

18

Extract from minute of 387th meeting of O.D.C.
held on 31st May 1939.

(Am replaced by
extract from final
minutes)

So that there may be as little delay as possible, a copy of the draft minutes of the O.D.C. meeting on the 31st May has been obtained and enclosed, and I annex a draft telegram conson. ⁽¹¹⁾ conveying authority to the Governor and High Commissioner to proceed immediately with -

- (1) the creation of two new European companies of the Fiji Defence Force at Lautoka;
- (2) an approach to the Government of Tonga on the possibility of raising a Defence Force of one company;

and giving him the substance of the conclusions reached at the O.D.C. meeting on the other points discussed in ^{Part I +} the Report of the New Zealand Defence Conference. The minutes of the meeting have not brought out the political difficulties which are present in the case of Tonga and our treaty obligation to defend the Protectorate, but the matter can be left until we hear from the High Commissioner the result of his approach to the Tonga Government.

The question of the force to man the coast defence battery will have to wait until we hear from the Admiralty. The decisions of the New Zealand Government on the Air recommendations of the Defence Conference are in (5-B), but their decisions on the Army recommendations are not yet available. I have worded the draft telegram accordingly.

I understand that Part III of the Report - the Pacific air routes - is being dealt with on ~~ether~~ another file. The comments in paragraph 19 onwards

of

(3164/2)

of (7) from Sir H. F. Batterbee are interesting. Sooner or later the question of unattached islands will have to be discussed again.

I am minuting separately on 85239/39 on the subject of the R.N.V.R., about which there is not the same urgency as the "viti" is not expected to be completed before September.

Dr Wetherston

7.6.39

14 X Do. ——— See ——— 5/6/39
(In copy book 45 see of 1/5/39 from H. in N.Zaland.)

15 X Do. ——— See ——— 7/6/39
(In copy tel by me 7/6/39 to N.Zaland)

16 X Do. ——— See ——— 8/6/39
(In copy tel 155 see of 7/6/39 from N.Zaland)

17 X O.C. minute 343 ——— See ——— 7/6/39
(N.Z. Defence Conference)

1. I am afraid that, owing to much pressure of other work, I have held this up for some days.

2. I have now expanded somewhat Mr. Watherston's draft telegram and submit it for consideration.

I ought, perhaps, to draw attention to the following points:-

(a) the recommendation that Suva should be made a Category A defended port will have to be formally submitted to the C.I.D. In point of fact, however, there will be no difficulty about this, and Major Jacob, to whom I have spoken on the telephone, agrees that it will be safe to telegraph on the lines indicated in the draft;

(b)

(4 on Part I
of the file)

(b) as regards the proposed company in Tonga, the Governor stated in his telegram of the 15th May that if the principle of raising a Tongan company were accepted, he would address us "as to the proportion, if any, of the cost the Government of Tonga might be able and willing to contribute". I told the Committee the substance of this passage, and warned them that unless assistance could be promised from Imperial funds it was quite probable that the Tongan proposal could not be proceeded with. The Committee fully appreciated, I think, the peculiar position of Tonga in this matter, but nevertheless there was a very general feeling that there would be no case for assistance from Imperial funds towards the recurrent cost. In the circumstances, I think that we should be justified in taking the line indicated in the draft;

(12 on
6214/20A/39)

(c) the financial proposals in the Governor's despatch of the 17th January have not yet been seen by higher authority. I assume, however, that we can take the line indicated in the draft. Actually, even if Fiji has to increase its recurrent expenditure on Defence somewhat above the figure of £18,000 mentioned by the Governor, I should not regard this as a severe burden, since it would still only represent about 3 per cent. of the territory's revenue. This would be considerably less than a number of Dependencies are having to spend on defence, not to mention H.M.G. in the United Kingdom.

It

3. It seems to me that it will be desirable to get the concurrence of Service Departments and of the Dominions Office in the draft telegram. Thus the proposal that H.M.G. should bear half the cost of the landing grounds in Fiji will involve a provision on Air Votes, and Mr. Gilbert (to whom I have spoken on the telephone) thinks that before we make any definite statement on the subject the Finance Branch of the Air Ministry should see, so that they can make the requisite arrangements. Accordingly, I have added ~~the~~ draft letters to the Service Departments and the Dominions Office, sending them the draft telegram for concurrence.

4. I am sending forward separately a draft despatch concerning the proposed formation of a R.N.V.R. unit in Fiji.

Whee

13.6.1939.

On the financial side, I agree that Fiji can afford the expenditure proposed: & I do not think that it is necessary to consult Sir C Parkinson on this point, unless G.D. wish the M to go forward. But I should prefer to let the Treasury see what we are saying - if only because of the last sentence.

Admiral 14/6/39

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Major Frith (at 8)
Wing Cmdr Foster (at 11)
Gen. Dora C.O.
Capt. Budgeton (Army)
B W Gilbert (Army)

*W/dft ltr
ans 18 JUN 1939*

#23 Do. ————— See ————— 14/6/39

Copy D.C.S. 1	Mts of Proceedings	14/4/39 *
" 2	" "	15/4/39 *
" 3	" "	17/4/39 *
" 4	" "	18/4/39
" 5	" "	19/4/39
" 6	" "	20/4/39
" 7	" "	21/4/39
" 8	" "	24/4/39
" 9	" "	26/4/39
Dec (Subh) 1	" "	17/4/39 *
" " 2	" "	20/4/39 *
" " 3	" "	26/4/39 *
" " 4	" "	18/4/39
" " 5	" "	21/4/39 *
" (air) 1	" "	19/4/39 *
" " 2	" "	20/4/39 *
" " 5	" "	21/4/39 *
" (Strat) 1	" "	22/4/39

* Final editions to replace copies of the first edition already registered on file Part I

15/6/39

Mr. Bevin }
 Mr. Bigg } for perusal.
 Mr. Lee }

L. Smith 17/6/39

A copy of paras. 8 & 9 of the report of the Air Committee on the Policy in relation to the Trans. Pacific Air Route should be put on the geog. file dealing with unattached islands, and a copy of para. 8 on the main Islands file.

