

,Minutes of the
War Committee of the Cabinet
December 7th, 1941.

(Full Cabinet)

Ottawa, December 7th, 1941.

CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

A meeting of the full Cabinet was held in the Privy Council Chamber on Sunday, December the 7th, at 7.30 p.m.

The following members of the War Committee were present:

The Prime Minister (Mr. King), in the Chair,
The Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Crerar),
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston),
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley),
The Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe),
The Minister of National Defence for
Naval Services (Mr. Macdonald).

The Minister of Fisheries and Acting Minister
of Justice (Mr. Michaud).

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

Other members of Council present were:

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner),
The Minister of Labour (Mr. McLarty),
The Minister of Trade and Commerce
(Mr. MacKinnon),
The Postmaster General (Mr. Mulock),
The Minister of National War Services
(Mr. Thorson).

The Chiefs of Staff (Vice-Admiral Nelles,
Major-General Stuart and Air Marshal
Breadner) were also present for report
upon Pacific Coast defences. (Paragraph 18
et seq.)

War with Japan

The Prime Minister reported that word

The Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Cline),
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston),
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley),
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The Minister of National Defence for
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War with Japan

1. The Prime Minister reported that word
received through the Legation in Washington had confirmed
earlier radio reports of the sudden outbreak of hostilities
between Japan and the United States, beginning with the
air attack upon Pearl Harbour early this morning. Word
had also been received from London of an attempted
landing by Japanese in Malaya, on the border of Thailand.

Japan was reported to have declared war upon
the United States and Great Britain.

Internal security, British Columbia

8. The Secretary pointed out that the special committee which had reported, some time ago, on measures to be taken in the event of war with Japan had recommended that a communication be addressed by the Prime Minister to the Premier of British Columbia, inviting co-operation in taking the necessary precautionary steps for the protection of loyal residents of Japanese race.

9. The Acting Minister of Justice reported that the Commissioner of the R.C.M. Police had received assurance of full support from civil and military authorities on the Pacific Coast.

10. The Prime Minister submitted a draft telegram to the Premier of British Columbia regarding internal security in that Province.

11. The Cabinet, after some discussion, agreed that the Prime Minister should make reference to this matter in a public statement, later this evening, rather than address a communication to the British Columbia government.

Orders to Canadian forces to engage the enemy

12. The Minister of National Defence pointed out that it had been decided by the War Committee that Canadian forces, upon the outbreak of war between the United Kingdom and Japan, should not be given orders to engage the Japanese unless they were attacked, and that the government would at the time decide upon the orders to be given. Clearly this decision was inapplicable in the present circumstances, Japan having taken the initiative and hostilities having already commenced against both Great Britain and the United States. Orders to engage the Japanese should be given to the forces, at once, and authority to that effect was requested.

13. The Cabinet approved the immediate issue of orders to the Canadian forces to engage the Japanese, at once, wherever found.

Extension of Defence of Canada Regulations to Japanese nationals

14. The Acting Minister of Justice submitted and explained a recommendation for the extension of the Defence of Canada regulations to persons of Japanese nationality.

15. The Cabinet, after some discussion, approved the recommendation submitted.