

that we might lose heavily on the deal if the Germans were able to use a successful Free French operation in St. Pierre as a lever for obtaining further concessions in North Africa (64).

49. The Cabinet War Committee subsequently directed that Canada's position in relation to St. Pierre and Miquelon should be studied and reported upon by the Defence Departments and the Department of External Affairs. On 21 Jul representatives of the three Services met with Mr Robertson but, in view of the complexities of the matter, no decision seems to have been reached (65).

50. On 31 Jul the United Kingdom High Commissioner in Ottawa again wrote Mr Robertson, hoping to be advised as to the Canadian Government's policy, since his Government was becoming more perturbed by the possibilities inherent in St. Pierre and Miquelon being adjacent to convoy routes. Having ascertained that the U.S. State Department was adopting the attitude that St. Pierre and Miquelon were primarily the concern of the Canadian Government and that its policy was likely to be influenced by the views of the Canadian Government, the British Ambassador in Washington had postponed making any approach until such time as the Canadian view could be ascertained (66).

51. Mr Robertson's own opinion seems to have been that a suitable naval officer might be retired temporarily and appointed to a civilian post at St. Pierre; unfortunately, however, the Navy considered that there was no suitable officer available (67). On the other hand, when asked to comment on Mr Macdonald's letter of 28 Jun (see para 45), Commissioner Wood was emphatic that there should be no delay "until something disastrous happens" before taking over the Islands (68). Although his suspicions of the good faith of the ruling element of St. Pierre undoubtedly were based on his experience with the pre-war smuggling of liquor, it was his considered opinion that such action would be welcomed by the majority of the inhabitants. The Chiefs of Staff Committee agreed with this view and, in a submission of 21 Aug, recommended to their Ministers that such action be taken. It was pointed out that a plan for the occupation of St. Pierre and Miquelon had been drawn up and could be initiated on six hours' notice (69).

52. However, on 18 Aug the Prime Minister had decided to establish a Canadian Consular Office at St. Pierre and had designated Mr C.C. Eberts, a third secretary in the Department of External Affairs, as Acting Consul (70). On 1 Sep Mr Eberts arrived at St. Pierre and was given provisional recognition by its Administrator, pending the granting of an exequatur (71). Shortly thereafter he began reporting regularly to Ottawa. Despatch No. 10 of 19 Sep was an interim report on political conditions on the Islands and included a short biographical note on each of the principal officials. Regarding the operations of the radio-telegraph station, and its sub-stations on other islands, Mr Eberts wrote:

It is impossible to ascertain what information the main station is sending out to France, Martinique and New York, as all confidential messages are, of course, given to it in cypher, and only the Administrator and his Secretary, Mr. Charles Cormier, handle cypher messages. It is not believed here that the Administration would report convoy movements even if it should receive word of them, and I do not think that any St. Pierre vessels go south into the shipping lanes. I feel, however, that this question can only be settled satisfactorily if an experienced telegraphist is employed to take down every message leaving the station over a period of a month or two, so that these messages can be sent to Ottawa to be broken down (72).

53. In a lengthy despatch of 25 Sep, explaining a public statement by de Bournat that neither he nor his Alsatian wife were "violently anti-British and unpatriotic French citizens", the Canadian Consul expressed doubts whether the Administrator would carry his co-operation with the Vichy Government far enough to necessitate a Canadian occupation of the Islands, but suggested that further measures were likely to be taken against de Gaullist sympathisers among the population (73). Other despatches dealt with the movements of the Islands' fishing vessels and the attitude of the population to the Canadian Government's decision to requisition the fishing schooner Cap Bleu, which was being built in a Nova Scotia shipyard for the Administration. During the same weeks the R.C.M.P. appear to have devoted a good deal of attention to the activities of a pro-Vichy shipowner, M. Auguste Moufroy, who was having his tug Bearn repaired at Pictou, Nova Scotia (74).

(v) The Organization of "Q" Force

54. On 6 Jun 41 the war diarist at Headquarters, Atlantic Command recorded that the Joint Service Committee had held a special meeting under the chairmanship of Major-General W.H.P. Elkins;* no details were given, however, since the discussion was "most secret" (75). On 11 Jun an Appreciation and detailed Plan were forwarded to the Chiefs of Staff Committee in Ottawa (See Appendix A). The former stressed that "little guidance" had been given on the "purely political aspect of the proposed Operation": furthermore, it was considered that "in any occupation made by a military force detailed guidance as to the Commander's authority in civil administration should be furnished, and steps should be taken to have a civil mission accompany the force" (76). Since it would be a combined operation against an unorganized defensive area, there would be no need for naval landing craft and fire support, or for aerial bombardment and low flying attack. Thus a dual or unified command was not justified:

*General Officer Commanding-in-Chief.

- (a) the responsibility of the voyage and method of landing will rest with the Naval Commander acting in co-operation with the Military Commander and
- (b) as far as Air is concerned the use of aircraft will be the responsibility of the Naval Commander up to the time the first troops disembark and from then on, the Military Commander.

No organized resistance was expected. The troops merely would have to occupy the vulnerable points listed and prevent any subsequent attempts at hostility or sabotage by pro-Vichy sympathisers (armed possibly with rifles). In view of scanty intelligence, the Plan for Operation "Q" was somewhat vague and phrased in generalities. Force "Q" was to be an infantry rifle company, augmented by a detachment from headquarters company of the same unit and attached Engineer, Signals, Medical and Army Service Corps personnel (See Appendix "A"). Command was vested in the lieutenant-colonel of the regiment from which the rifle company was selected. The Naval requirement was envisaged as two corvettes and one destroyer, while an R.C.A.F. bomber reconnaissance squadron would be needed to maintain a flight of five aircraft continuously over the Islands until the landing had been consolidated (77).

55. On 28 Jun the Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee replied that the use of a destroyer could not be justified; two corvettes should provide the necessary "show of force" and a small merchant vessel might be engaged as a transport if necessary. Since it was beyond the capabilities of one bomber reconnaissance squadron to maintain five aircraft continuously in the air from dawn to dusk, particularly should the Operation last more than a single day, it was suggested that the Plan call for only three aircraft being in the air continuously. It was further suggested that a detachment of R.C.M.P. might accompany the Force to aid in civil administration and control. Finally, it was emphasized that it might be "necessary to put this plan into operation at short notice at any time" (78).

56. In the reply despatched to Ottawa from Halifax on 3 Jul stating that the proposed alterations had been made, additional information was requested regarding the suggested employment of an R.C.M.P. detachment (79). Commissioner Wood's help was then sought. On 10 Jul he wrote the Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee that the senior R.C.M.P. officer at Halifax would be instructed to get in touch with General Elkins (80).

57. Reference to "Q" Force in the war diary of The Lake Superior Regiment*, which moved from Saint John to Camp Debart on 12 Aug and was selected to provide for this operation, are terse and not very informative, creating the impression that very few individuals had any idea of the proposed role. The following are the first references given by the diarist:

*The Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment did not move into Atlantic Command as had been contemplated earlier.

