



(c) crown copyright

Amended 24/9/42
(8.0 AM)

F 10
11A

Printed for the War Cabinet. September 1942.

SECRET.

Copy No. 30

W.P. (42) 424.

September 23, 1942.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document

WAR CABINET.

THE 1943 PRODUCTION PROGRAMME.

Memorandum by the Minister of Production.

TWO groups of problems are raised in the memorandum of the Joint War Production Staff on the 1943 Production Programme (J.W.P.S. (42) 50 (Final)), circulated under cover of W.P. (42) 416.

On the one hand, there are many steps which can and should be taken to increase the effectiveness with which the resources already devoted to the prosecution of the war are used. On the other hand, we have very shortly to decide in what proportions the last margin of additional resources is to be divided between fighting and fabrication. The fact that we are nearing the stage of complete utilisation of our man-power means that the distribution now made—whether it be done deliberately or in a haphazard way—will be irrevocable. If the best use is to be made of the resources of the United Nations as a whole, the decision should be taken in conjunction with a similar and complementary decision in the United States.

2. One of the major premises of both sets of problems is the Manpower Survey, which will shortly be presented by the Minister of Labour and National Service. There are, however, certain steps which may be taken on the recommendations in paragraph 8 of J.W.P.S. (42) 50, without waiting for this survey.

3. The Report recommends :—

(i) **The maximum comb-out of non-munition occupations, including National and Local Government and other Services, combined with the training of the older men for munitions.**

This is a task which primarily concerns the Ministry of Labour and the Board of Trade. I contemplate that as a result of the Survey, the War Cabinet will give an indication of the numbers which must be found from this source. Meanwhile, I suggest that the Lord President's Committee should consider, in respect of each of the main occupations, how much further restriction of civilian supply and convenience is possible.

4.

(ii) **The most drastic steps to get the best results from labour in the munition industries, including better utilisation of existing manufacturing facilities.**

I propose that a Board of five persons representing the three Supply Departments and the Ministry of Labour, together with my representative, should be set up to initiate and co-operate with the appropriate authorities in carrying out the detailed suggestions in paragraphs 31 to 34 of J.W.P.S. (42) 50.

5.

- (iii) **The urgent reconsideration by each Service Department of its scales of equipment, establishment and reserves, in the knowledge that the alternative to economy will be a reduction in Service man-power.**

Many aspects of this matter are already being examined as a result of recent direction from the Prime Minister. In order to deal with matters where parallel action by the services is required or there is a joint interest, it may be desirable that an authority should be set up similar to that mentioned in the previous paragraph, under a representative of the Minister of Defence. It would be an advantage if the members of this body, though doubtless drawn from the three Services, should not be regarded as representatives of their Services, but that they should be charged, severally and collectively, with the duty of proposing economies of man-power in all the Services.

6.

- (iv) **The placing of as many orders as is practicable in overseas countries, especially Canada.**

This policy is already being applied in part. It would be helpful if the War Cabinet could give its approval to the policy (set out in J.W.P.S. (42) 52) of keeping existing Canadian capacity fully employed and of placing additional orders there whenever possible, and particularly for stores to be shipped to overseas theatres. "It should be considered an achievement to transfer any item of production to Canada." If the War Cabinet will give its approval to this policy, I will take the opportunity of Mr. Howe's visit to explain it to him.

7.

- (v) **An attempt to secure agreement with the United States on a combined production programme and on the long-range assignment of finished munitions.**

The attempt to produce a combined production programme is running into difficulties. For the last four months we have been working on the assumption that the Combined Chiefs of Staff would provide an Order of Battle from which requirements on a strategical basis could be calculated. We should then have an assurance that, in planning production and in allocating finished munitions, British requirements would not be subordinated to demands of lower strategic importance and urgency. More than that we cannot ask.

This plan of action is now threatened with breakdown—or at least with postponement for several months—since the United States Chiefs of Staff have declared themselves unable to base their requirements on any strategic plan. We are thrown back to the position in which our requirements compete with those for an American army swollen beyond the size that could ever be moved out of the United States. It is still not too late to reverse this decision. The C.P.R.B. has drawn the President's attention to its consequences, and he may act. But in the meantime we have our own decisions to make, and they will have to be made without knowledge of what we shall receive from America in 1943.

In these circumstances, the best that we can do is to lay our plans, not on a self-sufficiency basis—for that is impossible—but on a basis which assumes the receipt from America only of the most vital necessities. If this is approved, I should propose to explain to the American authorities the quandary in which we are placed by the lack of precision in their plans, and attempt to secure some assurance, even if less than a firm commitment, that we shall receive at least what we need on this minimum basis.

This purpose could be served by a report, based on J.W.P.S. (42) 50, but re-drafted to emphasise the choice that is before us in allocating the final margin of our man-power between fighting and producing. The report would argue that we would rather take this decision as a result of a combined study, leading to a combined programme of provision of forces and munitions; but that as this is not likely to be carried through in reasonable time we cannot afford to wait, and must make the best decision possible on our own. We must ask that, if the time is not yet ripe for the United States to make a final ear-marking of all its resources, our decision should nevertheless be made with the knowledge and assent of the President and of the Chiefs of Staff—which would carry with it the undertaking that American production will be so planned that the needs of the British Services will be fully met.

8. The recommendations of the Joint War Production Staff conclude as follows:—

There should be a prompt study of the man-power survey with a view to making a comprehensive allocation of the man-power of the country, taking into account the decisions reached in the combined planning of production and making full allowance for all the economies obtained. This allocation should determine the ceiling of man-power for the munition industries, and should lead to a decision on the final scale of the Services.

I propose that this study of the man-power shortage should be carried out by the Lord President's Committee on Man-power at the earliest possible date and a statement of the alternatives drawn up. From this it should be possible to take our decision on how best to dispose of our remaining resources and to see what effect this will have upon our war plans. The same Committee is being asked to consider the man-power aspects of the specific proposals in this paper.

(Initialled) O. L.

*Ministry of Production,
Great George Street, S.W. 1.
September 23, 1942.*



5

5

