

No. 12-57

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CABINET CONCLUSIONS

A meeting of the Cabinet was held
in the Privy Council Chamber, on Thursday,
February 14th, 1957, at 10:30 a.m.

Present:

The Prime Minister
(Mr. St-Laurent) in the Chair,
The Minister of Trade and Commerce
and Minister of Defence Production
(Mr. Howe),
The Minister of Agriculture
(Mr. Gardiner),
The Minister of National Health and Welfare
and Acting Secretary of State
for External Affairs
(Mr. Martin),
The Minister of National Revenue
(Dr. McCann),
The Minister of Labour
(Mr. Gregg),
The Minister of Veterans Affairs
and Postmaster General
(Mr. Lapointe),
The Minister of Finance
(Mr. Harris),
The Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys
(Mr. Prudham),
The Minister of National Defence
(Mr. Campney),
The Leader of the Government in the Senate
and Solicitor General
(Senator Macdonald),
The Minister of Northern Affairs
and National Resources
(Mr. Lesage),
The Minister of Transport
(Mr. Marler),
The Secretary of State
(Mr. Pinard).

The Secretary to the Cabinet
(Mr. Bryce),
The Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet
(Mr. Martin),
The Economic Adviser, Privy Council Office
(Mr. Lamontagne).

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Cabinet Defence Committee; report of Minister of
National Defence

17. The Minister of National Defence reported that recommendations on a number of important matters had been made at the 113th meeting of the Cabinet Defence Committee held the previous week.

(a) U.S. Air Force request for tanker base
facilities in Canada

The United States had been authorized last year to survey facilities in Canada on which bases might be established to accommodate aircraft to refuel U.S.A.F. bombers. As a result, the U.S. now sought Canada's approval to develop, at U.S. expense, four of this kind of base at Frobisher, Churchill, Cold Lake, and Namao, and to make engineering studies of five others at Coral Harbour, Knob Lake, Great Whale River, The Pas, and Fort Chimo. The U.S. proposed to spend \$40 million on the first four and would begin this year, if possible, to lengthen runways up to 10,000 feet and provide fuel storage, taxiways, parking space, etc. Each base would be prepared to handle 40 Tanker aircraft. A full-scale exercise employing this number would be held once a year and, in addition, six tankers would be staged through each base once or twice a year. Only a small number of personnel would be stationed permanently in Canada, but when exercises were held, or operations occurred, there would be an additional 310 ground crew and 280 flying personnel at each base. The committee recommended concurrence in the U.S. request, on the understanding that procurement and construction would be undertaken through Canadian government departments. These bases would probably only be used by the U.S. until they acquired longer range bombers than they had now. Meanwhile, Canada would gain a number of improved airports in northern regions.

(b) Improvement to prime radars

Canada had constructed and financed 12 of a total of 37 prime radars in the Pinetree System. Coverage up to 40,000 feet was provided. Because of the higher altitude attained by modern fighters and bombers it was necessary to increase this coverage to 75,000 feet and perhaps eventually to 100,000 feet. It was proposed, therefore, to modify now 10 of the 12 radar stations financed by Canada in order to give coverage up to an altitude of 75,000 feet. This was estimated to cost \$20 million. The U.S. would, at the same time, be improving the radars in Canada for which the U.S. was responsible.

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(c) CF-105 aircraft programme

The CF-105 fighter and PS-13 (Iroquois) engine programmes had been reviewed and reports made on the stage reached. Technical progress had been satisfactory but development of the aircraft would take longer than had originally been thought, and would be more expensive. By March 31st, 1958, it was expected that an additional \$46.39 million would have been spent in addition to the amount previously authorized. The committee was of the view that the programme should continue and recommended the development and procurement of eight aircraft.

