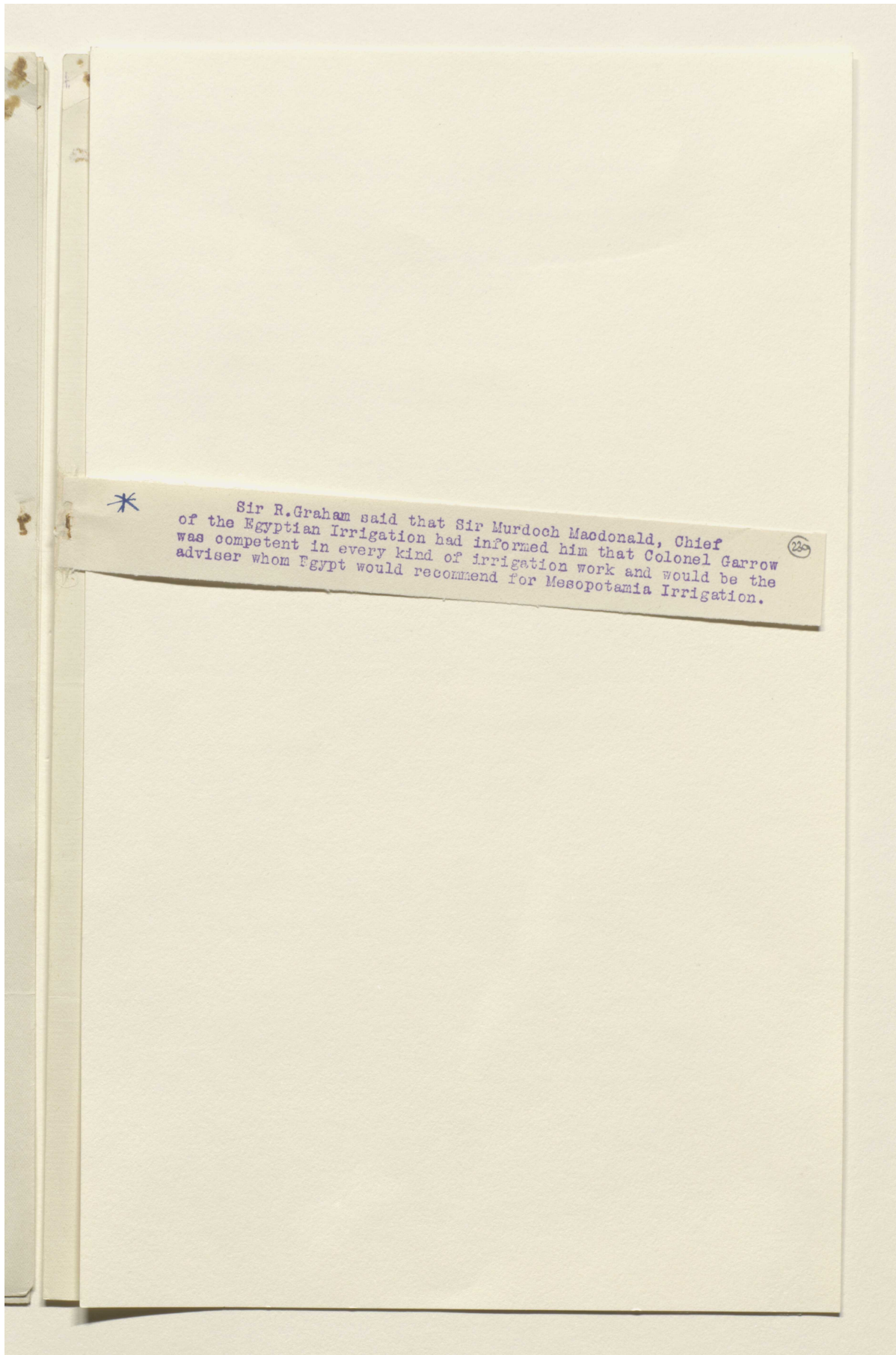


Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [22v]  
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Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [23ar]  
(45/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [23av]  
(46/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [23r]  
(47/80)

23  
The Committee agreed

- (i) that action should be postponed pending receipt of Sir Percy Sykes's report,
- (ii) the Government of India should be informed accordingly,
- (iii) and that Sir Charles Marling should be instructed to repeat the above telegrams to the Government of India.

2. IRRIGATION OFFICERS IN MESOPOTAMIA.

New documents cited.  
Draft telegram to Government of India.  
Letter from C.I.G.S. to Secretary of State for India,  
18th June, 1917.

THE CHAIRMAN submitted C.I.G.S.'s letter for the consideration of the Committee, pointing out that, in view of Sir William Robertson's opinion, the draft telegram previously decided upon required substantial alteration. \*

The Committee, after considering the C.I.G.S.'s letter, decided that a telegram should be sent to Sir Percy Cox, asking him whether he would be satisfied with the appointment of Colonel Garrow as Irrigation Adviser, attached to the Military administration, but authorised to communicate direct with the Civil Authorities; or whether he considered it necessary that a Civil Irrigation Adviser should be attached to his own staff, wholly independent of the military organisation.

GENERAL CLAYTON'S APPOINTMENT.

New documents cited.  
Telegram to Sir R. Wingate No. 587.  
Telegrams from Sir R. Wingate Nos. 616, 637, 651.  
Private telegram from General Clayton.

At the request of the Chairman

SIR RONALD GRAHAM read a private telegram from General Clayton, in which the latter submitted his request that if it were possible he should not proceed to Mesopotamia on grounds of health and previous service.

At the invitation of the Chairman

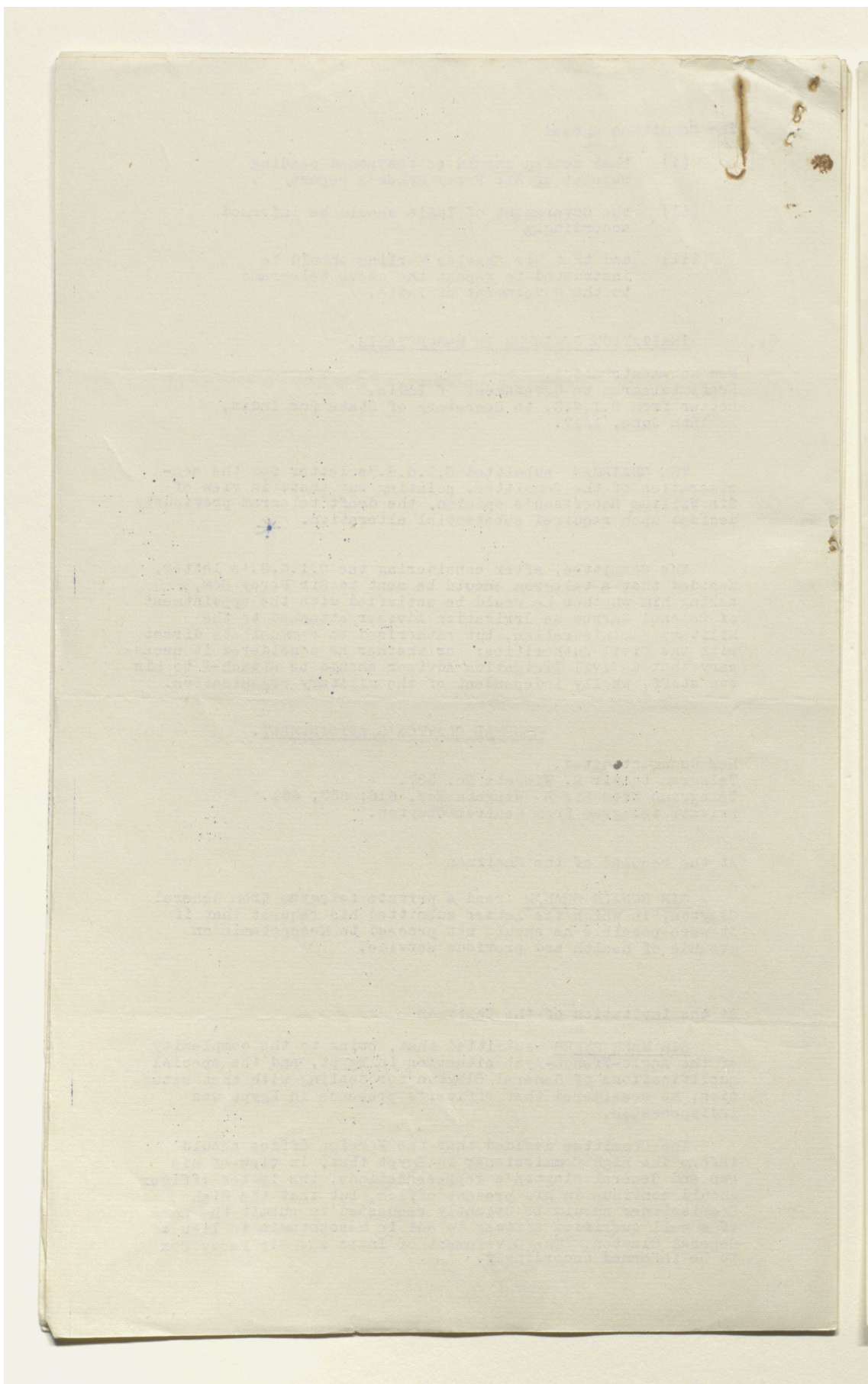
SIR MARK SYKES submitted that, owing to the complexity of the Anglo-French-Arab situation in Egypt, and the special qualifications of General Clayton for dealing with that situation, he considered that officer's presence in Egypt was indispensable.

The Committee decided that the Foreign Office should inform the High Commissioner in Egypt that, in view of his own and General Clayton's representations, the latter officer should continue in his present office, but that the High Commissioner should be urgently requested to submit the name of a well qualified officer to act in Mesopotamia in lieu of General Clayton. The Government of India and Sir Percy Cox to be informed accordingly.

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Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [23v]  
(48/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [24r]  
(49/80)

*Mesopotamian Committee* (24)

Offices of the War Cabinet,  
2 Whitehall Gardens,  
London S.W. 1.

July 2nd 1917.

Dear Lord Curzon,

Although I am to see you to-day at 2-30 I write to you in order to save your valuable time and lay before you certain points which I hope to lay before you for your consideration.

As matters at present stand, there are a series of problems which are very closely intertwined and which have hitherto lacked a single controlling hand inspired by a defined objective or ideal. The problems may be enumerated as follows:-

1. Persia, and future policy towards.
2. The Arab movement in Asia.
3. Anglo-French relations in regard to Hejaz.
4. Our future policy in Mesopotamia.

