

BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.,

October 16th, 1939.

No. 1156.

My Lord,

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With reference to Sir Ronald Lindsay's despatch No. 401 of the 6th April, I have the honour to transmit to you the accompanying copy from the Federal Register of August 26th of a proclamation issued by the President on August 21st last "extending the period for the establishment of an adequate shipping service for, and deferring extension of the coastwise laws to, Canton Island."

2. I regret to state that owing to pressure of other work, this proclamation only recently came to my notice. Being somewhat puzzled as to its purpose, I instructed the Counsellor of this Embassy to raise the matter informally with Mr. Pierrepont Moffat at the State Department. Mr. Moffat explained that Pan-American Airways have had to send quantities of supplies to Canton Island for the preparation of their landing ground there. The only ship available to convey these supplies from the West Coast of the United States to the Island was a Norwegian vessel. The Department of Commerce, however, had found themselves compelled by the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 to refuse to give the Norwegian vessel clearance unless a certificate could be given by the State Department that Canton is not United States territory.

or/

The Right Honourable

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The Viscount Halifax, K. G.,

etc., etc., etc.

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or failing that unless an exception were made by proclamation. The State Department had found itself unable to give the required certificate, in view of the Anglo-American exchange of notes of April 6th, 1939. Consequently this proclamation had been issued ad hoc by the Executive in order to enable the said Norwegian ship to convey its cargo to the Island.

3. I assume that Your Lordship will not wish to raise any objection to this proclamation. It might have been more courteous of the United States Government to have informed His Majesty's Embassy of it before it was issued, and I would suggest that if at any time His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have occasion to issue an order-in-council affecting Canton and Enderbury Islands, prior notification should be made to the United States Government.

I have the honour to be,

with the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient
humble servant,

(99D) LOTHIAN

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