

we had discussions with Air Vice-Marshal Croil and Air Commodore Anderson of the R.C.A.F. who arrived here after a visit to the Newfoundland Airport. They made it clear that the object of their visit was solely to ascertain the facts of the situation at our air bases and to report to their Government. They were not empowered to enter into negotiations of any kind or to commit their Government in any way. It appeared from these conversations that it is Croil's personal opinion that as things are now the Newfoundland Airport may become a positive menace because it is not out of the question that the enemy might capture it by a landing party and planes operating from a raider. It is his view that it would be unsafe to use the Newfoundland Airport for defence operations by aircraft until provision had been made for its adequate land defence. He was unable to express any opinion as to the extent of the land defences required but at our request will suggest to his Government sending a military officer to advise us on this aspect of the situation. We gathered that it was Croil's opinion that in addition to land defence against an attack on the Newfoundland Airport itself and against parties landing on the coastline nearest to the situation calls for the operation of military aeroplanes at the existing Newfoundland air bases and at one or more new seaplane bases, e.g., in the neighbourhood of the Straits of Belle Isle and the neighbourhood of St. John's. We gather further that Canada's resources in aircraft and military equipment generally are under severe strain. Croil will include in his report to his Government an intimation that we hope to receive from them an appreciation of the situation and advice as to the measures which ought to be adopted in order to make it quite impossible for the enemy to seize the Newfoundland Airport and use it as a base for air operations. We do not know whether they will make actual proposals for their own participation in whatever measures are necessary but Croil's own attitude suggested to us that they are likely to be reluctant to assume extensive obligations owing to doubts as to their ability to discharge them. He did not himself suggest the possibility of Canada taking over the air bases for the period of the war even when we gave an opening for such a suggestion. We feel we cannot make further progress in the discussion of this matter until we hear from the Canadian Government but we send this report of our conversations this morning to keep you informed and we hope that you will give us the fullest possible information in order that we may foresee any dangerous situation which we may have to encounter.

83.

NPA GN1/3 320/35

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

TELEGRAM 404

[London,] June 10, 1940

SECRET. Your telegram 7th June No. 325<sup>1</sup> Secret. Admiralty regrets that gun and equipment from S.S. *King Edward* cannot be spared.

<sup>1</sup> Non reproduit.<sup>1</sup> Not printed.