

1957

AGR/SHE/6#13

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(Formerly)

SUBJECT :

COMBINED MEETING OF EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS AND SHEEP OWNERS' ASSOCIATION, 1957.

CONNECTED FILES.

NUMBER AND YEAR.

A1

AT A MEETING OF EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS
AND SHEEPOWNERS' ASSOCIATION

HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, STANLEY, 11TH MARCH 1957.

(as taken in shorthand by S.O.A.'s Secretary (S. Stone))

PRESENT:

His Honour, the Officer Administering the Government,
(Mr. A.G. Denton-Thompson), who presided.

Messrs	A.G. Barton	A. Mercer
	S. Miller	J.F. Bonner
	C.H. Robertson	M.G. Creece
	T.A. Gilruth	N.K. Cameron
	J.T. Clement	H.C. Harding
	E.T. Fern	S.G. Trees
	D. Pole-Evans	Dr. R.S. Slessor
	A.L. Hardy	

At the invitation of the Officer Administering the Government Mr. Barton addressed the meeting and felt he could add little to the documents which had previously been circulated to members in regard to the proposed Colony-wide Soil Survey.

Previous research in this field, for one reason or another, would appear to have come to nothing.

The proposed Survey had the support of such experienced men as Dr. Davies and Mr. Hurd, and he was in favour of its being carried out now, the cost to be met wholly from surplus Colony Funds.

The Falkland Islands Company had recruited a Technical Officer for Pastoral Improvement and Mr. Barton considered the Soil Survey could be conducted concurrently with the Pasture Improvement Scheme.

Mr. Bonner suggested that Farms could easily obtain their own and forward them for analysis, the specialist to visit the Colony later.

Mr. Denton-Thompson said that Mr. Bonner's point regarding samples had already been considered, but he did not think the result would be of the practical kind required by Farmers. It would certainly seem preferable that recommendations should issue from a man with knowledge of the problems peculiar to the Islands, which could only be obtained by contact with local Farmers.

It is a specialist job to select suitable soil-pits and one of the main jobs of a Soil Surveyor would be the production of a Soil Map of the Colony.

It was mentioned that Dr. Davies has recorded the opinion that the Islands' herbage did not always contribute to effective soil research.

Mr. Miller enquired if the person proposed as Soil Surveyor was suitably qualified.

It transpired that Mr. David Lang, who is now a member of the Pool of Colonial Office Soil Surveyors, previously served as a meteorologist with the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey and some doubt was expressed as to whether Mr. Lang could possibly have acquired sufficient experience for this undertaking since leaving the Colony mid-1955.

The general idea is that the Surveyor would serve for

SOIL
SAMPLES

PREVIOUS
RESEARCH

SURVEYOR

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Sheep Farming in
the Falkland Islands*

SURVEYOR
(contd)

two years, return to Rothamsted and work out his final results with the support of other scientific knowledge available at that Institute. Representations could be made for an assurance that the man selected is highly qualified and expert.

SURVEY

Mr. Harding considered it better to wait until the Falkland Islands Company Technical Officer arrived and see if he thought it necessary to have a Soil Survey at the present time. He also favoured the sending of samples to United Kingdom first for analysis.

Mr. Denton-Thompson, replying to a question of re-grassing and fertilisers, said he thought Farms would be in a much stronger position in these matters with the assistance of a Soil Map to enable them to decide the area(s) which would react most favourably to Capital expenditure.

Mr. Miller stressed he considered the Survey unnecessary at the moment and thought each Farm should seek its own solution, as in point of fact had been done at Roy Cove with satisfactory results.

Although it was pointed out that the last such Survey took place 30 years ago, Mr. Harding thought the scheme under review to be premature.

Mr. Fern's view was that a Pasture Research Officer appointed by Government and working with an Agricultural Advisory Board with a Farmers majority would be more desirable. He deplored that his previous recommendation, the setting up of a Government controlled Experimental Station had not been implemented.

Mr. Denton-Thompson sought the considered views of members present and stated it was the general consensus of opinion that we should make arrangements for a Colony-wide Soil Survey -- Messrs. Harding, Miller and Fern dissenting.

FINANCE

Mr. Hardy then seconded a Motion of Mr. Gilruth's that the Scheme should be financed and operated entirely by Government.

ORGANISATION OF WORK

The question of effective control was discussed and whether a special Sub-Committee should be appointed either by EXCO or SOA. The matter was left to Government who would work out times etc., but the Industry would be closely consulted.

One man to be engaged for continuous service with the Surveyor.

EMPLOYMENT OF TECHNICAL OFFICER BY FALKLAND IS. COMPANY

Mr. Barton informed that the Falkland Islands Company was not at the moment asking for any financial aid for the work to be undertaken by their newly-appointed Technical Officer. If results subsequently justified, the Company may then make formal approach to Government and Sheepowners' Association.

Members then proceed to consider -

Mr. Denton-Thompson informed the meeting he considered supervision to be clearly the crux of the problem, but that

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CAMP TRACKS

CAMP TRACKS
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Government had never felt competent or equipped to exercise the degree of supervision so absolutely necessary. Whilst not in any way attempting to evade responsibility there were certain practical problems and defects in the way of Government personnel carrying out detailed supervision.

Farm Manager's difficulties were also appreciated, nevertheless the original agreement remains -- Government to provide machine, operator, bridging and covering materials and Farm to supply labour and supervision. Both Farm Managers and Operators had been advised that Operators came under the Manager's control. There was no doubt whatever that Operators had not been maintaining their machines properly.

