

D.O.3a.

SECRET

A. B. Acheson *etc.*

No.

F. 720/

Subject:

Pacific Islands.

XXX

Reference to previous correspondence:

29.12.38

With the compliments of *Mr. Dixon*.

A copy has also been sent to *Majors Jacob (C.I.D.)*
Majors Grover (Army)

Dominions Office, Downing Street,

193

29 DEC 1938

(R5952) Wt 32346/3556 5,000 2/36 H & Sr Gp 640
(R6630) Wt 15568/3657 20,000(4) 7/36

SECRET

29 DEC 1938

Dear Foster,

42
We have been thinking over the suggestion made at the meeting of the Oversea Defence Committee on the 12th December that the United Kingdom representatives at the proposed conference with New Zealand and the Commonwealth of Australia on Pacific Islands questions might include the Commodore in command of the New Zealand station and the Group Captain, Royal Air Force, attached to the New Zealand Air Force.

While there might not in this case be constitutional objections to this course, we are inclined to think that there might well be practical difficulties, and we understand that the Colonial Office share our views. As you know, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff have just put to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific certain suggestions as to the defence of the Pacific Islands. Details have not yet been received but, when they are obtained, it is quite

possible

WING-COMMANDER R. M. POSTER, D.F.C.

possible that it might be thought desirable to put forward at the conference comments on the suggestions from the United Kingdom point of view and conceivably also to suggest that New Zealand might assist financially in the measures proposed. It would be very awkward if officers who, although they belong to our Services, were at the time in the service of the New Zealand Government, had to take part in discussions of this nature as representatives of the United Kingdom Government.

It occurs to us that a possible alternative which would avoid these difficulties might be to suggest to the New Zealand Government that these officers should attend the conference as expert advisers, whose technical advice would be available to the United Kingdom Government or to the New Zealand Government (or to the Commonwealth Government also if they desired to have the benefit of it). If this could be arranged, it should be possible for the chief United Kingdom representative at the conference to convey to the two officers any views which Service Departments here might wish him to communicate to them.

I have mentioned this idea to Grover who thought that there would be no objection to such a procedure from the Admiralty point of view. Could you let me know how the Air Ministry regard the idea?

I am sending copies of this letter to Jacob, Grover and Acheson.

Yours sincerely,

Signed) C. W. DIXON