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Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq'

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	IOR/L/PS/12/2896
Date(s)	10 Feb 1940-28 Jun 1940 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
Extent and Format	1 file (46 folios)
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About this record

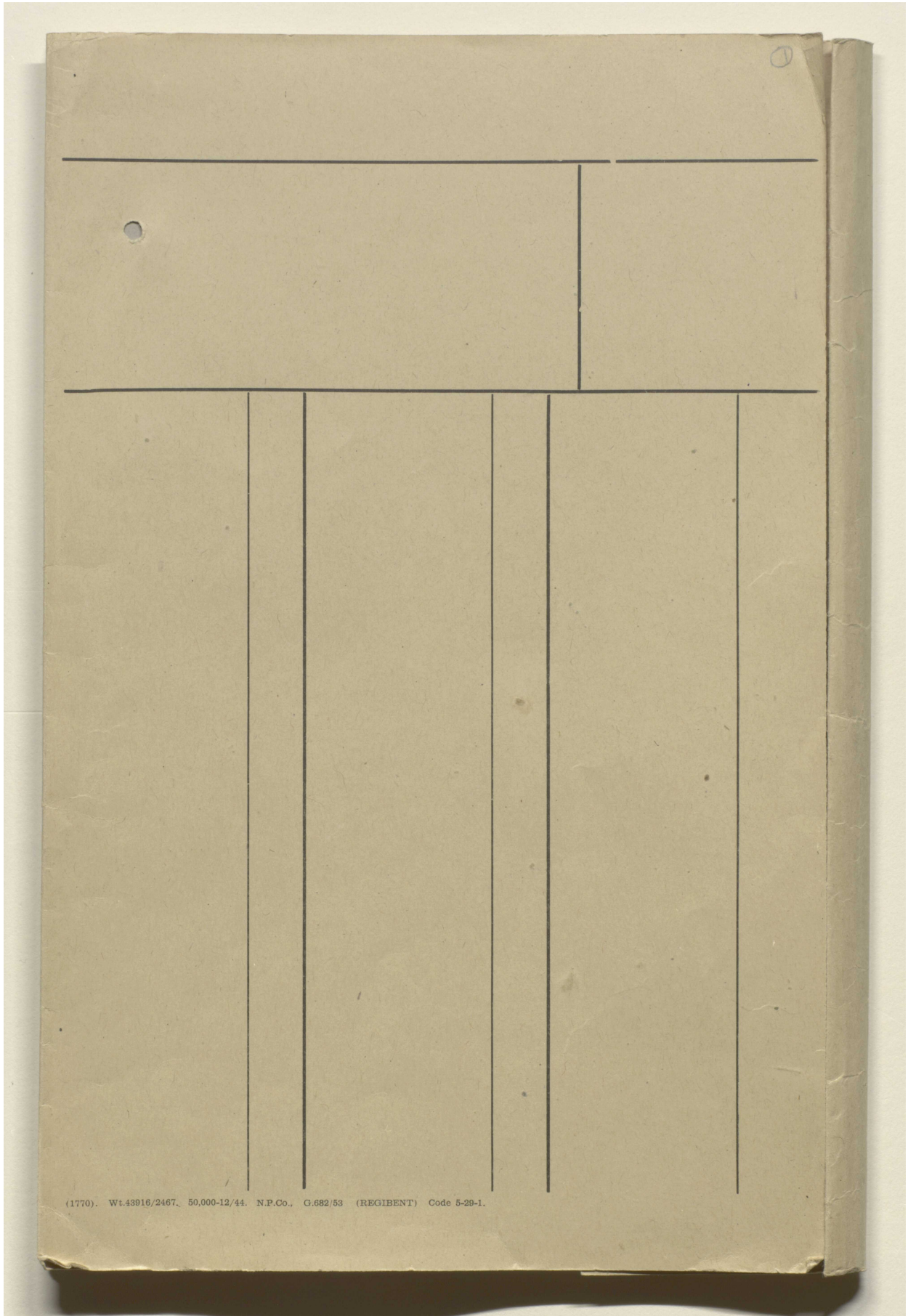
The file contains papers relating to a tour by Sir Basil Newton, HM Ambassador to Iraq, to the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, visiting Sharja [Sharjah], Muscat, Bahrain, Basra, Fao [Al-Faw], and Abadan.

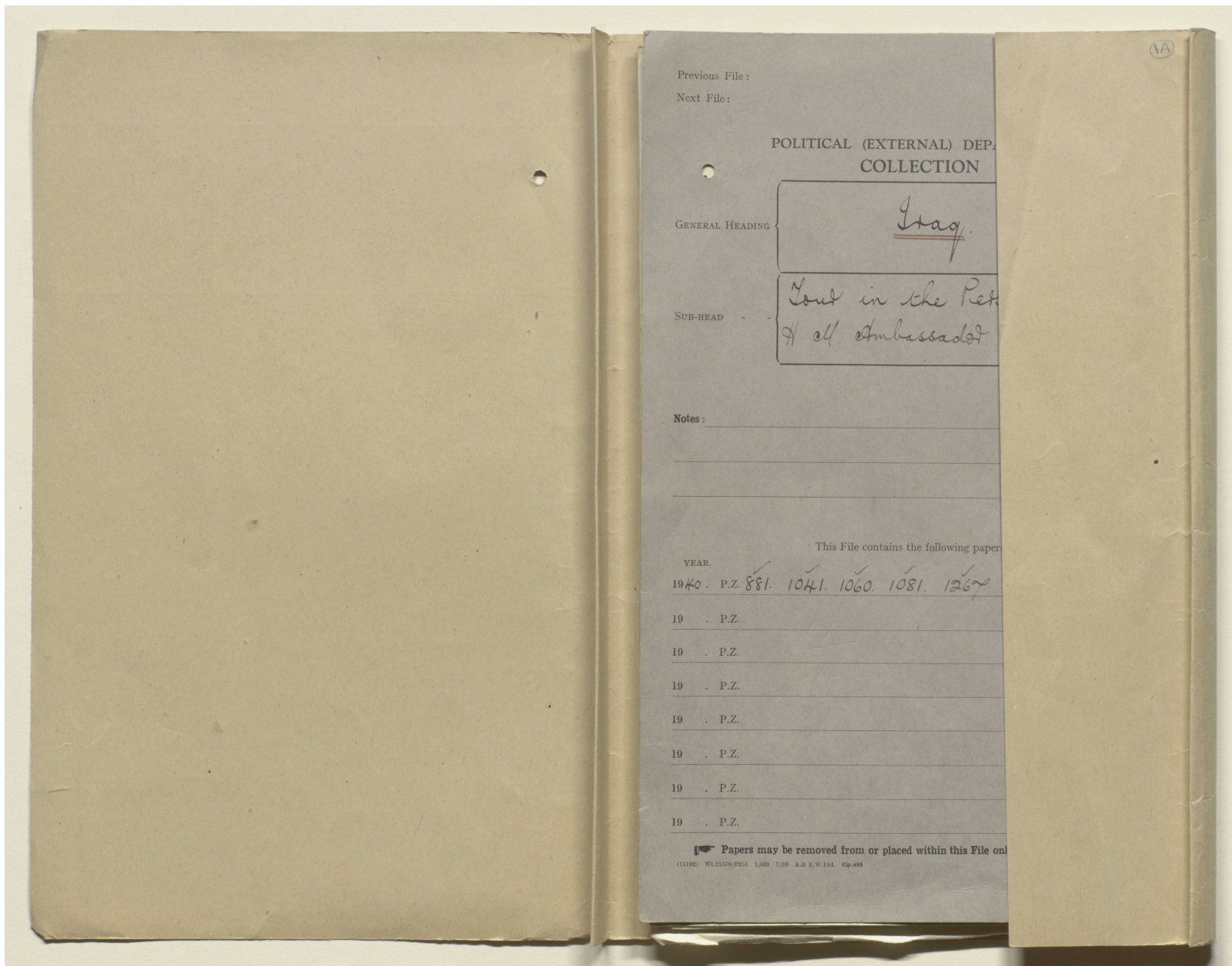
The file mostly consists of the following:

- Correspondence between the India Office (Roland Tennyson Peel) and the External Affairs Department of the Government of India.
- Correspondence between the India Office and the Foreign Office.
- Copy correspondence between Newton and the Foreign Office, including a copy of a despatch from Newton to Viscount Halifax (Edward Frederick Lindley Wood), Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, containing Newton's impressions and observations formed on the tour, and enclosing an account of his tour.

The file includes a divider, which gives lists of correspondence references contained in the file by year. This is placed at the back of the correspondence.

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(1/98)





Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [2r] (3/98)

Previous File :
Next File :

No. 17
File 34

POLITICAL (EXTERNAL) DEPARTMENT
COLLECTION

GENERAL HEADING { Iraq. IOR: L/PS/12/2896

SUB-HEAD { Tour in the Persian Gulf of
H. M. Ambassador in Iraq

Notes :

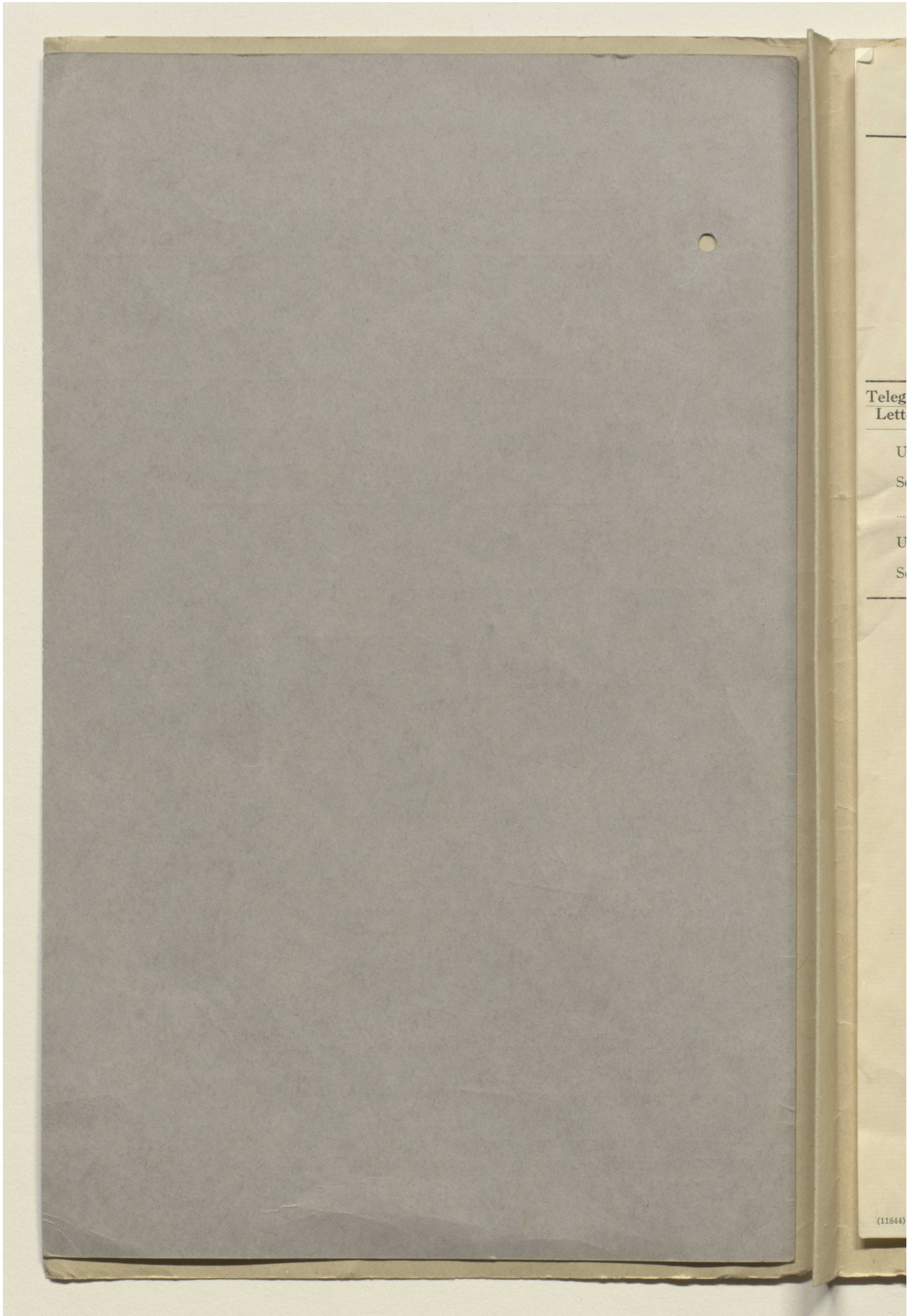
This File contains the following papers :—

YEAR.	P.Z.
1940	881. 1041. 1060. 1081. 1267. 2274. 2744
19	P.Z.
19	P.Z.
19	P.Z.
19	P.Z.
19	P.Z.
19	P.Z.
19	P.Z.

Papers may be removed from or placed within this File only by the Political Registry.

(11192) Wt.21570/P251 1,000 7/59 A & E.V.154. Cp.685

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [2v]
(4/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [3r]
(5/98)

SECRET. ³ ²

Political Department.

NOTES FOR REGISTRY.

REGISTER NO.

P. z.

2744/40

Telegram from Letter	19 4.e...	Initials.	SUBJECT.
Under Secretary	23. 5	AM	<p><u>Persian Gulf.</u></p> <p>Account of tour by Sir Basil Newton, H.M.Ambassador, Bagdad.</p>
Secretary of State			
..... Pol. Committee	31. 5	AM	
Under Secretary			
Secretary of State			

FOR USE BY DEPARTMENT ONLY.

28 JUN 1940
SEEN
POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Sir Basil Newton, H.M.Ambassador Bagdad, has written a most readable account of his recent visit to the Persian Gulf and has accompanied it with a despatch to the Foreign Office summarising his impressions and giving his comments.

The tour which was made by R.A.F. plane as far as Muscat, returning by the Weekly Steamship Service to Bahrein and thence by plane to Basra took 19 days. Sir Basil spent two days only in Muscat, his visit coinciding with the absence of H.H. the Sultan. It is with Muscat, however, that he deals mainly in his comments.

Sir Basil was much impressed with the development of oil production along the Hasa Coast and in Bahrein. He foresees that the vast potential oil resources in the Arabian littoral and the Trucial Coast and the consequent development in communications and enrichment of these States may lead to exploitations and foreign incursions. He speaks highly of the impressions he received of the prevailing tranquil pro-British atmosphere, and comments that whereas in Koweit, Bahrein, and the Trucial States we can by treaty control foreign activities, our

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(6/98)

SECRET
Political Department
REGISTER NO. P.
NOTES FOR REGISTRY

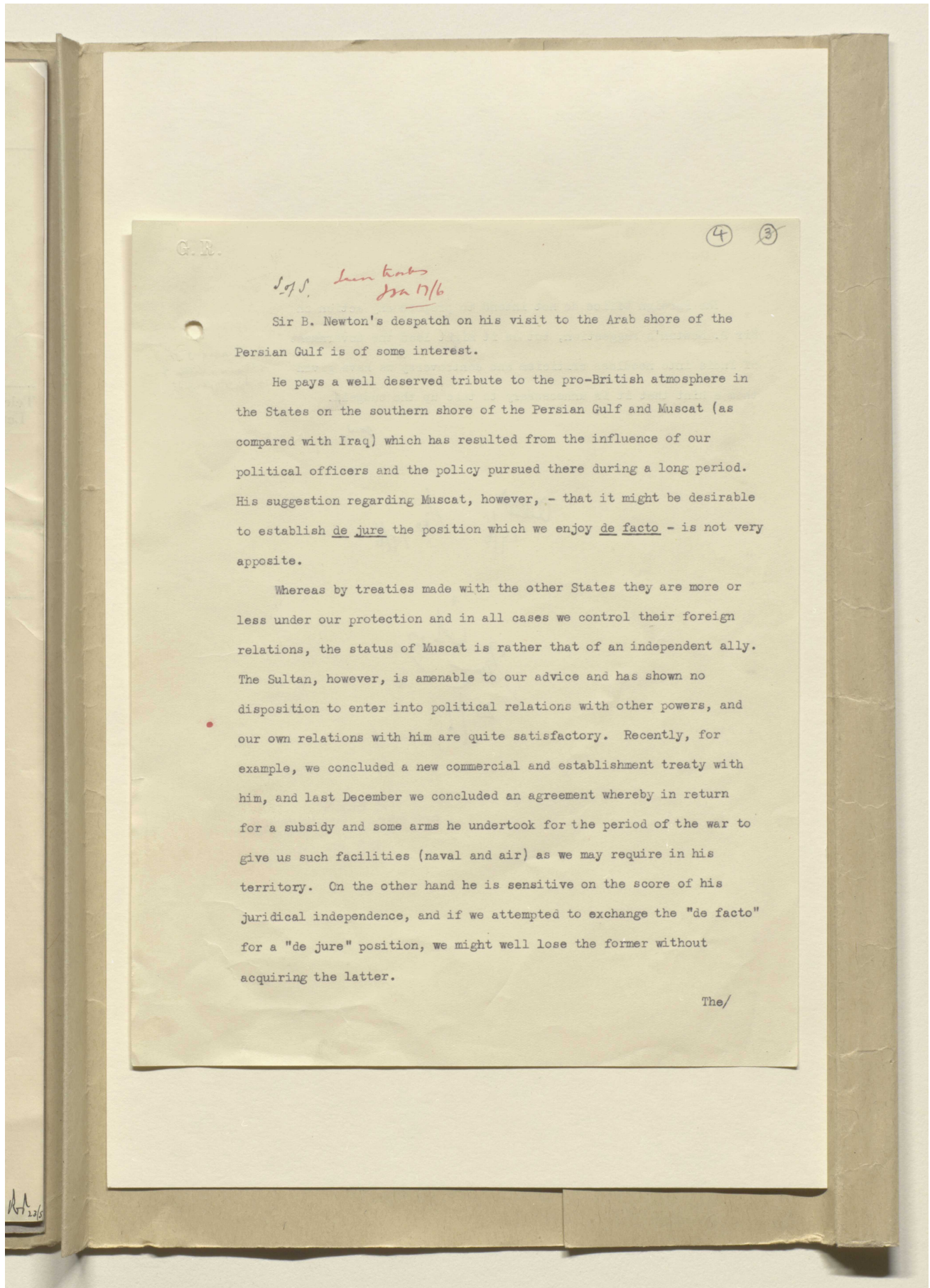
international position in Muscat seems to be less secure. He considers that this is a favourable time to use our present excellent de facto relations with the Sultan to establish our position de jure and thus guard against an uncertain future of possible foreign political intrusions and influence. In view of Mr. Caroe's remarks at para. 3 of his d.o. letter of the 9th April (P.Z. 2274/40 flagged) it will be interesting to see the Government of India's reactions to Sir Basil Newton's comments. To do him justice he remarks that if safeguards for the future should be desirable no doubt "the authorities directly concerned" will draw attention to the matter, but he adds that consideration should be given to the question at the Foreign Office as they also are concerned with the maintenance of British predominance in the Arabian peninsula.

for information Boyle
22/5/40

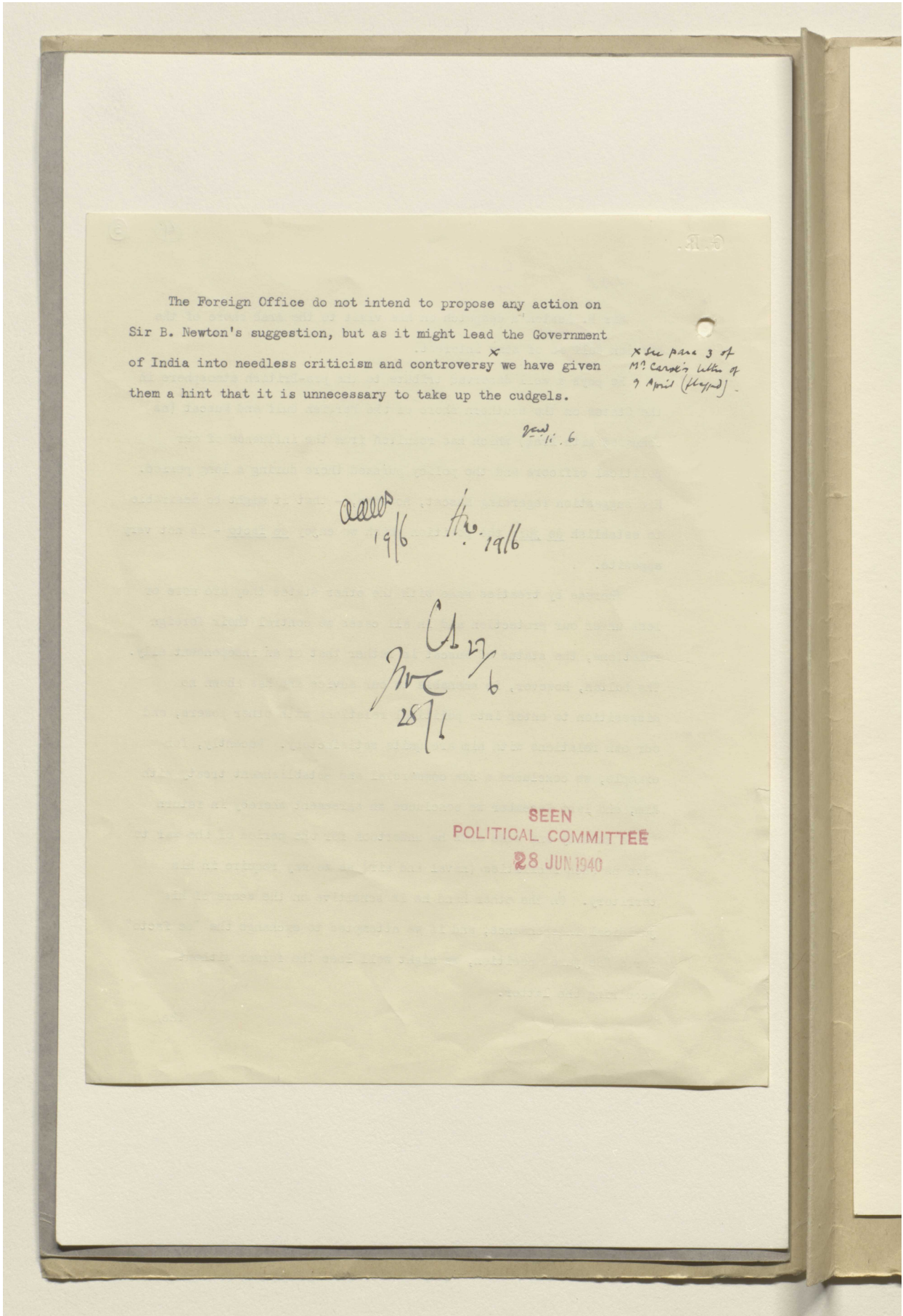
It is proposed to send a copy of the papers to the Govt. of India without a covering letter & leave it to them to "take the sting out" to Sir B. Newton's comments, if they think fit. I do not myself feel that his remarks on H.M.G.'s policy in Muscat are an unwarrantable intrusion even though Muscat (except in consular matters) is outside his official province. It is a legitimate suggestion that we should strengthen our position in Muscat de jure, but I do not think it wise. Something of the kind has more than once been considered, & I think the attempt would do more harm than good, possibly not with the French, whose practical interest in Muscat is now negligible, but with the present Sultan who is intensely jealous of his independence. So long as we are predominant in the Middle East the Sultan and his successors will lean on us; if we lose our predominance paper agreements will avail little. Hence I would not take the initiative in undertaking consideration of the ambassador's suggestion, if the Foreign Office ask for our views we can then formulate them in consultation with the local authorities.

It would certainly be very unwise at this juncture - with the possibility of Italy coming in against us - to do anything which might suggest to the Sultan that we have designs on his heavily preserved independence. In return for subsidies, the Sultan has agreed to give us the necessary facilities required by the Navy as an area for the war, and we can be content with that position. Only if the Sultan were again seriously to talk of retiring to Zofar and leaving the rest of the state to look after itself, would it be reasonable to consider our relationships with Muscat. In any case, we can await the G.O.I.'s comments in the first place. H.M. 22/5

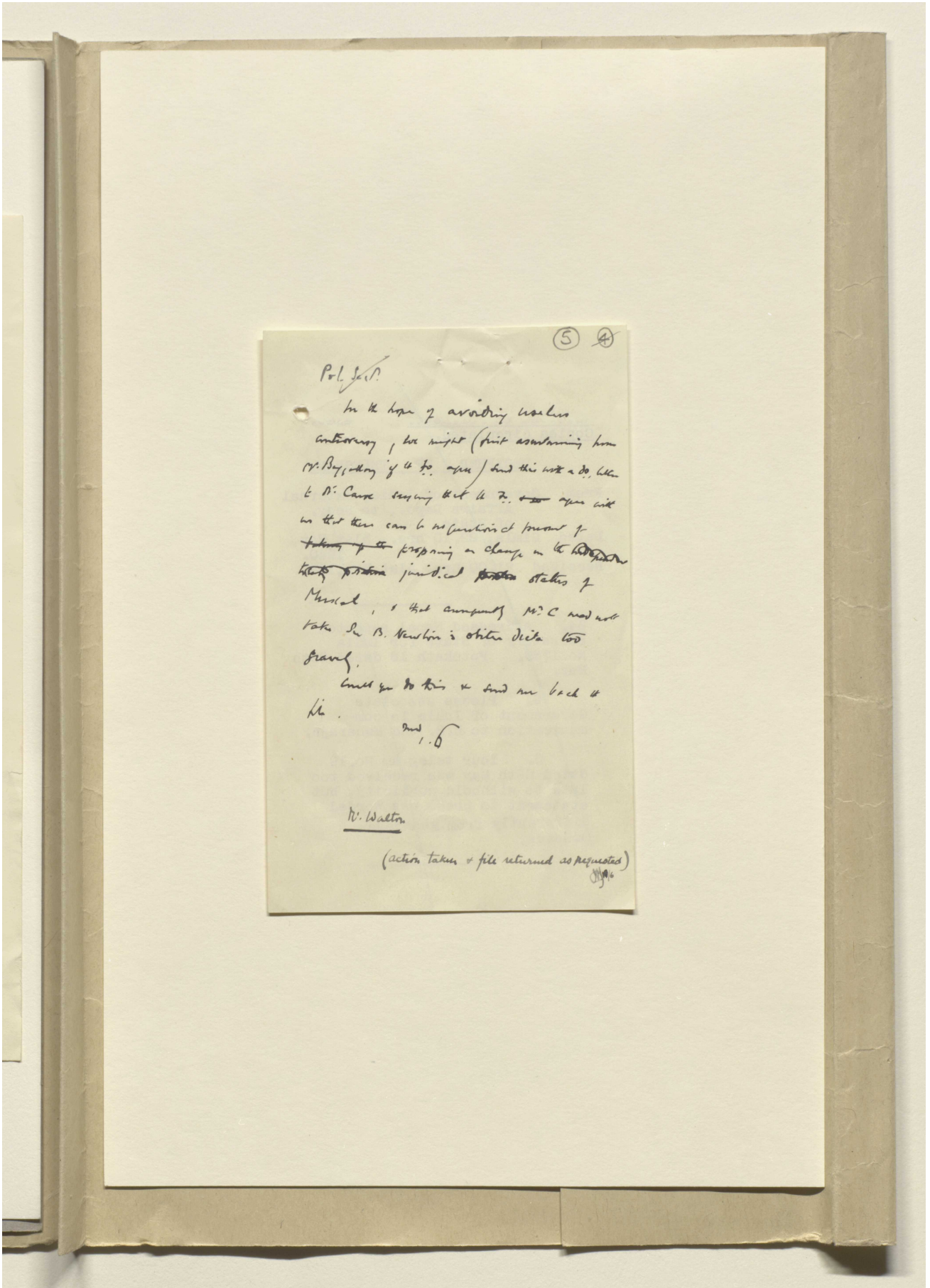
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [4r]
(7/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [4v]
(8/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [5r]
(9/98)



Pol. Secy.

(5) (4)

In the hope of avoiding useless
controversy, we might (first ascertaining from
Mr. Bay, whether it is to open) send this note to Mr. Carr,
to Mr. Carr saying that the ~~to~~ open will
be that there can be no jurisdiction of process of
~~the~~ the proposed change in the ~~jurisdiction~~
~~the~~ ~~jurisdiction~~ ~~status~~ of
Mosul, & that accordingly Mr. C need not
take Mr. Bay's objection into
account.

Could you do this & send me back it
ple.
and
1.6

W. Walton

(action taken & file returned as requested)
WJW

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [5v]
(10/98)

Allocated to For. Dept. 4140.
Copies circulated.

DECYPHER OF TELEGRAM.

From Government of India, External
Affairs Dept., to Secy.
of State.

Dated Simla, 22.10 hrs., 31st May,
1940.

Received 21.00 hrs. 31st May, 1940.

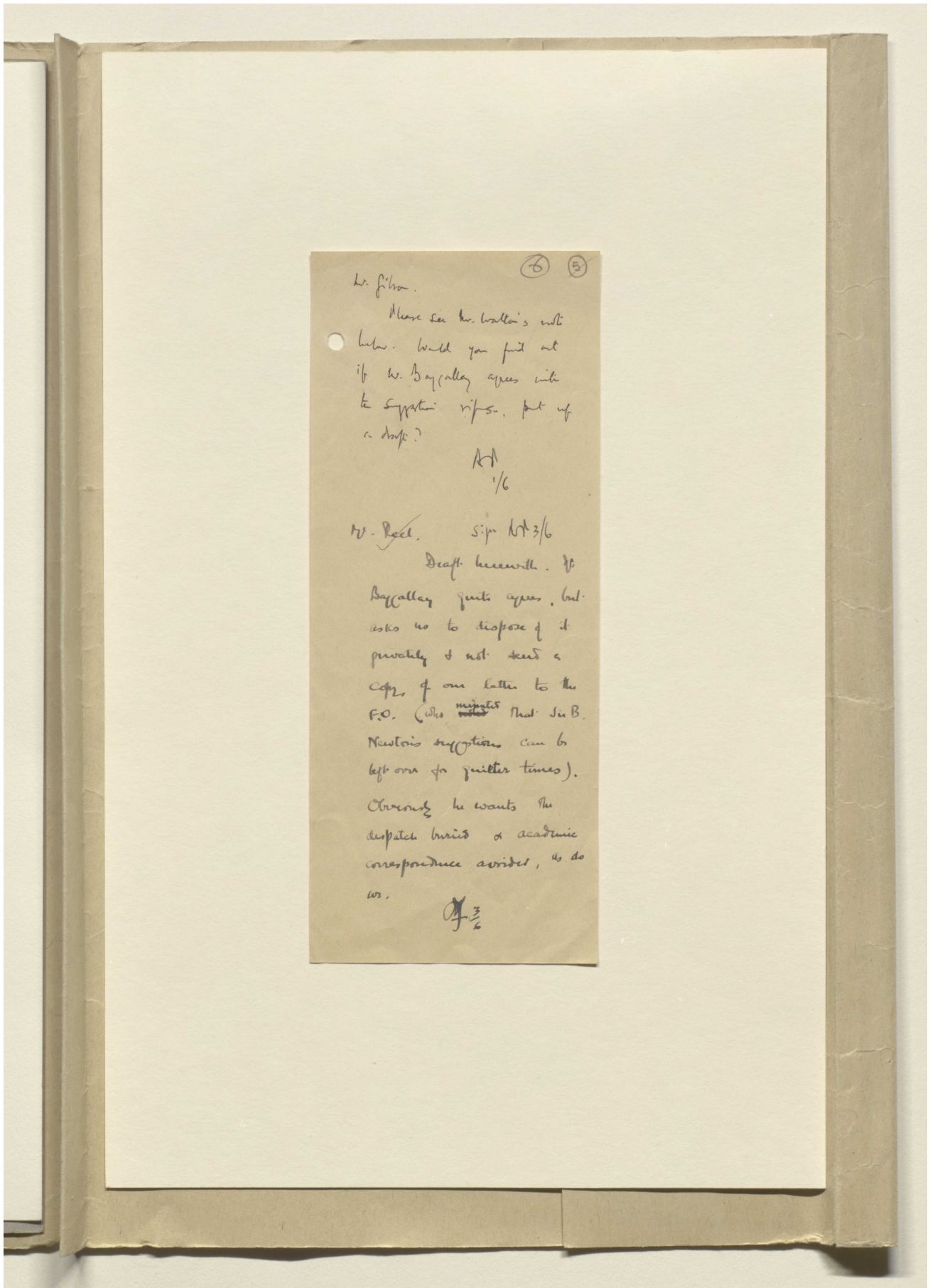
X

34. Addressed Nepal repeated
Secretary of State for India
No.1789. Fotokath 18 dated 29th
May.

2. Please associate
Government of India in com-
munication to H.H. the Maharaja.

3. Your telegram No.19
dated 29th May was received too
late to withhold publicity, but
statement to press was worded
differently from Maharaja's
message.

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(11/98)



Mr. Fisher.

(6) (5)

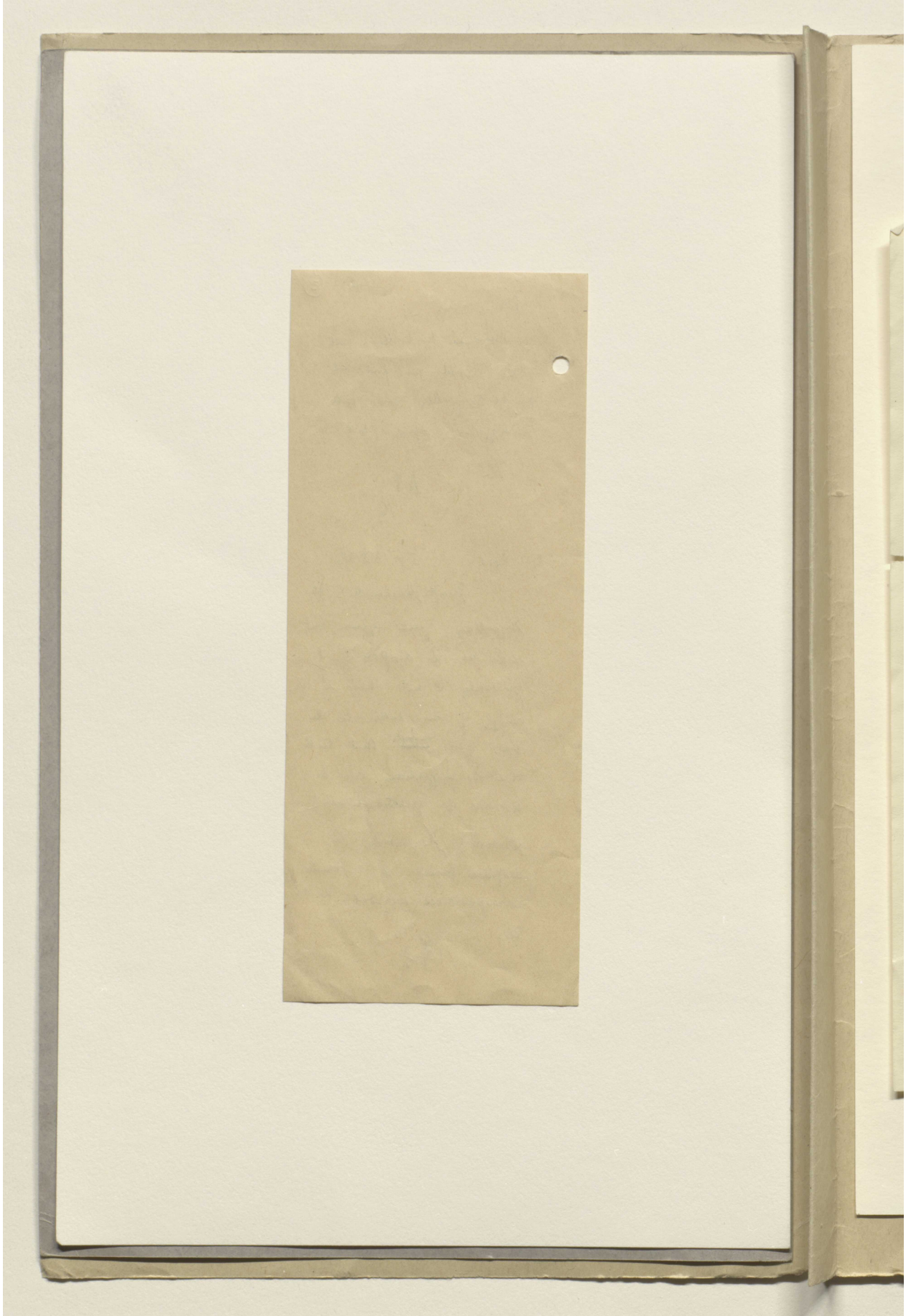
Please see Mr. Walker's note
below. Would you find out
if Mr. Baycalley agrees with
the suggestion referred to, put up
a draft?

