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Ext 2568/46 'Details regarding Transfer of U.N.O. Work to Communications & Overseas Dept'

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
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About this record

This file consists of correspondence between the Government of India, External Affairs Department and the Foreign Office regarding communication protocol between the Government of India and the newly established UNO. [United Nations Office].

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POLITICAL (EXTERNAL) DEPARTMENT.


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SUBJECT:

Details regarding Transfer
of U.N.O. Work to Communications
& Overseas Dept

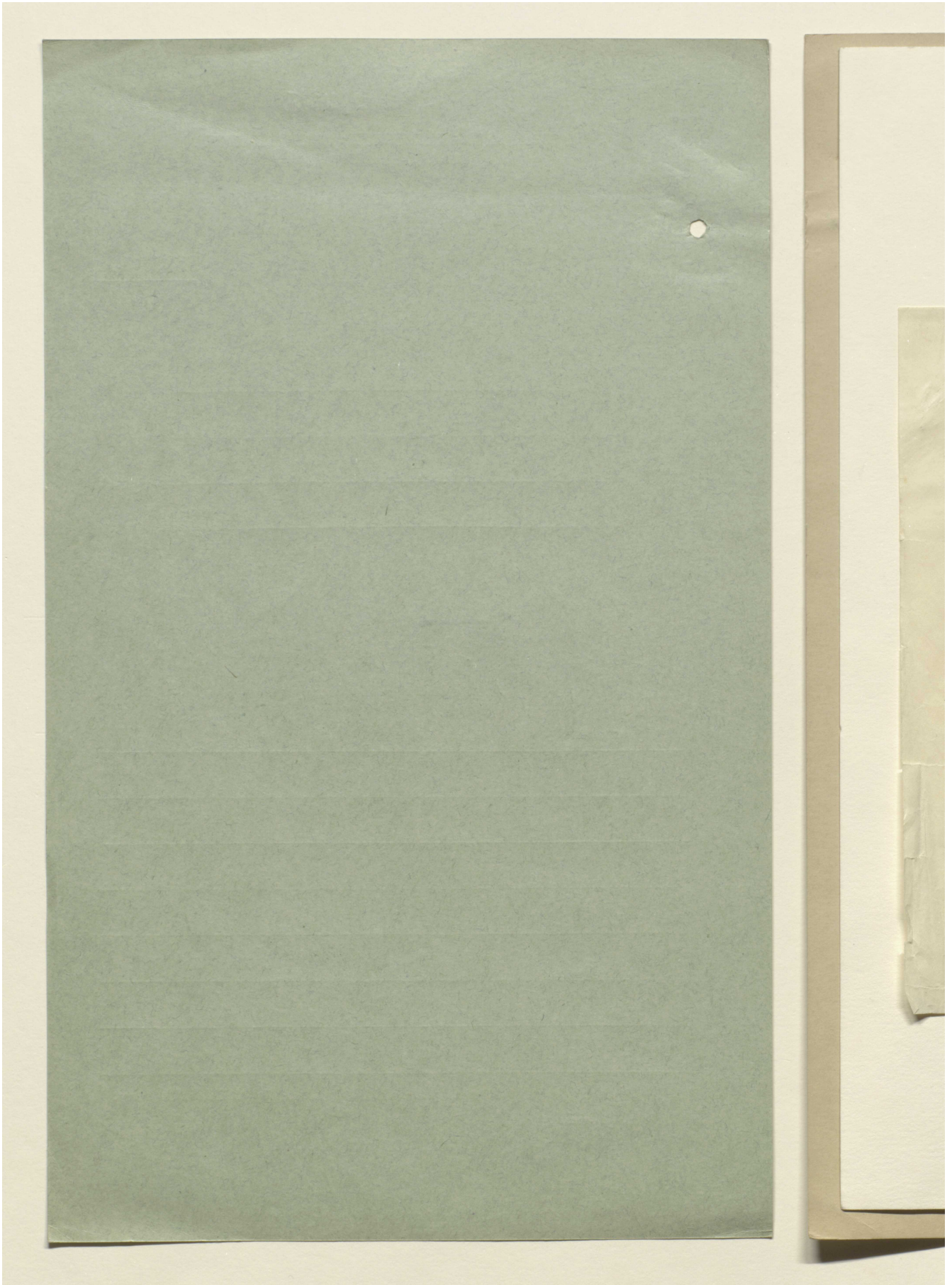
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Ext 2568/46 'Details regarding Transfer of U.N.O. Work to Communications & Overseas Dept' [2r] (3/12)

FILE COPY *Registering* (2)
1) please circulate to department & put in Register 9/14

MR. DONALDSON
Mr. Cleary
Mr. Harrison

E.& O. 2789/46

EXT 2568 1946.

