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MEMORANDUM

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CABINET WAR COMMITTEE
EMPIRE OIL SUPPLIES

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in the United Kingdom has reported that a position has been reached where there are insufficient tankers to cover requirements as at present planned. Stocks in the United Kingdom have fallen by nearly a million and a half tons during the past six months to a level considered inadequate by both British and United States high commands for future strategic and industrial requirements.

The United Kingdom has achieved drastic economies in the use of petroleum products, but the position has been reached where a further cut must be made even at the cost of productive capacity. It is estimated that the present tanker deficit will enforce a reduction on an average of 10% in plans for over all petroleum supplies. It is suggested that 10% be taken as a general guide by the Dominions in investigating the possibility of further cuts in consumption.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs requests that a review of consumption be undertaken by the Dominions with a view to considering what further economies are to be made on lines least prejudicial to the war effort. To facilitate the exchange of information, arrangements have been made for discussions between Dominion High Commissioners and the chairman of the Oil Control Board in England, following the review requested above and thereafter as necessary.

This despatch which was sent as a circular to all the Dominions does not make clear the relationship between short supply in the United Kingdom and the request for curtailment in Canada but a subsequent communication from the Canadian High Commissioner in London states that the liberation of tanker space is the objective. Canada is of course less dependent on tankers than the other Dominions.

Minutes and Documents of the Cabinet War Committee,
Volume XI, October - December 1942, (R.G. 2, 7c, Volume 11)

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