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OTTAWA, November 9, 1960.

MEMORANDUM TO THE CABINET COMMITTEE  
ON EMERGENCY PLANS

ACCOMMODATION FOR MINISTERS AND OFFICERS ON STAND-BY  
DUTY FOR WAR PURPOSES

1. Construction is now well advanced on a highly protected signal centre near Ottawa with accommodation for the central nucleus of the Government to use in wartime as a National Headquarters. This will provide working and living space for about 275 key people, with nation-wide communications and protected against nuclear weapons exploding about one mile or more away. The cost of its construction and communications equipment will be \$20-odd million.

2. It is highly desirable that this centre can operate in wartime. It has not been thought possible, financially, to duplicate it, as was originally proposed because of the cost. If it were destroyed, most government functions could be carried out from regional centres, but less effectively, and the ability to carry on foreign affairs and civil control of the armed services would be greatly reduced. Some modest alternative or ancillary headquarters in the Ottawa area seem desirable, as insurance.

3. It is not possible to conceal the size and protected nature of the installation under construction. Its associated radio aerials will be publicly visible. The potential attackers will know it is of some wartime importance. We have announced it is an experimental Army signal establishment. It is known that we are making some provision to carry on government outside Ottawa, but we have tried to confuse the situation as best we can, and have mentioned the temporary facilities at Petawawa. It is highly desirable that we should do all we can to conceal the degree of importance of the signal centre. For this purpose we are trying to keep very secret its role as a government headquarters and emphasize its signal purpose. This can be coupled with references to our regional headquarters and their signals networks, which can operate without the central unit but at much less capacity.

4. There will be difficulties, inconvenience and some modest expense in insuring that key people

are available at all times to man the wartime headquarters. Most of them must be people normally working in Ottawa - Ministers, civilian officials, military officers and a few selected support staff. Herefore we have been assuming that we would have enough

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warning of attack to enable these key people to get out of Ottawa before it was destroyed. With the increase in the missile element of the threat, we now believe that after 1961, and increasing each year, we cannot count on time to escape. Therefore it appears to be necessary to train a large number of persons in Ottawa to discharge special duties in case of war and request them to take turns working and living a few days each month outside of Ottawa, where they would be available immediately if Ottawa is attacked.

5. It is considered too dangerous to train and locate these hundreds of key persons in peacetime in the signal centre where the nucleus would operate in war. If this were done, the vital importance of this centre would be widely known. It is proposed instead to have such people serve in rotation in several small dispersed buildings in the Ottawa Valley, which could be within easy driving distance both of Ottawa and of the signal centre to which they would go after the outbreak of war, unless it were destroyed in the first attack. The existence and general purpose of these small centres would be made public, but with sufficient security concerning their basements, equipment, etc., to lead to some belief that they might well be small but important operating centres in wartime. The emphasis would then be put on dispersal into numerous small units as a means of avoiding destruction of the nucleus of government in wartime.

6. It is therefore proposed that the Committee approve in principle the construction of a number of small buildings to accommodate about forty persons each, with living and working space (combined where practicable) above ground and with moderately heavy concrete basements to protect occupants against fallout (and distant blasts). It is thought these might cost something like \$250,000 each, based on rough calculations of the cost of office buildings. It is proposed that two might be constructed in 1961 about twenty - odd miles from Ottawa, and others in future years. Decisions to proceed with them would be dependent upon approval of costs, designs and locations.

7. In approving this recommendation , the Committee would by inference be approving also in principle the idea of having key persons , including Ministers and senior officers , serve in rotation on stand - by duty outside of Ottawa to be immediately available for war services .

R . B . Bryce .

PrivyCouncil Office (EMO)

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