

Recently, the dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina over their respective claims to sovereignty over sections of the Antarctic was the subject of a conversation in London between Mr. Bevin and the Argentine Foreign Minister, Dr. Bramuglia. Mr. Bevin suggested that a deterioration in United Kingdom-Argentine relations should be prevented by a mutual agreement between the United Kingdom, Argentina and Chile to avoid naval demonstrations in the Antarctic during the coming Antarctic Summer. Dr. Bramuglia referred this suggestion to President Peron who subsequently expressed agreement in principle.

The United Kingdom High Commissioner in Ottawa has forwarded us the draft text of a proposed declaration on naval activities in Antarctica which is currently being discussed informally with the Argentine Embassy in London. The intention is that this or a similar declaration in agreed terms should be made simultaneously by the Governments of the United Kingdom, Argentina, and if agreeable, Chile. In this connection, the Chilean Government stated recently that they would probably wish to be associated with it.

The draft declaration is as follows:

"Being anxious to avoid any misunderstanding regarding the situation in the Antarctic which might affect the friendly relations between this country and the Argentine (and Chile), His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are willing to inform the Argentine (Chilean) Government that in present circumstances they foresee no need to send warships south of latitude 60 degrees during the 1948-49 Antarctic season, apart of course from routine movements such as have been customary for a number of years."

The United Kingdom High Commissioner has stated that should we wish to make any comments on the text of the proposed declaration, he would be grateful to receive them as early as possible.

In view of Mr. St. Laurent's previous decision that Canada should take no active part in Antarctic disputes, if you agree, I shall inform the High Commissioner that we have no comments to make on the text of the draft declaration.⁹

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⁹ Ce fut fait le 2 décembre.

This was done on December 2.