

Memorandum re Meeting of

Cabinet War Committee

October 8th, 1940.

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Ottawa, October 8th, 1940.

CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

A meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet was held in the Prime Minister's Office in the East Block, on Tuesday, October the 8th, at 11 a.m.

There were present the following members:

The Prime Minister,  
The Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe),  
The Minister of Mines and Resources  
(Mr. Crerar),  
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston),  
The Minister of National Defence  
for Air (Mr. Power),  
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley),  
The Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe).

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

Department of National Defence

Staff appointments

1. The Minister of National Defence reported that it was necessary to appoint, at an early date, a General Officer Commanding the 3rd Division, C.A.S.F. Careful consideration had been given to officers available for this Command, and the recommendations of the Chief of the General Staff and Lieutenant-General McNaughton, had been obtained.

Mr. Ralston mentioned the names of a number of officers who were being considered.

2. The Committee discussed the relative qualifications of the various officers whose names had been put forward, it being then decided to leave the matter to the Minister of National Defence for final review and recommendation to Council.

3. Mr. Ralston also reported the importance of making early appointment of District Commanding Military Districts Nos. 4 and 5.

In view of the internal situation in the Province and the fear of Japanese and anti-Japanese activity there, it was felt that such a step, coupled with the appointment of a Commanding Officer of reputation and ability, would help to establish local confidence and stability.

Japanese and Chinese in British Columbia

6. The Prime Minister referred to the changed position as regards the Pacific Coast, resulting from the deterioration in relations with Japan. Evidence of anti-Japanese agitation had increased in British Columbia and the organization of local groups such as the so-called "Flying Column", which threatened to take direct action, showed that the local internal danger was greater than any immediate threat of attack from without.

7. The Minister of National Defence for All reported that during his recent tour of inspection, he had visited the Pacific Coast and found that anti-Japanese feeling was running high. The danger of anti-Japanese outbreaks was serious. Many people in British Columbia had a "Japanese complex" and spoke of mass internment and deportation of all Japanese in the province. They had, however, no practical suggestions as to how the situation should be met. Intelligence reports upon alleged Japanese activities in sparsely populated areas (the Queen Charlotte Islands) had tended to show that there had been great exaggeration of any possible menace which might exist in the way of assistance to the enemy by local Japanese.

Mr. Power felt that the appointment of an officer of standing, to the proposed Pacific Command would do a good deal to allay local feeling in the matter of internal security.

8. With reference to the Special Committee which had been appointed at the meeting of October the 1st, to investigate the Japanese and Chinese situation in British Columbia, Mr. Ralston suggested that either the National Defence representative or the representative of the R. C. M. Police, whichever was the senior, should be convener. This was agreed.