

C.S.

Secret.

1939

No. S/49/39

Secretary of State

SUBJECT.

1939

23rd Decth

Oil Fuel.

Previous Paper.

✓

Stock of stated to be at Deception Island, South Shetlands.

MINUTES.

- 1. Secret telegram of 23/12/39 from S. of S.

YR

Submitted.

MCH

23. XII. 39.

The last whaling office at S. Shetlands was M^r G. Brechin. Does YR wish enquiry made as to stock of oil, if any?

MCH

So far as can be ascertained there has been no whaling at Deception since 1930. Note sent to M^r Brechin.

MCH

Subsequent Paper.

Letter from Mr G. Brechin of 2-3
28. XII. 59

Yh. Submitted. Mr Brechin states there was at least 1500 tons of oil fact remaining at Deception Is. in 1951, but apparently it is not possible to obtain the oil unless it can be heated. A fairly large quantity of coal and coke appears to have been left there.

2. Having regard to the fact that the Heekin Coy. failed to pay export duty totalling about £10,000, I do not consider they should receive compensation if it is found possible to use the oil.

MCH
CS
29. XII. 59.

Please attach file in which the duty was waived

~~ttt~~ 29. 12. 59

Yh. Ref 54 in C/5/31 reprs.

MCH
CS
1. 1. 40.

Reply put up

~~ttt~~ 4/1/39

- 4. Telegram to S. of S. of 2/1/40.
- 5. Letter to Sp. G. Brechin of 2/1/40.

W.H.

- 6-9 S. of S. Secret despatches of 2/4/40.

B.U. on arrival
of 15th Secretary
AD 15/1/40

G.E.

Owing to the exceptionally mild winter the ice should break early. I suggest that "San Carlo" be sent to L.A. as much as possible. She can carry 3000 tons of oil, + 300 tons of coke but probably not the coal. If she could not get out back, she could destroy it as well as the 15th Secretary.

AD 2/1/40

Presumably you have discussed this with Captain of "San Carlo" personally & will hesitate to risk a vessel of her construction in those waters - having regard to the terrific weight that may accumulate on the topides and her ~~all~~ supposed relative light draught

~~W.H.~~ 2/5/40

- 10. Telegram to Reg. S.G. no. 74 of 9/9/40
- 11. " from .. " " 79 of 13/9/40.

Y.E.

This is one of the matters I should like to discuss with you on Sat. - 21st. Sept.

The position seems to be as follows :-

1. There is no definite knowledge that these stores are still in existence unless the authorities in London have ascertained something as suggested in (4)
2. Further information might be obtained as suggested in (11)
3. With no definite information it might be considered worthwhile, provided the original story of the store is well based, to send "Scorby" to have a 'look-see' in the first instance. She could then wireless quantity to, but more important state of piping, wharf conditions, amount of any stores
4. It would be an immense pity to lose this store (if there) & its recovery would not only pay back the debt to the Govt. of the Arctic Whaling Co. but save the loss of penguins & seals, which the destruction of the oil would entail. It must be remembered too that this oil will be used over a vast area for an indefinite period of time - & the loss of fauna would be incalculable.
5. The recovery of the oil is possible according to the words of the "San Carlo" - an expert in the handling of oil. But it would be necessary to have the information outlined in para 4 above.
6. The "San Carlo" can handle it - it can also make the voyage probably as safely as the "Scorby" but there arises the difficulties of "ships articles", insurance & the agreement with the owners. All these can be overcome by Admiralty action.
7. I should like to send a telegram to the above effect - but it is most evidently for your decision.

19/11/40

Please have cost of voyage to Deception Island for Scorby worked out - fuel consumption & incidental if any

19/9/40

C.S.O. No. 5/19/39.

Inside Minute Paper.

Sheet No. 2...

A.C.S. Please arrange with Captains "San Casto" & "Scoresby" interviews, if possible on Monday 23rd. AD 29/12/40

A.C.S. Interviews arranged for Friday 27th Sept. at 11.0. am. C. J. P. 29/12/40

Y/E.,

I have seen the Captains of the "William Scoresby" and "San Casto". They are both anxious to undertake a "look-see" first and suggest that such a journey should be undertaken early in December. The obvious vessel they agree should be the "William Scoresby".

