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*La Légation de Grande-Bretagne à Berne
au Département politique*

N N° 29. (17/17/39) Confidential.

Berne, May 10th, 1939

His Majesty's Legation present their compliments to the Federal Political Department and have the honour to refer to their Note C.22.41.10.-SY of the 9th March last¹ and to the conversations which Monsieur Matter subsequently had in London on the subject of Swiss tonnage requirements in the event of war².

His Majesty's Legation are now instructed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to request that the following assurance may be conferred to Monsieur Matter:

«If the Swiss Federal Government complete their arrangements to obtain an option to hire a block of non-British tonnage, not belonging to a possible ally, to cover about one-third of their total shipping requirements in war, and will keep His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom fully advised of the arrangements they make and the names of the ships concerned, His Majesty's Government will undertake not to requisition or force into their service any such ships, subject to their being satisfied that the ships and their cargoes will not be used in a manner which might assist an enemy. His Majesty's Government will be prepared to discuss arrangements for ensuring this with the Swiss Federal Government and, if necessary, also with the French authorities.»³

1. *Non reproduit. A la suite de la note verbale de la Légation de Grande-Bretagne du 5 janvier 1939 (cf. N° 1), la Division des Affaires étrangères avait à nouveau demandé que E. Matter soit reçu par les autorités britanniques compétentes.*

2. *Sur ces entretiens, cf. aussi E 7800 1/162 et E 7110 1973/134/14.*

3. *Cf. N° 175.*