

Ref: 19/88/2

24th July, 1951.

Dear Sir,

The authorities in the Union have been considering ways and means of developing Marion Island and they feel that it would be helpful to them if they could be supplied with copies of reports on horticulture, afforestation, livestock, etc. from the authorities in charge of various islands where conditions appear to be similar to those prevailing on Marion Island.

The Commonwealth Relations Office has suggested that the Scott Polar Research Institute may possibly be able to supply some useful information in this connection, and I am accordingly writing to enquire whether the Institute has published any reports of this nature which might be of interest.

Yours faithfully,

T. HEWITSON.
Political Secretary.

The Secretary,
Scott Polar Research Institute,
Cambridge.

TH/AG

Noted
A.G.
27/7
24.24/8

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON.
Political Secretary.

24. 5/9 - Noted
A.G.
27/7

TH/AG

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:
G. C. L. BERTRAM, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 2983
Telegrams: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

Your ref. 19/33/2

Mr. de Villiers
A.G.

6th August, 1951.

The Political Secretary,
South Africa House,
Trafalgar Square,
London, W.C.2.



Dear Sir,

I write to acknowledge your letter of 24th July about ways and means of developing Marion Island.

We are looking into the question for you and will write again when we have collected together some information.

Yours faithfully,

B.B. Roberts

(B. B. Roberts)

Mr. de Villiers
A.G.
15/12

Handwritten notes:
B.F. 25/11
Noted P.W. 25/10
B.F. 25/10
Noted
P.W. 4/10
25/9
Noted
P.W. 6/9
B.F. 9/8
Noted
P.W. 11/8

The Secretary,
Scott Polar Research Institute,
Cambridge.

TH/AG

Handwritten notes:
Noted
A.G. 27/7
24.24/8

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON,
Political Secretary.

Handwritten notes:
24. 5/9, Noted
A.G. 2/7

TH/AG

ENGLAND

CAMBRIDGE 2983
POLAR CAMBRIDGE

August, 1951.

Ref: 19/88/2

31st December, 1951.

Dear Sir,

Would you please refer to your letter of the 6th August in regard to the ways and means of developing Marion Island?

I wonder whether it is as yet possible for you to let us have any information on this subject.

Yours faithfully,

A. L. W. DE VILLIERS.

Acting Political Secretary.

The Secretary,
Scott Polar Research Institute,
Cambridge.

Adv/AG

B/F. 15/12. Noted A.G. 15/1

B/F. 20/11. Noted P.W. 25/10
B/F. 25/10. Noted P.W. 4/10
25/9. Noted P.W. 6/9
9/8. Noted P.W. 11/8

The Secretary,
Scott Polar Research Institute,
Cambridge.

TH/AG

Noted A.G. 27/7
24/8

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON.

Political Secretary.

24. 5/9. Noted A.G. 2/7

TH/AG

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:

G. C. L. BERTRAM, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 2983

Telegrams: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

List of enclosures.

- (1) EVANS, H.R. Plants which have flowered successfully in gardens of the Falkland Islands, 1944. [Port Stanley, Government Press, 1944], 12 p., 21 cm. [List of hardy perennials, biennials and annuals, half hardy annuals, shrubs and climbers, with flowering dates and brief notes.]
- (2) HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY. How to grow gardens at H.B.C. posts. Winnipeg, H.B.C., no date [about 1939]. [Manual designed for Company's northern posts in Canada.]
- (3) TUTIN, T.G. Horticulture in the Northwest Territories. Polar Record, Vol.4, No.26, 1943, p.78-80.
- (4) BINGHAM, E.W. A greenhouse in the Antarctic. Polar Record, Vol.6, No.43, January 1952, p.392-93. [Proof of article to be published this month on experimental greenhouse used in 1946-47 at Stonington Island in south Graham Land.]
- (5) HILYER, C.I. Food without soil (for man and beast). Hydroponics. Bournemouth, 1938 [Reprinted 1941].
- (6) and (7) Typescript reports dealing with the Goose Bay, Labrador, hydroponics project.
- (8) WALTERS, S. MAX. Hydroponics in Labrador. Polar Record, Vol.4, No.31, 1946, p.341-44.
- (9) RICHENS, R.H. Crop production in the Soviet Arctic. Polar Record, Vol.6, No.42, 1951, p.227-36.
- (10) DALLIMORE, W. The Falkland Islands. Forestry. Tussock grass. Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew), 1919, No.5, p.209-21, illus. [Account of various experimental plantings of trees and shrubs up to 1919, with recommendations made by Royal Botanic Gardens; notes on Tussock grass (Poa flabellata) in the Falkland Islands, and its introduction to Britain.]
- (11) DALLIMORE, W. Trees for the Falkland Islands. Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew), 1920, No.10, p.377-78. [List of plants, seeds and cuttings sent out with newly-appointed Forest Officer.]