There is first the question of her wireless, concerning which reference is being made to the Naval Officer-in-Charge.

The Captain of the "Scoresby" points out that he must in the first instance have an extra Officer for navigation. Captain Mays at once volunteered and he stated he can easily be spared from "San Casto".

His attachment temporarily to "Scoresby" would satisfy a further requirement of Captain Dain's. To quote the latter verbatim: "I should most definitely not like to undertake the trip unless I had with me an Officer or officers who are thoroughly conversant with the handling of oil in great bulk."

The cost of this preliminary expedition would depend on the length of the voyage, and would be somewhere between £350 and £600. This would be made up as follows :

1.	3 days steam to Deception @ 10 tons per diem for a speed of 10 knots per hour = 30 tons @ £4. 10s.	=	£135. . .
2.	- do - - do - return voyage	=	£135. . .
3.	5 days @ Deception @ 1 ton per diem	=	£ 22. 10. -
	Extra clothing and food - say	=	£ 57. 10. -
			<hr/>
			£350. - -

or making allowances for fog, rough weather, ice conditions an extra 5 days full steam or probably 10 days at half speed = 225.

£575.

burning
The ~~burning~~ of the oil requires a special outfit

to remove the tops of the tanks, and the requirements for that outfit could only be estimated by an expert, such as Captain Mays.

I would suggest therefore that the following telegram be sent to the Secretary of State.

"Reference your despatch 3rd April Secret suggest that if Admiralty has no further information from "Discovery II" or possibly SVERRE NIELSEN C/O SALVESEN LEITH who was Manager Hektor Company William Scoresby be despatched early December to report in first instance."

[Signature]
Colonial Secretary.
27. 9. 40.

Yes with addition of words
possibility of being able to recover
data by tanker LANCASTER or similar vessel
shd not be overlooked
Tel. sent

p.a. *[Signature]* 1/10/40

- Telegram to S. of S. no. 100 of 28/9/40. 12.
- Telegram from Cinc. S.A., 6/10/40 13.
- " " " 7/10/40. 14-15
- Y.E. I think this is "finis" *[Signature]* 19/7/40

Possibilities . II

Perhaps, Hawkins shd call here on his way and it may be desirable for her to embark Captain W. Cook

- Telegram from S. of S. no. 96 of 5/11/40. 16 *[Signature]* 10/12/40
- Memo from Commanding Officer, HMS Q of B. 7/3/41. 17-23.
- S. of S. Secret Tel. of Starch, 1942. 24.
- Tel. Sec. to S. of S. No. 52 of 24/3/42 25.
- S. of S. Un-numbered Tel. of 26/3/42 25A.
- Tel. Sec. to S. of S. No. 56 of 27/3/42. 26.

Inside Minute Paper.

24. Cuttings from B.A. newspaper, "The Standard"
 28. Copy of memo: from Naval Attaché, B.A. of 1/4/42.
 Legal Adviser

For your perusal, pl.

MA
for CS
14/4/42.

H. B. J.

Seen - Thank you

A.B.
— F.A.

27/4/42.

DECODE.

5/49/39.

(1)

TELEGRAM.

From S. o. S.

To H. E.

488

Despatched : 1806/23/12/39 19 Time :

Received : 2217/23/39 19 Time :

No. 124 Secret.
Admiralty understands that at Deception Island in South Shetlands there is a shore whaling station once owned by Helge Norwegian Whaling Company but abandoned in 1932 consisting of large oil fuel tanks reported to contain 7000 tons of oil fuel. It is considered important that this stock be denied to the enemy. Please furnish your observations as to best method of preventing oil being used by enemy and on liability of H.M. Government to pay compensation if oil is destroyed or given or sold compulsorily to other whalers.

S. o. S.

Dec. 28th 1939

Dear Sir,

When the Steamer "Melville" left Deception Island in 1931 there was at least 1,500 tons of oil fuel stored in three tanks of 500 tons capacity each. Two other tanks had some oil in them. An enormous heap of steam coal and coke was also left there. I would say about 1,000 tons coal & about 200 or 300 tons of coke.

From conversations I have had at various times with members of the crew of Discovery II the oil was useless because there was no way of thawing it in the tanks until the boilers at the factory were refitted and lit up.