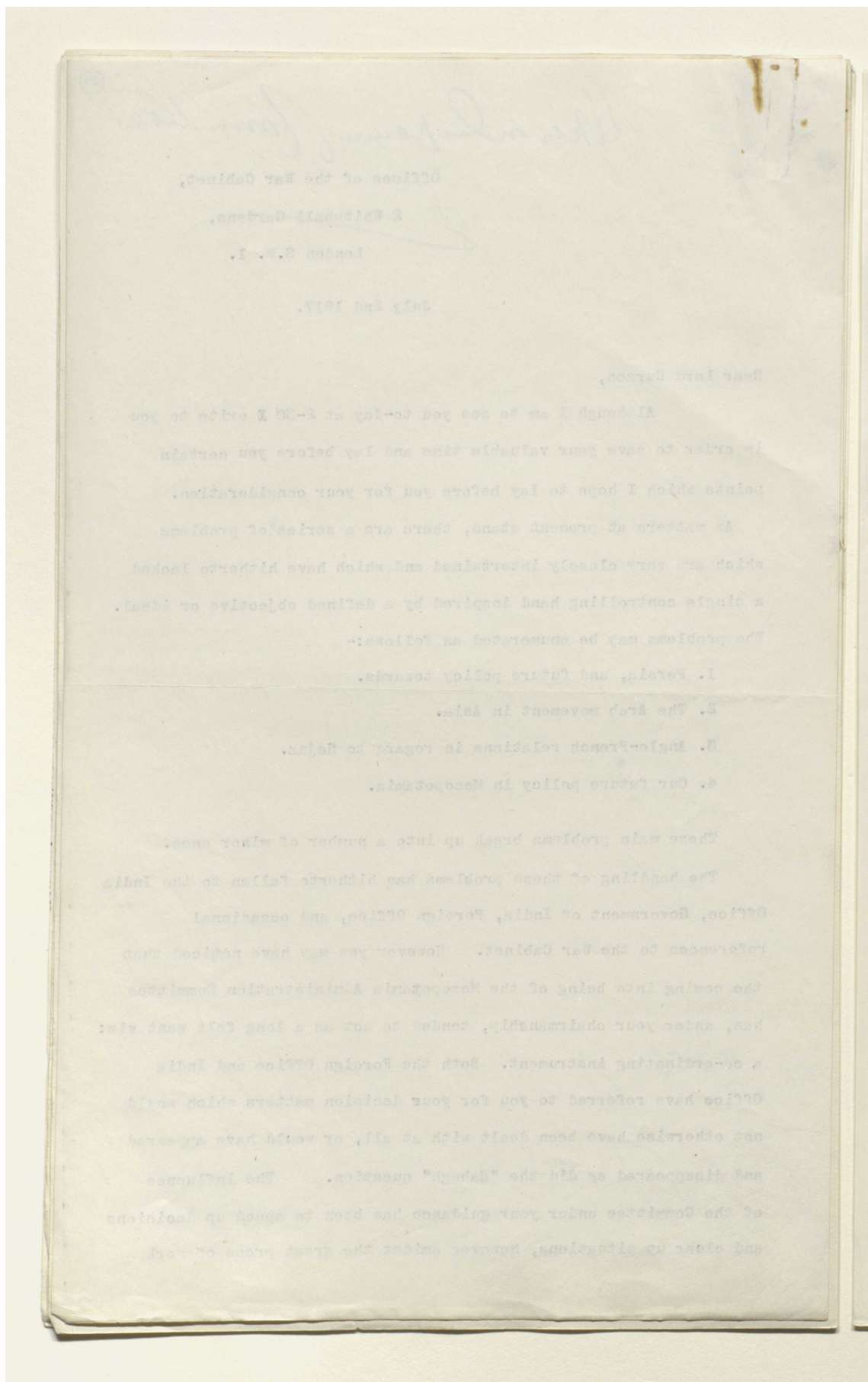
These main problems break up into a number of minor ones.

The handling of these problems has hitherto fallen to the India Office, Government of India, Foreign Office, and occasional references to the War Cabinet. However you may have noticed that the coming into being of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee has, under your chairmanship, tended to act as a long felt want viz: a co-ordinating instrument. Both the Foreign Office and India Office have referred to you for your decision matters which would not otherwise have been dealt with at all, or would have appeared and disappeared as did the "Rabegh" question. The influence of the Committee under your guidance has been to speed up decisions and clear up situations, however amidst the great press of work

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Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [24v]  
(50/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [25r]  
(51/80)

(26)

(2)

which surrounds you, it is possible that you may not have noticed that as matters are at present the Committee is becoming a permanent factor in the conduct of our middle and near Eastern affairs. If this is to be continued, ( and it has been what both Clayton and I have long prayed for, namely that you should assume control of the whole of the middle Eastern problem ) I think it will be advisable to give a new name for the Committee, to define its scope of work and fix on regular ordinary meeting days. There should also be some means devised for disposing of minor questions in order to avoid delay, as the agenda of the Committee is liable to become over charged.

If the Committee resolved that you as chairman should dispose of these lesser questions while keeping them informed of the action taken, one weekly meeting would suffice.

I anticipate the agenda for the next meeting will be heavy and involve considerable discussion, namely:-

1. Sir P. Cox's position in Mesopotamia.
2. The Arab Legion.
3. Our Arabian and Hejaz Policy.
4. The Persian situation in view of the Viceroy's telegram in regard to Schuster.

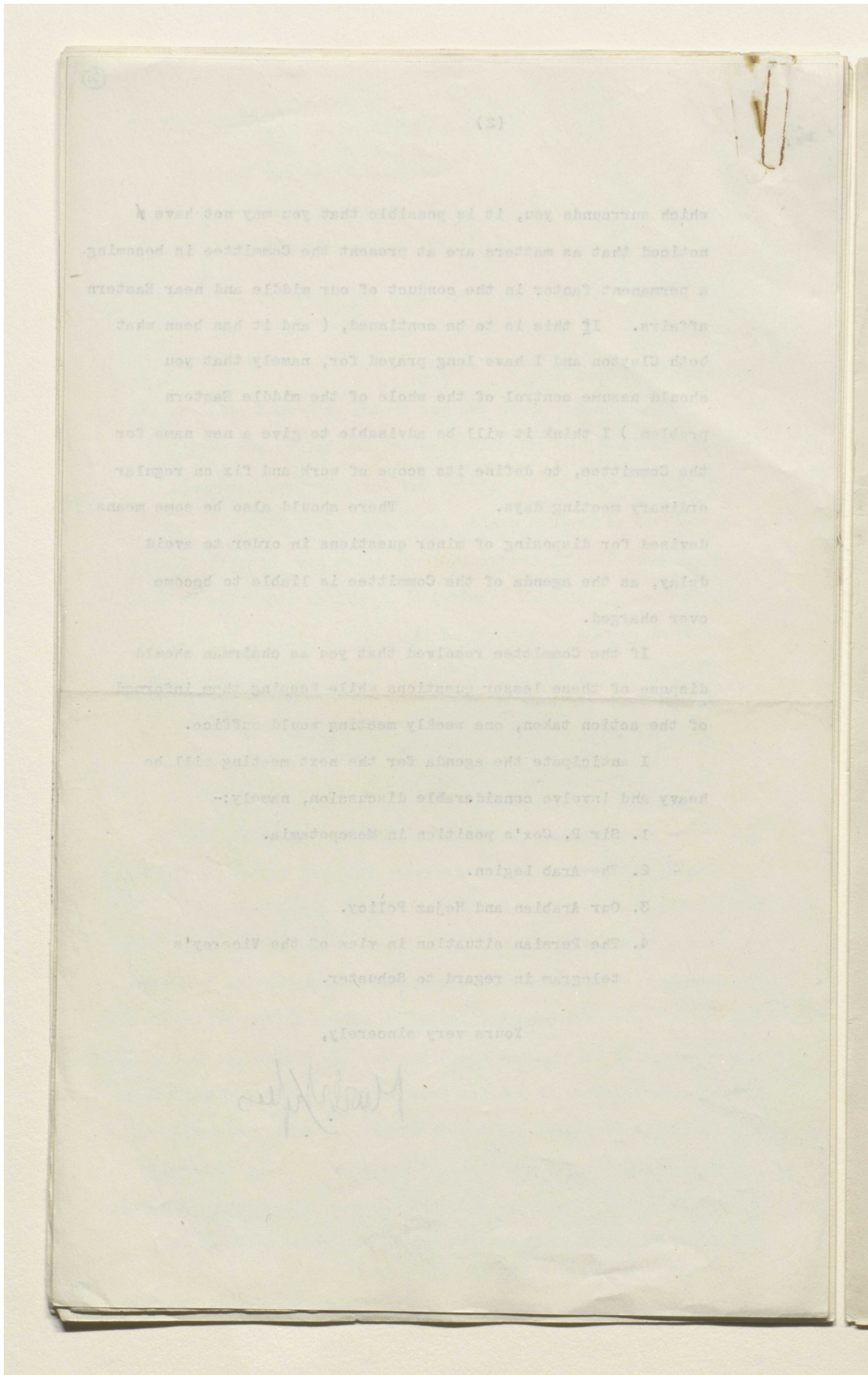
Yours very sincerely,

*Murphy*

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Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [25v]  
(52/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [26r]  
(53/80)

*Lord Curzon*

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MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Fifth Meeting of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee was held in the Lord President of the Council's Room at the House of Lords on Tuesday, July 3rd, 1917 at 6 P.M.

The following Members were present :-

The Rt.Hon.The Earl Curzon of Kedleston,  
K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.  
(in the Chair).

INDIA OFFICE { The Rt.Hon. A.Chamberlain, M.P.  
Sir Thomas Holderness, G.C.B., K.C.S.I.  
Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B.  
Lieut.-General Sir Herbert Cox,  
K.C.M.G., C.B., C.S.I.  
Mr. Shuckburgh.

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

Sir Mark Sykes, Secretary

1. SIR PERCY COX'S DUTIES AND ESTABLISHMENT.

- (a) The Chairman informed the Committee that he and Mr. Chamberlain had consulted Sir William Robertson, and that they had submitted to him the draft of a telegram to the Viceroy of India, and that they were awaiting Sir William's reply.
- (b) The Committee decided, in compliance with Sir Percy Cox's telegram No.2255, to offer the appointment of Oriental Secretary to the Chief Political Officer to Mr. Storrs, and to leave Sir Percy Cox to make his own arrangements in other respects. The Foreign Office and India Office to take the necessary action.

2. THE ARAB LEGION

The Committee decided that the Foreign Office should consult the War Office officially and report to the Committee.

3. POLICY IN ARABIA. Proposals by Sir R.Wingate.  
Sir R.Wingate's Despatch No.127 of 11th June, 1917

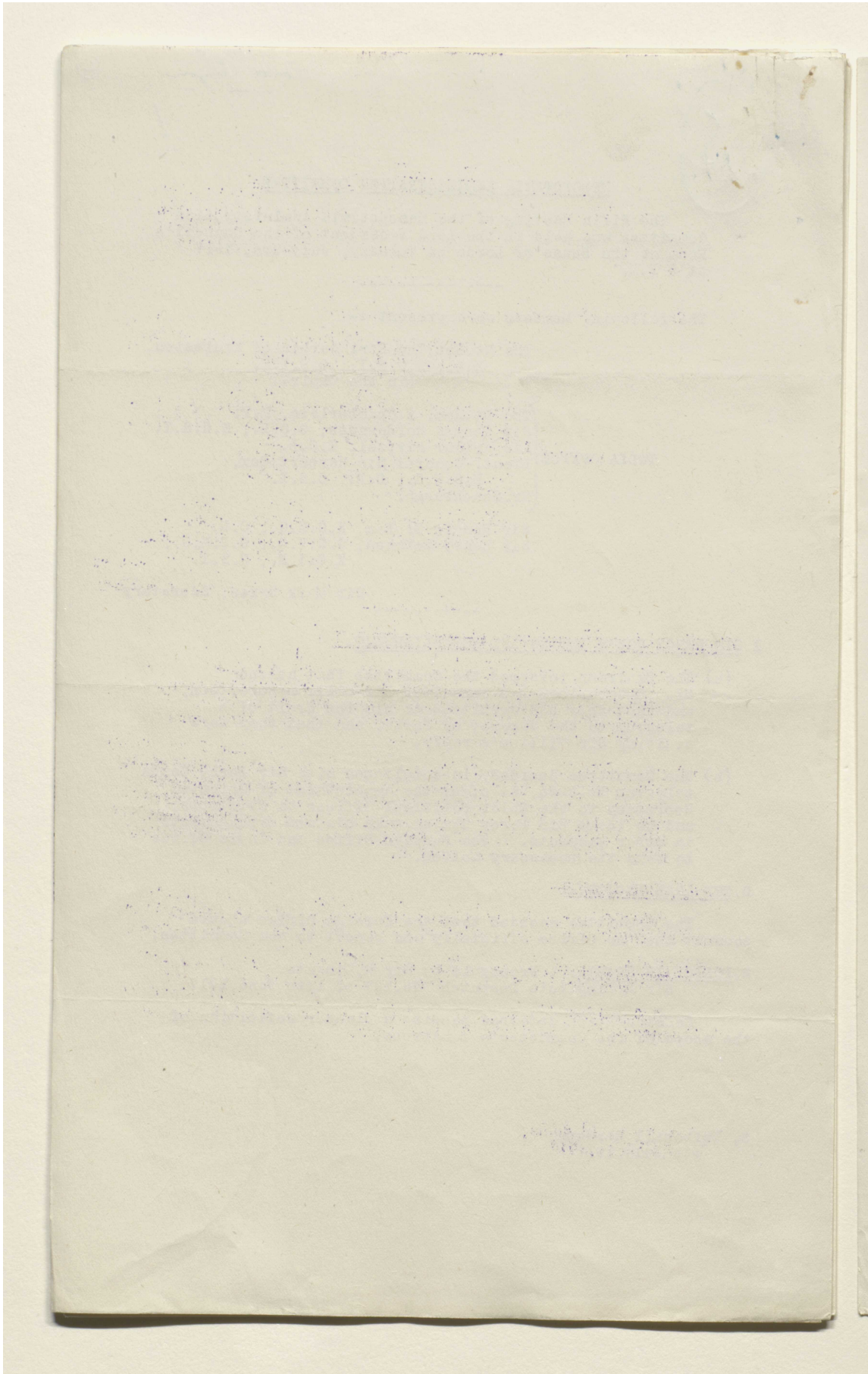
Consideration deferred pending a clearer definition of the scope of the Committee's functions.

