

1. We recognize as axiomatic that the safety of the Empire must be the paramount factor in deciding any questions which may arise from the offer by His Majesty's Government to the Government of the United States of America of facilities for establishing an air and naval base in this Colony.

2. Subject to paragraph one we wish to record our strong objections as representative Bermudians to the proposals of the United States Board. In paragraphs 7, 8, and 9 we make special reference to the important question of the location of the base.

3. General. The proposals of the Board in their magnitude go far beyond anything that was expected by the House of Assembly and the people of Bermuda and would, if adopted, give rise to the gravest economic, social and political dislocation of the life of the Colony. We ask that in considering the detailed representations which follow it may be constantly borne in mind that --

- (a) the area of the Colony is only $19\frac{1}{2}$ square miles,
- (b) its present population is 32,000 *h.e.*, more than 1600 to the square mile, and
- (c) the lease will be virtually in perpetuity.

4. Economic dislocation. The livelihood of almost the entire population is derived directly or indirectly from the tourist trade and the presence of wealthy American residents. This means of livelihood would disappear except perhaps for a certain number of ~~excursionists~~ ^{excursionists}. The attractions of Bermuda as a resort are its beauty, peacefulness, old-worldliness, facilities for outdoor recreation on land and water in pleasant surroundings, absence of mechanical transport, freedom of movement etc., etc.

In all these respects it is clear that the character of the Colony would be violently changed by the unsightly buildings,

noise, bustle, restriction of movement in large areas and extreme overcrowding which would inevitably result from the adoption of the present proposals. In addition the Colony, in spite of its proximity to the United States, has so far retained in marked degree British characteristics plus local characteristics and this has a peculiar attraction for American visitors who find in Bermuda their nearest foreign resort. Those characteristics would undoubtedly be submerged. We feel sure that, for the above mentioned reasons, the Colony as a pleasure resort and a pleasant place of abode would be ruined. Desirable tourists would go elsewhere and substantial American residents and many Bermudians would migrate.

Among damaging economic results which would follow the loss of the tourist trade plus the migration of residents we mention the following inter-related items with the observation that they would have innumerable by-results and ramifications affecting the whole economic structure of the Colony:

- (a) Serious general deterioration in value of real property in which there are heavy investments among all classes both directly and by way of mortgage;
- (b) Loss of business in high grade shops;
- (c) Loss of business in high grade hotels, guesthouses etc.;
- (d) Unemployment;
- (e) Loss of public revenue from decrease of imports and general decreased tax-paying capacity of population.

Apart from the effect of the loss of the tourist trade etc. it may be expected that the transference of population and consequent creation of new crowded settlements would entail additional burden on Colonial Treasury in public health and other services incidental to built up areas.

In conclusion under this heading we record our conviction that the economic gain to be derived from the establishment of the base as now proposed would fall far short of the economic damage caused. We admit that the work of constructing the proposed base would for a time benefit local labour and certain local interests but its completion would leave us permanently

deprived of our amenities and our peace time source of livelihood.

5. Social. The density of population of the Colony (1600 to the square mile) has for many years caused grave concern. There is already serious congestion in certain districts and the provision of recreation areas such as playing fields and bathing beaches especially for the poorer classes is becoming increasingly difficult. The proposals of the United States Board involve the addition of about 4,500 adult men and it may be assumed that some of these would be accompanied by wives and families. The actual increase in the permanent population might be as much as 6,000 or about 20% of the present population, and the floating population would be increased by the personnel of United States' warships. It is impossible to estimate with any precision the social effects of such a large and sudden increase in our already over-dense population, but it is certain that those effects would be disastrous from a social point of view. The increase in population accompanied by the removal of persons from their homes in occupied areas and the over-crowding of remaining areas suggest many and varied dangers to physical and moral health. [Furthermore the fact that the additional element would be largely unmarried service personnel would probably increase illegitimacy and miscegenation which are evils in themselves, and would lead to further over-population. A high percentage of local coloured women have lax morals even in prosperous times and illegitimate coloured births now number nearly one quarter of total coloured births. To sum up we might expect/the presence of a large foreign garrison living in a very small area largely among persons of colour and cut off by sea from home influences.]