I have also heard from the ^{local} men who go whaling that the factories visiting Port Foster have ~~taken~~ ^{come} from the dump.

Sir Hubert Wilkins, before his trip down in the "Wyatt Earp" made arrangements with the Hekter Whaling Company, regarding the use of various articles, and I believe coal was used by the Expedition

2

For these reasons, I would not like to say that there was coal on Deception now

I should add that my informant re the arrangements made by Sir H. Wilkins was Mr S. Neilson, at one time, Manager at Deception Island, for the Hektor Wheeling boy, and now employed by Messrs. Selvesen at S. Georgia.

I hope this may be useful to you

I am

Sir

Yours respectfully
Gregor Brecher

TELEGRAM

FROM....H.E.THE GOVERNOR.

To.....THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

DATE... 2nd JANUARY, 1940.

2.1
142
4

2.1
No 142? SECRET Your telegram No. I24 Secret. My information is that about 1,500 tons fuel oil were left in tanks at Deception Island in 1931. It would be necessary to refit boilers at factory and thaw the oil stop Condition of boilers unknown but there should be large stock of oil for firing stop I suggest that Admiralty ascertain position from members of Discovery II stop It appears advisable that a ship e.g. William Scoresby should visit Deception and destroy oil stocks not removable stop Question of liability for compensation purely legal but Company owning oil was reconstructed in 1935 leaving as abandoned debts £27,000 owing to Inland Revenue and £10700 to Falkland Islands Government.

s/49/39.

2nd January,

40.

Sir,

Red 3

I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of the 28th December, 1939, concerning the stocks of oil fuel, coal and coke which were at Deception Island when you were at that place in 1931.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient se

McA

Colonial S

Mr. Gregor Brechin,
STANLEY.

7

27 February, 1940.

13047/2/40.

S E C R E T.

Sir,

With reference to your Secret letter No. H.0936/40 of the 17th of February, about the stocks of fuel oil at Deception Island in the South Shetlands, I am directed by Mr. Secretary MacDonald to inform you that he agrees that to burn the oil appears to be the best solution, since it could not be removed without much trouble, in view of the condition of the plant.

2. If the oil were allowed to ooze into the harbour, it would cause intense suffering amongst the very large penguin rookery which is near by.

3. You will have observed that in his Secret telegram No.1 of the 3rd of January (a copy of which was enclosed in this Office Secret letter No.13047/2/40 of the 12th of January) the Governor refers also to "a large stock of coal", and it is possible that this might also be of considerable value to any German raider which might reach the Island.

4.

THE SECRETARY,
ADMIRALTY.

4. I am therefore to suggest that, if the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty think it necessary to take some action regarding Deception Island, the "William Scoresby" should be sent there to deal with the oil and coal as conditions indicate. As to expenses, it is presumed that the Imperial Government would cover the cost of the voyage and operation, but as the "William Scoresby" is now a naval vessel, Mr. MacDonald is not in a position to estimate the cost of the voyage. He is advised, however, that the voyage from the Falkland Islands to Deception Island would take about five days steaming for the "William Scoresby".

5. As regards liability for compensation, it appears from the last sentence of the Governor's telegram referred to above that this question is unlikely to arise.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) J. A. CALDER

COPY.

8

M.04155/40.

Admiralty, S.W.1.

23rd March 1940.

S E C R E T.

Sir,

With reference to your letter, 13047/2/40, dated 27th February and previous correspondence concerning the disposal of stocks of fuel oil at Deception Island, South Shetlands, I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that since weather conditions will preclude the use of this oil by the enemy before October 1940, they suggest that further consideration of this question may be deferred until that date.

2. WILLIAM SCORESBY will be stationed at Falkland from spring onwards and will be available for this task.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd). S. GILMOUR.

The Under-Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
S.W.1.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From Colonial Secretary,

To Magistrate, South Georgia. _____

Despatched: 9th September, 19 40. Time: ...

Received: 19 ... Time: ...

No. 74. Secret. Have you any authentic information as to quantity and quality of fuel oil, coal and coke stocks left by Hektor Company at Deception.

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

10

For use in
Cypher or
Coding Office
only.

