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SUBJECT: FARMERS CONFERENCE,

STARLEY, PALKLAND ISLANDS.

13TH, 14TH AND 15TH MAY, 1937.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

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SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF FARMERS AT STANLEY, ON THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, THE 13TH. 14TH AND 15TH OF MAY, 1937.

Present: D. S. A. Weir, Esquire, Agricultural Adviser, (Chairman). The Honourable G. J. Felton, M.E.C., J.P., Teal Inlet.

"L. W. H. Young, M.E.C., M.L.C., J.P., Falkland Islands Company, Limited.

"N. Keith Cameron, J.P., Port San Carlos.

F. J. Langdon, Esquire, J.P., Fitzroy.

A. G. Barton, Esquire, J.P., Pott Louis.

R. Robson, Esquire, J.P., Port Louis.

R. Greenshields, Esquire, J.P., Nill Cove.

G. Robertson, Esquire, J.P., San Carlos.

J. F. Bonner, Esquire, J.P., San Carlos.

K. Luxton, Esquire, J.P., San Carlos.

K. Luxton, Esquire, Roy Cove.

Alex. Pitaluga, Esquire, Salvador.

S. B. Pitaluga, Esquire, Rincon Grande.

C. Bender, Esquire, Moody Valley.

His Excellency the Governor opened the Conference with an inaugural address at 10.30 a.m., on Thursday the 13th of May. A copy of the address is attached.

The Chairman thanked His Excellency for opening the Conference and wished him and his daughters <u>bon voyage</u> and a <u>pleasant</u> holiday tour in the United Kingdom. Mr. Barton, on behalf of the East and West Falkland Farmers, said that he would like to associate himself with the Chairman's remarks.

His Excellency withdrew.

The Chairman then proceeded to address the meeting on the subject of his impressions regarding the sheep-farming industry in the Colony. His remarks are attached.

After deliberate discussion the following Resolutions were moved and adopted:

I. TELEGRAM TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

That a telegram in the following sense should be sent through the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the King on His Majesty's Coronation :



"The Falkland Islands Sheep Farmers assembled in "Conference beg respectfully to tender to Your Majesty and "Her Majesty the Queen their most loyal congratulations on "Your Majesties' Coronation. They pray that Your Majesty "may long be spared to rule over Your devoted subjects in "these Islands and throughout the Empire."

CHAIRMAN OF CONFERENCE".

II. LAMBING STATISTICS.

That statistics be furnished annually by all Stations of the numbers of lambs marked, weaned and dipped and the percentage of lambs shorn on the previous year's ewes.

III. IMPORTATION OF RAMS FROM NEW ZEALAND.

That enquiries be made of all Farmers regarding the numbers of sheep which they would be prepared to import from New Zealand in the event of a direct shipment being arranged in November, 1937.

In this connection Mr. Luxton moved and the Honourable N. Keith Cameron seconded that the Agricultural Adviser be asked to obtain information concerning the prices of Flock ewes (Romney and Corriedale). The motion was carried unanimously.

IV. VAGES - FARM EMPLOYEES.

That the question of increasing the wages of farm employees be referred to the Principals of the various Stations.

The Honourable L. W. H. Young in commenting on this subject gave some interesting information in regard to his Company's Provident Fund for employees. The Chairman also read a letter addressed to the Colonial Secretary by the Falkland Islands Reform League on the 9th of May, 1937, and the Colonial Secretary's reply to this communication of the 13th of May, 1937, on the subject of the restoration of wage cuts by Farm Stations. The Conference adjourned at 12.35 p.m., re-assembling at 2.30 p.m.

V. CONTROL OF PESTS - BIRDS.

(a) That as Upland Geese are considered to be a pest to Farmers some united effort should be made to adopt an effective method of reducing the numbers of Geese in the Colony.

(b) That the Government be asked to increase the amount paid for Turkey Buzzard Beaks to 6d and that all Farmers should pay an equal additional amount for Turkey and Carrancho Beaks.

VI. TELEGRAPH RATES TO THE UNITED KINGDOM.

That the members of the Conference wish to record their protest against the exorbitant telegraph rates and the refusal of the Government to transmit messages to the United Kingdom via Bergen.

