

No. 97

BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 26th, 1940.

My Lord,

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I have the honour to refer to Your Lordship's telegram No. 929 of December 21st about the relief of distress in Pitcairn Island by Admiral Byrd, and to inform you that the Navy Department's Communiqué of December 14th has led to a certain amount of public interest in the island. A lady named Mrs. Dorothy Hall, of Springfield, Long Island, who operates a shortwave station (VR6AY) and converses with the island when its radio is working, has inspired a long article in the press about the plight of the islanders, which ignores Admiral Byrd's visit and leaves the reader the impression that nothing has been or will be done to relieve the distress. This in turn has led to pressure being brought to bear on the Seventh Day Adventists to help their co-religionists on the island, and they have been enquiring what the need really amounted to.

2. It is not, in my view, desirable that it should be thought in the United States that the Pitcairn Islanders are being in any way abandoned to their fate by His

/Majesty's

The Right Honourable

The Viscount Halifax, K.G.,

etc., etc., etc.

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Majesty's Government. They received a good deal of publicity in connexion with the film "Mutiny on the Bounty" and there is a steady latent public interest in them for that if for no other reason. I should be grateful therefore if this Embassy and the British Library of Information (to which I am sending a copy of this despatch) might be given any available information wherewith to meet enquiries (of which there have been several) as to the measures which are being taken for the relief and prevention of distress in the island.

I have the honour to be,

with the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble servant,

(Sgd.) LOTHIAN