

(A 6980/21/45).

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

20th October, 1939.

Dear Acheson,

I am sorry to have been so long in replying to your letter to Balfour No. 86410/39 of the 10th October, about the proposal to establish a post office in Canton Island.

We are advised that while the Anglo-American exchange of notes of the 6th April leaves the question of the administration of Canton and Enderbury Islands very much in the air, the manner in which the two officials mentioned therein are to exercise the powers of administration, and the special joint ad hoc régime to be set up, are to be determined (under Articles 2 and 3 of the exchange of notes) by the two Governments in consultation. This being so, it seems to us that it is out of the question for us to claim the right to set up a post office without previous consultation with the United States Government; this, indeed, seems to be precisely one of the things which it was intended should be settled in that way. It does not appear that consultation would necessarily involve the establishment of a joint post office, but even if it did this would afford in our view no reason for not consulting the Americans if it was the intention of the exchange of notes of the 6th April that we should do so in such a matter.

Will you let us know whether you would like us to instruct Lord Lothian accordingly?

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) J.V. PEROWNE.

A.B. Acheson, Esq.,  
Colonial Office.