

1919

C.S.

Whaling

Compañía Argentina
de Pesca

No. 7 1 1

British Minister, B.A.

SUBJECT.

1919

9th August

Previous Paper.

Renewal of Leases, South Georgia, of the
Compañía Argentina de Pesca

MINUTES.

Letter from Cia. Argentina de Pesca 14. 8. 19.

H.E.,

I attach, in case Y.E. requires them, previous papers with regard to the granting of leases in South Georgia to the Compañía Argentina de Pesca, but ^{are} they badly kept and very confusing, and it may therefore be of use to Y.E. if I give here a short summary of the history of the Compañía as far as it is concerned with this Government.

The Compañía was started in Buenos Aires in 1905 with a capital of £40,000, its promoter being Captain C. A. Larsen ^c who had commanded the "Antartica" which was lost on the 1902 Swedish Expedition to the South Pole. He was in those days practically the only man with any practical experience of whaling in the antarctic and was undoubtedly the pioneer of the industry in these waters.

The Government of this Colony having been approached, ~~in~~ a lease of a certain portion of land at Cumberland Bay, South Georgia, was granted to the Compañía for a term of 21 years from the 1st January, 1906, at an annual rental of £250.

The terms of this lease grant to the Compañía certain facilities in the erection of plant for the treatment of whale
produce

Subsequent Paper.

produce &c., but do not give them any right to employ whale catchers.

In 1908 the Compañía secured a lease of Jason Harbour, an offshoot of Cumberland Bay, at an annual rental of £100 for a period of 18 years to take effect from the 1st January, 1909, thus making it coterminous with the lease of Cumberland Bay. Under the terms of this lease of Jason Harbour the Compañía secured the right to employ one floating factory and four whale catchers in connection with the land plant already provided for under the Cumberland Bay lease.

Since that date whaling operations have been prosecuted successfully by the Compañía until this date.

Before the war there was a certain German element in the Directorate of the Compañía but in 1914-5 the Board was entirely purged of any enemy traces and since that date its integrity has been vouched for by the British Legation in Buenos Aires.

In 1915 all whaling companies operating in the waters of the Colony and its Dependencies were compelled to ship all whale oil to the United Kingdom. A partial exception was however made in favour of the Compañía Argentina de Pesca who were permitted to ship their produce to Buenos Aires on giving a Bond to the effect that not less than 75% of the same would be re-exported to the United Kingdom. (Y.E. has on another paper - 729/19 - asked the Treasurer for information with regard to the whale oil exportation bond system and doubtless he will deal in more detail with the system of bonds enforced with regard to the Compañía).

I do not think that the Compañía, either in their letter to this Government of the 14th August or in their letter to the British Minister, Buenos Aires, of the 8th August, a copy of which is enclosed in this paper, claim for themselves anything but what they have a right to claim.

They

They are undoubtedly the pioneers of the industry. They run the only steamer communication between the Dependency and South America and thus provide the only means we have of communicating with the Stipendiary Magistrate. During the period between the date of their first leasing of their land, when the habits of the whale were little known and the legislative requirements of the industry could not be accurately gauged, until the present, although from time to time they have demurred at the increasing restrictions which have of necessity been imposed on their exploitation of the whale, yet it cannot be said that they have been anything but ready to carry out faithfully the terms of their leases and to fall in line with Government requirements. They in company with all other foreign (Norwegian) whaling companies have loyally carried out everything that has been required of them either by this Government or by the Imperial Government. No doubt it has been to their interest to do so and they knew it, but it is curious that the attitude of the foreign companies has been entirely opposite in appearance to that of the British Companies whose policy has always been one of bluff and bullying, of wheedling superiority and intimidation. (Messrs Salvesen's letter of the 8th January, 1919, in M.P. 758/19 on the subject of the erection of a slipway in Stanley for the repair of whale catchers, which I think Y.E. has seen, is only one of many of its kind). The policy of the British companies, probably on account of war conditions, has however so far succeeded that although they are in no

way the pioneers of the industry in these regions and came on the scenes comparatively late when others had taken the risk of proving that there was money to be made in the business, nevertheless they have obtained more and more prestige with the home authorities until, as it appears, they are in a sufficiently strong position to get for themselves permission to take out licences at a nominal figure for a far greater number of whale catchers than any of the foreign companies, *some of* which catchers they then sub-let to the foreign companies ~~xxxxxxlargerxxxxfiguresxxxx~~, and what the foreign companies pay them for vessels so sub-let is not known to me but can be guessed at.

I should not have troubled Y.E. with the last paragraph except that there are indications that the foreign companies feel that they are in some danger of being entirely ousted from the whaling grounds by the British companies (who are at present in a small minority as regards numbers) and I think this expressed desire on the part of the Compañia Argentina de Pesca to know some years in advance exactly how they stand with regard to future concessions in South Georgia is one of such indications.

Shall I submit for Y.E.'s signature a letter to the British Minister acknowledging with thanks the receipt of his letter, and write to the Compañia saying that their letter has been received, is receiving the attention of the Government and will be replied to at a later date?

The Forward
2nd October, 1919.

Office

Yes, please. As at A/. Merely a formal letter of acknowledgment.

Oct 13/19

T.R.S.

Letter to Lia. Com. di Pesca 28.10.19.

N.9.

Letter submitted for signature if appd.

Thy.
28.10.19

Letter to H. B. Mr. Charge d'Affaires, B. A.
28.10.19.



