

Mr. Bryanwell  
✓ to see.

Copy sent to  
Dava in H. June  
No. 56. J.S.

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
June 17th, 1939

No. 869

My Lord,

Mr. Walker 25/6  
Mr. Atkinson  
CRA 27/6  
to see him too

(A)  
23/6

9.1/47

In continuation of previous correspondence about the Pacific Islands, I have the honour to report that on the 15th instant I called on Mr. Moffat, the head of the Western European Division of the State Department, and said that the President in his speech at the White House dinner proposing The King's health had referred to the question of Canton and Enderbury Islands, and had cited it as an instance of the statesmanship that could be possible between the two great nations. That, I said, had been a small matter, but there was a yet wider question still open, namely that of title to other Pacific Islands and of Trans-Pacific aviation which presented more scope for statesmanship. Might I ask what progress the State Department was making in its consideration of our memorandum of last March?

2. Mr. Moffat said that this matter had been back and forth in the department and had become the subject of many papers, but one thing seemed clear, namely that the Service Departments were adamant against allowing the use of Hawaii as an intermediary base for non-American aeroplanes. I said that any final decision in this sense seemed to me to remove the inducement to us to proceed with general

discussions, /

The Right Honourable

The Viscount Halifax, K.G.,

etc., etc., etc.

RCL:DH

INDEX

-8-

discussions, as there would be no material quid pro quo for us to work for. Of course Government Departments always adhere to their own narrow point of view with great determination, and in the interest of the general good it is often necessary to cudgel them into any departure from it. Was the decision which he had mentioned of a Departmental character only, or had it been arrived at after more statesmanlike consideration of the whole issue?

3. Mr. Moffat demurred to the suggestion that there was any room in the discussions for talking about a quid pro quo, suggesting in fact that the various questions at issue must be decided on the basis of legal right. He admitted however that the hint in our memorandum, that perhaps terminal facilities in Australia and New Zealand might be refused, had not escaped notice. He said that all decisions taken so far had been based on ministerial authority. He admitted that His Majesty's Government might have a sense of grievance in that the United States Government had never yet stated its claims, and he said that that aspect of the matter was being actively pursued and that a statement of the islands claimed when ready would be found to be modest (but that of course is a matter of opinion).

4. We were neither of us very cheerful at this point of the conversations but Mr. Moffat pointed out that one good feature of the situation was that the practical importance of islands and landing places was not very urgent at the present moment. He further thought it a good thing that the questions/

questions we have been discussing had not yet attracted the attention of the public. There was no political urgency to take them up and settle them hurriedly. He thought that it was best that they should remain in the background, and for this reason the State Department shared the view put forth in our memorandum that it might be advisable to avoid arbitration. I said that there might be wisdom in these views, and that it might perhaps be wise to allow time to pass rather than to run into a deadlock. I did not however know how long the questions at issue could be kept quiet, especially on the other shore of the Pacific where they might be of more actual importance than here or in Europe.

I have the honour to be,  
with the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble servant,

(SGD) R. C. LINDSAY

Mr. W. A. L. Mallet, C.B.E.,  
 Counselor at Large,  
 British Embassy,  
 Washington, D.C.