

September 1, 1943.

Memo to: Honourable Ian Mackenzie

From: Director A.R.P.

The Provincial Civilian Protection Committee of British Columbia, having submitted a request to the Honourable the Minister of Pensions and National Health for special equipment for protection from fire in the Vancouver Harbour area, the Honourable the Minister asked me to examine the situation and make any necessary recommendations in connection therewith. I have examined the proposals, discussed the matter with the Chairman of the Provincial Committee and personally inspected the area under the guidance of Chief deGraves of the Vancouver Fire Brigade who is well acquainted with the fire hazards of this district and, as a result, I beg to submit the following report and recommendations.

1. AREA AFFECTED:

Vancouver Harbour consists of an inlet of the sea, landlocked except for a narrow entrance. On the north bank, and outside of the jurisdiction of the City of Vancouver proper, there are important shipbuilding yards and other industries; on the south side is the City of Vancouver, and important harbour installations extend for a considerable distance along the waterfront. These installations constitute the only outlet to deep water except such as is available at smaller ports but the destruction of these facilities would undoubtedly seriously handicap movement of goods from the West Coast. The buildings, generally, are of wooden construction and there are many piers built upon wooden piles, and extending for a considerable distance into the water. Nearly all the buildings present a distinct fire hazard and, while some are of concrete construction, there is a sufficiently large number of a highly inflammable type to present a serious problem in fire fighting if several fires started at the same time. Further up the inlet, and outside the jurisdiction of the City of Vancouver, are important oil installations which, if damaged, so that oil reached the water, might produce a dangerous situation. Immediately South of the waterfront are the lines of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company which here connect with the steamship facilities for ocean and coastal traffic. The situation is further complicated by the fact that immediately adjacent to the railway lines is an extensive district comprised largely of buildings of frame construction and very inflammable. If a fire got out of control in the harbour area, it would be almost impossible to prevent it sweeping this area, destroying many properties, some valuable, large quantities of goods, and rendering thousands of people homeless. It can be seen, therefore, that this harbour area presents a military target of the greatest importance and that an enemy air attack, even on a small scale, might easily have disastrous results, unless adequate steps are taken to neutralize the effect of such an attack.

2. PROVISION FOR DEFENCE:

The City of Vancouver, through its Fire Department, and in conjunction with the ARP organization, has augmented its fire fighting forces and effectively utilized all the equipment we have made available. I am of the opinion, however, that these auxiliary forces are still insufficient to deal with an emergency that might arise in the event of an air attack on the

Minutes and Documents of the Cabinet War Committee,  
Volume XIV, September - December 1943,  
(R.G. 2, 7c, Volume 14)

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