CONFIDENTIAL.

C.S.

~~1929.~~ 1932

No. C/20/32

S. of S. Confidential

1932.
~~1932~~

7th October.

Previous Paper.

SUBJECT.

FORWARDS INFORMATION REGARDING CERTAIN PROPOSED EXPEDITIONS TO THE ANTARCTIC.

MINUTES.

1-3. S. of S. Confidential despatch of 7 Oct. 1932.

P. Agnew
18. 11. 32

4-8. S. of S. Confidential despatch of 10/11/32.

P. Agnew
13. 12. 32.

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Subsequent Paper.

S. of S. Confidential despatch of 30/1/33. 12-14

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P. A
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FALKLAND ISLANDS.

CONFIDENTIAL.

DOWNING STREET.

7- October, 1932.

1/9/32

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you, for your information, a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Oslo regarding certain proposed expeditions to the Antarctic.

2. Although Mr. Wingfield's despatch, as a diplomatic document, is confidential and should not be published as such, the information which it contains need not be treated as confidential.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

(Sgd.) P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER.

GOVERNOR,

SIR JAMES O'GRADY, K.C.M.G.

etc., etc., etc.

(2)

Copy.

No.244.

British Legation,

O S L O.

September 1st 1932.

Sir,

According to statements which appeared in to-day's press Captain Riiser-Larsen, whose name is already familiar to you in connection with polar exploration and aviation, proposes to undertake an expedition in the Antarctic, for which purpose he will start southwards this autumn in a whaling steamer, accompanied by a wireless telegraphist and an expert in the management of dog teams. They propose to winter in the Antarctic and to erect a hut and large depot on a group of islands outside the Weddell Sea. They also propose to build huts on the northern point of Enderby Land and on some spot in Princess Ragnhild's Land. He also proposes to land in the neighbourhood of Enderby Land and to make a journey from there by sledge to the Weddell Sea. He will continue his journey along the west coast of that sea in order to ascertain whether there is any connection between it and the Ross Sea and his five thousand kilometre sledge journey is to terminate at the large depot mentioned above. It is proposed to send out and fetch back the expedition in the spring of 1934 either from Enderby Land or from the Weddell Sea. They will take with them a portable wireless station and their sledges are to be so constructed that they can, in case of necessity, be used as rafts.

2. It is understood here that Mr. Lincoln Ellsworth and Mr. Bernt Balchen are to start this autumn to fly from the

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Sir John Simon, G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., M.P.,

etc., etc., etc.

the Ross Sea to the Weddell Sea with a view to solving one of the problems to which Riiser-Larsen is also devoting attention - namely, that of the possibility of a connection between the two seas. It is also reported that Captain Wilkins has similar plans, for which purpose he has bought the Norwegian vessel "Fanefjord".

I have the honour to be, etc.,

(Sgd.) CHARLES WINGFIELD.

8

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Downing Street,

10 November, 1932.

Sir,

Rec. 3-1.

Mr.H.M.Repvs.
7.10.32.

I have the honour to refer to my Confidential despatch of the 7th of October regarding certain proposed expeditions to the Antarctic, and to enclose for your information, a copy of a further despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Oslo regarding the forthcoming expedition of the Captain Riiser-Larsen.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient

humble servant,

(Sgd.) P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER.

GOVERNOR,

SIR JAMES O'GRADY, K.C.M.G.,

etc., etc., etc.,

COPY.

(W.11465/192/50)

No.279.

BRITISH LEGATION,

OSLO.

October 7th, 1932.

Sir,

I have the honour to offer the following observations with regard to the financing of Captain Riiser-Larsen's forthcoming expedition to the Antarctic which formed the subject of enquiries by the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society in his letter of the 22nd ultimo enclosed in your despatch No.299 (W.10496/192/50) of the 28th ultimo.

2. I understand that it is estimated that the expenditure will amount to about sixty thousand Kroner, of which twenty thousand Kroner is to be provided out of the profits of the State Lottery, which, as explained in my despatch No.274 of the 3rd instant, are annually apportioned by the Storting to various objects of public interest.

Kr.60,000

Kr.20,000

3. It is hoped to obtain a further fifteen thousand Kroner from a contract with the North American Newspaper Alliance for the publicity rights in connection with this expedition, leaving some twenty five thousand Kroner to be obtained from the general public.

Kr.15,000

Kr.25,000

4. In connection with the prospects of raising this sum and with the smallness of the total amount involved, it must be remembered that for the people of Norway a polar expedition combines the attractions of a popular sport with the more practical interest of a step in

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etc., etc., etc.,

in the development of the field in which a remunerative branch of national industry is carried on. Almost every young man is accustomed to expeditions in the mountains in winter time andmany spend holidays on pleasure trips which involve sleeping in holes excavated in the snow or in frail shelters the materials for which they can carry with them on ski. Norwegians therefore have very exceptional knowledge as to all the details of the equipment needed for polar expeditions, which are catered for by many local firms; and they can consequently fit themselves out at the cheapest possible rate for such enterprises. And, moreover, a large proportion of the country's sea-faring population have been on expeditions to the polar regions for whaling, sealing and trapping, etc., with the result that they are not only inured to polar conditions, but also have great experience with regard to navigation in polar waters, and with regard to vessels and outfits best adopted for the purpose.

