

D.O.O.3a.

SECRET

C. Bevin, Esq.

Y025/r

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No. F720/226

Subject: Pacific Islands

Reference to previous correspondence:

Tel. No. 10.3.39

With the compliments of Mr Dixon.

A copy has also been sent to
Mr Balfour, (F.G.)
Capt. Herbertson, (Am.)
Major Jacob, (C.A.)
Major Grove, (Army)
Major Mead (W.O.)

Dominions Office, Downing Street,

10 MAR 1939 193

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PARAPHRASE TELEGRAM

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

From the United Kingdom High Commissioner in the
Commonwealth of Australia.

Dated 10th March, 1939. Received 11.10 a.m., 10th March.

No.41. Secret.

(37)
With reference to your telegram No.38 of the 2nd
March Commonwealth Government are sending telegrams to you
and to New Zealand Government proposing that Item (j) of the
Conference Agenda should be omitted.

Commonwealth Government have been giving
preliminary consideration to the whole question of Pacific
Defence and in the course of this consideration they have
reached the provisional view that it might be desirable to
endeavour to reach agreement with the United States of
America that north of the equator the latter should be
responsible for Trans Pacific Air Route and south of
equator British interests should be responsible. Idea is
that the United States of America's machines should fly
from the United States of America via Honolulu to a
suitable island (preferably one of those in dispute) as
near as possible to the equator and that British machines
should take over from that point and via Fiji to Auckland.
The following are the advantages claimed for this idea.

(a) No question would then arise as to landing rights in
Honolulu for British machines or in British islands for
United States machines.

(b) It is understood that at present there are no
British machines which could do the hop from Honolulu to
the United States of America, whereas machines now being
built for Trans Tasman service are fully capable of flying
that part of the route which lies south of the equator.

(c)

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(c) This proposal would work in with the plans already in hand for the extension of the existing services (1) from Darwin to the Timor and (2) from Thursday Island via Papua and Rabaul to the Solomon Islands. While these extensions would ostensibly be made as a part of the Civil Aviation programme they are in fact important from defence point of view: and, in combination with British control over the southern portion of the Trans Pacific route would go far to consolidate British aerial control over the Southern Pacific.

Seeing that these proposals would involve negotiations, not only with the United States Government, but also with the Portuguese and possibly the Dutch Governments, Commonwealth Government feel that the most suitable place for preliminary discussion is London rather than New Zealand, especially as matter will closely concern Imperial Airways. For their part they would be willing to be represented in London by Commonwealth High Commissioner or Acting High Commissioner if discussions begin before the return of Mr. Bruce. They would like discussions to begin at earliest convenient date and desire to emphasise that they are sincerely anxious to push ^{on} /as rapidly as possible with the establishment of the Trans Pacific route.

I have repeated the above to the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in New Zealand.