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Le haut commissaire de Grande-Bretagne au Premier ministre
High Commissioner of Great Britain to Prime Minister

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Ottawa, March 26, 1940

SECRET

My dear Prime Minister,

May I refer to your letter of the 16th March on the subject of the defence of Bell Island in Conception Bay. Immediately upon receipt of your letter I communicated the views expressed therein to the Governor of Newfoundland and I have now received a reply from Sir Humphrey Walwyn asking me to express to you the appreciation of the Commission of Government of Newfoundland of the proposals of the Canadian Government in this regard.

The Commission of Government confirm that the air bases at Botwood and the Newfoundland airport are at the disposal of the Royal Canadian Air Force either for the defence of Canada or of Newfoundland and that such land at Red Bay, Labrador, as is required by the Royal Canadian Air Force will be made available to them as soon as possible after they have selected them. The Commission of Government would be very glad to discuss with the representatives of the Royal Canadian Air Force the arrangements for the air defence of important points in Newfoundland and they suggest that it will probably be considered advisable that these discussions should take place in St. John's. At such discussions the nature and extent of the relative provision by each Government could be settled.

The Commission of Government state that the proposals in regard to the defence of Bell Island are quite acceptable and that the Newfoundland Government will be glad to receive information as to the date and place of the discussion of details. It is suggested that in this case also the discussions could take place at St. John's. In the meantime two points of detail arise for early settlement. Firstly, the position of guns and lights should be located so that the erection of barracks and other buildings may be proceeded with. If an adviser could visit St. John's soon and settle this point it would be appreciated. Secondly, the Governor states that Colonel Craig at Halifax kindly offered the Commission of Justice to take eight or ten of the Newfoundland militia into barracks there immediately to give them preliminary training during one quarter between now and the completion of the defence works. If the Canadian Government would approve of this proposal the Commission of Government would be deeply obliged and action thereon would be taken immediately.

Yours sincerely,

GERALD CAMPBELL