George 2330 / 13/9/40

37

Originators Instructions:
(Indication of Priority,
AIDAC, NOTWT
For Exercise).

INTERCEPT GROUP.

TO:

Secretary Stanley

FROM:

Message to British Secretary Number 79 Secret
from Magistrate

re (10) Your 7th

I regret I am unable furnish information
required. The only person I can suggest who
might be able supply the information is Mr.
SV ERBE NIELSEN care of SALVESEN Ltd. Mr.
NIELSEN was manager for the HECTOR Company
and is believed to be in the United Kingdom.

Book or Table to be used for

Cyphering or Coding.

Recyphering or Recoding.

Initials of Cypherer
or Coder.

Time of Receipt in
Cypher or Coding
Office.

Date.

DECODE.
SENT.

TELEGRAM.

12

From..... H. E. THE GOVERNOR.....

To..... SECRETARY OF STATE.....

Despatched : 28th September 19 40 Time :

Received : 19 Time :

No 100. *Secret*

With reference to your telegram No 124 Secret of 23rd December 1939 reference your Despatch 3rd April Secret 1940 Oil Stocks. Suggest that if Admiralty has no further information from Discovery II or possibly Sverre Nielsen ~~o~~ Salvesen Leith, who was manager Hektor Company, William Scoresby be despatched early December to report in first instance. Possibility of being able to salvage later by the tanker San Castro or similar vessel should not be overlooked.

I. D. C. C.

13

For use in
Cypher or
Coding Office
only.

Originators Instructions:
(Indication of Priority,
AIDAC, NOTWT
For Exercise).

INTERCEPT GROUP.

TO: CSAD HMS Hawkins (R) NOIC Simonstown

FROM:
C-in-C SA

Admiralty message 1741/23/9 is being passed to you.

On completion present refit HMS Hawkins is to visit Deception Island
investigate and deal with situation there. Further information available
about Deception Island and instructions will be sent to HMS Hawkins by
letter.

2245/0.

BRITISH NAVAL

CASE

2 - OCT 1940

FALKLANDS

Note: HMS Hawkins will complete working up at Simonstown about 26th
November.

*Almond Head.
Pay South River*
FOR N.O.I.C.

Book or Table to be used for		Initials of Cypherer or Coder.	Time of Receipt in Cypher or Coding Office.	Date.
Cyphering or Coding.	Recyphering or Recoding.			

For use in
Cypher or
Coding Office
only.

(15)

Originators Instructions:
(Indication of Priority,
AIDAC, NOTWT
For Exercise).

INTERCEPT GROUP.

TO:

CSAD HMS Hawkins (R) NCIC Simonstorn

FROM:

C-in-C SA

Following is a repetition of Admiralty message 1741/38 September, begins.

Reference NDO 1630/39 dated 16th November 1939 about existence at Deception Island, South Shetlands of oil fuel installation and coal stocks.

Consider use of this should be denied to enemy in preference to considerable expenditure in making available use. Undesirable in present circumstances to send 'William Scoresby' to investigate and deal with situation

as her absence from Falkland Islands would leave the port without a

minesweeper for about 14 days. And there is risk that she would meet

superior force in way of enemy raider or shore defences and might disable

her. Request you will take any steps you may consider necessary as G.....

Book or Table to be used for

Cyphering or Coding.

Recyphering or Recoding.

Initials of Cypherer
or Coder.Time of Receipt in
Cypher or Coding
Office.

Date.

For use in
Cypher or
Coding Office
only.

14

Originators Instructions:
(Indication of Priority,
AIDAC, NOTWT
For Exercise).

INTERCEPT GROUP.

TO:

FROM:

-2-

as opportunity offers. Reports of amount of oil remaining vary from
1500 tons in 1936 to 7000 tons in 1938. Ends.

0015n/7.



Book or Table to be used for

Initials of Cypherer
or Coder.Time of Receipt in
Cypher or Coding
Office.

Date.

Cyphering or Coding.

Recyphering or Recoding.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From Secretary of State for the Colonies,

To His Excellency the Governor.

Despatched: 5th November, 1940. *Time*: ...

Received: 5th November, 1940. *Time*: ...