- 14 Aug - "C" Coy. ordered to stand by for a scheme but no details given.
- 15 Aug - The "Q" Force a self contained unit has been formed under the Command of Lieut.-Col. H. Cook. The unit consists of one complete Rifle Company, "C" Company with attached personnel. The unit is standing to waiting orders to proceed on a Special Test Exercise.
- 16 Aug - "Q" Force still awaiting further orders concerning their impending move. This "Q" Force is strictly made up of volunteers for this particular piece of work. They are to be issued with canned beans and Hardtack as rations for two meals and sandwiches for one meal.
- 18 Aug - "Q" Force still standing by for orders. They are carrying out their own training syllabus.
- 19 Aug - "Q" Force had an inspection by Major D.M. Marshall M.C. [company commander], both morning and afternoon. Still awaiting further orders.
- 21 Aug - "Q" Force still standing by and their Operations Orders received from Lieut.-Col. H. Cook [see Appendix "B"].
- 22 Aug - "Q" Force still carrying on their own training.... "Q" Force received passes for 36 hours, this being their first break from C.B. since the "Q" Force was organized. All returned on time (81).

In view of the action taken by Prime Minister King on 18 Aug to appoint a Canadian Consul to St. Pierre and Miquelon (see para 52), the unit operation order, putting "Q" Force on four hours' notice to "move to Sydney to attack and destroy an invading enemy" already was obsolescent when issued. But, although the Cabinet War Committee agreed on 30 Aug that no action need be taken at present, only on 17 Sep was a letter despatched to the G.O.C.-in-C., Atlantic Command, advising him that the Operation would not take place on less than 72 hours' notice (82).

(vi) The Plot Thickens

58. Although the Canadian authorities became more concerned about the existence of an uncontrolled radio-telegraph station on St. Pierre, as the autumn weeks went by and the number of ship sinkings in the Western Atlantic increased, finding a satisfactory solution presented quite a problem (83). In a letter of 21 Oct the United Kingdom High Commissioner repeated an earlier suggestion that the

Free French naval forces based on Newfoundland should be permitted to rally the islands. On 29 Oct the Cabinet War Committee rejected this request, but agreed that the Canadian Consul at St. Pierre should approach the Administrator with a proposal that Canadian personnel be positioned in the wireless station to control all outgoing messages and prevent the use of cypher or any code which they were not able to read. Such monitors might also be charged with the inspection of radio equipment in fishing boats and other vessels (to make certain that their equipment was not capable of long range transmission). On 3 Nov the Canadian Legation in Washington informally approached the State Department with this proposal. Although it was assumed that the Permanent Joint Board on Defence "would undoubtedly approve this step", the Canadian Government did not consider that action should be delayed for a month until the Board held its next meeting (84). Mr John D. Hickerson* later wrote that the Canadians were informed verbally, on 8 Nov, that this memorandum "had been noted and we had no comments to make". He added: "This was intended and so understood by the Canadians as constituting a green light for them to go ahead"(85). In actual fact the Permanent Joint Board on Defence held its next meetings at Montreal on 10-11 Nov, when it was "unanimously agreed that the existence on the Islands of an uncontrolled and high-powered wireless transmitting station constitutes a potential danger to the interests of Canada and the United States" (86).

59. It was not until 3 Dec, however, that Prime Minister King elaborated on the earlier proposal in a telegram addressed to Prime Minister Churchill:

We have felt that the matter might be best approached by having a senior officer of the Department of External Affairs** visit St. Pierre and inform the administrator that the Canadian Government, in the interests of Canadian security and, in fact, North American security generally, considers this supervision essential and to express the hope that the administrator will see his way to co-operate.

*In addition to being a member of the Division of European Affairs within the State Department, Mr Hickerson was serving as secretary of the American section of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence.

**On 26 Nov the Cabinet War Committee had agreed that Brigadier G.P. Vanier, D.S.O., M.C. should so represent the Department of External Affairs. In addition to still holding the appointment of Minister to France (absent on leave), Brigadier Vanier was District Officer Commanding, Military District No. 5 (Quebec). He also had been added to the Canadian section of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence as a French-speaking member.

Should the administrator object to this supervision, such rejection would appear to be prima facie evidence that suspicions with respect to the use to which the transmitting stations on the islands may be put are well founded.

The question would then immediately arise as to the course to be taken as a consequence.

In that connection we are considering the advisability of sending to the islands, either with the senior official or subsequently upon receipt of word from him, four technical radio inspectors. These latter would be under charge of a member of the Royal Canadian Navy, probably of petty officer rank, who would himself be responsible to our acting Consul in St. Pierre. The technical radio inspectors would be directed to pre-censor all incoming and outgoing wireless and cable messages and to supervise all radio transmitting stations on the islands. It is proposed that they should be taken to St. Pierre in a corvette or minesweeper. The administrator would then be informed that the Canadian Government attaches such importance to this matter that in the circumstances the commander of the corvette had been instructed to leave a detachment of ratings in the islands in charge of the petty officer, to protect the technicians and to see that there is no interference with the supervisors in the performance of their duties.*

I recognize that with the relations between Vichy and Berlin what they are just at this time, and the situation in the Orient what it is, action of the kind might be interpreted by Vichy as an effort by Canada to take control, if not possession of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon - a French colonial possession; and that Vichy might seek to find in the incident, particularly at a moment when Darlan is collaborating so closely with Hitler, an excuse to turn over the French Fleet to Germany as a means of protecting French Colonial possessions.

The situation has its bearing, of course, on what is taking place in North Africa, and also upon the attitude which the United States has taken towards the French Colonial possessions in the Western Hemisphere and particularly in the Caribbean.

*When the draft of this telegram was submitted for approval to the Cabinet War Committee on 1 Dec, Prime Minister King had questioned the wisdom of a "show of force".

In the circumstances, I have felt that any action on Canada's part in the matter should be delayed until after we had ascertained the views of the Governments of the United Kingdom and of the United States in reference thereto. I shall be grateful to receive at the earliest convenience an expression of your own views in the matter. Meanwhile I am making a similar request of the Government of the United States (87).

On 5 Dec Mr Hume Wrong of the Canadian Legation in Washington handed a copy of the above telegram to Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, who promised to reply as soon as possible (88).

60. Mr Churchill had an alternative suggestion, however: he requested the Canadian Government to ascertain the American attitude towards General de Gaulle's reiterated proposal that the islands should be occupied by Free French forces. Personally, Prime Minister Churchill could see no objection to such a course and considered it preferable to the Canadian Government taking action in what "might create an embarrassing political situation" (89). His telegram emphasized, however, that no action would be taken unless the consent of the American and Canadian Governments was obtained. According to The Memoirs of Cordell Hull:

This suggestion did not appeal either to the Canadians or to ourselves. For my part, I looked with something like horror on any action that would bring conflict between the Vichy French and the Free French or the British. Though our advice had not been asked, I had been strongly opposed to the British attack on the French fleet at Oran in 1940, and I had worked hard to bring Britain and Vichy France back into some degree of friendship (90).

61. Here the situation rested when Admiral Muselier arrived by train in Ottawa from Halifax on 15 Dec -- a bare eight days after the United States had finally become a belligerent. It appears that when Admiral Muselier had left England during November to inspect Free French naval units serving on convoy duty with Royal Canadian Naval vessels, General de Gaulle had given him carte blanche to act. But, following his arrival at St. John's, and discussion with members of the Newfoundland Government, Admiral Muselier came to the conclusion that it would not be desirable to take any action without first reaching an understanding with the Canadian and American Governments. General de Gaulle was informed to this effect, and that Muselier was proceeding to Ottawa to attempt to secure such concurrence (91).

