

see me this morning at 10:15 a.m. The arrangements for the visit were made by Mr. Hankinson after consultation with Dr. Skelton.

2. Mr. Emerson explained the special position of the Wabana Iron Mines at Bell Island. A large scale sketch map of Conception Bay is annexed.¹

3. Mr. Emerson strongly emphasized the importance of the protection of Bell Island against raids by enemy submarines. He pointed out that the principal danger was from a possible raid by a single submarine that had escaped Naval cordons. He pointed out that the danger would become serious with the opening up of the spring season.

4. The possible adverse effect of a bombardment, assuming that it was in the nature of a "tip and run" raid, was discussed. Roughly speaking, one-third of the Canadian steel supply was dependent upon the Wabana ores and the destruction of the power-plant and landing facilities, if it occurred at a critical time of the year, might involve a delay to the extent of eight or nine months supply. That would be the maximum adverse effect, assuming effective bombardment at the critical time in the season. Colonel Macdonald, who is head of the company's police force, is a most distinguished and competent artillery officer, and I think his judgment on this point would be reliable.

5. The Newfoundland Government is anxious to get a decision on this question.

6. Mr. Emerson also discussed the question of the advisability of the establishment of a R.C.A.F. station for reconnaissance aircraft at St. John's.² At the present time this suggestion is merely made for consideration and he does not make any definite requests or proposals.

7. I told him that I would endeavor to have his request, for decision on the main question, brought to the attention of the Prime Minister at the earliest opportunity after his return.

J. E. READ

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1156-D-39

*Mémoire du secrétaire principal du Premier ministre
au conseiller juridique*

Memorandum from Principal Secretary to Prime Minister to Legal Adviser

SECRET

Ottawa, March 14, 1940

RE DEFENCE OF BELL ISLAND, CONCEPTION BAY, NEWFOUNDLAND

Regarding your note of February the 29th, for the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, which was forwarded to the Prime Minister by Dr. Skelton, I am directed to inform you that the subject was discussed in Council yesterday and it was agreed that:

¹ Non reproduite.

² Ceci présageait l'établissement de la base du CARC à Torbay, près de St. John's.

¹ Not printed.

² This presaged the establishment of the R.C.A.F. base at Torbay, near St. John's.