No. 96. Secret. Your telegram No. 100. Oil Stocks
of. Admiralty state H.M.S. "Hawkins" is to visit
Deception Island to investigate and deal with situation.
No/ action required at present "William Scoresby" or
"San Casto".

SECRETARY OF STATE.

Red 12

S/49/39.

1

FROM:- The Commanding Officer. H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda"
DATE:- March 7th 1941. Ref: 463/SA-13
TO:- The Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic Station
COPY TO:- The Rear Admiral Commanding, South America Division

SUBJECT:- Visit to Deception Island and
destruction of Plant Installation and Coal

Report on proceedings of H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" at DECEPTION ISLAND, on March 5th 1941, and on passage to and from DECEPTION ISLAND, is forwarded herewith.

Captain, Royal Navy

ORIGINAL ORDERS:

Orders were originally received for H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" to proceed to DECEPTION ISLAND, leaving the FALKLAND ISLANDS, on January 20th, after having spent four days there. This was cancelled by other orders on January 19th.

INFORMATION:

2. Whilst at FALKLAND ISLANDS, a special letter was received from the Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic Station to the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. "HAWKINS", under date of 10th October 1940, giving information with regard to DECEPTION ISLAND. This was found to be the same as that given in the FREETOWN INTELLIGENCE NOTES, dated 5th December 1939, a copy of which, was on board.

3. Whilst at the FALKLAND ISLANDS, enquiries were

....made

made about DECEPTION ISLAND, but little useful information could be obtained, except for a large scale chart of the Entrance and Harbour, made by a Frenchman - Dr Charcot (of the 2nd French Antarctic Expedition of 1908-1910), which proved of great use. It is thought that the Admiralty Chart was copied from this.

4. When on patrol with the Whale-fishing Fleet, (see H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda's' 452/SA-16, dated March 4th 1941), useful navigational information was obtained from the Captain of the ss. "SVEND FOYN", who had spent three seasons in PORT FOSTER, in a Whale-factory ship.

5. When H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" was ordered to proceed to DECEPTION ISLAND, on March 3rd, further enquiries were made about ice conditions, and the information obtained, although not very accurate, was favourable.

FURTHER ORDERS:

6. In accordance with the orders received in the Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic Station's 2231/February 23rd, H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" parted company with the Whale-fishing fleet at 0800 on March 3rd and proceeded to the Northward, on passage to DECEPTION ISLAND.

MOVEMENTS:

7. At 1600, on March 4th, H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda", having proceeded through BRANSFIELD STRAIGHT, was off the entrance to PORT FOSTER, DECEPTION ISLAND. As the wind was from the South-West, Force 8, and NEPTUNE'S BELLOWS are only two cables in width, with an un-marked submerged rock in the centre of it, I decided to remain "hove to" off the Entrance, until the wind had abated.

8. At 0600 on March 5th, the wind was still South-West but had eased to Force 4, and so H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" proceeded into PORT FOSTER, and anchored in 48 fathoms in

....WHALERS

WHALERS BAY, with 10 shackles on the port anchor and the starboard anchor under foot.

9. Plans had been made to send a ship's boat ahead to buoy RAVEN ROCK, the rock in the middle of the Entrance. This however was abandoned, as it was apparent that a ship's boat could not have achieved much, in the condition of the sea in NEPTUNE'S BELLOWS.

ACTION TAKEN:

10. Demolition parties proceeded ashore immediately the ship arrived.

11. Inspection showed that:-

- (a) the seven oil tanks were empty and did not appear to have been worked, or to have contained oil for some considerable time.
- (b) all the machinery installed, both for pumping the oil, and for the manufacture of whale oil, had suffered considerably, from exposure to the elements but could have been made to work.
- (c) the amount of coal remaining, consisted of a heap of about 150 tons.
- (d) about 15 tons of Diesel Oil had been left in drums
- (e) a considerable amount of gunpowder, and the necessary detonators, was stowed in cases in different huts in the Settlement.
- (d) there was a large quantity of stores, which were principally for use in the Whaling industry and most of which had deteriorated, owing to being exposed to the weather.

12. In order to ensure that no use could be made of the Oil tanks or the Stores, etc., by enemy forces, the following action was taken:-

- (a) all valve groups on each tank were blown off and the tanks, and a hole was made at the base of each

....tank

by demolition charges, except in the case of two small tanks, which were in such a bad condition, that a similar result was achieved with heavy hammers.