62. Following lunch and a lengthy discussion with the Minister of National Defence for Naval Services and Admiral Nelles, Admiral Muselier had an interview with the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs,* who stated his

*Although Muselier uses the terms "secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires étrangères" and "ministre des Affaires extérieures", it seems more likely that his interviews were with Mr Robertson. Had he seen Mr King it is suggested that he would have referred to him in his text, either by name or as the Prime Minister.

preference for the Canadian proposal which had been advanced to London and Washington. Admiral Muselier was then advised that, since Canadian policy was linked (*étroit liée*) to that of the United States, it would be "indispensable" to have a talk with the American Minister in Ottawa (92). Such an interview was quickly arranged. Muselier told Mr Moffat that the population of St. Pierre and Miquelon was entirely favourable to the Free French Movement and that occupation could be achieved without bloodshed. Such action would remove the threat of a wireless station on the flank of the convoy routes. He further suggested that his forces might then attempt to take over Martinique -- an action which ultimately would be necessary but which would create less unpleasantness for the United States with the Vichy régime were it handled by the Free French (93).

63. After reading Mr Moffat's telegram of this interview, President Roosevelt indicated that he did not favour any Free French action at St. Pierre and Miquelon. This information was telephoned to Mr Moffat on 16 Dec (94). During that same day the Canadian Cabinet War Committee came to the conclusion that "any action taken should be by Canada".

64. On the following morning (17 Dec), Mr Moffat called on Admiral Muselier and explained that President Roosevelt considered that it would be a mistake for the Free French to occupy the Islands. The "President felt that there would be fewer adverse repercussions if the Canadians took control of the communications from the island, by suasion, if possible, but otherwise by stronger means, and assured themselves, the United States and the Allied Powers that no communications of a deleterious nature left the islands" (95). Thereupon Admiral Muselier indicated that he would not proceed with the planned occupation. Being also discouraged from his vague proposal to occupy Martinique, and his desire to visit Free French representatives in New York and officials of the State Department in Washington, the Admiral seemed in a quandry. According to Mr Moffat's Diary:

The Admiral then asked what he should do. Here he was with his three corvettes in Halifax and in an embarrassing position. I suggested that he work out this problem with the Canadians. His idea at the moment is to remain in Canada more or less indefinitely, confident that the Canadian control of St. Pierre will not work and that he, or he and the British in conjunction, can persuade Washington to change its official mind (96).

65. But a telegram of 18 Dec from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs advised the Canadian Government as follows:

The President's view has been represented to General de Gaulle who agrees that proposed action should not, repeat not, now be taken.

We have again carefully considered your suggestion that steps should be taken to supervise wireless station at St. Pierre by Canadian personnel. We fully appreciate the reasons in favour of this proposal. There is, however, always danger that it might arouse hostility among Islanders. Moreover, our military advisers feel nothing short of occupation of Island by British or Allied forces would really meet the case from military point of view. This course, however, now seems ruled out by United States attitude as disclosed in your telegram.

In the circumstances it seems wiser not to take any action for the time being (97).

On the following day Prime Minister King told the members of the Cabinet War Committee that no action would be taken until agreement had been reached between the British and American Governments. On 22 Dec Mr Hume Wrong of the Canadian Legation in Washington advised the State Department that, in view of the British attitude, the Canadian Government would not go ahead with its proposed action. Mr Wrong added that the Free French Forces had cancelled any action (98). This, it might be added, was the day on which Mr Churchill and his entourage arrived in Washington for the so-called "ARCADIA" Conference.

(vii) Occupation of the Islands

66. General de Gaulle had not, however, given up the idea of rallying St. Pierre and Miquelon. On 17 Dec he telegraphed Muselier as follows:

Nos négociations nous ont montré que nous ne pourrons rien entreprendre à Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon si nous attendons la permission de ceux qui se disent intéressés. C'était à prévoir. Solution est une action à notre propre initiative. Je vous répète que je vous couvre entièrement à ce sujet (99).

On the following day Admiral Muselier received a further telegram from de Gaulle, this a direct order to act:

Nous avons, comme vous le demandiez, consulté les gouvernements britannique et américain. Nous savons de...certaine que les Canadiens ont l'intention de faire eux-mêmes destruction du poste de T.S.F. de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon. Dans ces conditions, je vous prescris de procéder au ralliement de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon par vos propres moyens et sans rien dire aux étrangers. Je prends l'entière responsabilité de cette opération devenue indispensable pour conserver à la France ses possessions (100).

General de Gaulle has since written in his Memoirs that, as soon as the Foreign Office confidentially advised him of the Canadian proposal to take over the radio station at St. Pierre, hesitation was no longer possible. He could not accept foreign intervention on French territory (101). Admiral Muselier's first thought was to offer his resignation. Only a sense of duty and belief that the Free French Movement would suffer a serious loss of unity and prestige, were a rift to develop between the General and himself, convinced him of the necessity of carrying out the order (102). Thereupon Admiral Muselier proceeded to Halifax by train and put to sea with three corvettes* and the giant submarine Surcouf on 23 Dec, ostensibly to return to St. John's. But, around three a.m. on 24 Dec they took peaceful possession of St. Pierre. That afternoon a force was landed on Miquelon from the corvette Alysse (103). The wireless station in Newfoundland then received its first signal of the day from St. Pierre, when a request was made to transmit three telegrams from Admiral Muselier (104). The one addressed to the British Government, read as follows:

I have the honour to inform you that in compliance with order quite recently received from General de Gaulle and request of inhabitants I have proceeded this morning to island Saint Pierre and rallied people to Free France and Allied cause with enthusiastic reception (105).

The others were addressed to General de Gaulle and to the Canadian Government. Interviews were given to the Canadian and American Consuls, to whom Admiral Muselier explained his intentions. The following proclamation was issued to the inhabitants:

Conformément aux ordres du général de Gaulle, je suis venu pour vous permettre de participer librement et dans l'ordre au plébiscite que vous réclamez depuis si longtemps. Vous aurez à choisir entre la cause de la France Libre et la collaboration avec les puissances qui affament, humilient et martyrisent notre patrie. Je ne doute pas que le plus ancien de nos territoires d'outre-mer, se rangeant aux côtés de la Grande-Bretagne, des Etats-Unis, du Canada et des autres alliés, ne manifeste en masse sa fidélité aux traditions d'honneur et de liberté qui ont toujours été l'orgueil de la France (106).

Despite the fact that the bishop, Monsignor Poisson, had issued a statement that he could not "en conscience" recognize the occupying force as the legitimate government (107), the plebiscite held on Christmas Day showed that 98 percent of the voters were in favour of the Free French Movement. Criticism was later directed at the wording of the two choices:

- (1) Ralliement à la France Libre,
- (2) Cooperation avec les puissances de l'Axe (108).

*Mimosa, Alysse and Aconit.

But, fortunately, an American newspaperman, Ira Wolfert of the New York Times, acting on a "hunch", had managed to accompany the expedition and his despatches convinced the American public that the plebiscite had been conducted in a fair and democratic manner (109).