A.H.
1/6

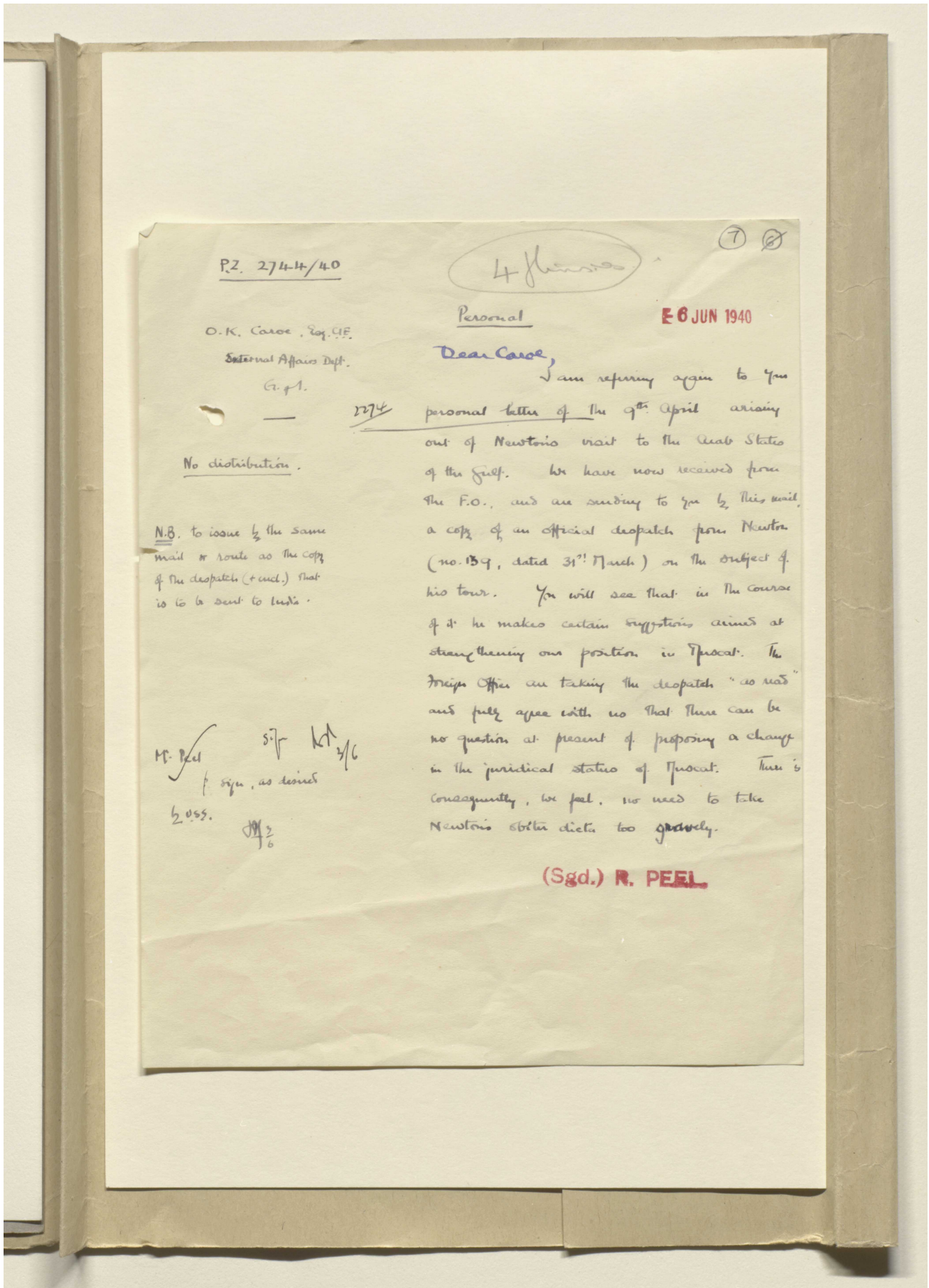
Mr. Reed. Sign A.H. 3/6

Draft herewith. Mr.
Baycalley quite agrees, but
asks us to dispose of it
privately & not send a
copy of our letter to the
F.O. (also ~~not~~ ^{mention} that Sir B.
Newton's suggestions can be
left over for quieter times).
Obviously he wants the
dispatch brief & academic
correspondence avoided, as do
we.

A.H.
3/6



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(13/98)



P.Z. 2744/40

4 flowers

7 8

O.K. Caroe, Esq. C.F.
External Affairs Dept.
G.P.O.

Personal

6 JUN 1940

Dear Caroe,

274

No distribution.

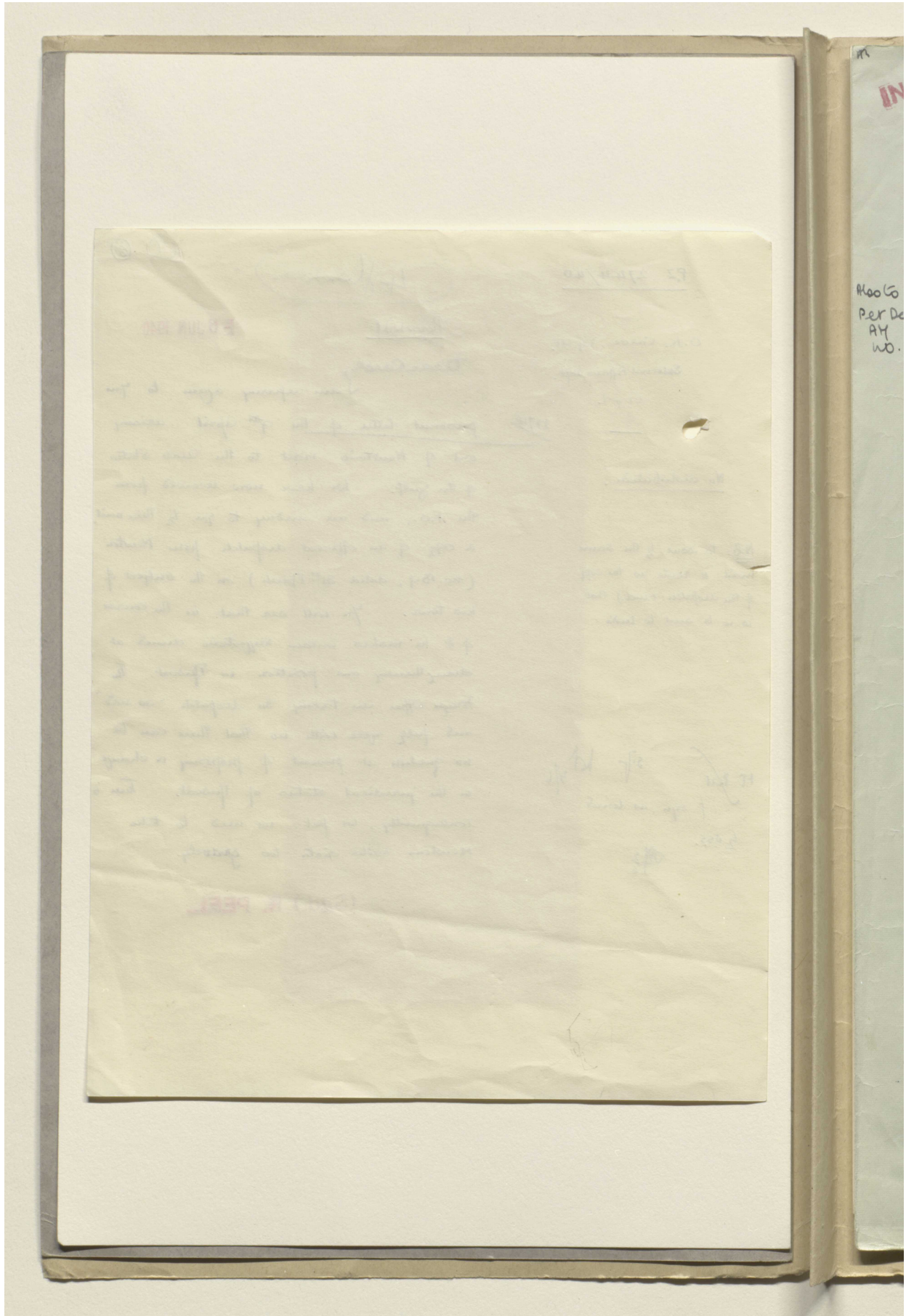
N.B. to issue by the same mail or route as the copy of the despatch (incl.) that is to be sent to Lush.

M. Peel
sign, as desired
L.O.S.
JH 3/6

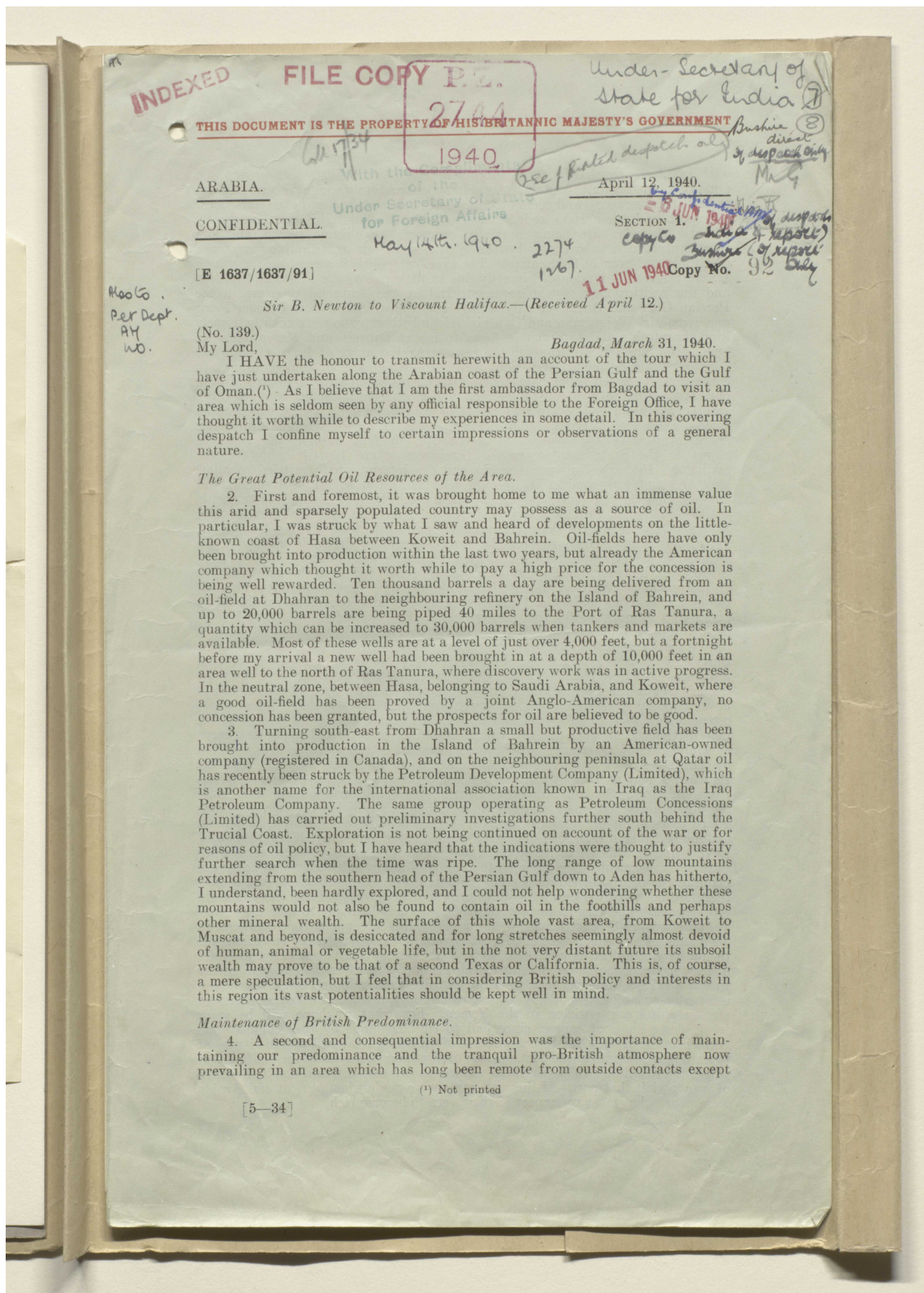
I am referring again to your personal letter of the 9th April arising out of Newton's visit to the Arab States of the Gulf. We have now received from the F.O., and are sending to you by this mail, a copy of an official despatch from Newton (no. 139, dated 31st March) on the subject of his tour. You will see that in the course of it he makes certain suggestions aimed at strengthening our position in Muscat. The Foreign Office are taking the despatch "as read" and fully agree with us that there can be no question at present of proposing a change in the juridical status of Muscat. There is consequently, we feel, no need to take Newton's observations too gravely.

(Sgd.) R. PEEL

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(14/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [8r]
(15/98)



INDEXED

FILE COPY P. 2.

2704
1940

Under-Secretary of State for India

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

ARABIA.

CONFIDENTIAL.

[E 1637/1637/91]

Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

April 12, 1940.

SECTION 1.

May 14th. 1940. 2274 (126)

11 JUN 1940 Copy No. 92

Handwritten notes: Koo Co. Per Dept. AY WO.

Sir B. Newton to Viscount Halifax.—(Received April 12.)

(No. 139.)
My Lord,

Bagdad, March 31, 1940.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith an account of the tour which I have just undertaken along the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.⁽¹⁾ As I believe that I am the first ambassador from Bagdad to visit an area which is seldom seen by any official responsible to the Foreign Office, I have thought it worth while to describe my experiences in some detail. In this covering despatch I confine myself to certain impressions or observations of a general nature.

The Great Potential Oil Resources of the Area.

2. First and foremost, it was brought home to me what an immense value this arid and sparsely populated country may possess as a source of oil. In particular, I was struck by what I saw and heard of developments on the little-known coast of Hasa between Koweit and Bahrein. Oil-fields here have only been brought into production within the last two years, but already the American company which thought it worth while to pay a high price for the concession is being well rewarded. Ten thousand barrels a day are being delivered from an oil-field at Dhahran to the neighbouring refinery on the Island of Bahrein, and up to 20,000 barrels are being piped 40 miles to the Port of Ras Tanura, a quantity which can be increased to 30,000 barrels when tankers and markets are available. Most of these wells are at a level of just over 4,000 feet, but a fortnight before my arrival a new well had been brought in at a depth of 10,000 feet in an area well to the north of Ras Tanura, where discovery work was in active progress. In the neutral zone, between Hasa, belonging to Saudi Arabia, and Koweit, where a good oil-field has been proved by a joint Anglo-American company, no concession has been granted, but the prospects for oil are believed to be good.

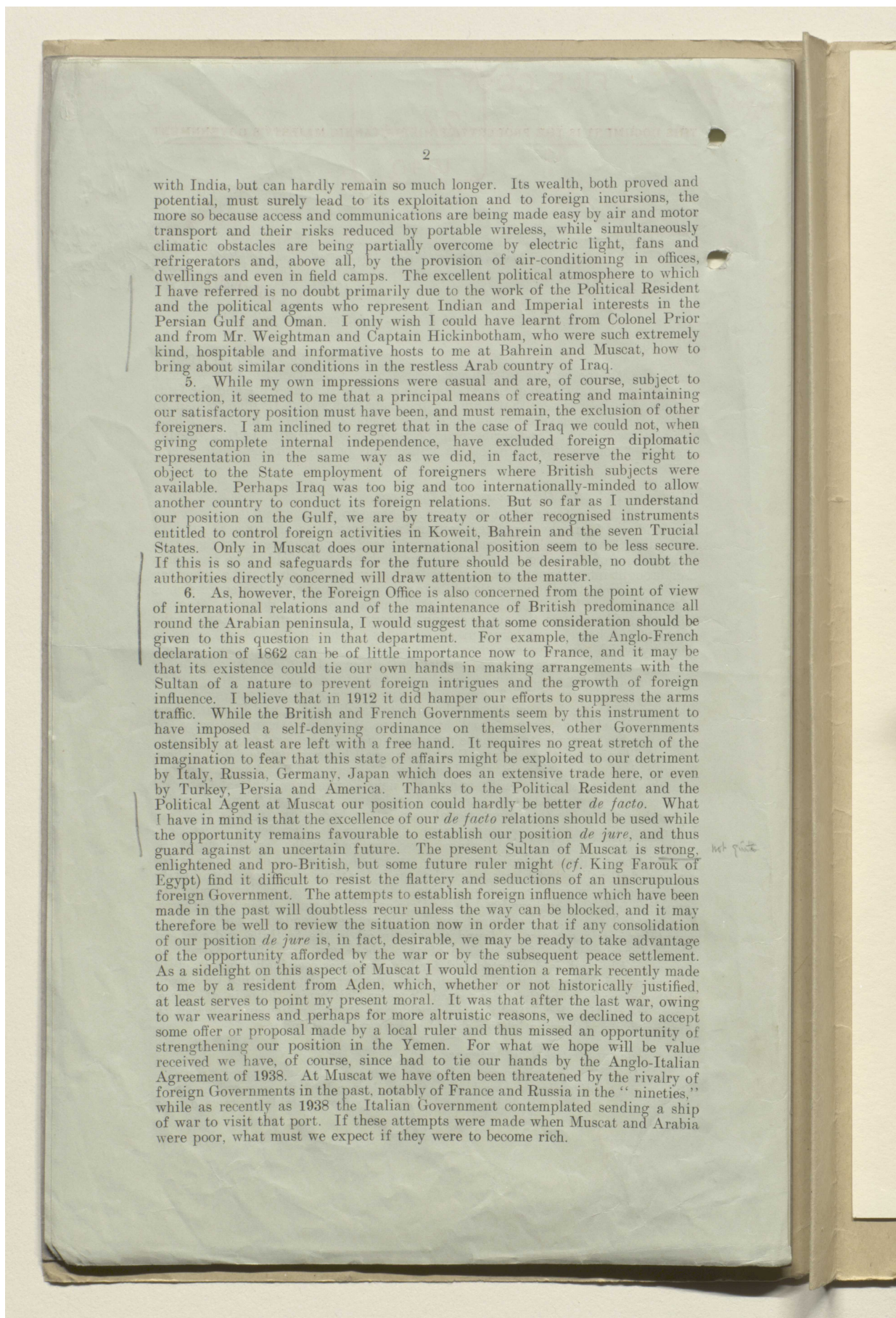
3. Turning south-east from Dhahran a small but productive field has been brought into production in the Island of Bahrein by an American-owned company (registered in Canada), and on the neighbouring peninsula at Qatar oil has recently been struck by the Petroleum Development Company (Limited), which is another name for the international association known in Iraq as the Iraq Petroleum Company. The same group operating as Petroleum Concessions (Limited) has carried out preliminary investigations further south behind the Trucial Coast. Exploration is not being continued on account of the war or for reasons of oil policy, but I have heard that the indications were thought to justify further search when the time was ripe. The long range of low mountains extending from the southern head of the Persian Gulf down to Aden has hitherto, I understand, been hardly explored, and I could not help wondering whether these mountains would not also be found to contain oil in the foothills and perhaps other mineral wealth. The surface of this whole vast area, from Koweit to Muscat and beyond, is desiccated and for long stretches seemingly almost devoid of human, animal or vegetable life, but in the not very distant future its subsoil wealth may prove to be that of a second Texas or California. This is, of course, a mere speculation, but I feel that in considering British policy and interests in this region its vast potentialities should be kept well in mind.

Maintenance of British Predominance.

4. A second and consequential impression was the importance of maintaining our predominance and the tranquil pro-British atmosphere now prevailing in an area which has long been remote from outside contacts except

(¹) Not printed

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(16/98)



with India, but can hardly remain so much longer. Its wealth, both proved and potential, must surely lead to its exploitation and to foreign incursions, the more so because access and communications are being made easy by air and motor transport and their risks reduced by portable wireless, while simultaneously climatic obstacles are being partially overcome by electric light, fans and refrigerators and, above all, by the provision of air-conditioning in offices, dwellings and even in field camps. The excellent political atmosphere to which I have referred is no doubt primarily due to the work of the Political Resident and the political agents who represent Indian and Imperial interests in the Persian Gulf and Oman. I only wish I could have learnt from Colonel Prior and from Mr. Weightman and Captain Hickinbotham, who were such extremely kind, hospitable and informative hosts to me at Bahrein and Muscat, how to bring about similar conditions in the restless Arab country of Iraq.

5. While my own impressions were casual and are, of course, subject to correction, it seemed to me that a principal means of creating and maintaining our satisfactory position must have been, and must remain, the exclusion of other foreigners. I am inclined to regret that in the case of Iraq we could not, when giving complete internal independence, have excluded foreign diplomatic representation in the same way as we did, in fact, reserve the right to object to the State employment of foreigners where British subjects were available. Perhaps Iraq was too big and too internationally-minded to allow another country to conduct its foreign relations. But so far as I understand our position on the Gulf, we are by treaty or other recognised instruments entitled to control foreign activities in Koweit, Bahrein and the seven Trucial States. Only in Muscat does our international position seem to be less secure. If this is so and safeguards for the future should be desirable, no doubt the authorities directly concerned will draw attention to the matter.

6. As, however, the Foreign Office is also concerned from the point of view of international relations and of the maintenance of British predominance all round the Arabian peninsula, I would suggest that some consideration should be given to this question in that department. For example, the Anglo-French declaration of 1862 can be of little importance now to France, and it may be that its existence could tie our own hands in making arrangements with the Sultan of a nature to prevent foreign intrigues and the growth of foreign influence. I believe that in 1912 it did hamper our efforts to suppress the arms traffic. While the British and French Governments seem by this instrument to have imposed a self-denying ordinance on themselves, other Governments ostensibly at least are left with a free hand. It requires no great stretch of the imagination to fear that this state of affairs might be exploited to our detriment by Italy, Russia, Germany, Japan which does an extensive trade here, or even by Turkey, Persia and America. Thanks to the Political Resident and the Political Agent at Muscat our position could hardly be better *de facto*. What I have in mind is that the excellence of our *de facto* relations should be used while the opportunity remains favourable to establish our position *de jure*, and thus guard against an uncertain future. The present Sultan of Muscat is strong, enlightened and pro-British, but some future ruler might (*cf.* King Farouk of Egypt) find it difficult to resist the flattery and seductions of an unscrupulous foreign Government. The attempts to establish foreign influence which have been made in the past will doubtless recur unless the way can be blocked, and it may therefore be well to review the situation now in order that if any consolidation of our position *de jure* is, in fact, desirable, we may be ready to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the war or by the subsequent peace settlement. As a sidelight on this aspect of Muscat I would mention a remark recently made to me by a resident from Aden, which, whether or not historically justified, at least serves to point my present moral. It was that after the last war, owing to war weariness and perhaps for more altruistic reasons, we declined to accept some offer or proposal made by a local ruler and thus missed an opportunity of strengthening our position in the Yemen. For what we hope will be value received we have, of course, since had to tie our hands by the Anglo-Italian Agreement of 1938. At Muscat we have often been threatened by the rivalry of foreign Governments in the past, notably of France and Russia in the "nineties," while as recently as 1938 the Italian Government contemplated sending a ship of war to visit that port. If these attempts were made when Muscat and Arabia were poor, what must we expect if they were to become rich.

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(17/98)

3

7. No doubt the problem is one of considerable delicacy. I heard that the Sultan of Muscat, like most Arab rulers, was jealous of encroachments on his independence, at any rate in outward appearance. Probably, however, in their inward hearts most Arabs are conscious that they cannot stand internationally alone and prefer to be associated with and protected by the British and Indian Governments, whom they know to be territorially satisfied, and with whose officials they have had good relations for centuries, rather than to be exposed to the ambitions of predatory Powers. In any steps to safeguard Arab States against foreign political intrusions great tact will, of course, continue to be required, and I was struck by the informal and unobtrusive way in which British influence was now being kept paramount. It occurred to me that possibly at some stage the British Council might be able to assist, because if in the course of an evolution which may soon become rapid an educational void were created, it would certainly have to be filled by us if it were not to be filled by others.

8. The underlying policy, to be followed even if not too openly expressed, might perhaps still be summed up in words used by Lord Curzon, when speaking as Viceroy of India to the Trucial Chiefs in 1903, he said:—

“ We have not destroyed your independence, but have preserved it. We are not now going to throw away this century of costly and triumphant enterprise; we shall not wipe out the most unselfish page in history. The peace of these waters must still be maintained; your independence will continue to be upheld; and the influence of the British Government must remain supreme.”

The Royal Air Force.

9. A third outstanding impression was of the importance of the Royal Air Force in these areas. For over three centuries it has been the proud task of the Royal Navy and the Indian Navy to gain and maintain for His Majesty's Government and the Government of India a commanding position in the Persian Gulf in the face of great political and climatic difficulties. In this task the Royal Air Force can now co-operate, and it seemed to me particularly appropriate that the Royal Air Force should spread its protective wings over an area which has been well described as the Suez Canal of the air. A station is available at Bahrein and landing-grounds have been established at a large number of places from Koweit as far as Muscat and from there on to Aden. In Iraq, Transjordan, Palestine and Egypt the Royal Air Force are also in a strong position, so that it is clear that the Royal Air Force can and doubtless will play an important part in the maintenance of British predominance round the Arabian peninsula.

10. In addition to these three main impressions, it is perhaps worth while to mention here three minor matters.

Smuggling.

11. On board the ship in which I travelled from Muscat to Bahrein my attention was drawn to the prevalence of smuggling from the Arabian coast. At the tiny town of Sharja, with a population of less than 10,000 inhabitants having a very low standard of living, no less than 15 tons of coffee were unloaded. At Dubai, only 8 miles away, with a population between 30,000 and 40,000, consignments of coffee, pepper, tea, &c., were discharged up to a total of 150 tons. The steamer maintains a fortnightly service, which is doubtless supplemented by dhows, so that a strong presumption of smuggling was afforded, and nowhere did I hear any denial of this presumption. It was commonly believed that the smuggling took place chiefly over to the Persian side with the connivance of underpaid Iranian officials. I have not heard, however, that the Government of Iran have shown any disposition to hold us responsible, or even to make complaints such as have, I believe, been brought from time to time against Koweit by Iraq and Saudi Arabia. If smuggling does, in fact, exist on a considerable scale, its sudden suppression might, of course, inflict appreciable loss on a population which looked already very poor.

Attitude towards Iraq.

12. A matter of some interest to me was the attitude of the Arab States on the Gulf towards Iraq. Since Ibn Saud is ambitious and an immediate

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(18/98)

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Handwritten note: Has to be kept only just reviewed. H.A.

neighbour, it might have been inferred that the small independent States would look to Iraq for support against Saudi Arabia. I was told, on the contrary, that feelings towards Iraq range from indifference to dislike. Iraq, with its modern pretensions, its assertion of centralised government against its own local sheikhs, and its Effendi-ruling class at Bagdad, does not appeal to sheikhs, who still maintain a patriarchal form of government. Ibn Saud is the Arab leader whom they respect, and against possible Saudi expansionist ambitions British protection is felt to be adequate.

Air-Conditioning as an Aid to Efficiency.

13. The value of air-conditioning in combating the disabling effects of extreme and prolonged heat was brought strongly to my notice. When I asked officials of the Bahrein Oil Company how their American and British staff had withstood the climate, I was informed that the incidence of sickness had at first been very high, but had been reduced to what was normal in America, chiefly, it was believed, by the installation of air-conditioning. On the Arabian mainland the American company had air-conditioned the quarters for all their American staff, not only at the principal camp at Dhahran, but even in the small portable cabin dwellings in use during construction work at Ras Tanura. At Abadan the general manager of the Anglo-Iranian refinery, which provides its staff with cheap facilities for the rent of air-cooling apparatus, told me that its installation was worth anything up to an extra two hours' useful work a day during the summer. It is not only the wealthy oil companies who care for their staff in this way. At Fao similar apparatus has been installed on most of the dredgers for the British staff and been found to contribute a great deal to their well-being. Such assistance for British officials elsewhere may have to await the conclusion of the war, but it will perhaps nevertheless, be helpful for those concerned to have the above evidence on record for the future.

14. In conclusion, I wish to record my gratitude to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf and to the Political Agents, Mr. Weightman at Bahrein and Captain Hickenbotham at Muscat, without whose assistance my tour would not have been possible. Mr. Weightman and Captain Hickenbotham invited Mr. Man, who accompanied me, and myself to be their guests and could not have done more to make my tour as enjoyable as it was both interesting and, I believe, instructive. At Sharja on my outward and return journeys Captain Howes, the Assistant Political Agent temporarily stationed there, went out of his way to enable me to put the short time at my disposal to the best use.

15. I am particularly indebted to the Royal Air Force, to Air Vice-Marshal Smart, who made it possible for me to fly as far as Muscat, and to Wing Commander Thomson, who took Mr. Man and myself as passengers. Without the advantage of this swift initial flight, a tour would have taken so long, or have afforded so little time at the two places of chief importance, that it would hardly have been feasible.

16. I have sent copies of this despatch (without its lengthy enclosure) to the Political Resident at Bushire, the Air Officer Commanding at Habbaniya, His Majesty's Ambassador at Cairo (for the information also of the Combined Middle East Intelligence Centre) and to His Majesty's Ministers at Jeddah and Tehran, to whom I have included the sections of my report headed "Muscat," "Bahrein," "Dhahran and the Coast of Masa" and "Ras Tanura, Safwa and Qatif."

17. For handiness of reference a small Imperial Airways map is attached.^(*)

I have, &c.

BASIL NEWTON.

(*) Not reproduced.

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(19/98)

ACCOUNT OF TOUR IN THE
PERSIAN GULF AND OMAN, MARCH 1940.

PL.
2744
1940

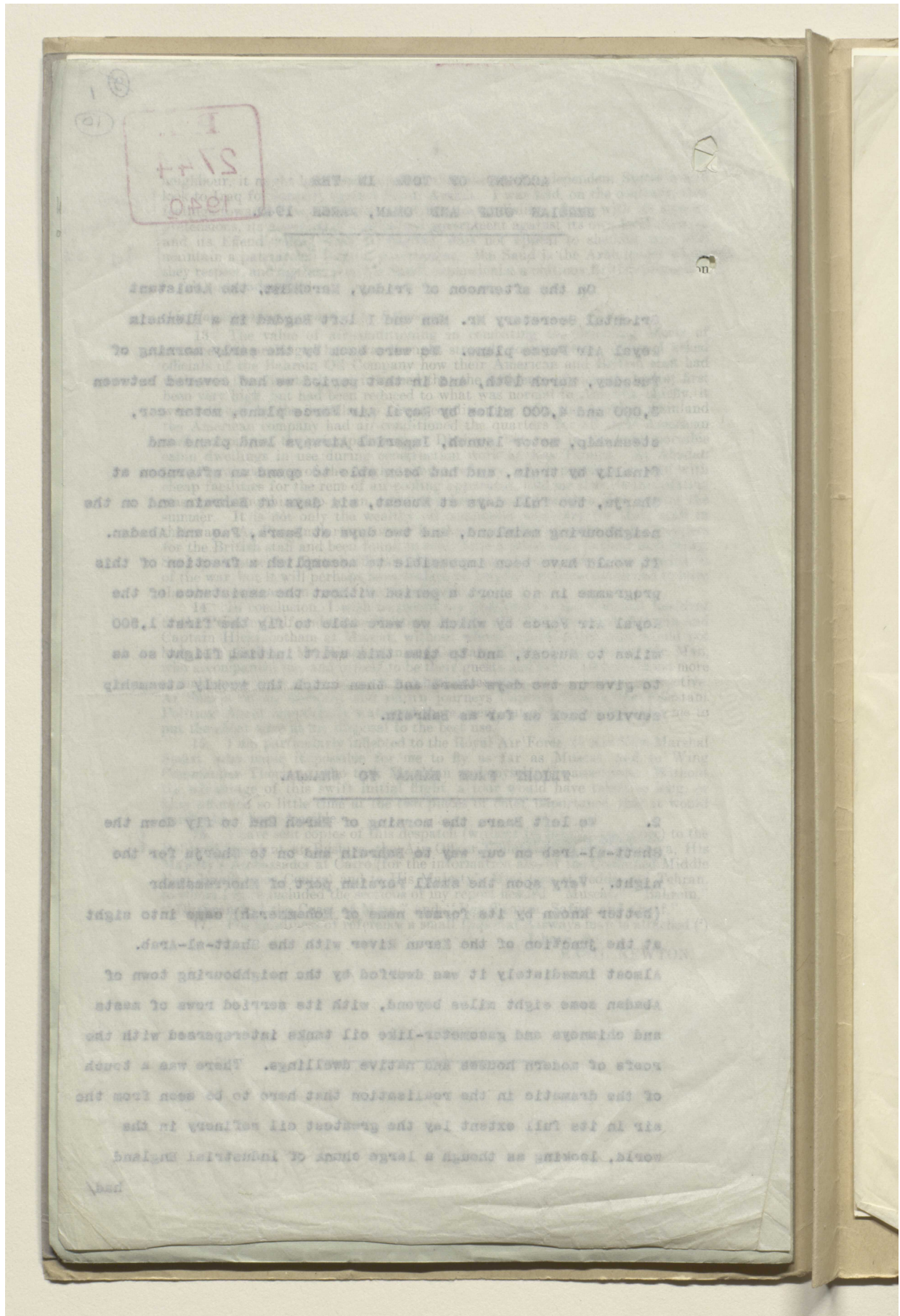
On the afternoon of Friday, March 1st, the Assistant Oriental Secretary Mr. Men and I left Bagdad in a Blenheim Royal Air Force plane. We were back by the early morning of Tuesday, March 19th, and in that period we had covered between 3,000 and 4,000 miles by Royal Air Force plane, motor car, steamship, motor launch, Imperial Airways land plane and finally by train, and had been able to spend an afternoon at Sharja, two full days at Muscat, six days at Bahrain and on the neighbouring mainland, and two days at Basra, Fao and Abadan. It would have been impossible to accomplish a fraction of this programme in so short a period without the assistance of the Royal Air Force by which we were able to fly the first 1,500 miles to Muscat, and to time this swift initial flight so as to give us two days there and then catch the weekly steamship service back as far as Bahrain.

FLIGHT FROM BASRA TO SHARJA.

2. We left Basra the morning of March 2nd to fly down the Shatt-al-Arab on our way to Bahrain and on to Sharja for the night. Very soon the small Persian port of Khorramshahr (better known by its former name of Mohammerah) came into sight at the junction of the Karun River with the Shatt-al-Arab. Almost immediately it was dwarfed by the neighbouring town of Abadan some eight miles beyond, with its serried rows of masts and chimneys and gasometer-like oil tanks interspersed with the roofs of modern houses and native dwellings. There was a touch of the dramatic in the realisation that here to be seen from the air in its full extent lay the greatest oil refinery in the world, looking as though a large chunk of industrial England

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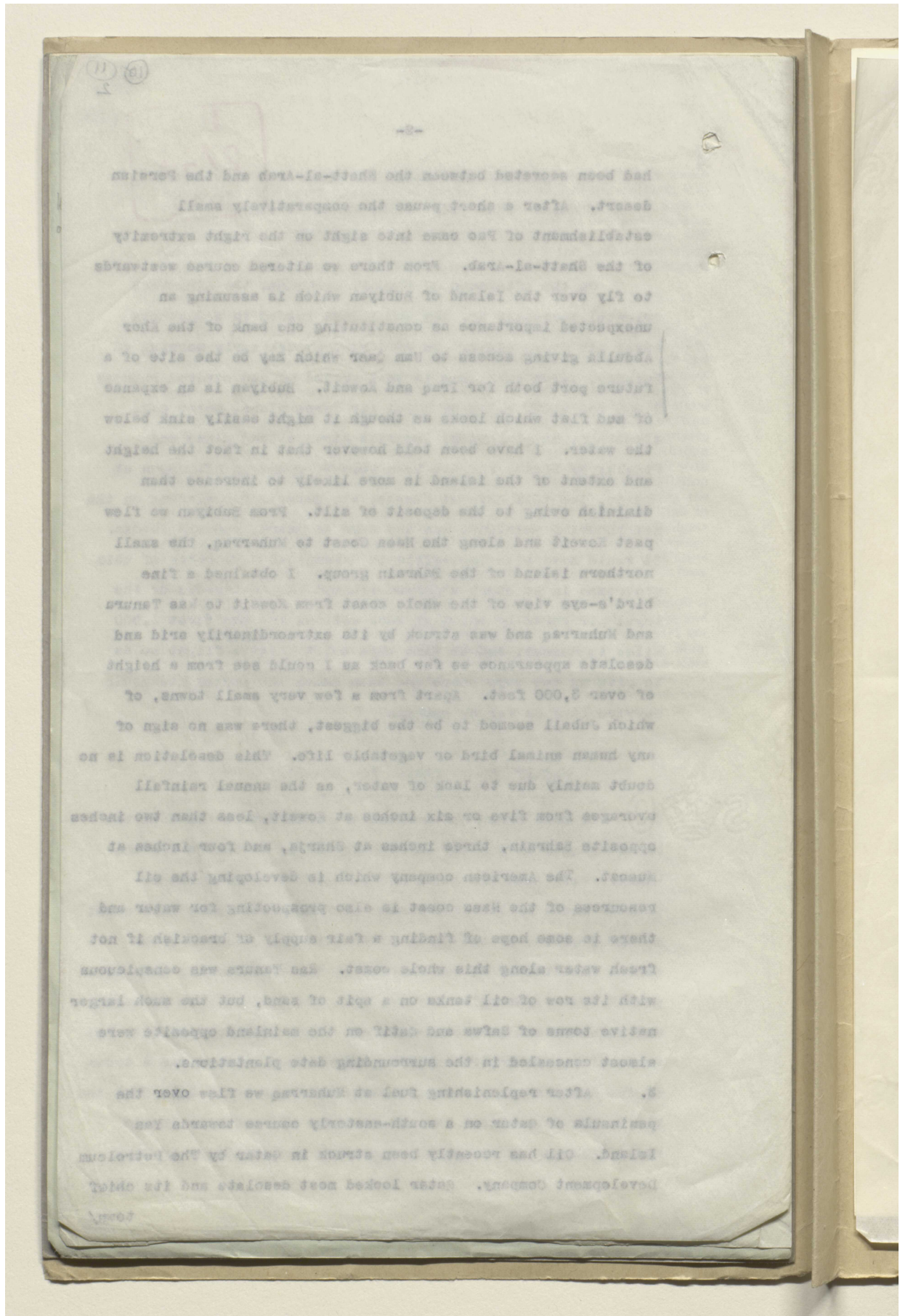
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had been secreted between the Shatt-al-Arab and the Persian desert. After a short pause the comparatively small establishment of Fao came into sight on the right extremity of the Shatt-al-Arab. From there we altered course westwards to fly over the Island of Bubiyan which is assuming an unexpected importance as constituting one bank of the Khor Abdulla giving access to Umm Qasr which may be the site of a future port both for Iraq and Koweit. Bubiyan is an expanse of mud flat which looks as though it might easily sink below the water. I have been told however that in fact the height and extent of the island is more likely to increase than diminish owing to the deposit of silt. From Bubiyan we flew past Koweit and along the Hasa Coast to Muharraq, the small northern island of the Bahrain group. I obtained a fine bird's-eye view of the whole coast from Koweit to Ras Tanura and Muharraq and was struck by its extraordinarily arid and desolate appearance as far back as I could see from a height of over 3,000 feet. Apart from a few very small towns, of which Jubail seemed to be the biggest, there was no sign of any human animal bird or vegetable life. This desolation is no doubt mainly due to lack of water, as the annual rainfall averages from five or six inches at Koweit, less than two inches opposite Bahrain, three inches at Sharja, and four inches at Muscat. The American company which is developing the oil resources of the Hasa coast is also prospecting for water and there is some hope of finding a fair supply of brackish if not fresh water along this whole coast. Ras Tanura was conspicuous with its row of oil tanks on a spit of sand, but the much larger native towns of Safwa and Qatif on the mainland opposite were almost concealed in the surrounding date plantations.

