



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to
BC

February 23, 1945

Dear Mr. White:

I enclose a copy of the despatch from London about which I spoke to you this afternoon. If you have any further thoughts on the matter please let me know. I will keep in mind your desire to talk to Boothby.

Sincerely yours,

Theodore C. Achilles

Theodore C. Achilles
Chief, Division of
British Commonwealth Affairs

Enclosure:

Despatch No. 20792
February 2, 1945

Harry B. White, Esquire

Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON



February 27, 1945

Mr. [Name] [Address]
[City] [State] [Zip]

Dear Mr. [Name]:

I enclose a copy of the document which you have requested. I am sorry that I cannot give you a more complete answer at this time, but I will be glad to discuss the matter with you if you wish.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

Director, [Division]
[Address]
[City] [State] [Zip]

RECEIVED
Treasury Department
FEB 27 1945
Office of
Assistant Secretary White

RECEIVED
[Name]
[Address]
[City] [State] [Zip]

B. Boothby

AIR MAIL

RESTRICTED

London, February 2, 1945.

No. 20792

Subject: Meeting with Mr. Robert Boothby, Member of Parliament, Leader of the Opposition to Bretton Woods, Who Will Lecture in the United States.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's telegrams No. 1134 of January 31, No. 1135 and 1137 of February 1 in regard to recent discussion in the House of Commons by Mr. Robert Boothby (Conservative) upon the Bretton Woods Final Act.

The Department will recall that Mr. Boothby is leading the fight in Parliament against the ratification by Great Britain of the Bretton Woods Final Act. The Department is also aware that Mr. Boothby is leaving this evening by sea for the United States where he is to engage in a lecture tour which will take him to Chicago and Washington and include some eight or ten other large cities in the East and Middle West.

Today at luncheon Mr. Boothby stated that he had recently called upon Mr. Eden, who had told Mr. Boothby that "he should not be himself, he should be prudent". Mr. Boothby quoted the Foreign Secretary as having stated that Mr. Boothby was the first member of Parliament who did not represent His Majesty's Government to go to the United States in some time; that he hoped Mr. Boothby would not "get into a row" but that he felt the American public might be interested to hear an expression of British opinion which was not "government propaganda". Mr. Boothby stated that at the end of his interview with Mr. Eden, Mr. Eden had inquired what he intended to say in regard to Bretton Woods and Mr. Boothby stated that he and the Foreign Secretary agreed that it would be "both inopportune and impertinent for him to comment upon Bretton Woods before it had been considered by the American Congress". An Officer of the Embassy reminded Mr. Boothby that only two days ago in Parliament he had spoken on many phases of monetary policy without mentioning Bretton Woods. Mr. Boothby agreed, and stated that he would raise in the United States many of the same points made in his recent speech and covered by the Embassy's telegrams above referred to, but he jokingly reiterated that

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he still would not be talking about "Bretton Woods" in view of his agreement that it would be "inopportune and impertinent" to do so. In reply to a question, Mr. Boothby stated that in addition to the general line on financial policy which he has expressed in Parliament, his speeches in the United States would touch upon a wide variety of subjects including "the brave new world". Mr. Boothby also stated that he was not "afraid of Dumbarton Oaks as I am of Bretton Woods". Mr. Boothby later stated that he was not actually so opposed to Bretton Woods as some of his speeches might indicate, but that he did feel that it tied Britain's hands too much in that it would prevent a devaluation of sterling in an amount in excess of 10 percent. He cited the devaluation of the American dollar in 1934 as having been a great stroke of good business for the United States and he apparently did not want Britain to be in a position where she could not herself exercise the right to do likewise. He also indicated that he would wish that Great Britain could denounce Bretton Woods and get out of it more easily if it were found to be inoperative.

The Embassy feels that although Mr. Boothby is the leader of the Opposition to the ratification of Bretton Woods by Great Britain and although he has repeatedly indulged in outbursts against the Final Act, his speeches in the United States may not be as violently anti-Bretton Woods as have been his speeches in Parliament. Mr. Boothby had not seen at the time of the meeting here reported any outline or comment upon the alternative plan to Bretton Woods proposed by the American Bankers Association, reports of which were published only in outline form in this morning's papers. When Mr. Boothby was told that the American Bankers Association appeared to contemplate a merger of activities of the Bretton Woods Fund and Bank he felt that that would be an improvement over the Bretton Woods Final Act.

The Department may recall from the Embassy's despatch No.6740 of February 12, 1941, that Mr. Boothby's conduct as a Member of Parliament was a subject of investigation by a Select Committee of the House of Commons and that as a result of the findings of this Committee he resigned his position as Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Food because the Committee found his conduct to be contrary to the usage and derogatory to the dignity of the House and inconsistent with the standards which Parliament is entitled to expect from its members. It appears that Mr. Boothby was active in the House in favoring the passage of an Act to guarantee certain Czech claims in which he may have had a personal interest. After his resignation as a junior Minister of the Government he joined the Royal Air Force, in which he served in 1941 and 1942, but returned to civilian life and since 1943 has been taking an active part in financial debates in Parliament. Further information in regard to Mr. Boothby's recent activities are contained in the Embassy's despatches No.18424 of October 5, 1944, and No.20449 of January 18, 1945.

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It will be seen from Mr. Boothby's past performance that he comes to the United States as no friend of Bretton Woods, and that he has been a strong advocate of Empire trade and bilateralism. However, it might be that a British Member of Parliament speaking in the United States against Bretton Woods on the ground that it ties Britain's hands too much could serve to develop American public opinion in favor of Bretton Woods.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

Herbert P. Fales,
Second Secretary of Embassy.

HPF:dm

Original and hectograph to Department.