

TELEGRAM

284900

From THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS
To THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANADA

LONDON,

3.

We have, as you know, decided not to proceed at present with the decision to send British warships into Norwegian territorial waters to intercept shipments of iron ore. At present, the position is that we have told the Norwegian and Swedish Governments that we have, in response to their requests, delayed execution of this decision, while making it plain to them that we consider ourselves entitled to expect them to submit proposals to us for achieving this object by other means. If, as is probable, they do not come forward with adequate proposals we will have to carefully consider situation thus created and examine, inter alia, whether violations by Germany of International Law on the High Seas are or are not sufficiently flagrant to liberate us from the restrictions to which we are at present submitting in the case of the transit of iron ore from Narvik to Germany through Norwegian territorial waters.

In case we should decide on a review of all relevant considerations to take action, we are studying whether instead of patrolling Norwegian waters we might not preferably lay mines in Norwegian territorial waters and declare mine field. The object of such a step would be to force ships carrying iron ore out into the open sea, where they could be intercepted. If the Norwegians were to sweep up the field another could be laid at a different point and this also declared. An advantage of this proposal is that there should be less risk of damage to Norwegian or other shipping in Norwegian waters and less likelihood of incidents with the Norwegian naval forces.