

*Extrait du plan de défense de Terre-Neuve, 1936<sup>1</sup>*

*Extract from Newfoundland Defence Scheme, 1936<sup>1</sup>*

SECRET

St. John's, May 4, 1936

## INTRODUCTORY

The Island of Newfoundland occupies what might in some circumstances be an important strategic position in the Western North Atlantic:

- (a) The Island covers the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence ports, which can be approached only through Cabot Strait and the Straits of Belle Isle.
- (b) St. John's is the most easterly port in British North America and lies within a few miles of the main steamship track across the North Atlantic.
- (c) Owing to its position, St. John's might in the event of a naval raid in the Atlantic be a convenient port of refuge.
- (d) The Island forms a stepping stone for an air service across the North Atlantic.
- (e) The Island is one of the principal nerve centres of the North Atlantic cable communication system.
- (f) The port of St. John's possesses a dry dock having a length of 570 ft. on keel blocks. The entrance is 70 feet wide at bottom, increasing to 89 feet at top, and the depth on the sill at low water springs is 23 feet 6 inches.
- (g) There is in St. John's an oil storage plant having a capacity of approximately 250,000 gallons.
- (h) During a state of war St. John's would be a minor routeing port for North Atlantic shipping.

2. The principal ports in Newfoundland capable of handling shipping of moderate size and provided with railway communication are: St. John's on the Avalon Peninsula, and the most easterly point of the Island; Botwood on the North Coast; Corner Brook on the West Coast, and Port-aux-Basques at the south-west angle upon Cabot Strait. Besides these there are a very large number of bays and inlets in which vessels could shelter. The ports of Bonavista and Placentia have railway communication, but no facilities for handling large ships. At Bonavista there is no harbour. At Placentia small steamers of draught not exceeding 21 feet can enter at ordinary high tides.

3. With the exception of Grand Falls, a paper manufacturing town of about 7,000 people, all towns and settlements of any importance are on the seaboard and open to attack.

4. The general defence problem will be dealt with under the following main headings:

- (a) Description of area to be defended.

<sup>1</sup>Cet extrait est tiré du texte final publié en 1937. Voir le document 4.

<sup>1</sup>This extract is from the "final prints" issued in 1937. See Document 4.