

IV. Staff Talks at Washington

The Minister of National Defence reported the outcome of recent staff talks in Washington participated in by Brigadier Stuart, Captain Murray and Air Commodore Cuffe. He read a brief summary of the report they had made and gave the Prime Minister a copy of the complete report.

A general discussion had been held with the heads of the Army and Navy staffs, and later detailed discussions were held on military, naval and air questions. The Canadian participants considered the discussions had been extremely valuable. At the outset there was a somewhat surprising lack of recognition on the part of the United States authorities of the part Canada was already playing as an advance post against Nazi efforts at world domination. Until recently they had thought of the British Empire as a whole; now they were coming to realize the importance to themselves of the Canadian effort and of giving aid to Canada. The Prime Minister quoted a statement by Mr. Moffat as confirming this view. The United States staff people had not indicated that they would be much concerned if Canada were merely raided, but they recognized they would have to intervene if Canada were seriously invaded. In that case they seemed to assume they would merely have to come in and take control. They did not have any adequate appreciation either of the political or the strategical situation. (Mr. Howe remarked that Mr. Morgenthau had told him the President had said that he had had to put his Staff "over the jumps regarding Halifax").

The discussion fell into two heads:

- (1) the necessity of the United States providing Canada with supplies in the present stage of carrying on the common effort, and
- (2) the facilities that could be arranged after United States intervention.

At the outset it was only the second of these points with which the United States participants seemed to be concerned, but in discussion they had realized the importance of the first point, and had shown themselves extremely willing to give assistance. It appeared that the Army particularly were not on good terms with the British Purchasing Commission, partly because of the approach through Morgenthau. Neither were their relations very happy with the British War Office, which had shown great reluctance to reciprocate in furnishing secret plans and appliances; for instance, aircraft detection, submarine detection, submarine designs, etc., statements which were confirmed by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Munitions from information which had reached them.