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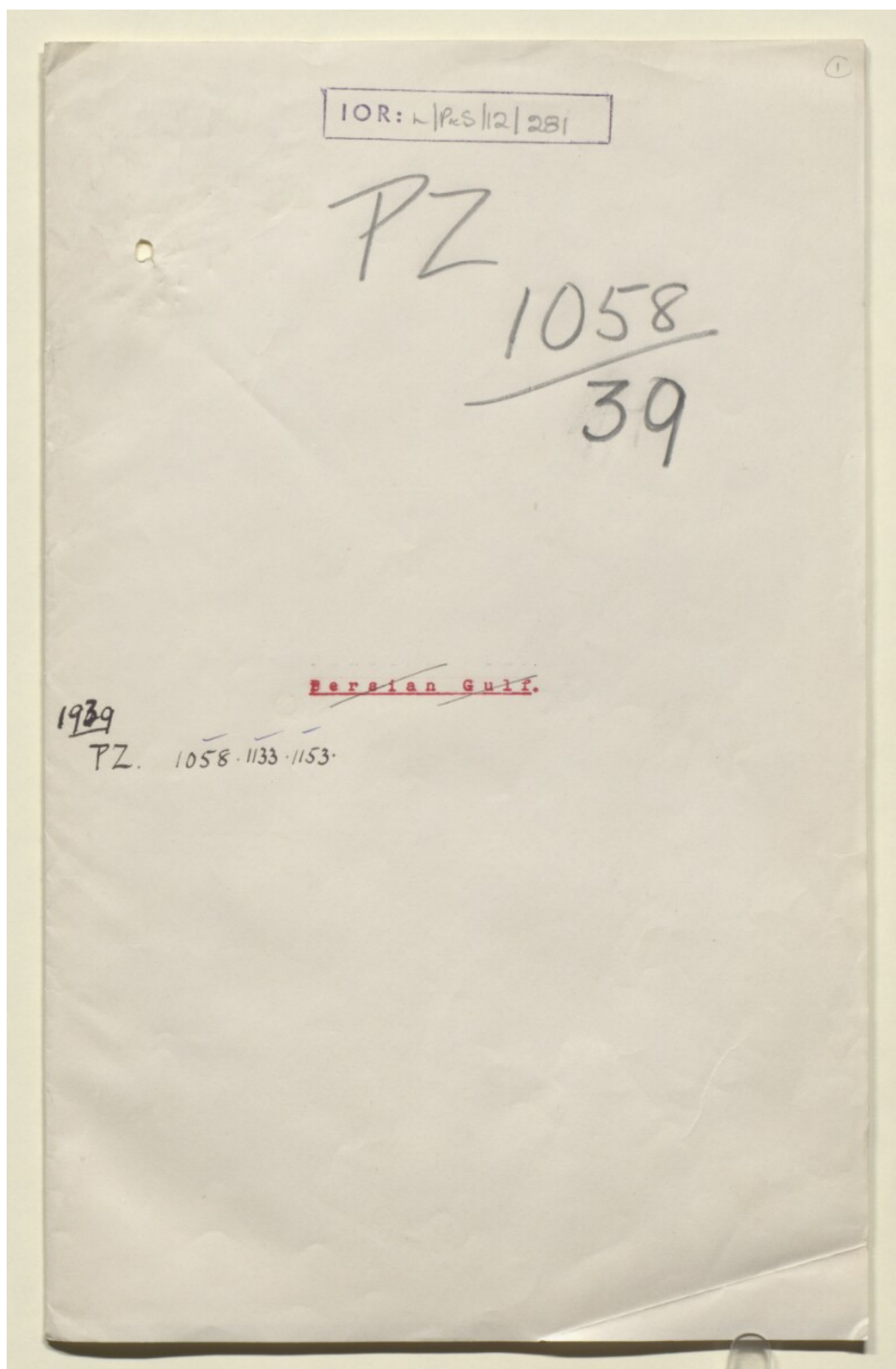
The online record contains extra information, high resolution zoomable views and transcriptions. It can be viewed at:

