

The question was asked as to whether the Greeks having turned their ships [over] to the British, this ship should now be allowed to sail. I could not answer respecting the extent of the Greek agreement with the British re shipping but pointed out that whatever it was, it would be unwise, in the light of all the facts, to embarrass the present situation by raising any question in Vancouver. I told the members of the British having asked us to intercept some ships and bring them into Vancouver for examination. That we had declined to do this fearing it might create trouble; also that we had not the means on the coast for either interception of other ships on the Pacific or for handling a situation of that kind effectively. I pointed out that the British had subsequently thanked us for not proceeding along the lines at first suggested by them.

I concluded the interview by telling the members that I really felt the situation was much more critical for the British in different parts of the world than they began to realize and that we must, at all costs, avoid anything which would lead to an additional burden on the shoulders of Britain at this time.

I asked Grote Stirling and Green to explain to Hanson what had been said, and mentioned that I hoped Harris would not press the question he had asked MacKinnon, about the ship with the scrap iron.

April 30, 1941

This afternoon, on leaving the House of Commons at 8, I 'phoned the Japanese Minister that I would like to call and see him on my way home. He seemed much pleased that I had come to call. He greeted me in a very friendly way. I said I had dropped in on the way home to tell him of my talk with the British Columbia members yesterday. To let him know they had agreed to co-operate with the government in doing their utmost to prevent any adverse criticism of the government's action in allowing the export of the wheat and wood which had been contracted for before the export permits were refused.

I gave him a little account of the meeting, stressing particularly that the Japanese Government had evidently misunderstood our motives and the immediate readiness of the members to join with the government in helping to remove an impression of the kind. The Minister seemed and expressed himself as greatly pleased at what I told him. He said he would telegraph his government at once.

He then asked me if they would be free now to make the application anew. I said that had been agreed to last week, and that I thought he had understood that that was the government's decision. That the members had not been called in to decide the matter but rather to be told of the decision which the government had made and to gain their co-operation in having the matter rightly understood. This seemed to give him even greater pleasure. He said he would send that word to his government at once.