

120

AIR MINISTRY,
GWYDYR HOUSE,
WHITEHALL,
LONDON, S.W.1.

4th January, 1937.

Dear Vernon,

We are thinking very seriously of this projected flight of one of our long distance flying boats to the South Pacific Islands which I mentioned at the meeting at the Colonial Office on 29th last. We have in mind that it will prove a very efficient form of demonstrating the value of British aircraft and the kind of flying boat which will be available during this year and which may be expected to be seen in those waters in the not distant future, as a counter to American activities.

If this flight is approved it will not make use of the islands of secondary importance on the route, but will pass straight through, stopping at Fiji, Apia (subject to local advice on the technical possibilities), Hull Island, Christmas Island and Honolulu. It would fly over Fanning Island and the American Stations at Pago Pago and Kingman Reef, but would not require to refuel at any of these points and would only land if conditions were altogether suitable.

In considering the flight we came to the provisional conclusion that the British representative who is to be sent to Christmas Island would be of great value if he could be got there in time for the visit of the flying boat, and we felt that for this and for general reasons it would be worth considering whether we could not find a man who had wireless qualifications and could be given a brief instruction in meteorological observation, and fly him out from Home to Australia to be sent up to Christmas Island from there by ship. He could take with him, from the nearest convenient point, a wireless set capable of communication with the flying boat and some moorings for it, which would, I suggest, constitute a first step in the active exploitation of the Island, which your legal advisers regard as so important in maintaining the claim to sovereignty. Thereafter, if the route becomes organised in 1938, as it very well may, he could be occupied in taking accurate soundings of the lagoon and in daily meteorological

*about
Early April*

R.V. Vernon, Esq., C.B.,
Colonial Office,
S.W.1.

/observation

observation until actual constructional work began when, of course, he would become extremely useful.

I mention this point because I know you are considering the question of sending such a representative and I would like to let you know that we should have considerable technical use for such a man on Christmas Island and that his functions need by no means be confined to being present there to ward off the American invasion, with little else to do.

You will perhaps like to take this into consideration when putting forward the results of our meeting.

Yours sincerely,

C. D. Galpin