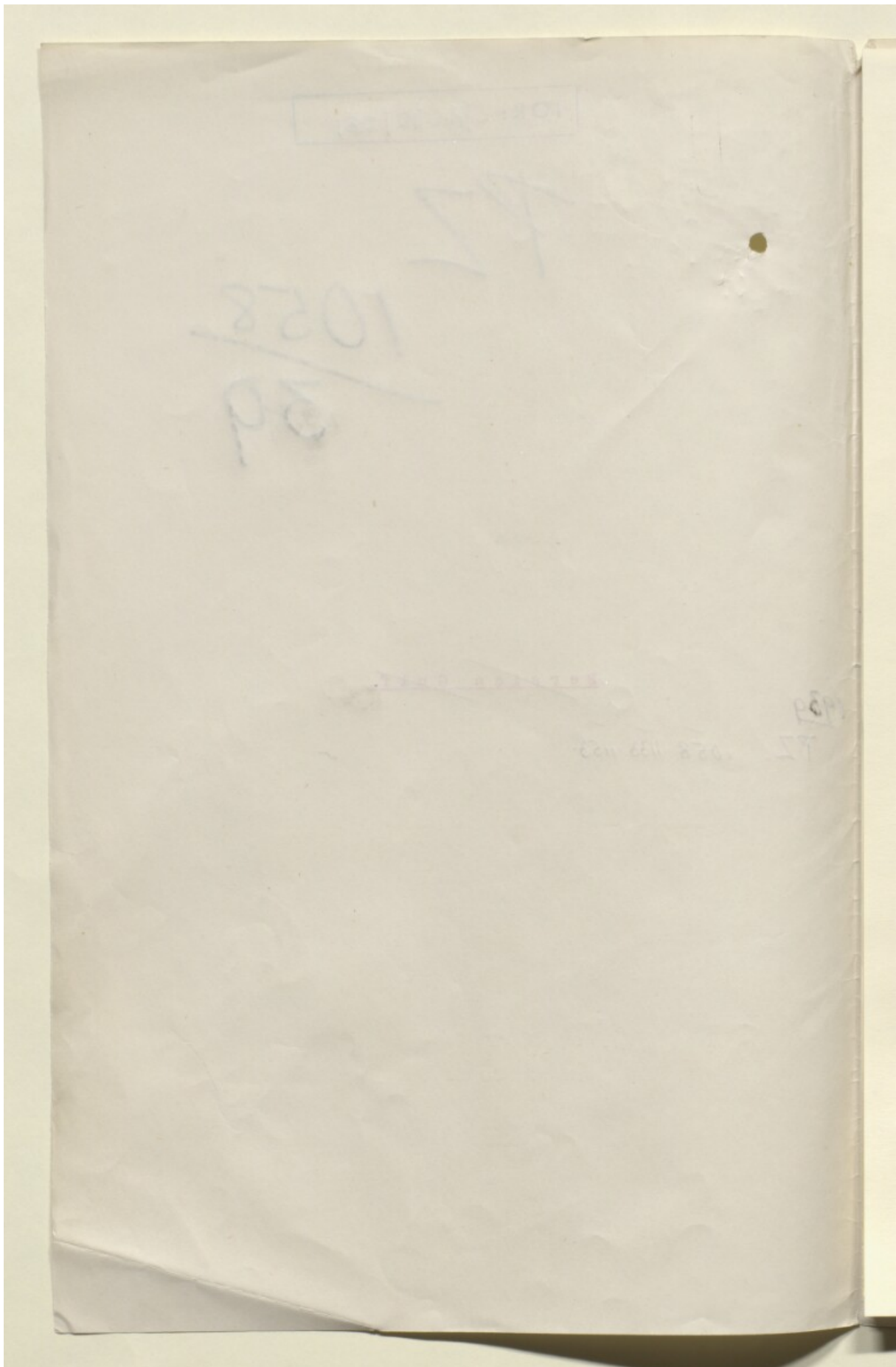
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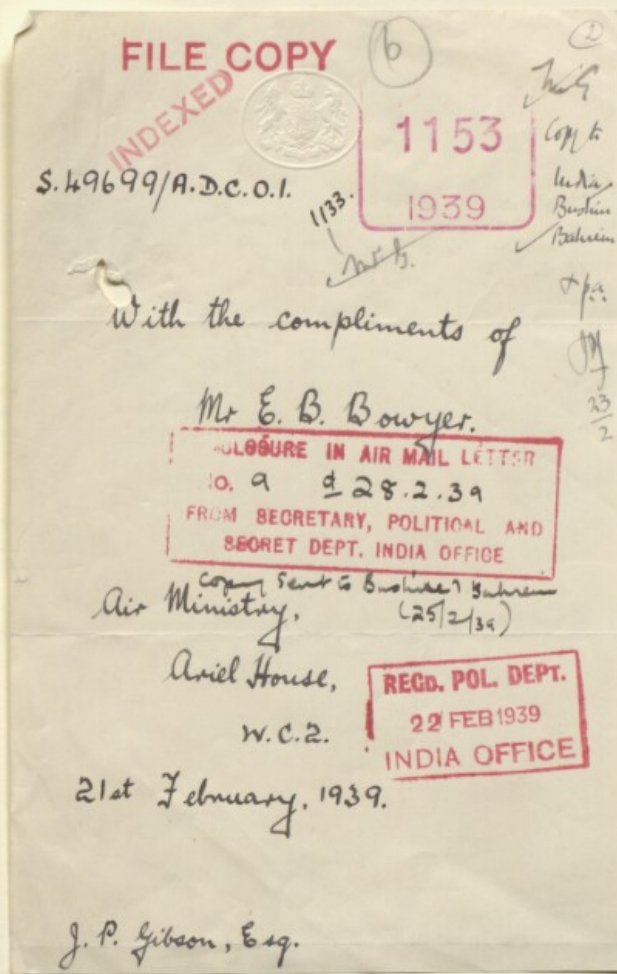
Reference	IOR/L/PS/12/281
Title	PZ 1058/1939 'Persian Gulf'
Date(s)	18 Feb 1939-23 Feb 1939 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
Extent and Format	1 file (12 folios)
Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
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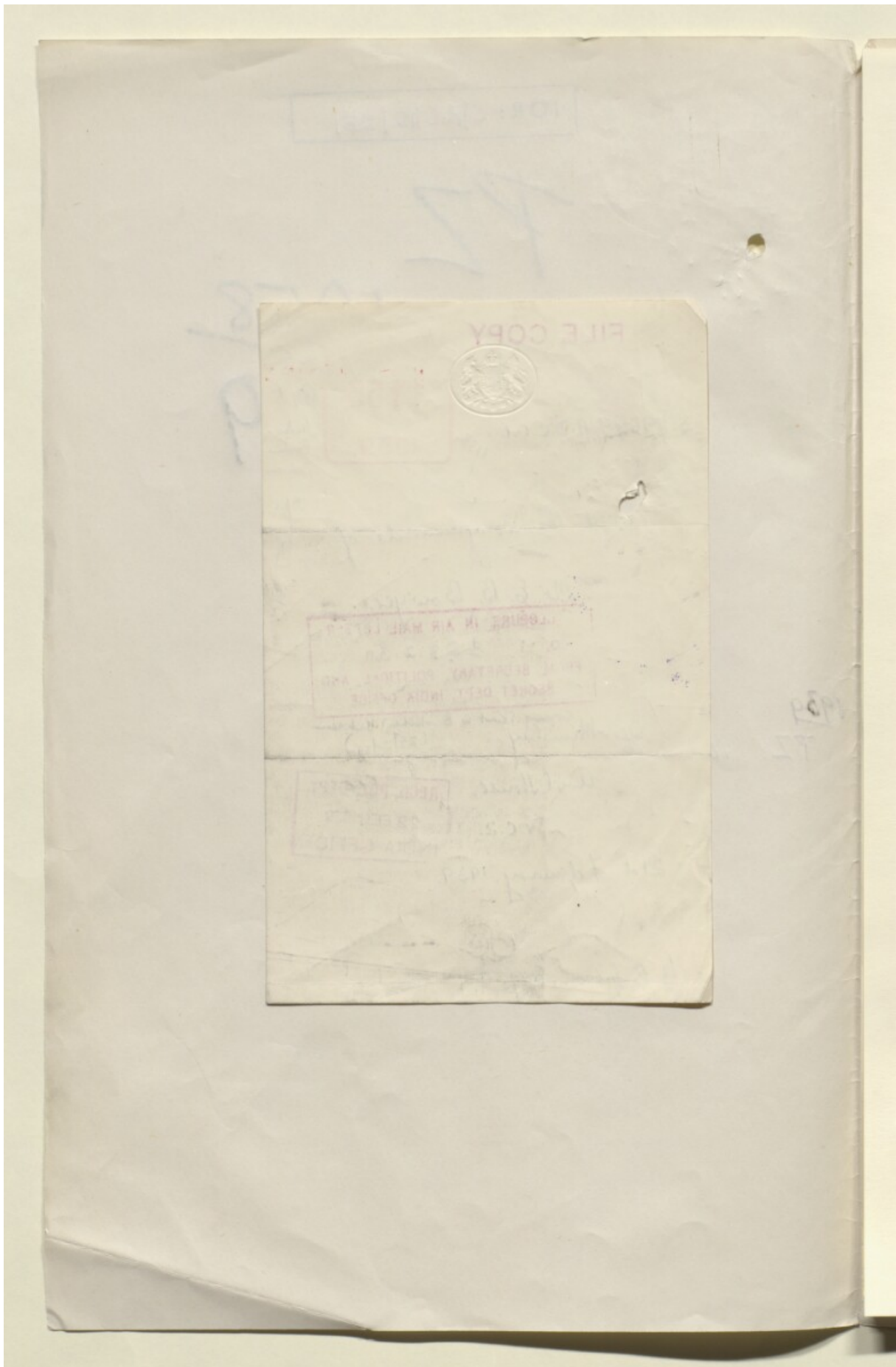
About this record

This file contains correspondence relating to the Standard Oil Company of California's oil concession in Bahrein [Bahrain]. The correspondence is concerned with whether or not it would be appropriate for Imperial Airways to assist the Californian company in developing aerial infrastructure in Arabia. In particular, the company feels it would be useful to be able to employ the use of aircraft between Bahrein and the area in which they are drilling, and between Bahrein and Jedda [Jeddah], where their main office is located. The possibility of the company forming an alliance/partnership with Germany is discussed by British officials. Copies of the letters were forwarded to the India Office and are included in the file (f 11 is a copy of f 5 and ff 12-13 are copies of ff 6-7).











FILE COPY

1153

1939

S.49699/A.D.C.O.I.

21st February, 1939.

Dear Burchall,

Will you please refer to your letter to Mr. Burkett of the 2nd February (reference OHL/344) about the desire of the Standard Oil Company of California to obtain your assistance in regard to air services between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

I discussed this with you on the telephone this morning and you informed me that what you envisaged was that, if you were able to give the Standard Oil Company technical advice on the matters set out in the fifth paragraph of your letter, they might then charter your planes for a commercial private service. There was, however, you thought, no question of your Company being asked to send representatives to Saudi Arabia to survey the ground or to obtain the necessary permits from the Saudi Arabian Government. All this would you imagined be undertaken by the Oil Company themselves.

This would dispose of the only difficulty which the Foreign Office, whom we have consulted, foresaw. The Foreign Office believe that the Saudi Arabian authorities are in general reluctant to allow any British enterprise to work in that part of Saudi Arabia which is in question, since they are rather suspicious of anything which they may regard as an attempt to extend British influence in the Persian Gulf area. Thus it is quite possible that the Saudi Arabian authorities, if asked for permission for Imperial Airways representatives to visit that part of Saudi Arabia, would refuse their consent, and if Imperial Airways were to send people, without the knowledge of the Saudi authorities, the

Lt.Col. H. Burchall, D.S.O.,
Imperial Airways,
Airway Terminus,
Victoria Station,
S.W.1.

