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F.I.G.A.S. - FIRE IN HANGAR.

SECRETARIAT

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FIGAS . I understand that a fire occured in the Hangan loday and that are of the main plans of the Questies was beent out. Please appoint a Board to arquire uno this accident. 2. Mapping a space awig is armeable but it was failures that the damage was not greater . the ex

2 y.E. Revuse . Inssist. Ikkint Channa Luisne ; mentin . Teras of up: Cause Affir unpossibilis if reglijues involues. Teducency I stategacy of existing presention Ale 20/10 And his 23/x.

No.	SEGRETARYSMEMORAN	DUM.	3
It is requested in any refer- to this memo- randum the above number and date	29 OCT 1953	28th October,	19 53.
should be quoted.	FALKLAND ISLAD	The Hon. Col. Sec.	
Earb.	our laster.		
	Stapley Falkland Islands.	(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(

SUBJECT :- TIT HANGAR WORKSHOP.

I report to inform you that a fire occurred in the hangar workshop this morning, resulting in the loss of the starboard mainplane of the Auster discraft, VP - FAC. I attach a report of the incident, but presumably as the loss of Government property was comparatively serious, there all have to be an official enquiry into the matter.

He to su.

lon

REPORT ON ACCIDENTAL FIRE IN HANGAR WORMSHOP.

A fire occurred in the hangar workshop during the morning of 28th October, resulting in the destruction of the starboard mainplane of the Auster seaplane, VP-PAC.

The fire was caused by an electric light bulb on a wandering lead, which was being used to illuminate the interior of the mainplane while the mechanic removed the suppressor from the generator. This bulb apparently ignited the doped fabric and thus caused the fire.

As the bulb was protected by a wire cage and it was essential to illuminate the interior of the minplane, I consider no unreasonable risk was taken by the Air Service Stafff. Their promptness in dealing with the outbreak undoubtedly prevented a far more serious loss to Government property, and showed that fire-fighting equipment at the hangar was adequate for small outbreaks, although an investigation may prove the necessity for more to deal with possibly larger fires. In particular I wish to mention the action of N.Aldridge and C.Short, who, on theri own iniative and without instructions from others, started to open the hongar doors to remove the Beaver aircraft to safety should the fire in the workshop get out of control.

The loss anounted to the starboard mainplane of the Austor, which is a complete write-ofr, and one window of the vorkshop mushed out of necessity during fire-fighting operations.

1 1 Sidnels

No. MEMORA	NDUM. (6
It is requested that, in any refer- tice to this memo-	29th Cotober, 19 53.
randum the above number and the date may be quoted.	To: D. E. J. Ekkint,
From: The Solonial Secretary.	STITLY.
Stanley, Falkland Islands.	

SUBJECT :- Fire in the F.I.G.A.S. Hangar - 27th October, 1953.

I an directed to inform you that a Board of Enquiry is to be set up under your Chairmanship to investigate the above fire with the following terms of reference;-

(a) to ascertain the cause of the fire.

- (b) to fix responsibility if negligence is involved
- (c) to report on the adequacy or otherwise of existing fire precautions.

2. The other Members of the Board will be Messrs. A. Mercer and A.E. Livermore., to whom a copy of this memo has been forwarded.

5. Elease arrange for the enquiry to be held and furnish ne with a copy of the Board's findings as soon as possible.

48-lania

REPORT OF BOARD OF ENQUIRY RELATIVE TO A FIRE

 \mathbf{AT} ==

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT AIRSERVICE HANGAR

ON THE 28th.OCTOBER, 1953.

CONSTITUTION OF BOARD. *******************

D.E.J. IKKINT (Chairman.) CHIEF CONSTABLE. A.MERCER A.E.LIVERMORE

SUPT. POST & TELEGRAPH SERVICE. SUPT. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Respectfully submitted.

A. P. I Success

Chief' Constable.

To:- The Honourable Colonial Secretary for the information of His Excellency the Governor.

Sir,

FIRE AT FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT AIR SERVICE HANGAR.

I respectfully report that in accordance with your directive, dated the 29th October, 1953, I convened a Board of Enquiry into the fire which occurred at the Falkland Islands Government Hangar on the 28th October, 1953.

The enquiry was held at the Police Station, with myself as Chairman and Messrs. A. Mercer and A.E. Livermore, at 2.0 p.m. on Friday the 30th October, 1953.