3. After replenishing fuel at Muharraq we flew over the peninsula of Qatar on a south-easterly course towards Yas Island. Oil has recently been struck in Qatar by The Petroleum Development Company. Qatar looked most desolate and its chief town/

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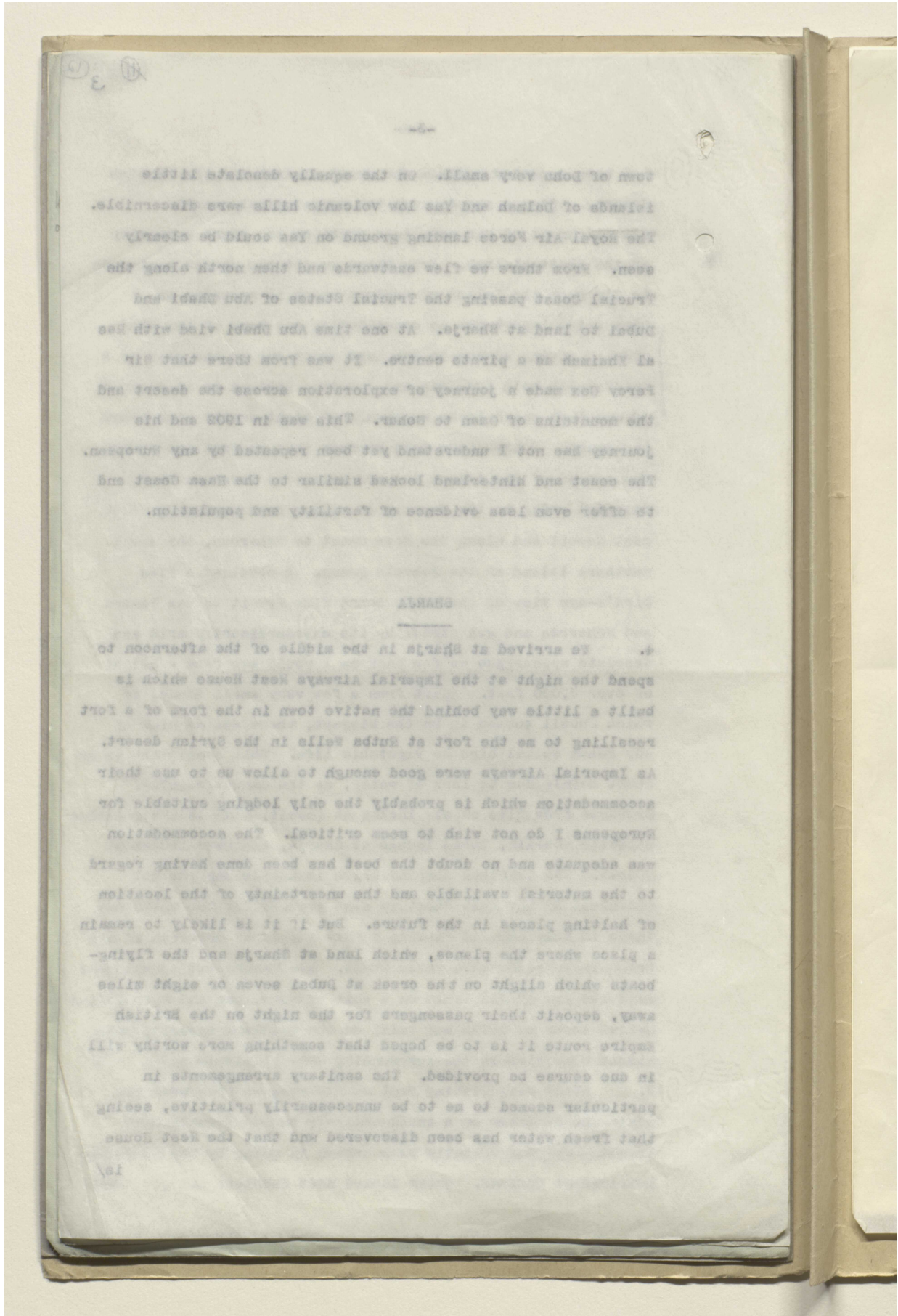
town of Doha very small. On the equally desolate little islands of Dalma and Yas low volcanic hills were discernible. The Royal Air Force landing ground on Yas could be clearly seen. From there we flew eastwards and then north along the Trucial Coast passing the Trucial States of Abu Dhabi and Dubai to land at Sharja. At one time Abu Dhabi vied with Ras al Khaimah as a pirate centre. It was from there that Sir Percy Cox made a journey of exploration across the desert and the mountains of Oman to Sohar. This was in 1902 and his journey has not I understand yet been repeated by any European. The coast and hinterland looked similar to the Hasa Coast and to offer even less evidence of fertility and population.

SHARJA

4. We arrived at Sharja in the middle of the afternoon to spend the night at the Imperial Airways Rest House which is built a little way behind the native town in the form of a fort recalling to me the fort at Rutba Wells in the Syrian desert. As Imperial Airways were good enough to allow us to use their accommodation which is probably the only lodging suitable for Europeans I do not wish to seem critical. The accommodation was adequate and no doubt the best has been done having regard to the material available and the uncertainty of the location of halting places in the future. But if it is likely to remain a place where the planes, which land at Sharja and the flying-boats which alight on the creek at Dubai seven or eight miles away, deposit their passengers for the night on the British Empire route it is to be hoped that something more worthy will in due course be provided. The sanitary arrangements in particular seemed to me to be unnecessarily primitive, seeing that fresh water has been discovered and that the Rest House

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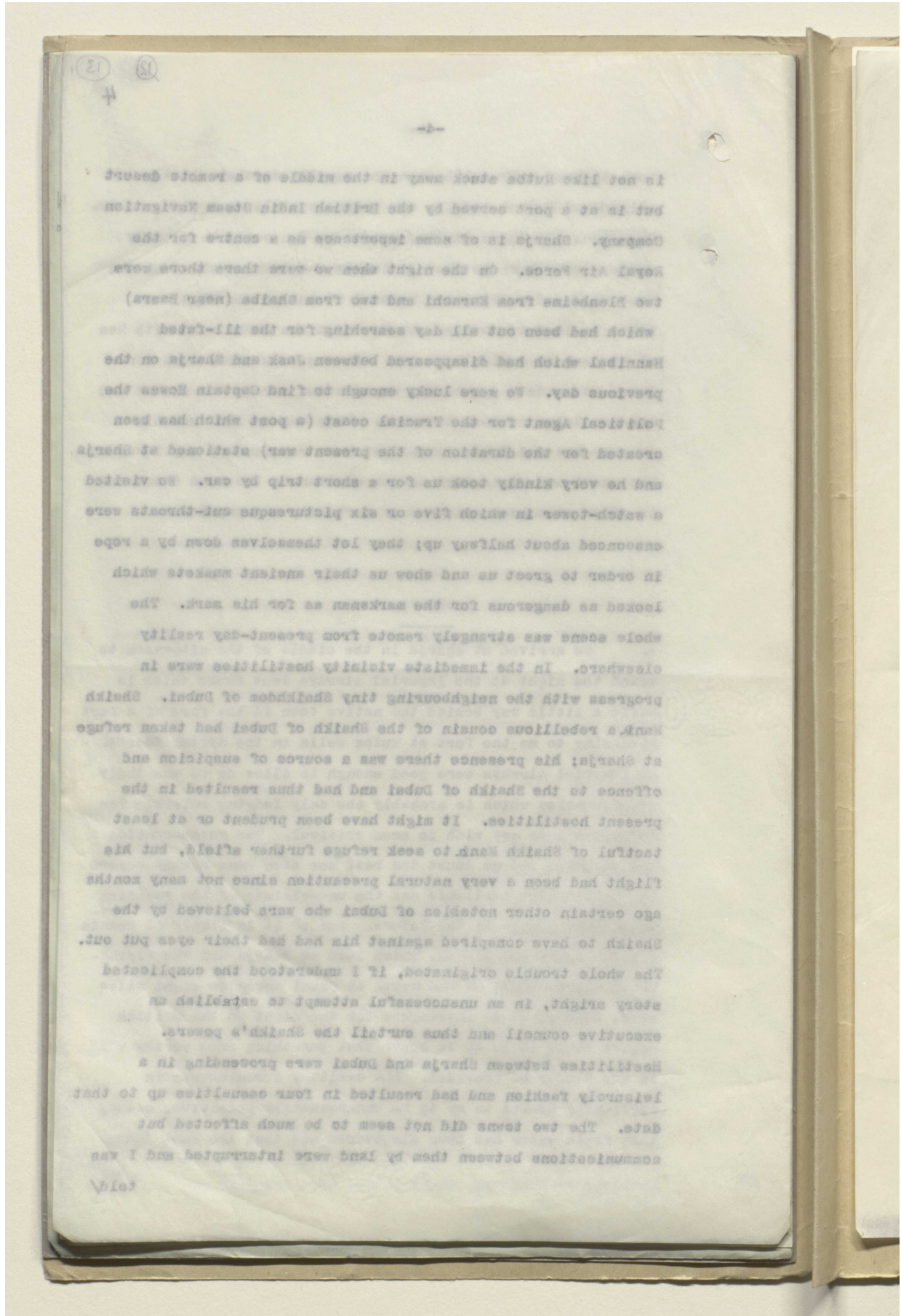


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is not like Rutba stuck away in the middle of a remote desert but is at a port served by the British India Steam Navigation Company. Sharja is of some importance as a centre for the Royal Air Force. On the night when we were there there were two Blenheims from Karachi and two from Shaiba (near Basra) which had been out all day searching for the ill-fated Hannibal which had disappeared between Jask and Sharja on the previous day. We were lucky enough to find Captain Howes the Political Agent for the Trucial coast (a post which has been created for the duration of the present war) stationed at Sharja and he very kindly took us for a short trip by car. We visited a watch-tower in which five or six picturesque cut-throats were ensconced about halfway up; they let themselves down by a rope in order to greet us and show us their ancient muskets which looked as dangerous for the marksman as for his mark. The whole scene was strangely remote from present-day reality elsewhere. In the immediate vicinity hostilities were in progress with the neighbouring tiny Shaikhdom of Dubai. Shaikh Manḍ, a rebellious cousin of the Shaikh of Dubai had taken refuge at Sharja; his presence there was a source of suspicion and offence to the Shaikh of Dubai and had thus resulted in the present hostilities. It might have been prudent or at least tactful of Shaikh Manḍ to seek refuge further afield, but his flight had been a very natural precaution since not many months ago certain other notables of Dubai who were believed by the Shaikh to have conspired against him had had their eyes put out. The whole trouble originated, if I understood the complicated story aright, in an unsuccessful attempt to establish an executive council and thus curtail the Shaikh's powers. Hostilities between Sharja and Dubai were proceeding in a leisurely fashion and had resulted in four casualties up to that date. The two towns did not seem to be much affected but communications between them by land were interrupted and I was told/

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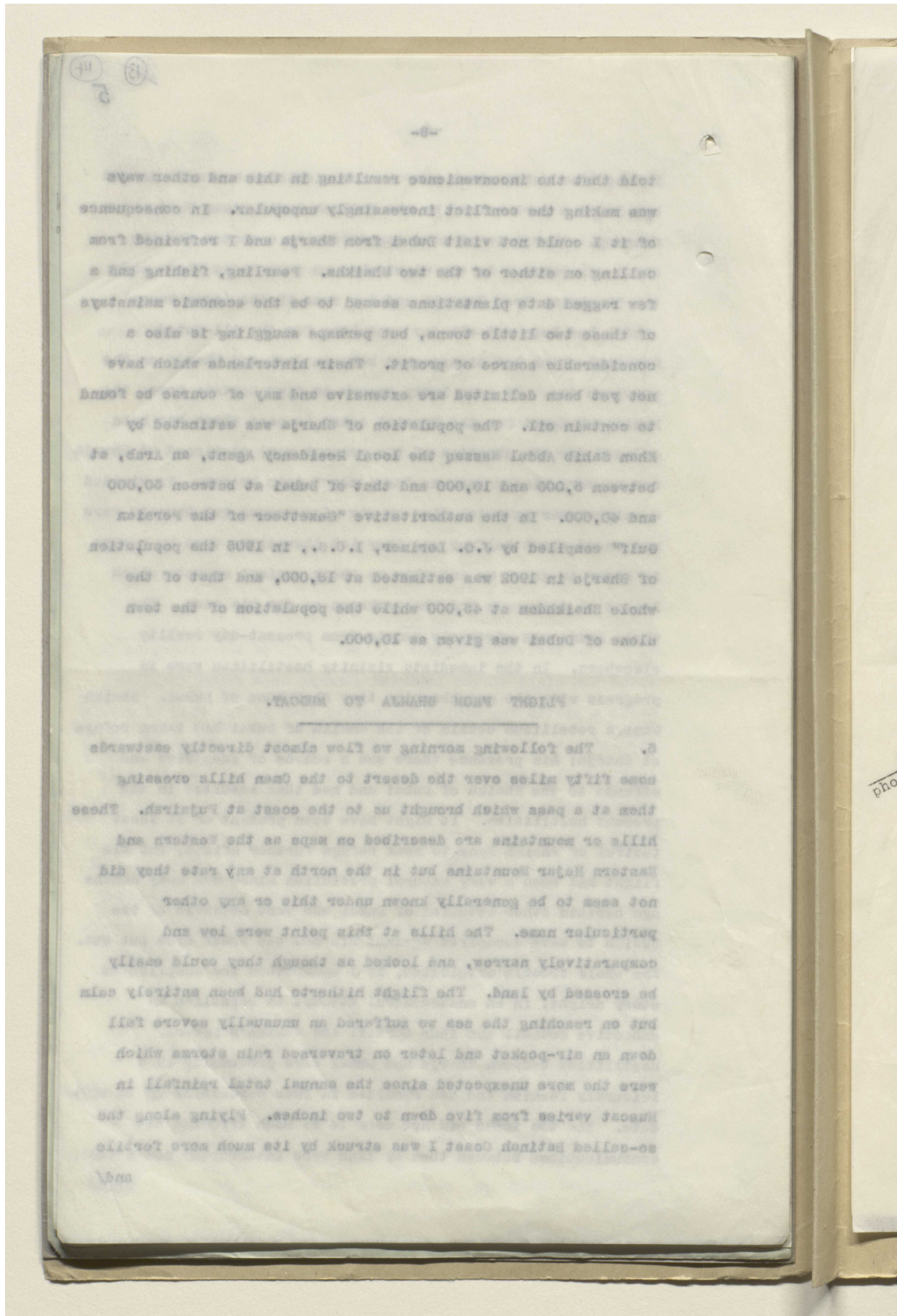
told that the inconvenience resulting in this and other ways was making the conflict increasingly unpopular. In consequence of it I could not visit Dubai from Sharja and I refrained from calling on either of the two Shaikhs. Pearling, fishing and a few ragged date plantations seemed to be the economic mainstays of these two little towns, but perhaps smuggling is also a considerable source of profit. Their hinterlands which have not yet been delimited are extensive and may of course be found to contain oil. The population of Sharja was estimated by Khan Sahib Abdul Razzaq the local Residency Agent, an Arab, at between 5,000 and 10,000 and that of Dubai at between 30,000 and 40,000. In the authoritative "Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf" compiled by J.G. Lorimer, I.C.S., in 1905 the population of Sharja in 1902 was estimated at 18,000, and that of the whole Shaikhdom at 45,000 while the population of the town alone of Dubai was given as 10,000.

FLIGHT FROM SHARJA TO MUSCAT.

5. The following morning we flew almost directly eastwards some fifty miles over the desert to the Oman hills crossing them at a pass which brought us to the coast at Fujairah. These hills or mountains are described on maps as the Western and Eastern Hajar Mountains but in the north at any rate they did not seem to be generally known under this or any other particular name. The hills at this point were low and comparatively narrow, and looked as though they could easily be crossed by land. The flight hitherto had been entirely calm but on reaching the sea we suffered an unusually severe fall down an air-pocket and later on traversed rain storms which were the more unexpected since the annual total rainfall in Muscat varies from five down to two inches. Flying along the so-called Batinah Coast I was struck by its much more fertile

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and populous appearance than the Trucial and Hasa coasts though no doubt this was largely a matter of comparison with the extreme desolation seen from the air hitherto. There were a number of oases and small towns set in date plantations at comparatively short intervals along this coast. Its inhabitants live chiefly by cultivating dates and catching large quantities of fish for home consumption and for export as fish manure. Although black and white grapes grow in Muscat I did not hear of any association between them and the so-called Muscat grapes which are so famous in Europe. Hills or low mountains run parallel with the coast at a distance varying from thirty to fifty miles until they come right down to the sea at Muscat. We passed by the tiny independent Shaikhdom of Fujairah and the equally tiny Trucial State of Kalba where a Royal Air Force landing ground was clearly visible.

MUSCAT

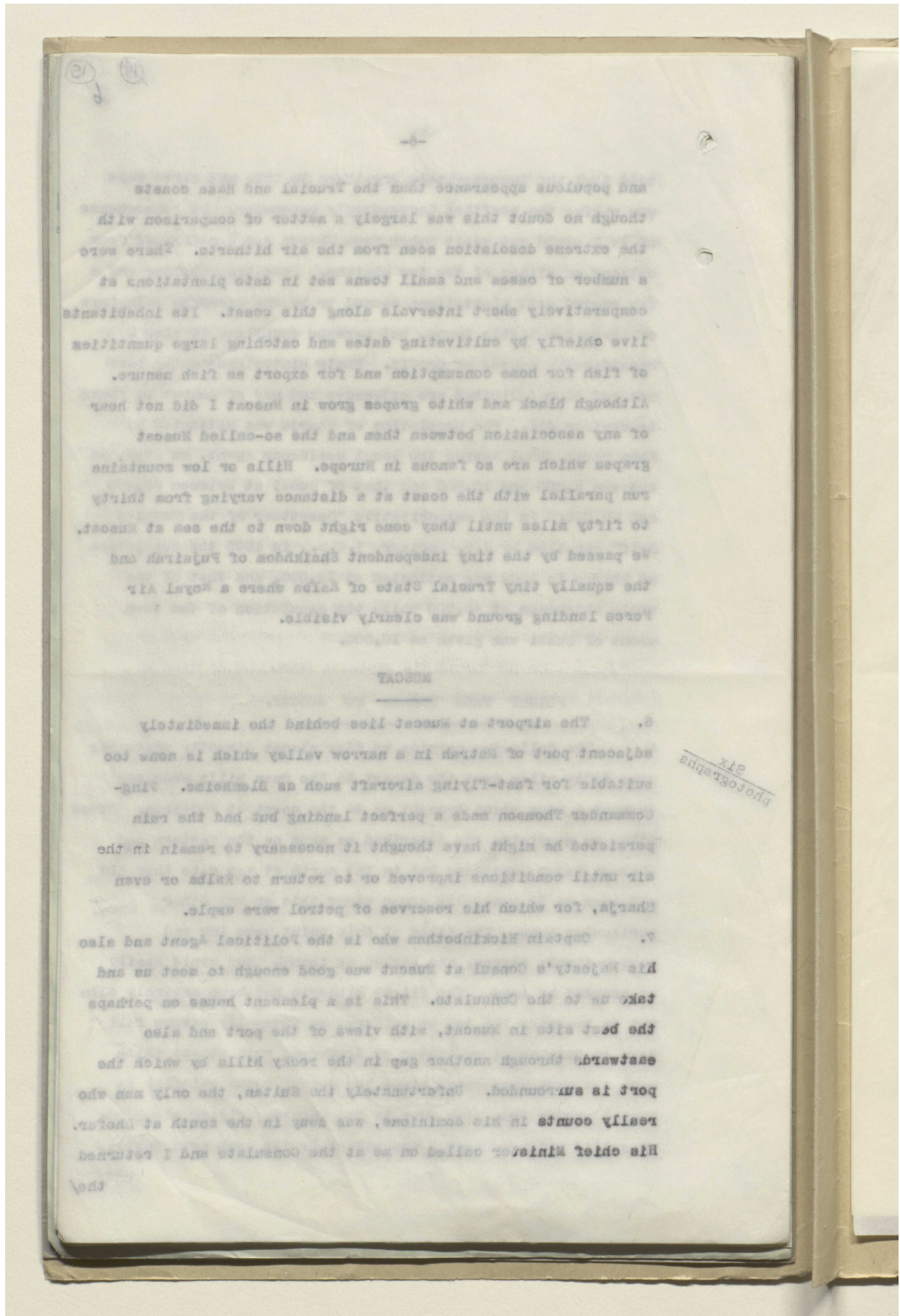
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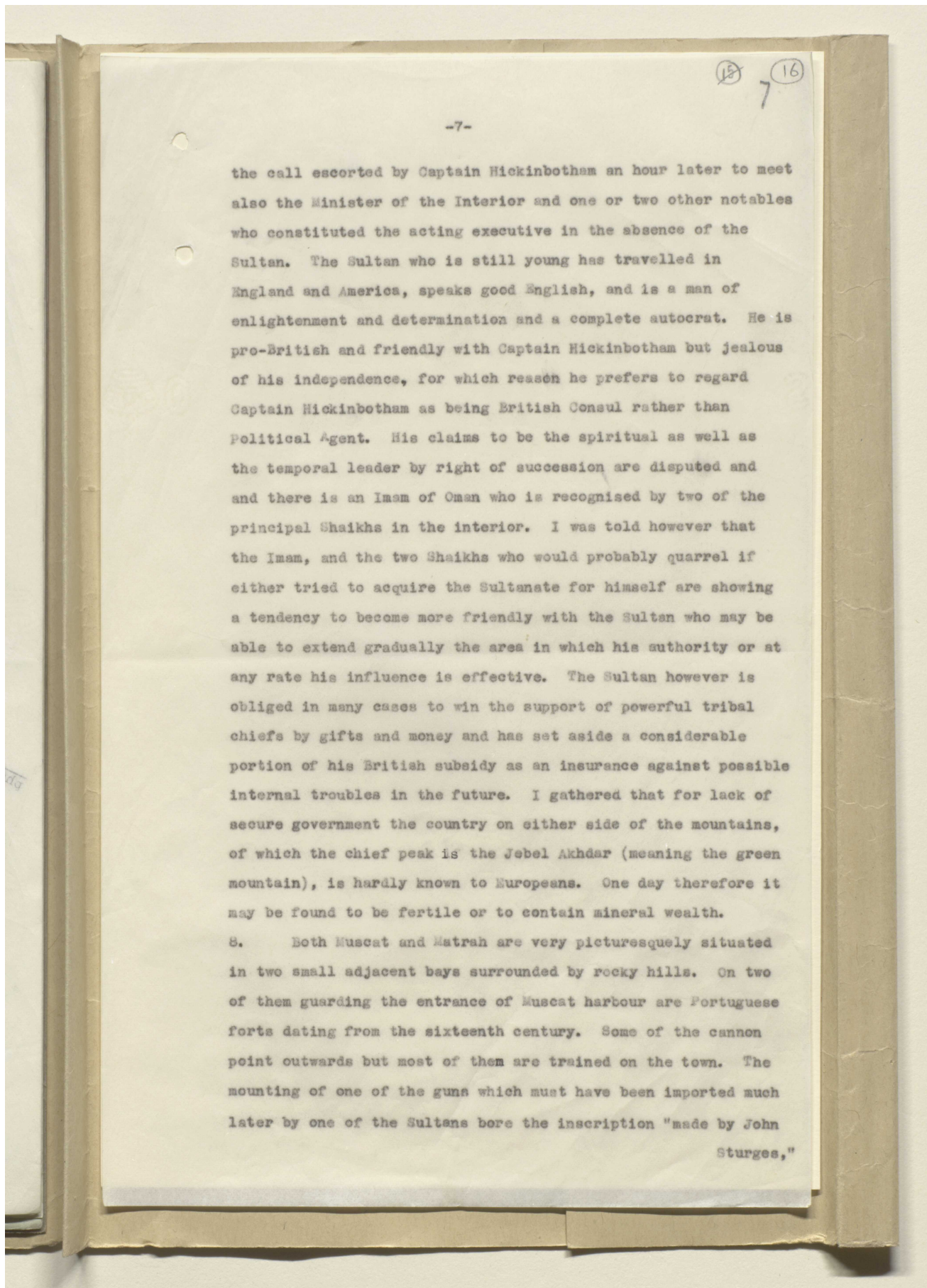
6. The airport at Muscat lies behind the immediately adjacent port of Matrah in a narrow valley which is none too suitable for fast-flying aircraft such as Blenheims. Wing-Commander Thomson made a perfect landing but had the rain persisted he might have thought it necessary to remain in the air until conditions improved or to return to Kalba or even Sharja, for which his reserves of petrol were ample.

7. Captain Hickenbotham who is the Political Agent and also His Majesty's Consul at Muscat was good enough to meet us and take us to the Consulate. This is a pleasant house on perhaps the best site in Muscat, with views of the port and also eastwards through another gap in the rocky hills by which the port is surrounded. Unfortunately the Sultan, the only man who really counts in his dominions, was away in the south at Dhofar. His chief Minister called on me at the Consulate and I returned

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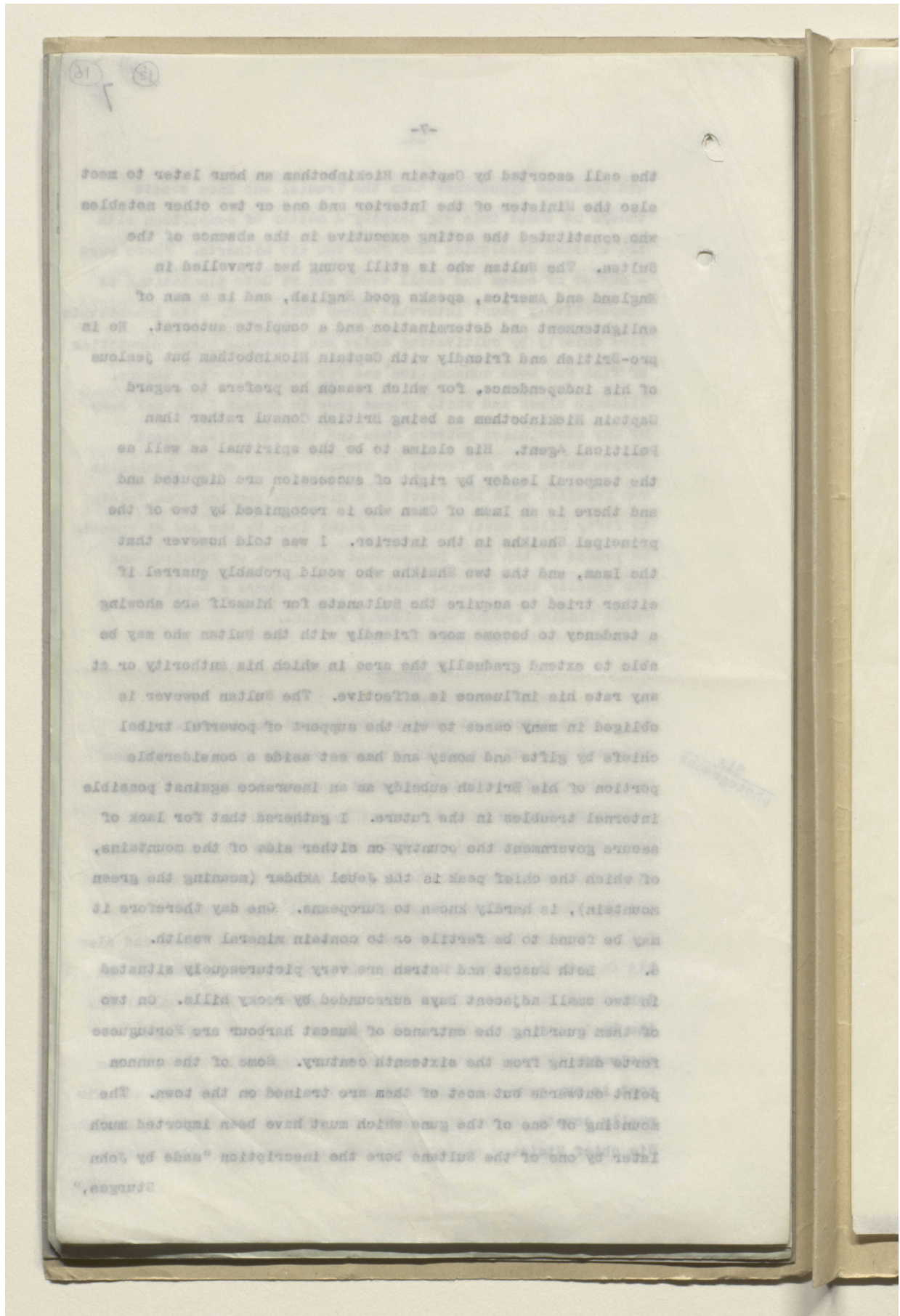


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the call escorted by Captain Hickinbotham an hour later to meet also the Minister of the Interior and one or two other notables who constituted the acting executive in the absence of the Sultan. The Sultan who is still young has travelled in England and America, speaks good English, and is a man of enlightenment and determination and a complete autocrat. He is pro-British and friendly with Captain Hickinbotham but jealous of his independence, for which reason he prefers to regard Captain Hickinbotham as being British Consul rather than Political Agent. His claims to be the spiritual as well as the temporal leader by right of succession are disputed and and there is an Imam of Oman who is recognised by two of the principal Shaikhs in the interior. I was told however that the Imam, and the two Shaikhs who would probably quarrel if either tried to acquire the Sultanate for himself are showing a tendency to become more friendly with the Sultan who may be able to extend gradually the area in which his authority or at any rate his influence is effective. The Sultan however is obliged in many cases to win the support of powerful tribal chiefs by gifts and money and has set aside a considerable portion of his British subsidy as an insurance against possible internal troubles in the future. I gathered that for lack of secure government the country on either side of the mountains, of which the chief peak is the Jebel Akhdar (meaning the green mountain), is hardly known to Europeans. One day therefore it may be found to be fertile or to contain mineral wealth.

8. Both Muscat and Matrah are very picturesquely situated in two small adjacent bays surrounded by rocky hills. On two of them guarding the entrance of Muscat harbour are Portuguese forts dating from the sixteenth century. Some of the cannon point outwards but most of them are trained on the town. The mounting of one of the guns which must have been imported much later by one of the Sultans bore the inscription "made by John Sturges,"

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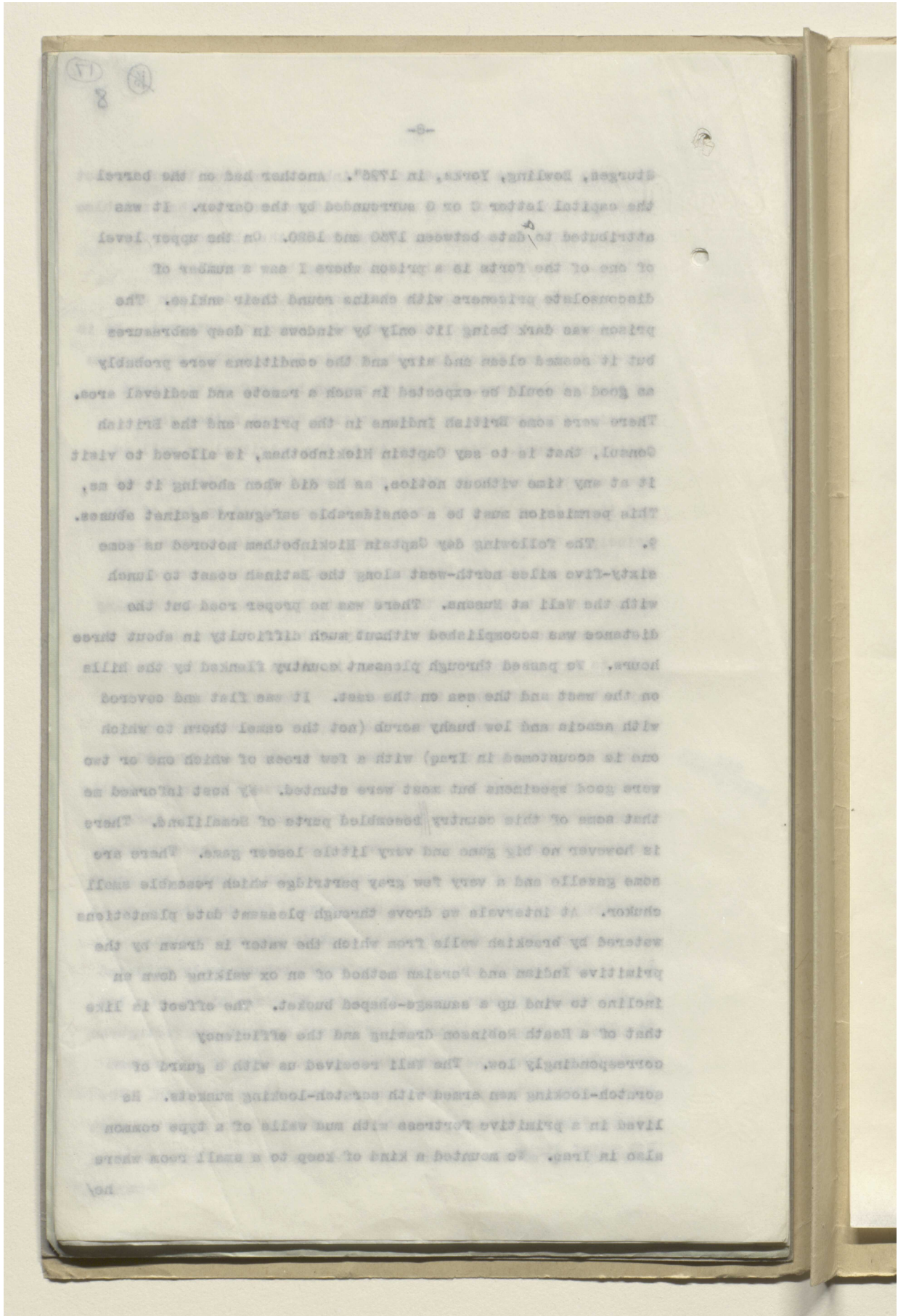
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Sturges, Bowling, Yorks, in 1796". Another had on the barrel the capital letter C or G surrounded by the Garter. It was attributed to ^adate between 1760 and 1820. On the upper level of one of the forts is a prison where I saw a number of disconsolate prisoners with chains round their ankles. The prison was dark being lit only by windows in deep embrasures but it seemed clean and airy and the conditions were probably as good as could be expected in such a remote and medieval area. There were some British Indians in the prison and the British Consul, that is to say Captain Hickenbotham, is allowed to visit it at any time without notice, as he did when showing it to me. This permission must be a considerable safeguard against abuses.