2, Whitehall Gardens,  
4th July, 1917

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Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [26v]  
(54/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [27r]  
(55/80)

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Lord Curzon ! (2)

SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The SIXTH MEETING of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee was held in Lord Curzon's Room at the Privy Council Office, on Friday, July 6th, 1917, at 3.p.m.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WERE PRESENT:-

The Rt Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I.,  
G.C.I.E., ..... (in the Chair).

India Office { The Rt Hon. A. Chamberlain, M.P.,  
Sir T.W. Holderness, G.C.B., K.C.S.I.,  
Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B.,  
Lt. Gen. Sir H.V. Cox, K.C.M.G., C.B.,  
Mr J.E. Shuckburgh.

Foreign Office { The Rt Hon. The Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, K.G., G.C.B.,  
G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., I.S.O.,  
Sir R. Graham, K.C.M.G., C.B.,

Sir Mark Sykes, ..... Secretary.

ARAB LEGION.

The Committee discussed the Report of the Interdepartmental Sub-Committee on the above and adjourned.

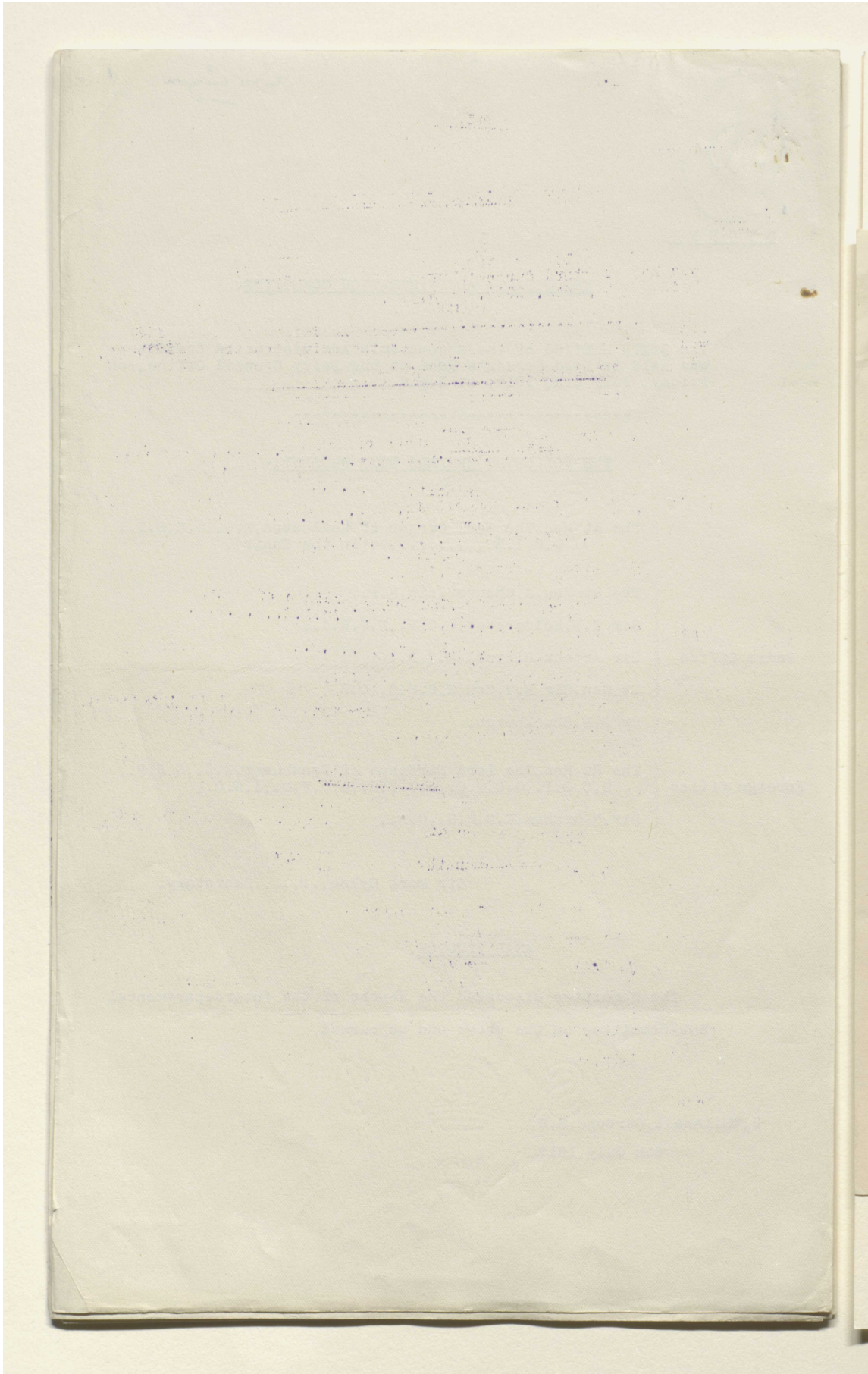
2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.

6th July, 1917.

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Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [27v]  
(56/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [28r]  
(57/80)

7  
MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

Composition and duties of the Committee.  
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WAR CABINET. 184.

( EXTRACT from Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held  
on the 13th July, 1917.)  
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MESOPOTAMIA  
ADMINISTRATION  
COMMITTEE:

EXTENDED POWERS.

9. The War Cabinet decided to enlarge the scope of the duties of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee, in order to enable them to deal with questions affecting the Middle East.

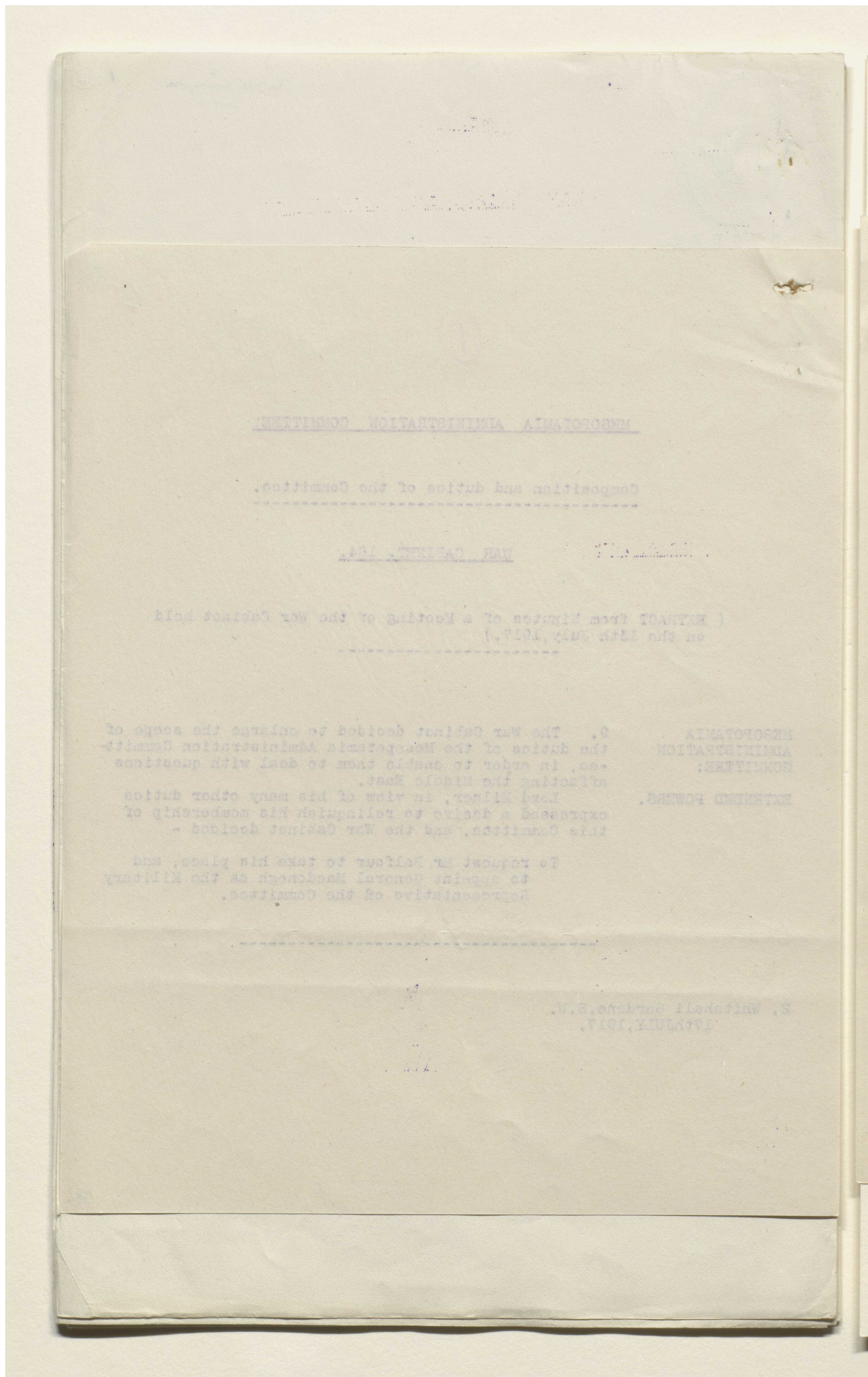
Lord Milner, in view of his many other duties expressed a desire to relinquish his membership of this Committee, and the War Cabinet decided -

To request Mr Balfour to take his place, and to appoint General Macdonogh as the Military Representative of the Committee.  
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2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.  
17th JULY, 1917.