Evidence was taken from the following personnel who were at the hangar at the time of the incident, and copies of same are attached for your perusal.

Frank Devrell Morris Smith Harold David Jones Nigel Aldridge . George Short Filot. Mechanic. Mechanic. Apprentice Mechanic. Coxwain Aircraft Tender.

As directed by you, the investigation into the above fire was held with the Following terms of reference:-

- (a) to ascertain the cause of the fire.
- (b) to fix responsibility if negligence is involved.
 (c) to report on the adequacy or otherwise of existing fire precautions.

The unanimous findings of the Board are as follows:- (a) <u>Cause of fire</u>.

That the fire was caused by the dope fabric of the "Auster" main plane (wing), which was undergoing a Certificate of Airworthiness Inspection, being ignited by the heat given out by a 150 watt electric bulb situated at the end of a wanderlead, when same was inserted into the wing in order to provide illumination for David Jones (mechanic) when removing a suppressor in the generating system.

(b) To fix responsibility if negligence is involved.

That no negligence was involved.

(c) To report on the adequacy or otherwise of existing fire precautions.

That the fire preautions at the hangar are inadequate.

The Board very respectfully make the following suggestions for the future safety of the hangar, its contents and its personnel.

1. That a large mobile foam extinguisher be purchased of a pattern as set out on leaflets marked "Pyrene", Merryweather" and "Atlas" CO _ Portable Fire Units.

2. That for work inside small compartments and close to the dope fabric, battery operated lamps should be used.

1

3. That when other work is carried out on aircraft which requires additional lighting, the measures of safety would be increased if wanderleads and handlamps were protected and fitted in such a way that only low wattage lamps could be used. The heat generated by a high wattage lamp is very high and in a confined space becomes very noticeable.

l₊. That a proper wanderlead be purchased and the present one, which is of home made design be scrapped. Although the Board could not find any fault with the present one, except that the wire cage surrounding the electric light bulb was of a rather flimsy construction, they are of the opinion that a properly constructed wanderlead should be purchased to replace the one at present in use.

5. That electric fires in the workshop should be abolished and replaced by a heating system where no naked light is exposed.

6. That the telephone should be removed from it's present position to some convenient spot outside the workshop, where it could still be used in the event of a fire inside the workshop.

7. That every member of Government staff be instructed how to manipulate the fire extinguishers in their various offices, thereby removing any weak points of departmental ability to combat initial outbreaks of fire.

We are Sir, Your obedient Servants Chairman a. merce. Member Reflectioner

2.

10 В A А В В 7 C D D Rough sketch of Wanderlead. 150 watt elecric bulb. Α. Wire cage. в.

- C. Bakelite holder.
- D. Insulated flex.

Francis John Devrell :-

<u>states</u>

I am a pilot in the employ of the Falkland Islands Government Air Service.

At about 10.0 a.m. on Wednesady the 28th.of October,1953, I was at the air-craft hangar in company with Morris Smith, David Jones, Nigel Aldridge and George Short.

I was standing in the doorway of the workshop, when I heard David Jones shout "Fire".

At that time we had a wing of the "Auster" plane in the workshop, being overhauled, and I think David Jones was removing the wind generator suppressor, but I am not sure about that.

As soon as David Jones shouted "Fire", Morris Smith and I ran out into the hangar to get two fire extinguishers, both foam extinguishers.

We returned to the workshop, where Morris Smith immediately applied his to the burning wing and I gave mine to David Jones, who also directed his on to the seat of the fire.

I then went to the "Beaver" plane and took the extinguisher out of it, which I then applied to the burning wing in the workshop.

In the meantime Nigel Aldridge and George Short had opened up the doors leading out onto the slipway in case the other planes had to be moved.

Two more extinguishers were obtained from the top hangar, and I believe that they were also used, but I am not sure of that.

The fire was extinguished after a short while.

I am sure that nobody was smoking at the time of the outbreak and that no electric fires were burning inside the workshop, also that no naked lights were being used.

The cause of the fire in my opinion was due to the hot bulb on the wander lead being used inside the wing, igniting the dope fabric of the wing.

The bulb of the wander lead was in a cage at the time.

It was necessary to use this light in order to enable David Jones to see what he was doing.

The following damage was done .- the wing was badly burned and two windows were broken by the heat.