9. The following day Captain Hickenbotham motored us some sixty-five miles north-west along the Batinah coast to lunch with the Wali at Musana. There was no proper road but the distance was accomplished without much difficulty in about three hours. We passed through pleasant country flanked by the hills on the west and the sea on the east. It was flat and covered with acacia and low bushy scrub (not the camel thorn to which one is accustomed in Iraq) with a few trees of which one or two were good specimens but most were stunted. My host informed me that some of this country resembled parts of Somaliland. There is however no big game and very little lesser game. There are some gazelle and a very few gray partridge which resemble small chukor. At intervals we drove through pleasant date plantations watered by brackish wells from which the water is drawn by the primitive Indian and Persian method of an ox walking down an incline to wind up a sausage-shaped bucket. The effect is like that of a Heath Robinson drawing and the efficiency correspondingly low. The Wali received us with a guard of scratch-looking men armed with scratch-looking muskets. He lived in a primitive fortress with mud walls of a type common also in Iraq. We mounted a kind of keep to a small room where
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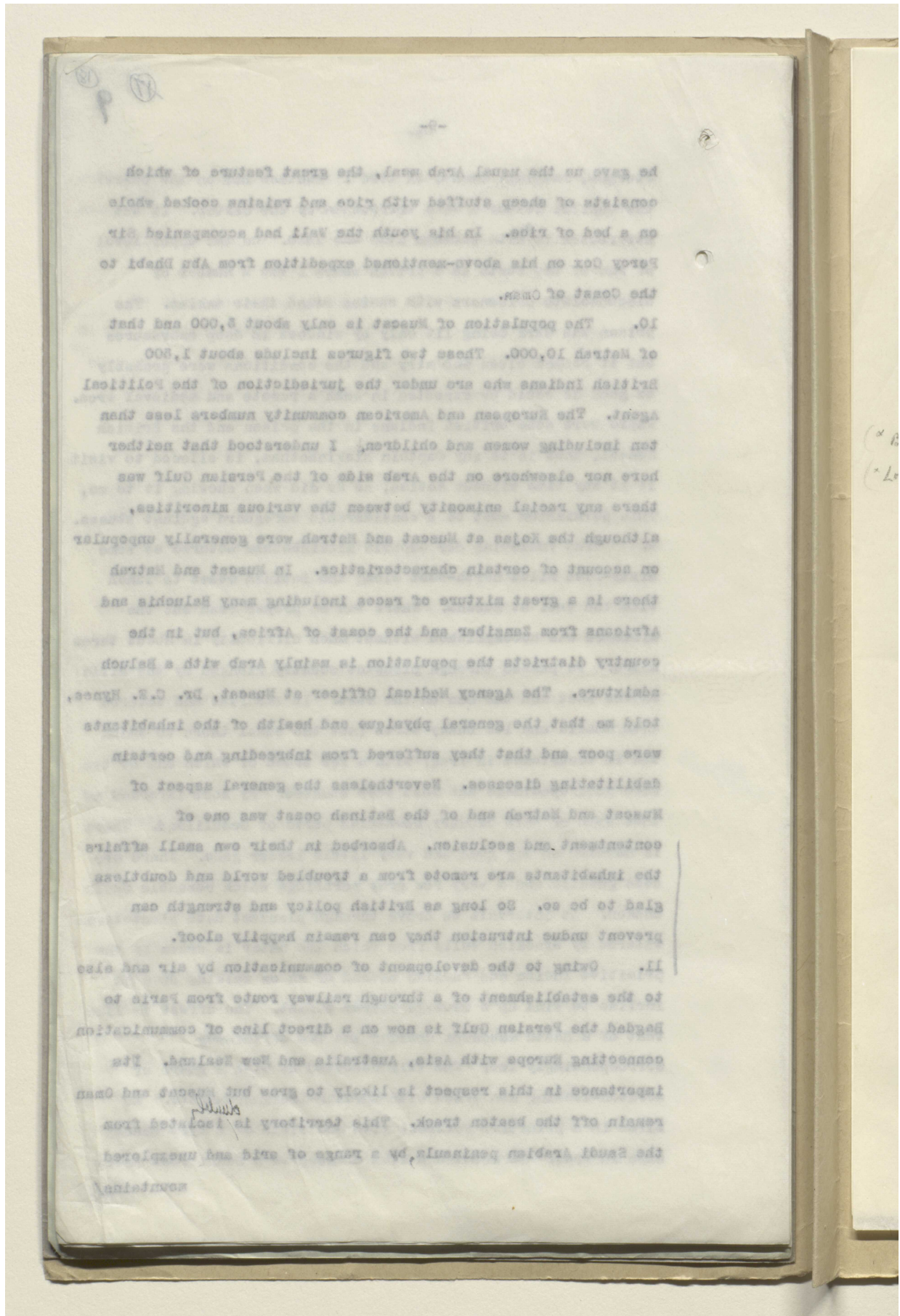
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he gave us the usual Arab meal, the great feature of which consists of sheep stuffed with rice and raisins cooked whole on a bed of rice. In his youth the Wali had accompanied Sir Percy Cox on his above-mentioned expedition from Abu Dhabi to the Coast of Oman.

10. The population of Muscat is only about 5,000 and that of Matrah 10,000. These two figures include about 1,500 British Indians who are under the jurisdiction of the Political Agent. The European and American community numbers less than ten including women and children. I understood that neither here nor elsewhere on the Arab side of the Persian Gulf was there any racial animosity between the various minorities, although the Kojas at Muscat and Matrah were generally unpopular on account of certain characteristics. In Muscat and Matrah there is a great mixture of races including many Baluchis and Africans from Zanzibar and the coast of Africa, but in the country districts the population is mainly Arab with a Baluch admixture. The Agency Medical Officer at Muscat, Dr. C.E. Hynes, told me that the general physique and health of the inhabitants were poor and that they suffered from inbreeding and certain debilitating diseases. Nevertheless the general aspect of Muscat and Matrah and of the Batinah coast was one of contentment and seclusion. Absorbed in their own small affairs the inhabitants are remote from a troubled world and doubtless glad to be so. So long as British policy and strength can prevent undue intrusion they can remain happily aloof.

11. Owing to the development of communication by air and also to the establishment of a through railway route from Paris to Bagdad the Persian Gulf is now on a direct line of communication connecting Europe with Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Its importance in this respect is likely to grow but Muscat and Oman remain off the beaten track. This territory is ^{dually} isolated from the Saudi Arabian peninsula, by a range of arid and unexplored mountains/

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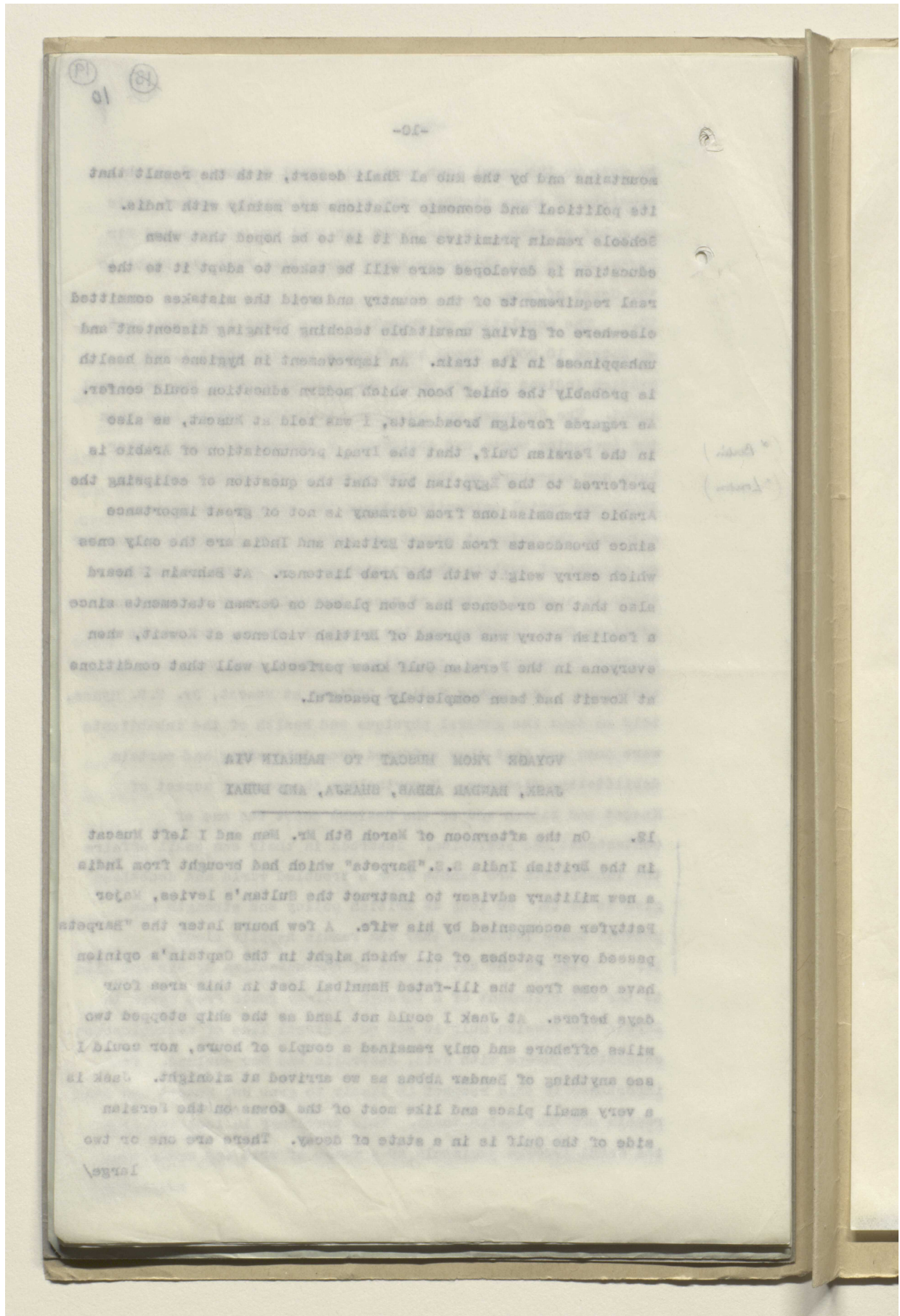
mountains and by the Rub al Khali desert, with the result that its political and economic relations are mainly with India. Schools remain primitive and it is to be hoped that when education is developed care will be taken to adapt it to the real requirements of the country and avoid the mistakes committed elsewhere of giving unsuitable teaching bringing discontent and unhappiness in its train. An improvement in hygiene and health is probably the chief boon which modern education could confer. As regards foreign broadcasts, I was told at Muscat, as also in the Persian Gulf, that the Iraqi pronunciation of Arabic is preferred to the Egyptian but that the question of eclipsing the Arabic transmissions from Germany is not of great importance since broadcasts from Great Britain and India are the only ones which carry weight with the Arab listener. At Bahrain I heard also that no credence has been placed on German statements since a foolish story was spread of British violence at Koweit, when everyone in the Persian Gulf knew perfectly well that conditions at Koweit had been completely peaceful.

(^x Berlin)
(^x London)

VOYAGE FROM MUSCAT TO BAHRAIN VIA
JASK, BANDAR ABBAS, SHARJA, AND DUBAI

12. On the afternoon of March 5th Mr. Men and I left Muscat in the British India S.S. "Barpeta" which had brought from India a new military adviser to instruct the Sultan's levies, Major Pettyfer accompanied by his wife. A few hours later the "Barpeta" passed over patches of oil which might in the Captain's opinion have come from the ill-fated Hannibal lost in this area four days before. At Jask I could not land as the ship stopped two miles offshore and only remained a couple of hours, nor could I see anything of Bandar Abbas as we arrived at midnight. Jask is a very small place and like most of the towns on the Persian side of the Gulf is in a state of decay. There are one or two large/

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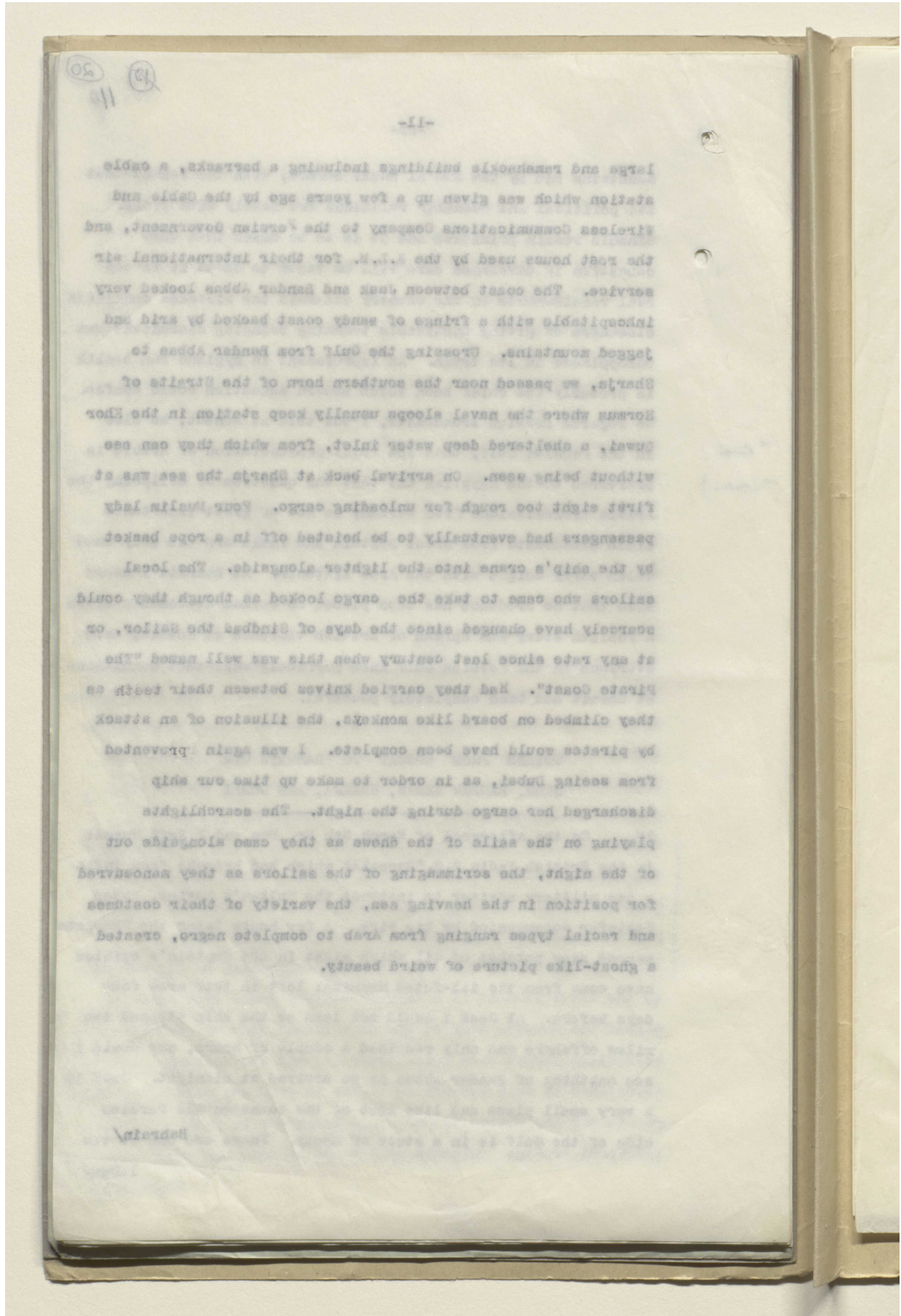
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large and ramshackle buildings including a barracks, a cable station which was given up a few years ago by the Cable and Wireless Communications Company to the Persian Government, and the rest house used by the K.L.M. for their international air service. The coast between Jask and Bandar Abbas looked very inhospitable with a fringe of sandy coast backed by arid and jagged mountains. Crossing the Gulf from Bandar Abbas to Sharja, we passed near the southern horn of the Straits of Hormuz where the naval sloops usually keep station in the Khor Quwai, a sheltered deep water inlet, from which they can see without being seen. On arrival back at Sharja the sea was at first sight too rough for unloading cargo. Four Muslim lady passengers had eventually to be hoisted off in a rope basket by the ship's crane into the lighter alongside. The local sailors who came to take the cargo looked as though they could scarcely have changed since the days of Sindbad the Sailor, or at any rate since last century when this was well named "The Pirate Coast". Had they carried knives between their teeth as they climbed on board like monkeys, the illusion of an attack by pirates would have been complete. I was again prevented from seeing Dubai, as in order to make up time our ship discharged her cargo during the night. The searchlights playing on the sails of the dhows as they came alongside out of the night, the scrimmaging of the sailors as they manoeuvred for position in the heaving sea, the variety of their costumes and racial types ranging from Arab to complete negro, created a ghost-like picture of weird beauty.

Bahrain/

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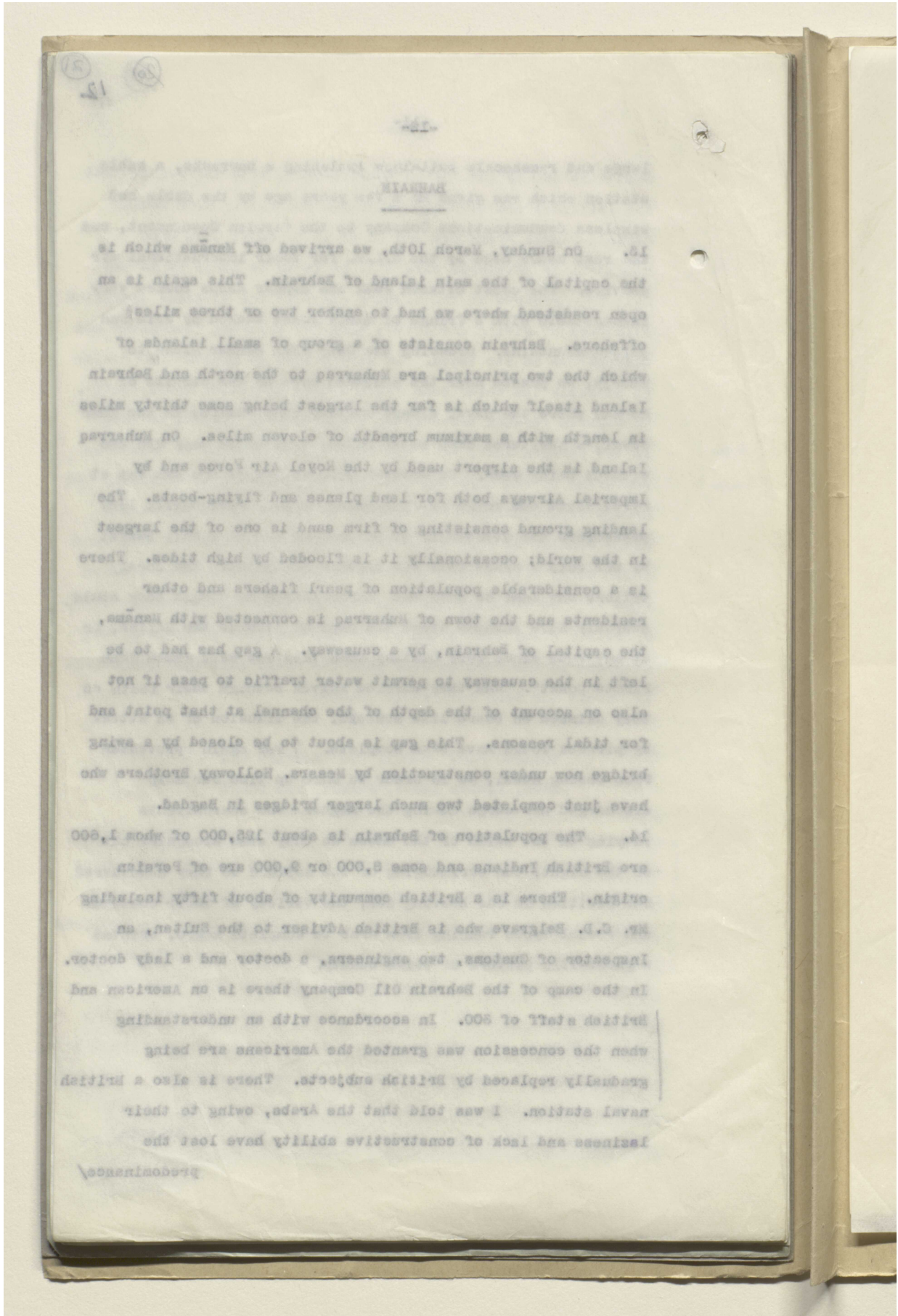
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BAHRAIN

13. On Sunday, March 10th, we arrived off Manāma which is the capital of the main island of Bahrain. This again is an open roadstead where we had to anchor two or three miles offshore. Bahrain consists of a group of small islands of which the two principal are Muharraq to the north and Bahrain Island itself which is far the largest being some thirty miles in length with a maximum breadth of eleven miles. On Muharraq Island is the airport used by the Royal Air Force and by Imperial Airways both for land planes and flying-boats. The landing ground consisting of firm sand is one of the largest in the world; occasionally it is flooded by high tides. There is a considerable population of pearl fishers and other residents and the town of Muharraq is connected with Manāma, the capital of Bahrain, by a causeway. A gap has had to be left in the causeway to permit water traffic to pass if not also on account of the depth of the channel at that point and for tidal reasons. This gap is about to be closed by a swing bridge now under construction by Messrs. Holloway Brothers who have just completed two much larger bridges in Bagdad.

14. The population of Bahrain is about 125,000 of whom 1,600 are British Indians and some 8,000 or 9,000 are of Persian origin. There is a British community of about fifty including Mr. C.D. Belgrave who is British Adviser to the Sultan, an Inspector of Customs, two engineers, a doctor and a lady doctor. In the camp of the Bahrain Oil Company there is an American and British staff of 300. In accordance with an understanding when the concession was granted the Americans are being gradually replaced by British subjects. There is also a British naval station. I was told that the Arabs, owing to their laziness and lack of constructive ability have lost the
predominance/

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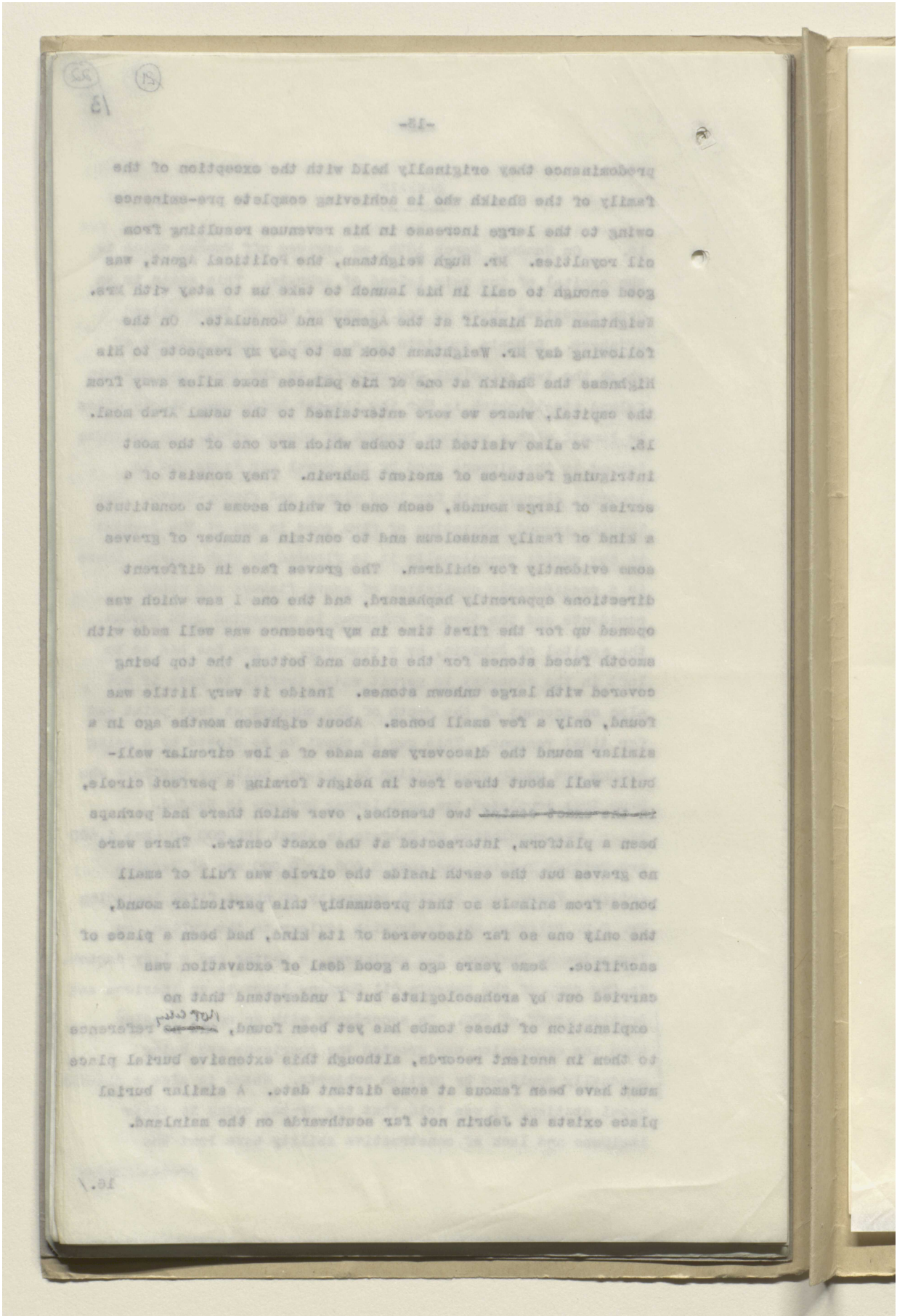
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predominance they originally held with the exception of the family of the Shaikh who is achieving complete pre-eminence owing to the large increase in his revenues resulting from oil royalties. Mr. Hugh Weightman, the Political Agent, was good enough to call in his launch to take us to stay with Mrs. Weightman and himself at the Agency and Consulate. On the following day Mr. Weightman took me to pay my respects to His Highness the Shaikh at one of his palaces some miles away from the capital, where we were entertained to the usual Arab meal.

15. We also visited the tombs which are one of the most intriguing features of ancient Bahrain. They consist of a series of large mounds, each one of which seems to constitute a kind of family mausoleum and to contain a number of graves some evidently for children. The graves face in different directions apparently haphazard, and the one I saw which was opened up for the first time in my presence was well made with smooth faced stones for the sides and bottom, the top being covered with large unhewn stones. Inside it very little was found, only a few small bones. About eighteen months ago in a similar mound the discovery was made of a low circular well-built wall about three feet in height forming a perfect circle, ~~in the exact centre~~ two trenches, over which there had perhaps been a platform, intersected at the exact centre. There were no graves but the earth inside the circle was full of small bones from animals so that presumably this particular mound, the only one so far discovered of its kind, had been a place of sacrifice. Some years ago a good deal of excavation was carried out by archaeologists but I understand that no explanation of these tombs has yet been found, ^{not any} ~~and no~~ reference to them in ancient records, although this extensive burial place must have been famous at some distant date. A similar burial place exists at Jebrin not far southwards on the mainland.

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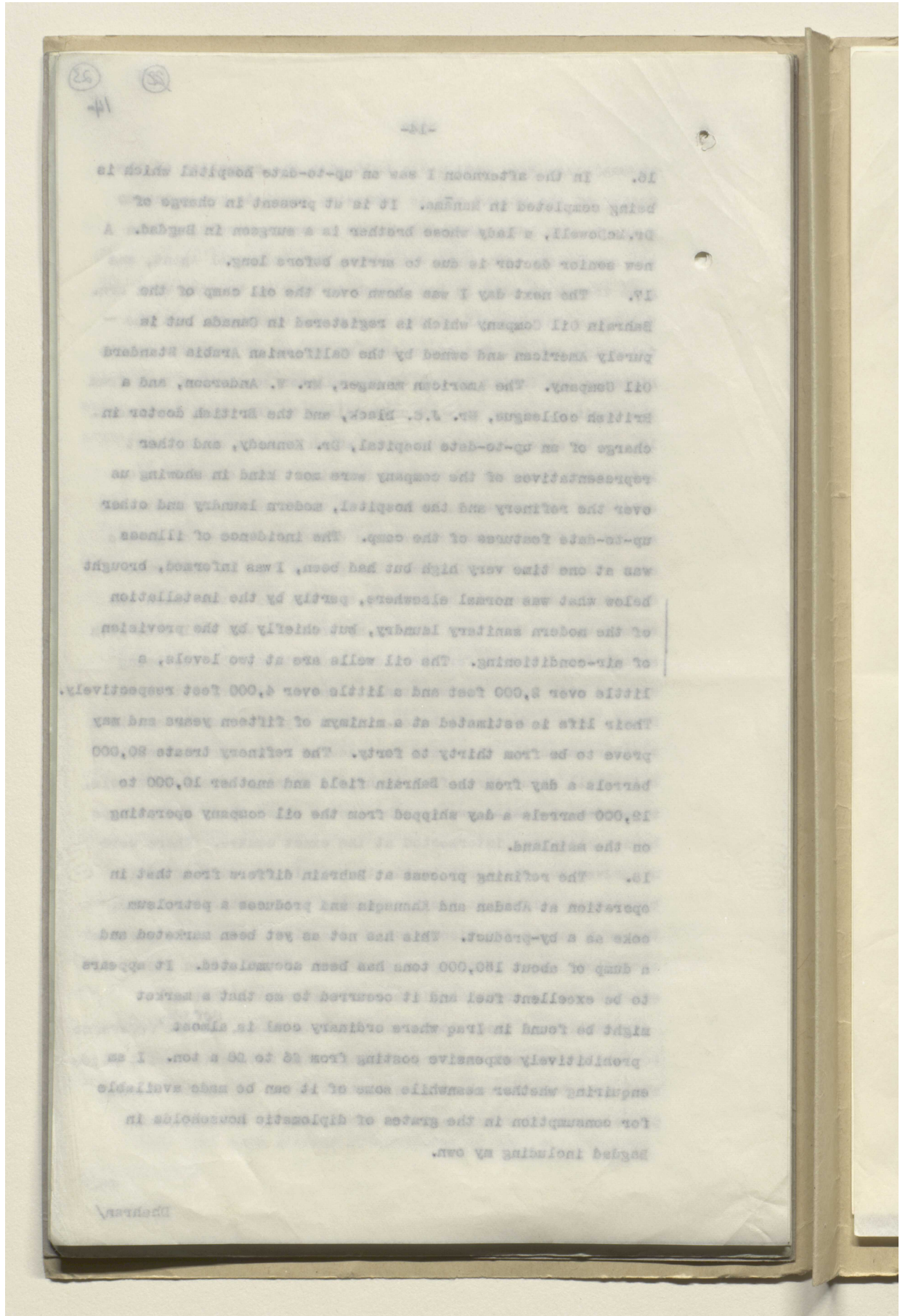
16. In the afternoon I saw an up-to-date hospital which is being completed in Manāma. It is at present in charge of Dr. McDowell, a lady whose brother is a surgeon in Bagdad. A new senior doctor is due to arrive before long.

17. The next day I was shown over the oil camp of the Bahrain Oil Company which is registered in Canada but is purely American and owned by the Californian Arabia Standard Oil Company. The American manager, Mr. W. Anderson, and a British colleague, Mr. J.S. Black, and the British doctor in charge of an up-to-date hospital, Dr. Kennedy, and other representatives of the company were most kind in showing us over the refinery and the hospital, modern laundry and other up-to-date features of the camp. The incidence of illness was at one time very high but had been, I was informed, brought below what was normal elsewhere, partly by the installation of the modern sanitary laundry, but chiefly by the provision of air-conditioning. The oil wells are at two levels, a little over 2,000 feet and a little over 4,000 feet respectively. Their life is estimated at a minimum of fifteen years and may prove to be from thirty to forty. The refinery treats 20,000 barrels a day from the Bahrain field and another 10,000 to 12,000 barrels a day shipped from the oil company operating on the mainland.

18. The refining process at Bahrain differs from that in operation at Abadan and Khanaqin and produces a petroleum coke as a by-product. This has not as yet been marketed and a dump of about 150,000 tons has been accumulated. It appears to be excellent fuel and it occurred to me that a market might be found in Iraq where ordinary coal is almost prohibitively expensive costing from £6 to £8 a ton. I am enquiring whether meanwhile some of it can be made available for consumption in the grates of diplomatic households in Bagdad including my own.

Dhahran/

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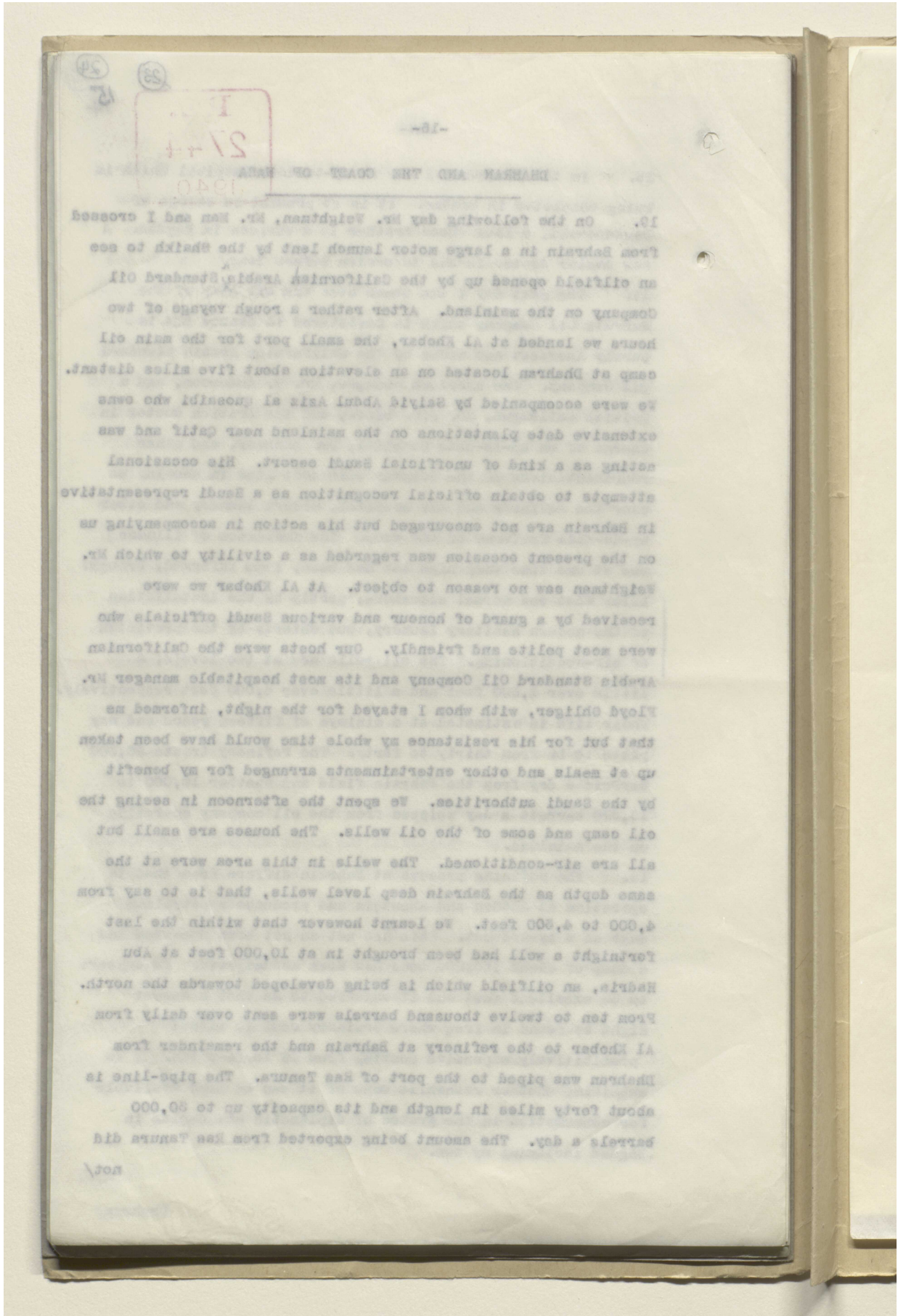
DHAHRAN AND THE COAST OF ARABIA

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19. On the following day Mr. Weightman, Mr. Man and I crossed from Bahrain in a large motor launch lent by the Shaikh to see an oilfield opened up by the Californian Arabia Standard Oil Company on the mainland. After rather a rough voyage of two hours we landed at Al Khobar, the small port for the main oil camp at Dhahran located on an elevation about five miles distant. We were accompanied by Saiyid Abdul Aziz al Quosaibi who owns extensive date plantations on the mainland near Qatif and was acting as a kind of unofficial Saudi escort. His occasional attempts to obtain official recognition as a Saudi representative in Bahrain are not encouraged but his action in accompanying us on the present occasion was regarded as a civility to which Mr. Weightman saw no reason to object. At Al Khobar we were received by a guard of honour and various Saudi officials who were most polite and friendly. Our hosts were the Californian Arabia Standard Oil Company and its most hospitable manager Mr. Floyd Ohliger, with whom I stayed for the night, informed me that but for his resistance my whole time would have been taken up at meals and other entertainments arranged for my benefit by the Saudi authorities. We spent the afternoon in seeing the oil camp and some of the oil wells. The houses are small but all are air-conditioned. The wells in this area were at the same depth as the Bahrain deep level wells, that is to say from 4,000 to 4,300 feet. We learnt however that within the last fortnight a well had been brought in at 10,000 feet at Abu Hadria, an oilfield which is being developed towards the north. From ten to twelve thousand barrels were sent over daily from Al Khobar to the refinery at Bahrain and the remainder from Dhahran was piped to the port of Ras Tanura. The pipe-line is about forty miles in length and its capacity up to 30,000 barrels a day. The amount being exported from Ras Tanura did

not/

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [24v]
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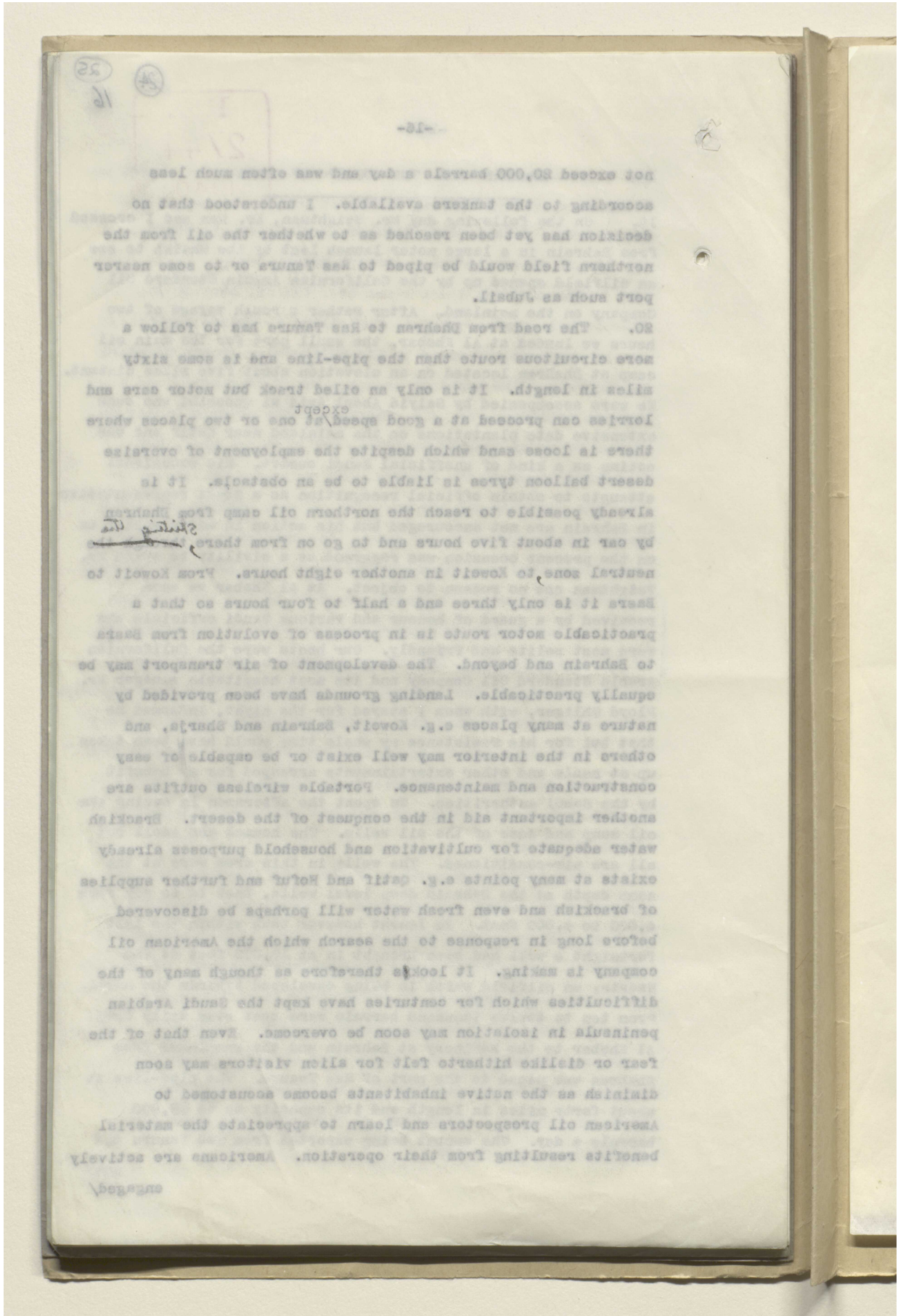
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [25r]
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not exceed 20,000 barrels a day and was often much less according to the tankers available. I understood that no decision has yet been reached as to whether the oil from the northern field would be piped to Ras Tanura or to some nearer port such as Jubail.