Mr. Gilruth suggested, in view of the difficulty of securing adequate supervision and the large sums of money already spent, that the scheme should be abandoned.

The general feeling, however, was that attempts should be made to overcome the problems before considering abandonment, and several suggestions were made:-

- (a) the two machines to operate on the same track.
- (b) that an existing Island Contractor be invited to take over the job.
- (c) that a Foreman be engaged from United Kingdom, on Mr. Cuthbertson's recommendation.
- (d) the recruitment of labour from Germany and Chile.

The meeting subsequently agreed the Buffaloes must be subjected to better supervision by a man fully experienced; that a Foreman should be engaged from U.K. to run the proposed team of 2 Operators + 2 Mates + a small labour force which may be enlarged at a later date if the Foreman presented good reason for it; the engagement of a Cook.

The question of where the machines would eventually concentrate was left over.

It was agreed that the East Buffalo should return to complete work at San Carlos and that Government would write to Operator(s) not leaving them in any doubt that they are under the control of the Farm Manager.

Mr. Barton suggested that the machines might be hired out for drainage between May/August months.

At this juncture, Mr. N.A. Barnes (Civil Engineer) attended.

Mr. Denton-Thompson summarised the position, and invited comments from Mr. Barnes.

Mr. Barnes thought it a good thing to carry on with the scheme. Bulldozer parts had arrived and would be brought into service immediately. He was not entirely convinced that the existing machines and machinery were adequate for the tasks they had been called upon to undertake and suggested the purchase of a Rotavator, which would cost approximately £1000, if Bulldozing results proved unsatisfactory.

/Mr. Miller

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CAMP TRACKS
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Mr. Miller then offered on behalf of Bertrand & Felton to make the track from the boundary in the direction of Chartres using their machinery, for £60 per mile for a distance of roughly 20 miles.

It was agreed that provided no objections were made by Messrs. Blake and Luxton that Mr. Miller should make a start informing Government when the project was suitably underway and officials and EXCO members would then visit Roy Cove to inspect progress.

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Camp Tracks.

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MINUTES OF COMBINED MEETING OF MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE SHEEPOWNERS
ASSOCIATION HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE ON THE
11TH MARCH, 1957

PRESENT: His Honour the Officer Administering the Government.
The Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary.
The Honourable the Senior Medical Officer.
The Honourable Mr. N. K. Cameron, O.B.E., J.P.
The Honourable Mr. H. C. Harding, J.P.
The Honourable Mr. A. G. Barton, C.B.E., J.P.
The Honourable Mr. T. A. Gilruth, J.P.
The Honourable Mr. A. L. Hardy, B.E.M., J.P.
The Honourable Mr. M. G. Creece, J.P.
The Honourable Mr. S. Miller, J.P.
The Honourable Mr. A. Mercer, O.B.E.
The Honourable Mr. E. T. Fern.
The Honourable Mr. J. T. Clement.
J. F. Bommer, Esq., J.P.
C. H. Robertson, Esq., J.P.
D. M. Pole-Evans, Esq., J.P.

1760

1. PASTURE IMPROVEMENT AND SOIL SURVEY.

There was a lengthy discussion on the proposal to arrange for a soil survey of the Colony to be undertaken. The outcome of the discussion was

- (a) The majority of Members of both Councils and the Committee of the Sheep Owners' Association were in favour of the proposal for a Colony-wide soil survey. Messrs. H. C. Harding, S. Miller and E. T. Fern dissented.
- (b) Should the survey eventually materialise it should be financed and controlled by Government and the surveyor should be based on Stanley.
- (c) Estimates of cost should be prepared and inserted in the 1957/58 Estimates and submitted to Executive Council and eventually to the Standing Finance Committee.
- (d) There was a general feeling that the surveyor proposed by the Secretary of State was not sufficiently experienced.

The Honourable Mr. A. G. Barton stated that the Falkland Islands Company Limited now wished to defer their request for Government financial assistance for the Company's pasture improvement and experimental projects.

1641/A/III 2. CAMP TRACKS.

Mr. Cuthbertson's report was noted and it was agreed:-

- (a) that the project should not be abandoned but that the arrangements for supervising the project and the operations should be radically changed and improved.
- (b) That Mr. Cuthbertson should be requested to recruit a good foreman with thorough experience in the working of Buffalo Drainage machines and their attachments.

/(c)

- (c) When the foreman arrives both machines should work together and a small follow up team of two men should be recruited locally in the first instance.
- (d) In the meantime the machines should continue working as they are at present and the machine working on the East Falkland should go to San Carlos on completion of the work on the Stanley/Fitzroy track.
- (e) Experiments should be carried out with the bulldozer blades shortly to arrive in the Colony.

The Honourable Mr. S. Miller stated that his firm (Messrs. Bertrand & Felton of Roy Cove) were willing to undertake the construction of a track from Roy Cove to Chartres using their tractor and rotovator for the sum of £60 per linear mile. Mr. Miller estimated the distance at approximately 20 miles.

It was agreed that:-

- (i) Mr. Miller should first secure agreement to this proposal from the Managers of Hill Cove and Chartres.
- (ii) Mr. Miller should construct a mile or two of the track in the first instance. This work would then be inspected by Government representatives and others prior to final approval of the scheme.

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