VII. QUARANTINING OF SHEEP IMPORTED FROM PATAGONIA.

That Section II of the Live Stock Regulations (Consolidation) 1923, be amended by the insertion of the words "or at a suitable Quarantine Station on the mainland" after the word "Island",

VIII. POSSIBILITY OF FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE OR OTHER FREEZING WORKS IN THE COLONY.

That consideration of the question of the establishment of a freezing works in the Colony be held in abeyance pending the outcome of discussions taking place in England between the Manager, Rio Seco, Chile, the owners of Falkland Islands Ehcep Farms, and the Falkland Islands Company, Limited.

IX. STOCK SHOW.

That a stock Show should be hold in February, 1939, and that the Government should be asked to render every possible assistance in this direction.

The Chairman adjourned the Conference until 10.30 a.m. on the 14th of May.

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X. CAMP HOLIDAYS - UNIFORMITY OF.

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That while the month of February would be more suitable for Camp holidays than at Christmas time the Conference cannot see its way clear to make any alteration in the date for such holidays.

XI. CAREFUL GATHERING AND ITS RELATION TO LICE INFECTION.

That Farmers should give special attention to gathering with a view to the prevention of infection of sheep with lice and that simultaneous action be considered by groups of Farmers at gathering time particularly with regard to straggling at dipping time.

XII. INTRODUCTION OF TROUT INTO THE CCLONY.

That the Government be approached with a view to considering the question of the introduction of Trout into the Streams and Lakes in the Colony.

The meeting adjourned until 11.0 a.m. on Saturday the 15th May.

XIII. REVISION OF ORDINANCES OF THE COLONY.

That the Ordinances of the Colony should be revised, consolidated and brought up to date,

XIV. ANNUAL STOCK RETURN.

That the figures for cast ewes and four tooth ewes should be shown separately in the Annual Stock Return published cach year.

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XVI. RING ORM IN THE COLONY.

. That closer attention should be paid to the question of the spread of Ring Jorm with a view to its prevention and elimination and that the Agricultural Adviser should be asked to take an active part in any measures adopted in this connection.

Mr. Harding put the following questions -

- (a) Can anything be done to reduce the rates on Parcel Post via Montevideo.?
- (b) Is the Government prepared to lift the ban on the importation of farm labourers, supposing that farmers are unable to obtain sufficient labour to work their farms satisfactorily.?
- (c) Can the possibility of altering the date for the commencement of dipping to the 15th of February, be discussed.?

The Chairman replied to (a) stating that "the Government "has left no stone unturned during the past two years in its "endeavours to get a reduction in the rates of parcels "transhipped at Montevideo. The obstacle has been the high "charges made by the Uruguayan Postal Authorities which is now "considering a scheme for lower rates. The Government has "offered to re-bridge this service but unless some material "reduction can be made by Uruguay a scheme is in contemplation "for having parcels confined to a transport Company in the "United Kingdom which will ship all parcels as freight to the "Government.

With regard to (b) the Chairman informed the meeting that no ban had been imposed on the importation of farm labourers and no application had yet been received by the Government from any farmer to import labour. It was the case that one farmer asked his Agent in Stanley to make application but the latter failed to do so. The policy of the Government, however, was not to grant permission for the importation of labour while workers were available in the Colony who were prepared to return

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or onter on camp life if reasonable terms and conditions were offered, taking into consideration the price of wool and the cost of living. In any event licences would be granted for men to be brought in for technical or mechanical work which no local persons were qualified to undertake.

The Conference was of the unanimous opinion that the subject under question (c) was a matter which should be left to the discretion of the Agricultural Adviser.

Discussions on the following subjects then took place :

- (a) Sub-division.
- (b) Ditching.
- (c) Spelling of Camp.
- (d) The leaving of shepherds with their
- flocks during shoaring time.
- (c) Planting of Tussac and Sand Grass.

It was generally agreed that (a), (b) and (c) are beneficial and that while it is a good practice to leave Shepherds with their flocks during shearing time this had been impossible owing to the difficulty experienced by Farmers in obtaining labour. With regard to (c) it was agreed that much more work would be done in this respect if labour were available.