20. The road from Dhahran to Ras Tanura has to follow a more circuitous route than the pipe-line and is some sixty miles in length. It is only an oiled track but motor cars and lorries can proceed at a good speed ^{except} at one or two places where there is loose sand which despite the employment of oversize desert balloon tyres is liable to be an obstacle. It is already possible to reach the northern oil camp from Dhahran by car in about five hours and to go on from there, ^{skirting the} ~~through the~~ neutral zone, to Koweit in another eight hours. From Koweit to Basra it is only three and a half to four hours so that a practicable motor route is in process of evolution from Basra to Bahrain and beyond. The development of air transport may be equally practicable. Landing grounds have been provided by nature at many places e.g. Koweit, Bahrain and Sharja, and others in the interior may well exist or be capable of easy construction and maintenance. Portable wireless outfits are another important aid in the conquest of the desert. Brackish water adequate for cultivation and household purposes already exists at many points e.g. Qatif and Hofuf and further supplies of brackish and even fresh water will perhaps be discovered before long in response to the search which the American oil company is making. It looks therefore as though many of the difficulties which for centuries have kept the Saudi Arabian peninsula in isolation may soon be overcome. Even that of the fear or dislike hitherto felt for alien visitors may soon diminish as the native inhabitants become accustomed to American oil prospectors and learn to appreciate the material benefits resulting from their operation. Americans are actively engaged/

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [25v]
(50/98)



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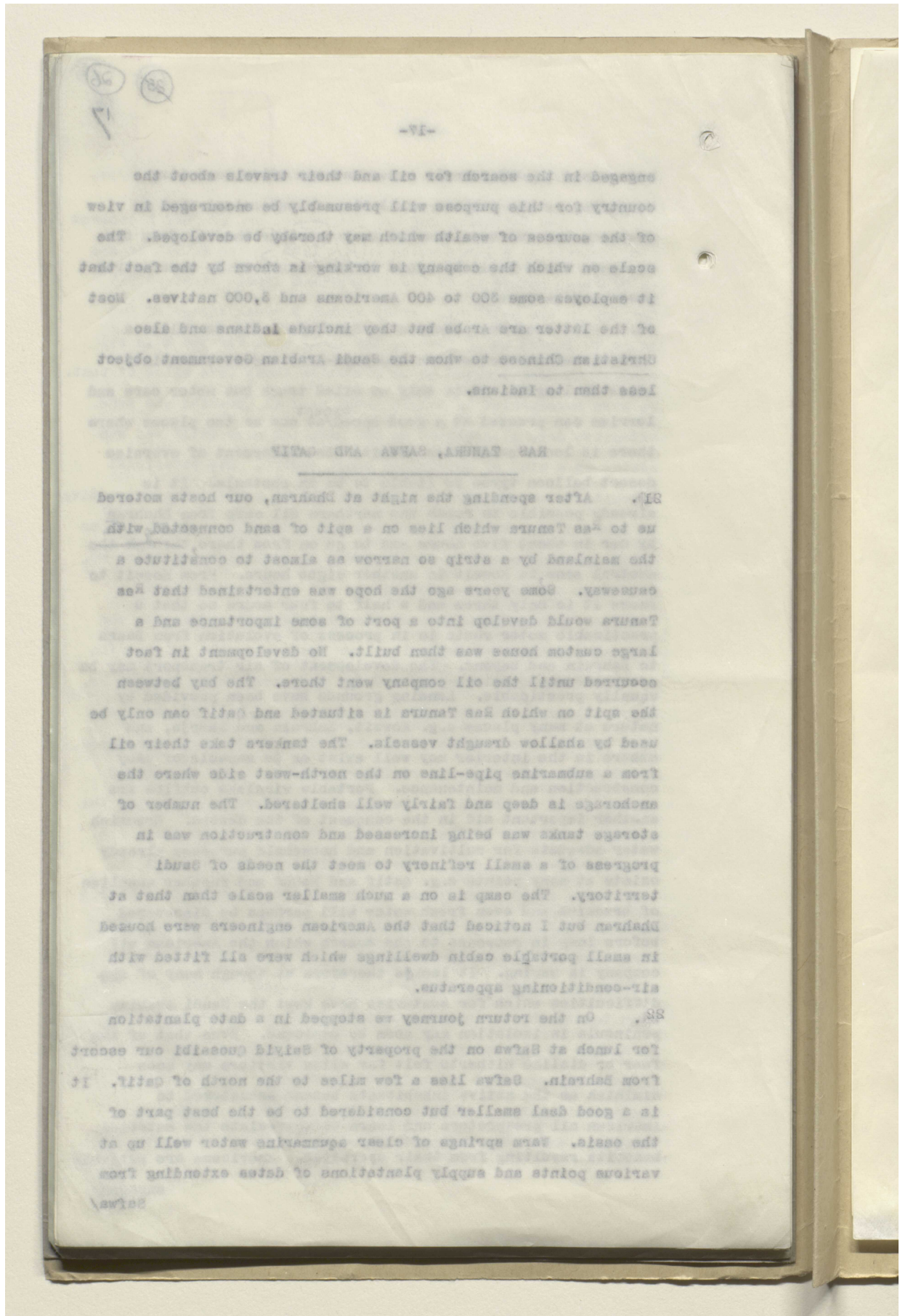
engaged in the search for oil and their travels about the country for this purpose will presumably be encouraged in view of the sources of wealth which may thereby be developed. The scale on which the company is working is shown by the fact that it employs some 300 to 400 Americans and 3,000 natives. Most of the latter are Arabs but they include Indians and also Christian Chinese to whom the Saudi Arabian Government object less than to Indians.

RAS TANURA, SAFWA AND QATIF

21. After spending the night at Dhahran, our hosts motored us to Ras Tanura which lies on a spit of sand connected with the mainland by a strip so narrow as almost to constitute a causeway. Some years ago the hope was entertained that Ras Tanura would develop into a port of some importance and a large custom house was then built. No development in fact occurred until the oil company went there. The bay between the spit on which Ras Tanura is situated and Qatif can only be used by shallow draught vessels. The tankers take their oil from a submarine pipe-line on the north-west side where the anchorage is deep and fairly well sheltered. The number of storage tanks was being increased and construction was in progress of a small refinery to meet the needs of Saudi territory. The camp is on a much smaller scale than that at Dhahran but I noticed that the American engineers were housed in small portable cabin dwellings which were all fitted with air-conditioning apparatus.

22. On the return journey we stopped in a date plantation for lunch at Safwa on the property of Saiyid Quossibi our escort from Bahrain. Safwa lies a few miles to the north of Qatif. It is a good deal smaller but considered to be the best part of the oasis. Warm springs of clear aquamarine water well up at various points and supply plantations of dates extending from
Safwa/

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [26v]
(52/98)



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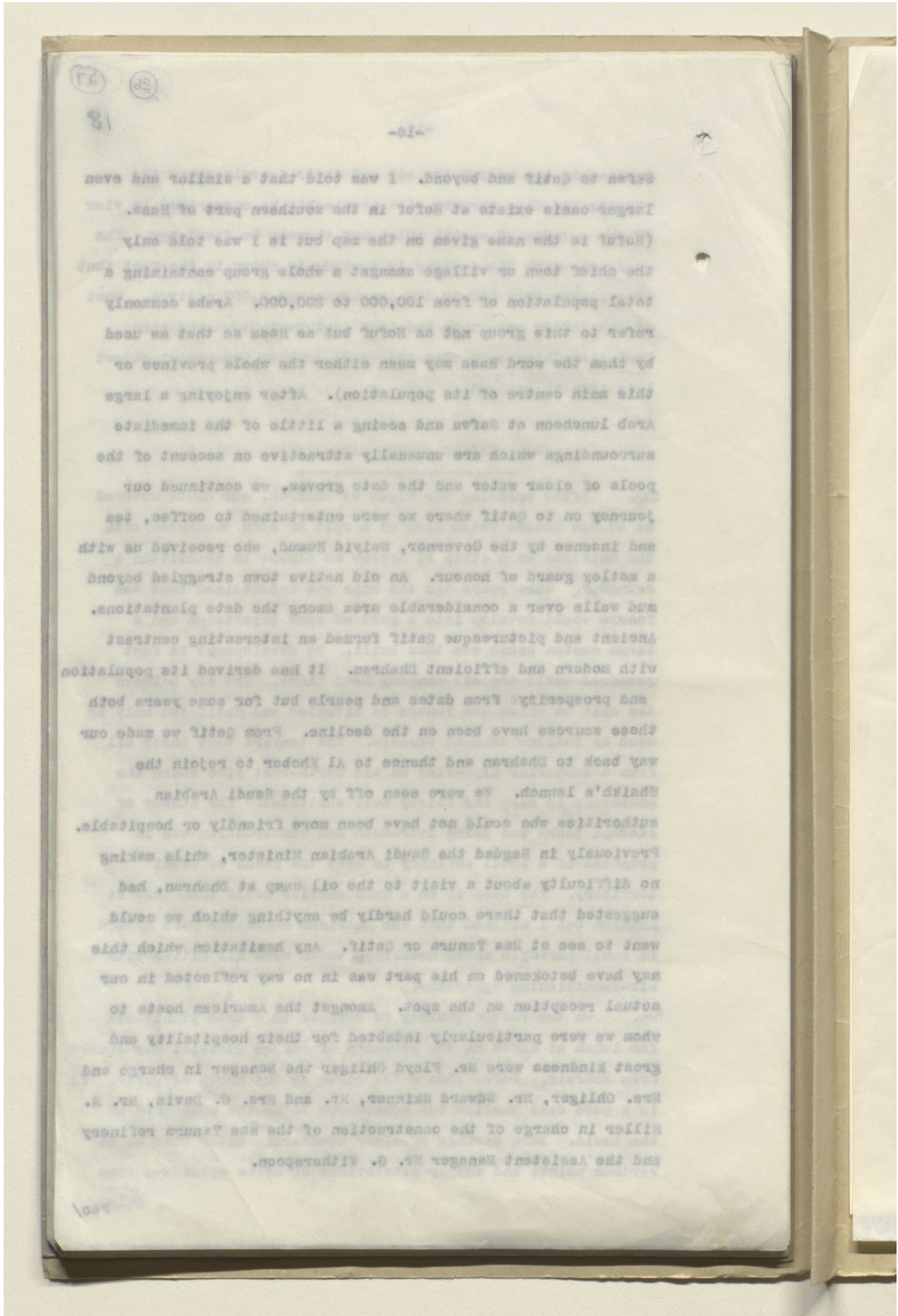
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(26) (27)
18

Safwa to Qatif and beyond. I was told that a similar and even larger oasis exists at Hofuf in the southern part of Hasa. (Hofuf is the name given on the map but as I was told only the chief town or village amongst a whole group containing a total population of from 100,000 to 200,000. Arabs commonly refer to this group not as Hofuf but as Hasa so that as used by them the word Hasa may mean either the whole province or this main centre of its population). After enjoying a large Arab luncheon at Safwa and seeing a little of the immediate surroundings which are unusually attractive on account of the pools of clear water and the date groves, we continued our journey on to Qatif where we were entertained to coffee, tea and incense by the Governor, Saiyid Humud, who received us with a motley guard of honour. An old native town straggled beyond mud walls over a considerable area among the date plantations. Ancient and picturesque Qatif formed an interesting contrast with modern and efficient Dhahran. It has derived its population and prosperity from dates and pearls but for some years both these sources have been on the decline. From Qatif we made our way back to Dhahran and thence to Al Khober to rejoin the Shaikh's launch. We were seen off by the Saudi Arabian authorities who could not have been more friendly or hospitable. Previously in Bagdad the Saudi Arabian Minister, while making no difficulty about a visit to the oil camp at Dhahran, had suggested that there could hardly be anything which we could want to see at Ras Tanura or Qatif. Any hesitation which this may have betokened on his part was in no way reflected in our actual reception on the spot. Amongst the American hosts to whom we were particularly indebted for their hospitality and great kindness were Mr. Floyd Ohliger the Manager in charge and Mrs. Ohliger, Mr. Edward Skinner, Mr. and Mrs. C. Davis, Mr. R. Miller in charge of the construction of the Ras Tanura refinery and the Assistant Manager Mr. G. Witherspoon.

Fao/

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [27v]
(54/98)



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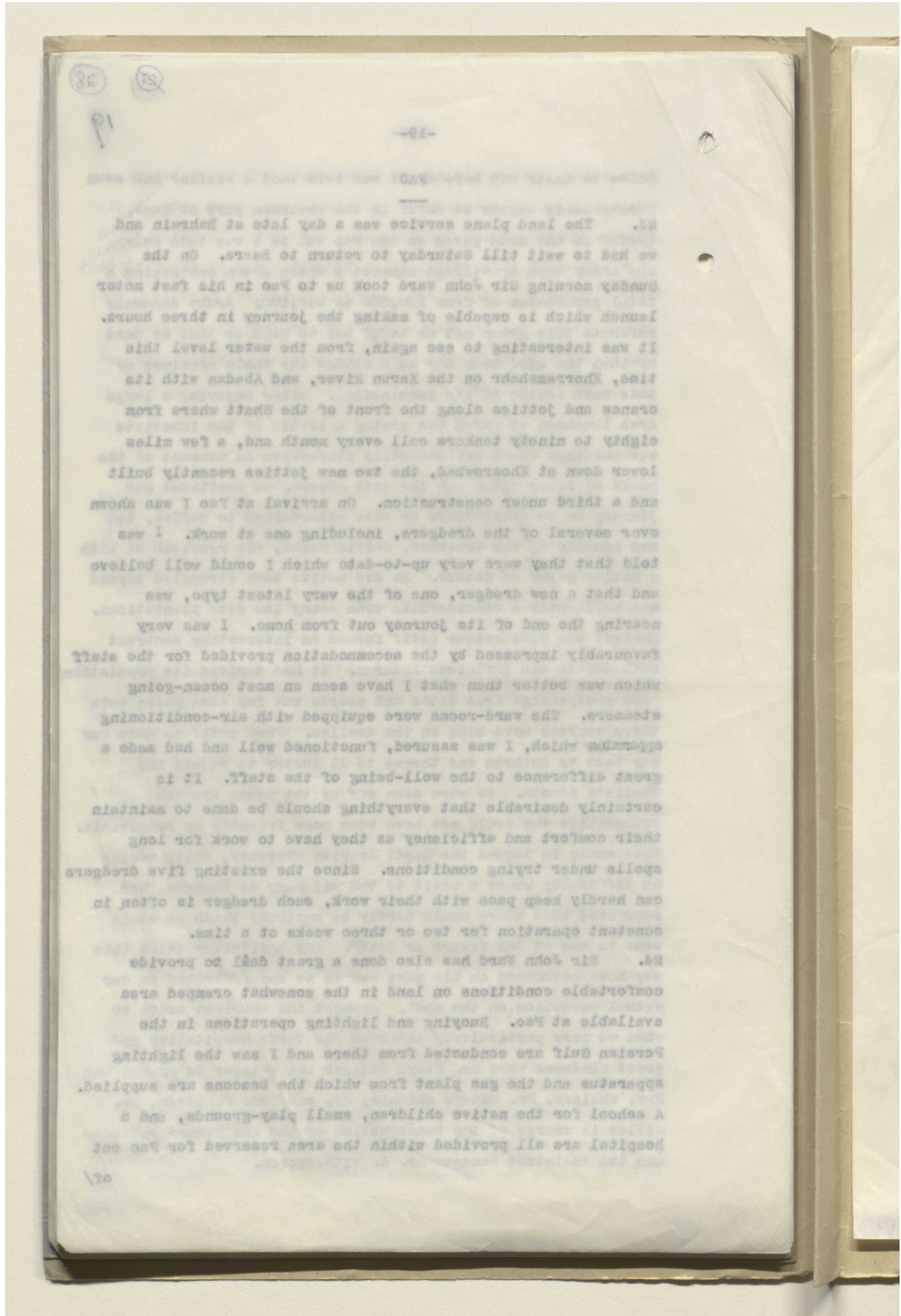
FAO

23. The land plane service was a day late at Bahrain and we had to wait till Saturday to return to Basra. On the Sunday morning Sir John Ward took us to Fao in his fast motor launch which is capable of making the journey in three hours. It was interesting to see again, from the water level this time, Khorramshahr on the Karun River, and Abadan with its cranes and jetties along the front of the Shatt where from eighty to ninety tankers call every month and, a few miles lower down at Khoerowbad, the two new jetties recently built and a third under construction. On arrival at Fao I was shown over several of the dredgers, including one at work. I was told that they were very up-to-date which I could well believe and that a new dredger, one of the very latest type, was nearing the end of its journey out from home. I was very favourably impressed by the accommodation provided for the staff which was better than what I have seen on most ocean-going steamers. The ward-rooms were equipped with air-conditioning apparatus which, I was assured, functioned well and had made a great difference to the well-being of the staff. It is certainly desirable that everything should be done to maintain their comfort and efficiency as they have to work for long spells under trying conditions. Since the existing five dredgers can hardly keep pace with their work, each dredger is often in constant operation for two or three weeks at a time.

24. Sir John Ward has also done a great deal to provide comfortable conditions on land in the somewhat cramped area available at Fao. Buoying and lighting operations in the Persian Gulf are conducted from there and I saw the lighting apparatus and the gas plant from which the beacons are supplied. A school for the native children, small play-grounds, and a hospital are all provided within the area reserved for Fao out

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Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [28v]
(56/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [29r]
(57/98)

(28) (29)
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-20-

of the surrounding date plantations belonging to the Shaikh of Koweit. Five Europeans are permanently employed on the land establishment and nine on each dredger. The total European staff ashore and afloat was normally about seventy but should be ninety at full strength. Sir John Ward told me that he was having difficulty in maintaining the European establishment at full strength. The number of natives employed fluctuates and is at present from 200 to 250.

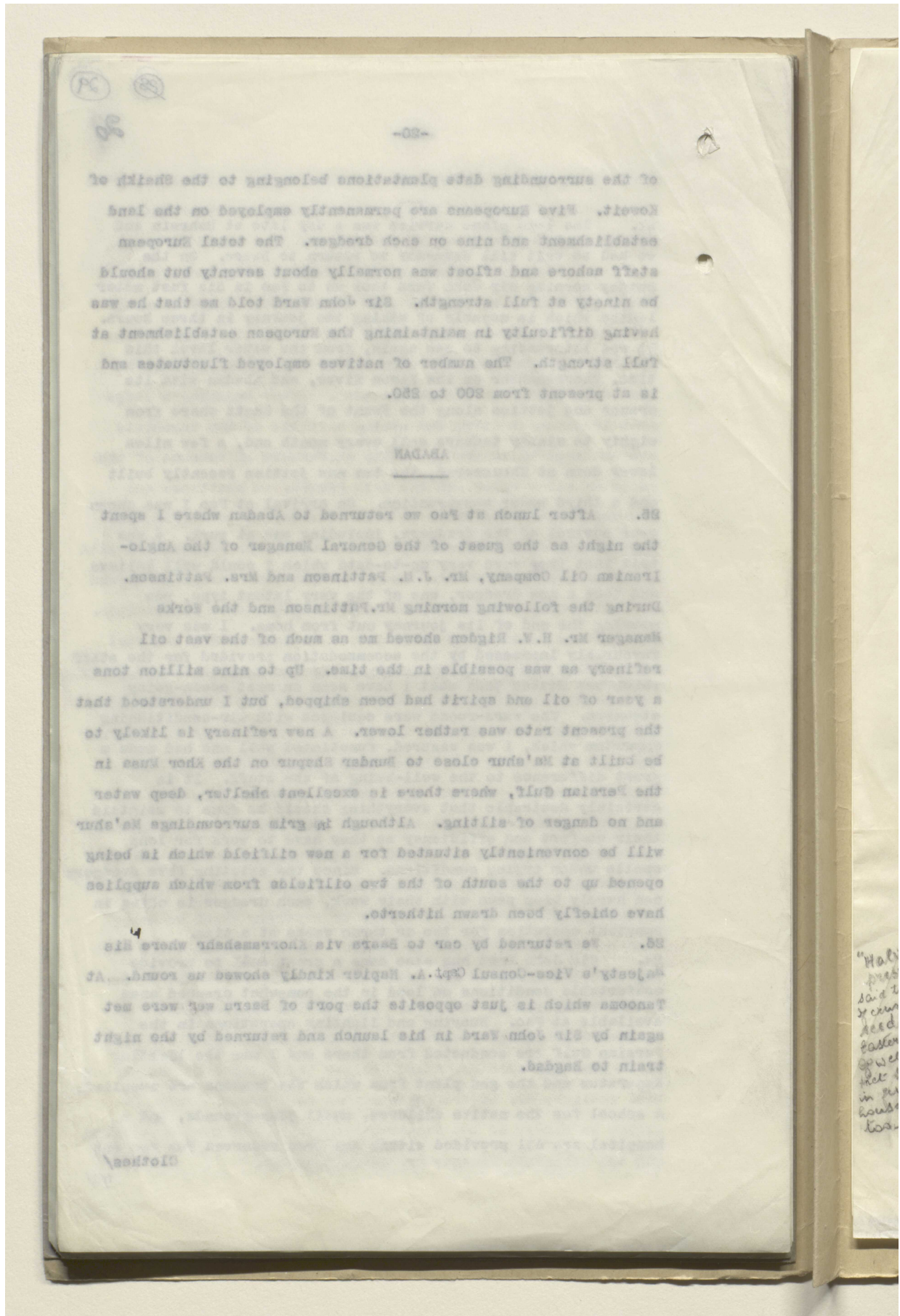
ABADAN

25. After lunch at Fao we returned to Abadan where I spent the night as the guest of the General Manager of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Mr. J.M. Pattinson and Mrs. Pattinson. During the following morning Mr. Pattinson and the Works Manager Mr. H.W. Rigden showed me as much of the vast oil refinery as was possible in the time. Up to nine million tons a year of oil and spirit had been shipped, but I understood that the present rate was rather lower. A new refinery is likely to be built at Ma'shur close to Bunder Shapur on the Khor Musa in the Persian Gulf, where there is excellent shelter, deep water and no danger of silting. Although in grim surroundings Ma'shur will be conveniently situated for a new oilfield which is being opened up to the south of the two oilfields from which supplies have chiefly been drawn hitherto.

26. We returned by car to Basra via Khorramshahr where His Majesty's Vice-Consul Capt. A. Napier kindly showed us round. At Tanooma which is just opposite the port of Basra we were met again by Sir John Ward in his launch and returned by the night train to Bagdad.

Clothes/

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [29v]
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CLOTHES AND CLIMATE

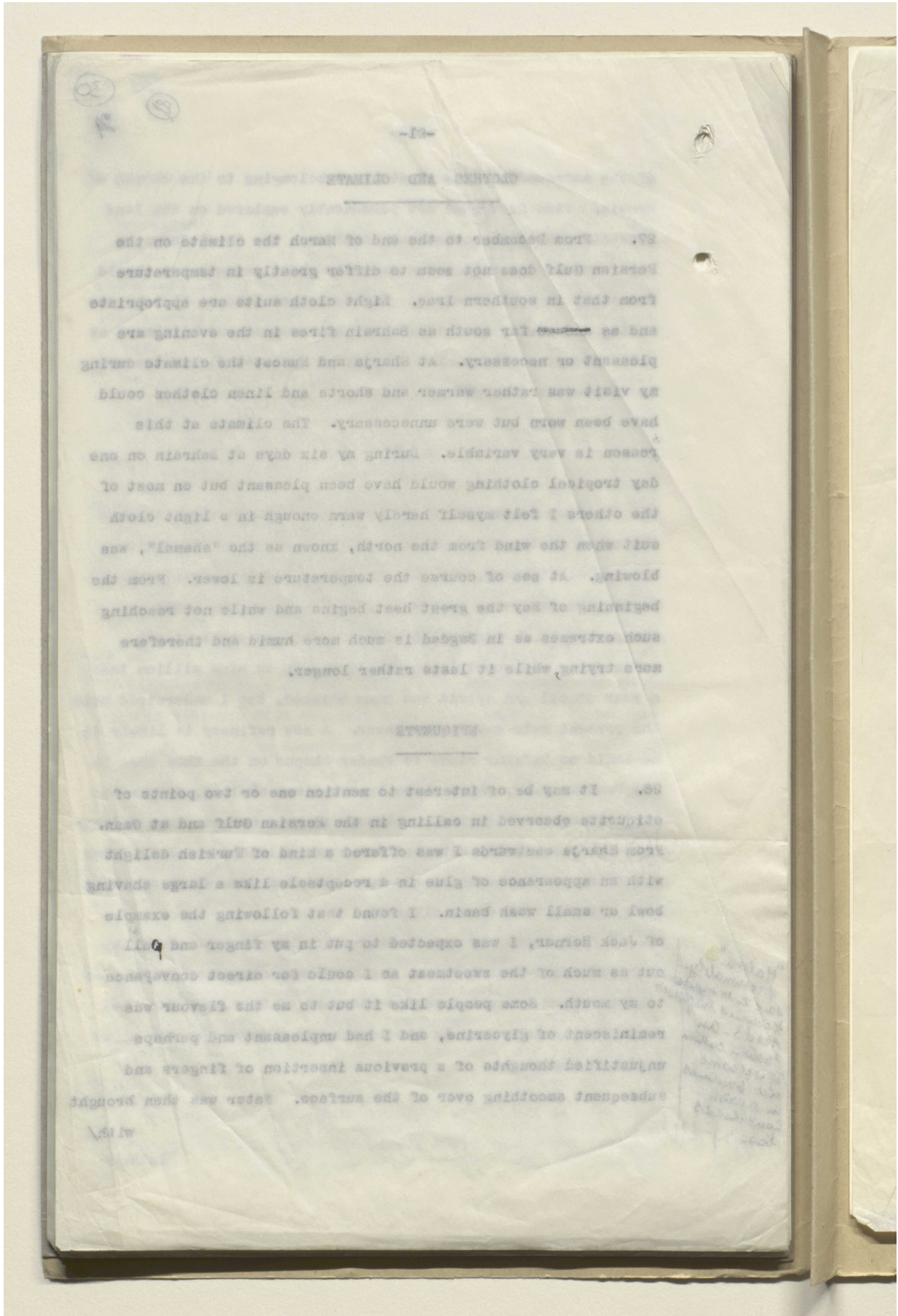
27. From December to the end of March the climate on the Persian Gulf does not seem to differ greatly in temperature from that in southern Iraq. Light cloth suits are appropriate and as ~~and~~ far south as Bahrain fires in the evening are pleasant or necessary. At Sharja and Muscat the climate during my visit was rather warmer and shorts and linen clothes could have been worn but were unnecessary. The climate at this ^s season is very variable. During my six days at Bahrain on one day tropical clothing would have been pleasant but on most of the others I felt myself hardly warm enough in a light cloth suit when the wind from the north, known as the "shamal", was blowing. At sea of course the temperature is lower. From the beginning of May the great heat begins and while not reaching such extremes as in Bagdad is much more humid and therefore more trying, while it lasts rather longer.

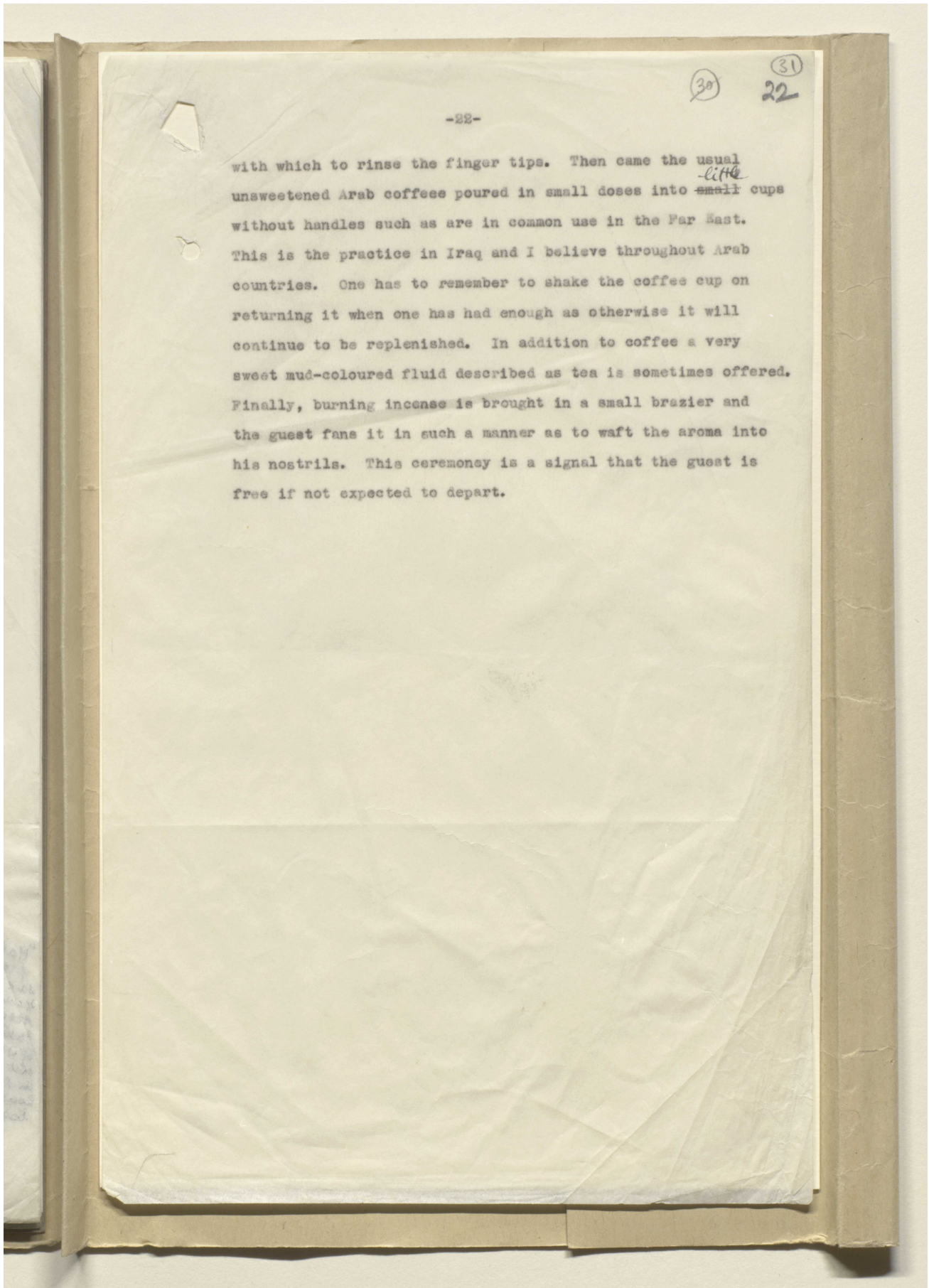
ETIQUETTE

28. It may be of interest to mention one or two points of etiquette observed in calling in the Persian Gulf and at Oman. From Sharja eastwards I was offered a kind of Turkish delight with an appearance of glue in a receptacle like a large shaving bowl or small wash basin. I found that following the example of Jack Horner, I was expected to put in my finger and pull out as much of the sweetmeat as I could for direct conveyance to my mouth. Some people like it but to me the flavour was reminiscent of glycerine, and I had unpleasant and perhaps unjustified thoughts of a previous insertion of fingers and subsequent smoothing over of the surface. Water was then brought with/

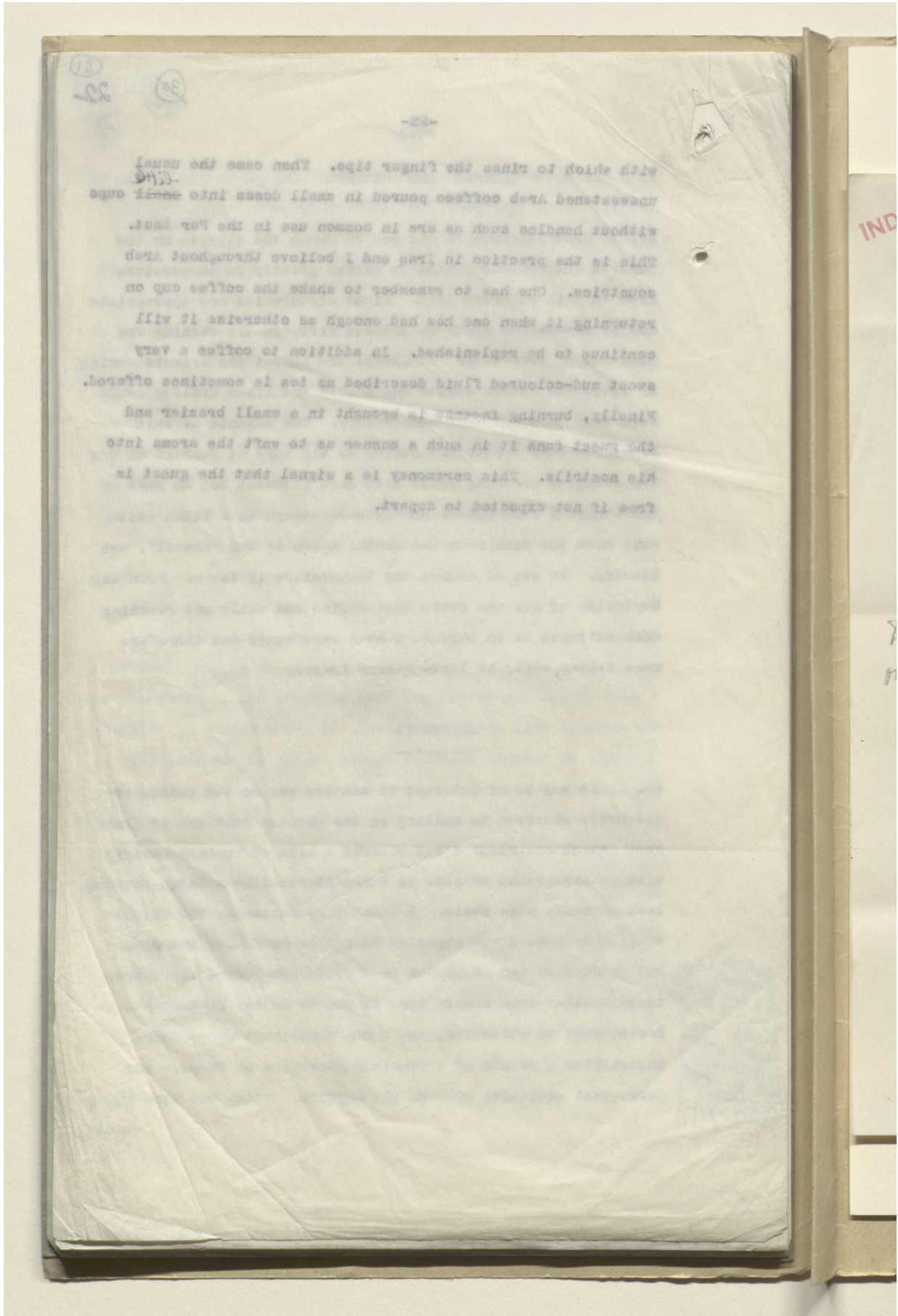
"Halwa"
presumably
said to be made
of crushed sugar
beets. An
Eastern custom
of welcome
that sometimes
in British
households
too.