(b) all the boilers were rendered useless by demolition charges.

(c) the heating arrangements and pumping plant for the oil fuel tanks were destroyed by demolition charges.

(d) the steam driven dynamos were destroyed by demolition charges.

(e) the coal heap was set on fire and was burning well, when H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" sailed.

(f) the Diesel Oil was destroyed by fire.

(g) all piping between the oil tanks and the machinery shops, and boiler house was broken.

(h) the gunpowder and detonators were thrown into the harbour.

(i) all stores that might have been of use were destroyed by fire.

13. The housing quarters, which were in fairly good order, and any stores solely applicable to whale fishing were left undisturbed, as it is very likely that the whale factory ships may use DECEPTION ISLAND as a base.

14. All demolition was finished by 1600 and by 1700 all hands had been re-embarked.

REPORT ON THE SETTLEMENT:

15. The Settlement, which is at the head of WHALERS BAY, gave one the appearance of having been sealed up in good order, and left for a Winter, and then not re-opened.

16. Since then, it would appear, that it had been visited, and looted, in a mild way, by odd ships. Some of the living quarters were still sealed up and in very good order; others, which had been broken into, were damaged and

dis-ordered in various degrees. The roofs of all living quarters were still in place, but some of the roofs of the workshops and machine-shops, had fallen in.

DEPARTURE:

17. Anchors were weighed by 1730 and the ship proceeded out of harbour. When clear of the harbour, course was altered to the Westward, and H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" proceeded out of the SOUTH SHETLAND group of Islands, through BOYD STRAIT, and set course for the FALKLAND ISLANDS.

NOTES ON THE WEATHER, ETC:

18. Bransfield Strait.

In the BRANSFIELD STRAIT, on Tuesday March 4th, a steady Westerly wind of Force 6 was encountered, with short rough seas.

19. A pronounced set to the East-North-East, estimated at about 1/2 knot was experienced. Weather was clear but overcast, with visibility about 5 to 8 miles. JOINVILLE and GRAHAM LAND were not sighted, but the high ground of KING GEORGE ISLAND was seen, almost completely covered in snow, nothing else was sighted until LIVINGSTONE ISLAND was reached, when MOUNT BARNARD and NEEDLE PEAK were identified.

20. The difference in the appearance of DECEPTION and LIVINGSTONE ISLANDS was most marked, the former being practically devoid of snow or ice on its Eastern sides, whereas the latter presented a striking appearance, being covered with snow.

21. The South-Westerly wind increased as DECEPTION ISLAND was approached, and on arrival off the Entrance to the Harbour, it was blowing Force 7 with gusts of Force 9. The ship remained 'hove to' in the lee of the Island for the night.

ENTERING HARBOUR:

22. By 0600 on March 5th, the wind having moderated to
....Force 4

(18)

Force 4, H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" proceeded into PORT FOSTER at 12 knots. The ship closed the Eastern Bluff and Fildes Point to within 100 feet to gain ample clearance from the unmarked and submerged RAVEN ROCK, lying in the centre of the Entrance.

23. The entrance to the harbour, NEPTUNE'S BELLOWS, lived up to its name, as, when the ship was fairly entered in the channel, a squall of about Force 8, with reduced visibility was encountered. WHALERS BAY, PORT FOSTER, came somewhat abruptly into view, and a sharp starboard hand turn, and a partial drift, took the ship into her anchorage in 48 fathoms, in the centre of WHALERS BAY.

WHALERS BAY:

24. The bottom of this Bay, consisted of lava and gravel, and proved to be a good holding ground. The ship laid to 10 shackles on the port anchor. The starboard anchor was veered underfoot, in an attempt to check the wide yawing, which is peculiar to this type of vessel in a high wind. This was not successful, as the ship yawed through 70°-90°.

25. During the day, clouds covered the mountains, and the wind increased to Force 7, with frequent squalls of Force 9, from the West to the West-South-West. The barometer remained steady at 29.98 inches. The air temperature was 30° F, and, except for the high wind, which raised a rough sea for boat-work, weather conditions were very fine.

