

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Governor's Office.

No.

SGD/WHA/1 # 17

Date of Receipt.



From		SUBJECT.
Secretary of State for the Colonies.		WHALE FINS (or finners) Prohibition of export of
No.	Date.	
131	21st Novr., 1916.	

Colonial Secretary's Record No.	MINUTES.
	<i>Minutes to the Col Sec 9 Jan 1917.</i>
Registered Number of last Despatch	<i>Desp. to Sec of State n^o 10 of 9 Jan 1917.</i>
	<i>Desp 10 ackd by S/S n^o 26 of 6 March 1917. u. n^o 138/17.</i>
No. next Despatch	<i>9.1.17</i>
	<i>(138/17)</i>

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Reference to previous correspondence:—

Secretary of State's } Despatch No. -
Governor's

Falkland Islands.

No 731.

Downing Street,
21st November 1916.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you

the papers noted below on the subject of the prohibition of the export of
whale fins (or finners)

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

A. BONAR LAW.

The Officer Administering

the Government of the Falkland Islands.

Date.	Description.
1916.	
18 th October	Board of Trade (with enclosure)
14 th November	To Board of Trade.

ERW

COPY.

ENCLOSURE TO DESPATCH

No. C. 27320.

No. 131. **OF 1/11/16** BOARD OF TRADE,

(COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT),

GWYDYR HOUSE,

-WHITEHALL,

LONDON, S.W.

18th October, 1916.



Sir,

I am directed by the Board of Trade to transmit to you herewith an extract of a letter from Messrs. Stuart and Thomas, respecting the exportation of whale-fins to Norway, together with a report on the subject by the Commercial Intelligence Branch.

The Board would be glad to learn whether Mr. Secretary Bonar Law sees any objection to a prohibition (List B) of export being established in respect of whale-fins. As however it would appear that an ordinary prohibition of export would be ineffective (since such prohibitions are usually held not to cover transshipment), the Board propose subject to Mr. Secretary Bonar Law's approval to request the Commissioners of Customs and Excise to apply the prohibition to goods in transshipment as well as to goods imported into the United Kingdom.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sd) H. FOUNTAIN.

The Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office.

Extract from Letter from:-

Stuart & Thomas,
11, Queen Street,
Old Hall Street,
LIVERPOOL.

During the writers conversation with you in July last regarding the re/exportation of Whale Fins from this country to Norway.

As you are aware previous to the War the Norwegian Steamers would bring large quantities of Whale Fins from the South Atlantic Whaling Grounds to Norway and re/sell them to German factors, who shipped them to Hamburg, where they were cleaned, cut, and made saleable, and re/sold to this country.

During the last few months a considerable quantity of these fins have arrived here in Liverpool, with the result that we have fitted out apparatus for cleaning and preparing the fins ready for the market, with the result that we find that this business can be carried on in this country for the future.

We have also been informed by several London Whale-bone manufacturers that it would be to their interests if an effort was made to retain their trade.

You may refer to Messrs. Howard Hall and Company of Hackney Road, London.

The present difficulties we have to contend with is, the source of supply, which is as follows:-

On the arrival of the vessels in this country with a cargo of Whale Oil, the Whale Fins are used to prevent the barrels from breaking (commonly known as stowage dunnage) and is not brought as cargo, the result is that the Whale Fins are the property of the owners, or the Master of the vessel.

If

If the vessel had to return to the South Atlantic for a further cargo of Whale Oil, or , is chartered to take a cargo from England, then the master of the vessel is compelled to offer the Whale Fins for sale in this country, say at a price of from £3 - £4 per ton according to quantity and condition, but, should it so happen that the vessel is going from an English port, without cargo to Norway, then the master of the vessel will only offer the Fins at an exorbitant price of from £8 - £10 per ton.

If we do not agree to purchase at this price the master or owner can then apply and obtain a licence to take the Fins to Norway.

We can only presume that eventually they make their way to the German factors in Hamburg.

The Norwegians have never offered these goods for sale in this country.

Now we honestly think that his Majesty's Government should take this matter up and prevent the re/exportation of these Fins.

This trade is not very big, at the present moment we are employing a fair number of women doing this work, and, doing it as well as when the Germans had the trade.

We have been compelled to experiment and teach these women how to clean the Fins, and it is only now that we may expect to receive any benefit.

At the present moment there is a vessel here in Liverpool the S.S. "Orwell" which has about 15-20 tons of Whale Fins aboard.

The writer offered to purchase the Fins, but the master asked such an exorbitant figure that it was impossible to purchase without placing the finished fins considerably above the market value.

The master of the Orwell informed the writer that he could obtain a licence to take these to Norway and that "We would either have to pay his price or leave them".

Unfortunately at the present there is a great shortage of Whale Fins, we have received several enquiries from London buyers, who wish to purchase Fins (who cut them and finish them into Corset Bones, Bristles for Whalebone Hair-Brushes, Whip stocks and various other articles.

They employ a considerable staff to do the work, and when a shortage occurs in the raw Fins they naturally have to deplete their staff.