Buenos Aires,

August 9th. 1919.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which has been addressed to me by Mr. Miles A. Pasman, President of the Compañia Argentine de Pesca, (Argentine Fishing Company).

You are well aware of the position held by this Company. The Directors are well known to us; and from my own knowledge of the administration of the Company the report is quite favourable.

I have on this account agreed to forward to you the letter asking for the renewal of the whaling licence granted to the Company which appears to be shortly expiring.

I have sent copy of this Despatch and enclosure to the Foreign Office.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Requiescitur

His Excellency,

Hon. Douglas Young. C.M.G.

Port Stanley,

Falkland Islands.

ARGENTINE FISHING COMPANY.

Buenos Aires,

Copy.

August 3th. 1919.

Sir,

We hereby have the honour to address Your Excellency requesting your kind help in favour of the renewal of the whaling licence granted to the Compañia Argentina de Pesca by the Government of the Falkland Islands.

It was due entirely to efforts on the part of the initiators of our Company that the feeding grounds and migratory habits of whales were discovered in the South Atlantic.

Our whaling industry was established in 1904 at Cumberland Bay, South Georgia, which up to that date had been an uninhabited Island.

In 1906 after having exported whale products to England, the Government of the Falkland Islands, commenced the exercise of its jurisdiction over the Island and gave us a lease for 21 years of the lands required by us, with the right to exploit our whaling industry during the same term.

We possess a factory on shore of sufficient capacity to deal with our catch on the most modern lines, including a hydro-electric plant that enables us to dispense with large quantities of coal which otherwise would have to be imported. We also keep up the only line of regular communication between the Island and the River Plate by means of our ships which maintain a stock of fresh provisions and the traffic of passengers and mails.

Our

Our Capital investment amounts to over £300,000 of which a large proportion is represented by the oil factory and annexed installations on shore, which we are desirous of increasing by the addition of other appliances for the obtainment of higher yields.

The above data will suffice to show the importance of an early and anticipated decision regarding the renewal of our whaling licences for another term of 21 years, and the lease or sale of lands occupied by us, which we purpose soliciting from the Government of the Falkland Islands.

We take the liberty of asking Your Excellency's kind support in favour of this petition of ours, knowing that we can count on your good word in favour, based on what has come under the notice of the British Legation in connection with the action of our Company.

Begging Your Excellency to pardon us for thus calling upon you, believe us to be, Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

(Signed) MILES A. PASIAN.

Chairman of the
Compañia Argentina de Pesca.

His Excellency,

Sir Reginald Tower, K.C.M.G., C.V.O.

H. B. M. Minister.

711/19.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

No 711/19.

Government House,
Stanley.

26th October, 1919.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of Sir Reginald Tower's letter of the 9th August, 1919, forwarding a copy of a letter received by His Excellency from Mr Miles A. Passman, President of the Compania Argentina de Pesca, dated the 8th August, relative to the renewal of the Compania's leases of land in South Georgia.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your Excellency's
most obedient, humble servant,

Administrator.

His Excellency

Sir Claude Hallet, C.M.G.,

Esq., Esq., Esq.,

H. B. M. Chargé d'Affaires,

Buenos Aires.

7/11/19.

COMPAÑÍA ARGENTINA DE PESCA
SOCIEDAD ANÓNIMA

TELEGRAMAS "PESCA" BUENOS AIRES
LIEBER'S CODE

BUENOS AIRES, August 14th, 1919.
SAN MARTÍN 142



Sir,

In view of the necessity of investing more capital in improvements and modern appliances for the more efficient exploitation of our whaling industry, we hereby have the honour of addressing Your Excellency's Government with a request for the anticipated renewal of our leases for another term of 21 years.

We request that our renewed leases shall include our present rights, with the addition of the lake and intervening lands utilized by us for our hydro-electric power plant, and also the lake situated on the high lands at half a mile to the N.W. of Gryt-viken, with the intervening land for the amplification of our electric power, and the right to build dams and use the discharge of waters from the glaciers.

It is our intention to try the possibilities of converting part or all of the crude whale products into food and other manufactured commodities by means of hydrogenation and separation into their different components.

We hardly need recall the fact that it was entirely due to

To the Colonial Secretary
of the Falkland Islands,
Port Stanley

efforts on the part of the initiators of our Company that the feeding grounds and migratory habits of whales were discovered in the South Atlantic.

Our whaling industry was established in 1904 at Cumberland Bay, South Georgia, which up to that date had been an uninhabited Island.

Our factory on shore is of sufficient capacity to deal with our catch on the most economical lines, including a hydro-electric plant which enables us to dispense with large quantities of coal.

We keep up the only line of regular communication between the Island and the River Plate by means of our ships, which maintain a stock of fresh provisions and the traffic of passengers and mails.

Our Capital investment amounts to over £300.000 of which a large proportion is represented by installations on shore, which we are desirous of increasing by the addition of other appliances for the obtainment of higher yields.

We beg to point out the importance of an anticipated decision in accordance with our request, in order that we may be allowed to take due advantage of our position at the earliest date possible.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

Miles A. Pasmare

Chairman of the
Compañía Argentina de Pesca.

711/10

23th October,


19

Sir,

I am directed by the Administrator to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter of the 14th August, 1919, relative to the renewal of the leases of the Compañia Argentina de Pesca in South Georgia.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,


J.A. Colonial Secretary.

Wiles A. Nassman Esq.,

President,

Compañia Argentina de Pesca,

San Martin 142,

Buenos Aires.