5th April, 1946.

INDEXED

Dear Gore-Booth,

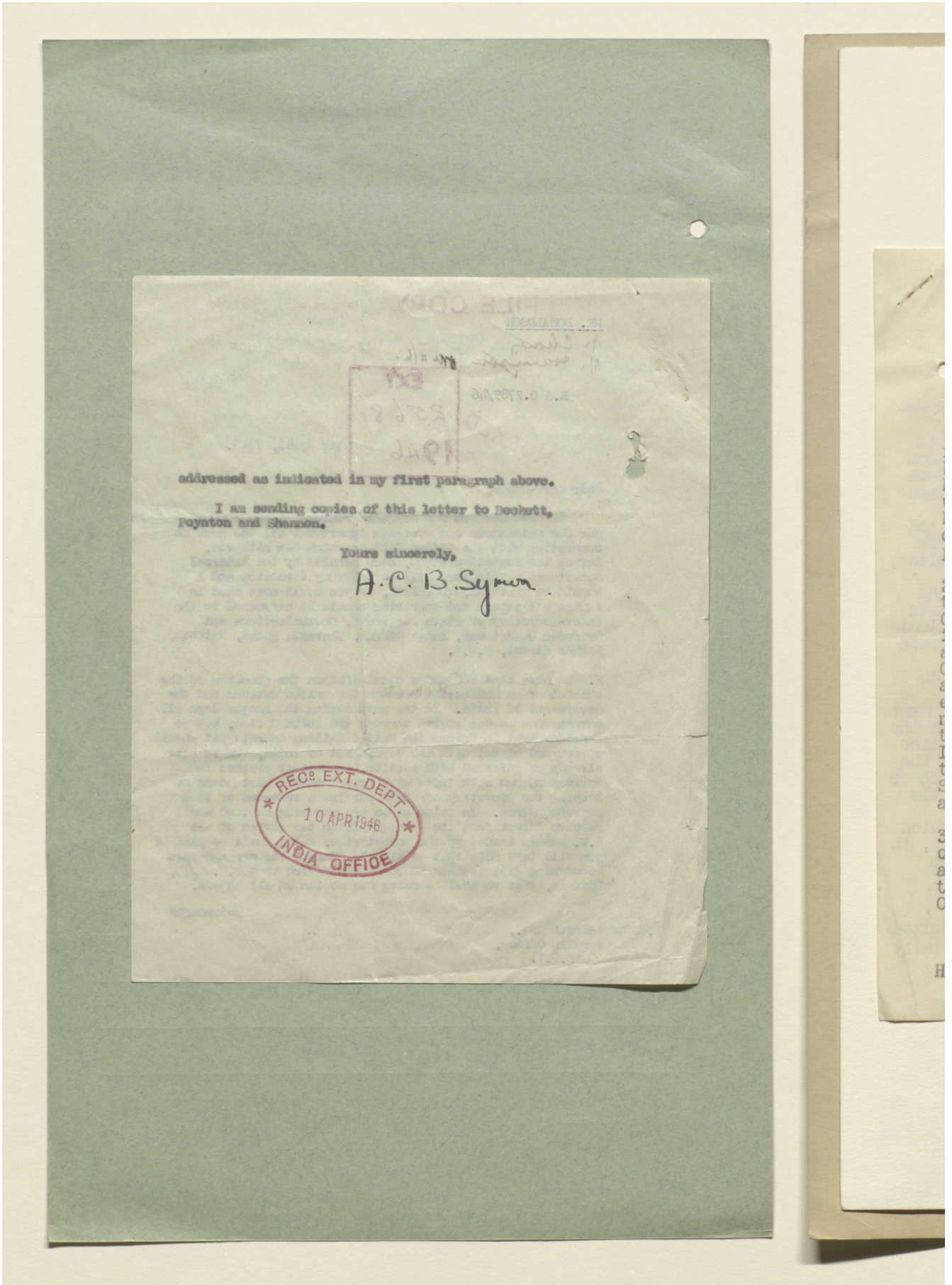
We have decided for domestic reasons to transfer to our Communications and Overseas Department all the work in connection with the United Nations which has hitherto, during the formative stage, been handled by the External Department. This work will be under my direction and I should be grateful, therefore, if you would note that in future all papers and enquiries should be addressed to the Under-Secretary of State for India, Communications and Overseas Department, India Office, Clarence House, Matthew Parker Street, S.W.1.