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [30v]
(60/98)

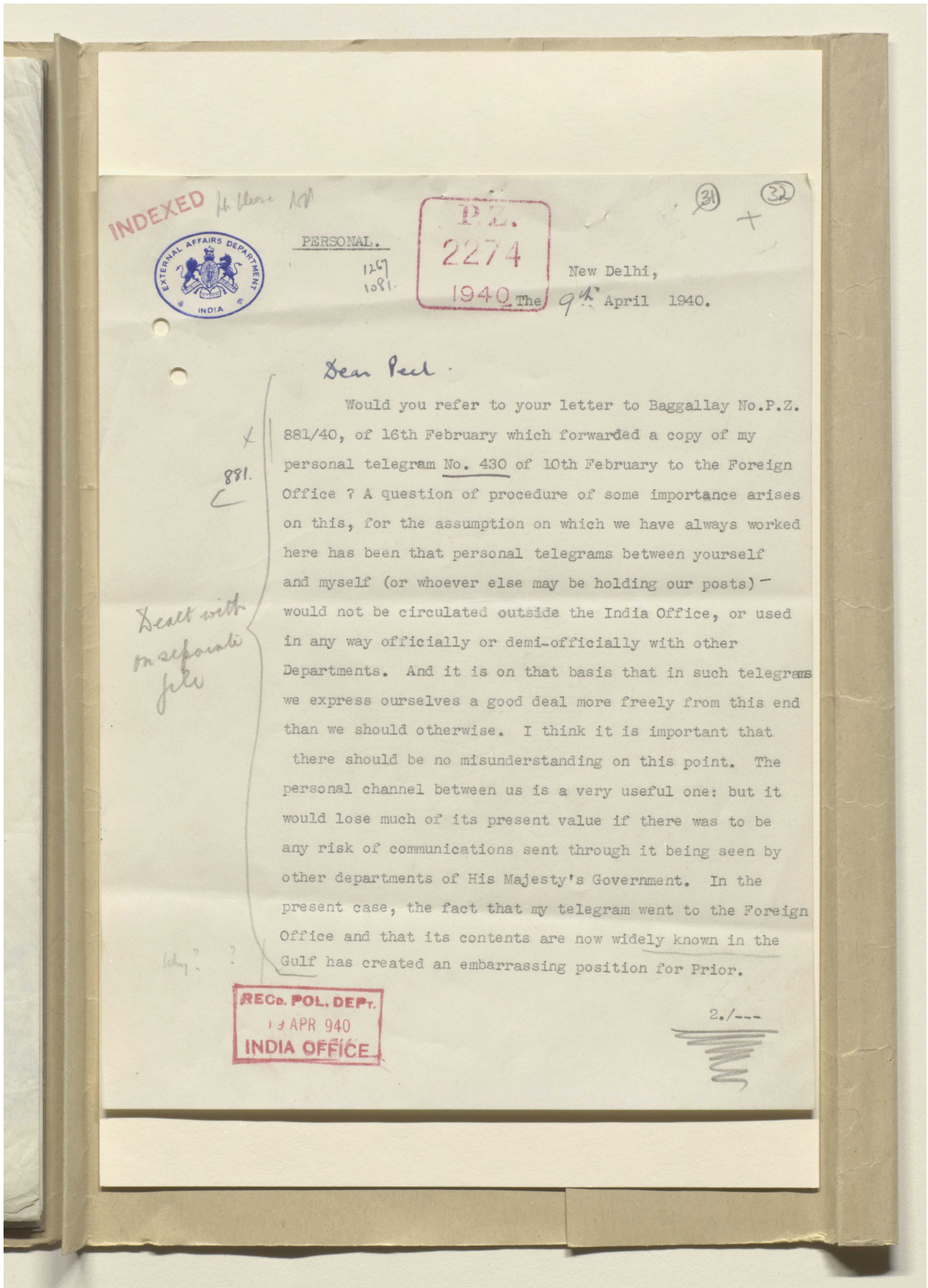




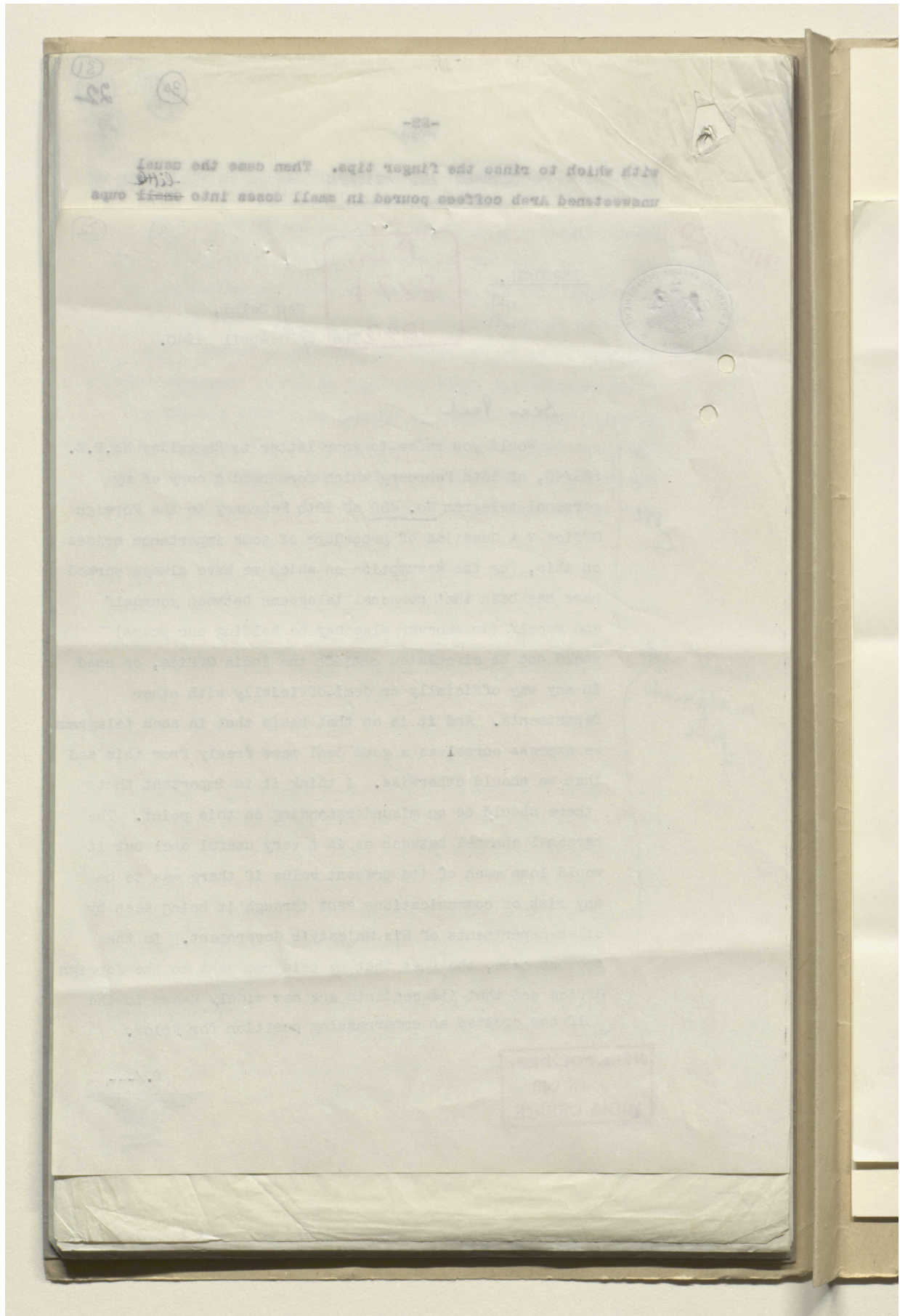
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [31v]
(62/98)

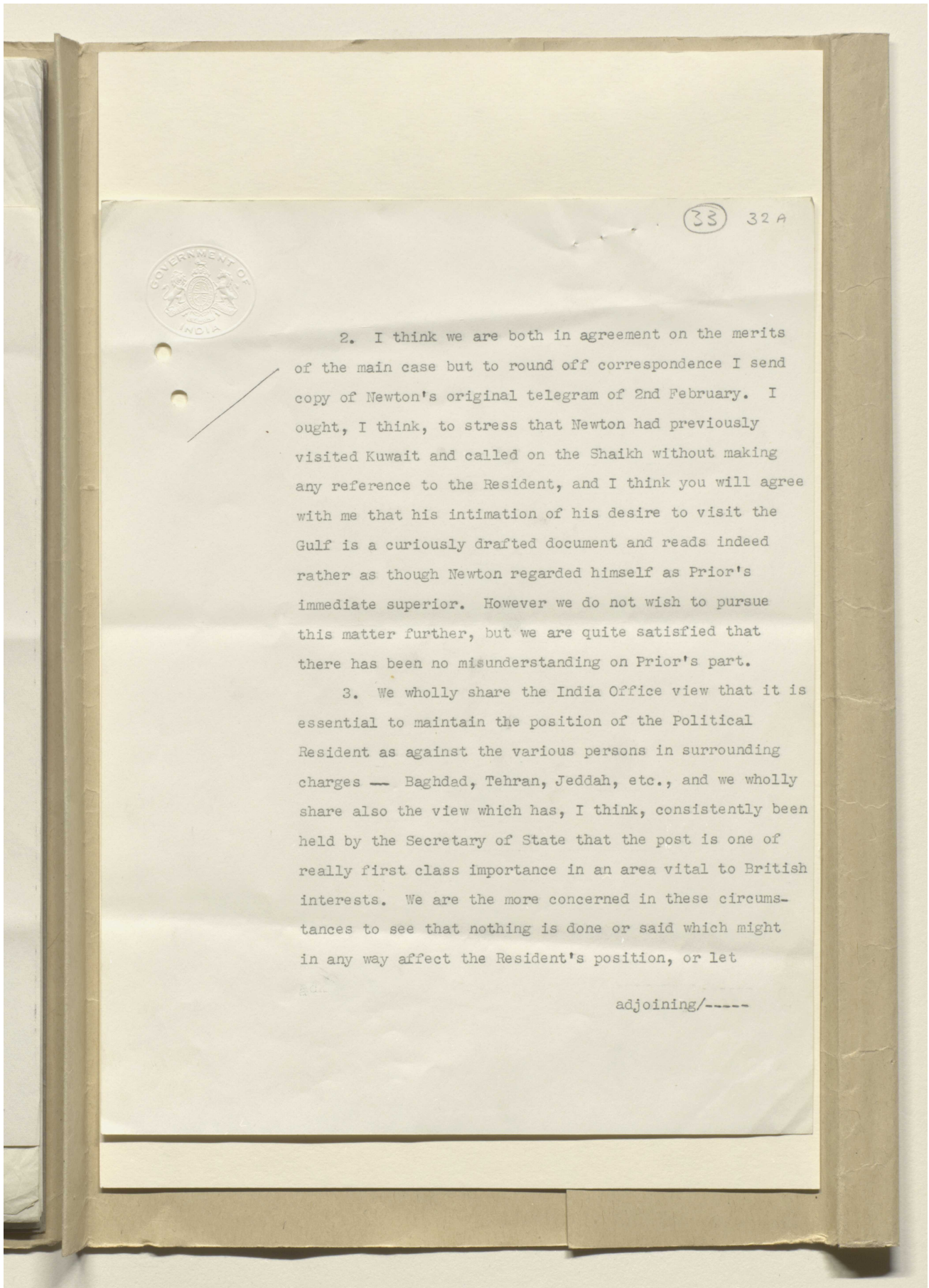


Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [32r]
(63/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [32v]
(64/98)





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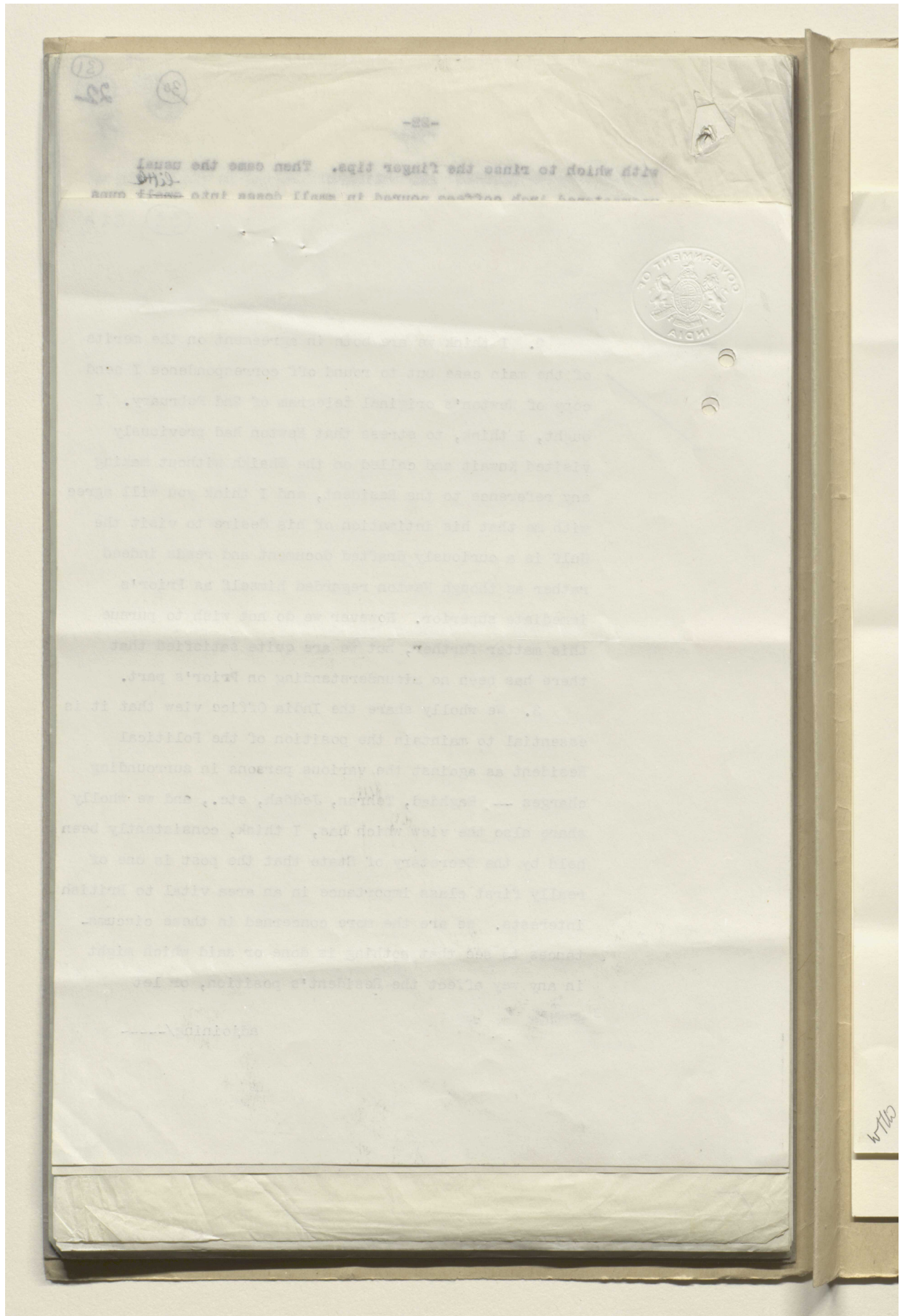


2. I think we are both in agreement on the merits of the main case but to round off correspondence I send copy of Newton's original telegram of 2nd February. I ought, I think, to stress that Newton had previously visited Kuwait and called on the Shaikh without making any reference to the Resident, and I think you will agree with me that his intimation of his desire to visit the Gulf is a curiously drafted document and reads indeed rather as though Newton regarded himself as Prior's immediate superior. However we do not wish to pursue this matter further, but we are quite satisfied that there has been no misunderstanding on Prior's part.

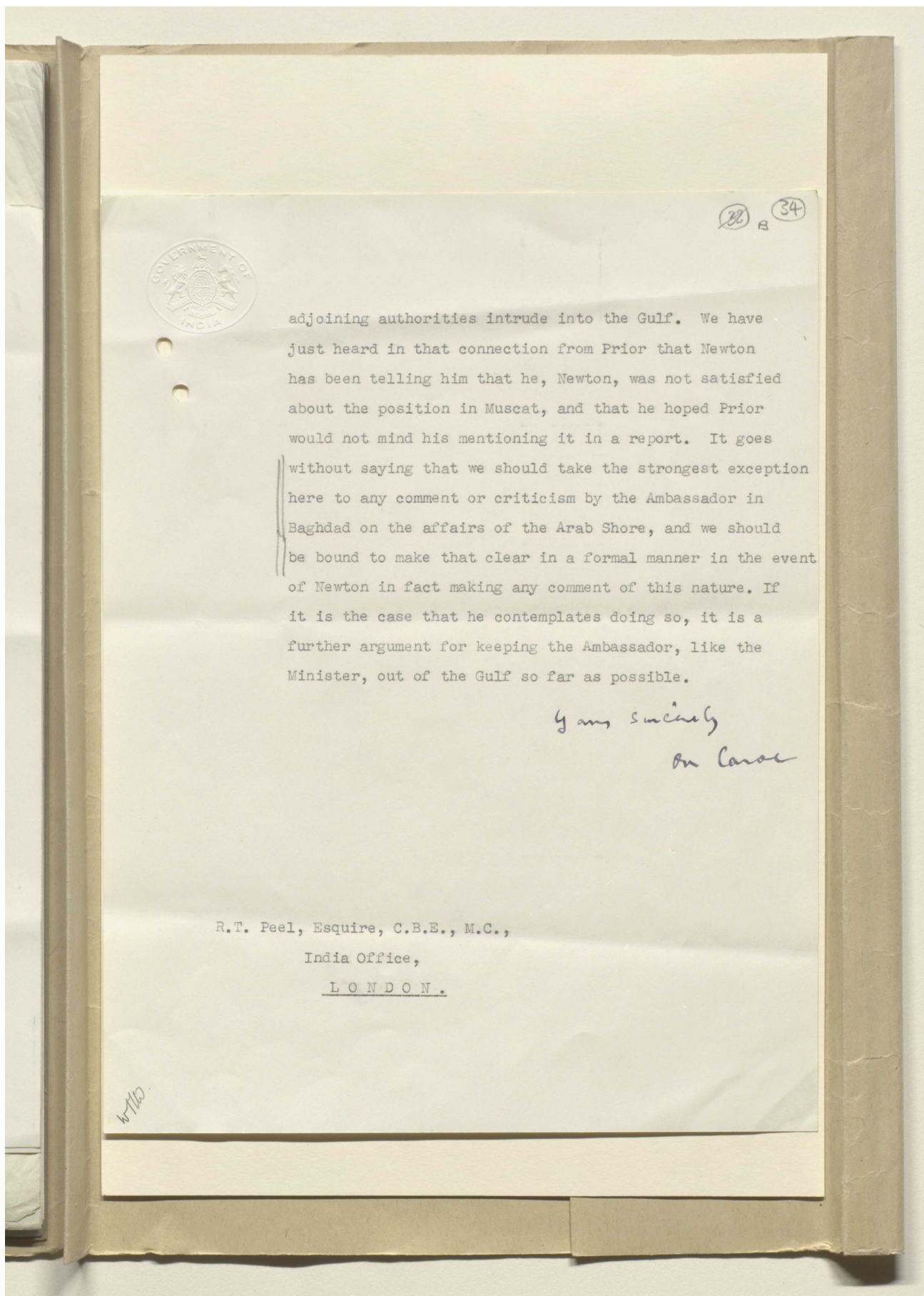
3. We wholly share the India Office view that it is essential to maintain the position of the Political Resident as against the various persons in surrounding charges — Baghdad, Tehran, Jeddah, etc., and we wholly share also the view which has, I think, consistently been held by the Secretary of State that the post is one of really first class importance in an area vital to British interests. We are the more concerned in these circumstances to see that nothing is done or said which might in any way affect the Resident's position, or let

adjoining/-----

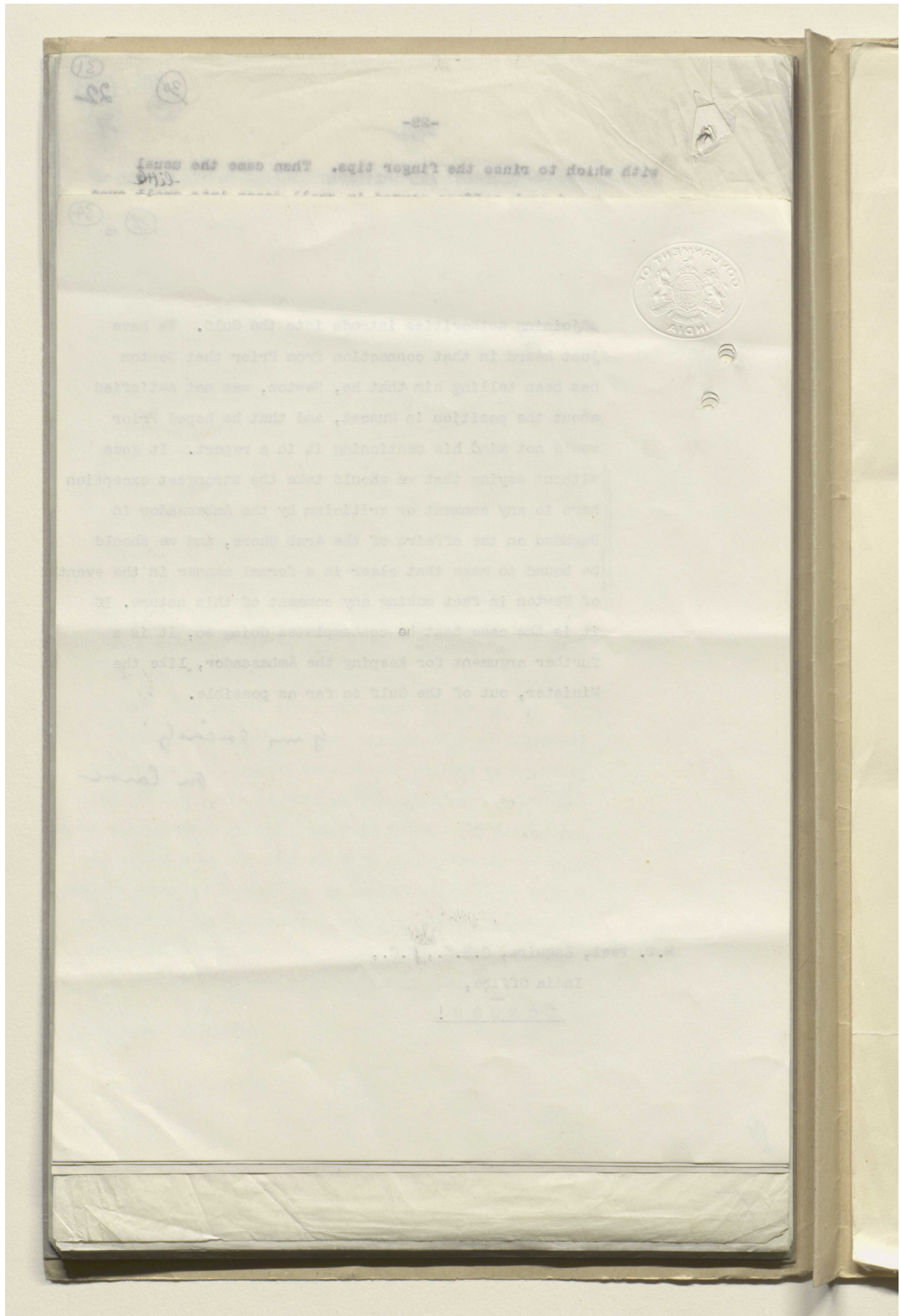
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [33v]
(66/98)



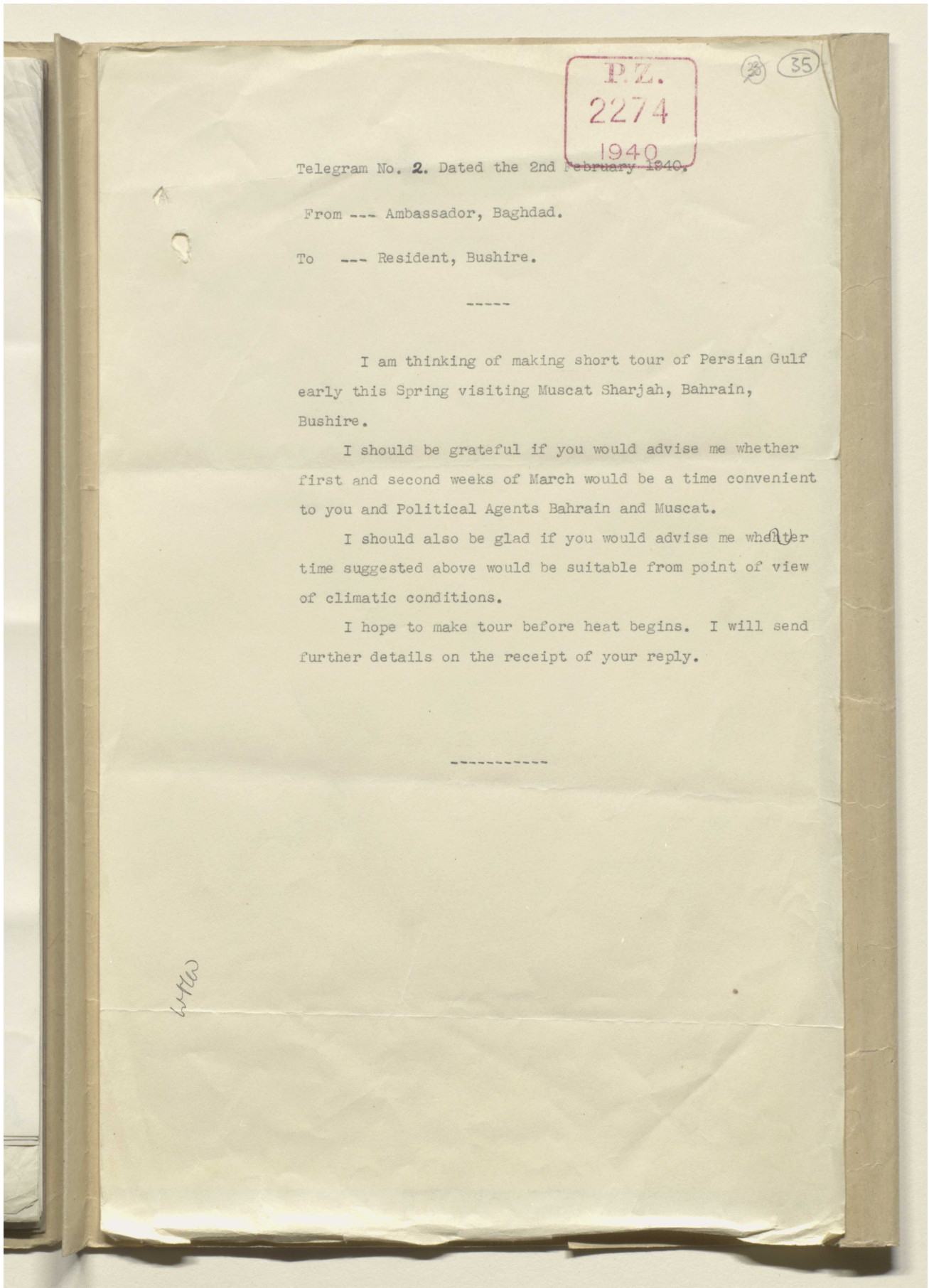
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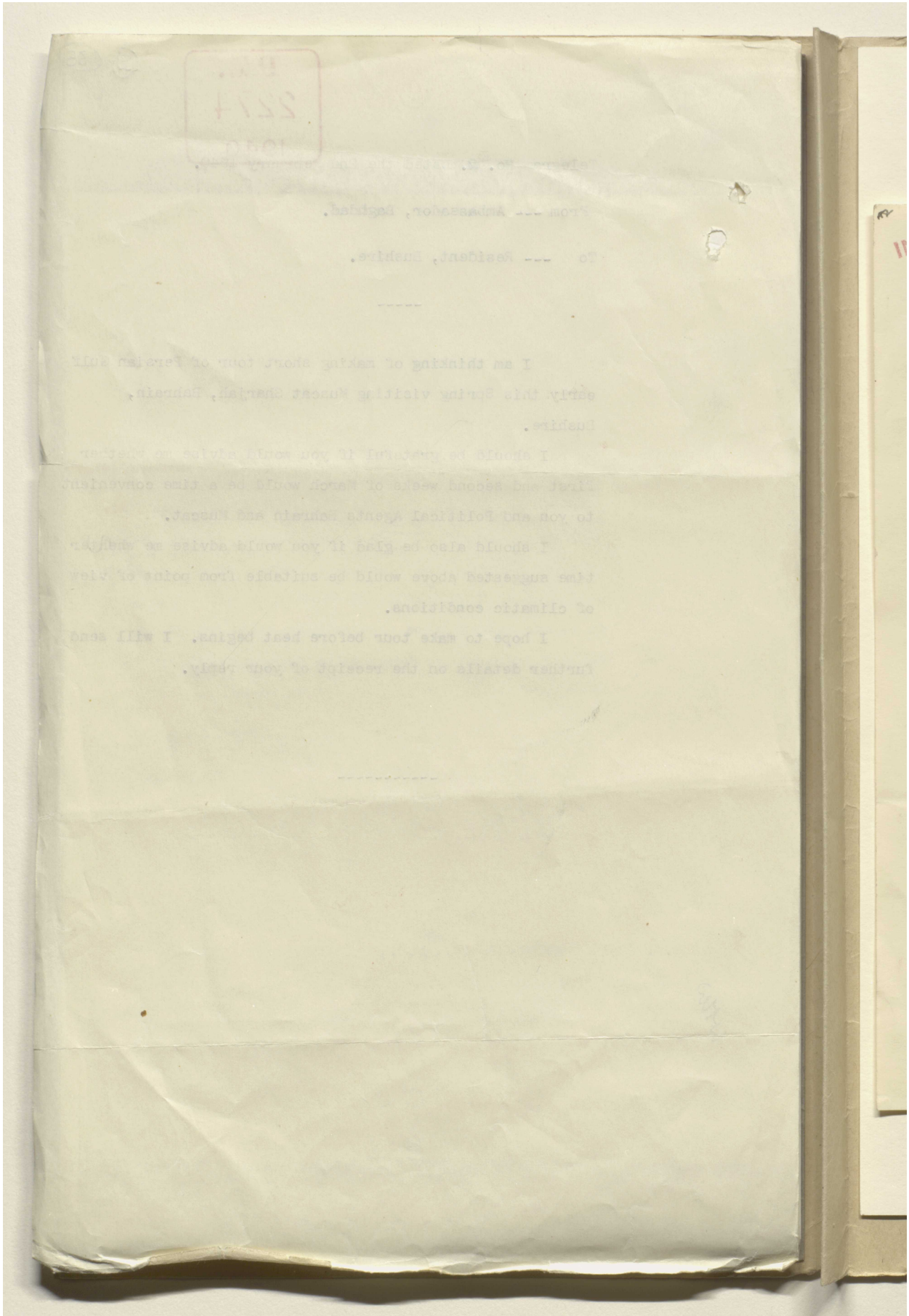
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [34v]
(68/98)



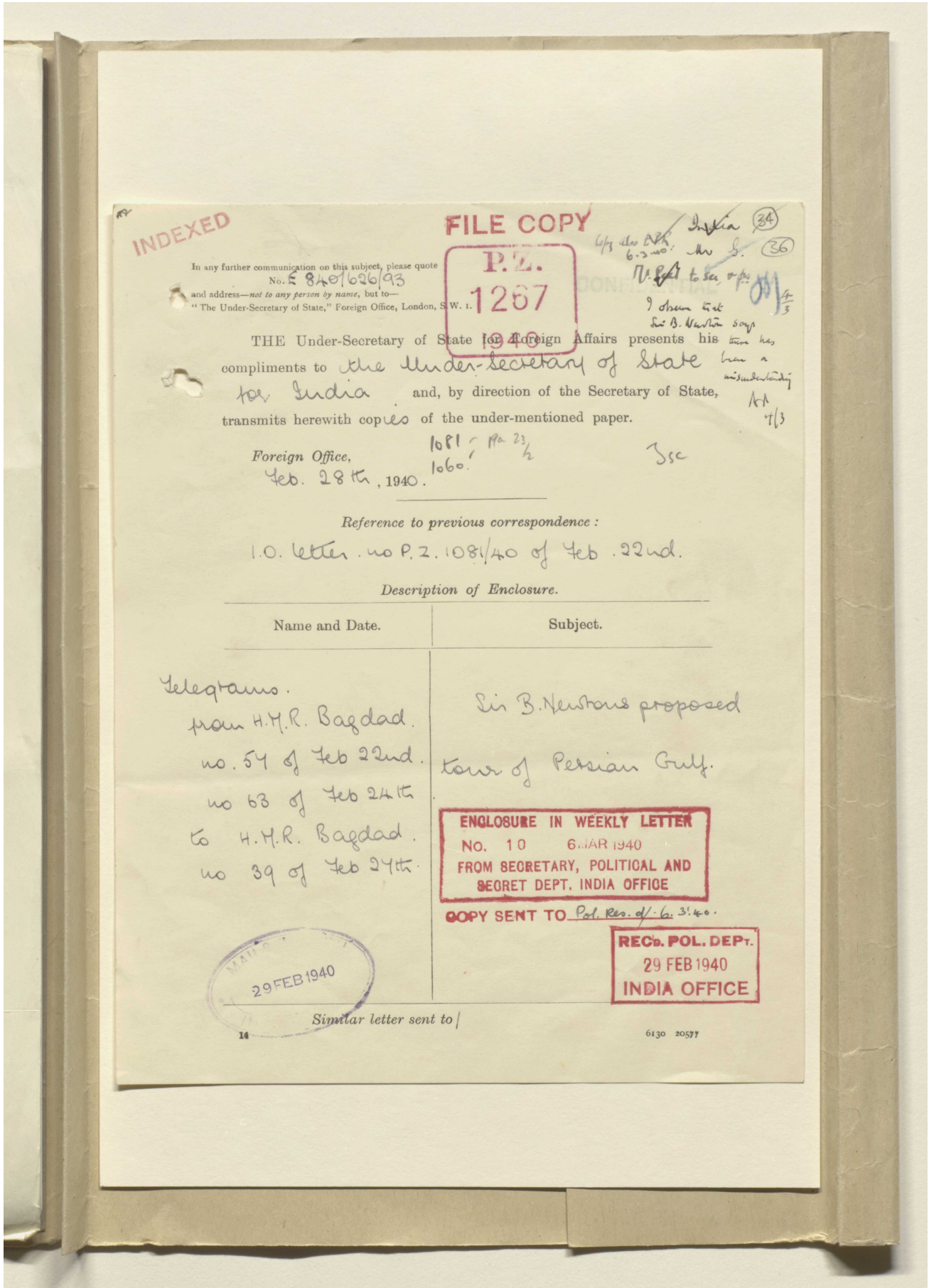
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [35r]
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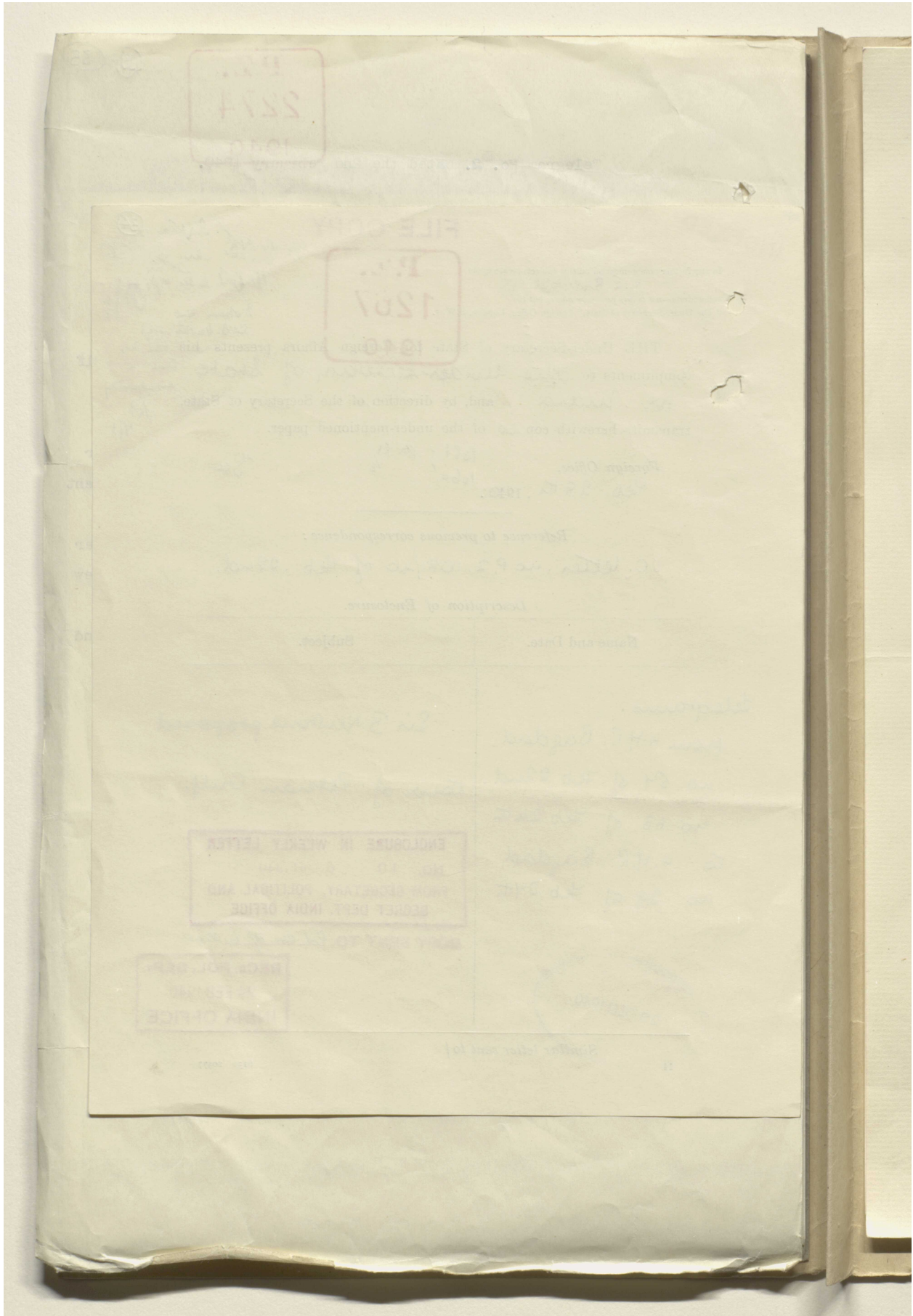
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [35v]
(70/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [36r]
(71/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [36v]
(72/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [37r]
(73/98)

P.2.
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LIMITED DISTRIBUTION.

