

No. 120-58

Copy No. 26

THIS DOCUMENT ON LOAN FROM THE PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE - CANADA

SECRET

CABINET CONCLUSIONS

A meeting of the Cabinet was held in the Privy Council Chamber on Tuesday, December 2nd, 1958, at 10:30 a.m.

Present:

The Minister of Public Works
and Acting Prime Minister
(Mr. Green) in the Chair,
The Minister of Finance
(Mr. Fleming),
The Minister of Veterans Affairs
(Mr. Brooks),
The Minister of Transport
(Mr. Hees),
The Solicitor General
(Mr. Balcer),
The Minister of National Defence
(Mr. Pearkes),
The Minister of Trade and Commerce
(Mr. Churchill),
The Minister of Justice
and Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs
(Mr. Fulton),
The Minister of National Revenue
(Mr. Nowlan),
The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
(Mrs. Fairclough),
The Minister of Fisheries
(Mr. MacLean),
The Minister of Labour
(Mr. Starr),
The Postmaster General
(Mr. William Hamilton),
The Minister without Portfolio
(Mr. Macdonnell),
The Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys
(Mr. Comtois),
The Minister of National Health and Welfare
(Mr. Monteith),
The Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources
(Mr. Alvin Hamilton),
The Minister of Defence Production
(Mr. O'Hurley),
The Secretary of State
(Mr. Courtemanche).

The Secretary to the Cabinet
(Mr. Bryce),
The Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet
(Mr. Fournier).

SECRET

- 2 -

Statements by External Affairs departmental officers

1. Mr. Fulton, as Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs, referred to statements alleged to have been made by civil servants to the effect that they were "astonished" that the Prime Minister would seem to imply, as reported in a Colombo dispatch, that Canada would like to see a large share of the planned increase in Colombo plan aid used for ridding Canada of surplus grain. An inquiry within the Department of External Affairs had revealed that an officer had received a phone call from Harold Morrison of the Canadian Press about this matter. The official was certain that he had not stated that he was "astonished" at the Prime Minister's comments. What he had said was that he would be very much surprised if the Prime Minister had announced new government policy from Colombo. He had then "filled in" Morrison on Colombo Plan aid. He had not said that the Prime Minister was treading on delicate ground in calling on the Asian Colombo Plan countries to step up their imports of Canadian wheat and flour, as stated in Morrison's article.

The department was planning to strengthen its press liaison work and the officers in the department would be warned about the risks in speaking to newspapermen and particularly in commenting on press statements.

2. The Cabinet noted the report of the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs on the comments alleged to have been made by a departmental officer to Mr. Harold Morrison of the Canadian Press.

Statements of Air Marshal Slemon at NORAD Headquarters
(Previous reference Nov. 27)

3. The Minister of National Defence said that Air Marshal Slemon had now seen the Canadian press reports referring to the recent press conference of Canadian and U.S. newspapermen at NORAD Headquarters. Slemon had said that a review of the transcript clearly showed that some of the principal assertions, which some Canadian newspaper reports had claimed he had made, were entirely without foundation. There had been a tape recording of the conference. The Minister said that it seemed obvious that the more sensational reports had been made by people who were not even present at the conference at NORAD. Furthermore, he did not think that he should make a corrective statement. This would only keep the pot boiling. He had written to Slemon reminding him that responsibility for policy statements rested with members of the government and advising him that, if he was again questioned about the CF-105, he should reply that it was not part of NORAD inventory.

4. The Cabinet noted the reassuring report of the Minister of National Defence on the statements alleged to have been made at NORAD Headquarters by Air Marshal Slemon.