We on our part employ from 20 - 30 women, cleaning and preparing the Fins, and if we could obtain this 15 - 20 tons ex S.S. "Orwell" it would keep approximately 30 women in work for a month.

This is not a matter of any competition for the purpose of purchase.

We at the moment are the only Whale Fin cleaners in the North of England, Messrs. Devine and Company, of Old Ford, London are, we believe the only other firm who do a similar class of business in England. It is a trade that is very little known in England.

Is it not possible to cancel the licence in the case of Orwell, considering that this 15 - 20 tons means employment for say 200 people (mostly female workers) from the Raw material to the actual finished articles.

If necessary we can furnish you with further particulars and endorsement from the various users of the Whale Fins.

We should esteem it a favour if you will give this matter your very best attention, if we can only starve

the

the Germans from their sources of supply we are assured
of a more complete hold of the trade for the time when
they are in a position to try and regain same.

Awaiting your kind favour,

We remain,

Yours faithfully,

p.p. STUART AND THOMAS.

o COPY.

No. C.27320.

The statements contained in the extract from letter are correct being borne out in every particular by information supplied to me by the Merchants and Brokers as well as the users of whale-bone. The industry of fin cleaning is a new one in this country, Messrs. Stuart and Thomas as present being the only firm engaged in it. Arrangements have been concluded for establishing another cleaning plant in the outskirts of London, and this is expected to be in operation very shortly. Prior to the war Germany controlled the industry and the Corset makers in the United Kingdom were dependent for their supplies of whalebone upon that country.

The opportunity to secure for this country a trade upon which the manufacturers of Corsets must rely for their requirements, is within reach and the absolute prohibition of the export of whale fins would be of invaluable aid to the pioneers of the whale fin cleaning trade.

Unless this prohibition be established, it simply means that directly war is over, Hamburg will resume its old position as monopolists and the English Corset maker will again be compelled to buy from Germany either the whale bone or in its stead, the special steel which up to recently has had to be used in the make up of corsets.

The shortage in whale bone is being acutely felt and it is aggravated by the prohibition of import of corset steel which can be supplied by the U.S.A.

I am informed that in addition to the parcel in S.S. "Orwell", there is a parcel at Runcorn, just arrived and a second lot in the Thames.

THOMAS C. WALTON

5/10/16.

49956/1916.

Downing Street,

14 November, 1916.

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Bonar Law to acknowledge the receipt of your letter numbered C.27320 of the 18th October, relative to the question of prohibiting the export of whalefins (or finners) and to state for the information of the Board of Trade, that he is not aware of any objection from the point of view of the Colonial Office to the proposal for establishing a prohibition of export (List B) in respect of that commodity.

2. To make such a prohibition effectual it appears that it will be necessary to apply it to whale-fins (or finners) brought into British ports which would not, in the absence of a prohibition, be discharged there.

3. Mr. Bonar Law has, however, been informed by Mr. Geddès, of Messrs. David Geddès and Son, 45 Renfield Street, Glasgow, that the principal market for whale-fins and most of the factories using them are in Paris, and if this is correct the Board will no doubt take into consideration the needs of the French manufacturers.

4. I

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
(COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT)
BOARD OF TRADE.

4. I am to suggest that the Foreign Office should be invited to consider the advisability of giving notice of the intended prohibition to the Norwegian Whaling Companies through His Majesty's Minister at Christiania and the Norwegian Whaling Association.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) G. GRINDLE

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

No. 10.

Government House, Stanley.

9th January, 1917.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr Secretary Bonar Law's despatch No. 131 of the 21st November, and to submit herewith for your information copy of the instructions I have issued with regard to the export of whale fins (or finners) used as dunnage in the shipments of barrels of whale oil from this Colony.

9th January, 1917.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

Douglas Young
Governor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

&c.,

&c.,

&c.

Honourable Colonial Secretary,

I understand that in shipping whale oil whale fins (or finners) are used as dunnage to prevent the cargo of barrels of oil from breaking, and that as much as 15 to 20 tons of whale fins may be used in this respect.

Whale fins are a marketable commodity, and their exportation from this Colony to any place other than the United Kingdom any British Possession or Protectorate, without an export licence is a contravention of my proclamation of the 21st December, 1915, as well as, being a marketable commodity, a contravention of the Customs Ordinance unless declared to as an export.

In future Whale fins (or finners) ~~shall~~ not be allowed to be shipped or exported to any place, other than the United Kingdom etc., in terms of my proclamation, any fins used as dunnage to stow cargo ~~shall~~ be declared to under the Customs Ordinance, and the approximate quantity and value noted on the third person note to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies reporting the shipment of whale oil.

Whale fins are valued at a price of from £3 to £4 per ton according to quantity and condition. In some instances as much as £8 to £10 per ton has been asked by the Master of the Vessel for the fins.

Please send a copy of this Minute to the Treasurer and Deputy Collectors at South Georgia, South Shetlands and New Island for their information and guidance.

Douglas Young
Governor.