

No. 18.

New Zealand, Dominions No. 238.

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 31st March, 1919.

I have the honour to request Your Excellency to inform your Ministers that it is understood that the French Government propose to call an International Conference of the Allied Nations at Paris to discuss meteorological questions of common interest in the course of this year. The date of the proposed Conference has not yet been fixed, but it will be communicated to you in due course.

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2. The various parts of the British Empire occupy positions of great importance in relation to nearly all questions of common interest in meteorology, but the Director of the Meteorological Office in London informs me there is, at the moment, no organized machinery for the exchange of views between the responsible meteorological authorities of the several parts of the Empire. It appears that the ordinary avenues of correspondence became more and more restricted as the war went on, and it is felt that they should now be reopened on more defined lines, because the scope of meteorological work has been very much widened by the experience gained during the war of national and Imperial requirements. In particular aerial navigation, which is likely to form a new means of communication even between the most widely separated parts of the Empire, is more dependent than other means of communication upon effective knowledge of meteorological conditions.

3. It would place the meteorological authorities of the United Kingdom, as well as those of the oversea dominions, in a much more favourable position for arriving at a common understanding at the International Conference of the Allied Powers, representing a great variety of interests, in as many languages, if they had first an opportunity of exchanging between themselves information as to the position and progress of meteorological work in their own countries and their views as to the best ways of securing helpful co-operation.

4. His Majesty's Government propose, therefore, to invite the dominions and colonies which have organized meteorological services to send delegates to a preliminary conference of meteorologists of the various States of the Empire, to be held in London. It is thought that this conference could be held most conveniently during the week preceding the proposed International Conference at Paris, and its date will therefore depend on that of the latter Conference.

5. The agenda of the proposed preliminary conference may be summarized under the following heads:—

- (i.) The arrangements of observations and hours for (a) telegraphic reports, (b) climatological data with a view to the combination of the data in comprehensive maps for general meteorological purposes and the navigation of the air.
- (ii.) The organization of observations of the upper air, supplementary to the ordinary observations of meteorological stations, to meet the needs of aerial navigation.
- (iii.) The relation of the general meteorological services of the State to the special requirements of the Naval, Military, and Aerial services, which include, among others, the effect of meteorological conditions upon ballistics, sound-ranging, chemical warfare, and internal-combustion engines.

6. I shall be glad if you will inform me by telegraph whether your Ministers would wish to send a delegate to the preliminary conference, and, if so, if you will furnish me with the name of the person selected.

7. No formal invitations to the International Conference have yet been issued, but it is of course assumed that any delegate coming to the preliminary conference in London will attend also the International Conference.

I have, &amp;c.,

MILNER.

Governor-General His Excellency the Right Hon. the Earl of Liverpool,  
P.C., G.C.M.G., G.B.E., M.V.O., &c.