

handful of Micmac Indians of Canadian origin round Hermitage Bay. There is a very small French-Indian, half-breed population near Bay St. George.

#### *Rivers*

38. The rivers of Newfoundland are practically valueless as means of communication. The Humber River on the West Coast is navigable by small craft for a few miles only. Except during the seasons of heavy rain or in the Spring when the ice and snow are breaking up, the rivers are as a rule fordable by infantry everywhere.

#### *Coast*

39. There are ample though unequipped landing places on almost all parts of the coast.

### (B) — REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING DEFENCE

#### *General Reasons*

40. As stated earlier in this Chapter the Island of Newfoundland lies across the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The possession of any part of it, especially the South-West and North-West parts, by enemy forces would constitute a serious menace to the Dominion of Canada, and might result in the stoppage of the sea channels between the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic.

41. The position of the Island as commanding the main North Atlantic trade routes gives it strategic importance.

42. St. John's possesses a small but very well sheltered though unfortunately unfortified harbour, and might be useful as a mercantile port of refuge in which a certain amount of British shipping in mid-Atlantic would be able to seek safety from molestation or capture in time of war.

43. The large modern dry dock at St. John's capable of taking ships of the length of 570 feet on keel blocks might in some circumstances be of much value. The entrance is 70 feet at bottom increasing to 89 feet at top, and the depth on the sill  $23\frac{1}{2}$  feet at low water springs.

44. Although the importance of Newfoundland as an air centre is small at present, its potentialities from the point of view of trans-Atlantic service are great, and there is every possibility of its developing into an important air base in the not far distant future.

45. The population of the Island, drawn in the past almost wholly from the United Kingdom, is exceedingly loyal and of the best racial type, as has been evidenced by the fine record of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve during the War of 1914-18. The people are almost all accustomed to seafaring work and are excellent in boats and small craft.

46. The Island is also possibly the most important cable centre, linking the Old with the New World.

47. The nature of the trade of the Island at present is that the people live almost entirely by the production of dried codfish, iron-ore, newsprint paper and timber, all of which things are sold abroad; and, with the exception