/latter



latter would no doubt object very strongly if they got to hear of it later.

I pass on these observations for your information but, as I have said, the above difficulty appears unlikely to arise. That being so, not only have we no objection to your assisting the Standard Oil Company in any way in your power, but we should very much like you to do so, so far as you feel able because we feel that it is most undesirable that they should seek the assistance of any foreign country (as I gather they would be likely to do if your assistance was not forthcoming) and thereby enable that foreign country to obtain a foothold in Saudi Arabia.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) E. B. BOWYER.

This would dispose of the only difficulty which the Foreign Office, when we have consulted, has raised. The Foreign Office believes that the Saudi Arabian authorities are in general reluctant to allow any British enterprise to work in that part of Saudi Arabia which is in question, since they are rather suspicious of any thing which they may regard as an attempt to extend British influence in the Arabian Gulf area. It is quite possible that the Saudi Arabian authorities, if asked for permission for Imperial Airways representatives to visit that part of Saudi Arabia, would refuse their consent, and it is important always to keep people without the knowledge of the Saudi authorities, the



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FILE COPY
 Tel. No.:
 HOLBORN 3434; Ext.:
 S.49699/A.D.C.O.I. 1058
Immediate
 1133
 1939
 SECRET
 AIR MINISTRY,
 ARIEL HOUSE,
 STRAND,
 LONDON, W.C.2.
 20. February, 1939.

Dear Gibson,

Please refer to Baxter's letter to me of the 15th February (E.1014/992/91) regarding the possibility of air activities in Arabia at the instance of the Standard Oil Company of California.

I am sending you herewith a copy of Burkett's letter to Baggallay (with enclosure) to which Baxter's letter is a reply.

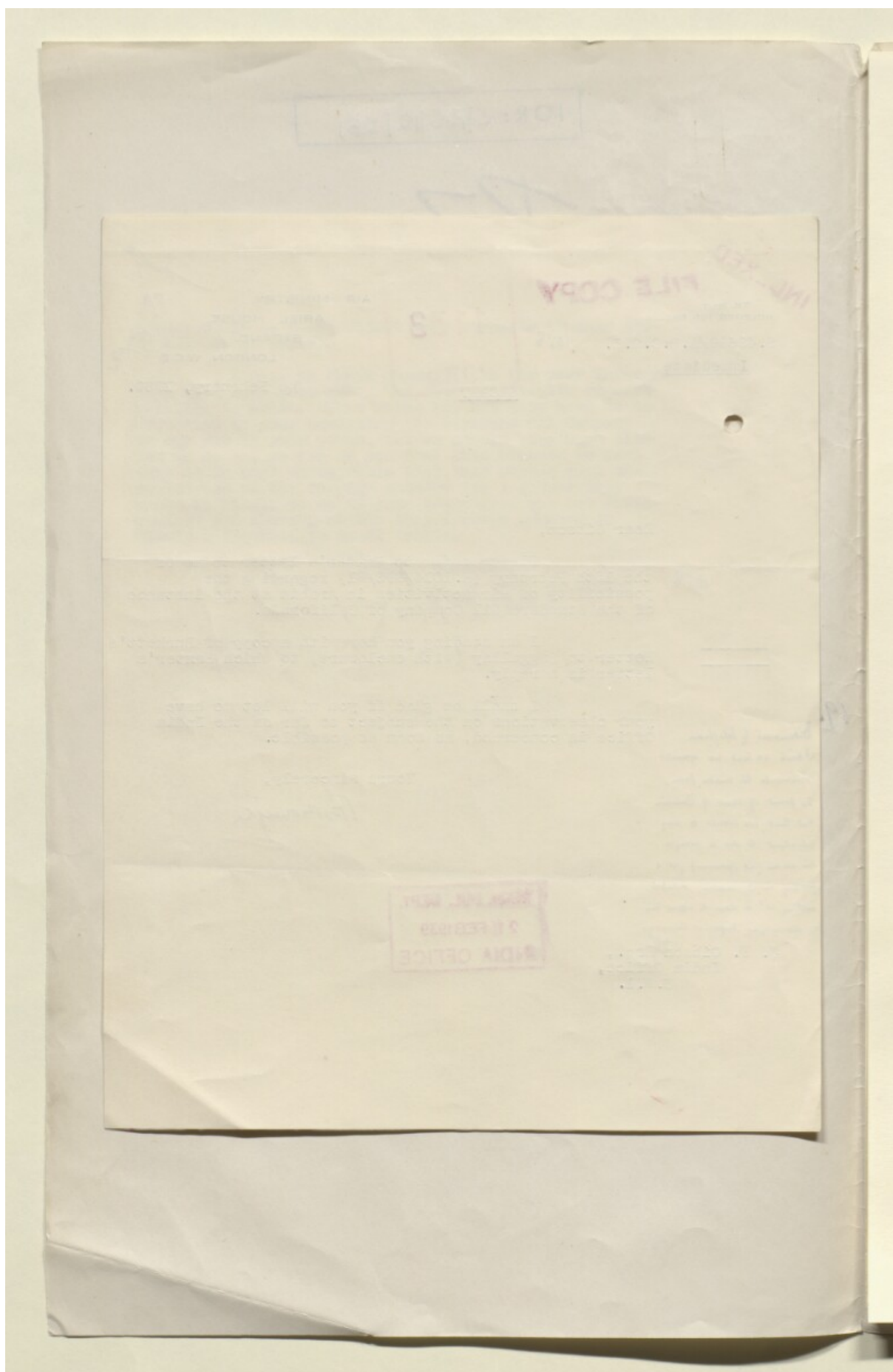
I shall be glad if you will let me have your observations on the subject so far as the India Office is concerned, as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,
 J. P. Gibson

*Discussed by telephone.
 I said we had no special
 comments to make from
 the point of view of Britain,
 but that we would be very
 reluctant to see a foreign
 air service (e.g. German) get a
 footing in S. Arabia, & hoped
 nothing would be done to affect this
 by discouraging Imperial Airways.*

J. P. Gibson Esq.,
 India Office,
 S.W.1.

INDIA POL. DEPT.
27 FEB 1939
INDIA OFFICE





COPY

FILE COPY

S.49699/D.O.C.A.

1132

1939

6th February, 1939.

Dear Baggallay,

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I have received from Colonel Burchall, General Manager of Imperial Airways Limited, with regard to the possibility of air activities in Arabia at the instance of the Standard Oil Company.

We should be glad to know as soon as possible whether, from the political angle, you agree that Imperial Airways should offer their advice and assistance in this matter.

