

Minutes of the
War Committee of the Cabinet
July 8, 1942.

CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

A meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet was held in the Privy Council Chamber on Wednesday, July the 8th, at 11.30 a.m.

There were present the following members:

The Prime Minister (Mr. King), in the Chair,
The Minister of Mines and Resources
(Mr. Crerar),
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Halston),
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley),
The Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe),
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).

Conditions in Japanese work camps - Blue River highway

1. The Minister of Mines and Resources drew attention to the unsatisfactory conditions in camps situated adjacent to the main C.N.R. line between Jasper, Alberta and Blue River, B.C. A report by the R.C.M. Police, concurred in by National Defence, showed that dissatisfaction and resentment were widespread, and that proper discipline was not being maintained. It recommended that the Japanese be removed from these camps. A summary of the R.C.M. Police report was circulated.

(Secretary's note, July 8, 1942 - C.W.C. document 222).

2. Mr. Crerar emphasized that, contrary to the view expressed in the report, discipline in the camps was not the responsibility of the Department of Mines and Resources, whose function was solely to lay out and oversee the work. This had been settled in correspondence with the Minister of Labour. A foreman on the job could not deal satisfactorily with Japanese who refused to work or who otherwise conducted themselves improperly.

There were present the following members:
The Prime Minister (Mr. King), in the Chair,
The Minister of Mines and Resources
(Mr. Crerar),
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston),
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley),
The Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe),
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).

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2. Mr. Crerar emphasized that, contrary to the view expressed in the report, discipline in the camps was not the responsibility of the Department of Mines and Resources, whose function was solely to lay out and oversee the work. This had been settled in correspondence with the Minister of Labour. A foreman on the job could not deal satisfactorily with Japanese who refused to work or who otherwise conducted themselves improperly.

3. The Minister of Justice said that, under existing arrangements, the R.C.M. Police were unable to make adequate provision for the keeping of order and the guarding of railways, bridges and the like in the vicinity of the camps. Much larger numbers

of police would be required if the Japanese continued their present attitude.

4. Mr. Crerar described the circumstances leading to the present difficulties. The B.C. Security Commission had found no fault with the Mines and Resources foreman who had neither the authority nor means to deal with the situation. Probably the only course, at this stage, would be to have the Japanese moved.

5. The Minister of National Defence agreed that the present situation was quite unsatisfactory. The Japanese were neither interned nor free. National Defence at present had no direct responsibility.

6. Mr. St. Laurent suggested that interested Ministers consult Assistant Commissioner Mead, R.C.M. Police, who was a member of the B.C. Security Commission.

It should be remembered that reluctance to adopt rigorous methods resulted principally from fear of reprisals upon Canadians in Japanese hands.

7. The War Committee, after further discussion, agreed that the Ministers of Mines and Resources, National Defence, Labour and Justice confer with Assistant Commissioner Mead, and subsequently submit recommendations.

Future employment of Canadian Army overseas

8. The Minister of National Defence referred to the reply, authorized by the War Committee on June the 24th, to the War Office's request regarding the inclusion of Canadian military forces in a British Expeditionary Force under the operational control of a British Commander.

The Canadian High Commissioner had delayed the communication of this reply to the U.K. authorities pending the government's consideration of certain observations thereon by Lieutenant-General McNaughton. These observations had now been received and considered by the Army Staff and the Department of External Affairs.

(Telegram 1790, Canadian High Commissioner,
External Affairs. July 7, 1942.)