Decypher. Sir B. Newton, (Bagdad).
22nd February, 1940.
D. 1.30 p.m. 23rd February, 1940.
R. 3.00 p.m. 23rd February, 1940.
No. 57.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

1060 Your telegram No. 31.

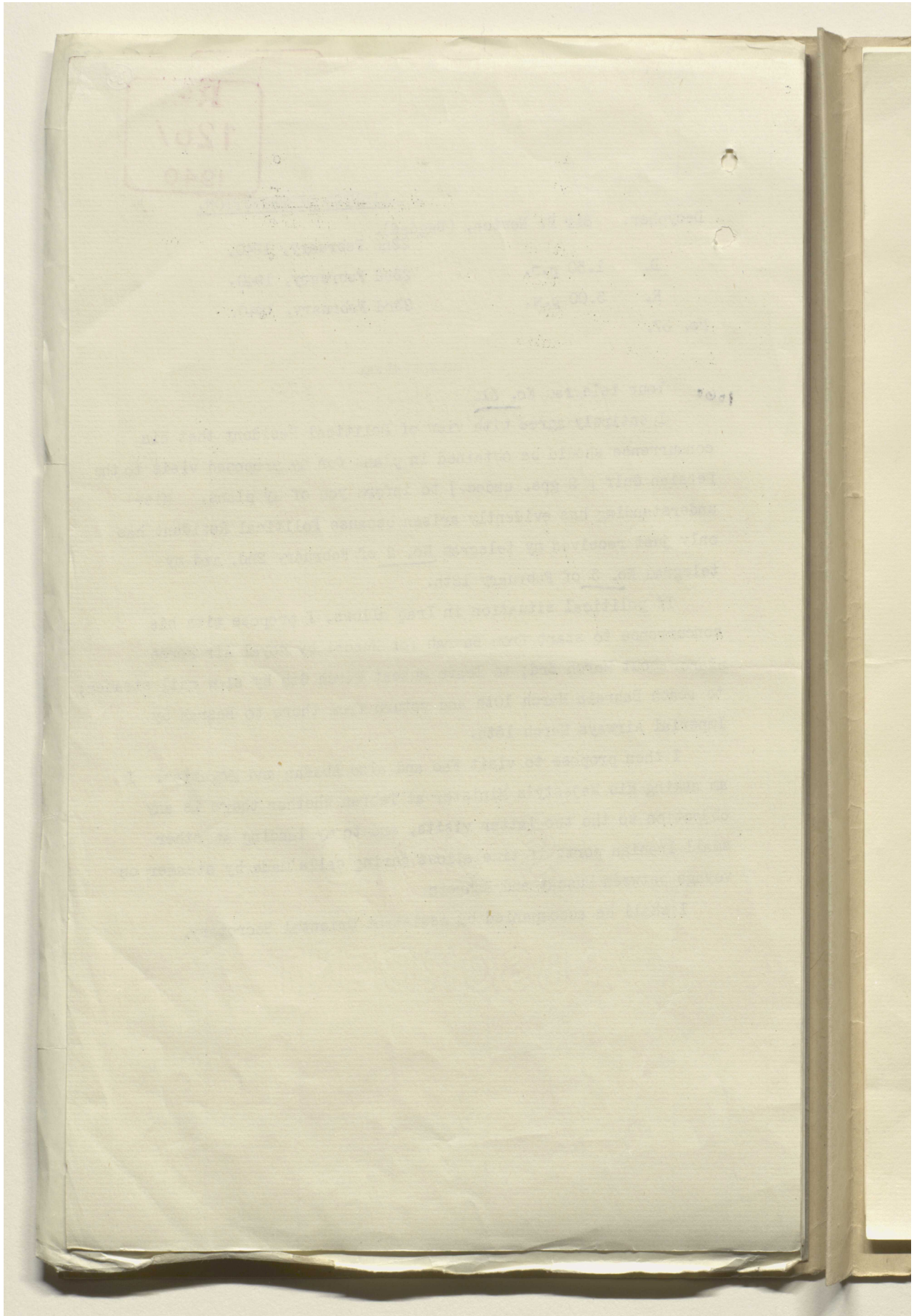
I entirely agree with view of Political Resident that his concurrence should be obtained in plans for my proposed visit to the Persian Gulf [2 gps. undec.] to inform you of my plans. Mis-understanding has evidently arisen because Political Resident has only just received my telegram No. 2 of February 2nd, and my telegram No. 3 of February 18th.

If political situation in Iraq allows, I propose with his concurrence to start from Basrah for Muscat by Royal Air Force plane about March 3rd; to leave Muscat March 6th by slow mail steamer; to reach Bahrein March 10th and return from there to Basrah by Imperial Airways March 15th.

I then propose to visit Fao and also Abadan and Mokattam. I am asking His Majesty's Minister at Tehran whether there is any objection to the two latter visits, and to my landing at other small Iranian ports if time allows during calls made by steamer on voyage between Muscat and Bahrein.

I shall be accompanied by Assistant Oriental Secretary.

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [37v]
(74/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [38r]
(75/98)

(38) (36)
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LIMITED DISTRIBUTION.

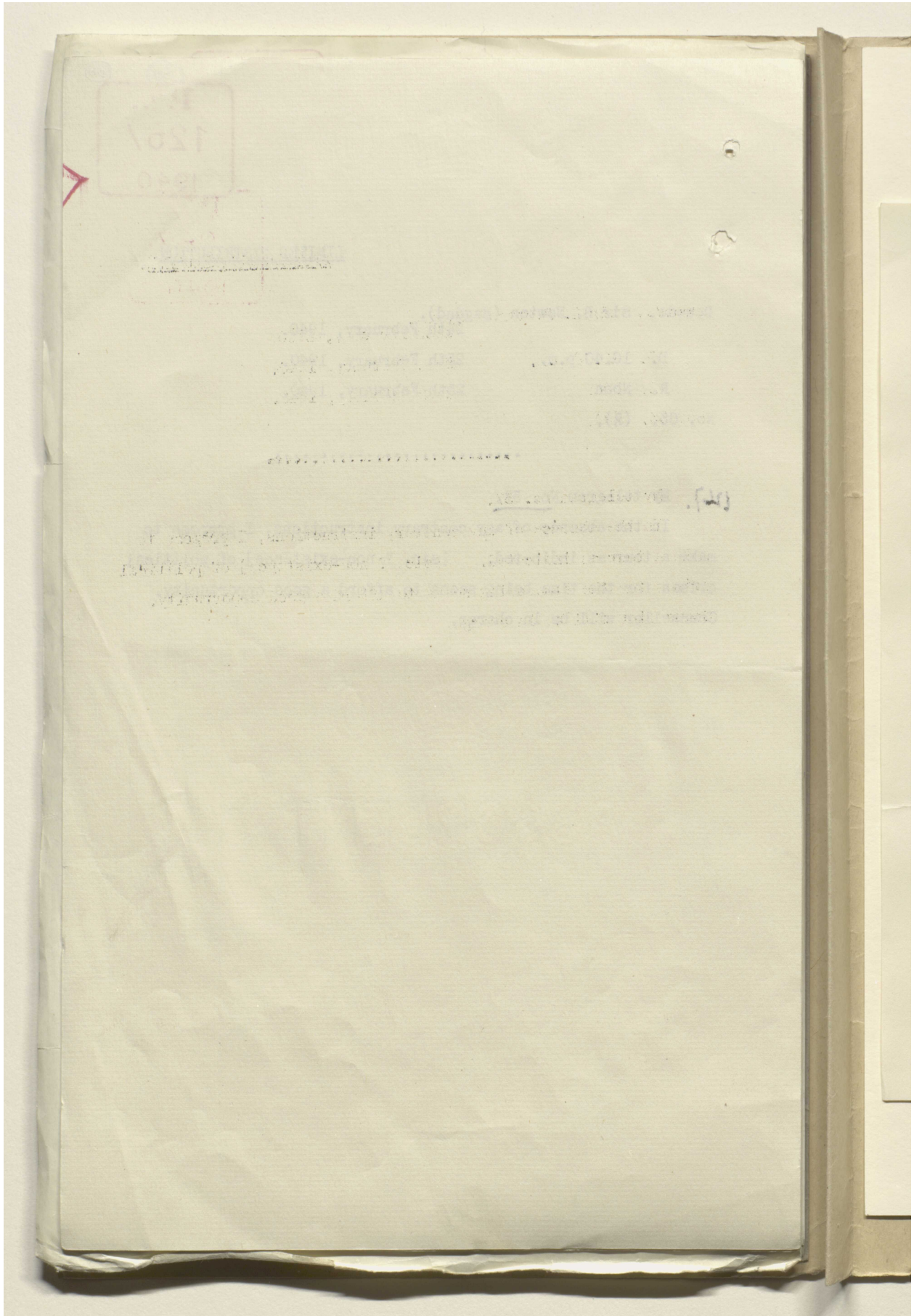
Decode. Sir B. Newton (Bagdad).
24th February, 1940.
D. 10.40 p.m. 25th February, 1940.
R. Noon 25th February, 1940.
No. 63. (R).

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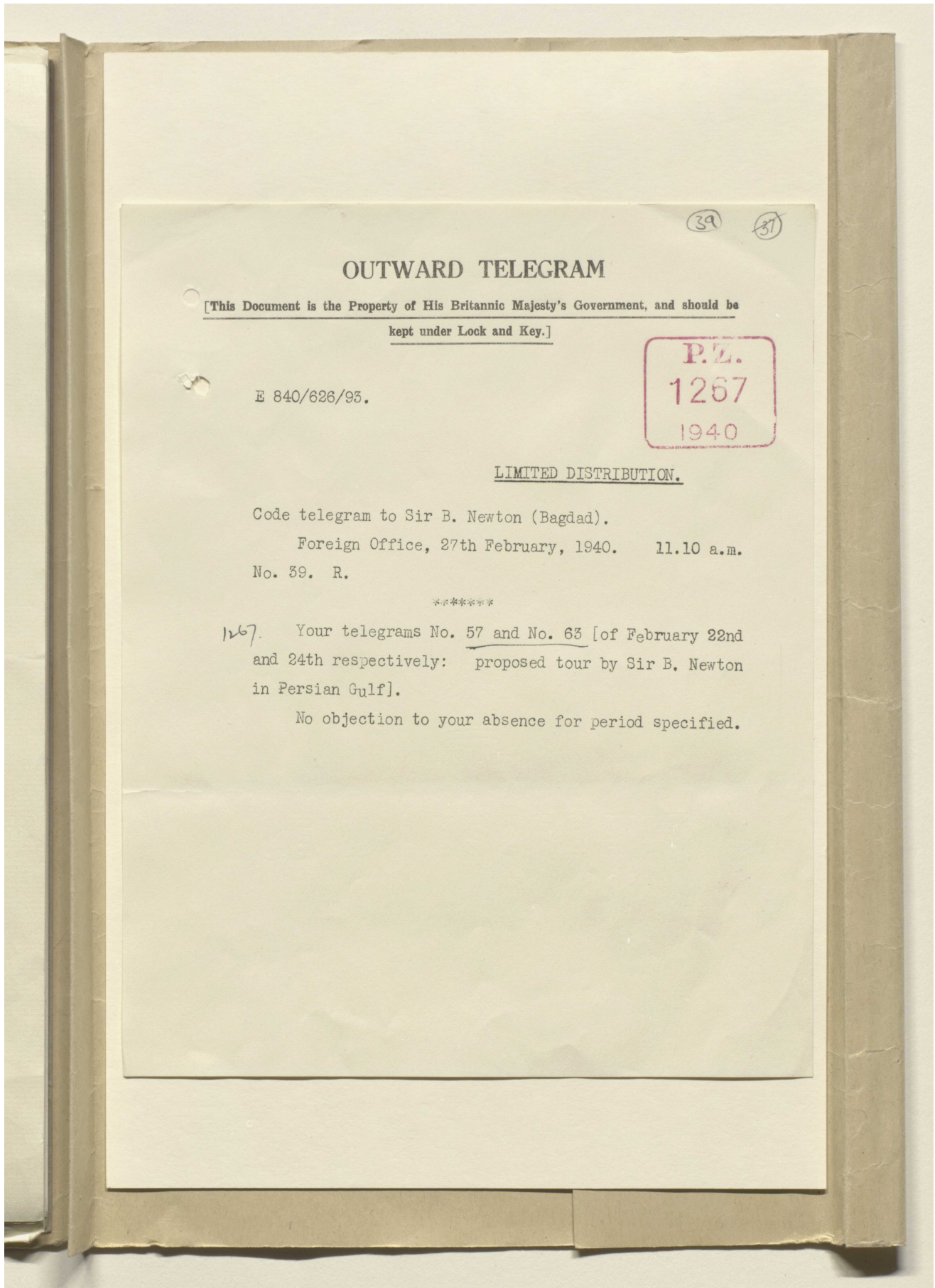
(267). My telegram No. 57.

In the absence of any contrary instructions, I propose to make a tour as indicated. [sic. ? non-existence] of political crises for the time being seems to afford a good opportunity. Counsellor will be in charge.

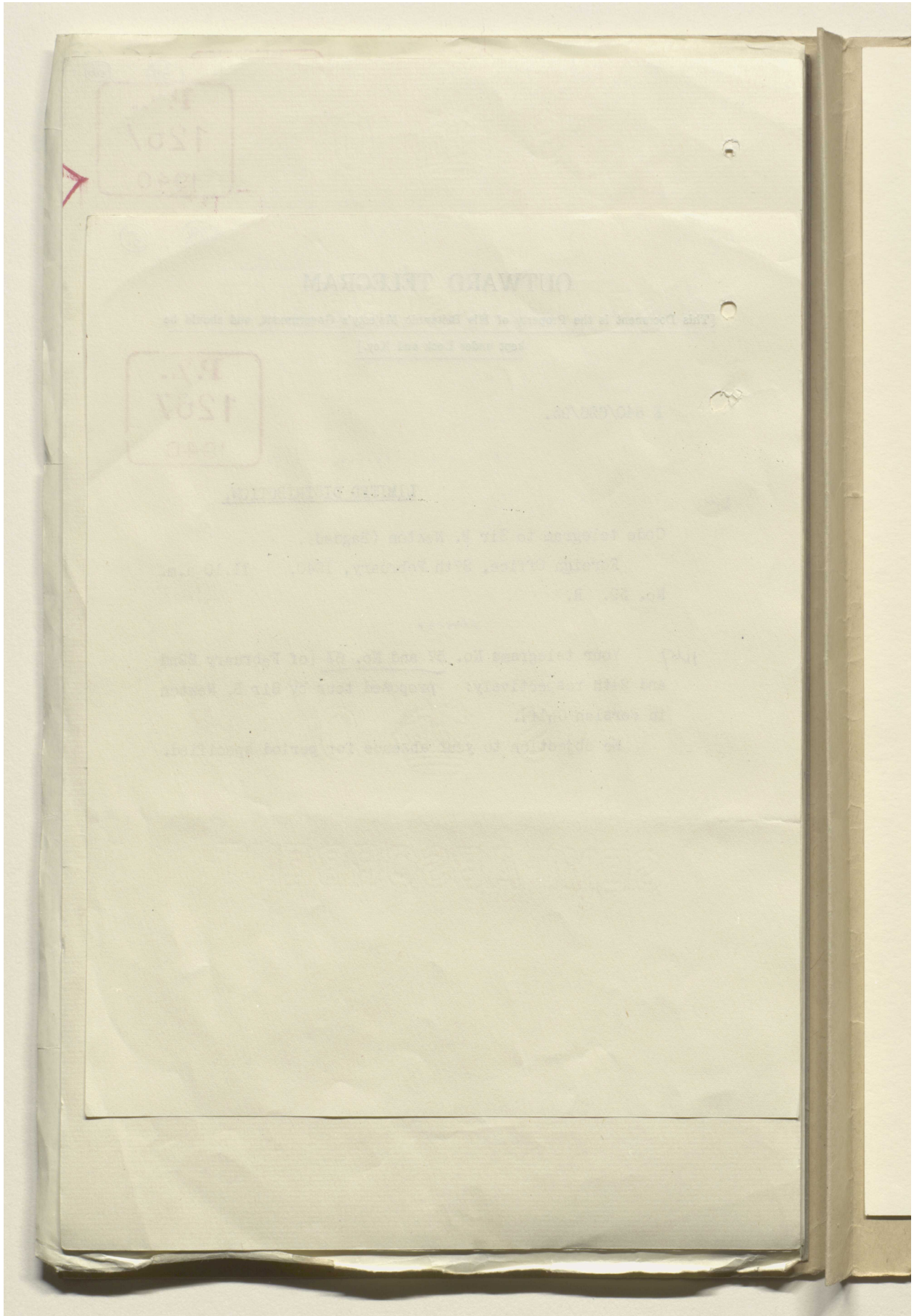
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [38v]
(76/98)



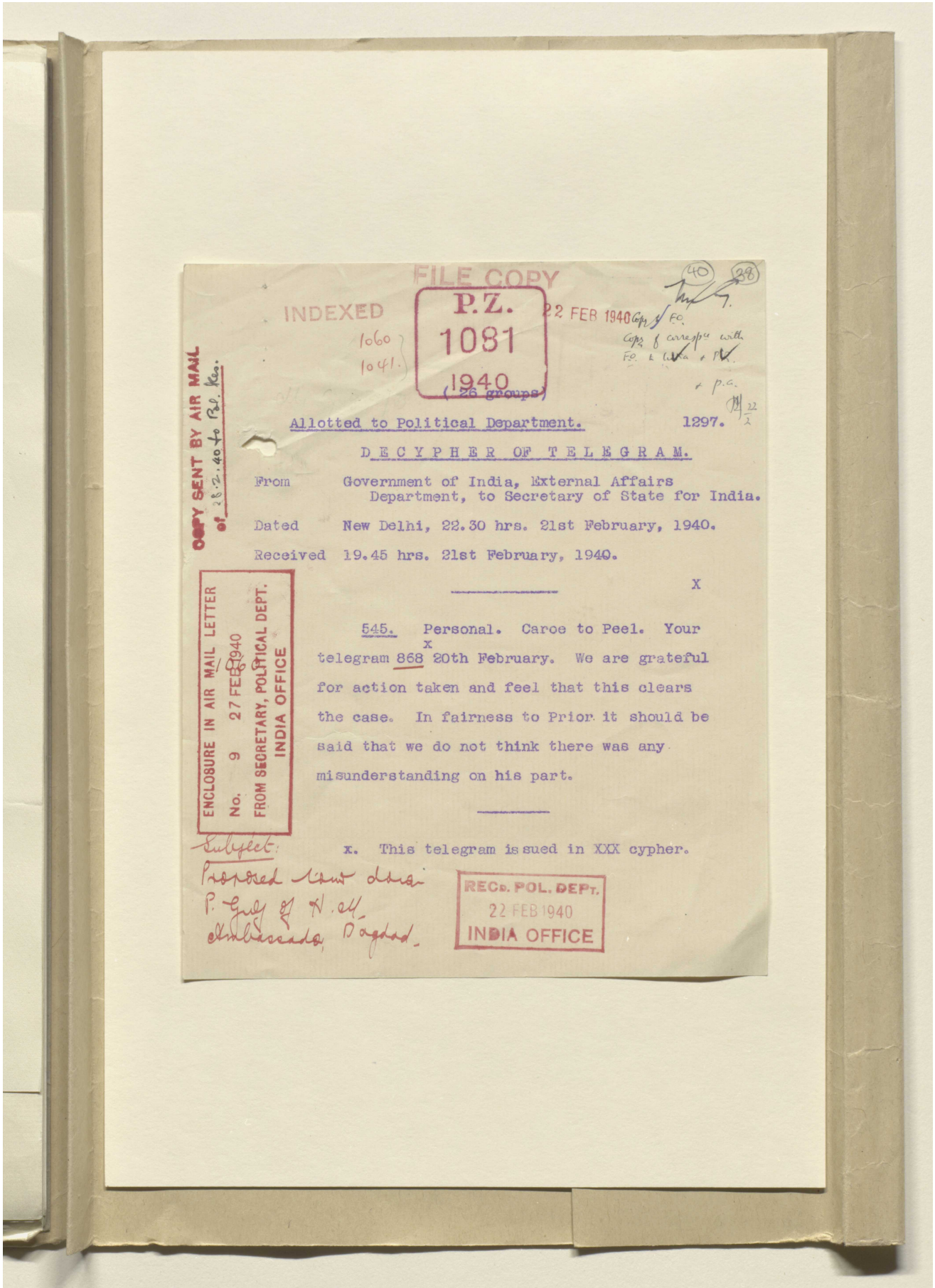
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [39r]
(77/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [39v]
(78/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [40r]
(79/98)



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FC & W.A. & M.
+ p.c.
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COPY SENT BY AIR MAIL
of 28.2.40 to Pol. Dep.

ENCLOSURE IN AIR MAIL LETTER
No. 9 27 FEB 1940
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL DEPT.
INDIA OFFICE

DECYPHER OF TELEGRAM.

From Government of India, External Affairs Department, to Secretary of State for India.

Dated New Delhi, 22.30 hrs. 21st February, 1940.

Received 19.45 hrs. 21st February, 1940.

X

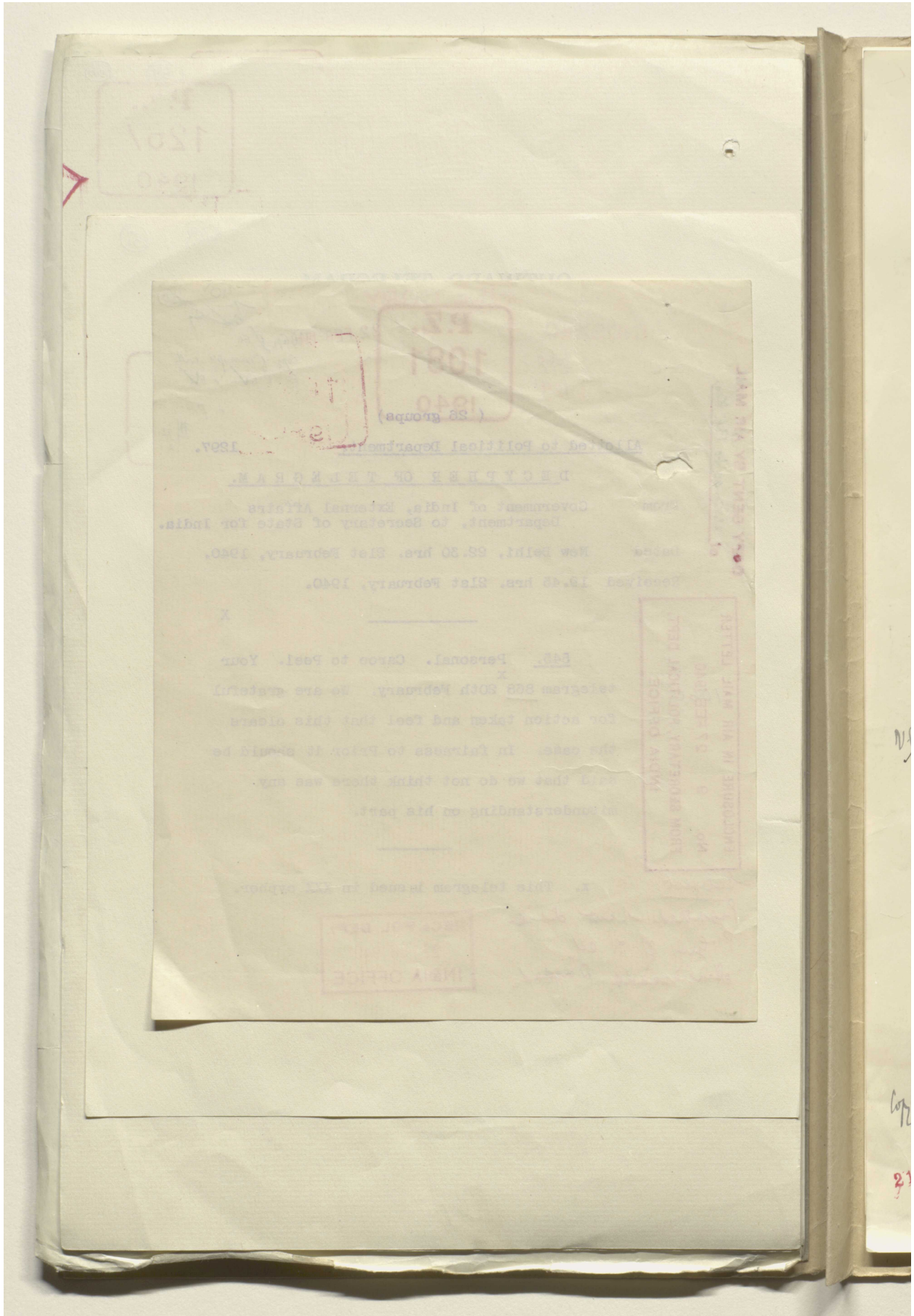
545. Personal. Caroe to Peel. Your telegram 868^x 20th February. We are grateful for action taken and feel that this clears the case. In fairness to Prior it should be said that we do not think there was any misunderstanding on his part.

x. This telegram issued in XXX cypher.

Subject:
Proposed tour of
P. Guly of N. H.
Ambassade, Baghdad.

REC'D. POL. DEPT.
22 FEB 1940
INDIA OFFICE

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [40v]
(80/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [41r]
(81/98)

Draft Paper.

P.L.
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1940

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Department.

xxx

Telegram

868.

S/S to G/I, E.A. Dept.
Repeat to P.R. in the P.G.
(Bahrain)

Personal. Peel to Cairo repeated to Piro. Your telegram of the 10th February, 1930. In principle we see no objection, and indeed some advantages, in Newton's proposed tour, and we assume that if Piro sees any objection in present circumstances he will let Newton know of it. There may indeed have been some misunderstanding behind your telegram as Newton's communication was no doubt intended to (in Piro's opportunity to state if he saw any objection if he at our suggestion. Foreign Office has now telegraphed to Newton explaining position and indicating that concurrence of Political Resident should be sought, but informally, when members of Embassy staff propose to visit one of Great States. We do not think it necessary to put procedure on the formal basis suggested by you, which would not be usual practice.

Send to Piro 20.2.40

Mr. Walton
Ad 20/2

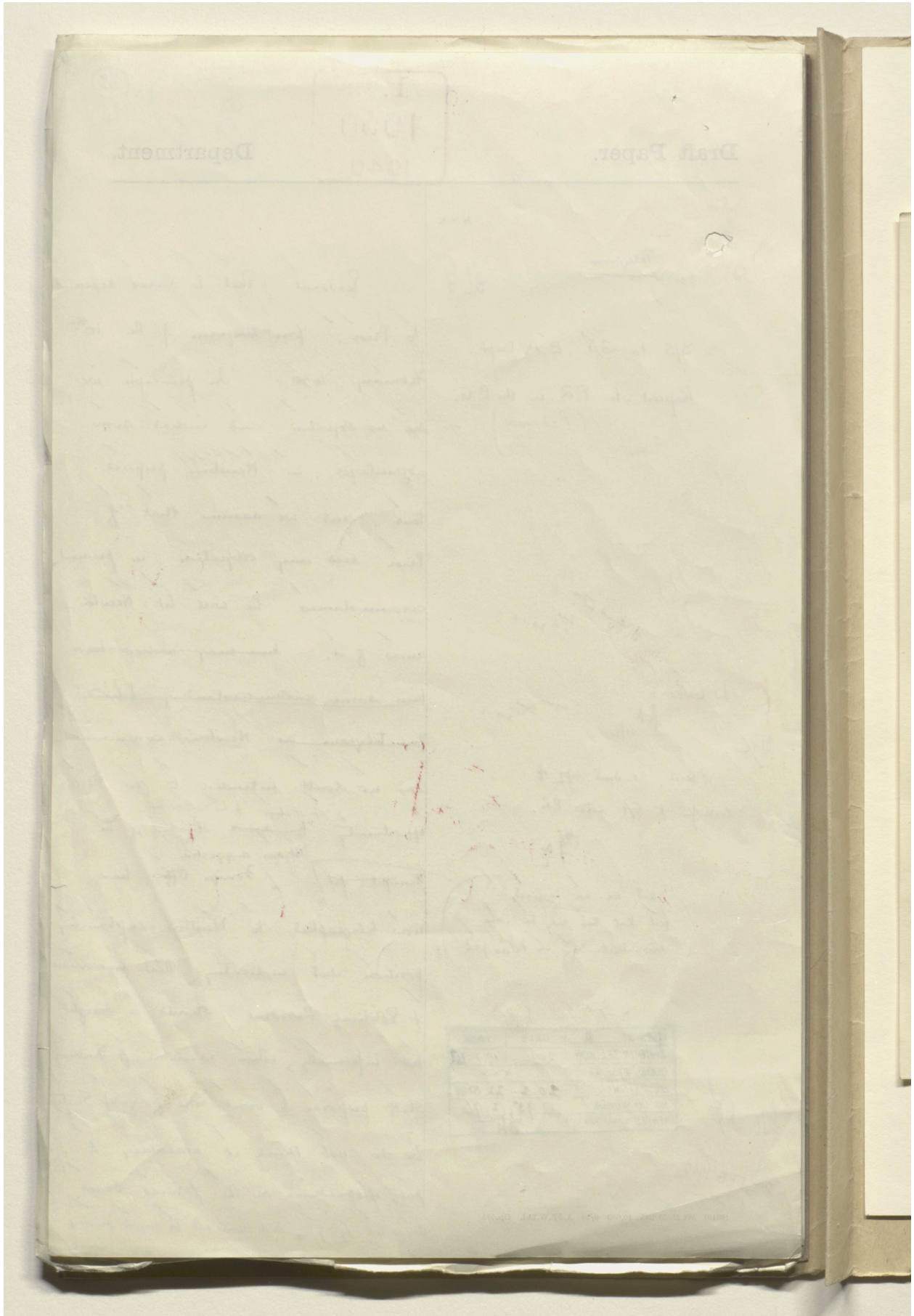
✓ sent, & sent copy of copy to G/I and P.R.

and we are inclined to feel that there may be some misunderstanding on Piro's part.

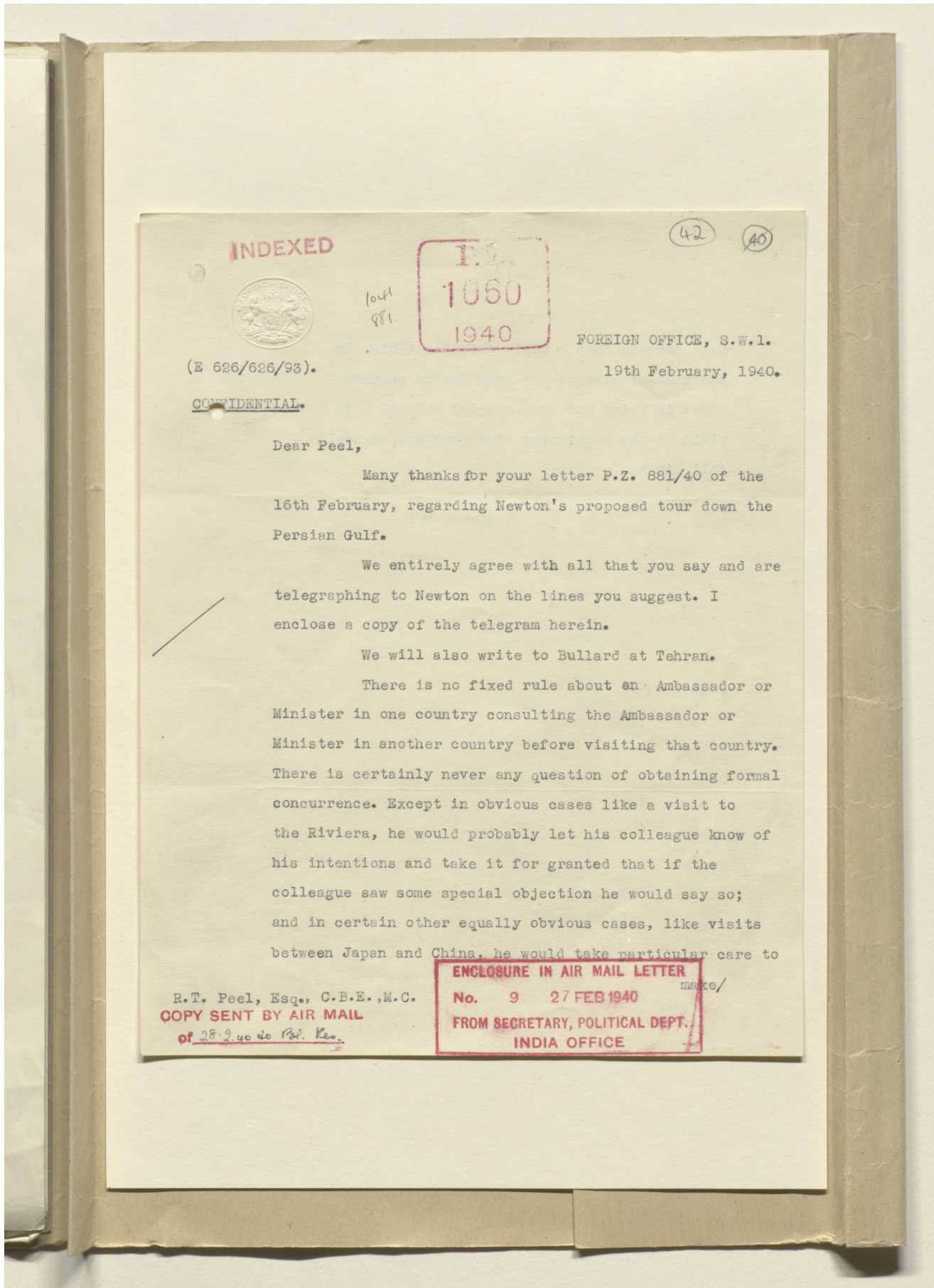
SENT BY	DATE	TIME
REC'D IN TEL. BOW.	20/2	19.30
CODE, X or XX		xxx
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21 FEB 1940

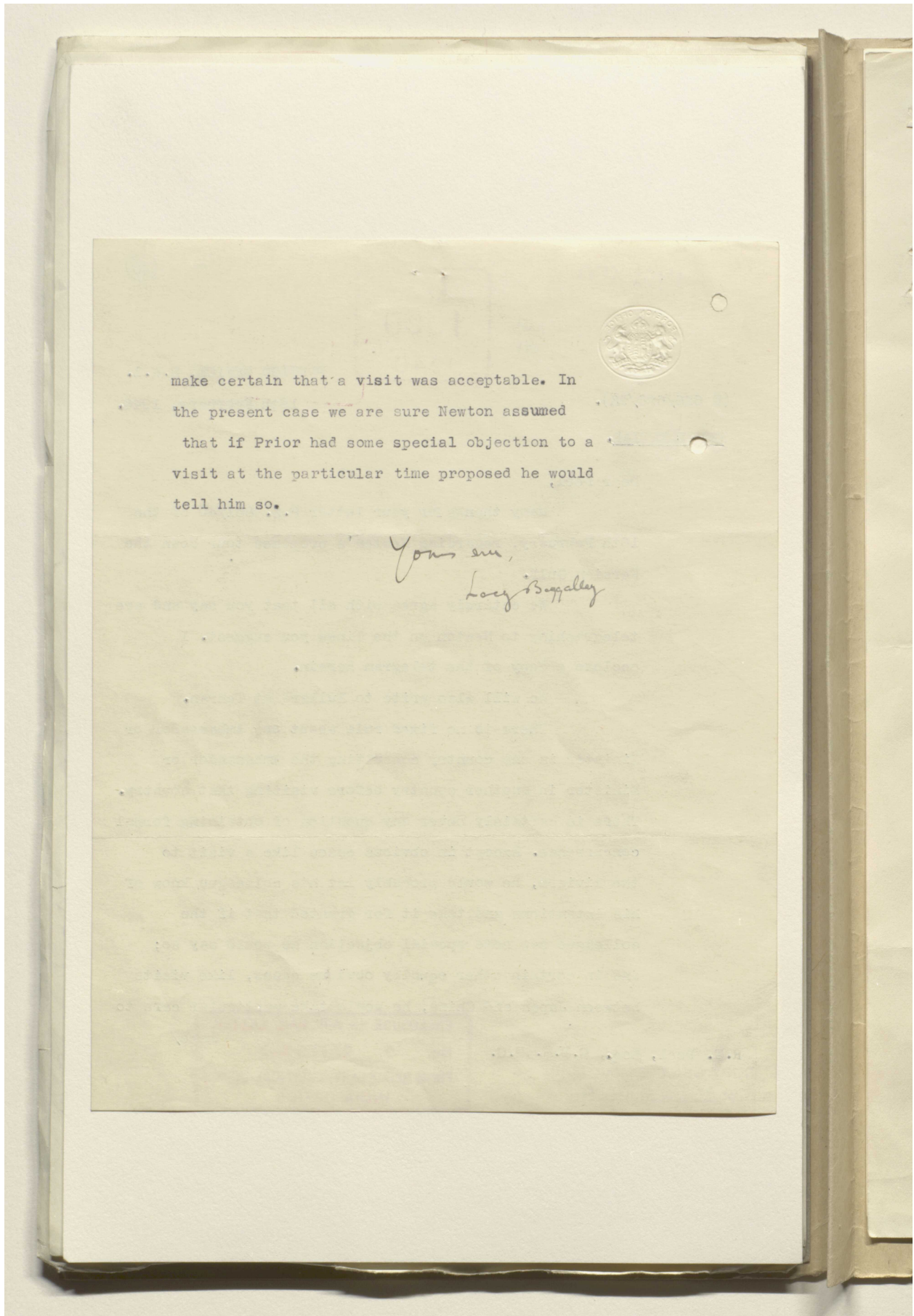
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [41v]
(82/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [42r]
(83/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [42v]
(84/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [43r]
(85/98)

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

(41) (43)

[This Document is the Property of His Britannic Majesty's Government, and should be
kept under Lock and Key.]