2. We have also had under consideration the question of the channel of communication between the United Nations and the Government of India. In the past during the League days all correspondence was routed through the India Office, but we consider that in future the United Nations Secretariat should correspond direct with the Government of India, and we have already so informed both parties. We are at present in correspondence with India with regard to the best means of keeping the Secretary of State for India informed of this correspondence. In doing so we are assuming that we shall receive direct from the Foreign Office two copies of all U.N. papers issued by the Secretariat, and I shall be glad if you will take note that we wish to confine the arrangements concerning distribution to the India Office in A.O.U. 46/73, that is, that we shall receive two copies of all papers,

/addressed

P.H. Gore-Booth Esq.,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

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COPY (External Dept.)

3

16th March, 1946

My dear Weightman,

We have had under consideration recently how, so far as the India Office is concerned, matters arising from India's membership of the United Nations should be handled and in particular what is the best procedure - having regard to the existing constitutional position and while it continues - for enabling this Office to play a helpful part when required and what means should be devised for keeping us adequately informed for the purpose.

2. It is quite clear that, in future, all communications between the United Nations Secretariat and the Government of India should be direct. In some instances, already letters and telegrams have been addressed directly by the Secretary General to the Government of India in the External Affairs Department, although, on other occasions, telegrams and correspondence have come to us for despatching. We are, however, now telling the Secretariat that in future all communications should be addressed direct to the Government of India, and not to this Office. Similarly, we suggest that communications from the Government of India to the Secretariat should be sent direct. No doubt you will agree that this is the correct procedure to adopt.

3. The result will, of course, be that the Secretary of State will not now become automatically aware, as they arise, of points which may concern him. We shall continue to receive, through the good offices of the Foreign Office, copies of all United Nations papers generally

issued, /

H. Weightman, Esq., C.I.E.
Secretary to the Government of India (External Affairs
New Delhi. Dept.)

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issued, but we shall not receive copies of any correspondence specifically passing between the United Nations Secretariat and the Government of India - to take an example, we shall not be aware of invitations to individuals or to the Government of India to serve on Commissions or Conferences, nor the date and place of their convening. Nor should we receive, under these arrangements, copies of communications from the Government of India to the Secretariat, or of briefs given to Indian delegates to United Nations Assemblies, Council Meetings, or Conferences. As this is an entirely new problem, which did not arise during the days of the League of Nations, the Secretary of State would like to have the views of the Government of India as to the best method by which he can be kept informed of matters with which he is concerned. In such matters, his function is already somewhat similar to that of the Secretary of State for the Dominions. He will continue to act as the link between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government as members of the Commonwealth, and must be ready to bring to the notice of either Government at a sufficiently early stage the views or proposals of the one party which may affect or cause difficulty to the other. (For example, if His Majesty's Government should contemplate proposing certain drastic reforms with regard to narcotics which the Government of India could not in practice apply, it would be the Secretary of State's duty to bring the Government of India's difficulties to the Notice of His Majesty's Government.