I do not think that anybody was to blame for the fire as it was

Francis John Devrell continued.

imperative to use a light inside the wing.

With reference to adequate fire precautions, I am satisfied that they are adequate to deal with small outbreaks of fire, but not with a major conflagration. I have however no suggestions to make for increased fire-fighting precautions.

I did not call for the services of the fire brigade as I did not consider it necessary after we had succeeded in patting out the fire, but reported the matter to Mr.Huckle.

All extinguishers were refilled the same day by Mr. Bowles.

The following questions were then out to Mr. Devrell.

Mr.Mercor.Can you tell me what sized bulb was being used in the wanderlead ? Reply. A large sized bulb, either 100 or 150 watt.

kr.Mercer. Do you know if there was any fracture in the wander lead ? Reply. I cannot say, but must refer you to Mr.Jones who was using it.

<u>Mr.Livermore</u>. Would a larger cage round the bulb be more advantageous ? <u>Reply</u>. Yes, probably so.

Mr. Livermore. Could not a hand torch be used on future occasions for a

Reply.

similar type of work ? Yes, I think a larger cage and a smaller lamp may be better though. By smaller lamp I mean a less powerful bulb.

Morris Smith

<u>states</u>

I am an aircraft mechanic in the employ of the Falkland Islands Government Air Service.

At about 10.0 a.m. on Wednesday the 23th.of October,1953,I was at the aircraft hangar in company with Frank Devrell, David Jones, Nigel Aldridge and George Short.

At the time we were doing a"Certificate of Airworthiness" inspection on the "Auster" aircraft. We had taken the starboard main plane (wing) into the workshop. Our reason for doing so, was because eventually there would be doping (fabric) work to be done and it is dryer and warmer in the workshop.

David Jones was working on the root end of the main plane (wing) removing a suppressor in the generating system, I was working at the other end. To do this, he had to have a light and used what is known to us as a wanderlead, suitably cased in a wire cage.

We can only assume that the wanderlead bulb created sufficient heat to ignite the fabric when it was placed inside the wing through the inspection panel.

As I was working at the other end of the wing, I cannot say whether the wanderlead cage was resting on the fabric or not.

I heard David Jones say "Fire" and ran straight out into the hangar accompanied by Frank Devrell for a foam extinguisher. Two foam extinguishers and two pyrene's were used and the fire was quickly put out. These have now all been re-charged for further use.

There was definitely nobody smoking in the workshop and no electric fires were burning.

In my opinion the fire was almost certainly caused by the heat generated onto the fabric by the bulb in the wanderlead.

As far as damage is concerned, the wing in my opinion is totally unfit for further use.

I do not think there is any negligence on any body's part, and we have decided in future to use a smaller wattage bulb, when we are engaged upon similar work.

I am satisfied with the present fire apparatus for small outbreaks, but would urgently suggest larger and more foam extinguishers, preferably Morris Smith continued.

of a mobile type.

The services of the fire brigade were not sent for, firstly because nobody had any time to do so and secondly because the fire was completely extinguished by us.

The following questions were then put to Mr. Smith.

<u>Mr.Livermore</u>. Where there any fire extinguishers in the workshop ? <u>Reply</u>. Yes.

Mr.Mercer.Do you consider the cable of the wanderlead satis-
factory ?Reply.Mes, it has given us no trouble lately, I must how-

ever agree that it is not the correct cable, but that is all we could get.

Mr.Mercer.Con you tell me the wattage of the bulb which was
being used in the holder on the wanderlead.Reply.Yes. 150 watt.

H. ROLD DAVID JONES :-

states

I am an aircraft mechanic ib the employ of the Falkland Islands Island Goverment Air Service.

At about 10.0 a.m. on Wednesday the 28th.of October,1953, I was at the air craft hangar in company with Morris Smith,Frank Devrell,Nigel Aldridge and George Short.

I was removing a generator system suppressor from the starboard wing of the "Auster" plane, which was in the hangar workshop. I was removing a screw, and in order to do so, I inserted an inspection lamp into the main plane (wing) through the inspection panel. The inspection lamp is composed of an ordinary bakelite bulb holder, one 150 watt electric light bulb, encased in a home made wire cage. This is attached to a long insulated lead, and the whole thing is termed a wanderlead. Electricity is provided to this lamp through the lead which is plugged into a power plug on the wall of the workshop.

