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King Papers, PAC

*Mémorandum du Premier ministre**Memorandum by Prime Minister*

[Ottawa,] July 27, 1941

INTERVIEW WITH MINISTER OF JAPAN

Kingsmere, Saturday, July 26, 1941—5.00 p.m.

During the morning, Mr. Robertson informed me that the Japanese Minister, Hon. S. Yoshizawa, had asked for an interview. I arranged to have him come to Kingsmere at 5. When he arrived, I was dealing with the strike situation at Arvida, and had to ask him to wait five or ten minutes before seeing him.

I met him in a very friendly way explaining the reason for the delay. He was quite friendly but clearly had much on his mind of which he wished to speak. When we had concluded exchanging courtesies, Mr. Yoshizawa said that he had not received any instructions from his government, nor had he had communications with them on the matter but felt on his own account that he should come and express his keen disappointment at the action which the Canadian Government in conjunction with the British and the U.S. Governments had felt it necessary to take, and which had been announced over the radio last night. He intimated that Robertson had given him the information re freezing of assets about the time that the public announcement was made.

The point he made was that it was altogether out of proportion to any step Japan had taken. He outlined at length what he referred to as the co-prosperity policy of the Japanese Government stressing the extent to which Japan had been cut off from supplies of raw materials by action of the British, Canadian and United States and other governments, and that they were reaching the point where, particularly as they were conducting war with China, they felt they might find their own position gravely impaired. He spoke of their inability to conclude an agreement with the Dutch which would enable them to get what they needed of supplies, particularly oil and rice, and said that without having authority for so saying, it looked as though an effort was being made to prevent their making a successful agreement with Thailand. He stressed at some length what he regarded as the unfair assistance which had been given China by the British and by the United States, and said that if no assistance had been given, he was sure that the Japanese could have had that war over by this time.

In reply, I said that both the United Kingdom and the United States were under obligation to assist China against what was clearly an act of aggression on the part of Japan. That their contractual relations effected by the treaty