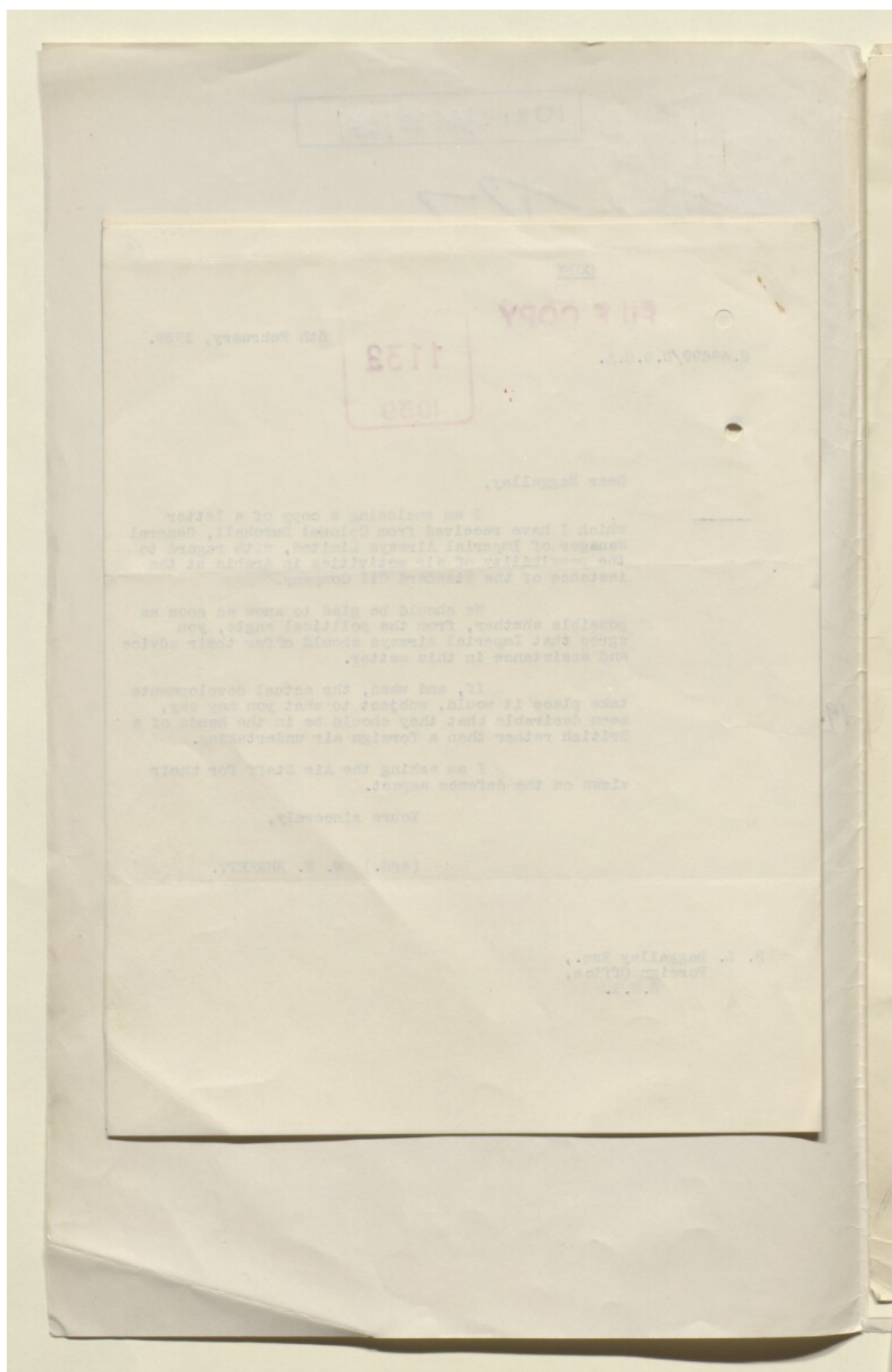
If, and when, the actual developments take place it would, subject to what you may say, seem desirable that they should be in the hands of a British rather than a foreign air undertaking.

I am asking the Air Staff for their views on the defence aspect.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd.) W. W. BURKETT.

H. L. Baggallay Esq.,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.





COPY

FILE COPY

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS LTD.

SECRET

GML/344.

1132

Airway Terminus,
Victoria Station,
London, S.W.1.

1939 2nd February, 1939.

Dear Burkett,

You doubtless know that the Standard Oil Company of California have an oil concession close to Bahrein. They also have extensive areas in Arabia over which they can prospect for oil.

During a recent talk with people of the Standard Oil Company, it appeared that they are interested in the use of aircraft in Arabia. At the moment, they feel that they could usefully employ aircraft between Bahrein and the area on the mainland in which they are now drilling.

I understand that their chief office in this part of the world is at Jedda, and that they have frequent convoys across the desert from Bahrein to Riyadh and Jedda, and now use desert lorries. Communication from Bahrein to Jedda by air would be a great asset to them. Similarly, if they find oil in the centre of Arabia, they might also need air services operating to the North and South of this main route.

The Standard Oil Company have heard of the successful way in which we have carried out work for the Iraq Petroleum Company in Palestine, and on aerial surveys, and they have therefore asked our advice as to the practical possibility of such aerial developments.

They seem anxious to have our opinion and advice in regard to:-

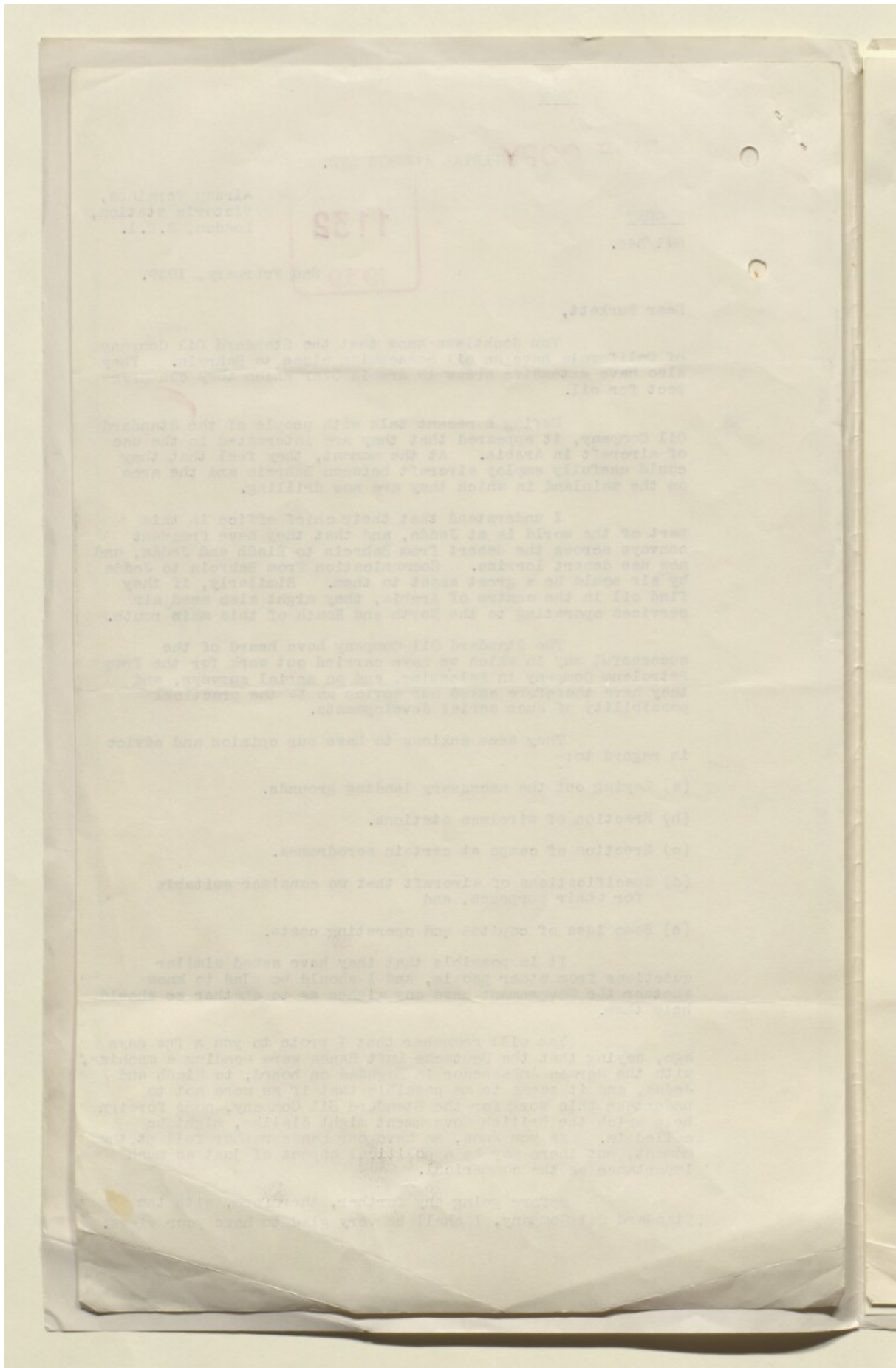
- (a) Laying out the necessary landing grounds.
- (b) Erection of wireless stations.
- (c) Erection of camps at certain aerodromes.
- (d) Specifications of aircraft that we consider suitable for their purposes, and
- (e) Some idea of capital and operating costs.