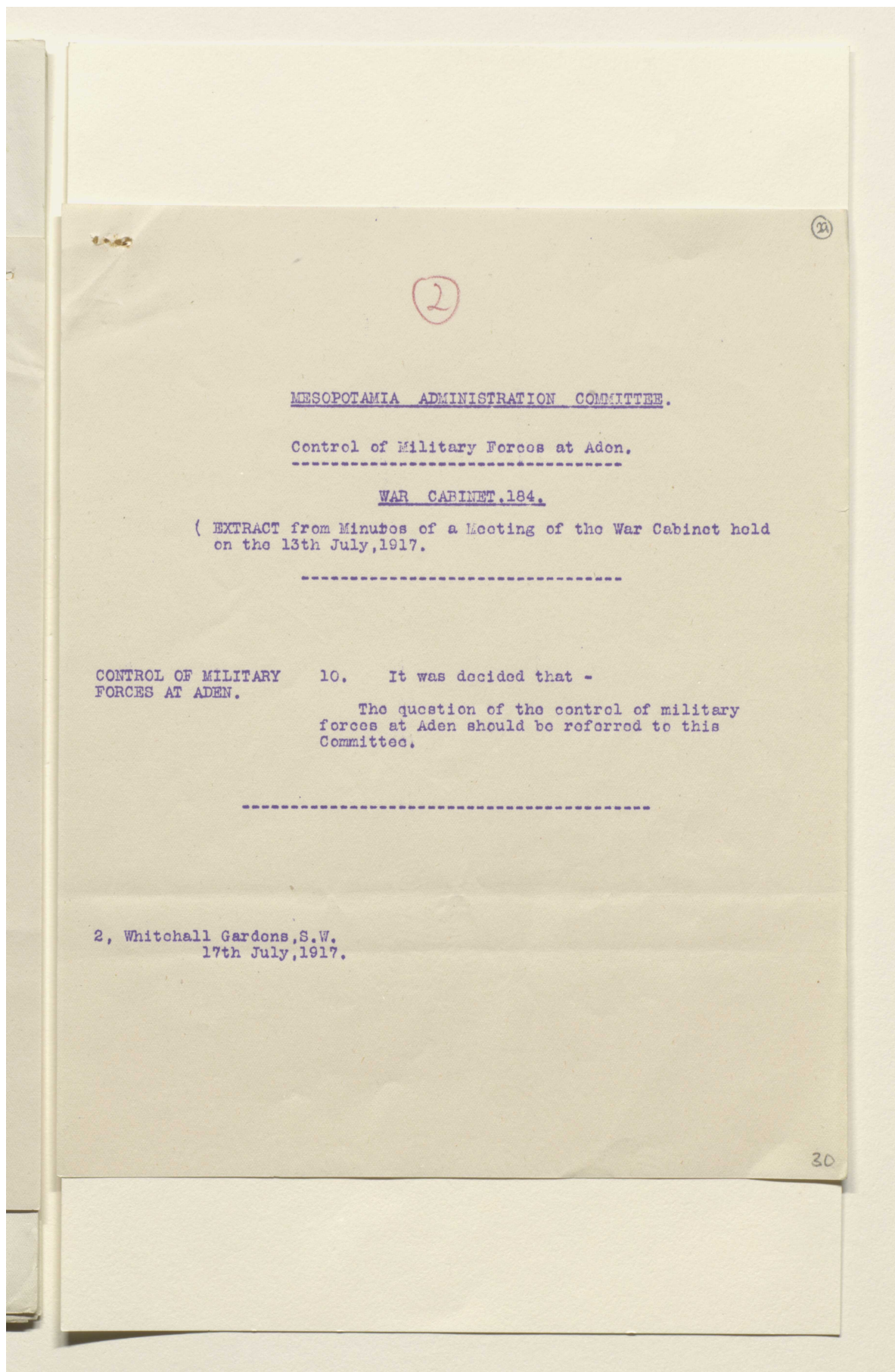


Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [28v]  
(58/80)



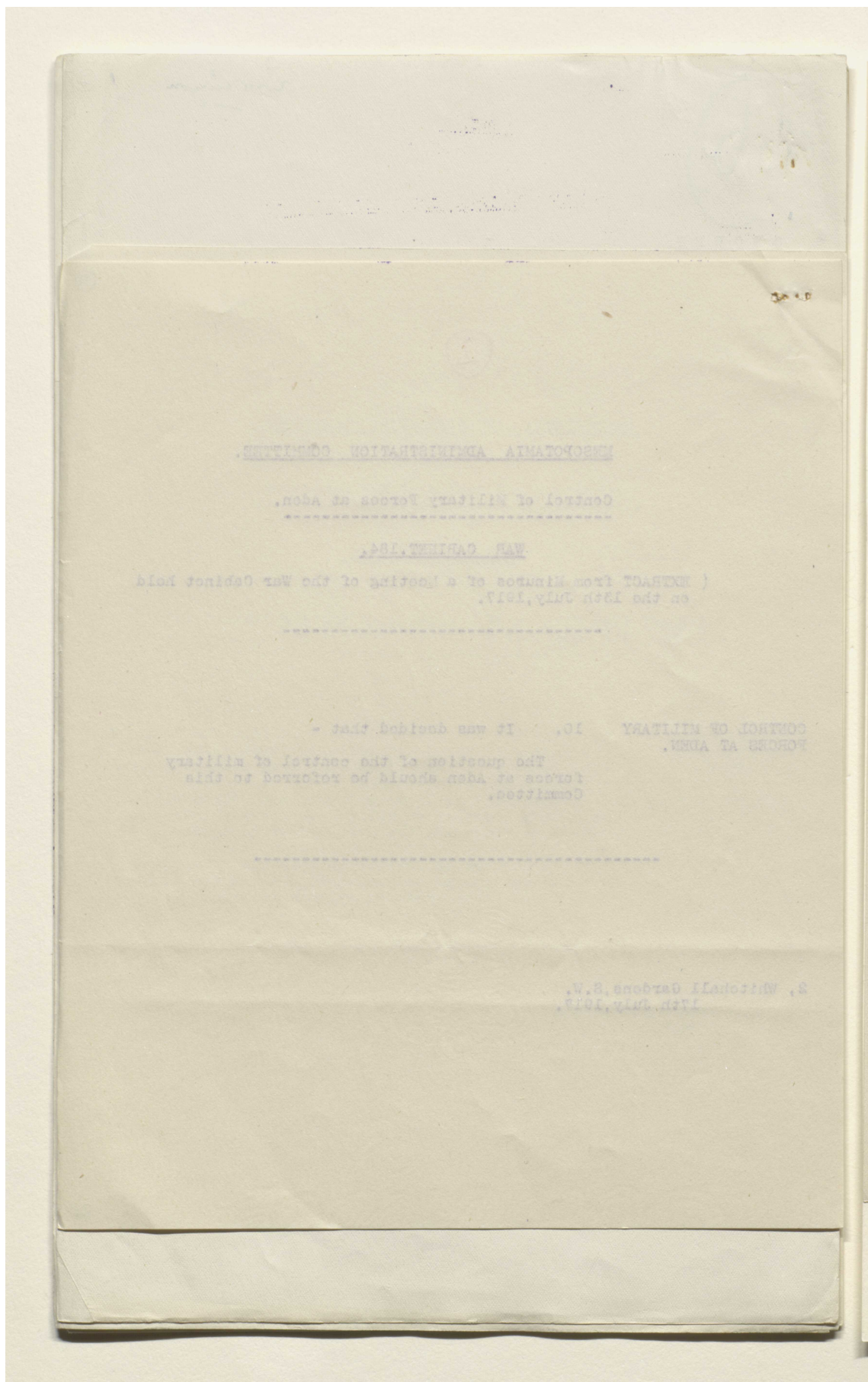


Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [29r]  
(59/80)



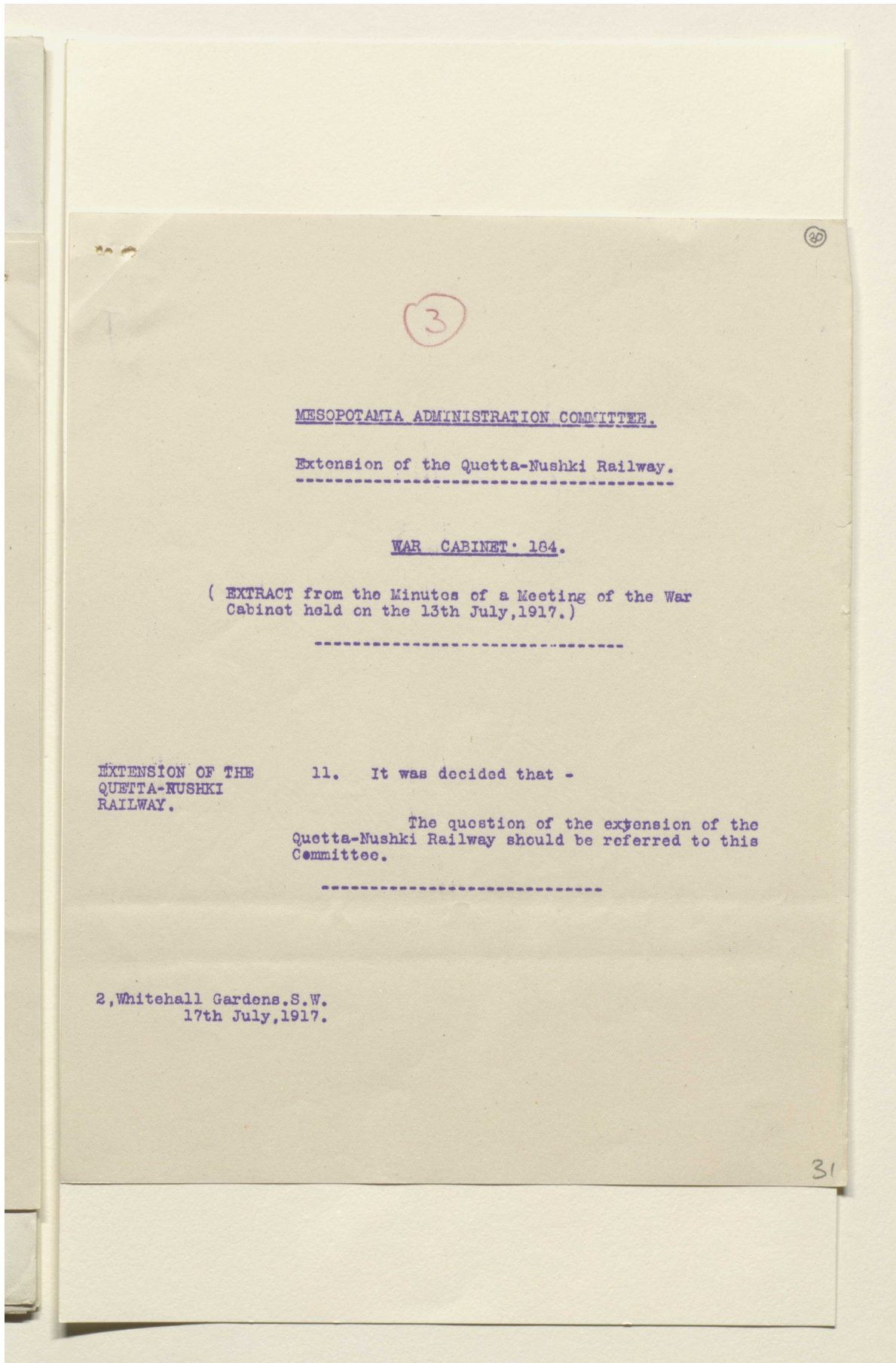


Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [29v]  
(60/80)



