

Minutes of the
War Committee of the Cabinet
September 23, 1942.

(Afternoon and Evening Meeting)

Secret

Ottawa, September 23rd, 1942.

CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

A meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet was held in the Privy Council Chamber on Wednesday afternoon, September the 23rd, at 3 p.m.

There were present the following members:

The Prime Minister (Mr. King), in the Chair,
The Minister of National Defence
(Mr. Ralston),
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilesley),
The Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Michaud),
The Minister of Munitions and Supply
(Mr. Howe),
The Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent).

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

There was also present:

The Chief of the General Staff (Lieutenant-
General Stuart).

There were also present for the discussion
described in paragraphs 1 to 12:

The Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff
(Commodore Reid),
The Chief of the Air Staff (Air Marshal
Breadner),
The Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee,
(Captain DeWolf, R.C.N.)

Transport overseas of Service personnel

1. The Secretary referred to the new arrangements under which troop convoys would be temporarily in abeyance, and trans-Atlantic traffic limited to fast unescorted sailings in large liners (the "Queens")

13. The Secretary submitted a request of the Minister of Munitions and Supply for decision upon the requisitioning of 1,000 tons of binder twine, now at Saint John, N.B., enroute from Mexico to Ireland.

The twine was urgently required in Canada and could not reach Ireland for use this year. The United States had requested that Canada hold the fibre as part of North American supply, on the understanding that Ireland be provided with her requirements from the United Kingdom. The Irish government, however, were unwilling to consent to this being done. An explanatory note had been circulated.

(Secretary's note, September 23, 1942 - C.W.C. document 288).

14. The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs observed that the seizure of the property of another country, in transit, would be a considerable extension of existing practice. The United Kingdom should be given an opportunity of considering the political implications.

In any event, the vessel could not sail immediately, for no bunkers could be made available before October 1st.

15. The War Committee, after discussion, agreed to defer action pending consultation with the U.K. government.

Pacific Coast - movement of Japanese from vulnerable points

16. The Prime Minister read extracts from a letter emphasizing the external and internal dangers to be anticipated from Japanese action on the Pacific Coast.

The writer felt that the risks of a Japanese attempt from without were being under-estimated, and that more drastic steps should be taken to provide

protection against subversive activities from within, by persons of Japanese race.

(Letter, R.A. Logan to the Prime Minister, September 9, 1942).

17. The Minister of National Defence pointed out that it had already been decided to move Japanese workers from railway lines.

It should be borne in mind that drastic measures would have a direct result in reprisals upon Canadians in Japanese hands. In this connection, he had been much impressed by a recent report from a Dr. Parsons who had recently returned from Japan.

18. The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs suggested that the internment of Japanese and their treatment should be related to the manpower shortage now under consideration.

19. The Chief of the General Staff said that he would be surprised if the Japanese made any attempt upon the Pacific Coast. The evidence was against it. At present the United States were taking the initiative in the Aleutians.

20. The War Committee, after further discussion, referred to Council, for further consideration, the question of treatment of evacuated Japanese.

Special subject x

21. The Prime Minister submitted a certain proposal communicated to him the previous day in a most secret and personal message from the British Prime Minister, requesting the views thereon of his colleagues.

(Most secret and personal letter, U.K. High Commissioner to the Prime Minister, September 22, 1942.)

22. The Minister of National Defence submitted certain cables which had been exchanged on the same subject with the Canadian Army Commander, Lieutenant-General McNaughton.

(National Defence telegrams - C.M.H.Q. to N.D.H.Q., Ottawa, G.S. 3284, September 20, 1942;
C.M.H.Q. to N.D.H.Q., G.S. 3297, September 21, 1942;
N.D.H.Q. to C.M.H.Q., CGS 465, September 22, 1942;
C.M.H.Q. to N.D.H.Q., C.G.S., September 22, 1942;