It is possible that they have asked similar questions from other people, and I should be glad to know whether the Government have any wishes as to whether we should help them.

You will remember that I wrote to you a few days ago, saying that the Deutsche Luft Hansa were sending a machine, with the German Ambassador in Baghdad on board, to Riyadh and Jedda, and it seems to me possible that if we were not to undertake this work for the Standard Oil Company, some foreign help which the British Government might dislike, might be called in. As you know, we have our hands rather full at the moment, but there may be a political aspect of just as much importance as the commercial.

Before going any further, therefore, with the Standard Oil Company, I shall be very glad to have your views.

/I





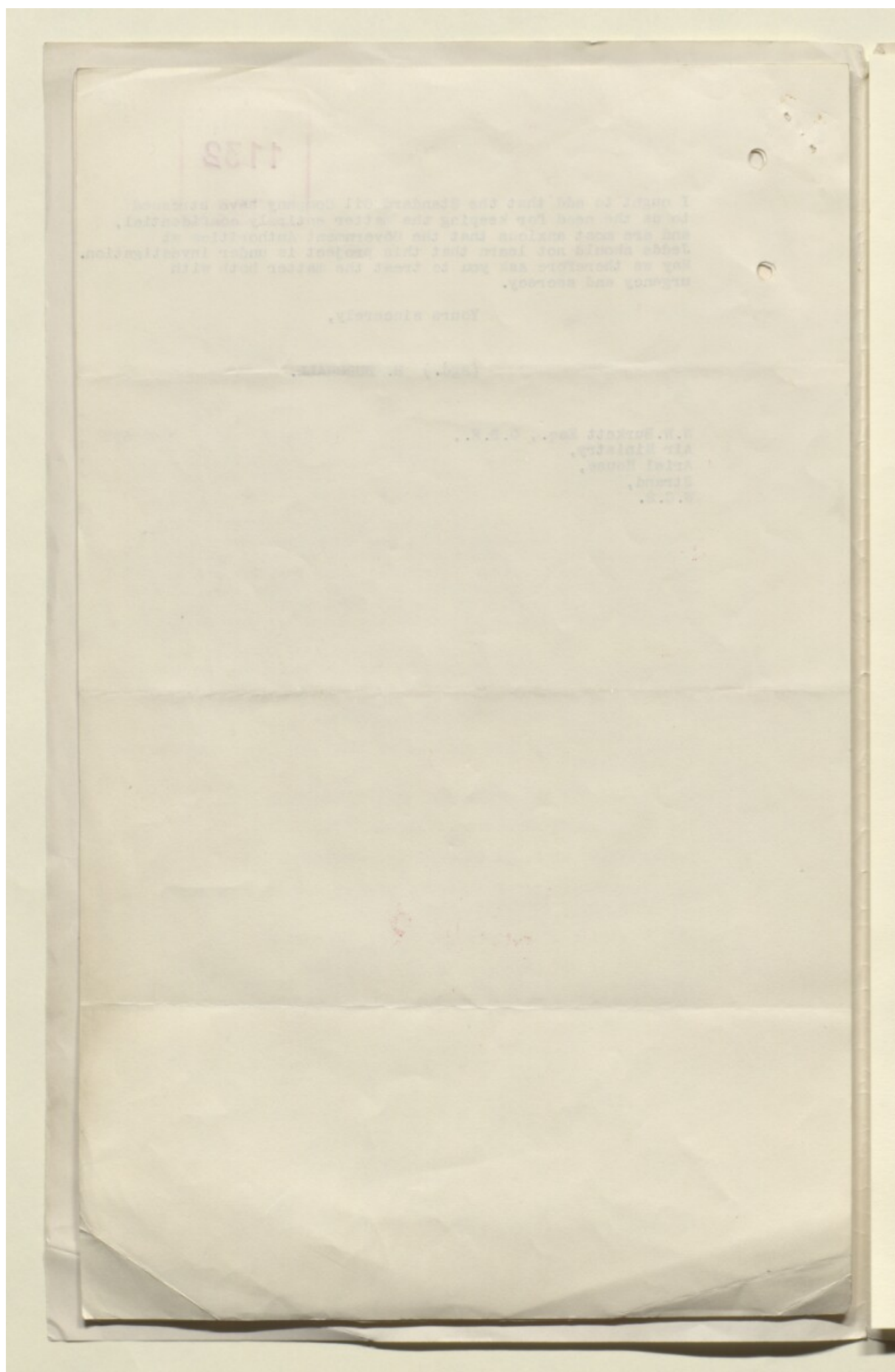
1132

I ought to add that the Standard Oil Company have stressed to us the need for keeping the matter entirely confidential, and are most anxious that the Government Authorities at Jedda should not learn that this project is under investigation. May we therefore ask you to treat the matter both with urgency and secrecy.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd.) H. BURCHALL.

W.W.Burkett Esq., O.B.E.,
Air Ministry,
Ariel House,
Strand,
W.C.2.





E1014/992/91

INDEXED FILE COPY

Ref. **P.Z. 1058 1939**

With the compliments
of
Mr. Baxter.

**RECD. POL. DEPT.
18 FEB 1939
INDIA OFFICE**

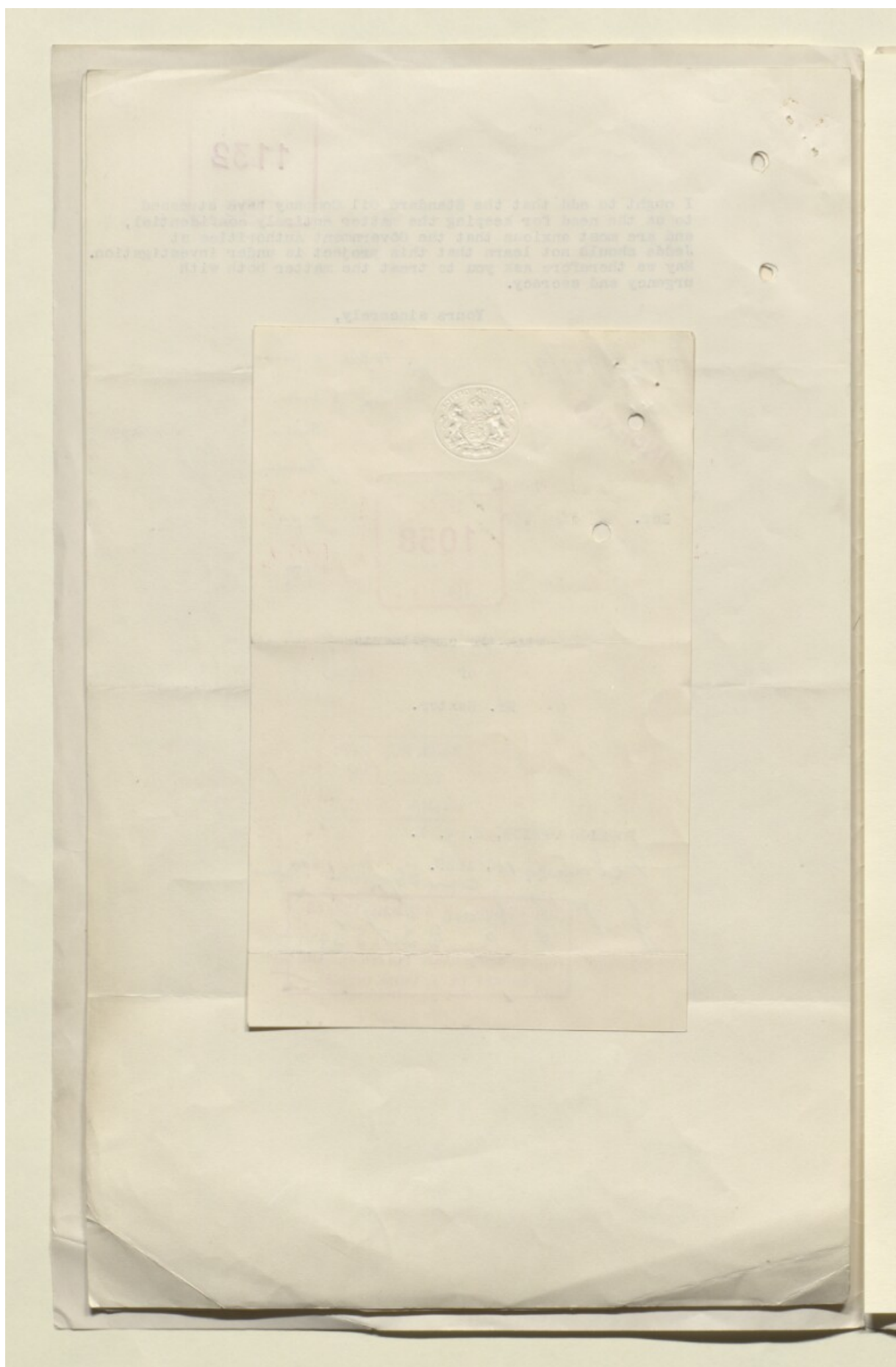
FOREIGN OFFICE, S. W. 1.