/(12)

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON,

Political Secretary.

TH/AG

24. 5/9 - 11/10

A.C. 2/7

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:

G. C. L. BASTEN, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 1981

Telex: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

anything useful turns up. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you think additional details about any of the above points might be helpful in South Africa. In particular, we could probably help to acquire copies (or arrange for photocopies to be made) of most of the publications to which I have referred, if these are not available in South Africa. Meanwhile, I have not done this until we know more about the particular lines which are thought to be most promising.

Yours faithfully,

Brian Roberts

Brian Roberts.
(Senior Research Fellow)

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON,

Political Secretary.

24. 5/9 - HJW

25/23

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:

G. C. L. BERTRAM, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 2983

Telegrams: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

of the Colonial Development Corporation, whether he had any suggestions on this subject. He replied that the only comparable locality with which the Corporation has had experience is Tristan da Cunha. That venture, he says, is only possible on the profits of a highly priced speciality article (frozen crawfish) in a very specialized and wealthy market (United States). He doubts very much whether any fishery activity at Marion Island could be made to pay unless something analagous can be found.

General.

20. In 1939 a general investigation was undertaken of the possibilities of developing potential minor industries in the Falkland Islands. Enclosure (14) is a photocopy of the resulting report. Unfortunately this does not seem to provide any useful suggestions applicable to Marion Island except perhaps the collection of Kelp. If suitable species of Kelp are not more readily obtainable on the South African coast, and if there seems to be any practical possibility at Marion or Prince Edward Island, it might be worth making enquiries of the Technical Service Department of Alginate Industries Ltd., Walter House, Bedford Street, Strand, London, W.C.2. This firm has recently been investigating the possibilities of starting an industry in the Falkland Islands for the production of alginic acid. I imagine, however, that the lack of sheltered waters round the Prince Edward Islands would preclude any useful development in this direction.

21. I have been through all our literature on Alaska and have failed to find anything very relevant. It seems clear that, as far as agriculture and forestry are concerned, Icelandic and north Swedish experience, especially the former, is likely to be far more helpful. It appears also that there are no special developments in Svalbard or Jan Mayen which suggest application at Marion Island, ~~that~~ I have not already mentioned above. I have noted one small point, however, which shows that we should always keep an open mind on possibilities in developing these southern islands. There used to be a horse on Bjornøya (Bear Island) which was needed for work in the coal mine there. This animal thrived on an exclusive diet of fish. Cows, also, as I have seen myself, are sometimes fed partly on a fish diet in Iceland, when fodder is scarce in winter; but it makes the milk taste fishy!

22. I will continue in my efforts to obtain further information from France (about Iles de Kerguelen, Iles Crozet, Ile St. Paul and Ile Amsterdam) and from Iceland, and will write again later if

/anything

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON.

Political Secretary.

10/4. 5/9. H.C. 2/7

TH/AG

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:

G. C. L. BERTRAM, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 2983

Telegrams: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

Reindeer in 1909.

14. Pigs also have been a great success in South Georgia (where there is plenty of food refuse from the whaling stations and unlimited steam for heating their quarters). In the more southerly Dependencies of the Falkland Islands we have no winter experience yet, but pigs always do well in the summer in unheated shelters. At Marion Island I suppose the only problem would be an adequate food supply.

15. Fowls do very well in South Georgia with little more special care than in temperate climates. They lay well and bring off chicks, even in the very early spring when there is deep snow and temperatures are low. Further south, in the South Shetland Islands and Palmer Archipelago, the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey bases (and formerly the whaling station at Deception Island) had equal success; but found that it was essential to look after their fowls with special care, shutting them up at night and during cold spells or snow storms.

16. Pigeons have also done well (as pets, and to provide a change in diet) at South Georgia, where they thrive but usually lay infertile eggs. They are rather liable, however, to get blown out to sea in bad weather!

Seals and Penguins.

17. The possibility of some future rational exploitation of seals and penguins should be borne in mind. A prerequisite is adequate census work, which might be undertaken at an early stage. I make no further comments on this subject here in view of the experience and advice available in Cape Town from R.W. Rand, biologist to the Guano Islands Administration.

Fisheries.

18. Doubtless possibilities will be looked into. Investigations by the "Discovery" in South Georgia waters led to the conclusion that nothing important is likely to develop there. There is a great abundance of fishes (Notothenidae) close inshore that supply the local needs of the whaling stations, but the rather poor eating quality of the fish and the great distance from possible markets make it most unlikely that profitable fisheries can be established.