5. There is accordingly a great deal of local talent from which to select the personnel of an expedition and able to assist in making the necessary preparations; so much so, indeed, that there seems to have been much competition for the honour of participating in the one under discussion, for it is stated in the press that some persons have offered as much as six thousand Kroner for the privilege of accompanying Captain Riiser-Larsen. The latter has, it is stated, selected Halvard Devold, whose share in the annexation of Eric the Red's Land was reported in my despatches of last year, and Olaf Kjelbotn, an expert ski-maker and ski-runner, who has spent the

last

last two years in Greenland and has there acquired great repute as a manager of sledge-dogs. These latter are reported to have arrived already from Greenland and to be in quarantine on an island in the Oslo Fjord.

6. But a considerable part of the funds required will undoubtedly be subscribed by private persons and companies interested in whaling, sealing, fishing, etc. in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. These activities play an important part in the economic life of Norway, and whole towns are practically dependent on them. When I visited the small town of Sandefjord this summer, I found that practically all the population was dependent on whaling in the Antarctic. There was a Whaling Museum; a Whalers' Club, in which the "ancient Order of Humpbacks" hold their revels; etc., etc., whilst in the harbour lay rows of floating factories of fifteen to twenty thousand tons each awaiting the time to steam south for next season. One of the leading men of this town is Lars Christensen, whose father before him was engaged in fitting out whaling expeditions to the Antarctic and who was himself responsible for the "Norvegia" expeditionsof 1929-30 and 1930-31. I believe that he has contributed towards the present expedition of Captain Riiser-Larsen; and he has certainly undertaken to transport him and his expedition to the Antarctic and back on his whaling vessels, assistance which will very materially reduce the expenditure involved.

7. Herr Christensen is not unkown in London and I had occasion to write about him to Mr. Warner on April 1st last. He is married to the daughter of a rich

whaling

whaling-man and is evidently at present able to provide ample funds, for purposes of exploration in the Antarctic which so strongly appeals to all his compatriots and particularly to his fellow-townsmen.

8. The inhabitants of other whaling ports interested in the Antarctic, such as Tonsberg, have doubtless also made some contribution; and possibly also some of those in Aalesund and elsewhere, who are mainly interested in Arctic waters, but, as they have been so eager to force their Government to adopt a forward policy with regard to Greenland, will also doubtless be strongly in favour of the maintenance of the reputation of the people of Norway as active participators in the exploration of all polar regions. There is, indeed, much national pride in the important part played by this small nation in this field of human activity, and there is, moreover, a feeling that Norwegian interest in freedom of access to all parts of the polar regions must be demonstrated to the world by such striking evidence, if Norway is not to run the risk of seeing exclusive claims to parts of these regions put forward by certain States and generally admitted by others which attach little importance to the territories in question and are not therefore disposed to question the validity of such claims.

I have etc.,

(SGD.) CHARLES WINGFIELD.

10

F.O.

COPY

(E 13679/192/59)

No. 324

BRITISH LEGATION,

OSLO.

December 7th 1932.

Sir,

With reference to Mr. Wingfield's despatch No. 279 of October 7th I have the honour to state that "Aftenposten" of the 3rd instant published an interview with Captain Riiser-Larsen, in the course of which he made the following statements.

2. He has for a considerable time been planning an expedition to the Antarctic, where he will explore the regions which, in company with Captain Lutzow-Holm, he discovered and charted on previous expeditions. He has just returned from England and Germany, where he has consulted various explorers in connection with his forthcoming expedition. In England he had conversations with prominent members of the Geographical Society and of various scientific institutions, and he was fortunate enough to meet practically all the English Antarctic explorers, both old and young. In Berlin he ordered two aluminium boats and inspected the wireless equipment which is to be ready in eight days. Halvard Devold, who is a wireless operator in addition to being an excellent dog driver, is to go to Berlin to inspect the equipment, which consists of a short wave apparatus specially constructed for his sledge journey. The equipment of the expedition also includes an "electro-sounding" apparatus for taking depths on their journey. It is shaped like a torpedo, and is about as long as a pencil.

3.....

The Right Honourable
Sir John Simon, G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., M.P.
etc., etc., etc.

3. The dogs for the expedition are now being cared for at Norten and their numbers have increased from forty to about sixty and are expected to exceed seventy before the expedition leaves.

4. The members of the expedition are to go ashore in Enderby Land and then proceed northwards to Graham's Land, a distance of about five thousand kilometres, of which about two thousand five hundred kilometres are unknown territory. On their way the party will pass through the Norwegian territories, Queen Maud's Land, Princess Ragnhild's Land and Crown Princess Märtha's Land, all of which have been charted previously.

