

the situation in Washington, in preparation for later discussions on the Ministerial level.

A first question was whether the Canadian government would be a party to these discussions. This was most important and it was very much hoped that Canadian Ministers would be able to participate. The meetings would take place after the experts had settled a statistical basis from which to proceed.

2. MR. HOWE suggested that the matter of Canadian representation at the Washington talks would be taken up later in the Cabinet.

3. MR. LYTTELTON, outlining the nature and magnitude of the problem, spoke of the imminent danger of a condition of near starvation in Western Europe, in contrast with a relatively tolerable situation in areas liberated by Soviet forces. If reasonable subsistence and employment could not be secured for the peoples of France, Holland and Belgium, no stable governments could survive, and the morale of the populations would be destroyed. The restoration of reasonable levels of consumption had therefore become a major political objective of U.K. government policy. In their view, it was absolutely necessary to demonstrate to the people of the liberated countries that the Western Allies were doing everything possible for their assistance.

The United States, faced with an internal problem of some difficulty, had criticized the size of stockpiles maintained in Britain. The heat had been taken out of this criticism to some extent by the recent statement of the facts by Mr. Churchill.²²⁰ U.S. opinion had now turned to making unfair and unfavorable comparisons with Canadian conditions. It was, therefore, important that anything that the Canadian government were inclined to do should be done before the Washington talks began. Any lead from Canada would have an important effect in the United States and in Europe.

4. MR. LYTTELTON said that there were certain sources from which additional foodstuffs might be secured:

(a) Soviet requests for including foods in the forthcoming 5th Protocol²²¹ should not be regarded as so imperative as heretofore. Russian Armies had now overrun large surplus agricultural areas and the U.S.S.R. should no longer be able to obtain supplies from the Western Allies without a demonstrated need. Further, it might be suggested that responsibility for supplying Poland and Czechoslovakia might well be assumed by the Soviet Union.

(b) The scales of rations for the Armed Forces should be scrutinized very carefully, including those for prisoners of war and displaced persons. There was some ground for thinking that Army stocks were higher than need be in present circumstances. No longer could we afford the luxurious levels which had

²²⁰Voir Grande-Bretagne, Chambre des Communes, *Débats*, 1945, cinquième série, volume 409, colonnes 818-20.

See Great Britain, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1945, Fifth Series, Volume 409, Columns 818-20.

²²¹Voir les documents 598 et 599.

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