De Beathurst

20.6.39

Adm 20/6

(copy registered on 3/6/52 under name of Trans Pacific Air Service)

If a spare copy of the report of the Air Committee is available it would be desirable to have it registered (secret) with the files about the Trans.

Pacific air service

WJH:sm

20/6

You may care to see these.

No action is needed on this file,
apart from the revisions which
suggested in the above minutes.

Whee
20/6

M. E. Antiochus
20/6/39

24 ~~12~~ Do.

Sec.

21. 6. 39

Tra c. Tel. 68. Sec. fr. Gov. Gen. of New Zealand.
Report of the Pacific Defence Conference.

25 ~~13~~

Treasury.

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21. 6. 39

Adv. No 22. No comments.

26 ~~14~~

Admny.

—

21. 6. 39

Adv:
When the replies
to the 18-22 have
been received &
we are ready to
telegraph to Fiji
copy of 624/53B/39
ds 2 & 3.

27 Do

Sec -

23. 6. 39

Repe. dft tel. in 20. State concerns subject to observations stated.

Amir also replies.

Three

26/6

as usual.

28 Do

Sec -

28. 6. 39

TSC/els 71, 24/6/39, 176, 28/6/39 fr. New Zealand.

State action taken on the report, and points included in Gov. Gen's. speech to Parliament.

Pub 6

Three

24/6

as usual

29

Major IHC Firth

Com

30 JUN 1939

~~29~~

30

Wing Command. Foster

Com

30 JUN 1939

31

War Office

So

4/7/39

(Comments on draft tel enclosed with 18.)

32

A. King (Stevens)

6. 7. 39

Concern in draft tel reply is subject to considerations indicated.

I have incorporated in the draft telegram the amendments suggested by the Departments concerned. I have also been through it again with Mr. Watherston, in order to check a doubtful point about Ocean Island.

I suggest that it should now issue. The file might recirculate in order that we may consider whether further action will be necessary as regards the proposal that the War Office should supply certain arms and ammunition, etc. I understand from Major Mears that there is likely to be no difficulty about this, subject, of course, to the overriding consideration that any demands will have to take their due place in the priority list.

Whee

7.7.1939.

De Watherston

8.7.39

W.E. Anthony

12/7/39

33 TO Fiji let No. 112 — 12.7.39

34 O.A.C.

35 Dixon (D.O.)

36 Maj Genr Forster (Army)

37 Major Forster (W.O.)

38 Capt Budgeton (Army)

39 C W Dixon (D.O.)

40 Major Mears (W.O.)

33

14 JUL 1939

14/7

14/7

41 Do. Sec - 3.7.39

from NZ Land Mtr.
Trs of Lt. 7/6 to Lesching enclosing a note re
Aerodrome development - Pacific Islands.

42 Do. - Sec - 17.7.39

Trs of Lt 83 r63, 14/7 to New Zealand & Australia
re the Fiji Defence Force, coast defences at Suva,
the formation of a Infantry Company at Tonga, and
the proposal that a platoon from New Zealand
should be stationed at Tannier Island.

43 Do. - Sec - 19.7/39

Trs of Lt 138. Sec 7 re New Zealand re construction
of two landing grounds in Fiji, states that unless
work can be completed before the end of October
it will be almost impossible for either aerodrome to
be ready for use before July, 1940. Asks if replies
could be expedited.

44 War office - Sec - 19/7/39

Comments re Fiji Lt 112. concerning the financial
implications of the expansion programme.

45 Do. - 22/7/39

Trs of draft Lt. to New Zealand re landing grounds in
Fiji.

46

Lo -

Sec -

27/7/39

Tscy tel. 27/7 to New Zealand & Australia, stating that Govt. will agree that two landing grounds should be constructed - size, cost to be shared equally between U.K. New Zealand Govts

Unfortunately our main file about the New Zealand Defence Conference is temporarily missing. We can, however, telegraph forthwith to the Governor of Fiji on the lines of the annexed draft; I agreed with Mr. Pitblado that we would do this as soon as the Dominions Office had produced their telegram.

After the issue of the telegram Mr. Bigg and P. and M. Department should see.

Whee
1.8.1939.

607A
2/8
PWA
2/8

47 20 Fiji tel. 122 Secret. - cons - 1.8.39.

- 48 b.rr. Dixon (D.O.)
 - 49 Wang Comd R. W. Foster (A.M.)
 - 50 Major E. H. G. Firth (W.O.)
 - 51 Capt. D. A. Budgen Admrs
- w/c = 2 AUG 1939

52. Lo - Sec - 31.7.39

Tscy tel. to New Zealand. 26-29/7. re Armed Merchant Cruisers.

Noted has seen this no action.

SOE PART III

53 - Major Slope (W.O.) - 12/9