After about one minute had elapsed I noticed a red glow on the fabric near the lamp, and I sid "Fire" to Frank Devrell who was close to me at the time, and looked around for a fire extinguisher.

Frank Devrell and Morris Smith immediately obtained two extinguishers and the fire was quickly extinguished.

The fire was definitely caused by the heat of the bulb igniting the wing which is dope impregnated, and the wing in my opinion is completely unfit for any further use.

In my opinion there was no negligence on anybody's part.

From what I have seen, the fire precautions are adequate for small fires, but I suggest that they are inadequate for larger conflagrations and should be augmented by larger foam extinguishers, preferably of a mobile type.

The services of the fire brigade were not called for as the fire was properly extinguished by us.

The following questions were then put to Mr. Jones.

<u>Mr.Mercer</u>. Do you think that the wander lead is in proper working condition and had no cracks in it ? <u>Reply</u>. Yes, if there had been any cracks in it the light would h

Yes, if there had been any cracks in it the light would have flickered, but I do think that we should be supplied with a proper workshop wanderlead.

HAROLD DAVID JONES Continued.

•	
Mr.Livermore. Reply.	Was the electric fire on in the workshop ? No, the plug was taken out as soon as we put the wing in the workshop.
<u>Mr. Livermore.</u> Repl/.	Was any body smoking in the workshop ? No, I am sure of that.
Mr. Livermore.	I take it that the dope you referred to with which the wings are impregnated is very inflammable ?
Reply.	Yes, highly inflammable, but planes cannot be constructed without the use of it unless they are all metal.



states

I am an apprentice aircraft mechanic in the employ of the Falkland Islands Government Air Service.

At about 10.0 a.m. on Wednesday the 28th. of October,1953, I was at the aircraft hangar in company with Mr. Devrell, Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones and George Short.

I was out in the hangar at the time working on the "Auster" floats, when I saw "r. Devrell and Mr. Smith run into the hangar from the direction of the workshop and grab two fire extinguishers.

Thinking there was a fire, I immediately started to remove rull drums of petrol away from the workshop door, and I then ran up to the top hangar for two more extinguishers.

I took those two back to the workshop where all the others with the exception of George Short were dealing with a fire in the workshop.

> I then stood by in case the "Beaver" plane had to be moved. That is all I can say.

George Short :-

states

I am coxwain on the aircraft tender. At about 10.0 a.m. on We Sesday the 23th.of October, 1953, I was working at the aircraft hangar. I was working with Nigel Aldridge at the time, helping him to clean the floats of the "Anster" aircraft.

f saw Mr.Devrell and Mr.Smith run out of the workshop and grab two fire extinguishers and then run back into the workshop where there appeared to be something burning.

I took no part in the fire atall, all I did was to open the large doors leading out onto the slipway in case the "Beaver" had to be moved.

That is all I can say about it.

H.M.

18 onwards for your observations, pl.

wayfor C.S. 9.11.53.

H.C.S. I agree with the findings of the board: as farshadowed in my preliminary epat (which does not appen to be filet) 4 equipment in the hanger does not appear to be adequate du larger outbreaks of fire. If you approve a large mobile foam extinguistier will be puchased: also wandering lead. I am not so convinced about the telephone - that is the mer point where I feel the Board's recommendations are unnecessary: There is an atternative telephane in the landplane haisen.

9.6. To see report of Board of laging on drage fins " 7.00 p. 8.

2. A second telephone in the hangen of emergency use would appear the best solution of para 6 of the Board's recommendations.

X

land plane phone

3 g. aill accept the Branch fraching?

Furdungs & Recondulans accepted _ I am much obligat to

CQ.

the Board . R. cusure the meaning action is taken

entired delay.

