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DND HQS 7410

*Mémorandum du directeur du service des plans et des opérations
au directeur des services de l'état-major de l'air*

*Memorandum from Director of Plans and Operations
to Air Staff Officer*

S. 1196
SECRET

[Ottawa,] March 30, 1938

NEWFOUNDLAND DEFENCE SCHEME—1936

1. In reading through the Newfoundland Defence Scheme, I cannot but feel that the question of air defence has not been given the consideration it requires.

2. In April, 1937, we raised the question of the air defence of Newfoundland in our Quarterly Liaison Letter to the Chief of the Air Staff, and stated that the matter would undoubtedly be brought up at the Imperial Conference. Whether this was done, I am, of course, not in a position to say.

3. Extracts from the Scheme are given below with comments following.

Extract page 7, para. 36. "The coast of Newfoundland contains a considerable number of uninhabited harbours where submarines could shelter and probably remain unobserved for considerable periods. These would be dealt with by organizing a marine or land patrol."

Comment. An air patrol for this purpose would seem to be essential. It is also presumed that although not mentioned Labrador is included in the term Newfoundland.

Extract page 7, para. 40. "The possession of any part of Newfoundland by enemy forces, especially the Southwest and Northwest parts, would constitute a serious menace to the Dominion of Canada."

Comment. Canada is vitally interested in the defence of Newfoundland as it affects her communications and shipping routes, and if the accepted scheme for the defence of Newfoundland does not include a part of the Royal Air Force, Canada may be called upon to defend Newfoundland in order to protect itself.

Extract page 8, para. 52. "It is highly improbable that ships carrying any number of aircraft would have occasion to be in the neighbourhood of the Island."

Comment. As no provision is made in the Scheme for air defence, one aircraft bombing the City of St. John's would have considerable moral effect and cause considerable material damage as there would be no opposition whatever.

Extract page 9, para. 57. "The type of aircraft carried by cruisers is not suitable for bombing."

Comment. Any aircraft is capable of dropping bombs and will certainly do so in view of the lack of any opposition.

4. As stated by the C.N.S., the Governor of Newfoundland and his Secretary (who incidentally was one of the officers responsible for drawing up the