67. The immediate result of this fait accompli was to create a diplomatic furore on Christmas Day. The Canadian Government was embarrassed and the United States State Department frantic. Only the evening before Mr Norman Robertson had assured the Vichy Minister in Ottawa that neither the Canadians nor Free French would occupy the islands. But when Mr Robertson hastened around to explain, the French Minister did not give the impression that "the occupation would be the straw that broke the camel's back in Franco-Canadian relations" (110). Mr Robertson later told the American Minister that Prime Minister King was "particularly upset", that the episode would prove an embarrassment to him in Washington tomorrow, but that he planned to talk it over with the President and Mr. Churchill shortly after his arrival" (111). Mr Moffat next had a few words with the United Kingdom High Commissioner. Mr Hull phoned Mr Moffat to demand that Canada take steps, that afternoon, to restore the status quo. The fact that the Canadian Government might be reluctant to do so, particularly in the event that the plebiscite then being taken in the Islands proved favourable to the Free French Movement, was completely lost upon Mr. Hull. The long distance telephone between Washington and Ottawa continued to buzz and several Christmas dinners were delayed. Mr Moffat vainly endeavoured to convince members of the staff of the Department of External Affairs that the action demanded by an irate State Department should be taken (112). Prime Minister King's reaction, as reported to Mr Moffat was as follows:

If the British and the United States jointly asked Canada to take action, Canada will of course do so. Thus far, however, Britain had not expressed herself at all, and the American request is certainly far from concrete. He was leaving in less than two hours and would feel much happier deferring action until he could talk it over at greater length with the President and Mr. Churchill. Meanwhile, he wanted Robertson to come to Washington with him, even though he would not take him to the White House talks. Mr Robertson should continue searching for a possible formula or recommendation of action. As soon as something concrete were put before him he would study it. Until then he hoped there would be no publicity (113).

68. Unfortunately^{ELY}, however, Mr Hull had already authorized the State Department to release a very controversial statement:

Our preliminary reports show that the action taken by the so-called Free French ships at St. Pierre-Miquelon was an arbitrary action contrary to the agreement of all parties concerned and certainly without the prior knowledge or consent in any sense of the United States Government.

This Government has inquired of the Canadian Government as to the steps that Government is prepared to take to restore the status quo of these islands (114).

69. The press immediately began badgering Mr King for a statement and Mr Moffat records in his diary that the official Canadian attitude now changed from one of "helpful cooperation" to one of "most reluctant cooperation" (115). Canadian officials failed to be impressed by (what they must have considered a remote possibility) that Vichy would retaliate by allowing Germany to seize the French fleet and occupy North America. They also resented the American attempt to discredit de Gaulle and other "Free Movements". Moreover, they saw no reason why Canadian servicemen should risk coming to blows with the Free French, should Admiral Muselier forcibly resist eviction from the Islands (116). Late in the evening Mr Moffat received over the telephone, for transmission to Washington, a message which Mr King and his Defence Ministers had drafted on the train to Montreal:

Canada is in no way responsible for the Free French occupation of St. Pierre. We have kept in close touch with both the United Kingdom and the United States on this question and have always been ready to cooperate in carrying out an agreed policy. We decline to commit ourselves to any action or to take any action pending such agreement. In the circumstances and until we have had an opportunity of considering action with the President and Mr. Churchill, the Canadian Government cannot take the steps requested to expel the Free French and restore the status quo in the islands (117).

70. In the United States the reference to the "so-called Free French" touched off a violent explosion of American public opinion. Professor William L. Langer has concluded that the excitement was created more by hatred of Vichy and its policy of collaboration with Germany than by devotion to de Gaulle and his Free French Movement, about which the great majority of Americans knew next to nothing. In a volume entitled Our Vichy Gamble, this historian has written:

Rarely had the Department been exposed to more abusive criticism. The Union for Democratic Action demanded reconsideration of the American condemnation and declared, in a protest sent to Secretary Hull: "Surely appeasement of Vichy need not go so far as to guarantee Vichy's rule in parts of the Western Hemisphere like the island of St. Pierre." Groups of prominent citizens, probably more well intentioned than well informed, adopted the same argumentation and demanded that the President reorganize the Department's personnel so as to bring it "into line with the anti-Axis war effort to which the rest of the Government and the country itself are dedicated" (118).

71. But Mr Cordell Hull refused to abandon his stand and became more incensed as the days went by, especially against Mr Churchill who refused to condemn or even censure the Free French action. Alone among the Roosevelt Cabinet, Mr Hull had managed to escape public criticism during the Administration's nine years of office and now he found it an unpleasant experience. Moreover, as Mr Sumner Welles has since written: "As long as he [Hull] was Secretary of State he regarded any public criticism of his department or of a policy for which he assumed responsibility as a personal affront, and an affront that he would not forgive" (119). At first the President refused to take the matter seriously. He could not be deeply disturbed by an incident which seemed trivial to the point of ridiculousness in comparison with all his other problems. At a time when Mr Churchill and he were engaged in the planning of global war and the formation of the greatest coalition in history, he could hardly consider entering into an open dispute with the United Kingdom over such a question (120). Elsewhere Mr Welles has written:

The most damaging feature of the St. Pierre-Miquelon incident was that it greatly hampered the American government in continuing its relations with Vichy and in carrying out its policies in North Africa. But neither course could be abandoned if the American and British plans for the invasion of North Africa were to be carried out successfully (121).

72. Mr Hull did manage to work out a compromise, which he thought would be agreeable to Vichy, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, and make perfectly logical the withdrawal of the Free French forces. This provided that the three Governments should exercise joint supervision over the Islands, which would be neutralized and demilitarized. Canada and the United States would provide personnel to control the wireless station. The Administrator would be withdrawn for the duration of the war, to be succeeded by a consultative council. All armed forces would be recalled and the United States and Canada would provide economic assistance (122). There were, however, practical considerations that made acceptance impossible for all the interested parties. Naturally enough the armed forces of Canada and the United Kingdom had welcomed the removal of the potential menace to shipping. On 28 Dec 41 the United States Army's Newfoundland Base Commander recommended to Washington that St. Pierre and Miquelon should be left in Free French control (123). The question was discussed during Mr Churchill's visit to Ottawa: with the Cabinet War Committee on 29 Dec, when it was agreed that the maintenance of relations between Canada and Vichy might continue to be useful, and in Mr Churchill's speech to Parliament on the following day, when he poured scorn on the Vichy leaders and paid glowing tribute to the Free French (124). Although Mr Churchill did agree to take a strong line with General de Gaulle, the latter realized that the attempts at intimidation were being made in an effort to humour Mr Hull. According to General de Gaulle's Memoirs:

Mr Eden saw me twice on January 14th and put up a show of insisting that we should agree to the islands being neutralised, to the administration being independent of the National Committee and to a control by allied

officials being established on the spot. As I refused such a solution, Mr Eden announced to me that the United States was thinking of sending a cruiser and two destroyers to Saint Pierre. "What will you do then?" he asked me. "The allied ships," I answered, "will stop at the limit of territorial waters, and the American admiral will come to have lurch with Muselier, who will be delighted." "But if the cruiser crosses the limit?" "Our people will summon her to stop in the usual way." "If she holds on her course?" "That would be most unfortunate, for then our people would have to open fire." Mr Eden threw up his arms. "I can understand your alarm," I concluded with a smile, "but I have confidence in the democracies" (125).