19. We asked Mr. H.H. Brown, Manager of the Fisheries Division

/of

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON,

Political Secretary.

At. 5/9. H.C. 2/7

TH/AG

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:

G. C. L. BEETRAM, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 2983

Telegrams: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

Livestock.

10. Here I think that perhaps French experience on Iles de Kerguelen is the most relevant. I have been trying to obtain for you a copy of the following publication, but so far without success:

BLANC, FRANÇOIS. Possibilités de l'exploitation animale dans les Dependencies Australes de Madagascar. Paris, Imprimerie R. Foulon, 29 Rue Deparcieux, 1947.

I have not seen this myself, but I believe it contains the full story of the French experiments with introduced sheep and goats; with the reasons for failure.

11. Sheep and cattle are fattened in South Georgia on Tussock grass (Poa flabellata) during the summer months to supply fresh meat for the whaling stations, but they cannot survive the winter in the open. Cows, of course, could be kept on Marion Island to provide fresh milk if this is thought economically worth while - witness the cow which is reported to have calved successfully at "Little America" on the Ross Shelf Ice during one of Admiral Byrd's expeditions. Presumably in that case the transport of hay, etc., and the specially heated cow house must have been quite an expensive undertaking, which may have been more in the nature of a "stunt".

12. A short general summary of livestock problems is:

PHILLIPS, RALPH W. Breeding livestock adapted to unfavourable environments. FAO Agricultural Studies, No.1, Washington, January 1948.

13. Wild Reindeer have been introduced with very considerable success from Norway into South Georgia, where they provide excellent sport and supplement the meat ration. They have also been successfully introduced into Tierra del Fuego. If the South African authorities are interested in this possibility for Marion Island I think we might be able to give some help. The secretary of the "Reindeer Council of Great Britain" lives in Cambridge and is now engaged on an experimental introduction of Reindeer from Sweden into Scotland. I am inclined to think that this may have considerable possibilities for Marion Island, but a thorough botanical survey would be necessary first, and careful consideration of the effects on the existing flora and fauna. No adverse effects have been noted in South Georgia since the first introduction of

/Reindeer

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON.

Political Secretary.

6/4. 5/9. H.C. 2/7

TH/AG

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:

G. C. L. BERTRAM, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 2983

Telegrams: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

7. I understand that, in addition to its activities with crawfish, the Tristan da Cunha Development Co. Ltd. is developing a line in seed potatoes. These are virus free and therefore provide a distinct possibility of a valuable export to South Africa. Potatoes are also grown successfully in prepared ground in the Falklands. It might therefore be worth looking into this further with Mr. C.H. Guggins, the Managing Director of the Tristan da Cunha Development Co. Ltd. who lives in Cape Town. Even quite a small-scale activity of this type would go far to promote a feeling of interest in useful work among the men occupying Marion Island.

Forestry.

8. It seems probable that forestry could be developed to some extent by methods similar to those used in the Falkland Islands. Sir Edward Salisbury notes that the importance of provenance should be stressed in obtaining seed from suitable sources and not simply from suitable species. Falkland Islands experience in the past may not indicate the best that can be done in these conditions, since I suspect that relatively little attention has been given to the latest ideas about provenance of seeds, nursery practice, protection of seedlings, drainage, etc. However, I feel sure that an approach to the Governor of the Falkland Islands (via the Commonwealth Relations Office in London) would meet with a helpful response should any seeds of specified plants or trees be wanted from the Falkland Islands. Enclosures (10), (11) and (12) are photocopies of the only three publications we have been able to trace on forestry in the Falklands. There is, however, an excellent general work by W. Davies: The grasslands of the Falkland Islands, published in 1939 by the Colonial Secretary's Office, Port Stanley. This can be purchased from Port Stanley, and would, I think, be of considerable interest to those who may be planning any agricultural or forestry experiments on Marion Island. Another publication which has been recommended is:

RODDA, T.E. Planting on sea coasts to combat heavy winds.
New Zealand Journal of Agriculture, Vol.72, No.4, 1946,
p.345-49.

9. On this general subject of forestry we asked for the advice of Dr. F.C. Ford Robertson, Director of the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau at Oxford. Enclosure (13) is a copy of his letter in reply to our enquiry. I have written to the Icelandic authorities whom he recommends, but have not yet received any reply. I will let you know when I do hear.

/10. Livestock.

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON,

Political Secretary.

6/4. 5/9. H.C. 23/7

TH/AG

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:

G. C. L. BERTRAM, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 2983

Telegrams: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

Greenhouses and Cold Frames.