H? Be see HE: ministe above - cannot the

Mansferres to the seaflane hangar puté cant ? in

H.C.S. Sagree: you will recall that while I was away Mu acting 11/or altered the hanger tilephone system so thear all Calls for the hanger have to pass through the office. I did not like to ask the theren to alter this again immediately I returned, especially as there was some sense in Mr Oliver's re-arrangement; however, it is not always convenient to have the flice as a sub-exchange , I think it would be a good idea to revert to the old system when the office is moved to the jetty. In an emergence. I can always usic the telephone operate to cut of the person talking to the hanger of plug me through to the hanger. You probably know mare about the reasons of the attention then I do - - I realise it is a monoging to find the S.M.O. has whered the increast away without letting the office know, but in my experience the Resser only doce so with ridly good cause of it is so seldan that are can swellow mis pride this number of times in a year! The position will then be a normal -telephone from the hangen workshop to the exchange, with an extension into another part of the hanger : . The extension to the Candplane hanger being eliminated .

he have . Be even that

11 34

policy brother

make it waters promise

The rearrangement of the telephone was The Olivers idea when he was acting in your absence and you are at liberty to alter it. if it doesn't suit. 2) be nort inflement the Boards decision Winds to me with a mangency and it is up to you to decide (in commercian with crfr) what is the best arrangement. a) Use the existing line thro you that of have the second only as an emergency (i.e. public cannot uso). 6) the centring the as a privite the between un mis i hangan a all other traviers the conducted on of facep the office phone 7 and more It out side in the housen. 3) Please let me know your what anangements you come to . Si. 4) What about Board recommendation 5. Com I right in saving that we were going to get an ere but retregnently screpped the idea or is there are on owning 19V. B.

H.C.S. Esse cancelled (a rather shelved): there is one type of electric fire already in use in the hanzar which does not have a glowing element - same sat of principle as an electric iran. This may meet board's requirements, unless they were thinking in terms of sparks from fraged wires etc? A further fire of this type could be inderteel of if it is approved. I give a further fire of this type could be inderteel of horms when the is

270 arranged. WH 25/x1/53.

25

H.c.s. Nistand with you to 3. 14. 43. VI C.C.

HM. Classcobe is buffer with the Great electric fine which has no plowing element, I agree.

X. 1. 1.1.

H.C.S. Will indent of ofurther are in that case thank you. 6 A. xu. (Q) 1V

10. Sin

AVIATION DEPARTMENT,

Stanley,

Falkland Islands.

7th. February, 1963.

sir,

I have the honour to report that a minor fire occurred in the hangar workshop at approximately 10:00 hrs. this morning, a fault having developed in the petrol blow lamp.

SECRETARY

FEB 1963

2. The fire was quickly brought under control by the rapid actions of the hangar staff and I am pleased to report that no damage was done to materials or equipment, except the breaking of one window pane this being done to allow the gas to escape after the fire had been got under control.

3. I have reported the matter to the Supt. of Public Works and Supt. of the Fire Brigade and arrangments made to have the extinguishers recharged.

4. A rather serious fire could have developed had it not been for the rapid and effective action taken by the staff under the supervision of Mr Jones and I have expressed my gratitude to the staff on duty.

> I have the honour to be, Sir, Ypur Obedient Servant,

Director of Civil Aviation.

The Honourable, The Colonial Secretary, PORT STANLEY.

27. y. E. I whoke to Mr. fores. He says (a) Ris hearticular blasland will not be used again. (6) He requess replacing to one behol blow land with a haroffing blow lamp. (c) Fino figures evenponent vhould michade goes manhos as it is difficult to go were behave fumer. all in will be taken why ro (will there . man I couver git's appreciation of Le action taken by her f- and no staff and say that recommondations to eliminate he danger of such an accident in buteno are awaited War 63 5 58/2/63

13 February, 63.

To: Director of Civil Aviation,

From: The Colonial Secretary,

STANLEY.

Fire at Hangar

26

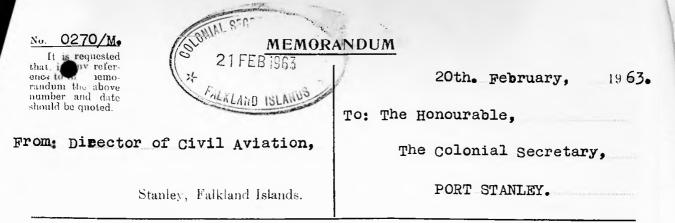
With reference to your report on the above matter, would you please be good enough to submit your recommendations to eliminate the danger of an accident of this nature recurring.

2. Please convey to Mr. Jones and the Hangar Staff His Excellency's appreciation for the prompt action taken which undoubtedly prevented a serious fire.

