

127. *Le ministre des Douanes et du Revenu intérieur
au Premier ministre*

My dear Sir Robert,

Paris, May 3, 1919

Enclosed please find memorandum in regard to Air Traffic Report W.C.P. 516.

Yours very truly,

ARTHUR L. SIFTON

[PIÈCE JOINTE]

*Mémorandum du ministre des Douanes
et du Revenu intérieur*

[Paris, s.d.]

I have just received revised draft of Aeronautical Commission, W.C.P. 516, relating to international air navigation. It has apparently been considerably improved in some respects, and on the ground of equality which we have raised in connection with this and other matters, is much better than any of the other conventions. The portion of clause which made us specifically liable whether we signed or not has been removed and a clause has been inserted making a Dominion a State for the purposes of this convention, so that there is an apparent intention of giving us at least the satisfaction of not accepting unless we are willing. This, however, is still slightly ambiguous owing to the habit which has been adopted of using 'British Empire' as an entity when they really should use 'Great Britain'.

Notwithstanding these changes, I could hardly credit the fact that a country like Canada for instance with a boundary line of four thousand miles over a large portion of which air-craft could start or land without any assistance from an aerodrome and which would be largely interested in air traffic, could ever agree to be governed even in regard to technical matters by a Commission meeting in Paris, as is suggested for the first meeting, and having one representative out of probably fifty. And it still has the radical objection which would probably apply to any attempt at the present time, that it is an attempt to deal with a subject by people who can have no possible personal knowledge of the subject under discussion.

So far as an International Convention for world wide navigation is concerned, I should say that a simple one, similar to the one annexed hereto, would be all that would be safe for any nation to sign at the present time.

If the experts who have been engaged in connection with this matter, would devote their time, attention and experience to drafting regulations to put in Annex of suggested draft, they would be doing a very valuable work. If it is important, as has been said, to furnish profitable employment for men