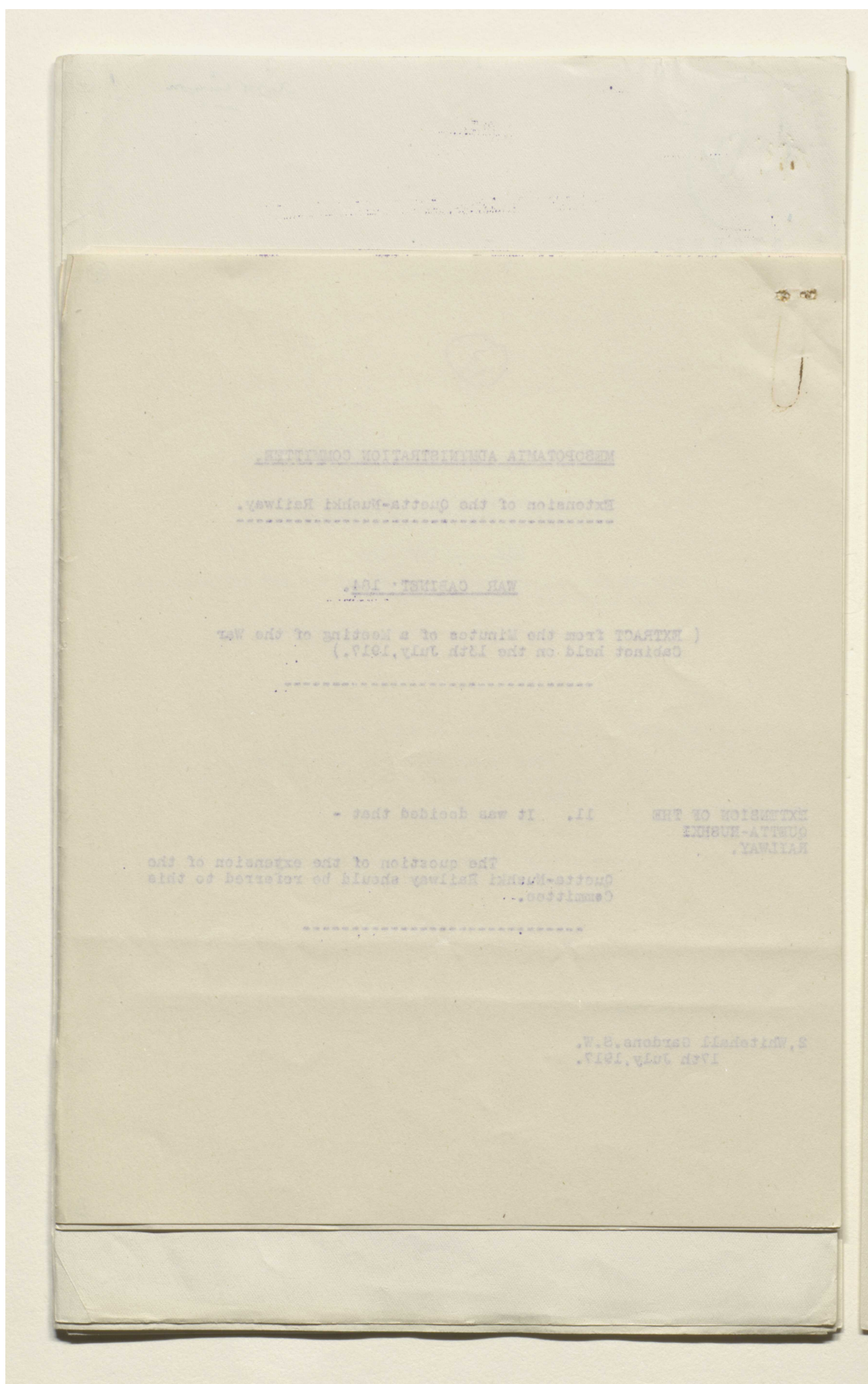


Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [30r]  
(61/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [30v]  
(62/80)





SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The Seventh Meeting of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee was held in Lord Curzon's Room at the Privy Council Office, on Saturday, July 21st, 1917, at 11.35 a.m.

The following members were present :-

The Rt.Hon.The Earl Curzon of Kedleston,  
K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. (In the Chair)

India Office { The Rt.Hon.E.S.Montagu, M.P. Secretary of State  
for India.  
{ Sir T.W.Holderness, G.C.B., K.C.S.I.  
{ Sir A. Hirtzel, K.C.B.  
{ Lt.Gen. Sir H.V.Cox, K.C.M.G., C.B.  
{ Mr.J.E.Shuckburgh.

Foreign Office { Rt.Hon. A.J.Balfour, O.M., M.P. Secretary of State  
for Foreign Affairs.  
{ Rt.Hon. Lord Hardinge, K.G., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G.  
{ G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., I.S.O. Permanent under Secretary  
of State for Foreign Affairs.  
{ Sir G.R.Clerk, K.C.M.G., C.B.  
{ Sir R.Graham, K.C.M.G., C.B.

Lieut.Col. Sir H.McMahon, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.

Sir Mark Sykes (Secretary)

COMPOSITION AND  
DUTIES OF THE  
MESOPOTAMIA  
ADMINISTRATION  
COMMITTEE.

- (1) The Secretary was authorised to bring administrative matters, referred to the Committee requiring immediate action, direct to the Chairman and the two Secretaries of State for disposal.

CONTROL OF  
MILITARY FORCES  
AT ADEN.

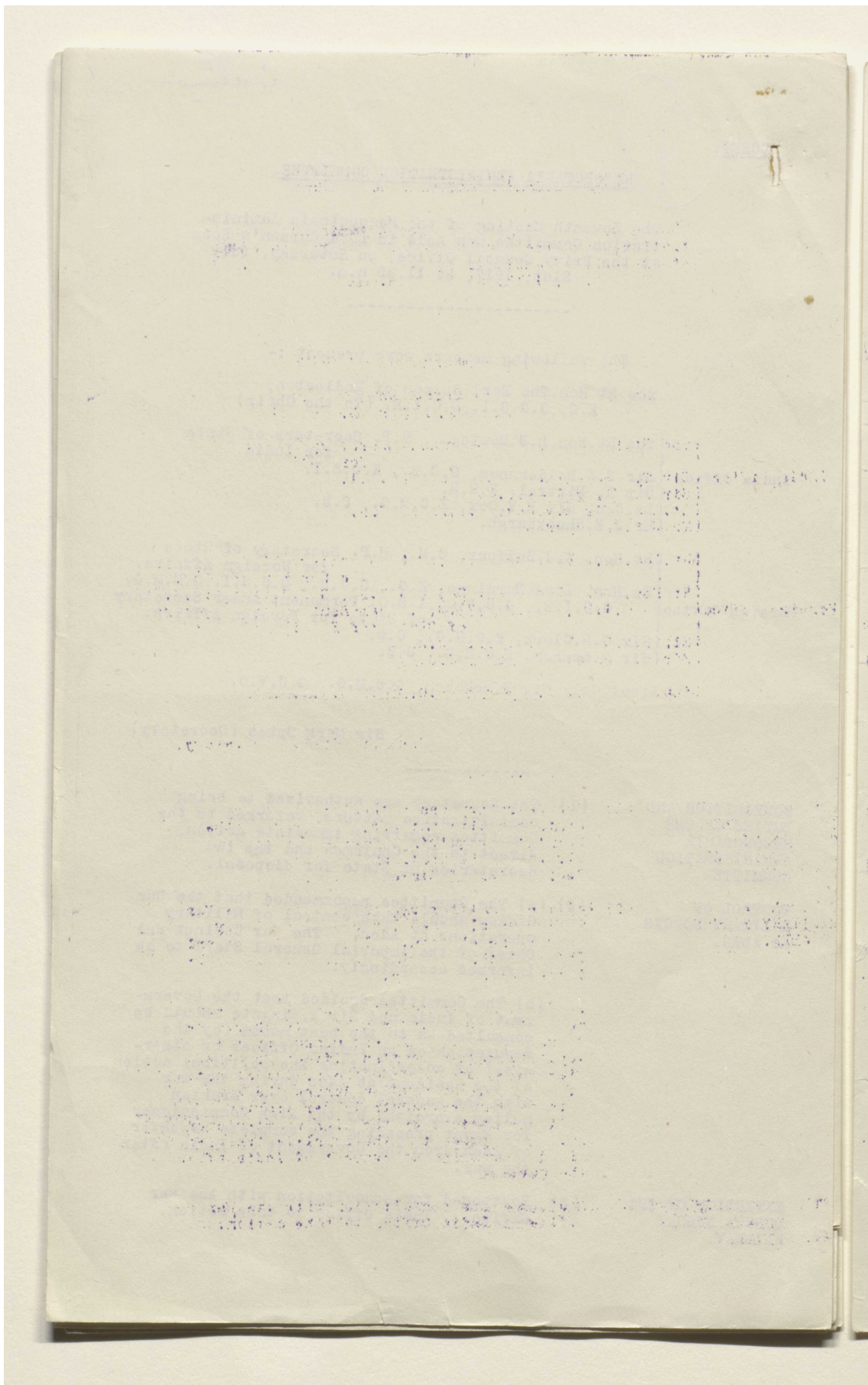
- (2) (a) The Committee recommended that the War Office should take over control of Military operations at Aden. The War Cabinet and Chief of the Imperial General Staff to be informed accordingly.
- (b) The Committee decided that the Government of India and Sir R.Wingate should be consulted as to the best means (by the deputation of an Indian Officer or otherwise) of co-ordinating the political action of the Resident at Aden during the war with the general control over Arabian policy exercised by the High Commissioner for Egypt preceding the complete transfer of Aden from the Government of India after the war.

EXTENSION OF THE  
QUETTA NUSHKI  
RAILWAY.

- (3) Postponed for consultation with the War Office. India Office to take action.



Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [31v]  
(64/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [32r]  
(65/80)

-2-

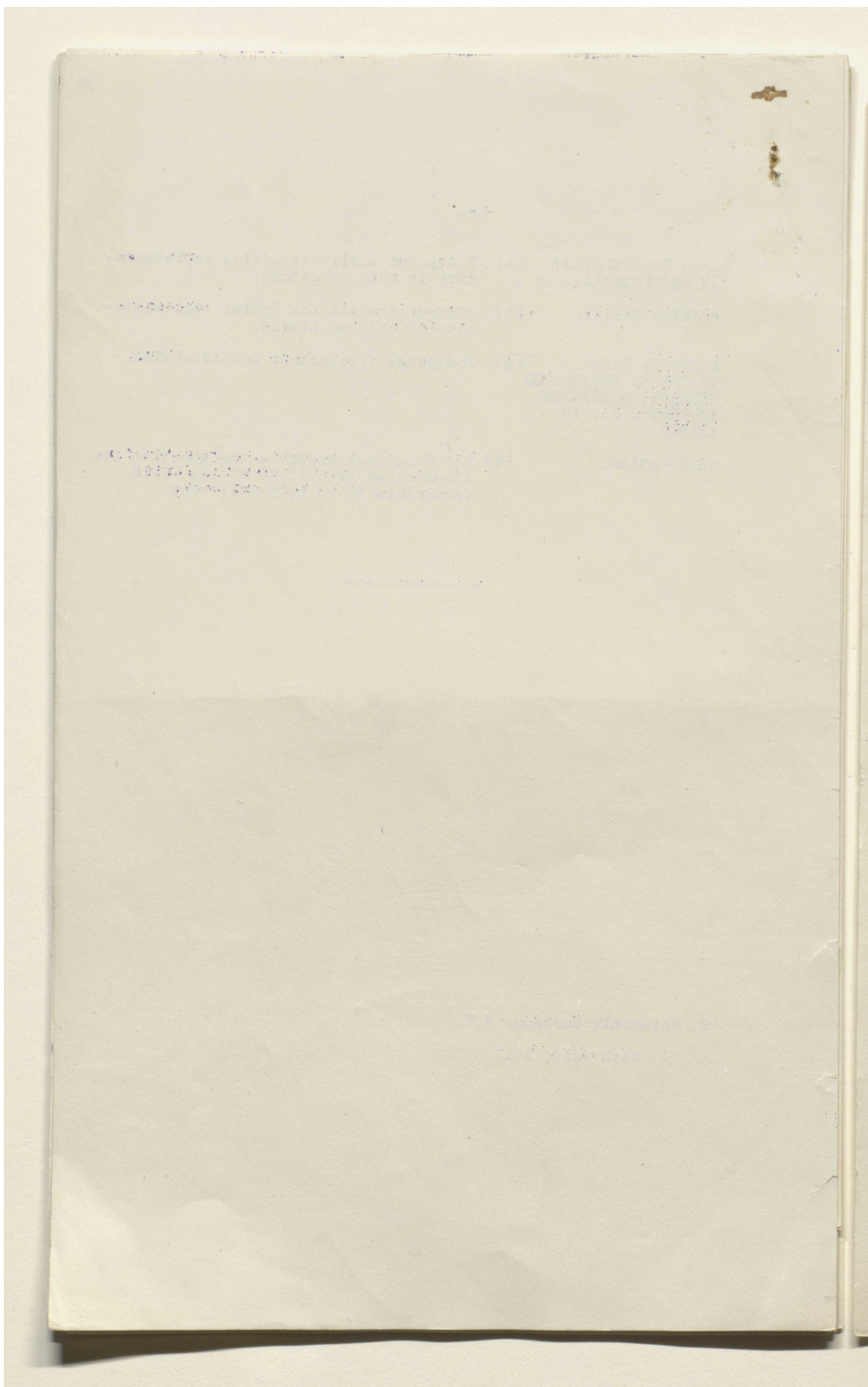
- ARAB CO-OPERATION IN MESOPOTAMIA. (4) Postponed until War Office representative is able to attend.
- ARABIAN POLICY. (5) Postponed until War Office representative is able to attend.
- PROPOSED REPLY TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR RESPECTING BRITISH INTERESTS &c. IN ARABIA. (6) Postponed for further consideration.
- ARAB LEGION. (7) The Committee reserved the question for disposal by Mr. Balfour at the Paris Conference to be held next week.
- 

