

Minutes of the
War Committee of the Cabinet
December 29th, 1941.

A special meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet was held in the Privy Council Chamber on Monday, December the 29th, at 12 o'clock, noon.

There were present the following members:

The Prime Minister (Mr. King), in the Chair,
The Leader of the Government in the Senate
(Senator Dandurand),
The Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Crerar),
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston),
The Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe),
The Minister of National Defence for Naval
Services (Mr. Macdonald),

The Under-Secretary of State for External
Affairs (Mr. Robertson),
The Secretary (Mr. Heeney).

There was also present:

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
(Mr. Churchill).

There were also present (Para. 15 et seq.):

The Chief of the Naval Staff (Vice-Admiral Nelles),
The Chief of the Air Staff (Air Marshal Breadner),
The Chief of the General Staff (Lieut.-General
Stuart),
The Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee
(Captain Houghton, R.C.N.),
The Chief of the Air Staff (United Kingdom),
(Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal),
The Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee
(United Kingdom), (Brigadier Hollis), and
The Personal Assistant to Mr. Churchill
(Commander Thompson, R.N.)

Before the Prime Minister and Mr. Churchill entered the meeting, the two following matters were dealt with: (Mr. Crerar in the Chair)

Return to Canada of Canadian Corps Commander

1. The Minister of National Defence read a communication from Lieutenant-General McNaughton, suggesting that he return to Canada for a time. Medical authorities had advised him not to resume full duty until the latter part of February. Now that Major-General

anxious to keep the United States to the fore, and avoid anything in the nature of partisanship. As far as joint U.K.-Canadian matters were concerned, it was his own responsibility to see that the Canadian government were fully informed.

Pacific Coast defence

19. The Chief of the General Staff described army dispositions on the Pacific Coast. The army was regarded as in a subsidiary role to that of air and naval forces. It was felt that apart from anti-aircraft defences, which were not available, army forces were reasonably adequate to deal with any scale of attack which could be anticipated.

20. The Chief of the Air Staff gave details of the limited air defences which it had been possible to concert and the steps which were being taken to develop stronger fighter forces for this purpose. For additional modern fighter aircraft, we were dependent upon U.S. deliveries, but sixty Hurricanes were now being converted to use and should prove suitable for duty on the Pacific Coast.

21. The Chief of the Naval Staff pointed out that there was practically no Canadian naval defence on the Pacific Coast.

Internal security - British Columbia

22. The U.K. Prime Minister enquired as to Japanese population in British Columbia. Some years ago they had caused a good deal of trouble.

23. The Chief of the General Staff replied that he had just returned from the Pacific Coast. Members of the special government committee, as well as military, police and local authorities, were concerned less at the possibility of subversive activity by Japanese than at the danger of serious anti-Japanese outbreaks by the white population. There were approximately 24,000 persons of Japanese race in the whole of Canada, and no more than 7,000 in any one community on the Pacific. The police felt that they had the situation well in hand.

Canadian army programme - 1942-43

24. The Minister of National Defence observed that the Army programme, for the next year, was now under consideration. Its recommendations included the conversion of an infantry division and its despatch to Britain as a second armoured division. The U.K. Secretary of State for War had, on an earlier occasion, expressed to him the view that a second armoured division would constitute, on the part of Canada, the most desirable form of additional