Mr. Luxton stated that he was quite certain that unopened ditches on his Station were his greatest source of loss in lambs during their first winter and the Conference was very large agreed on this point with regard to other Stations,

During the meeting the Chairman addressed the Conference on the subject of the sheep exported from the Colony to Chile with special reference to the number fit for freezing and the nature and causes of disease found among them. He pointed out that many sheep had been condemned on account of Caseous Lymphadenitis caused by improper attention after shear cuts. He outlined methods for the prevention of the disease. Other diseases which caused condemnation were Icterus, Jaundice, Pleurisy, Peritonitis and bruising.

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The Chairman also addressed the Conference at some length on the disease common in Falkland Islands sheep including internal parasites, Ante-Partum Paralysis in ewes, Caseous Lymphadenitis and Hydatid disease. He did not consider that internal parasites played the most important part in the piner sheep problem in the Colony, but likened this trouble to bush sickness in New Zealand and the North of Scotland: he spoke of the excellent results which were being obtained by the use of Cobalt in a salt lick.

In reply to a question put by Mr. Miller, the Chairman gave some detail in regard to the economical improvement of a flock by the process of line breeding and selection.

Mr. Harding requested that the Farmers be informed from time to time of the position with regard to labour in Stanley.

He was informed by the Chairman that they would be given any information possible in this connection.

In answer to a question put by Mr, Barton the Chairman outlined the work in progress in connection with the improvement of pastures on Stanley Common.

The Chairman then gave a demonstration of the Benzol Test for the detection of hair in wool, in which the members were most interested.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Honourable G. J. Felton moved a vote of thanks for the able manner in which Mr. Weir had conducted the Conference and dealt with the various subjects, stating that he himself, and he felt sure all those present, had learned a lot from the Conference. He hoped that such Conferences would be held annually with Mr. Weir as Chairman of many more of them.

The Honourable N. Keith Cameron said that the members were fortunate in having Mr. Weir as head of the Agricultural Department. The /

The Honourable L. W. H. Young stated that, as a layman, he wished to associate himself with the remarks made by the Honourable G. J. Felton and the Honourable N. Keith Cameron and would like his name coupled with the motion which was carried unanimously.

Responding Mr. Weir thanked all those present for assisting in making the Conference a success and concurred that similar conferences should be held annually.

Finally Mr. Harding moved and Mr. Greenshields seconded that a vote of thanks and appreciation be accorded His Excellency the Governor, Sir Henniker Heaton, K.C.M.G., for the personal interest displayed by him in the sheep-farming industry, and for having convened the Conference.

The motion was carried unanimously.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT, STANLEY, FALKLAND ISLANDS. 13th May, 1937.

Gentlemen,

As public speaking is not my forte, I shall be glad if you will overlook my frequent reference to my notes.

You have just listened to the address of His Excellency the Governor, and I am sure you will agree that it is fortunate for this Colony to have as its Governor one who is so genuinely interested in the welfare of the sheep farming industry. Let us all hope he will long remain in our midst.

As a direct result of the foresight of His Excellency the Colony has already received substantial monetary benefit from the Colonial Development Fund, a source which apparently no one else has ever thought of.

His Excellency has charged me with the duty of establishing in the Colony, an Agricultural Department, based on similar lines to other Colonies and I hope, with your assistance, to make that Department, one which will be capable of giving a really worth while service to farmers.

I am glad gentlemen, to have this opportunity of extending to you a welcome to this, the second conference of owners and managers, and I am pleased to see such a large and representative attendance.

I feel certain that much good must accrue from these conferences, and I trust that in this respect, this one will be no exception.

Before proceeding with the business on the Agenda paper, I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you individually and collectively for the welcome you have given me to your Colony, and for the hospitality which has been extended to me, by yourselves, wives and families during my official official visits to the Camp, where I have been able to feel very much at home.

I would also like to heartily endorse the remarks of His Excellency, bearing on the recent formation of an owners and managers association in the West Falklands, and I hope in the near future, to see a similar organisation in the East.

