

Royal Canadian Air Force, was made of the Labrador coast during the summer of 1939, and of the Newfoundland coast in September.

It is intended, next spring, to locate a R.C.A.F. base at Red Bay, on the Labrador coast for the protection of the Straits of Belle Isle. In addition, a squadron of long-distance, high-speed bomber reconnaissance aircraft will be stationed at Dartmouth and can, if required, reach the St. John's, Newfoundland area within two hours. If circumstances so dictate, a detachment of this squadron could operate from the Newfoundland airport at any time.

The stationing of reconnaissance aircraft, additional to these (to be located at Red Bay), will have to be determined on the availability of aircraft from time to time, and the general plan for the protection of the Newfoundland and Canadian coasts. It is thought that a reasonable arrangement for the air defence of important points in Newfoundland would be for the R.C.A.F. to furnish the aircraft and personnel, and for the Newfoundland government to furnish the necessary operating facilities, such as hangar, slipway, mooring, refuelling and general maintenance requirements.

The defence of Bell Island presents a special problem, which is of direct interest, both to the government of Canada and to the government of Newfoundland. The Canadian government is interested because of the fact that upwards of 30% of the iron produced in Canada is smelted at Sydney from ore obtained from the Wabana Mines. The government of Newfoundland is interested, in so far as the industry provides employment for Newfoundland nationals and revenue, directly and indirectly, for the government. The responsibility for providing a measure of protection in Bell Island is, therefore, one that the Canadian government is also prepared to share with the Newfoundland government.

As the result of careful investigation, since the matter was first considered, it is felt by our Department of National Defence that the coast defence of Bell Island would be adequately provided for by the installation and manning of two 4.7" guns and two defence electric search lights. There are in Canada spare 4.7" mobile equipments, and adequate coast defence mountings can be manufactured in this country. Two search lights, which would be adequate for this purpose, will shortly become available at Halifax. The Canadian government would be willing to overhaul and install these guns and search lights and provide an officer instructor and two assistant instructors for a period of six months. This, it is believed, should be sufficient to ensure the training of the crews to a point of satisfactory efficiency. The government of Newfoundland, no doubt, could provide and maintain the necessary crews and be in a position to carry on after the members of the instructional staff had completed their task.

I should be obliged if you would communicate these views to Sir Humphrey Walwyn. If the project proves to be acceptable, our government will be prepared to make provision for any necessary discussions of detailed arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

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