

Of the 70,000 tons of wheat which were under firm order before February 13th when our export requirements came into force and for which we have undertaken to grant permits, approximately 33,000 tons have already been shipped and a further 4,500 are to be loaded within the next few days. This leaves a reserve of slightly more than 33,000 tons still to be shipped under existing Japanese contracts and we consider it advisable to wait until this reserve is further reduced before reaching a decision as to whether additional permits could be granted for the whole or any part of the quantity involved in the Mitsubishi inquiry.

Please inform the Japanese Foreign Office as above.

1313.

Skelton Papers, PAC

Le secrétaire aux Dominions au secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures
Dominions Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs

TELEGRAM CIRCULAR M.179

London, July 24, 1941

MOST IMMEDIATE. MOST SECRET. Japan. We have considered our conclusions further in the light of views expressed by Canadian, Commonwealth and New Zealand Governments. We fully appreciate the vital importance to which all three Governments have called attention of securing the clearest possible indication that active armed support of the United States will be immediately available if Japanese force the issue to the point of war. Only question in our mind is how can this best be secured.

2. Having regard to constitutional difficulties in the United States, we feel quite certain that to ask the United States Government now to give us such an assurance would be most unwise. Any attempt to attach such a condition to our taking action similar to that which the United States are prepared to take might well discourage the United States from taking action at all, and in any case would not in our view produce the desired result.

3. We have considered whether it would be possible to inform the United States Government that we are prepared to take action parallel with theirs, and at the same time to make it clear that we are assuming, if in consequence an attack on the Netherlands East Indies or ourselves results, they will be prepared to give us armed support. We feel however that the United States Government would have no alternative but to make reservations which would seriously embarrass us.

4. In our view the United States Government will in fact be compelled to support us if need arises. It is clear that if the Japanese are provoked to extreme measures it will be as a result of the drastic effect of action taken by