That same day the Cabinet War Committee meeting in Ottawa, agreed that Canada should not participate in any coercive measures attempted against the Free French. Protests were made, but Vichy accepted the fait accompli and there was no severance of Franco-American or Franco-Canadian relations - a policy that was in line with the attitude displayed by the French Minister in Ottawa to Mr Moffat on Christmas Day (see para 67).

73. But only on 2 Feb did Mr Hull reluctantly admit to President Roosevelt that it would be best to let the matter rest until the end of the war (126). Then at a press conference of 13 Feb, while Mr Hull was on a much needed holiday in Florida, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles stated that, in his judgement, the Act of Habana did not apply to St. Pierre and Miquelon (127). But, although the appointment of an American Consulate General at Brazzaville in French Equatorial Africa during April indicated de facto recognition of the Free French Movement in certain African and Pacific areas, none of the State Department's releases made any reference to St. Pierre and Miquelon (128).

(viii) Demise of "Q" Force

74. During the autumn of 1941 there had been occasional entries in the war diary of the Lake Superior Regiment indicating that "Q" Force was still carrying on extra training of a "hardening" nature. The entry for 15 Dec mentioned that "Q" Force was being reorganized: personnel desiring to spend their Christmas Leave at more distant centres than Saint John were being replaced by men who would be staying in camp. It was emphasized that the Force was still standing by and was on 56 hours' notice to move (129). On the following day the Secretary of the Joint Service Committee at Halifax wrote N.D.H.Q. to discover whether the above degree of preparedness was still required, or could those concerned be notified that the need for the Plan as an "active measure" was past (130). Admiral Nelles agreed with the Chief of the General Staff that there no longer was any need to keep "Q" Force on 72 hours' notice, but suggested that the degree of readiness might be made one week (131). Due to the diplomatic crisis occasioned by Admiral Muselier's occupation of St. Pierre and Miquelon, however, this information was not sent to Atlantic Command. Instead a letter despatched to the G.O.C.-in-C. on 17 Jan 42 merely pointed out that the subject was still under consideration (132).

75. On 23 Jan 42 the Director of Staff Duties at N.D.H.Q. advised the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence that, during a recent visit to Camp Debert, the future of "Q" Force had been one of the questions raised by Headquarters, 4th Canadian Division: would its continued existence interfere with the conversion of this division into an armoured formation (133)? Minuting this memorandum to the Chief of the General Staff on 27 Jan, the Vice Chief of the General Staff suggested that, while the Plan could not be put completely in abeyance, it might now be placed on a seven days' basis of readiness. This would enable the conversion of infantry battalions to armoured regiments to proceed, and permit General Elkins to earmark "any available unit" for this role (134). The Chief of the General Staff concurred and the G.O.C.-in-C., Atlantic Command was advised accordingly in a letter dated 29 Jan 42 (135). Two days later The Lake Superior Regiment left Debert Camp and moved back to Saint John, New Brunswick (136).

(ix) Subsequent Events

76. Mr Eberts' despatch of 26 Dec 41 to the Secretary of State for External Affairs reported on the coup d'etat in the light of his interview with Admiral Muselier. After defending his recent action (see para 66), Admiral Muselier had discussed the knotty problem of local defence as follows:

The Admiral has stated to me with complete cordiality, but nevertheless with every indication of determination, that he feels that, in view of the results of the plebiscite, he must defend the Islands against all possible attacks and that he would be unwilling to abandon them since a very large percentage of the population have now openly committed themselves to the Free French Movement and might be expected to suffer reprisals.

While he would name only the French forces as "possible attackers", the Admiral made it quite clear that he also had in mind at least those of Canada and the United States, and that he felt that I should inform you of his attitude. It may be added that he has spoken in identical terms to the United States Consul with a similar end in view.

You will, of course, appreciate that the majority of the population in these Islands are too overjoyed with present events here to be able to understand the difficulties which they may entail for the Allies in the wider sphere of policy and that, particularly with the leadership of occupation forces, they might well put up a stubborn resistance to any attempt to reverse the results of the occupation and plebiscite, even if they knew from the outset that it was doomed to failure. It should perhaps be added that the Admiral's fear of reprisals against the de Gaullists in the event

of his forces being withdrawn or overcome has already been substantiated to some extent. Yesterday evening, when Dr. Gau, the Chief of the Health Service was listening to the news of Mr. Cordell Hull's statement on the occupation of these Islands, at the United States Consul's house, he said with obvious relish that there would certainly be reprisals if there was a further change here. Again, today, a thoroughly reliable informant who has on various occasions furnished useful information to the United States Consul and myself, tells me that he has had an identical reaction from Mr. Georges Landry, a local merchant. The attitude of these men would probably be typical of the pro-Vichy and rather anti-British elements here (137).

Subsequent despatches reported that Admiral Muselier continued in command of the defences and responsible for all matters which were not purely administrative. Five changes had been made in the membership of the Council but the new Administrator Lieutenant (i.e. Capitaine de Corvette) Alain Savary, was carrying on local affairs with a mixed group of officials, which included those who had not been vehemently pro-Vichy. The Free French continued tolerant, upon opposition on the part of the pro-Vichy minority soon became rare, and there was a steadily decreasing number of accounts of hostile remarks made in private conversations. Some 400 men, women and boys had offered their services to a Home Guard, the Women's Auxiliary Corps, the Free French Navy and its naval cadet school in the United Kingdom. Although the Clergy had officially withdrawn its opposition to the new régime on 20 Jan 42, only two priests were actually co-operating fully. As long as there seemed hope that the United States might take some action to force the Free French to vacate the Islands, Monsignor Poisson endeavoured to follow a policy of "wait and see", whilst those pro-Vichy members of the mercantile class who were not undergoing the mild form of detention establishment on Ile aux Marins in the harbour mouth of St Pierre (along with the former Administrator and his wife) continued to live in hope (138).

77. Two of the Free French corvettes had left for St. John's on 26 and 27 Dec 41, while the submarine Surcouf sailed for Halifax on 12 Jan 42 (under orders to proceed to the Far East) (139). In accordance with arrangements completed with Commodore Murray, the Mimosa and certain Canadian corvettes were earmarked to provide a convoy service between St. John's and St. Pierre and between St. Pierre and North Sydney. (140) (During February these last were embodied as the Western Local Escort Force.) On 23 Jan the Norwegian freighter Havorn sought shelter in the harbour when her convoy was attacked by U-boats only six to eight miles off St. Pierre (141). During the afternoon of 26 Jan, H.M.C.S. Louisburg put into St. Pierre to pick up two freighter and a Canadian icebreaker which had been convoyed from North Sydney by Mimosa. Five members of this corvette's crew were taken into custody after creating a disturbance while intoxicated, and doing about \$10.00 worth of damage to private property. Admiral Muselier treated this incident in a light-hearted manner, however, assuring an apologetic Canadian Consul that it was an incident which might occur in any port during wartime. (142).

