Minutes of the

War Committee of the Cabinet

January 8th, 1941

SECRET

Ottawa, January 8th, 1941.

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 Wednesday, January the 8th, at 3 p.m.

There were present the following members:

The Prime Minister,
The Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Crerar),
The Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe),
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley),
The Minister of National Defence for Naval Services (Mr. Macdonald)

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

Greenland - Establishment of Air Base, Aircraft Wireless and Meteorological Stations

1. The Prime Minister enquired as to the status of the proposals of the U. K. government for the establishment in Greenland of an air base and aircraft wireless and meteorological stations. These proposals had been mentioned at the last meeting of the Committee and it had been decided that they should be the subject of discussions with the U. S. government.

2. The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs reported that it now appeared that the provision of an aerodrome at the south end of Greenland was regarded by the U. K. government as a matter of urgency because of the large number of aircraft on order in the United States.

It should be borne in mind that to establish an air base in Greenland would mean a complete change of policy. So far the policy had been one of co-operation and assistance; the present proposals involved occupation.

to the plant in question having already been established by the Order-in-Council authorizing the building and equipping of the plant.

25. The Secretary was, accordingly, directed to refer the request to Treasury Board.

No. 1 Neurological Hospital, R.C.A.M.C.

26. Mr. Macdonald, as Acting Minister of Munitions and Supply, submitted a recommendation of the Minister of National Defence, for approval of expenditure up to £62,000 for the refitting of Hackwood Park, which had been made available for the use of this unit.

27. After explanation by Mr. Macdonald, the recommendation, in this respect, of the Minister of National Defence, was approved in principle, and referred to Treasury Board, for examination in detail.

Army Tradesmens School

28. Mr. Macdonald, for the Minister of National Defence, reported that the department now recommended that the Army Tradesmens School, for the establishment of which approval had already been given, should be located at Hamilton, instead of at Kingston. It was said that a substantial saving could be effected by the use of existing buildings in Hamilton.

29. Mr. Macdonald was inclined to think that a measure of decentralization might result in the facilities of the Army Tradesmens School being more suitable for post-war purposes; at his suggestion, decision in this respect was, accordingly, deferred.

Orientals in British Columbia

30. The Prime Minister, having retired from the meeting to interview the Japanese Minister, returned and reported that he had thought it advisable to inform M. Yoskizawa of the government's conclusions

with regard to Japanese in British Columbia before any public announcement were made. The only comment made by the Minister, upon being shown the draft press release, was that Japanese Canadians regretted that they were not permitted to serve in the armed forces.

Floating Dry-dock at Halifax

31. The Secretary reported that Treasury Board had submitted to the Committee, for decision in principle, a request of the Department of Munitions and Supply, for approval of an expenditure of approximately $3,000,000, estimated cost of the construction of a floating dry-dock at Halifax.

32. Mr. Macdonald explained the reasons which made necessary the provision of additional facilities for ship repairs on the Atlantic Coast. While Canada had sufficient dockage available for normal times, facilities were not adequate for war purposes, and to meet the increased burden upon Atlantic ports during the winter season. If operations in the Atlantic were extended further westward, an additional dry-dock at Halifax would be essential and would be welcomed by the British Admiralty.

33. The Prime Minister observed that Halifax had already assumed great importance as a vital Empire port, in connection with the war effort. The proposal appeared to be an appropriate one, though as he had remarked previously, he did not feel that further large commitments should be undertaken until the Committee were in a position to make an informed judgment upon all the requirements of the three Services.

34. After further discussion, in which members of the Committee expressed general agreement with the recommendation, it was decided to defer final decision until the Committee were in a position to deal with the programmes of all three Services; meantime the recommendation was referred, for study, to Treasury Board.

Accommodation for members of the forces on leave - Halifax.