

Minutes of the
War Committee of the Cabinet
March 11, 1943.

SECRET

Ottawa, March 11th, 1943.

CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

A meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet was held in the Privy Council Chamber on Thursday, March 11th, 1943, at 11.00 a.m.

Present:

The Prime Minister (Mr. King), in the Chair,
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston),
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley),
The Minister of Transport (Mr. Michaud),
The Minister of National Defence for
Naval Services (Mr. Macdonald),
The Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent).

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

Mr. J. R. Baldwin, Privy Council Office.

Also present (for discussion recorded in
paragraphs 1 to 35):

The Chief of the Naval Staff and Chairman
of the Chiefs of Staff Committee
(Vice-Admiral Nelles),
The Chief of the General Staff
(Lieutenant-General Stuart),
The Chief of the Air Staff
(Air Marshal Breadner),
The Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee
(Squadron Leader Morrow).

Organization for anti-submarine warfare -
command relations; U.K., U.S., and Canadian forces

1. The Chief of the Naval Staff reported
upon discussions in Washington between British, U.S.,
and Canadian officers.

The conference had agreed upon re-arrangement

of certain Canadian railway troops, aggregating 1,000 all ranks.

Steps were being taken to comb the Army in Canada for the required personnel, while the Canadian railway companies had also been asked to explore the possibility of providing key men. The Chief of the General Staff regarded such troops as extremely valuable in view of the proposed operations.

An explanatory note had been circulated.

(National Defence memorandum, undated - C.W.C. document 436).

21. The Chief of the General Staff stated that provision of the railway troops requested would not entail any change in the manpower or financial programmes of the Army. It was strongly recommended that approval be given.

22. The War Committee, after discussion, authorized provision of the railway troops as recommended.

Employment of Japanese in British Columbia

23. The Secretary said that the Chiefs of Staff had reconsidered this question.

They reported that, while there was objection to employment of Japanese in the lumber industry within the protected areas, the same objection did not apply to their employment under suitable safeguards outside the protected areas.

Defence Council had concurred in this recommendation. An explanatory note had been circulated.

(National Defence memorandum, Mar. 8, 1943 - C.W.C. document 429).

24. Mr. Heeney pointed out that the employment of Asiatics in the B.C. lumber industry had already been the subject of an Order in Council (P.C. 1422), of February 23rd, 1943. The recommendation submitted by the Chiefs of Staff appeared to be consistent with this Order.

25. The War Committee noted, with approval, the recommendation of the Chiefs of Staff, and agreed that it be communicated to the Minister of Labour for the information of the Director of National Selective Service and the British Columbia Security Commission.

Proposed U.S. military hospital at Edmonton

26. The Secretary reported that a request had been received from the United States for authority to construct, at Edmonton, a 250-bed hospital, and to lease the necessary sites in that city.

The project had been initiated by the Surgeon General of the U.S. Army and construction would be undertaken by the U.S. Corps of Engineers. Plans would allow for possible future expansion. An explanatory note had been circulated.

(Secretary's note, Mar. 10, 1943 - C.W.C. document 437).

27. The Chief of the Air Staff said that he understood that the United States expected to employ a U.S. contractor and to use American lumber already on the site. There appeared to be no objection to agreeing to the request, provided that the location were acceptable to Transport.

28. The Prime Minister suggested that such requests should be examined by the Joint Defence Construction Projects Panel so that the views of the various departments concerned could be obtained.

29. The War Committee, after further discussion, agreed that this request be approved subject to the Joint Defence Construction Projects Panel seeing no objection, particularly from the point of view of materials and labour supply.

Alaska highway; postwar military use; connecting roads

30. The Secretary submitted a memorandum from the Department of External Affairs proposing an exchange of notes with the United States; copies had been circulated.

As to the present use of connecting roads, it was pointed out that the inadequacy of rail transportation had made it necessary to send U.S. vehicles