5. The expedition is to start just after the New Year on Lars Christensen's transport ship, which is expected back in Norway between Christmas and the New Year.

I have, etc.,

(Sgd) G. Fullerton-Carnegie.

FO 13

Copy

(W 314/209/50)

No. 2

British Legation.

Oslo.

January 3rd, 1933.

Sir,

With reference to Mr. Fullerton-Carnegie's despatch No. 324 of the 7th instant and my previous reports on the subject of Captain Riiser-Larsen's projected explorations in the Antarctic, I have the honour to inform you that "Aftenposten" of today's date has published a detailed statement regarding this expedition, which is to leave Fredrikstad tomorrow. Captain Riiser-Larsen himself is going to London first and to join the others at Cape Town.

2. After pointing out that during the last weeks Captain Riiser-Larsen and his companions have been very busy making final preparations, the article in question gives various details regarding the equipment and plans. Most of these have already been reported, but the following may be of some interest.

3. As regards expenses it is stated that the total cost will be Kr.60 - 70,000, of which the State has supplied Kr. 20,000 (see my despatch No. 279 of October 7th 1932), and the North American press Kr. 30,000.

4. The expedition is expected to reach Enderby Land on about February 20th, and if the ice-conditions are favourable, to go straight on land - i.e. through the ice-barrier. It is to be carried out with dog-sledges, which are considered the most practical for such work. It is further stated that important results from a national point of view may be expected.

5. The main object of the expedition is stated to be the linking-up of the three Norwegian territories, Queen Maud's Land, Princess Ragnhild's Land and Crown Princess Märtha's

Land/

The Right Honourable
Sir John Simon, G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., M.P.,

etc., etc., etc.

Land; and it is pointed out that there are stretches of unknown land towards the end of Princess Ragnhild's Land, between this latter and Crown Princess Martha's Land, and in the middle of the last named. When these unknown stretches have been charted there will be an unbroken coast line or territory from Enderby Land to Coats Land.

5. The expedition is also to explore the Weddell Sea and Norwegian whalers are to construct winter-quarters at Hope Bay on Louis Philip's Land, which the expedition hope to reach early enough to return with a whaling-vessel next season.

7. A number of scientific investigations and observations are to be undertaken.

8. As already reported Captain Riiser-Larsen will be accompanied by Helvard Devold. The third leader of the expedition is to be Olav Fjellbotn, a well-known ski-runner, who has on two occasions wintered in East Greenland.

9. I enclose a sketch-map showing the territory which is to be traversed by the expedition.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) Charles Wingfield.

F.O.

16

Copy

No.38

(W 1600/209/50)

British Legation,
Oslo.
February 9th 1933.

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No.2 of the 3rd ultimo I have the honour to report that "Aftenposten" has on the 2nd and 7th instant published two articles contributed by Captain Riiser-Larsen on the subject of his expedition to the Antarctic.

2. The first of these contained no information of interest additional to that which I have already reported to you, but there were a few statements in the second which are perhaps worth recording.

3. In writing about the short wave wireless set, with which the expedition is equipped, Captain Riiser-Larsen explains that the batteries are too heavy for all of them to be taken with them and that some of them will consequently be deposited in a depot which they intend to construct on Enderby Land, where they will also build a hut in case ice-conditions prevent them from setting out until late in the southern summer.

4. For map-making purposes they have with them ordinary navigation instruments, sledge and pocket-sextants, pocket chronometers, etcetera, etcetera. They also have a complete set of meteorological instruments and will take observations every three hours, when not on the move. As regards magnetic investigations, they will take observations of deviations and angles of inclination. The Aurora Australis (Southern Light) has not been photographed before; and they have special lenses for this purpose. In addition investigations will be made regarding tides and currents. Soundings will

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etc., etc., etc.

will be taken in shallow water with fishing lines and in deeper water with an electric-sounding apparatus. They also hope to bring back with them a collection of geological and botanical interest.

5. Captain Riiser-Larsen says that he very much hopes to reach Crown Princess Märtha's Land just after the southern winter has begun when the Weddell Sea is entirely covered with ice. Should they reach this spot at a moment when the coast along Coats Land, Caird-Coast and Louis Philip's Land is free of ice, they may be compelled to traverse this stretch on the inland ice. Captain Riiser-Larsen and his two companions will spend the whole winter alone in the Weddell Sea, but next year Lincoln Ellsworth comes to the Ross Sea with Bernt Balchen to fly to the Weddell Sea and back. Captain Riiser-Larsen states that collaboration with Ellsworth's expedition will be a pleasant change for them after the long, trying winter and that he has just received a telegram from Ellsworth which reads:-

> " Much interested in establishing antarctic contact with you and in collaborating in every possible way. Any proposal concerning this will be received with pleasure."

I have etc.,

(Sgd.) Charles Wingfield.