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.

24th July, 1917.



Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [32v]  
(66/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [33r]  
(67/80)

SECRET.

*Lord Curzon* 11  
- (3)

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The Eighth Meeting of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee was held in Lord Curzon's Room at the House of Lords, on Friday, August 10th, 1917, at 4 P.M.

The following members were present :-

The Rt.Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston,  
K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. (in the Chair).

India Office { The Rt.Hon.E.S.Montagu, M.P., Secretary of State  
for India.  
Sir T.W.Holderness, G.C.B., K.C.S.I.  
Sir A.Ha'tzel, K.C.B.  
(Mr. J.E. Shuckburgh.

Foreign Office { The Rt.Hon. A.J. Balfour, O.M., M.P. Secretary of  
State for Foreign Affairs.  
Sir R. Graham, K.C.M.G., C.B.  
Sir G.R. Clerk, K.C.M.G., C.B.

War Office Major General Sir G.M.W.Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B.  
Lt.Col: Sir H. McMahon, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.  
Mr. Ronald Storrs, C.M.G. (called in to give  
evidence).

Sir Mark Sykes (Secretary)

RELATIONS BETWEEN GENERAL MAUDE and GENERAL COX at BAGHDAD. The Committee decided to instruct the India Office to dispatch a telegram to the Viceroy subject to approval of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. This telegram will be circulated as soon as possible.

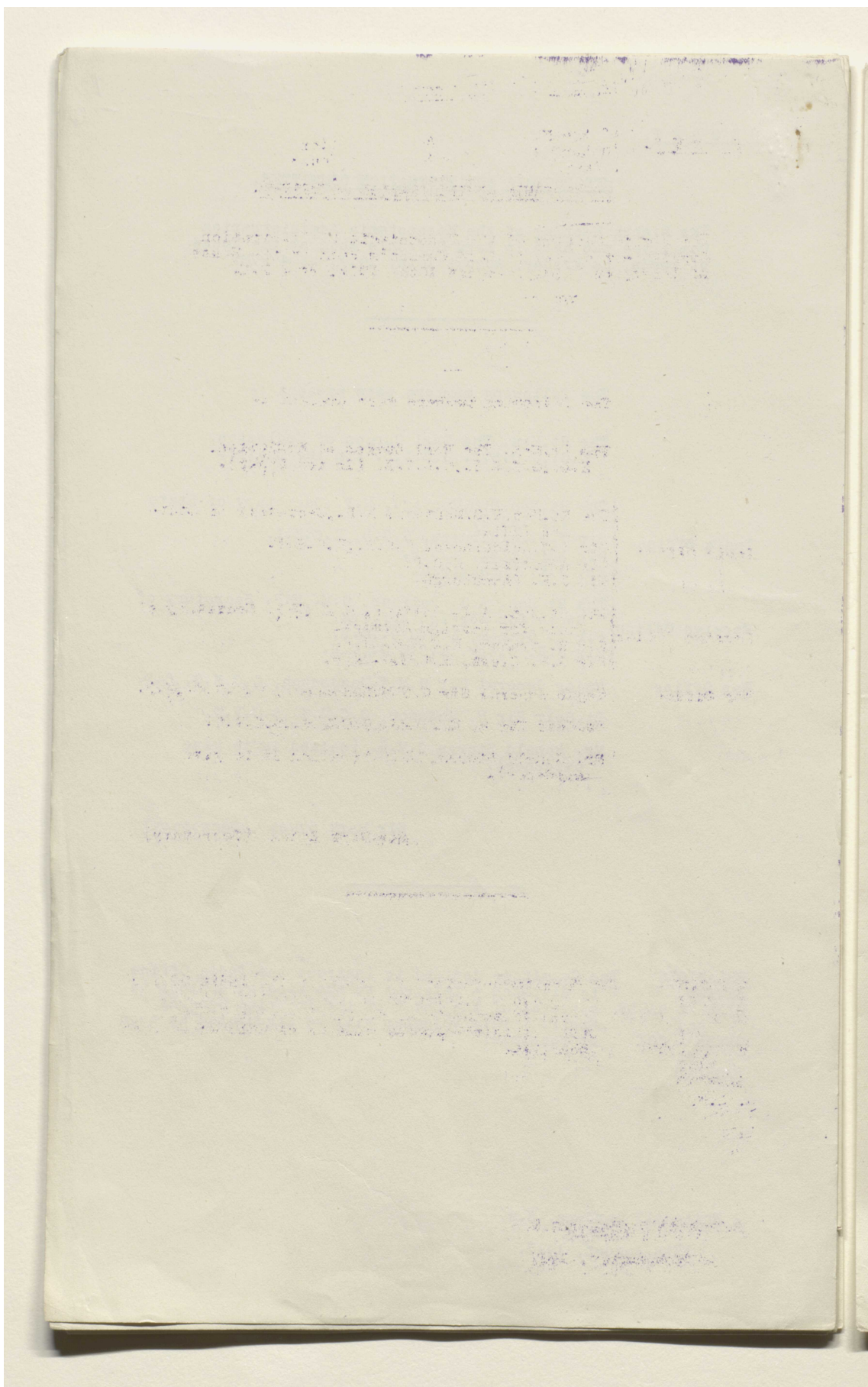
2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W.

13th August, 1917.

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Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [33v]  
(68/80)





SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIA ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

The NINTH MEETING of the Committee was held in Lord Curzon's Room at the Privy Council Office on Wednesday, August 22nd 1917 at 6 P.M.

The following Members were present:-

The Rt. Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston,  
K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. (in the Chair).  
  
(The Rt. Hon. E.S. Montagu, M.P., Secretary of State  
India ( for India.  
Office. (Sir A. Hirtzel, K.C.B.,  
(Lieut. General Sir H.V. Cox, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.S.I.  
  
(The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, K.G.,  
Foreign ( G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., I.S.O.  
Office. (Sir Ronald Graham, K.C.M.G., C.B.,  
  
War Office. Lieut. Colonel R.A. Steel. C.I.E.  
  
Lieut. Colonel Sir H. McMahon, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.

Mr. J.E. Shuckburgh. (Acting Secretary)

- NAME OF THE COMMITTEE. (1) It was decided to recommend to the War Cabinet that the name of the Committee should be altered to "THE MIDDLE EASTERN ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE". The Chairman to take action.
- EXTENSION OF THE QUETTA-NUSHKI-DALBAN-DIN RAILWAY. (2) The Committee considered and approved a draft telegram submitted by the Secretary of State for India, approving the proposed extension subject to the condition that it will not interfere with any present or foreseeable future demands upon the Government of India for railway material, rolling stock or personnel for active theatres of War. India Office to take action.
- STATUS OF CHIEF POLITICAL OFFICER, MESOPOTAMIA. (3) The Committee approved the proposal of the Secretary of State for India, to accept, subject to the concurrence of the Foreign Office and War Office the arrangements advocated in Sir Percy Cox's telegram No. 3521 of the 20th August 1917. India Office to take action.

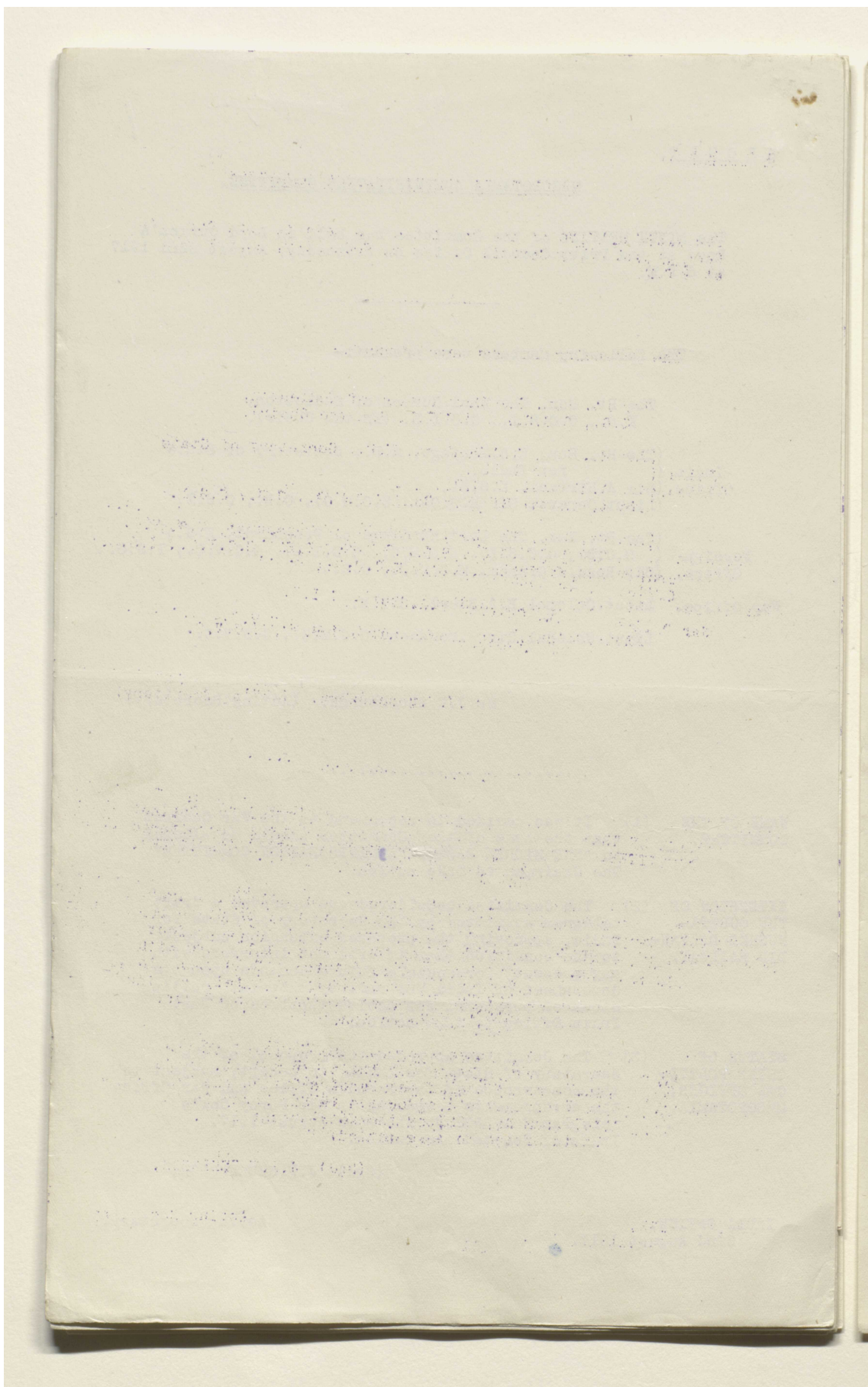
(Sgd) J.E. SHUCKBURGH,

INDIA OFFICE.  
22nd August 1917.

