

Le secrétaire aux Dominions au gouverneur de Terre-Neuve
Dominions Secretary to Governor of Newfoundland

TELEGRAM 276

[London,] May 10, 1940

SECRET. Addressed to Governor of Newfoundland No. 276. Repeated to United Kingdom High Commissioner for Canada. No. 840. Secret. Your telegram of 8th April No. 168. As regards last paragraph there is no doubt that responsibility for defence of Newfoundland, in so far as this cannot be provided from Newfoundland's own resources, is that of United Kingdom Government. If Canadian Government are prepared in any way to relieve United Kingdom Government of this responsibility by provision of forces or material, such an offer would on general grounds be welcome. At the same time, having regard to questions which are under discussion between the United Kingdom and Canadian Governments as to Canada's general war effort and its financial aspects, we should be glad if we could be consulted before any specific proposals for assistance are put forward to Canadian Government or any offers by Canadian Government are definitely accepted. In so far as any measures taken might involve dollar expenditure by Newfoundland, the matter would have to be considered in relation to general exchange position.

As regards particular question referred to in earlier part of your telegram the importance of adequate protection for vulnerable points in Newfoundland is fully appreciated. It will be realized that defence of Newfoundland depends primarily upon protection afforded by Royal Navy rather than upon local defence measures. At the present time the naval authorities consider the risk of attack upon Newfoundland, either by naval base raider or by submarine, to be remote and in view of other urgent requirements it would not be practicable for them to provide special Naval or Air Forces for patrol purposes as indicated in your telegram. For the same reasons it is felt that provision of guns for St. John's or placing of mines could not be justified. If, however, after discussions with the Canadian Government, the Commission feel that this is a point requiring further examination they will no doubt inform me. The whole position would of course in any case be immediately reconsidered if there should be any change in the situation involving extensions of German submarine operations to the western Atlantic or creating other serious risk of an attack on Newfoundland.

Suggestion contained in your telegram April 30th, No. 229, Secret, is being dealt with separately. If Government of Newfoundland desires to discuss with Canadian representatives suggestion that proposed base at Red Bay should be located further south at Botwood or Harbour Grace, Air Ministry would prefer such an arrangement provided that expenditure to be incurred by the Government is not thereby increased.