For discussion
with action

6. Political. The political dislocation may prove eventually to be the most serious of all. The people of the Colony have always felt devoted allegiance to the Crown and a sense of political dependence on Great Britain.

It seems doubtful whether these feelings strong as they now are could survive the constant evidence of United States predominance in the defence of the Colony and complete control of large areas which the proposals would entail. We also feel that political problems would arise in respect of the following services:

Ports and Harbours, Lighthouses, Pilot Services and Ship Channels, Shipping, Civil Air Service Development, Inland Transportation, Customs, Police, Administration of Justice, Postal, Cable and Wireless and Local Government.

7. Request for Modification of Proposals: Site of Base.

The foregoing observations apply in greater or less degree to the establishment of a base on the scale proposed wherever the base may be situated, and we therefore ask in the first place that, irrespective of the site of the base, the proposals should be drastically modified, and in particular that the proposed land aerodrome which has never been mentioned in previous negotiations should be abandoned. [If however imperial interests demand] that the United States should possess a base of the magnitude proposed, then it is doubly important to us that the whole of the base should be concentrated at the East End of the Islands. We note in this connection that Lord Lothian's note leaves the exact location of the base to be decided by common agreement and we bear in mind the Prime Minister's assurance that no action would be taken against the wishes of the people of the Colonies concerned.

8. Special objections to areas selected by Board.

The areas selected by the Board are in the highest degree open to all the objections [we have] cited. These areas comprise about 1/13th of the total area of the Colony.

(a) The mainland area is situated in the middle of the Colony.

Its retention is indispensable to the existence of the tourist trade generally and it includes valuable properties, for

which there are no possible substitutes elsewhere in the Colony, belonging to some of our most desirable American residents.

It includes a wide corridor from coast to coast dividing the Colony into two parts, and cutting railway and main road communications. This feature would give rise to difficult political and administrative problems of every kind.

Furthermore approximately 1500 persons would be dispossessed of their homes and their resettlement elsewhere even under poor conditions would present a highly difficult problem. *(The compensation for damage would be high.)*

(b) The islands selected by the Board for storage of ammunition and explosives are some of the largest and most beautiful in the Great-Sound. Some have holiday residences and all are extensively used for recreation by local inhabitants as well as visitors. *It is* We presume that not only the islands but the waters in the vicinity would become prohibited areas.

Furthermore with the coming and going of aircraft, service motor craft and possibly warships, the Great Sound itself would be entirely transformed. Its waters provide the only area for [our sport of] yacht racing and one of our principal areas for pleasure boating of every description.

The danger of the storage of explosives in the locality chosen seems [to us to be] a further objectionable feature. The main channel into Hamilton Harbour passes close to these islands and might well be rendered useless in the event of an explosion.

9. East End Preferable as Site of Base. The location of the base at the East end of the Colony would considerably lessen in degree the objections [we have] mentioned. [We think that] to a material extent the base and its activities could thereby be detached from the ordinary life of the Colony. Fewer and less important amenities would be disturbed, fewer political problems would arise and persons dispossessed would be far fewer in number *(not more than 50) generally speaking* (about 500) and ~~perhaps by reason of comparative poverty~~ more willing to accept monetary compensation.

[10. Conclusion. We deeply regret that at this time we should ¹⁸ feel compelled to raise certain questions which may at first sight appear unseasonable and even prompted by self interest but we feel very keenly our responsibility for the future welfare of the Colony. We emphasize that the Colony will welcome any sacrifice necessary to help in the successful/prosecution of the war but we cannot forget that the American base will be permanent and we feel that without detriment to the fighting strength or other vital needs of the Empire it may well be possible to secure the suggested alterations of the present highly objectionable proposals. We point out in conclusion that the other colonies concerned in the scheme of United States defence will be far differently affected by reason of their much greater area, sparsity of population and the fact that their industries are not similarly vulnerable. They may even, in a purely material sense, be benefited.]