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CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

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MEMORANDUM

CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

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12

Re: Japanese Labour on Blue River Highway

On July 15th, 1942, the War Committee of the Cabinet agreed that the Japanese in work camps along the Blue River Highway should be removed from the vicinity of the railroad as quickly as possible.

The Minister of Mines and Resources has stated that the situation has changed in the past few weeks and that the removal of married men from the camps has improved the atmosphere so that there appear to be few indications of sabotage. The British Columbia Security Commission favours continuance of the work by the single Japanese. Mr. Crerar also has pointed out that most of the road to be opened up lies between Gossnell and Thunder River on the opposite side of the Thompson River to the C.N.R. line. The opportunity for sabotage is thus reduced.

The Minister of National Defence in commenting on this information has stated that since continuation of the work will add an important link to highway communications he is willing to agree that single Japanese should continue their work between Gossnell and Thunder River, subject to proper precautions being maintained regarding the steel railway bridge at Thunder River and the temporary bridge across the Thompson River in the camp area.

The section of the road in Yellowhead Pass is in a different position. Between Red Pass Junction and Yellowhead the main railway lines to Vancouver and Prince Rupert are closely parallel and pass through a canyon of the Fraser River. Camps in this area are still occupied by the Japanese. Mr. Ralston considers that the Japanese should be removed from this area without further delay and that any road work still necessary to complete that portion of the highway should be undertaken by white labour.

A. D. P. Heeney,
Secretary.

Privy Council Office,
September 28, 1942.