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(Copy regd on 86059/58  
w/lae)

With Mr. J. Balfour's  
compliments.

FOREIGN OFFICE,  
31st October, 1938.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W. 1.,

29th October, 1938.

A.8060/G.

SECRET.

Dear Archer,

Your Secret letter P.720/152 of the 26th October asking for our views as to the character of the conference which the New Zealand Government have suggested in general terms should take place between representatives of Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand to discuss Pacific island matters. We note that the despatch from the Governor-General of New Zealand of the 20th May last in which this suggestion is submitted deals primarily with the importance of developing facilities on Pacific islands which can be employed by New Zealand aircraft for strategic purposes. It is clear, however, from the recent differences between His Majesty's Government and the United States Government regarding Canton Island, and from the various indications we have lately received that the United States Government may before long attempt to assert claims to sovereignty over other hitherto neglected Pacific islands, which they could utilise as air ports, that any conference relating to the development of the above-

mentioned....

H.E. Archer, Esq., O.B.E.

mentioned air facilities must necessarily also concern itself with the problem of consolidating the British title to individual islands likely to be suitable for this purpose, e.g. Hull Island and Christmas Island.

The political aspect of the problem is thus inseparable from the strategic, and the Foreign Office would recommend that the former aspect of the matter should be placed on the agenda of the conference and British representation arranged accordingly. It would appear appropriate in the circumstances that, if possible, both the United Kingdom High Commissioner in New Zealand as also the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific should participate in the discussions.

*208/86059/38  
with Mr. Ramsey* I might add that you will be receiving from us a copy of a letter to the Colonial Office No. A.7569/16/45 of the 28th October enclosing a Foreign Office memorandum which surveys the question of the future status of outlying Pacific islands from the political angle. This survey should be read in conjunction with two previous Foreign Office memoranda on the subject, the one enclosed in my letter to Sedgwick A.1292/16/45 of the 21st February last, and the other....

*20/86059/38  
with Mr. Ramsey*

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86059/38 *with  
A. Bannan*

other in my letter to him A.3639/16/45 of the 10th  
May.

(Sgd.) J. BALFOUR.