

Memorandum re Meeting of

Cabinet War Committee

September 26th, 1940.

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Ottawa, September 26th, 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 Thursday, September the 26th, at 3.20 p.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 Finance (Mr. Ilsley),
The Minister of Agriculture and Minister
of National War Services (Mr. Gardiner),
The Minister of National Defence for
Naval Services (Mr. Macdonald).

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

Relations with France

1. The Prime Minister read a reply from the Leader of the Opposition, to his letter regarding the status of Canada's relations with the French government.

In his letter Mr. Hanson had referred to extreme views held in Canada on the part of those who favoured, respectively, the Vichy government, and General deGaulle's "Free French Movement". He did not intend to raise the issue publicly, so long as relations remained as they were.

2. Mr. King referred to the operations undertaken by General deGaulle with the support of British forces, off Dakar. It had now been announced that these operations had been discontinued and the Free French and British forces had been withdrawn.

Following the decision of the Committee, at its last meeting, a telegram had been sent to the U. K. government expressing Canada's deep concern at the prospect of a rupture with France,

mission, in present circumstances. It was unlikely to achieve any useful results. It has been definitely decided that Mr. MacKinnon would not go, as he had felt, as did the Chairman of the Wheat Board, that no fruitful discussions of the wheat problem could be anticipated under present circumstances.

16. The Minister of Agriculture stated emphatically his view of the importance of the proposed mission at the present time. Agreements with regard to several important products were running out within a short period and would have to be renewed. Experience in respect of bacon led to the belief that the U. K. government would welcome revised arrangements. They were concerned as to the whole question of food supplies. Direct conversations were the best means of affecting settlements. We should inform the U. K. authorities what we have and what we are able and willing to supply of their present and future needs. Communications received from the United Kingdom supported his view that a mission of this kind would be welcomed.

17. After further discussion it was agreed that Mr. Gardiner, accompanied by a number of experts, should proceed to Great Britain and that in making his visit known, it should be emphasized that the object was to help the United Kingdom in solving their problems of food supply.

Military training of Japanese and Chinese in British Columbia

18. The Prime Minister read a letter from the Premier of British Columbia, urging strongly that Canadians of Japanese and Chinese racial origin should not be called out for military training under the present training scheme, and expressing grave concern as to the consequences if this were done.

(See letter of September the 23rd, from the Premier of British Columbia, to the Prime Minister).

19. The representations of Mr. Pattullo were discussed by the Committee. It was pointed out that it was difficult to discriminate in favour of or against racial groups who possessed Canadian citizenship. At present there were no exceptions, apart from the

Mennonites and Doukhobours, whose special position had been recognized since the last century. The Japanese involved were all Canadian citizens, mostly Canadian-born and educated, and possibly not amounting to more than a couple of thousand. It would be difficult to exclude them from the same treatment as that accorded other Canadians.

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On the other hand it was argued that regard must be had to the danger of the whole Oriental problem in British Columbia. The wishes of the Provincial government and their judgment of the danger of the situation should receive the fullest consideration.

20. It was agreed:

(a) as an immediate measure, to omit Japanese and Chinese, in British Columbia, from the first call for military training, and

(b) to direct Mr. Justice Davis to discuss the problem with the Attorney General of British Columbia.

Munitions and Supplies -
Inter-Government Inspection Board

21. The Minister of National Defence explained a draft Order-in-Council which had been prepared upon his recommendation, providing for the combination of inspection services, under an Inter-Government Inspection Board, to be constituted by the government, and the U. K. government. It was felt that this move would make for greater efficiency and saving and help to conserve essential technical services so urgently needed.

After some discussion the draft Order-in-Council was approved, in principle, and referred to the Minister of Finance for further consideration and report.

Department of National Defence

22. Mr. Ralston submitted, for approval, the following proposals involving financial commitments:

(a) the establishment of eight provost companies for military police