78. But Admiral Muselier did become incensed because some equipment and stores shipped from England for his garrison were being detained at Saint John, New Brunswick, where they had been unloaded, "on orders from Ottawa". This action had been taken at the request of the British Government, which was still worried lest the U.S. State Department should insist on some positive action being taken against the Free French at St. Pierre and Miquelon. Early on the morning of 3 Feb Admiral Muselier lodged a verbal complaint with the Canadian Consul. The items being held consisted merely of "two double machine-guns and ammunition" for use by two high speed runrunner launches being refitted for service as submarine chasers, 200 bags of kit for newly enlisted marines and a variety of propaganda material. By an unfortunate coincidence, the Canadian Naval authorities at Halifax had just requested Commandant Birot of Mimosa to convoy three vessels from Louisbourg to a rendezvous off St. Pierre. The Admiral told Mr Eberts that, although Mimosa would carry out this assignment, the Free French Navy would undertake no further convoy duty until the stores at Saint John had been released, and that the submarine Surcouf would be held in Bermuda and not proceed to the Far East as scheduled. The Admiral then read the text of a telegram that he was despatching to General de Gaulle. Mr Eberts reported to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that the feelings of the Admiral had been hurt by the manner in which he and his forces had been treated as a second-rate ally. Mr Ebert's despatch concluded as follows:

My understanding of your attitude towards the Free French Movement is that you are willing to cooperate with it discreetly in every way possible, provided you are not asked to take any action which will embarrass our relations with the Vichy Government. From recent conversations with the Admiral I feel satisfied that he realizes that Canada has very good reasons for continuing to recognize the Vichy Government, and that he is anxious to see his Movement act with proper discretion in its dealings with the Canadian Government. For these reasons, I feel that it would be mutually advantageous if he were to go to Ottawa; if he could be reassured by you that the Canadian Authorities respect the Free French war effort; if the limits of Canadian cooperation could be described to him fully; and if he could be assured that steps will be taken to prevent the occurrence of further incidents which could be could be interpreted as unfriendly (143).

79. British action was now taken to secure American acquiescence in the release of the non-military items of stores being held in Canada. Agreement having been secured from Washington on 10 Feb, Canadian Naval authorities were directed on the following day to arrange for their clearance for St. Pierre. A clearance was not obtained for the military items, however, until early in March (144). Henceforth, naval stores were issued by the Royal Canadian Navy to the Free French at St. Pierre and charged against their "Admiralty account" (A.H.Q. Report No. 76).

80. On 13 Feb Admiral Muselier left St. Pierre to return to the United Kingdom. Free French Headquarters in London had reported that Muselier was a sick man and that his "threat" over the above incident should not be taken "too radically" (145). Actually, as the Admiral had told both the Canadian and American Consuls at St. Pierre as early as 26 Dec 41 (see paras 66 and 76), he was fed up with General de Gaulle's dictatorial régime. On 4 Mar 42 he resigned as National Commissioner for the Navy and Merchant Marine. Although Muselier insisted that he had not resigned as Commander-in-Chief of the Free French Navy, deadlock was only resolved by his finally refraining from taking any further part in Free French affairs until General de Gaulle and General Giraud merged their organizations into a French Committee of National Liberation in June 1943 (146).

81. Before leaving North American waters, however, Admiral Muselier had expressed a desire that the wireless station at St. Pierre should be operated as a Free French Naval wireless station within the Royal Canadian Navy's coast W/T organization (147). This was approved. But the further request by the Flag Officer Newfoundland Force, that an R.C.N.V.R. officer be posted to St. Pierre for liaison duties was vetoed by Mr Norman Robertson. Mr Robertson replied to Admiral Nelles on 19 Feb that "for the time being while the situation in the Islands is straightening itself out, it would be better for Admiral Murray to communicate with St. Pierre through the Free French cypher officer stationed in St. John's than to second a Canadian officer for this purpose to St. Pierre" (148).

82. Only on 19 May 42 was Mr Eberts able to make a detailed report to Ottawa on the defences of the archipelago. As early as 12 Feb he had reported upon the location of a makeshift, zig-zag boom, laid across the northeastern entrance to the St. Pierre roadstead and closed from dusk to dawn, when all communities were blacked out, as well as the coastal lights and lighthouses (149). All members of the local forces were naval and on full time service. They consisted of officers, petty officers and ratings landed from the corvettes, recruits awaiting transfer to the corvettes or to the United Kingdom for training, a "home guard" of men over 30 years of age (wearing battle dress), boys in training to become ratings and a women's corps for clerical and cypher work. Armament comprised only one 90-mm gun, one 75-mm gun, a few obsolescent machine guns and a variety of rifles. In addition to the guards stationed at a number of vulnerable points, there were three so-called "combat groups" (10 men armed with an automatic rifle and nine rifles, much as an infantry section) capable of being rushed by truck to any danger point. It was considered that, so long as resources were concentrated on St. Pierre, any small landing parties from enemy submarines or surface vessels could be dealt with successfully. Only a few members of the "home guard", armed with rifles, were stationed at Miquelon village. Two of the larger motor launches formerly used as rumrunners (Astrid and Henry Joe) were being fitted as submarine chasers, while other local vessels had been commandeered for general naval purposes. If Asdic equipment could be procured and arrangements made to have the daily submarine reports communicated to St. Pierre, Astrid and Henry Joe would be used on anti-submarine patrol between St. John's and Sydney (150).

83. Under the direction of Capitaine Gaston Lavoisier, formerly of the French Air Force, work had recently commenced as a relief project on the construction of an airfield to the south of the inner harbour. This was being prepared for use by the amphibian plane the Administrator was hoping to obtain, and for possible use by any Free French or other Allied service aircraft which it might be desirable to base there. There was also the expectation that St. Pierre might be a port of call when the trans-Atlantic service of Air France should be resumed after the war. It was hoped that one 1000-metre landing strip of crushed stone and earth could be completed by September 1942; two further 1200-metre runways were planned for construction in 1943. About 60 men with a tractor, a steam-roller and trucks were presently engaged, but there was a shortage of both manpower and equipment and enquiries had been made as to whether the machinery used by the Americans at their Argentia air base could be made available. As Mr Eberts had reported earlier, both the present and previous Administrators had no doubt but that, despite the prevalence of fog during much of the year, air service was a practical possibility (151).

84. The Department of External Affairs agreed that the Administrator might visit Canada in June for dental treatment, to discuss Church problems with Cardinal Villeneuve and to meet the Free French representative in Ottawa, but it was considered that he should avoid press or radio interviews (152).

Learning of this proposed visit, the Admiralty suggested to Admiral Muselier's successor as National Commissioner for the Free French Navy that Lieutenant Savary should discuss with Naval Service Headquarters in Ottawa the possibility of developing the Islands as auxiliary bases for patrol convoys and sea planes (153). The Admiralty signal to Naval Service Headquarters presumed that Canada would "wish to make full use of facilities offered by Free French consulting with U.S. as you consider necessary" (154). Admiral Nelles brought this matter to the attention of Dr Keenleyside, his letter of 21 Jun concluding that "the wireless facilities would be of value to the Navy, and the harbour might be used to a limited extent as a Naval base" (155). Although Lieutenant Savary was advised that the Canadian Government was favourably disposed and that naval officers would visit St. Pierre to inspect existing installations and examine possibilities, no official reply seemed desirable until the matter had been cleared in Washington (156). Only on 27 Jun did Mr L.B. Pearson (Minister-Counsellor at the Canadian Legation) telegraph Mr Robertson as follows:

Regarding proposed visit of Canadian naval officers to St. Pierre, I have discussed this matter with Hickerson, who said he was glad to get the information in question, but did not think it was necessary to take it up with anyone else in the State Department, as no misunderstandings were likely to arise. He felt that question need not be brought up at the Joint Defence Board. I emphasized to him that the visit in question was purely technical and operational in character and that we wished the United States authorities to know of it in advance in order to counteract any exaggerated reports based on wrong interpretations which might possibly reach them (157).

