

8. The Minister of Finance felt that the proposals put forward by the Minister to increase production would require careful consideration from the point of view of their general effect upon the cost of living and the price ceiling generally; further, it should be kept in mind that any bonusing of grain production assumed successful maintenance of price control to the summer of 1948.

9. Mr. Gardiner referred to the importance of reaching decision on these questions early in the New Year and, meantime, to the desirability of giving some public indication of the government's attitude towards increased hog production at a very early date. A general assurance of the government's desire to see substantial increases during the coming season might suffice for the present.

10. The Cabinet, after further discussion, agreed that a general expression of the government's wishes along the lines indicated by the Minister of Agriculture might be given at once, but deferred consideration of the specific proposals submitted pending their examination by the Minister of Finance.

Prisoners of war; retention in Canada

11. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (as Acting Minister of Labour) submitted a report from the Deputy Minister of Labour following the discussion at the meeting the previous day.

Arrangements had been made for the retention of upwards of 200 prisoners of war on the basis of the decision taken by the Cabinet at the meeting of December 3rd. These men ranged from common labourers to skilled tradesmen. It could not be said, however, that there were not tradesmen in Canada who could do their work, though shortages existed in a number of the trades which they followed. It would be recalled that prisoners of war labour, so far, had been confined to agriculture, lumbering and a few other industries and to date all personnel had been employed for heavy duty in these categories.

Whether or not the group of some 200 were retained permanently would make little difference to the general labour situation; on the other hand the administrative task involved would be considerable.

The final prisoners of war sailing had been fixed for December 22nd. If it were now decided that none were to be retained it would, however, be possible to have the group of 200 odd proceed overseas at the end of the month. The Labour Department had no special representations to make in respect of individual cases.

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Vol. 2639

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