



GENERAL SUMMARY.

Memorandum A deals with Howland, Baker and Jarvis islands. The only points outstanding appear to be -

- (1) whether a démarche is to be made to the United States Government concerning the American annexation of Baker, Howland and Jarvis islands.
- (2) whether Howland and Baker ^{Islands} are to be deleted from the list of British "Phoenix islands" in the Colonial Office list.



Memorandum B deals with other islands in the Pacific which have been mentioned as likely sites for air bases, and in particular with those over which the British claim to sovereignty is weak or is thought to be in danger of dispute by other Powers.

Pending a decision on the Canada to New Zealand and other air routes, it is necessary to decide whether any action should be taken to vindicate the British claim to sovereignty over those islands which are thought likely to be of service. The Commodore commanding New Zealand Station, after studying the reports of H.M. Ships, ~~the~~ "Leith", "Wellington" and "Achilles", gave his opinion as follows:-

Copy to H.C. - 15 on 86059/1/37.5.

(a) that probably for some years to come Honolulu will be an essential port of call for an air service between Canada and New Zealand.

(b) that Fiji being the most important group of islands, both commercially and strategically, between Honolulu and New Zealand, any British air line should call near Suva.

(c) that between Honolulu and Fiji probably two refuelling bases would be required - one in the area of the Phoenix ^{and} or Union groups and one in the Kingman Reef to Christmas Island area. In the former area there appeared to him to be two possibilities - Hull island (Phoenix group) or Nukunono in the Union group. In the latter area either Christmas Island or Kingman Reef appears suitable, but Christmas Island is British and may be even better than Kingman Reef because buildings can be erected ashore, whereas a depot ship would be required at Kingman Reef.

(d) that the best route from New Zealand to Honolulu would be via Suva, Hull or Nukunono, Christmas Island or Kingman Reef.

The following points arise:-

- (i) As regards Christmas Island, whether anything is to be said to the United States Government on the subject of the reports to the effect that America does not recognise British sovereignty over the island.

The Foreign Office *
contemplates awaiting a
* report from
H.M. Consul at Honolulu

(ii)

(ii) As regards the Phoenix group, ~~there is the~~
~~question~~ whether the group, or the six leased
islands, should be included within the
boundaries of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands
Colony by Order in Council under the Colonial
Boundaries Act. (The question of settling
Gilbertese on Sydney or Hull is a side issue.)

It does not seem that any action can usefully
be taken in regard to the scattered islands west of the
French Marquesas islands. As regards Pitcairn and its
"dependencies", the Administrative Officer's report can be
awaited.

Colonial Office
December, 1936

[R. M. P.
11/12/36]