The memorandum which Mr Robertson submitted to the Prime Minister that day, elucidating the problem, read in part:

It is proposed to send two officers from Canadian Naval Headquarters in St. John's to St. Pierre to study the best ways of coordinating Canadian wireless services with St. Pierre wireless services, particularly in the fields of communications, meteorological service and radio beacons. They will also look into the possibility of using the harbour at St. Pierre for repairing and servicing small patrol craft to relieve some of the strain on harbour facilities in Halifax, St. John's and Sydney. They will also examine the possibility of using St. Pierre as a supplementary supply base for servicing the slow convoys between Halifax and St. John's. Some of these convoys are guarded by small patrol craft whose range of action is so limited that they cannot make the whole journey without refuelling. It is thought that it might be possible to use the harbour at St. Pierre as a convenient half-way house where the small boats could take on additional bunkers and ship's stores.

Two motor launches now in St. Pierre would be sent to St. John's to determine whether it was possible to equip them with Asdic (submarine detecting apparatus). If this proves feasible, these boats would be assigned regular patrol duty, operating from St. Pierre, which would be coordinated into the general plans for patrolling the East Coast. Naval Services have inquired whether there would be any political objections to proceeding with these tactical arrangements. I told them that I did not think there would be. The general question of the status of the Islands, which remains in abeyance, would not be affected by these plans for closer defence co-operation with the Free French Naval Services in the Gulf (158).

85. It might be conveniently noted here that, the official Canadian and American attitudes towards the Free French occupation of St. Pierre and Miquelon were undergoing modification, in consequence of the U-boat campaign being waged against coastal shipping, which hitherto had been moving safely without the need for convoy protection. Although the U-boats were concentrated on such focal areas as Hampton Roads, North Carolina and Cape Hatteras, and had found that the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico also were good hunting grounds, there had been sinkings in Canadian coastal waters during the winter (see para 77). During March Canadian ships were withdrawn from the Western Local Escort Force for convoy duty between Boston and Halifax (159). Although the Royal Canadian Navy possessed a "Plan GL 2" for convoying ships using the St. Lawrence River and its Gulf, this was placed in effect only on 12 May after two freighters had been sunk to the north of Cape Magdalen by the submarine U-553 (160). Three days later the matter was raised in the

House of Commons and, in view of the undue alarm and excitement created among the civilian population of the lower St. Lawrence, the Armed Forces were forced to adopt more elaborate measures than the situation actually required (A.H.Q. Report No. 30). Yet 19 of the 20 freighters torpedoed in these waters during 1942 actually sank, along with a corvette, a frigate and an armed yacht on escort duty. Although the United States refused to make any further concrete gesture towards the presence of the Free French at St. Pierre and Miquelon, it was now obvious that no action would be taken to upset the status quo. Therefore, on 1 Aug the Administrator removed the restrictions against Allied aircraft flying over the Islands (161).

86. On 9 Aug a party of four - Lieutenant-Commander(E) E.W.T. Surtees, R.C.N.R., Mr C.A. Williams, R.C.N. (Warrant Telegraphist), Captain J.C. Baker, R.C.A. (Headquarters, "W" Force) and the United States Vice Consul in Newfoundland - arrived at St. Pierre. They found that the naval installations had been somewhat strengthened since Mr Eberts' report. Their mission having been accomplished, and having been well entertained by various officials, the party left on 12 Aug. The gist of the reports rendered individually on their four-day visit appears in the recommendations forwarded on 19 Aug to the Naval Board in Ottawa by the Flag Officer Newfoundland Force:

I consider that St. Pierre should be used as an anchorage for ships rather than as a flying boat base, but, as a hangar is to be erected next Spring on the south side of the harbour, it is possible that this could be made available to R.C.A.F. for emergency use.

It is considered that St. Pierre is a most valuable potential base for light surface ships in pursuance of the "Spare Bedroom" policy, which was the chief reason for the development of Botwood, i.e., to have defended ports strategically placed for Operations in the Atlantic.

The two slipways which are at present in good condition could be made suitable for Fairmiles, and I concur in the recommendation that the two not now in operation be converted to one capable of docking a corvette.

The existing repair facilities could be developed and put to good use.

It will be necessary to provide a Liaison staff....(162).

87. Some time was to elapse, however, before the Naval Board felt justified in deciding these several points. During the course of the weekly Naval Staff meeting on 31 Aug the Chief of the Naval Staff expressed the opinion that a base of this sort would be of use only in an emergency - seeking shelter in stormy weather. Thus a considerable expenditure was not warranted. The Chief of Naval Engineering and Construction added that it was possible to have too many bases for small ship repairs: if not already reached, such a situation soon would be (163).

Not until 8 Sep, however, was it agreed that a bilingual R.C.N.R. officer, suitable for shore appointment only, should be appointed as a liaison officer and directed to investigate the possibilities of further use of the Island (164).

88. On 7 Oct Dr Keenleyside asked Captain E.S. Brand, Director of Trade Division, if the Naval Board were doing anything about a liaison officer for St. Pierre. Dr Keenleyside thought there should be no objection to the proposed action, "under the present political situation, and that it would be all to the good to have one there" (165). Dr Keenleyside added that the Department of External Affairs would be glad to have a naval liaison officer serve as Consul, since this would enable the present incumbent to be employed in some other post. Lieutenant-Commander J.J. Deslauriers, R.C.N.R. was selected and, after a period of briefing, arrived at St. Pierre on 29 Oct.

89. Although Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander A.L. McKay, R.C.N.V.R. had made a very favourable impression during his visit 1-11 Sep to examine the colony's sanitary conditions (166), Lieutenant-Commander Deslauriers made a very bad impression from the outset and became the reason for a minor diplomatic crisis. As he was docking, Deslauriers was greeted by a number of merchants (of the discredited pro-Vichy element) and merchant seamen who apparently were old acquaintances of rumrunning days. His first unofficial visit was to the Bishop, still considered to be the leader of the pro-Vichy element. At a luncheon party Lieutenant-Commander Deslauriers was reported to have criticised the United Kingdom and his treatment in the Royal Canadian Navy. His attitude plainly indicated that he was a supporter of the Bloc Populaire partly headed by Mr. Maxime Raymond. In consequence, the Canadian Vice-Consul deemed it unwise to make available his confidential office files and proceeded to report most unfavourably to Ottawa (167). The Administrator complained to the French Committee in London, which had been on the point of agreeing that the function of Canadian Consul might be exercised by the Naval Liaison Officer (168). On 9 Nov it was decided at a meeting in the East Block, presided over by Mr Norman Robertson and attended by the Director of Naval Intelligence, that Lieutenant-Commander Deslauriers should be recalled. (Mr Eberts was present, having returned to Ottawa for duty, leaving in temporary charge Mr A.J. Pick of the High Commissioner's staff in Newfoundland). The qualifications required in a successor, according to the Department of External Affairs, were as follows:

The Canadian Naval Liaison Officer should be married and should have considerable educational background. Age is of little importance. Ability to speak French is the least important qualification, as the Government and naval authorities, as well as many of the residents, speak English. It was suggested that it would be preferable to have an English speaking Canadian to a French speaking Canadian, who spoke with a decidedly French Canadian accent. It was pointed out that the Fighting French Government and naval authorities are particularly sensitive to expressions of political opinion and it was recommended that the Canadian Naval Liaison Officer should be thoroughly grounded in the political situation, and should also be capable of being particularly discreet in this connection (169).

