

N.R.

No. 287.

BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.

27th March 1940.

My Lord,

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With reference to my despatch No.213 of the 1st March I have the honour to report that Mr. Tinkham has now aired in the House of Representatives his suspicions about the Anglo-United States exchange of notes of the 6th April 1939 regarding the joint control of Canton and Enderbury Islands. The House appears to have paid no attention and is unlikely to do so: but as part of his remarks Mr. Tinkham read into the Congressional Record the full correspondence between himself and Mr. Hackworth of the State Department. Most of it is of no interest to His Majesty's Government but I enclose copies of a letter which Mr. Hackworth addressed to Mr. Tinkham on the 3rd August 1939, giving the Department's information regarding the history of Christmas Island.

2. The account, referred to by Mr. Hackworth, in Moore's "International Law Digest", Volume I, pages 572-3, is doubtless available in Your Lordship's department. It does not mention the first discovery of the island by Captain Cook in 1777, and only puts the date of Captain Stetson's rediscovery as "prior to 1857" instead of giving

/(vide

The Right Honourable

The Viscount Halifax, K.G.,

etc., etc., etc.

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(vide Mr. Hackworth's letter) the exact date of February 15th, 1925. Otherwise the account referred to does not differ from that given in paragraphs 1 - 13 inclusive of the Foreign Office memorandum (W 1302/457/27) of the 4th March 1936, i.e., it stops with Lord Salisbury's note of May 24th, 1888, to the United States Chargé d'Affaires.

3. Your Lordship will observe that Mr. Hackworth's letter openly states that the United States Government made no protest against the British Order in Council of the 30th July 1919, and dissociates the United States Government from the National Geographic Society's 1936 map ascribing Christmas Island (prophetically perhaps) to the "United States and Great Britain". Indeed the impression left by his letter is that the United States long ago abandoned any case it may have had for claiming the island.

4. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Governor General of New Zealand and to the High Commissioners for the United Kingdom in Australia and New Zealand.

I have the honour to be,

with the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble servant,

(Sgd.)

LOTHIAN.