

As long as the figures are not publicly known however, these arguments, sound as they may be, can have little influence on public opinion.

9. In this, as in other matters, a dispute which is initially one between the United States and the United Kingdom is apt to involve Canada. The United States has announced a cut of 87½% in shipments of meat to the United Kingdom in the forthcoming quarter in order to compel the United Kingdom to consume its stocks. The United Kingdom contention is that this action will result at no very distant date in the reduction of the meat ration in the United Kingdom which, both absolutely and relatively to pre-war standards, is lower than that of the United States.

10. The United Kingdom, therefore, is apt to turn to Canada in the hope that we may make good, in part, the shortage of supplies from the United States. The United States press, on the other hand, is apt to point with scorn to Canadians as unwilling to curtail their consumption of meat in order to assist the United Kingdom. An even more embarrassing line of criticism already apparent in the Hearst-McCormick press, consists in praising the Government of Canada for turning a deaf ear to outside plans which might call for sacrifices from its own citizens and to criticize the Government of the United States for being too soft-hearted.

11. It may be well be that the United States authorities, in order to make further restrictions acceptable politically, have coupled them with a reference to military needs and with a tough demeanor towards the United Kingdom. While this approach spares Canada from immediate denunciation, our best course seems to be to use this respite to render ourselves immune to legitimate criticism.

12. The conclusion suggested is that it is important that Canada should take energetic steps to curtail the civilian consumption of meat both in order to contribute to the avoidance of political unrest in liberated Europe and in order to maintain abroad the high reputation which Canada, in virtue of her war effort, has achieved.

1289.

PCO

Conclusions du Cabinet

Cabinet Conclusions

TOP SECRET

Ottawa, March 23, 1945

A meeting of Cabinet was held in the Privy Council Chamber on Friday, March 23rd, 1945, at 12 o'clock noon.

The Minister of Mines and Resources
(Mr. Crerar) in the Chair.