90. That same day, and as a consequence of the resistance being offered to the Allied landings in North Africa by the local French forces, Canada and the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Vichy. Prime Minister King issued a statement that "there no longer exists in France a government that has any effective independent existence - in other words...there no longer exists in France a legal or constitutional government in any sense representative of the French people, but only a German puppet government" (170). Although Major-General G.P. Vanier subsequently was accredited as Minister to the Governments-in-Exile located in London, he was directed merely "to act in consultation with the French national committee on matters relating to the conduct of the war" (171).

91. Lieutenant-Commander Deslauriers was removed from St. Pierre as soon as transportation could be arranged and Mr Pick continued to represent Canada at St. Pierre until 11 Dec, when Lieutenant D.E. Ffolkes Jemmett, R.C.N.V.R. assumed the dual post of Acting Consul for Canada and Canadian Naval Liaison Officer.* Lieutenant Jemmett seems to have had a satisfactory tour of duty. However, as he reported to the Secretary of the Naval Board on 1 Feb 43:

Notwithstanding the fact that most of the officials, with whom I am in contact, speak English moderately well, a knowledge of the French language is important. During meals and leisure hours, when valuable knowledge and information are to be gathered, all discussions are in French. As much time as possible is therefore given over to study of the language of which I had a slight knowledge before coming to St. Pierre. All correspondence of the Commandant requiring an English translation is done by me, and at my request; English is spoken only when absolutely necessary (172).

92. The plan to fit the motor launches Astrid and Henry Joe with Asdic equipment for employment as submarine chasers (see para 82) having proved impracticable, the Free French authorities had requested the Admiralty to provide three Canadian-built Fairmiles. Since the United States was considered responsible for supplying requirements within an American controlled theatre of operations, the request had, been passed

*Born in Cobalt on 13 Apr 12, Douglas Edward Ffolkes Jemmett had been employed by his father's firm, Northern Canada Supply Limited at Kirkland Lake before being commissioned into the R.C.N.V.R. in August 1941. At that time he claimed some ability to converse in French and German. Prior to his posting to St. Pierre he had served on the armed yacht H.M.C.S. Reindeer. He was actually at St. Pierre from 5 Dec 42 to 17 Oct 44. Subsequently he served afloat in the destroyer H.M.C.S. Haida.

to the United States Navy, which had refused and referred the matter to the Royal Canadian Navy. Although the Naval Board in Ottawa was favourably disposed, questions of availability and method of transfer delayed action from 9 Nov 42 until 14 Jan 43, when it was recommended to the Department of External Affairs that the most practicable arrangement would be to loan three Fairmiles "as is" [then at Sydney] for the duration of hostilities: all costs in connection with maintenance, alterations and additions to be charged to "Admiralty account" on behalf of the Free French (173). It had already been agreed (31 Dec 42) that the fuel tanks required by these Fairmiles could be supplied from Canadian sources under similar financial arrangements (174).

93. Meanwhile the Chiefs of Staff Committee had been giving some thought to the airfield under construction at St. Pierre, for which assistance first had been sought by the Administrator during his visit to Ottawa in June 1942 (see para 84). Because of the success achieved in enlisting most of the able-bodied men into the Free French forces, there was a local shortage of labour and the Acting Canadian Consul had reported on 27 Nov 42 that most of the 80 to 100 workers were either quite young or old. Few were skilled in any way, while many were undernourished fishermen unaccustomed to regular hard manual work. Local materials and hand labour had been used to date, but proper construction equipment was being sought under Lend-Lease arrangements from the United States and builder's supplies would be required for surfacing the runways and constructing hangars (175). At its meeting of 22 Dec the Chiefs of Staff Committee recommended that the Defence Council point out to the Department of External Affairs that this project should not be carried to completion unless adequate provision was made for defence (176). On 8 Jan 43 the Defence Council approved this recommendation and requested the Department of External Affairs to ascertain whether the defence measures adopted by the Free French at St. Pierre were adequate (177).

94. The same question was discussed by the Canadian Section of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, meeting in Ottawa on 2 Feb 43, and Rear-Admiral George C. Jones was directed to communicate with the Naval Liaison Officer at St. Pierre (178). Lieutenant Jemmett's report of 10 Feb stated that, owing to unusually severe weather conditions, all work had been virtually at a standstill since the middle of December 1942. The officer in charge of construction had assured him, however, that the single, as yet incomplete, runway could be used for emergency landings should there be time to remove the snow and mark its boundaries. However:

The project as originally planned, is visualized as a base for a French Transatlantic Airline after the war and as such will require French monitoring equipment. As it did not appear that the Canadian Government was interested in using the base during the war, no consideration has so far been given to the possibility of obtaining and installing Canadian or American equipment.

Commandant Dillfroy explained that great loss of time had been experienced in obtaining

materials and consequently in work accomplished due to the fact that all demands for equipment had been made through Free French Headquarters in London for provision under the lease-lend arrangements from the United States (179).

Then, on 2 Mar 43 the Chief of the Air Staff provided Hon. C.G. Power with an appreciation, which concluded as follows:

In view of the protective screen provided by the Defence Forces already established in Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces, the probability of the enemy attempting to make use of the landing strip now under construction on the Island of St. Pierre et Miquelon is considered very remote. Therefore, it is considered that no additional defence measures are necessary for St. Pierre et Miquelon (180).

95. Mr Power's further question of the same day as to the R.C.A.F.'s interest in this airfield does not seem to have been answered, despite a hastenor from his private secretary on 20 May, until the subject was raised by Dr Keenleyside on 18 Jun 43 (181). Four days earlier Lieutenant Jemmett had written that a new Administrator, M. Garrouste, had decided that further airfield construction work would be carried on slowly, at minimum expense and without costly equipment, should the airfield not be required by Canada for wartime use (182). The fact now came to light that the International Division, Army Service Forces had turned down a request made by the Free French purchasing staff in New York for equipment to complete the airfield (183). The U.S. War Department considered that it was responsible for meeting Free French requirements within an American strategic sphere, but St. Pierre and Miquelon was clearly within Canada's so-called "North American Area" (AHQ Report No. 76). The British members of the London Munitions Assignment Board now argued that St. Pierre and Miquelon was definitely part of Canadian local defence, pointing out that the United States Navy had refused earlier to supply the Free French Navy with three Fairmiles and considered that Canada should deal with all its requirements (184). In view of the fact that neither the Royal Canadian Navy nor the Royal Canadian Air Force considered that the airfield at St. Pierre was a necessary requirement, and so advised the Department of External Affairs, however, there was no point or interest in continuing the controversy. (185).

(x) Conclusion

96. Unfortunately it is impossible to carry this story further because of a lack of documentary evidence. The fourth and presumably final volume of the relevant naval file (NSS 1037-5-14) would seem to have become lost or mislaid during the period of reorganization following the conclusion of the Second World War. From other sources it appears that Lieutenant (latterly Acting Lieutenant-Commander) D.E. folkes Jemmett continued to perform his duties as Naval Liaison Officer in a manner satisfactory to both the French and Canadian Naval