I have long been an advocate of thorough organisation of farmers bodies, believing that these organisations are capable of doing much greater good for farmers and the community in general, than is the case where individual effort is relied upon.

I should also like to outline briefly my impressions in regard to your sheep farming industry generally.

While I have been here eight months only, I have been able to see a good deal of the country, and I trust that if some of my remarks are unpalatable, you will bear with me and try to realise, that I am entirely at your service, to assist each and everyone of you as far as it is within my power to do so.

In other words, please accept my criticisms as being constructive and in the spirit in which they are meant, and it is hoped you will understand that they are purely of an impersonal nature.

I have long felt that it would be of greater good to talk to you, as I now propose doing, rather than to write criticisms in the form of reports on each individual property.

Undoubtedly the prosperity of the Colony is wrapped up in the success of the sheep farming industry, and anything that can be done to improve that industry must be well worth while.

You are enjoying the privilege of living in one of the finest little Colonies in the World, in that the Climate conditions are healthy, and poverty and starvation are unknown to any section of its community.

From a sheep farming point of view, the country is very much in its natural state, and is capable of considerable improvement.

One cannot escape from the impression that there is reluctance in some quarters to make any radical alteration in the farming methods which have obtained since the earlier days of settlement.

There should be a determined effort all round to develop the farming lands along the modern lines now regularly adopted in other countries.

It is perhaps in this respect a matter for regret that so many owners live away from the Colony.

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The natural concomitant of this is the limitation of money available for farm and flock improvement.

Increased expenditure on the farms would not be a hardship, as after all the holder must ultimately benefit from any improvement to a greater extent than anyone else.

There is much room for closer subdivision on nearly every property.

This subdivision should be carefully planned as far as it is possible to ensure the separation of the winter camp from the summer camp.

There is everywhere striking cvidence that much good camp was ruined in the days before fencing, as a result of the process of selective grazing, or the crowding of stock on to good camp, while the poor camp was virtually abandoned by animals.

Ditching, and still more ditching is of paramount importance.

The planting of sand grass and tussac should receive more attention. It is doubtful if any other country in the World, in temperate zones at anyrate, is favoured with such a natural and usoful supplementary fodder as Falkland Islands Tussac.

Rotational grazing and the spelling of Camp is well works serious consideration, and a great deal more importance should be attached to the grazing of larger mobs of cattle, on many places, with a view to pasture improvement.

Undoubtedly, the close grazing of white grass is the best method of improving this class of pasture, but failing this, the discriminate and systematic burning of rank growth is essential.

It is granted that in some instances there are properties where the prepoderance of wet and mountain camp precludes the possibility of maximum improvement, never-the-less the best areas of these properties might be greatly improved.

On the other hand, almost the total area of some properties could be embraced by a general plan of improvement.

Too much stress cannot be laid on the necessity for culling the flocks, both for age and for wool, and much This is one way improvement could be effected in many flocks by the simple and in which the Aqui economical method of line breeding and selection, suitable rams to start with would of course be required.

Hoggets are deserving of special care, and should be given the best possible camp, and the question of providing them with some form of supplementary fodder during their first winter is one of paramount importance to the future success of the sheep farming industry.

In this respect it is a matter for much regret that the Farm Government Experimental at "Green Patch" was closed before any experiments in regard to the growing of supplementary fodder could be carried out.

Much improvement might be effected by the surface sowing of bare ground with such grasses as Yorkshire Fog, and Creeping red fescue; experiments being made as to whether autumn or spring sowing is the more successful.

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The necessity of leaving sufficient shepherds with the unshorn flocks in the Camps during shearing time is a matter of i and 1 he importance, and one which would handsomely repay for the extra und features outlay involved in wages.

Clean gathering in its relation to lice infection, is a matter which should receive the greatest possible care and attention.

A good deal could be done in the way of providing shelter for stock, especially around homestead paddocks - Gorse might be used much more extensively than it is at present for this purpose.

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It seems incredible that such commodities as milk, butter, eggs, and bacon should be imported to this Colony, however this may be made the subject of a separate disgussion during the conference.