Acting Secretary.



Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [34v]  
(70/80)





*Lord Curzon*

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S E C R E T.

MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

The Tenth Meeting of the Middle East Committee was held in the Lord President's Room at the Privy Council Office on Thursday September 13th, 1917 at 6 p.m.

The following Members were present :-

The Rt. Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston,  
K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., (in the Chair).  
  
(The Rt. Hon. E. S. Montagu, M.P., Secretary of State  
for India.  
India (Sir T. W. Holderness, G.C.B., K.C.S.I.,  
Office. (Sir A. Hirtzel, K.C.B.,  
(Lt. Gen. Sir H. V. Cox, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.S.I.,  
  
(The Rt. Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P.,  
(The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, K.G.,  
Foreign ( G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E.,  
Office. ( G.C.V.O., I.S.O.,  
(Sir Ronald Graham, K.C.M.G., C.B.,  
  
War Office. Major General Sir C. M. W. Macdonogh, K.C.M.G., C.B.,  
Lt. Col. Sir H. McMahon, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.,  
K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,

Sir Mark Sykes (Secretary).

also by special request.

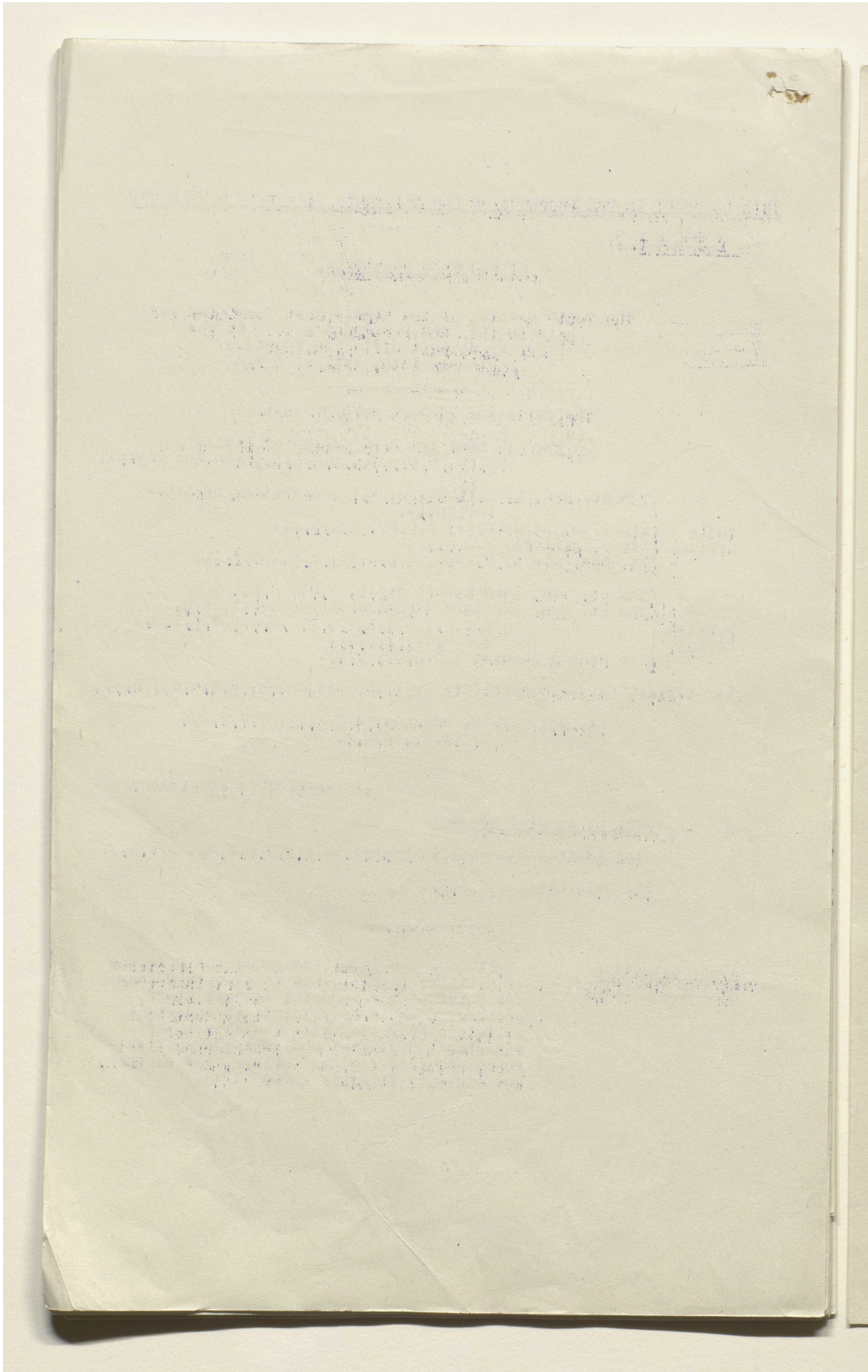
Vice Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., K.V.O.,  
Lt. Col. Steele, C.I.E.,

ADEN. Situation  
in the Hinterland.

(1) The Committee asked the Director of Military Intelligence to ascertain from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, whether it would be possible to undertake a limited operation with the object of retaking LAHEJ, what would be the smallest force required for the purpose, and whether, how and when it could be supplied.



Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [35v]  
(72/80)





Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [36r]  
(73/80)

- 2 -

COLONEL JACOB'S  
SALARY.

(2) The matter to be referred to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Secretary of State for India for decision. The Foreign Office and India Office to take action accordingly.

EMPLOYMENT OF  
CHINESE TROOPS  
IN EGYPT.

(3) The Secretary of State for India raised the question of the employment of Chinese troops in Egypt, (see Foreign Office Telegram No. 889 to High Commissioner Egypt. (174515) ).

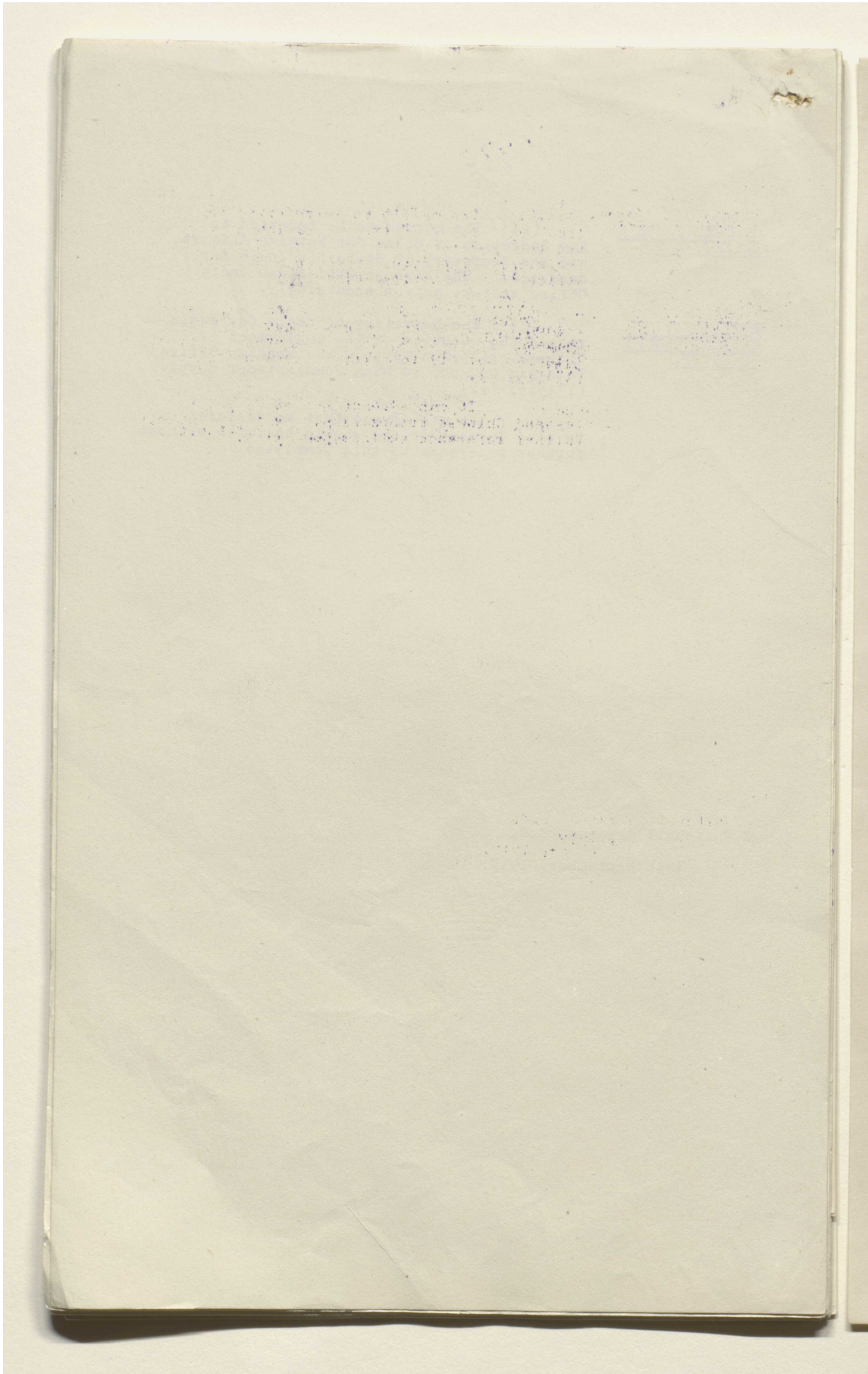
It was agreed that no decision to send Chinese troops should be taken without further reference to this Committee.

2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W.

14th September, 1917.



Papers of the Mesopotamian Administration (later Middle East) Committee [36v]  
(74/80)





*Middle East Com. for the R. Lord Curzon 2* (31)

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SECRET.

11th Minutes.  
(Final).

WAR CABINET.

MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE.

The Eleventh Meeting of the Middle East Committee was held in the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' Room at the Foreign Office on Saturday, January 12th, 1918, at 11.30.a.m.

PRESENT:-

The Right Hon. The Earl Curzon of Kedleston,  
K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. (in the Chair).

The Rt. Hon. Lord Robert Cecil,  
K.C., M.P.

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hardinge,  
of Penshurst, K.G., G.C.E.,  
G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E.,  
G.C.V.O., I.S.O.

Major General Sir G.M.W.  
Laedonogh, K.C.M.G., C.P.

Mr. J.E. Shuckburgh,  
India Office.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Islington,  
G.C.M.G., D.S.O.

Col. Sir Mark Sykes (Secretary).  
Capt. W. Ormsby-Gore, M.P., (Acting Assistant  
Secretary).

Functions  
of the  
Committee.

