

Explanatory note.

16

There are three papers which require action in the annexed bundles:-

- (a) 86059/39 Western Pacific,
- (b) 7025/2 Secret General, and
- (c) 6214/53.

(a) deals with miscellaneous questions affecting islands in the Western Pacific and ~~etc etc~~ ^{in particular} ~~incidentally~~ ^{incidentally} largely with the Canton-Enderbury dispute.

(b) 7025/2 deals with the Conference in New Zealand, which arose out of a proposal by the New Zealand Government (which was referred to the C.I.D.) for a survey of the islands for air routes. (c) 6214/53 deals with defence questions in the Western Pacific.

These bundles have become necessarily correlated owing to the proposed Conference in New Zealand.

It may be convenient if I give briefly the summary of the present position.

As far as the Canton-Enderbury dispute is concerned the position is that a draft exchange of notes is under discussion with the United States Government. A telegram received a few days ago indicates that the draft prepared by us and presented to the United States Government is likely to be acceptable to them.

Enclos 2
15 on 86059/39

That file also deals with our apprehensions lest United States Government should again present us with ~~the~~ ^a fait accompli by trying to seize some of the other islands in the area. A few months ago they informed

206
on 86059/58
Pt III
(d 231)

Quel to
12 on 86059/39

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26
on 86059/39

informed us that they were proposing to send a hydrographical expedition to certain of these islands including Hull and we were apprehensive lest it should be part of a further move in that area. It now appears from recent telegrams that they have no such immediate intentions, at least in regard to Hull. It was because of these apprehensions that we were anxious from the Colonial Office point of view to press on with the proposed Conference in New Zealand for the discussion of the general position in regard to these islands.

As far as the proposed Conference is concerned the position now is that a telegram has just gone from the Dominions Office to New Zealand dealing with the agenda in so far as defence was concerned, and saying that the Conference might take place in the middle of March. (There is a draft telegram on ^{7025/2}~~6214/55~~ informing the High Commissioner of this.)

It is proposed that the Conference should consist of Sir Harry Batterbee, (the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom in New Zealand) and representatives of the New Zealand, ^{Australian and Fiji} ~~and Dominion~~ Governments. It appears that it will be possible for Sir Harry Luke to attend this Conference without interfering with his plans for visiting the

High

High Commission territories this summer.

In so far as the agenda for the Conference is concerned, ^(a) the defence agenda is discussed on 6214/53.)

(b) A brief has been prepared by the Foreign Office dealing with the political aspects of the matter (5 on 7025/2). (c) A brief is being prepared in the Air Ministry dealing with civil aviation aspects and ^(d) a draft brief is with these papers dealing with the future of unattached islands in the area. There are certain subordinate issues, but the main points requiring decision on this paper are the form of the draft brief for Sir Harry Batterbee in so far as the ~~Un~~attached Islands are concerned, and secondly, the instructions to Sir Harry Luke in regard to the date and the agenda for the proposed Conference.

(Unfortunately some of the earlier defence papers and certain secret papers dealing with the Unattached Islands cannot be traced. That and the fact that the files are constantly being required for urgent action has delayed the preparation of the brief for Sir Harry Batterbee).

ABerr

2.2.39.

CWD 3/2/39

Mr. Mr. Berr has put a great deal of work into this, ~~and I am~~ ^{and I am} ~~much~~ ^{much} indebted to him.

This note gives a guide to the papers. I do not think that you need do more than read: -

- 1) This note
- 2) The draft on 7025/2/39/30r

Paras 8 to
12
in particular.

3) The F.O. brief enclosed in
No 5 on 7025/2/39 Gen.

4) The draft letter and brief on
86059/39.

May I suggest that it might be useful for
you to send for Mr. Berris, if there are
any points on which you require
explanation.

A. B. Fisher
6.3/2.