4. Among the subjects which may be raised in a United Nations Organisation context there are many, especially

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in the fields of defence and external affairs, in relation to which the Government of India's policy and activities are framed in close concert with the Secretary of State, and on which therefore it is evidently necessary that the Secretary of State should be fully and continuously informed. So far as concerns other subjects with respect to which the India Office has in practice a less close concern, it is always possible that something primarily related thereto may impinge in some way on a topic in which the Secretary of State is more directly interested, and again there are likely to be many occasions when it will be of advantage to India that the India Office may be aware of what is passing between India and the United Nations Organisation in order to be able to put at the service of the Government of India its knowledge of connected matters arising in other quarters, and to see that Indian interests are taken into account in any consideration by His Majesty's Government of related questions. For these reasons, and since it may be almost prohibitive without undue labour and delay to extract from a mass of papers and correspondence the points which are or may be of interest to the India Office, you may possibly find it most convenient to make some arrangement which will secure that we should receive a copy of all communications passing between the United Nations Organisation and the Government of India and of any instructions given to the Government of India representatives or delegations.

5. It has occurred to us that it might be convenient, once the Organisation is housed in the United States, for the Government of India, if they contemplate an arrangement by which papers from the United Nations Organisation Headquarters are received by a permanent

Government /

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Government of India representative in the United States of America, to secure that the latter should transmit one copy to this Office at the same time as he sends them to the Government of India. This, however, would cover only communications from the Secretariat to India. For communications the other way and for briefs we should presumably have to look to the Government of India.

6. We shall be grateful, therefore, if you will give consideration to this matter and perhaps address the Secretary of State officially as early as possible, since the United Nations Organisation Secretariat is already in the process of moving to its interim Headquarters in the United States of America.

7. Turning to a more domestic aspect of the question, it will probably be helpful to you to know how it has been decided that incoming papers on the United Nations Organisation matters should be dealt with internally on receipt in this Office. In the formative stage of the Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco Conferences, and later during the Preparatory Commission and the first part of the first General Assembly (which might be called the constituent stage) the External Department has, as a provisional arrangement, taken charge of the papers, and has acted as the co-ordinating Department. For example, a member of the External Department was attached to the United Kingdom Delegation during the Conference in London for the purpose of providing liaison between the Indian Delegation and the United Kingdom and Dominion Delegations in matters affecting India. Again, apart from recording the mass of papers received from the Secretariat, and from the United Kingdom Delegation, the External Department have also been responsible for the general co-ordination of United Nations Organisation matters of concern to other

departments /

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departments in the India Office, by initiating action and consulting the appropriate authorities.

8. In the light of experience it has, however, now been decided that, as the bulk of the work is likely to concern the Economic and Overseas Department more directly than any other Department of the India Office, the whole of the papers should, in the first instance, be taken by this Department. It is, therefore, taking them over forthwith, and we shall be glad if - subject to what is said in paragraph 9 below - you will address this Department in future on all United Nations Organisation topics. Actually, the E. & O. Department is in process of reorganisation and it is likely that the branch of it which will handle United Nations Organisation matters will be renamed within the next few weeks. We shall let you know the title of the reorganised department as soon as possible.

9. Very diverse matters are likely to be raised from time to time under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation and it is not, of course, intended that this Department in its capacity as the Department handling United Nations Organisation work should itself deal with the matters of substance so arising. It will receive, record and distribute United Nations Organisation papers and any communications concerned with the functioning of the United Nations Organisation, and the handling of matters by, or in relation to, the United Nations Organisation. It will have the task of following the relationship of one subject with another, of providing the United Nations Organisation "slant", and generally of advising other departments here on the United Nations Organisation aspect of subjects that come

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within their purview. It will also deal with any question that may arise here in regard to the structure and working of the United Nations Organisation itself. Insofar, however, as any question of substance arising out of dealings with or by the United Nations Organisation relates to, for example, external affairs or financial policy, it is contemplated that the work on the subject matter and any correspondence thereon with the Government of India would be done by our External or Financial Department respectively, and so on in the case of other subjects. This would be done in consultation - so far as concerns the United Nations Organisation aspect - with the E. & O. Department. We imagine that some similar arrangement may be adopted at your end, as respects the functions in this connexion of the several Departments of the Government of India, but should be glad to have this confirmed or to know what you propose to do in this respect.

10. All the above arrangements - actual or proposed - are, as is indicated in the first paragraph, conceived in the light of current experience and of existing relationships; but as it cannot be foretold how and when the situation may be basically altered, it will be understood that they must be regarded as quite provisional.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) D. T. Monteath

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