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POLICE DEPT. HEAD OFFICE

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10 th May 1938

Colonel Sir Vernon Kell
Box. No. 500
Parliament Street, B.O.
LONDON S.W.1.

Dear Sir Vernon,

You may care to have the following note regarding the recent visit to New Zealand of Count Felix Von Luckner in the auxiliary yacht "Seeteufel" in the course of a world tour.

Soon after he arrived at Auckland on the 4 th March last the Count signed a contract with Messrs John Fuller & Sons Ltd and J.C. Williamson Picture Corporation Ltd, as a result of which he toured New Zealand and made personal appearances at the firms' theatres where he gave talks on his war exploits and escape from New Zealand when held here as a prisoner of war.

Prior to his visiting New Zealand the Count was at Samoa, following which reliable information was received that two members of his crew were suspected of being members of the Gestapo, or that a member of the Gestapo was on board. The persons particularly referred to were Frederick Thiele, rating A.B. and Paul Kunert, rating Diesel Engineer. The latter did not come under notice while in New Zealand. With reference to Thiele it is worthy of note that during one of his several visits to the German Club in Auckland it was stated in his presence that the manager of the shipping firm in Zealand having the agency for various German shippings concerns is a Jew. Thiele showed no little interest in this statement, of which he made a note.

It was authoritatively within the German Club at Auckland towards the close of the Count's visit by a person with whom he had become very intimate that the Count had been paid 15,000 marks by the German Minister of Propaganda, and a like amount by Herr Hitler towards the costs of his present trip.

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Two members of the crew, Gregor Reitchmaier, radio operator and Hans Osterreich, cameraman, left the vessel at Auckland. The former has been granted permission to remain in New Zealand for two months, he is endeavouring to obtain authority to remain here permanently. Osterreich has also been granted permission to remain two months and to complete a motion picture film. He is to rejoin the Count at Sydney. Osterreich was very friendly with Thiele and usually accompanied him ashore.

When the Count left here on the 4 th instant for Sydney he was accompanied by two Auckland men, Colin Moore and Michael Hutt, announcers at L.Z.B. Radio Station, Auckland, who have been granted extended leave of absence to enable them to accompany the Count on his tour.

Yours sincerely

Commissioner of Police

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