KIV X offosite it

(Sgd) H. L. Bound.

for COLONIAL SECRETARY



SUBJECT :-

1

stractul to true

Fire at Hangar.

with reference to your memorandum of even number dated 13th. inst. on the above subject, I have discussed the matter with the Air Service engineers and the immediate action is to dispose of the faulty blowtorch. This piece of ancient equipment was originally the property of F.I.D.S. and is not held on charge by my department, the question of authority to write-off does not therefor arise.

Replacement of this torch will however be necessary as it was 2. used for the heat treatment of metals used in aircraft repair. Having once been 'bitten' with a pressure type petrol burner it is agreed by all that we should accept our lesson and allandon the idea of liquid fuel burners. It is therefor recommended that the replacement should be a gas welding kit, estimated cost £40.

One may ask are the engineers capable of using such equipment, 3. the answer to that is, yes, Mr Jones of this department has attended a welding course at British Oxygen, cost being met by this Government.

I have advised Mr Jones and the staff of His Excellency's 4. appreciation of the action taken by them during the above mentioned fire.

One point which emerges from our mishap and not previously 5. mentioned was that it was necessary to break a window to allow tha gas to escape and fire fighting operations to continue, the admission of draft could have caused the fire to flare up and get a good hold, we have discussed this with the supt. of P.W. and supt. of Fire Brigade and they advise that breathing apparatus should be available for use when Pyrene or foam extinguishers are used in a confined space.

Finally I am to advise you that all discharged extinguishers 6. were re-charged within hours of being used.

Director of Civil Aviation.

BU 2363

Phined DLA'S Director of Civi. More & when the many to the if he weeded many to and for it bype SFC when such for it bype SFC when

H.C7 30 + 30 fer aformalie 8 2/2/63 and the fait was in e ta version ininolo H. C. S. New, Whank you and the second of the second o 22.2.63 print and the second second second second second n' cin Bu B. 3:63 & 52 27. " 5. 2 ·

34me ber hing [hench is I you to SPW. to entrait para 5 g 30 pound it to T.C. and who make advis of Le Friedbin be porps a to ce advisubility of providing yes, mashs for is nonsan anda she blaces

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0270/H.

63.

Lon March,

Hadam,

I an directed to enclose an entract from a nonorandum from the Director of Givil Aviation and to request that the advice of the fire officer be sought as to the advisability of providing gas masks for the hangar and/or other places.

> I an, Naden, Your obsidient sorvant.

> > 8.

COLCHILL SECREPARY.

The Town Clerk, Stanley Town Council, BEAMLEY.

5 06 30.

DRIV'TE

Copy to DCA

N. 4. 62

NOTE

see here 2 9 30

Application made for permission to include a sum of £40 in 1963/64 Estimates.

Folio 25 in 0284/XVI is where the original Perminen la include in estimates que application is filed.

Howe T. For inf. ple. 1 (9.4.6.) 27th March, 1963.

DRM/FH

37 Shohan to Fine Officer. It would be well of two gas masters were provided for the hangan. He doen't heigh key are neded for over flaces . We Fine Brigade have bein aun. He minters the are some in the Scremme Stare. SPW. any say marky in le forenue lo are ner in fud-Stre 2. 2. One may is quired for any other frontine 2 3. 16 we cover they theme to inter to. DiA. 11/1/62 38 H.C.S. Shere are half a dozen dust masks which we are when stone crushing at the quary. Swo of These can be issued until we receive further supplies. after 39 d'Actor. S.P.N. 13/6/63. (let wany to DC & & SPW I have may showed presenting be taken andens branden. In mes BLAI Everous) 5- 676 (0 m.

26th June,

63.

To: The Suporintendent,

From: The Colonial Secretary,

Public Torks Department,

STANLEY.

Fire Fighting Equipmont

I am directed to authorise you to transfer two dust masks to the Aviation Department in case they are needed for fire fighting.

(Sgd chiMILATBOUNDERTARY.

for

0270/1

DRM/IM.

24-June, 63.

To: The Director ? Civil Aviation,

From: The Colonial Secretary.

Aviation opertment,

STARSY.

Pire Fighting Equipment.

I am directed to enclose a copy of a memoandum to the Superintendent of Works authorising the transfer of two dust masks to your Department in case they are needed for fire fighting. Fresumably you will arrange for them to be brought on charge.

> (Sgd.) H.L. Bound COLONIAL SECRETARY.

for