DEPARTURE:

26. On leaving, NEPTUNE'S BELLOWS was again negotiated at 12 knots, and a course was set to the Westward towards SMITH ISLAND.

27. H.M.S. "Queen of Bermuda" entered and left NEPTUNE'S BELLOWS on a line of bearing 257 to 077 degrees on the inside beacon lighthouse, which gave about 100 feet clearance from

FILDES POINT. At no time was there any sign of broken water over the $1\frac{1}{2}$ fathom RAVEN ROCK, but discoloured water was evident to the Southward of the Rock's position.

28. PENGUIN ROCK; the high bold rock off the Eastern end of FILDES POINT; the SULPHUR LAKE on the spit of WHALERS BAY; the beacon lighthouse off the Entrance to the BELLOWS, and the beacon lighthouse inside the BELLOWS, were all boldly prominent when visibility allowed.

ICEBERGS:

29. Ice bergs were sighted all down the BRANSFIELD STRAIT, but there were none close in, under the lee of DECEPTION ISLAND. There was no ice on the water in PORT FOSTER.

30. There were a large number of big icebergs aground in to the South and West of DECEPTION ISLAND, and a few were encountered on passage to and through BOYD STRAIR. No icebergs were seen after the ship was 50 miles to the Northward of SMITH ISLAND.

CHARTS:

31. The chart made by Dr Charcot, of both DECEPTION ISLAND and NEPTUNE'S BELLOWS (see paragraph 3), proved of the greatest use, and appeared to be very accurate. Otherwise, Admiralty Chart No. 3205 was used for approaching and leaving DECEPTION ISLAND.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From **Secretary of State for the Colonies.**

To **His Excellency the Governor.**

Despatched : 19 *Time :*

Received : 19 *Time :*

No. 52. **SECRET.** Argentine press has announced that Argentine transport which took radio telegraphist to South Orkneys found a wrecked factory (possibly work of a raider) on island in South Shetlands of which Argentine authorities took formal possession painting crosses on tanks and leaving record in a chest.

2. Please telegraph whether you have any information and let me have your observations.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

24

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

To SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Despatched : 24th March, 19 42. Time :

Received : 19 Time :

NO. 52. Secret. With reference to your telegram secret No. 52 published statement undoubtedly refers to naval action taken as outlined in your telegram No. 96 secret of 5th November 1940.

Argentine annexation of Deception Island is not understood. Please see my telegram No. 142 secret of 2nd January 1940 as regards ownership.

I.D.C.O.

GOVERNOR.

Read (24)

Recd (H)

*By Order
24/3/42
[Signature]*

25A.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From The Secretary of State for the Colonies.

To His Excellency the Governor.

Despatched : 26th March, 19 42. *Time* : 14.40.

Received : 27th March, 19 42. *Time* : 09.00

Un-numbered. Your telegram No. 52. Please check and repeat reference in the last sentence.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From His Excellency the Governor.

To The Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Despatched : 27th March, 1942 Time : 1445

Received : 19 ... Time : ...

Recd 24

No. 56. SECRET. With reference to my telegram No. 52

Secret last sentence reads: Please see my telegram No.

(Recd 4)
142 Secret of 2nd January 1940 as regards ownership ends.

Ownership refers to buildings and fuel stocks.

I.D.C.O.

GOVERNOR.

*Langdon Office
27/3 [Signature]*

(24)

CUTTING FROM B.A. NEWSPAPER "THE STANDARD"
dated Monday 23rd March,
1942.

MYSTERY ISLAND IN FAR SOUTH

THE National transport *Primer de Mayo* docked in the New Port yesterday morning carrying the members of two scientific expeditions who have been working in the far South.

One of these, sent by the Meteorological Department, had spent the last eighteen months on the South Orkney Islands.

Officers of the transport confirmed the rumour that during the course of their expedition they had found an abandoned whale fishing station on Deception Island, which forms part of the South Shetland group, some 1,100 miles from Tierra del Fuego. Not a single human being was found on the island, and from the investigation carried out it had not been possible to discover to whom it had belonged. All the installations had been destroyed and the machinery smashed up.

CUTTING FROM B.A. NEWSPAPER "THE STANDARD"
dated Tuesday 24th March,
1942.