(d) R.C.N. shipbuilding programme

When the present shipbuilding programme was completed, the Navy would have 14 modern escorts and 25 others which would become obsolete between 1960 and 1968. It had been suggested that, rather than undertake a "crash" replacement programme, replacements be put in hand now on a gradual basis. As a start, the committee recommended that two new ships of the Restigouche class (the later modified version of the St. Laurent class) be laid down in 1957-58 and two more the following year. Conditions had been attached to the programme which, it was hoped, would result in economical construction and procurement.

(e) National Aeronautical Establishment;
construction of high speed wind tunnel
and transfer of National Aeronautical
Establishment (Uplands) from National
Research Council to Defence Research
Board

In 1954, construction of a wind tunnel at Uplands had been authorized at a cost of \$3.5 million. Subsequently, an additional expenditure of \$250,000 had been approved. For a number of reasons the project was now only approaching completion of the design stage. Recent estimates indicated that the cost of the tunnel would be in the order of \$6 million. The committee had concluded that this was a necessary facility for the development, improvement, and modification of aircraft and recommended that construction proceed. It was also proposed that the aeronautical research facilities at Uplands be transferred from the National Research Council to the Defence Research Board.

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(f) U.K. proposal for the establishment
of a "Canada station"

Last summer the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom had requested Canada to assume responsibility for certain areas in the north-western Atlantic and north-eastern Pacific Oceans, formerly included in certain U.K. "naval stations", and designate these areas as the "Canada stations" just as there were Australian and New Zealand stations in the Pacific. No further manpower or expenditure would be required for this purpose, nor would acceptance of this responsibility mean additional commitments which the Navy would be expected to assume. However, it was thought that the term "Canada station" should not be used and that the southern limit of the Pacific area should only extend to the parallel of latitude which met the North American coast at the U.S.-Mexican border rather than include waters adjacent to Latin America.

(g) Procedures for consultation on alerts

The committee considered again the procedures for consultation with the United States on the calling of alerts in the event of an emergency, and agreed to send a further communication to the U.S. to clarify this matter.

18. During the discussion the following points emerged:

(a) The improvements to the airfields for tanker base facilities would become Canadian property and the supplies and manpower required to make them would come from Canadian sources.

(b) The U.K. proposed to reduce the size of its conventional forces and had said more of its resources would be devoted to missiles. There seemed to be a good deal of confusion in U.K. thinking at the moment. The impression which some would wish to convey was that the U.K. remained an independent world power but this was no longer economically or physically possible.

19. The Cabinet noted the report of the Minister of National Defence on the 113th meeting of the Cabinet Defence Committee held on February 6th and 7th, and agreed:

(a) that the United States Air Force be authorized,-

(1) to establish, for occasional use, ⁴ aircraft tanker base facilities at the R.C.A.F. airfields, at Frobisher,

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Churchill, Cold Lake, and Namao on the understanding that procurement and construction of what was required for these bases would be undertaken through Canadian government departments and agencies employing Canadian contractors; and,

(11) in conjunction with the R.C.A.F., to conduct engineering studies for the possible establishment of tanker bases at the airfields at Coral Harbour, Knob Lake, Great Whale River, The Pas, and Fort Chimo;

(b) that improvements be made in 10 of the 12 radar stations financed by Canada in the Pinetree System, to provide coverage up to an altitude of 75,000 feet;

(c) that the CF-105 aircraft and PS-13 (Iroquois) engine development programmes proceed, and that the procurement of 8 aircraft be authorized;

(d) that four new ships of the Restigouche class be constructed for the Royal Canadian Navy in accordance with the conditions to which the Minister had referred;

(e) that the authority for the construction of a high-speed wind tunnel at Uplands be confirmed;

(f) that the facilities, administration and control of the National Aeronautical Establishment at Uplands be transferred from the National Research Council to the Defence Research Board; and,

(g) that Canada assumed the responsibility, hitherto borne by the United Kingdom as part of its world-wide "naval station" organization, for areas in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, to be designated the "Northwest Atlantic Station" and the "Northeast Pacific Station", in accordance with the conditions considered by the Cabinet Defence Committee.