1. LORD CURZON stated that there seemed to be some uncertainty regarding the exact position and functions of the Committee. It sprung out of the Mesopotamian Administration Committee, which had been constituted by the War Cabinet to deal exclusively with Mesopotamia after the taking of Baghdad. The objects of the Committee at that time were to secure co-ordination between the various authorities concerned with the administration of Mesopotamia and to construct a new régime in that country. Other questions, however, had been referred to the Committee such as those affecting Aden, the Hejaz, and the interior of Arabia. Accordingly with the concurrence of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the War Cabinet expanded the functions of the Committee which was thenceforth known as the Middle East Committee. He had latterly found that a number of questions which had been raised and could advantageously have been discussed by the Committee had been dealt with Departmentally. He hoped that in future the position of the Committee would be placed on a more regular footing and that meetings would be held more frequently and the preparation of papers and agenda more effectively carried out.

LORD ROBERT CECIL agreed with Lord Curzon and suggested that the Committee should meet regularly once a week on Saturday mornings at a fixed time and added that he had arranged with the concurrence of Lord Hardinge that Sir Mark Sykes should come over to the Foreign Office as Head of a Department working directly under Lord Hardinge.



-2-

Personally he felt that a Middle Eastern Department was required with a duly constituted secretarial staff and that pending future re-allocation of duties this Department and Staff should be found by the Foreign Office.

SIR MARK SYKES pointed out that in his new position in the Foreign Office it would be difficult for him to act both as Member of the Committee and as Secretary at the same time.

LORD CURZON and LORD ROBERT CECIL agreed but expressed the view that Sir Mark Sykes should be responsible for submitting to the Members of the Committee a Weekly Summary of the telegrams and despatches received on matters that concerned the Committee by the Foreign Office, the India Office and the War Office. The Agenda should reach Members of the Committee not later than Friday evening together with the necessary documents in such a form that the Committee could consider the points upon which their decision was necessary without necessarily wading through a large series of documents.

LORD CURZON suggested that the Minutes of the Committee should be given as fully as possible and should be composed and circulated in the same manner as those of the War Cabinet. The Middle East Committee should not be confounded in any way with the Persian Committee of which Mr. L. Cliphant would remain Secretary.

The Committee decided to adopt the above-mentioned proposals made by Lord Curzon and Lord Robert Cecil for more effective preparation and execution of the duties of the Committee.

Reorganisation  
of Political  
Representation  
in Palestine  
and the  
Hejaz..

2. The Committee considered a Memorandum on the Political situation and duties of General Clayton in Palestine and the Hejaz. This Memorandum had been prepared by Sir Mark Sykes on his recent return from Paris after seeing the French Foreign Office Authorities at the request of the Prime Minister, and had been circulated by order of the latter to all Members of the War Cabinet. This Memorandum stated that whereas the military situation both in Palestine and the adjacent Arab territories was most encouraging the political situation in these regions was far from satisfactory owing to the want of duly defined control on the part of the British Representatives in these regions.

SIR MARK SYKES stated that it would appear from telegram No. 46 from Sir Reginald Wingate that there were indications that matters had improved slightly since the time at which his Memorandum had been written but that he still held the view that if difficulties with the French were to be avoided clearer instructions were necessary from His Majesty's Government with regard to the exact position to be occupied by General Clayton and the policy which he was to carry out.

LORD HARDINGE read to the Committee a note that <sup>he</sup> had prepared upon the subject of Sir Mark Sykes' Memorandum. He agreed with the suggestion that there should be a "clear out" made between Palestine and Egypt, but suggested that in Palestine, General Clayton should be completely independent of the High Commissioner in Cairo, and that he should act independently as the Chief Political Adviser to General Allenby in Palestine.



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In regard to the Hejaz he suggested that General Clayton should be made Chief Civil Commissioner under Sir Reginald Wingate who would continue to perform the purely Military functions of the General Officer Commanding in the Hejaz. Sir Reginald Wingate was well known in the East and while the political functions which he carried out in regard to the Hejaz should be transferred to General Clayton he thought it desirable to retain Sir Reginald Wingate as General Officer Commanding in that area. It was essential from every point of view that there should be co-operation and co-ordination between the political and military forces in Palestine and in the Hejaz and he recognised that in Egypt there existed a sentiment hostile to the Arabs.

GENERAL MACDONOGH agreed that from a Military point of view co-ordination was most important; it would, however, be impossible for General Allenby to give instructions to Colonel Wilson at Jeddah and it was necessary to improve the system of liaison between the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in Palestine and the General Officer Commanding in Hejaz. He thought that for this purpose Colonel A. Dawnay who was on the staff of Sir Reginald Wingate for Arab Operations should be attached to General Allenby's Headquarters to ensure fuller co-ordination.

LORD ISLINGTON stated that he understood the proposal was that General Clayton should be placed in both Palestine and the Hejaz in precisely the same position as that occupied by Sir Percy Cox in Mesopotamia.

SIR MARK SYKES pointed out that General Clayton's only staff was the Arab Bureau which was at present situated in Cairo, and was a Foreign Office body under Sir Reginald Wingate. He thought that the Arab Bureau should be moved from Cairo to some place in Palestine, whence it would be possible for General Clayton to carry out his proposed duties, both in regard to Palestine and the Hejaz.

LORD HARDINGE agreed that the movement of the Arab Bureau would follow, as a matter of course, from the re-definition of functions to be entrusted to General Clayton. In reply to Lord Islington he added that it would be difficult to carry out the analogy between the position of General Clayton and that of Sir Percy Cox completely. The Hejaz was an independent Sovereign State and therefore General Clayton's relations with King Hussein would be largely those of a diplomat.

LORD ISLINGTON pointed out that if General Clayton was to act as both political Officer in Palestine and in the Hejaz it would be necessary for him to delegate his authority to some other person in the Hejaz; he presumed this would be Colonel Wilson at Jeddah who in future in regard to all political matters would take his instructions from General Clayton.

LORD ROBERT CECIL explained that the channel of communication between His Majesty's Government and General Clayton would in each case be through the General Officer Commanding in Palestine and the Hejaz. General Clayton should of course be allowed the utmost freedom in regard to his communications with the Committee.



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- 4 -

GENERAL MACDONOGH expressed the view that before this proposal was definitely approved by the Committee the views of the two Military Members namely, General Allenby and Sir Reginald Wingate, should be obtained.

LORD ROBERT CECIL agreed that it was a sound principle that the General Officers Commanding should be in responsible control.

LORD HARDINGE suggested that General Clayton should be given the style and title of "Civil Commissioner in Palestine and the Hejaz", this being the style and title given to Sir Percy Cox in Mesopotamia.

SIR MARK SYKES pointed out that this might give offence to the French. The French Government were addressing M. Picot at Jerusalem as Haut Commissaire de la Palestine and even as Haut Commissaire de l'Orient.

LORD CURZON expressed the view that under the circumstances it would probably be better that General Clayton should be styled "Chief Political Officer" rather than "Civil Commissioner".

The Committee decided:-

- (a) that subject to any contrary representations that might be put forward by General Allenby or General Sir Reginald Wingate, Brigadier-General C.F. Clayton, C.M.G. should be appointed Chief Political Officer in Palestine under General Allenby and Chief Political Officer in the Hejaz under General Sir Reginald Wingate.
- (b) that the D.M.I. should ascertain by telegram the views of the two General Officers Commanding who were concerned.

French and  
Italian  
aspirations  
in  
Palestine.

3. LORD CURZON stated that he gathered from various sources that a good deal of trouble existed in Palestine between the British, French and Italian Representatives.

SIR MARK SYKES stated that there was no doubt that serious trouble existed; in his opinion this was very largely due to the fact that General Sir Reginald Wingate had paid one if not more visits to Palestine and that if he had not actually entered Jerusalem he had been to Nebi Samwail, a place several miles North West of Jerusalem, and also to the fact that Egyptian Civil Servants such as Borton Pasha whose attitude towards the French was not altogether friendly had been appointed to important posts in Palestine whereas no Frenchmen or Italians had been given corresponding posts. As was well known, there existed among the British Officers in Egypt, a spirit distinctly hostile to the French, which was reciprocated with interest by Frenchmen like M. de France, the French Consul-General in Cairo. He understood that Mr. Ronald Storrs had replaced Borton Pasha as Governor of Jerusalem, and here again he feared that unless their attitude towards Mr. Storrs had changed recently, the French would feel aggrieved as Mr. Storrs had been anything but persona grata with them. Further, he learnt from French sources that a number of Anti-French Syrians had been given posts in Palestine; on the other hand he agreed that the attitude of the French Press was most chauvinistic, in regard to the French claim to the whole of Palestine, which they regarded as the Holy Land.

CAPTAIN ORMSBY GORE added that he had recently seen Dr. Weizmann, President of the English Zionists Federation, who was alarmed at the Anti-Semitic attitude now being adopted in France.



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5.

LORD ROBERT CECIL stated that the Italian difficulty was also acute, due to the perpetual jealousy felt by the Italians for the French, and the claims put forward by the Italian Nationalists with regard to the custody of the Christian Holy Places.

LORD ISLINGTON read an interesting letter that he had received from an Officer, who had been present at the Allies' entry into Jerusalem, and who had subsequently been invalided home and in the course of his journey had stopped in Rome where he had interviews with our representative at the Vatican and with Cardinal Gasparri, the Pope's Secretary of State. Cardinal Gasparri had spoken very definitely to this Officer upon two points -

- (1) He stated that while His Holiness had been kept closely informed of the situation in Palestine by the Germans and Austrians he had been given no information whatever by the British since the capture of Jerusalem.
- (2) He stated most categorically that the Pope's wishes were that the British, and not the French, should remain in control and possession of the Holy Places as they alone were in a position to adjudicate fairly between the claims of rival Christian sects and rival Christian Nationalities.

GENERAL MACDONOGH stated that at the instruction of the Foreign Office he had telegraphed to General Allenby suggesting to him that he should appoint two French and two Italian Officers to be selected by him to important posts in Palestine, but that General Allenby had replied that he could not at present see his way to carry out this request though he was willing to appoint two Frenchmen and two Italians as Sanitary Officers.

The Committee were unanimously of the opinion that the War Office should press General Allenby to carry out the original suggestion for diplomatic reasons, but that important posts such as the Governorship of towns should be given to one French and one Italian Officer while a less important post should be given to the other French and Italian Officers.

LORD HARDINGE undertook to draft a telegram to this effect for the War Office to send to General Allenby.

It was also decided that an effective means should be devised to furnish periodical information to the Vatican regarding the situation in Palestine.

The position of Ibn Saud, Viceroy and Sir Reginald Wingate discussing the policy to be adopted towards the Emir, Ibn Saud of Nejd. The latter appeared anxious to operate against Ibn Rashid the Emir of Hail but desired considerably greater material than diplomatic support from us. It was pointed out that considerable divergence of interest existed between King



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6.

Hussein and Ibn Saud and that the reversion of Hail was eagerly disputed between them.

LORD CURZON added that the fall of Hail and extinction of Ibn Rashid, who was at present being heavily subsidised by the Turks, would follow more or less automatically when General Allenby succeeded in finally cutting the Hejaz Railway East of the Jordan, and that until this was done it was desirable that while we should not give any such refusal to the request of Ibn Saud as to discourage his co-operation, we should do our utmost to temperise with his present demands.

SIR MARK SYKES pointed out how sharp the Arabs were to detect any vacillation of policy on our part and how disastrous it would be to our prestige and to the Arab cause to let it get out that we were doing anything directly or indirectly to suffer a continuance of Ibn Rashid's regime.

The Committee decided that a reply should be sent to Sir Reginald Wingate in the sense outlined above by Lord Curzon and that special steps should be taken to secure the utmost secrecy in regard to this policy.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.  
12th January, 1918.