

DOCUMENTS and CORRESPONDENCE
on NEW GUINEA'S BOUNDARIES

compiled by

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Preface

This series of documents is a companion volume to Search for New Guinea's Boundaries: From Torres Strait to the Pacific (Australian National University Press, 1966). It brings together not only scattered, previously published documents, but also some of the correspondence surrounding them and reports and memoranda dealing with the boundaries in general. The latter include material up to 1962.

The documents have been arranged chronologically within sections. Material in sections A, B, and C corresponds respectively with matters dealt with in Chapters 2 (New Guinea Annexations), 3 (Papua Irredenta), and 4 (The Former Anglo-German Boundary), that in sections D, E, and F with those in Chapter 5 (The Irian Boundary), while that in section G is touched upon in the concluding chapter.

The selection of published documents was simple: all were included. Choice of unpublished material available in the archives was an individual one. Documents in Dutch, French, and German have been translated. Personal comments and queries have been entered in footnotes to the English translations which in all cases precede the original text. Cross references to Search for New Guinea's Boundaries, using the abbreviation S.N.G.B., are made for the convenience of the reader.

Most of the older documents are reproduced from material in the Commonwealth Archives Office in Canberra and the Archives of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague. I wish to express my appreciation to these institutions for the opportunity to consult and reproduce these documents. For the more recent material I must first of all thank Dr J. Woltring and Miss L.J. Ruys of the Archives of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs who responded promptly to my continual requests and inquiries. At times, in fact, it appeared that the greater the distance the speedier the co-operation. In Australia, my debt is to the Departments of External Affairs and Territories. In particular, Dr J. Cumpston, Historian of the External Affairs Department, provided rays of light during moments of despair.

Assistance in the translation of the documents was received from Dr C. Wouters, Miss O. van Rijswijck, and the Translation Service of the Australian National University. Some documents were published with official translations, and these are indicated in the footnotes. The typing of the documents from manuscript profited greatly from the meticulous

care of Miss I.M. Goodin and other members of the secretarial staff of the Department of Pacific History. Naturally, I alone am responsible for the translations and the faithful reproduction of the documents.

Reading these documents may reveal different things to different readers. What impressed me in collecting them was the slow progress that was made - the great amount of time, energy, and paper spent for the result achieved. It would be a forlorn hope to expect much improvement in this regard. At the same time, reading this selection of documents shows convincingly the need to press forward with boundary matters despite the absence of any urgency at the time and not to regard present situations as necessarily novel developments. Often they are merely a return to well-trodden paths along which present-day governments may hopefully advance further than their predecessors.

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