February 15, 1939.

J. P. Gibson

**ENCLOSURE IN AIR MAIL LETTER
No. 9 d 24.2.39
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL AND
SECRET DEPT. INDIA OFFICE**

Handwritten notes:
H. Peel & see
1/2 copy to India
Bushire
Bahrain
P
P.S.
17/2





FILE COPY

(E 1014/992/91).

Immediate.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

15th February, 1939.

1058

1939

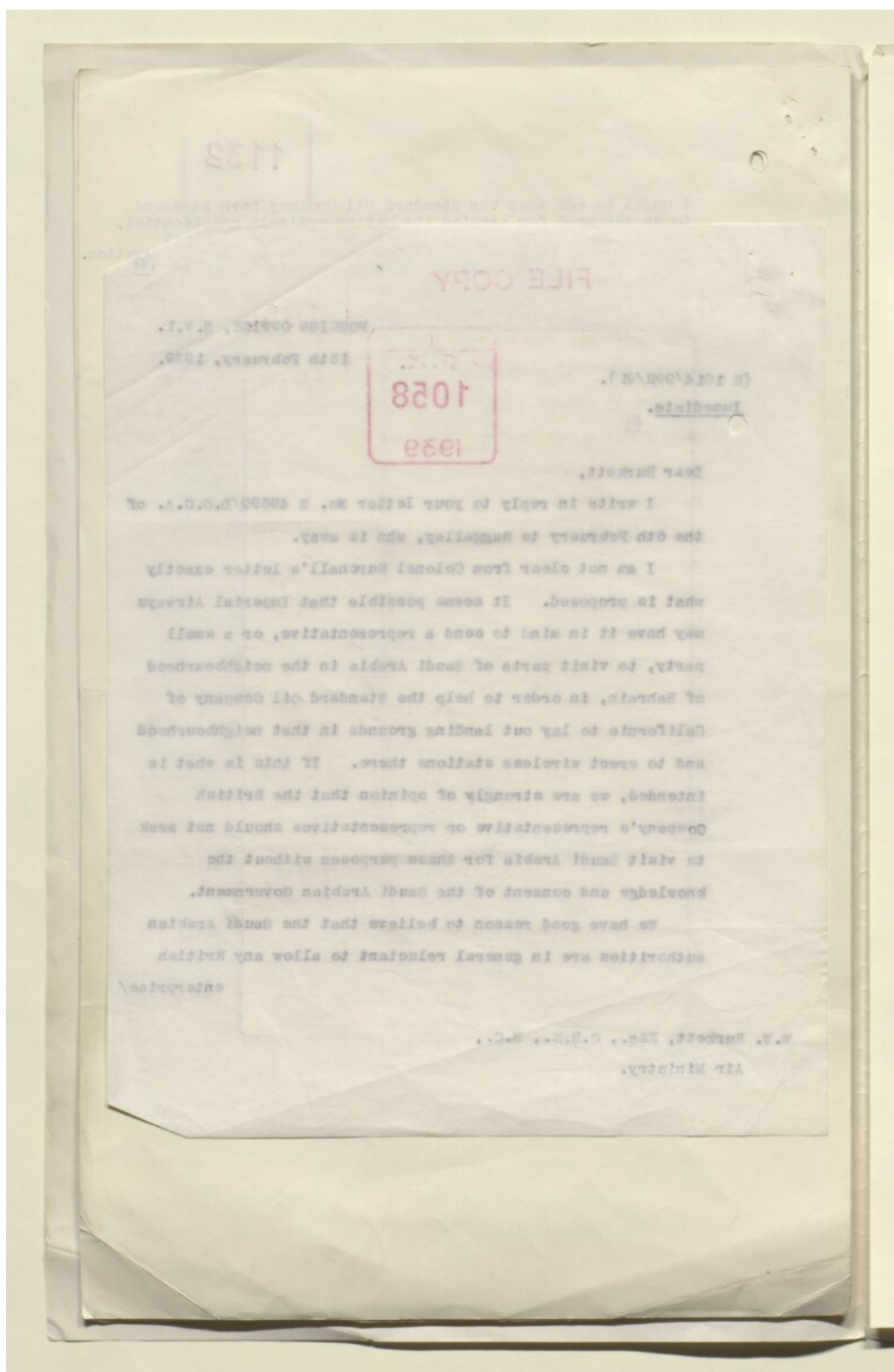
Dear Burkett,

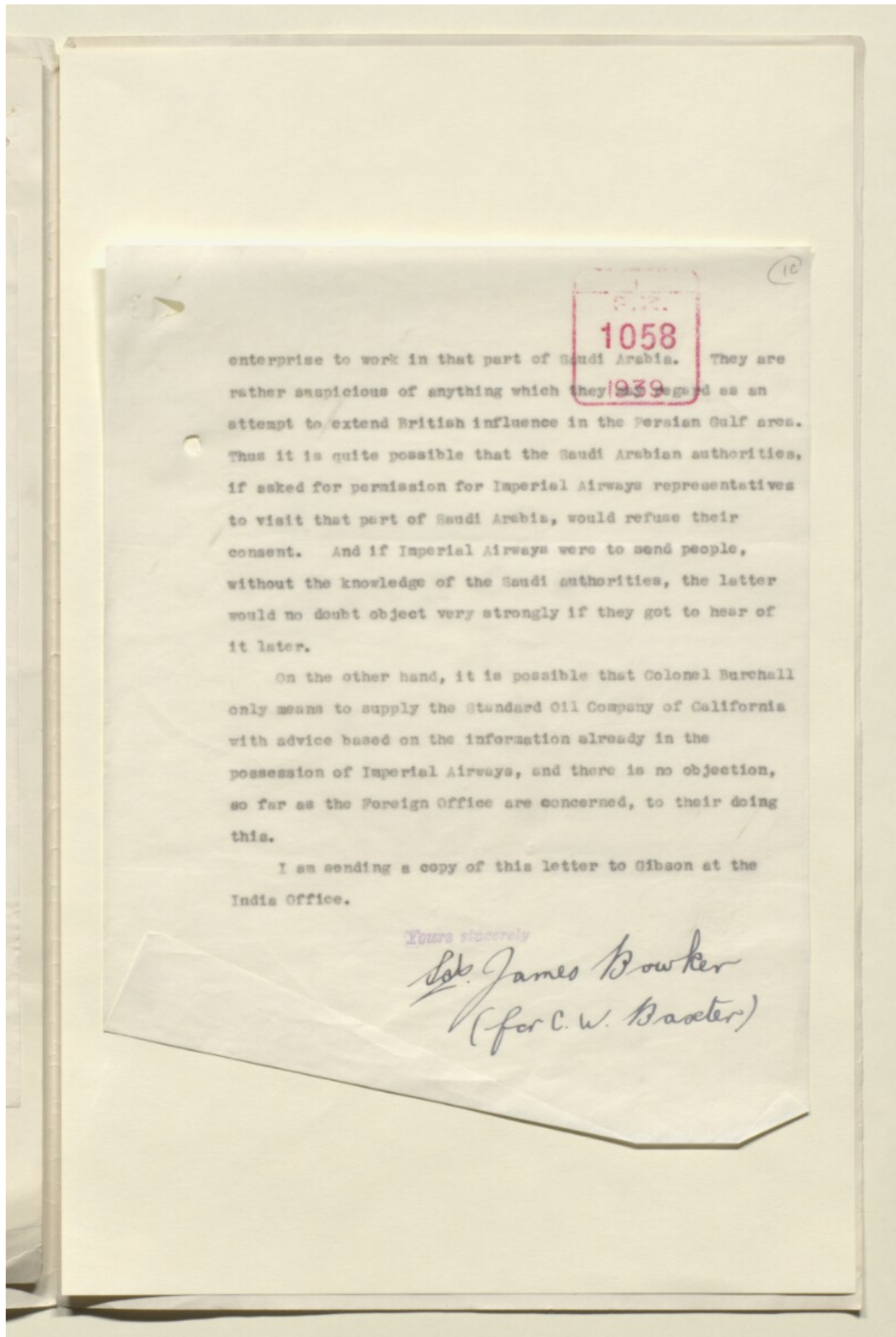
I write in reply to your letter No. S 49699/D.O.C.A. of the 6th February to Baggellay, who is away.

