

idle. Why acquire more land that, in a large measure, does not compare with what they have at present? Why acquire additional territory that Canada appears to consider is merely going to be an additional drain on the pockets of her people? Various explanations have been advanced, from personal pride of the Prime Minister to complete a job his predecessors could not do, all the way down to the fact that Canada likes us and wants to help us. Tucked into the middle of all these reasons are the mineral resources of the island, but in my opinion the only real reason is our strategic geographical position. It is in this connection that I propose to address you at length today.... The United States, as well, recognises this fact. North American pressure and economic interest tend to take Newfoundland towards the United States, and it is the fear of Newfoundland's becoming a possession of the United States more than any other single factor that is motivating the evident interest that Canada has in Newfoundland.

Newfoundland, because of its position, possesses a meaning that its economic weight alone could not give it. It is on the edge of two worlds — the North American continent and the North Atlantic basin. To the continent it is an outpost but in the North Atlantic it forces itself on the attention; it is in the forefront of the sailor's thoughts. When soundings are picked up on the Banks, America is coming near, and when the first landfall is made it is Newfoundland. The island is of the continent but not in it. As long as faces on the continent were turned westward, Newfoundland was forgotten; but for some years past, events forced them to turn eastward again and so their glance had to rest on it. The island is a focus of the lines of force crossing the North Atlantic basin....

*[Mr. Higgins then gave a lengthy summary of Newfoundland's history, concentrating on its strategic position in the North Atlantic]*

Four centuries of history reveal rather clearly the influences that play about the island of Newfoundland. They are oceanic and continental; they radiate out from Europe and from the continent of North America. They are not constant, but vary with the variations in the forms of political organisation in surrounding lands and with the combinations or severances between those political organisations. The island is revealed by

its history to be a focus of lines of force, a place where international policies intersect. As such it will always be conspicuous in the history of the North Atlantic basin and usually so in that of the North American continent.

Human history has alternated between terrestrial and maritime periods. In the middle ages, the chief centres of movement, the chief routes, were within the continents. As a result of the discoveries beginning in the 15th century, mankind became maritime and the centres moved out to what had formerly been distant frontier countries. With exploration completed humanity tended to become terrestrial once more, the interior continental masses, such as Germany and the United States, rising in importance as the maritime areas declined. Today ease of communication makes lakes of the oceans and hence the sharpness of the distinction is softened. The past war, indeed, has caused the maritime areas to take on a new importance.

The English thrust into the Americas three centuries ago afforded a striking example of the rise in significance of the maritime world. Yet no sooner had settlements been made than the oceanic thrust began to be transformed into an indigenous continentalism, solidly based on the soil. This continentalism has steadily grown and upon it is now erected the world's greatest power, the United States. The resolution of extra-continental rivalries by the English victory of 1763 left one race supreme and its later unfortunate division as a result of the American revolution has not prevented harmonious co-operation between its two parts in the threat of a common peril. Among other things, it has allowed the continent of North America to be thought of and dealt with as a unit in a way which Europe never could. This has made for a simplicity and largeness of conception with all secondary details tending to fall into a general scheme. For example, plans for the defence of Europe have not entered into European thinking, but we in this continent are busy putting into execution plans for the defence of North America.

The American "fence" through the middle of the Pacific ocean and the American thrust eastward from the Atlantic ocean, together amount to a recognition that North America is an island and that its problems must be studied as those of an island; sea communications and out-