In view of the fact that horses may not always be procurable on the present favourable terms from South America, something might be done to encourage or revive horse breeding in the Colony.

To sum up, I am definitely of the opinion that by the adoption generally of more up-to-date farming methods, a great many more and better sheep can be carried in this fertile little Colony.

Further than this, I am equally sure that the managers are thoroughly capable of putting into effect any improvements The owners and it is to be hoped that they will the definity - be given every opportunity in the future.

The increased wool prices, if maintained over a reasonable period; might well act as some incentive in this direction.

The policy of the Agricultural Department is to assist farmers in every possible direction, and in no way to harass them. In effect it is desired that farmers should look upon

the office of the Department as a bureau of information, and that problems however great or small should be referred to that officer, so that it may have the opportunity of assisting in their solution. We want your confidence in return for ours.

Many other matters which have not been commented upon will come up for discussion during the course of the Conference.

I would ask you, gentlemen, to ponder over my remarks and reserve any questions in regard thereto for the closing day of the Conference, when ample opportunity will be given for the asking of questions which I will endeavour to answer.

The business on the Agenda paper will now be proceeded with.

(Sgd) D.S.A. Weir. Agricultural Adviser.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, STANLEY. 13th May, 1937.

Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure in welcoming you individually and collectively on the opening of this the Second Conference of Farmers.

It is of particular satisfaction to be able to record the improvement in the position of the industry since the last Conference, through the recovery from depression of the wool market and through the policy of development locally, with which you have associated the farms under your management.

Eight resolutions were passed at your last meeting. The first was a telegram of congratulations to His late Majesty King George the Vth on His Jubilee. You will doubtless wish to send through the Secretary of State for the Colonies a loyal message to His Majesty our present King on His Coronation.

Of the remaining seven resolutions it may be stated that each one in turn has found or is in process of finding successful settlement through our own or outside agencies. This is no mean achievement. I propose to make brief reference to what has been and is being done.

The second resolution passed in 1935 dealt with unemployment in the Colony at a time when there were upwards of 100 men in Stanley seeking a livelihood. Without going into detail it is sufficient to note here that there are now no unemployed men, Shough a small number are on part time work only for the Agricultural Department.

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There are however some farms which are short handed and have to face the question of making the terms of employment sufficiently attractive to secure the labour they require locally or of importing workers if none are obtainable in the Colony on reasonable conditions of wages and hours.

The third resolution recommended that expert advice should be sought from the Welsh Plant Breeding Station on the improvement of pastures. As you are aware the Colony has been fortunate enough to obtain the services of Mr. William Davies one of the foremost advisers in the Empire on the subject. He will arrive in the spring and spend three months in the Colony. The Advisory Committee of the Colonial Development Fund is very generously meeting the whole of the cost of the visit of Mr. Davies and it is trusted that the action of the Committee will be deeply appreciated and full advantage taken of Mr. Davies' visit. We have particularly to thank Professor Stapledon for releasing Mr. Davies for this work.

Resolution IV asked for an investigation into the practicability of the Colony shipping sheep to the coast for freezing. The difficulty of finding a permanent market for surplus stock has been the chief problem of the industry for 50 years and we are this year indebted to the initiative and enterprise of a freezing company in Chile for what appears to be a complete solution of the question. I understand that the proportion of sheep found to be suitable for freezing is sufficiently high to justify hopes of the establishment of a refrigerating factory locally.

The fifth resolution proposed the establishment of a quarantine/

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Few farmens have taken the slightent which of his advice quarantine station at Fox Bay. From a morass of misunderstandings it is probable that the station will emerge this year.

The revival of the Sheep Breeders Association was the subject of the sixth resolution. Although that has not materialized owing to opposition or apathy in some quarters I have learnt with pleasure of the formation of a Farmers Association in the West Falklands. This is unquestionably a step in the right direction.

The last two resolutions dealt respectively with the necessity for improved communications and with the appointment of a qualified Stock Adviser to be selected by the New Zealand Government. We have the Falkland Island Company to thank for the immense improvement in communications afforded by the new "Lafonia". The loss to the Colony through the withdrawal of the Pacific Steamship Company's cargo vessels from regular calls appears to be limited to the increased cost of the parcel mail service. Highly regrettable though that is, a remedy can yet be found.

