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NPA GNI/3 320/35

*Le haut commissaire de Grande-Bretagne au sous-secrétaire d'État adjoint
aux Dominions*

*High Commissioner of Great Britain to Assistant Under-Secretary of State
for Dominions*

516 K/8

[Ottawa,] November 22, 1938

SECRET

My dear Batterbee,

I received your letter No. D.245/11 of the 21st October regarding the defence of Newfoundland with interest, and quite appreciate the considerations which you had in mind when the Duke of Devonshire's official despatch No. 323 of the same date to the Canadian Government was drafted.

You may like to know that before any action was taken on your letter Colonel Pope, who, as was reported in Sir Francis Floud's despatch No. 204 of the 22nd July,¹ was recently appointed Secretary of the Joint Staff Committee here, went out of his way to tell Holmes what a very good reply the despatch of the 21st October formed, in his opinion, to the Canadian Government's approach. As was mentioned by Holmes in his letter to Dixon No. 516 K/6¹ of the same date, which crossed your communications on the subject, the Canadian despatch itself represented a considerable triumph on the part of those defence authorities here who are anxious for co-operation between Canada and the United Kingdom on such matters. We gather that what was said in the Duke of Devonshire's reply and the way in which it was put will give those same authorities just what was required to get the question properly considered here.

On the 18th November, on my instructions, Holmes had a private talk with Pope and was able to put to him the various points made in the second and third paragraphs of your letter. Pope agreed that it would have been unreasonable for the Canadian Government to expect, having regard to the terms of their own enquiry, that we should draft our reply on the basis that Canadian co-operation with us in the circumstances envisaged was not to be assumed. He said that there would be no misunderstanding on the part of the Canadian authorities as to the source from which we naturally hoped the air squadron for Newfoundland would be forthcoming. He also stated that the suggestion that the Canadian authorities should get in touch with the Newfoundland Government direct on the subject generally was a sound one, and Holmes gathered that Pope would make this suggestion as one of his own in drafting the Joint Staff memorandum appropriate to the issue.

In fact, Holmes gathered, the existing "Plan for the General Defence of Canada" (and it is encouraging to know that such a plan does exist in some shape or form) provides for a concentration of something like five squadrons

¹ Non reproduite.

¹ Not printed.