P.L.
1060
1940

E. 626/626/95

LIMITED DISTRIBUTION

Cypher telegram to Sir B. Newton (Bagdad)
Foreign Office. 19th February, 1940. 7.00. p.m.
No. 31.

b b b b b b b b

My telegram No. 36 Saving [of the 22nd December; proposed
tour in the Persian Gulf.]

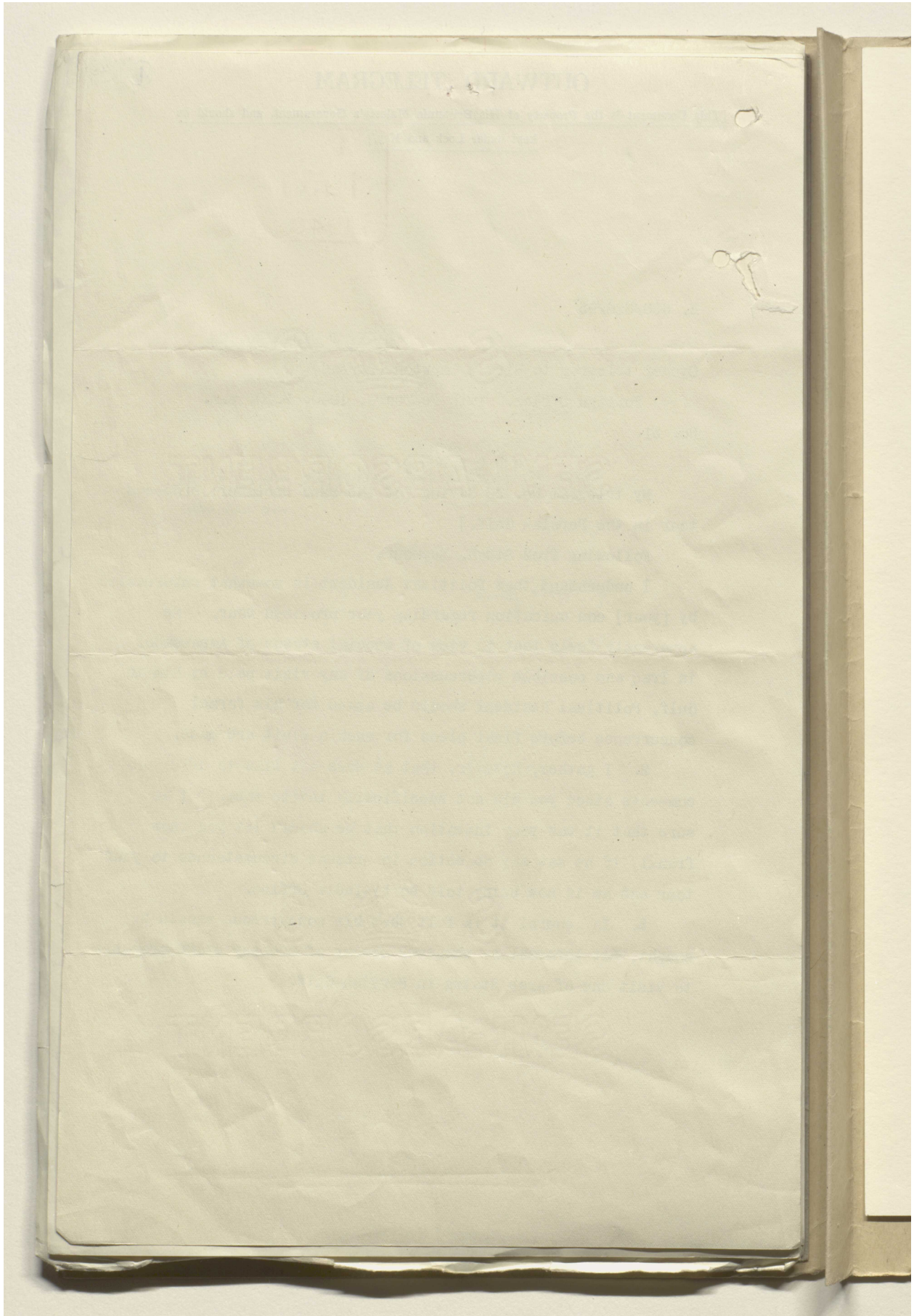
Following from Sir H. Seymour:

I understand that Political Resident is somewhat embarrassed
by [your] communication regarding your proposed tour. He
apparently feels that in view of special status of Ambassador
in Iraq and possible repercussions of any visit paid by him to
Gulf, Political Resident should be asked for his formal
concurrence before final plans for such a visit are made.

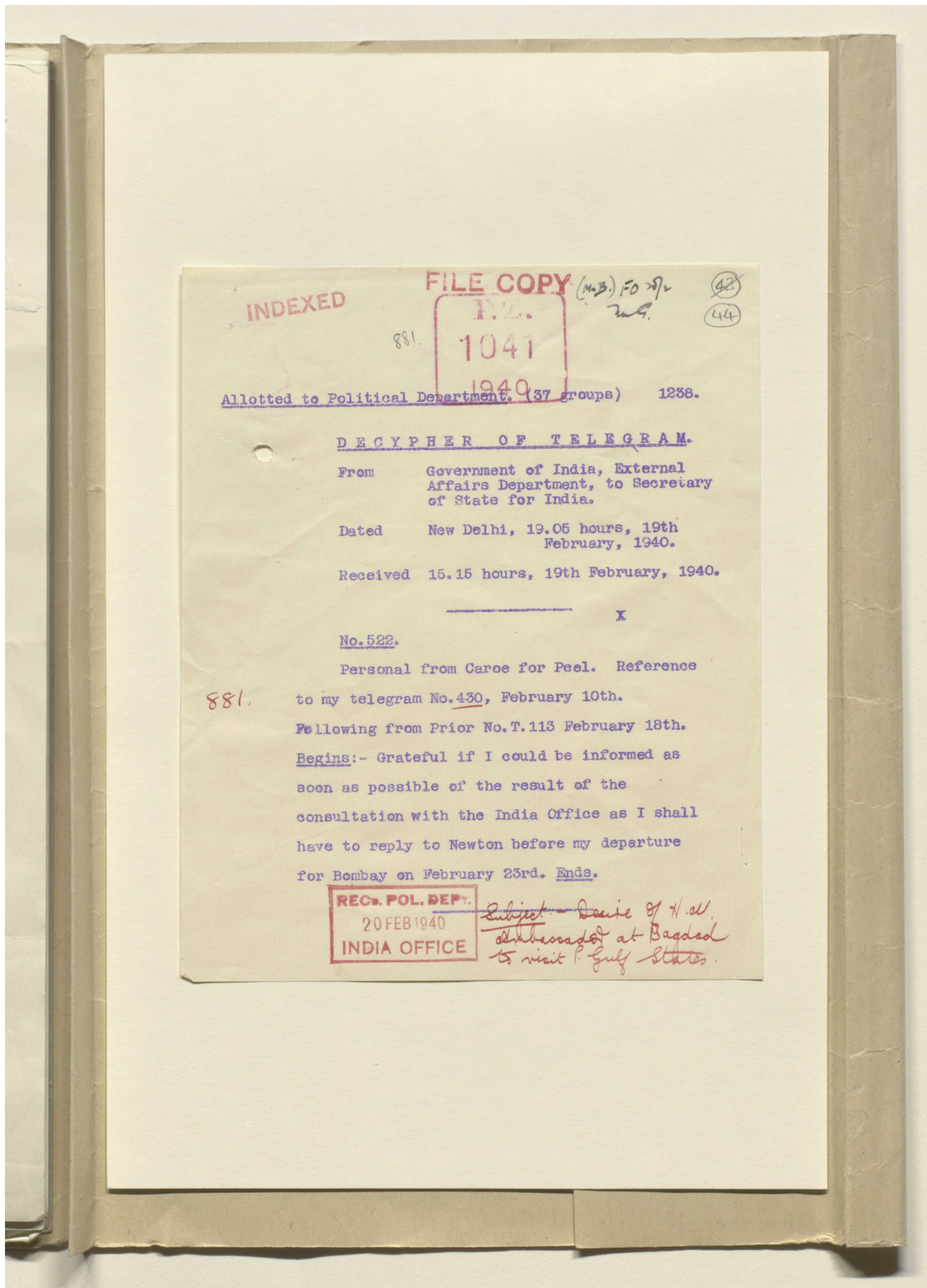
2. I gather, however, that he does not like to offer any
comments since you did not specifically invite them. I am
sure that it was your intention that he should let you know
frankly if he saw any objection in present circumstances to your
tour and he is now being told so by India Office.

3. In general it is felt that his concurrence should be
sought, but informally, whenever member of Embassy staff proposes
to visit one of Arab States in Persian Gulf.

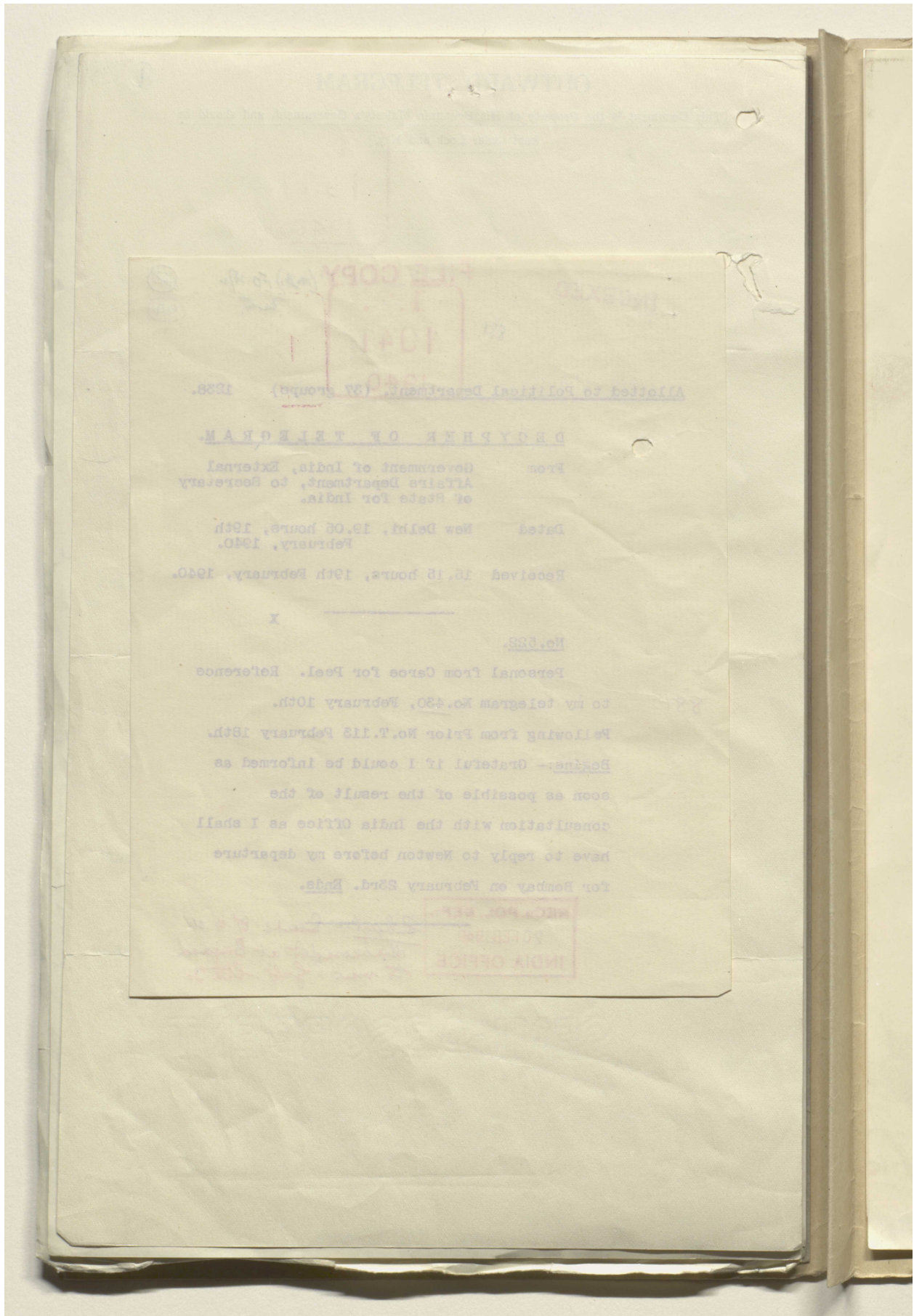
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [43v]
(86/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [44r]
(87/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [44v]
(88/98)



Minute Paper.

P2. 881 / 40

Department.

(45) (43)
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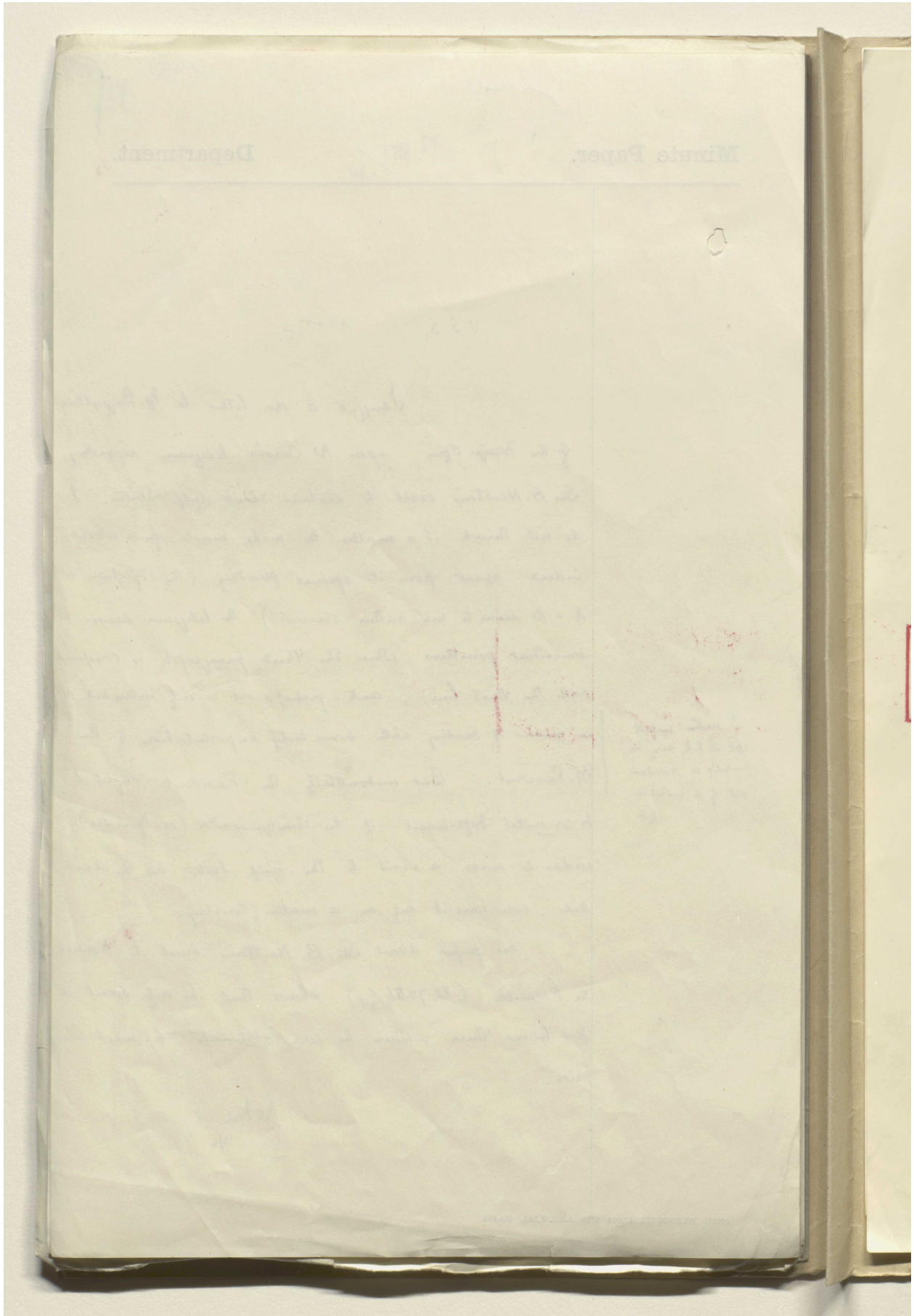
I suggest a do. letter to Mr. Bayzelay
of the Foreign Office upon Mr. Cairo's telegram regarding
Sir B. Newton's visit to certain Arab Gulf States. I
do not think it a matter to make much fuss about;
indeed apart from its special pleading (the objections at
A & B seem to me rather strained) the telegram seems
somewhat pointless when the third paragraph is compared
with the third line, and perhaps it is only intended as
a means of dealing with some body's importunation of the
P.R. Resident. But undoubtedly the Resident ought to
be consulted beforehand if the Ambassador (or Minister)
wishes to make a visit to the Gulf States on the Arab
side, even were it only as a matter of courtesy.

I rather suspect
that the P.R. may be
making a mountain
out of a molehill.
Rt.

The paper about Sir B. Newton's visit to Kuwait
in November (12.7.86/89) shows that he only spent a
few hours there, when he was "fortunate" to meet Ahmad
Pasha.

Rt
13/2

Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [45v]
(90/98)



Draft Paper.

7

P.2. 881 /40

Department.

(46) (44)

Confidential.

H. L. Baggallay Esq.

F.O.

16 FEB 1940

Dear Baggallay.
I enclose a copy of a telegram from Cairo about a proposed visit by Newton to certain of the Arab States of the Gulf. You will see that ^{Cairo} ~~the~~ suggests that a rule is laid down that no visit should be paid by the Ambassador to the Arab coast without obtaining the Resident's formal concurrence, and further that visits to this area from the Embassy at Bagdad or the Legation at Tehran should be kept within narrow limits.

ENCLOSURE IN AIR MAIL LETTER
No. 9 27 FEB 1940
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL DEPT.
INDIA OFFICE
COPY SENT BY AIR MAIL
of 28.2.40 to Pol. Sec.

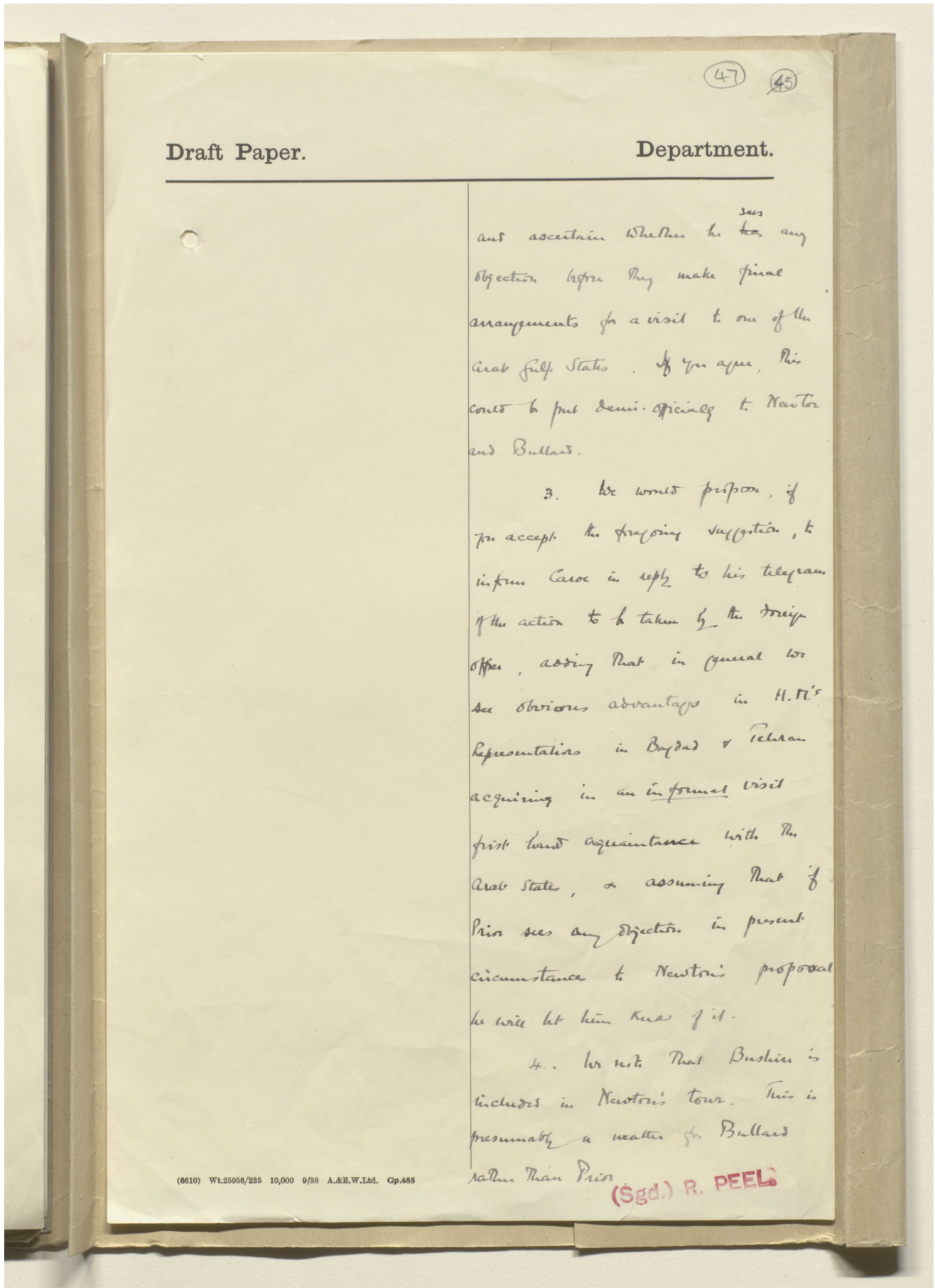
in fact we are inclined to wonder whether the whole thing has not arisen from some misunderstanding. It appears that Newton ~~did~~ ^{has} given the Political Resident intimation of his proposed tour and it may be that without saying so in so many words he did in fact intend that this should be taken as asking for his concurrence. However that may be

2. We do not feel that the matter need be taken unduly seriously, ^{we} we are not aware that visits from Bagdad & Tehran to the Gulf have been unnecessarily frequent or likely to cause political embarrassment. There are indeed obvious advantages in enabling the Ambassador or Minister to have some acquaintance with conditions in the Arab States and an opportunity of

Draft Paper

discussing local problems with the
man on the spot, ^{provided of course} ~~in~~
that ^{any such} ~~the~~ visit is made in an
informal ^{capacity} ~~basis~~ and without emphasis
on the visitor's position as H.M.'s
Representation in Bagdad or Tehran,
But we should naturally have expected
that such visits would be made only
after consultation with the Political
Resident, who ^{might} ~~may~~ have ^{particular reasons for} ~~to~~
^{denying} ~~objecting~~ e.g. on account of the local
political situation or of the inconvenience
to the political authorities of a particular
date. We do not know what
procedure is followed elsewhere in similar
situations by H.M.'s Representatives, but
the case of the Gulf States ^{we are inclined to think} ~~we think~~ that
to prescribe that the formal concurrence
of the Resident must be sought is hardly
necessary, or, indeed, desirable in so
far as it might tend to obscure the
nature of a visit which we think should
be informal. We should think it
sufficient to ask Bagdad, ~~and~~
also Tehran, to consult the Pol. Resident

ENCLOSURE BY AIR MAIL LETTER
No. 9, 25 FEBRUARY
FROM REPRESENTATIVE POLITICAL DEPT.
INDIA OFFICE
COPY SENT BY AIR MAIL



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Department.

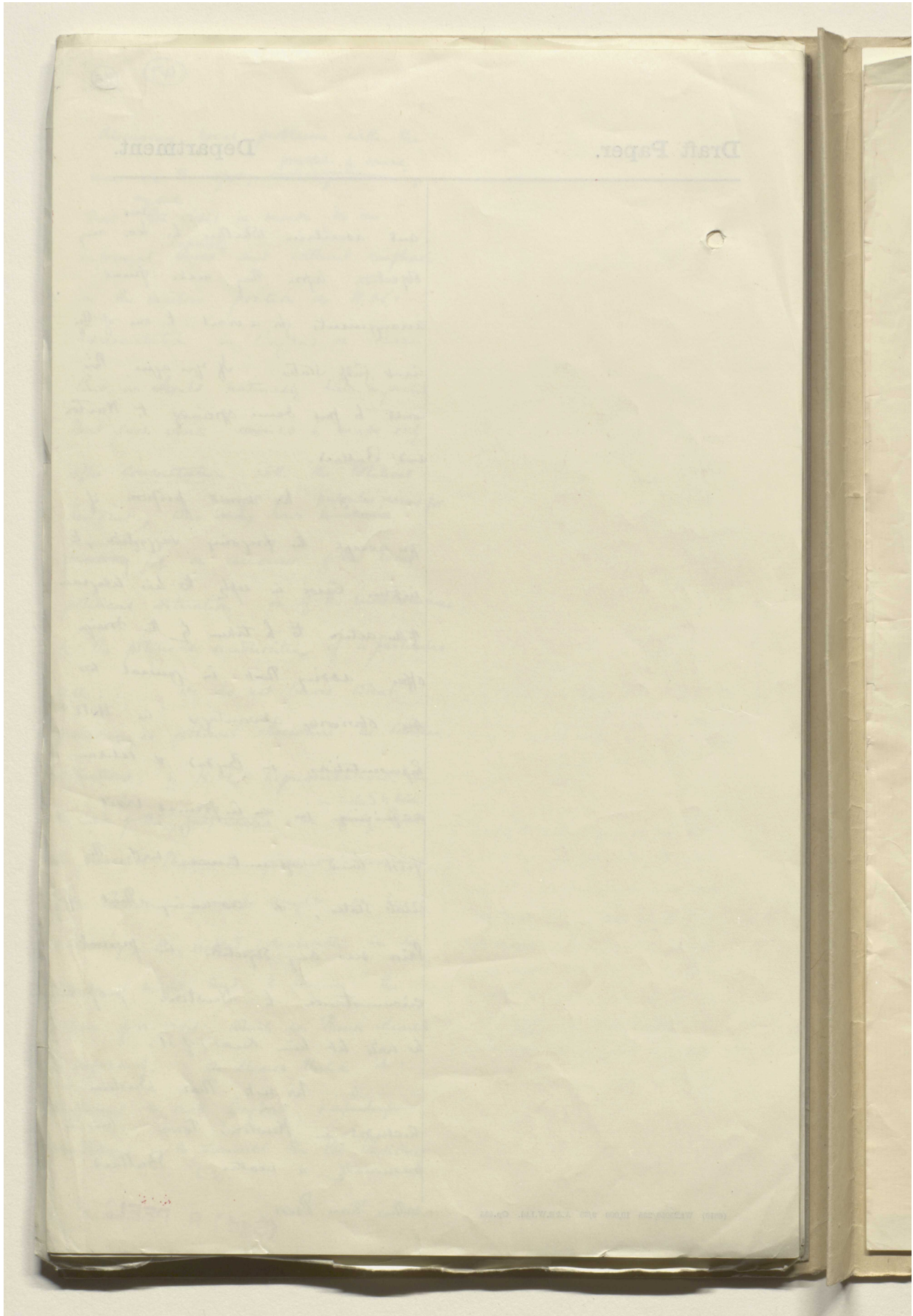
(47) (45)
and ascertain whether he ^{sees} any
objection before they make final
arrangements for a visit to one of the
Arab Gulf States. If you agree, this
could be put semi-officially to Newton
and Bullard.

3. We would propose, if
you accept the foregoing suggestion, to
inform Caroe in reply to his telegram
of the action to be taken by the Foreign
Office, adding that in general we
see obvious advantages in H.M.'s
Representatives in Baghdad & Tehran
acquiring in an informal visit
first hand acquaintance with the
Arab States, & assuming that if
Pirion sees any objection in present
circumstances to Newton's proposal
he will let him know of it.

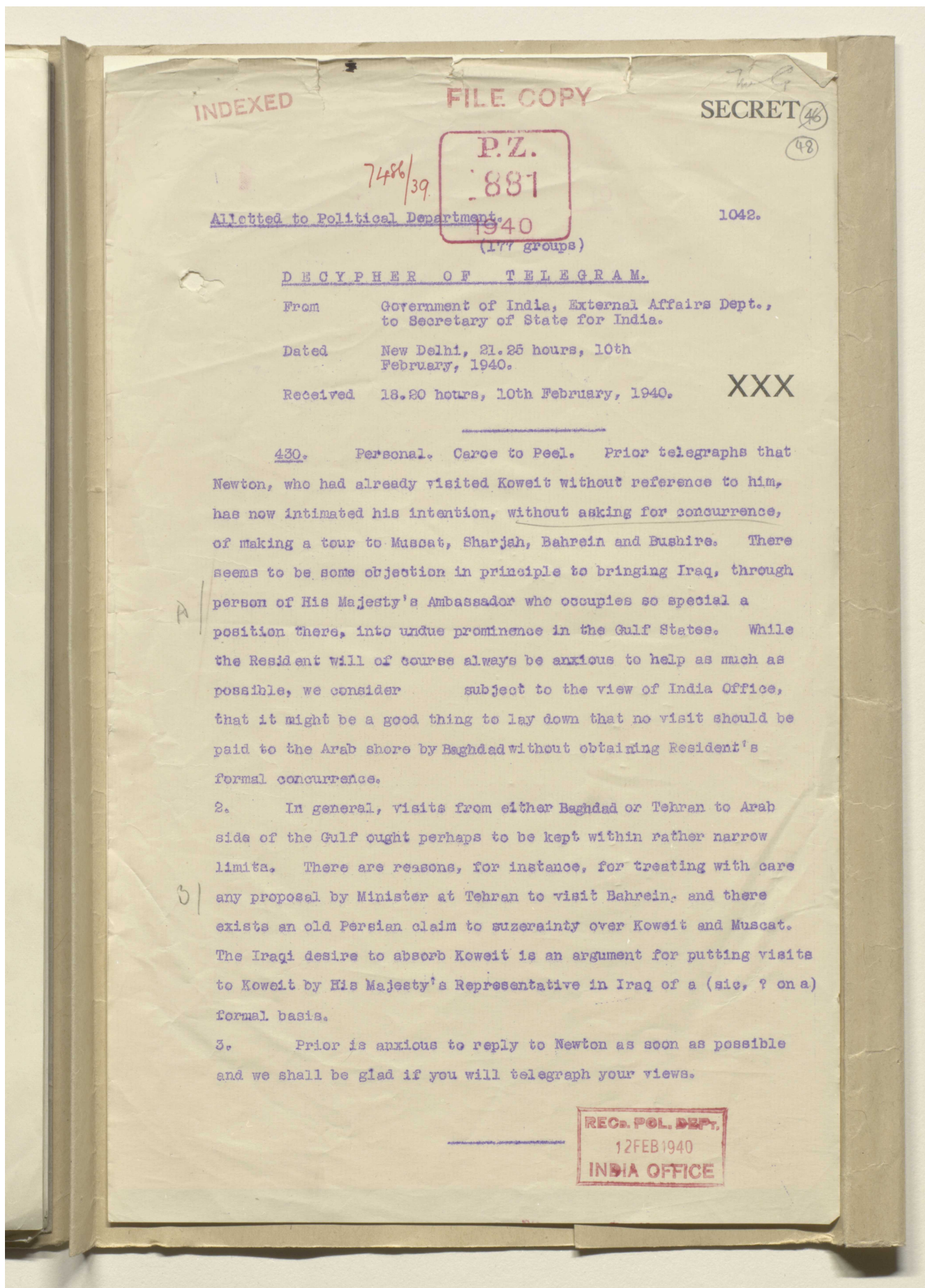
4. We note that Bushier is
included in Newton's tour. This is
presumably a matter for Bullard
rather than Pirion

(Sgd.) R. PEEL

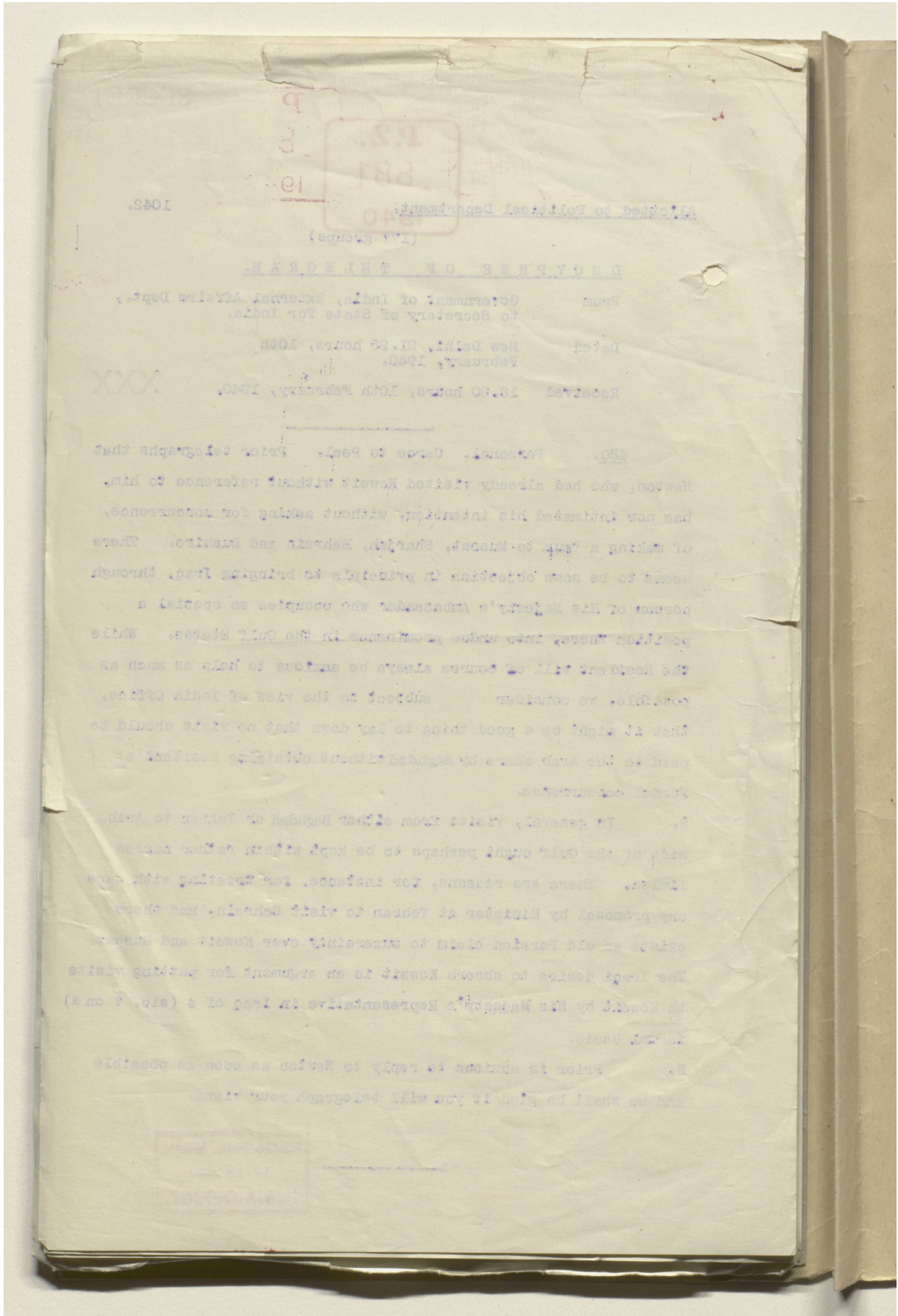
Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [47v]
(94/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [48r]
(95/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [48v]
(96/98)



Coll 17/34 'Iraq. Tour in the Persian Gulf of H.M. Ambassador in Iraq' [back-i]
(97/98)

