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(A1895/21/45)

With Compliments of
American Department

A. Bevir Esq.
Colonial Office

13 March 1939

(A 1895/21/45).

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

IMMEDIATE.

13th March, 1939.

Dear Dixon,

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Enclosed is a draft of a reply which we have prepared to the telegram of the 10th March from our High Commissioner in Australia. I am forwarding copies of this letter and the draft to the other interested Government Departments.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) J. BALFOUR

G.W. Dixon, Esq., C.M.G., O.B.E.

Dominions Office.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

March 1939.

Despatched

M.

The High Commissioner,

Commonwealth of
Australia.

IMMEDIATE.

Telegram. (48)

Your telegram No. 41 (of the 10th
March).

No.

Please explain to Commonwealth

Government that, whilst fully sharing wish to
push on as rapidly as possible with establish-
ment of a trans-Pacific air route, His
Majesty's Government in United Kingdom consider
that no positive progress can be achieved until
United States Government show a disposition to
co-operate for the purpose. United States
Government have however as yet abstained from
accepting repeated invitation to enter into a four-party
conference to discuss settlement of the problem
on practical basis of reciprocal air facilities.
They have hitherto sought instead to secure
control for themselves over intermediary links
in chain of trans-Pacific aviation by advancing
claims to Pacific Islands hitherto regarded as

British, and have recently renewed their

proposal for a discussion designed to regulate the status and use of islands in dispute. As Commonwealth Government are aware from draft reply to this proposal, His Majesty's Government in United Kingdom, although not excluding possibility of a discussion of the status of individual islands at the above-mentioned four-party conference when it materialises, are resolutely opposed to United States solution, which assumes that ownership of such islands can be determined independently of their value as part of a general system of air navigation. It moreover seems evident that attitude of His Majesty's Governments concerned towards question of ownership cannot be determined without reference to the importance of the islands concerned in connexion with plans for colonisation and defence.

As His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom view the matter, the

forthcoming/

forthcoming conference in New Zealand offers an exceptional opportunity for coordinating available information concerning use of outlying Pacific islands for above-mentioned purposes and of formulating recommendations as to most practical methods of ensuring that problem of trans-Pacific navigation can be settled with due regard to the various interests involved. We would therefore express the earnest hope that Commonwealth Government will withdraw their proposal to omit Item J from the agenda, especially as forward policy of the United States Government has rendered consideration of this subject a matter of urgency.

SECRET

J. A. Calder Esq.

D.O.3a.

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No. D. 255/15

Subject:

Pacific Islands:
Defence Questions.

Duplicate Registered

Fiji Defence (6214/20A/39)

Reference to previous correspondence:

With the compliments of Mr. Dixon.

A copy has also been sent to

Mr. Selmon (Adms)
Maj. Jacob (C.O.)
Maj. Meant (WO)
Maj. Comd. Fort (A7)
Mr. Devier (CO)

Dominions Office, Downing Street.

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