

I think the D.O. reply speaks for itself and there is no need for "further official correspondence" as Croil suggests.

The practical conclusions which I think the government ought to face are along the following lines:

That Canada hereto assume the defence of Nfld. as part of the defence of her own East Coast

That our General Staff should be instructed to submit plans accordingly

That upon receiving a scheme from the General Staff, if conversations with the U.S. general staff in Washington seem appropriate in this connection, our General Staff be authorised to enter into such conversations at once.

L. C. C[HRISTIE]

23.

DND NSS 1440-166/25

Procès-verbal d'une réunion du Comité interforce d'état-major
Minutes of Meeting of Joint Staff Committee

VERY SECRET

[Ottawa,] December 12, 1938

The Chairman read Secretary of State for Dominions Affairs despatch, No. 323, dated 21st October, 1938, which had been received in reply to the Prime Minister's despatch No. 185, dated 27th July, 1938, regarding the defence of Newfoundland, and also C.N.S.'s and S.A.O.'s memoranda thereon, of the 24th¹ and 25th November,¹ respectively, (H.Q.S. 7410, folios 34, 38, 43, and 44).

Some discussion ensued as to the precise meaning of the words "that an air squadron, if available, would also be located there for the same duties", which appear in the British reply. S.A.O. was of opinion that an air squadron located in Newfoundland was implied. In any event it appeared to him that the United Kingdom despatch had been designed so as to leave the way open for the Canadian Government to state that it would assume a general responsibility for the defence of Newfoundland. C.G.S. thought it was clear that if the defence of Newfoundland was deemed desirable in the Canadian interest we should have to see to it ourselves. Consequently he thought that the course of action suggested by C.N.S. was sound, that is to say, that the defence of Canadian interests on the Atlantic seaboard, if it was to be effective, required naval and air reconnaissance of Newfoundland waters, that this reconnaissance should be carried out by Canadian forces, and that the Minister should be so advised to the end that authority might be obtained for direct conversations to be held with the Newfoundland Government as to the provision of facilities which our forces would require. The only modification he would suggest was that this approach should be made through the British Government. This was agreed to.

Decision: The Secretary was instructed to draw up a memorandum to the Minister in the sense of the above.

¹ Non reproduit.

¹ Not printed.