

It was contended that this re-organization would help to meet the serious shortage of oil in the British Isles by providing direct service from the West Indian Islands to North Africa and the United Kingdom. It would also afford Canadian forces with the opportunity of the better training facilities available in Britain.

The objections to these suggestions, from the Canadian point of view, were that Canadian Naval forces would be divided and the majority diverted from Canadian waters, beyond Canadian control. An officer of the Royal Navy was enroute to Washington to discuss these proposals.

(Telegrams Nos. 265 (two) and 264, Dominions Office to External Affairs, December 17 and 18, 1942).

19. The War Committee agreed to defer consideration of this question pending its further examination by the Minister.

Employment of Canadian tribal destroyers

20. The Minister of National Defence for Naval Services again raised the question of the employment of tribal destroyers under construction in Britain.

In accordance with the decision of the War Committee on December 2nd, enquiries had been made regarding the possibility of purchasing some fourteen escort destroyers. It was suggested that Canada offer the tribals for use with the British fleet in return for the seriously needed smaller craft which could more efficiently be employed on escort work.

21. The War Committee, after discussion, approved of the offer of Canadian tribal destroyers to serve with the British fleet on condition that the United Kingdom provide, in exchange, equivalent strength in escort destroyers to the R.C.N.

British Colonial policy

22. The Prime Minister submitted a draft reply on the British proposals, reported at the last meeting, with regard to the proposed joint U.S.-U.K. declaration on Colonial policy.

The draft communication pointed out that emphasis on defence was likely to be misinterpreted in the United States at this stage, suggested that responsibility of "parent states" should be not merely towards indigenous peoples, but towards world opinion, that greater emphasis should be placed upon rights of native peoples to participate in the conduct of their own affairs and that provision should be made for participation by third party states and by indigenous peoples on the suggested Regional Commissions.

(Draft telegram, External Affairs to Dominion Affairs, December 23, 1942).

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