

S.36757/G.A.1.

17 December, 1936.

Dear Mounsey,

With reference to the recent investigation of certain Pacific Islands in connection with their possible use as air bases, you will be interested to see the enclosed copy of a letter, which has been received from Woods Humphery, concerning a claim by the United States Government to sovereignty over Christmas Island, which we understood was definitely part of our Gilbert and Ellice Islands group.

You will already have seen that this suggestion that the Americans are preparing to dispute our sovereignty of Christmas Island has aroused misgivings in New Zealand, and given rise to a telegram to the Dominions Office, a copy of which was sent to your Department on the 3rd instant, under Dominions Office reference No. 6649/68.

We hope that it can be established without doubt that this island is definitely under British sovereignty, as there can be no question as to its future importance in connection with any British service that may be established across the Pacific.

I am sending copies of this letter to Batterbee and Shuckburgh.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) F.C. Shelmerdine

Sir George Mounsey, K.C.M.G., C.B., O.B.E.,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.