

For a few weeks in 1940, the United States Section of the Board outnumbered the Canadian Section by one service member, since both the United States War and Navy Departments provided air officers. On October 11, an additional Canadian service member, Lieutenant-Colonel Georges P. Vanier (now His Excellency General The Right Honourable Georges P. Vanier, Governor General of Canada) was named to the Board, thus equalizing the representation. However, when Colonel Vanier resigned late in 1942 to accept a diplomatic post, he was not replaced. Equality of representation was not achieved again until 1947, when, with the establishment of the Department of the Air Force, the United States representation of air officers was reduced to one. During the last several years, it has become customary for representatives of the Canadian Departments of Transport and Defence Production also to attend meetings of the Board, because of the close association of those departments with matters frequently under discussion.

The Canadian service members and the diplomatic members of the Board and the secretaries of each Section have always held other appointments as well. Thus, between meetings, they are in daily touch with the problems with which the Board is concerned and with the policies of their departments. Initially, United States service members were not as a rule within the War Department General Staff or the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations; now, however, they are the senior officers within their respective departments concerned with Canadian affairs. The Chairmen of each Section have never had departmental or service affiliations and are appointed by their respective heads of government.

The first meeting of the Board took place on August 26, 1940, in Ottawa, when seven recommendations were passed, more than a fifth of all the Board's recommendations for the entire war. This was possible because there was a backlog of urgent problems that had already received some joint staff consideration. During the remainder of the year the Board met every month. Normally meetings were held alternately in Canada and the United States. The first meeting in Ottawa was followed by one in Washington; other meetings were held at the sites of proposed defence projects; and, later in the war, the Board usually met alternately in Montreal and New York. No fixed schedule was adhered to; the Board met irregularly as often as required. During 1941, there were only eight meetings but in 1942, with the United States now a belligerent, the number of meetings increased to 11. By 1943, the turning-point of the war had been reached and measures for the defence of North America became less urgent. This was reflected in a decreasing number of meetings: seven in 1943, five in 1944, and five in 1945. Since then, meetings have been held on the average of four times a year.

The Permanent Joint Board on Defence was designed to be an advisory rather than an executive body, and its prime purpose was -- and still is -- to make recommendations to the respective governments on joint defence questions. Business is conducted without formality. The agenda include a review of progress reports submitted by the armed services of both countries, by the Canadian Department of Transport, and on behalf of the co-chairmen of the joint committee of the two governments on defence-production sharing. Defence problems are considered and discussed until general agreement is reached. No voting procedure is used and formal recommendations are passed unanimously. Problems for discussion may be initiated by the Board itself or by an agency of either government referring the