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Mémorandum du commissaire à la Justice à la commission pour Terre-Neuve
Memorandum from Commissioner for Justice to Commission of Government
of Newfoundland

J.12-1940

[St. John's,] March 23, 1940

CONFIDENTIAL

One of the principal purposes of my visit to Canada was to ascertain to what extent the military, naval and air strategy of that Dominion envisaged the defence of Newfoundland. My colleagues will remember that on September 8th, the Prime Minister of Canada made an announcement in regard to the general policy of that country in connection with the war. He made particular reference to the defence of Newfoundland¹ . . .

2. I would have expected to find that as a result of the apparent agreement between Great Britain and Canada on this subject that [sic] the technical advisers to the Government would have been given instructions to coordinate their strategy so as to defend Newfoundland. I interviewed the Chief of General Staff General Anderson, Vice-Admiral Nelles and Air Vice-Marshal Croil and speaking generally I found that no instructions had been issued relating to Newfoundland except:

- (a) In regard to Bell Island to which I shall address myself at greater length, and
- (b) In regard to those parts of our coasts which have to be considered in relation to the defence of Canada.

3. I also had an interview with the Counsellor to the Department of External Affairs and I inferred from my conversation with him that some two years ago correspondence took place between the United Kingdom Government and the Canadian Government in which it was suggested that the defence of Newfoundland should in the case of war be looked upon as part of the burden to be borne by Canada. Nothing however was done to finalize matters as it was felt that in the case of Great Britain declaring war, Newfoundland would find itself automatically at war, whereas Canada would exercise its own discretion as to whether it was to consider itself justified in joining in the fight against Great Britain's enemy. It would appear also that since the declaration of war by Canada the Prime Minister, who is also Minister of External Affairs, has been so occupied that no instructions have been issued to the military, naval or air branches to consider Newfoundland as part of the territory which they are to defend.

¹ Voir le document 41.

² See Document 41.