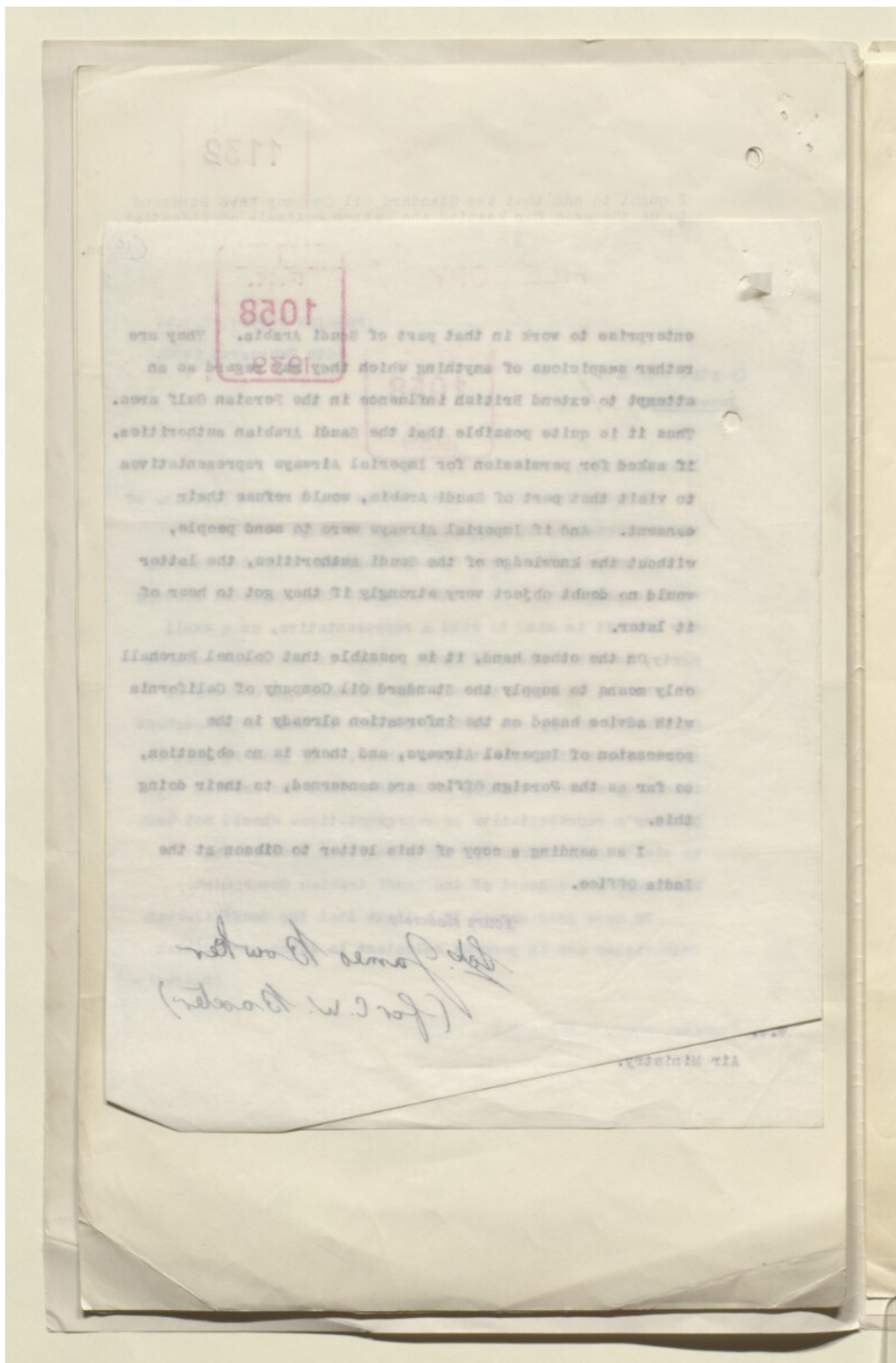
I am not clear from Colonel Burchall's letter exactly what is proposed. It seems possible that Imperial Airways may have it in mind to send a representative, or a small party, to visit parts of Saudi Arabia in the neighbourhood of Bahrain, in order to help the Standard Oil Company of California to lay out landing grounds in that neighbourhood and to erect wireless stations there. If this is what is intended, we are strongly of opinion that the British Company's representative or representatives should not seek to visit Saudi Arabia for these purposes without the knowledge and consent of the Saudi Arabian Government.

We have good reason to believe that the Saudi Arabian authorities are in general reluctant to allow any British enterprise/

W.W. Burkett, Esq., O.B.E., M.C.,
Air Ministry.

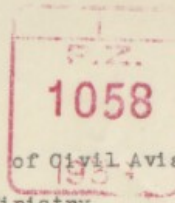








FILE COPY



Copy.
(E 1014/992/91).
S.496/D.O.C.A.

Department of Civil Aviation,
Air Ministry,
Ariel House,
Strand,
London, W.C.2.
6th February, 1939.

Dear Baggallay,

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I have received from Colonel Burchall, General Manager of Imperial Airways Limited, with regard to the possibility of air activities in Arabia at the instance of the Standard Oil Company.

We should be glad to know as soon as possible whether, from the political angle, you agree that Imperial Airways should offer their advice and assistance in this matter.