Lastly we have welcomed in the person of Mr. Weir who is your Chairman at this Conference the very fortunate selection of the New Zealand Government. Speaking for myself it suffices to say that it is a matter of sincere regret to me that he has come to us for a term of no longer than three years. He is laying the foundations of an Agricultural Department which will be an asset of great value to the country and the future of the farming industry. His value as an Adviser is dependent on your trust and confidence. I have reason to believe that you have already extended these to him.

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While the First Conference confined its discussions to broad matters of general interest to the farming community you propose, I understand, at your present meetings to take into consideration a number of subjects which deal directly with the technical side of sheep raising and management. The industry and the Colony cannot fail to benefit by the outcome of your discussions. I wish Godspeed to your labours.

> H. HENNIKER HEATON. Governor.

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The Second Annual Conference of Owners and Managers in the Falkland Islands, will be held in the Town Hall, Stanley, on Thursday 13th, and Friday 14th May, 1937.

Morning Sessions 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Afternoon Sessions 2.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

AGENDA PAPER.

Thursday 10.30 a.m. - Inaugural address by His Excellency The Governor Sir Henniker Heaton, K.C.M.G.

. Short talk by The Agricultural Adviser. Subject - Impressions regarding the sheep farming industry in the Colony. <u>DISCUSSIONS</u>.

1. Death rate in lambs.

- (a) From marking to shearing.
- (b) From shearing to dipping.
- 2 Possible importation of Rams from New Zeuland in November next.
- 3. Labour supply for Camp purposes.
 - (a) Wages Shepherds and Navvies.
- 4. Control of pests birds.
 - (a) Upland Geese.
 - (b) Coranchos.
 - (c) Turkey Buzzards.
 - (d) Jackass Penguins.



- 5. From Mr. H. C. Harding, Hill Cove.
 - (a) Can anything be done to reduce the cost of parcel post via Montevideo.?
 - (b) Is the Government prepared to lift the ban on the importation of farm labourers, supposing that farmers are unable to obtain enough local labour to work their farms satisfactorily.?
 - (c) Does the ban apply to the importation of a technical man, such as a motor mechanic.?
 - (d) Have sheep imported from Patagonia still to be quarantined for 3 months on an island, or could they be quarantined at a Quarantine Station such as the proposed site at Fox Bay.?
 - (e) Can the possibility of altering the date of the commencement of dipping to February 15th, be discussed.?
- 6. From Mr. S. Miller, Roy Cove.
 - (a) That the upland geese in this Colony are destructive vermin and as such all farmers should be compelled to pay for beaks, and the Government assist towards payment.
 - (b) Discussion on the possibilities of a Farmers Co-operative or other freezing works in the Colony. The Agricultural Department to be asked to obtain and circularise to farm owners, full costs and details of the smallest works profitable to operate.

(c)/

- (c) That as a stock show on the lines of that of 1933 tends to promote interest and advertise local good stock, it is in the interest of farmers to organise a regular show, or alternatively, another experimental one for 1938. Useful side lines such as dog trials could be part of the show.
- 7. General discussion on the following subjects :-
 - (a) Subdivision.
 - (b) Ditching.
 - (c) Spelling of Camp.
 - (d) The leaving of shepherds with their flocks during shearing time.
 - (e) Rough shearing and consequent disease.
 - (f) Planting of Tussac and Sandgrass.
 - (g) Necessity for careful gathering for shearing and dipping - in regard to lice infection etc.
 - (h) Camp Holidays question of uniformity throughout the Colony.
 - (i) Incidence of internal parasites in sheep in the Colony.
 - (j) Demonstration by Agricultural Adviser of Benzol Test for the detection of hair in wool.
- Report on sheep exported to Chile with particular reference to (a) number of sheep fit for freezing and (b) nature and causes of disease.
- Establishment of refrigerating factory (?) jointly by Rio Seeco, Falkland Islands Company and farmers.
- 10. Discussions on other matters of interest which may be brought forward at the Conference.