

Confidential.

No. C.1.

Governor

(SUBJECT).

1908

15<sup>th</sup> March

Previous Papers.

Copy of bespateh on  
1907-08 whaling season.

(MINUTES).

Found loose in Confidential Cupboard  
and put in this jacket - There  
is really nothing Confidential  
about it now.

C.F.S.  
C.S.  
22.2.16.

Subsequent Papers.

Falkland Islands

Confidential

Government House, Stanley

18 March, 1966.

My Lord,

Now that the whaling season in the southern Dependencies of this Colony (South Shetlands and South Orkneys) is practically over, it is interesting to review the results.

2. Although the summer here has been unusually cold and wet, it has been a comparatively open one at the South Shetlands.

3. The four Companies which have been operating there under Whaling Licences granted by this Government are:-

- (a) Mr Alexander Lange's Expedition;
- (b) The Newfoundland Whaling Company;
- (c) Sociedad Ballenera de Magallanes;
- (d) Captain Lystad's Expedition (Christenson & Co).

I have already addressed you in my despatch No 9 of 21 January with regard to Captain Lystad's action in proceeding to South Shetlands without a Custom's Officer.

4. The Newfoundland Company was the only one that visited the South Orkneys. Whales were plentiful, but the large quantity of ice interfered with whaling operations, and forced the Manager to proceed to South Shetlands.

5. The

The Right Honble

The Earl of Elgin K.G., G.C.S.I.

So. So. So.

Secretary of State for the Colonies,

Downing Street.

5. The total catch of the four Companies in South Shetland waters was between six hundred and fifty and seven hundred whales. A considerable percentage of them belonged to the variety known as 'blue whale' and were unusually large and powerful. Mr Lange's whalers lost over fifty harpoons and many lines in their battles with them. Seeing that the attackers were fully equipped with every modern convenience including bombs, it shows the strength and vitality of this species.

6. Between the 24 November when the expedition reached the South Shetlands and the 27 February when it left Deception Island on the return voyage to the Falklands, the two small steamers 'Hauken and Grib' spent 70 days whaling, and caught in all 224 whales, or an average of 3.2 per diem. The catch was composed of:-

51 Blue Whales.	106 Hump-Back Whales.
	67 Fin-Back Whales.

7. Most of the whales were found in the Bransfield Strait which lies between the South Shetlands and Joinville Island, Louis Philippe Land, Trinity Land, Banco Land (all to the north of Graham's Land). The Strait is some 120 miles in length and 60 in breadth.

8. There were a great many fin-back whales in the Belgica Strait between the Palmer Archipelago (Anver and Brabant Islands) and Danco Land, and hump-back whales were plentiful near Joinville Island, but as long as blue whales are obtainable the whalers are not likely to go out of their way to look for the fin and hump-back variety.

9. One thing stands out pre-eminently as the

result

result of whaling in these regions i.e. that without a reasonably safe, adjacent, and accessible harbour the industry cannot be conducted. The Newfoundland Whaling Company had unwillingly to abandon the idea of whaling at the Orkneys this season on account of the inaccessibility of the harbours; while Mr Lange in commenting on the number of whales in the Belgica Straits and around Joinville Island deplored the fact that an accessible and safe harbour for his floating factory had not yet been discovered in those localities, and stated that he had spent a considerable amount of time and trouble endeavouring to find one. I need hardly point out the very great risk he incurred in navigating practically unknown waters in this latitude in his search for a safe anchorage for his factory.

10. Mr Lange's opinion as to the necessity for a secure harbour for his operations corroborates the contention I made in my Confidential despatch of 28 December last i.e. 'the whaling industry, as the whalers themselves know perfectly well, could not be conducted at all in this tempestuous latitude unless the commodious and magnificent harbours of this Colony and its Dependencies were thrown open to them'.

11. With regard to the South Shetland Group of which this Government has hitherto had very little reliable knowledge I desire to state that the following harbours are declared by the whalers to be the safest and best, especially during the summer months when the prevailing

prevailing wind is from the north west:-

- (a) St George Bay at King George Island.
- (b) Admiralty Bay (north shore) do  
(good water obtainable)
- (c) Hospital Cove at Greenwich Island.
- (d) South Bay " Livingston Island.
- (e) Two anchorages " Deception Island.

12. In my Confidential despatches of 26 December and 21 January I expressed the opinion that the number of Whaling Companies in South Georgia should be restricted to four, and it is likewise my opinion and that of my Advisers, that in the best interests of the Colony and the Whaler, a similar restriction should apply to South Shetland.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble servant,

*W. A.*  
Governor