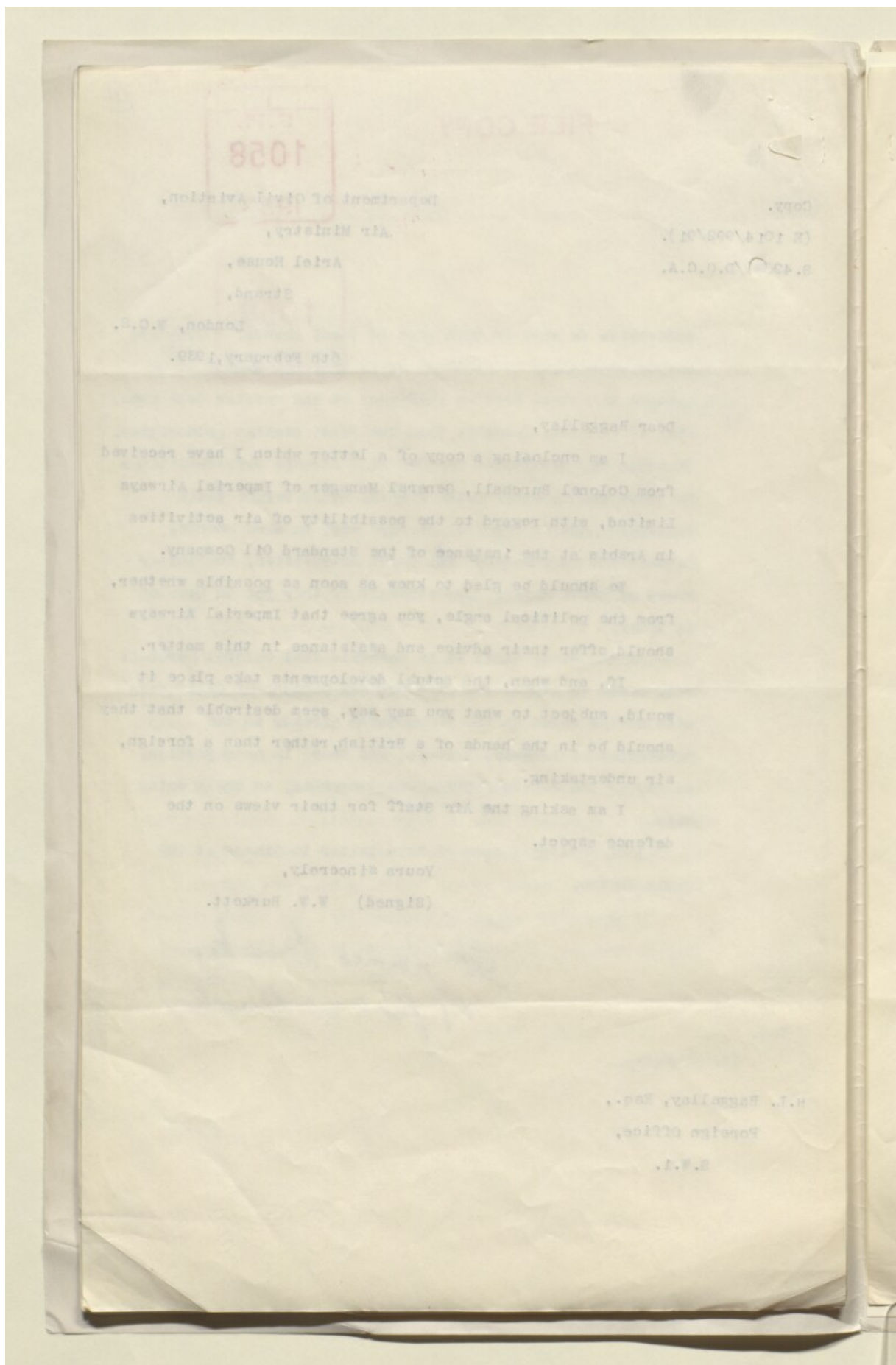
If, and when, the actual developments take place it would, subject to what you may say, seem desirable that they should be in the hands of a British, rather than a foreign, air undertaking.

I am asking the Air Staff for their views on the defence aspect.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) W.W. Burkett.

H.L. Baggallay, Esq.,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.





GML/344.

SECRET.

(12)
Imperial Airways Limited,
Airway Terminus,
Victoria Station,
S.W.1.
2nd February, 1939.

Dear Burkett,

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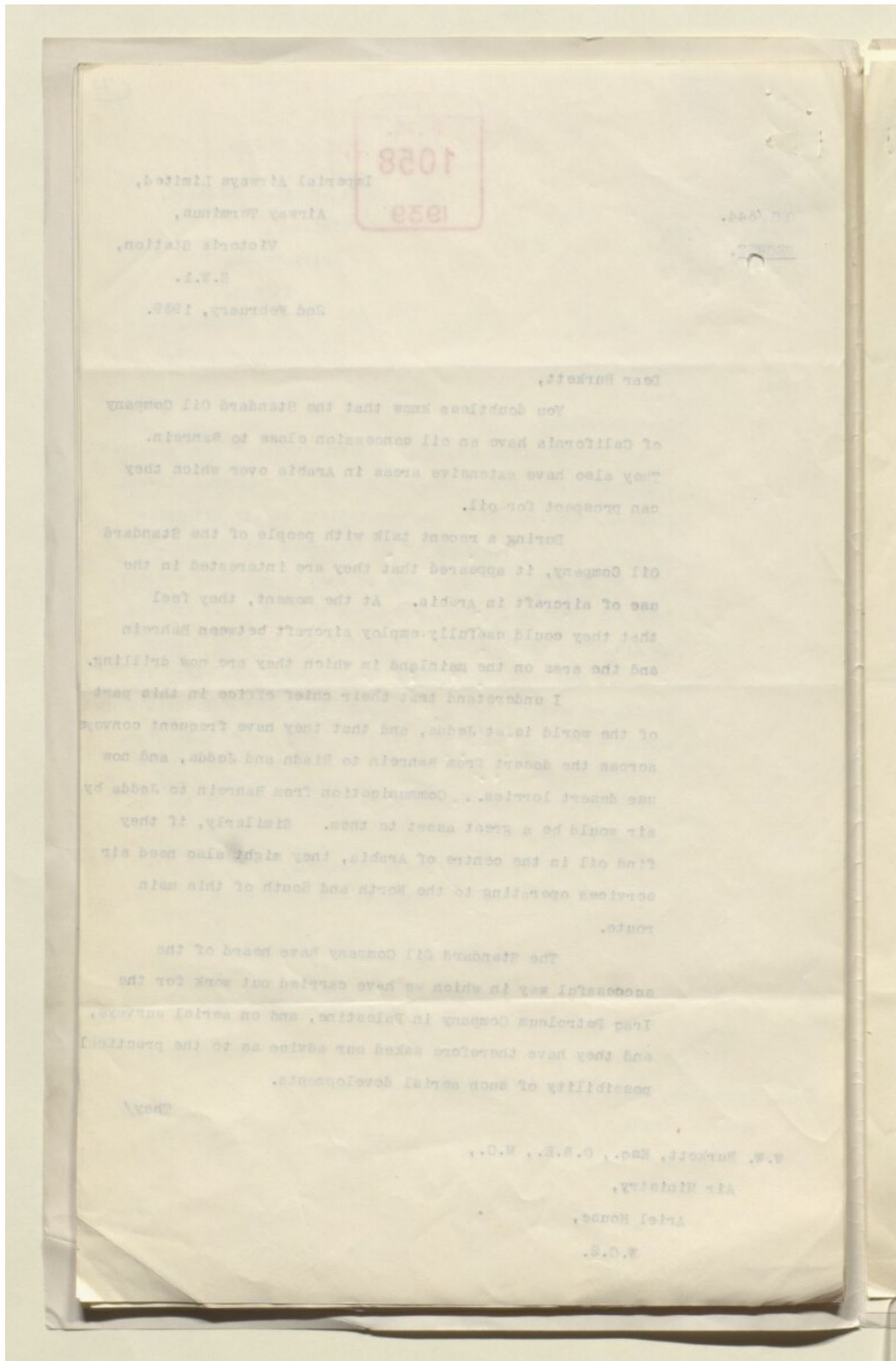
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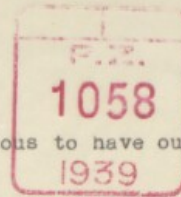
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They/

W.W. Burkett, Esq., O.B.E., M.C.,
Air Ministry,
Ariel House,
W.C.2.





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in regard to:-

- (a) Laying out the necessary landing grounds.
- (b) Erection of wireless stations.
- (c) Erection of camps at certain aerodromes.
- (d) Specifications of aircraft that we consider
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Yours sincerely,

(Signed) H. Burchall.