THAT WHALING STATION

CONSIDERABLE interest has been aroused by the announcement that the Ministry of Marine will issue an official statement concerning the reports that the transport *Lo de Mayo* had found a wrecked and abandoned whaling station in the Far South, and had taken possession of it in the name of the Argentine Government.

So far no official news has been available, but apparently some members of the crew of the transport have been responsible for the story. The *Lo de Mayo* was returning from its yearly trip to the Argentine Observatory in the South Orkneys, and the whaling station is supposed to have been located on Deception Island, some 600 miles from Tierra del Fuego.

According to the stories current, an oil factory and other plant appeared to have been dynamited prior to being abandoned, and the fact that there were a couple of cradles in different houses, and a little cemetery close by, is taken as an indication that the place had been permanently inhabited for some considerable time, apparently by Norwegians.

BRITISH EMBASSY

BUENOS AIRES

REFERENCE SHEET No. 33FROM: Naval Attache,
Buenos Aires.TO: Director of Naval Intelligence,
Admiralty.

DATE: 1st April, 1942.

Copies: H.M. Ambassador, B.A.
H.M. Ambassador, Washington
H.M. Ambassador, Santiago
H.M. Minister, Montevideo.
S.O.(I)M.; N.O.I.C.Falklands.

Reference No. 650/213/42.

1. The Argentine naval transport "1 DE MAYO" left Buenos Aires on 14th January, 1942, having embarked the reliefs for the South Orkneys Meteorological station and a scientific mission from the Buenos Aires Museum of National Sciences (Professors Alberto Nani, Feo. Yneri and Ernesto Motti).

2. According to detailed press accounts she proceeded straight to Deception Island in the South Shetlands, arriving there during the last week of January. She found there a well equipped whaling factory with laboratory, hospital, pier of 200 metres, slipway, tanks, well built wood and zinc houses for about 200 people. The houses were fitted with steam heating. There was a cemetery with 30-35 graves. Cradles indicated that families had lived there. There was also a destroyed wireless station.

3. Nobody was living on the island and the installations had been deliberately destroyed by dynamiting. The newspaper "LA NACION" says that the tanks were perforated by what appeared to be shell holes and suggests that the destruction was the work of a raider, rather than the owners; who, it had been suggested, had, on deciding to abandon the property, destroyed it to prevent its use by a competitor.

4. It appears that the Commanding Officer of the Transport, Capitan de Fragata Alberto Odders, formally took possession of the Island in the name of the Argentine Republic. A mast was erected and the Argentine flag hoisted in the presence of the ship's company. An act of possession was signed and a copy deposited in a chest from the ship which was placed on a site easily visible. The National colours were painted on the walls of the factory and on the roof of one of the sheds.

5. After a stay of several days the transport steamed south for one week towards Graham's Land, then returned to Ushuaia via Port Foster when the flag was seen still to be flying.

6. The real history of this factory, which is apparently unknown to the Argentine Government, is that it belonged to the Hektor Norwegian Whaling Company which abandoned it in 1932. When visited in 1938 the island was reported to be uninhabited, but with fuel tanks in an excellent state of preservation and a large coal dump. Early in 1941, H.M.S. "QUEEN OF BERMUDA" destroyed the oil fuel tanks and the coal dump.

7. The Norwegian Consul in Montevideo states that the Hektor Company used to pay a yearly licence to the British Government for the use of this place and the Antarctic Pilot says that the
Sociedad/

Ballenera de Magallanes maintained a stock of coal as Port Foster. If payment of this licence has been continued up to the present time it would be a valuable proof of our effective possession and development of the islands.

8. The relief of the South Orkneys staff was carried out by the whaler "DIAZ" of the South Georgia Company; which brought the old staff from the South Orkneys to Ushuaia, where they had to wait 22 days until the "1 DE MAYO" arrived from the south. The whaler then took the new staff to the South Orkneys and the transport left for Buenos Aires.

9. With reference to paragraph 4 of Sir Esmond Ovey's despatch No. 256 of 14th November, 1941, it is noteworthy that a number of letters were sent by persons in this Embassy addressed to their homes; to be posted in South Orkneys. Although the transport brought up mail from South Orkneys none of the above mentioned letters have been delivered.

J. S. C. SALMOND.

Rear Admiral.