4. Sir Edward Salisbury, for whose advice we asked, considers that greenhouses will be a necessity on Marion Island. With the aid of heating and supplementary lighting he considers that good crops of vegetables, fruit and flowers could be produced under glass throughout the year. Enclosure (4) is a proof of a short paper which is to be published in the January 1952 issue of the Polar Record about a small heated greenhouse erected at the Stonington Island base of the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey in south Graham Land. Conditions there are, of course, very much more rigorous than at Marion Island, and this preliminary experiment was undertaken by unskilled people. It suggests, however, what can be done in this line. Cold frames might also be of considerable value on Marion Island.

Hydroponics.

5. In view of the evident scarcity of good soil, the possibility of hydroponics (water culture) might be considered either in the open air, or in a greenhouse, or cold frames. Enclosure (5) is a short booklet on this subject by Mrs. C.I. Hilyer. Enclosures (6) and (7) are typescript notes on Canadian experience with hydroponics at Goose Bay in Labrador, and Enclosure (8) is a printed summary of (7) which was published in the Polar Record. On this subject, Sir Edward Salisbury particularly recommends two publications if the South African authorities wish to follow it up:

GERICKE, W.F. Soilless gardening. London, Putnam, 1940, 285 p.

The water-culture method for growing plants without soil.

California Agricultural Experimental Station, Circular No. 347
(Revised 1950), 33 p.

Crops.

6. Sir Edward Salisbury considers that wind breaks or protecting walls might enable some crops to be grown satisfactorily in the open, providing that adequate drainage and suitable soil conditions generally can be achieved. Enclosure (9) is a paper by R.H. Richens of the Commonwealth Bureau of Plant Breeding and Genetics, Cambridge, on crop production in the Soviet Arctic. This may provide some suggestions on hardy varieties. His conclusion is also relevant that crop production in such conditions is not an economic proposition but is considered to be well worth while for the psychological effect on the men living at isolated Polar stations.

/7. I understand

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON.

Political Secretary.

TH/AG

64. 5/9 - H. J. C. A. G. 4/7

SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Director:
G. C. L. BERTRAM, M.A., PH.D.

Telephone: CAMBRIDGE 2983
Telegrams: POLAR CAMBRIDGE

Your ref 19/88/2



9 January 1952

Dear Sir,

MARION ISLAND

I must apologise for the long delay in replying to your letter of 24th July last year and your reminder of 31st December about suggestions for possible ways of developing Marion Island. It has taken much longer than I expected to collect together the information required from widely scattered sources, and even now I am sorry to say that I am still unsuccessful with material about the French sub-Antarctic Islands and Iceland which I have been trying to obtain.

2. I will deal with our suggestions under various headings. The numbers in brackets refer to the numbered enclosures. I have assumed that economic considerations will not always be the most important factor, and that the aim is partly to make living conditions more attractive for the staff of the meteorological station.

Horticulture.

3. Experience from the Falkland Islands and various Arctic areas suggests that quite a lot can be done in this direction. Enclosure (1), obtained from Port Stanley, gives a list of plants which have flowered successfully in gardens in the Falkland Islands. Enclosure (2) is a manual of gardening prepared by the Winnipeg office of the Hudson's Bay Company for their northern posts. Enclosure (3) is a note by T.G. Tutin on horticulture in the Northwest Territories, Canada. Sir Edward Salisbury, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, recommends two publications dealing with related problems in Sweden:

SCHWANBON, N. Four years' experience relating to the winter hardiness of our herbage plants. Agri Hortique Genetica (Landskrona, Sweden), Bd.5, Nr.3-4, 1947, p.106-31. [in Swedish, with English summary].

NILSSEN, A. The winter hardiness of herbal, biennial and perennial ornamental plants. Agri Hortique Genetica, Bd.7, Nr.1-2, 1949, p.29-78. [in Swedish, with English summary].

The Acting Political Secretary,
South Africa House,
Trafalgar Square,
London, W.C.2.

/4.

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON.

Political Secretary.

64. 5/9 - H. S. C. A. G. - 4/7

TH/AG



19/88/2
9 January 1952

19/88/2

Surface Mail.

MARION ISLAND

14th January, 1952.

THE SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:

...for the long delay in receiving the...
...the possible ways of developing Marion Island...
...which I have now...

Marion Island Development.

With reference to your minute No P.M.1/96/2 of the 6th June last and our reply of the 23rd July, I enclose for your information copies of a letter now received from Dr. B. Roberts, Senior Research Fellow at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, together with the annexures referred to therein.

We have suitably thanked Dr. Roberts for the valuable information, which the Institute has obviously gone to a great deal of trouble to assemble.

A. L. W. DEVILLIERS

Acting Political Secretary.

AdV/PW

The Acting Political Secretary,
South Africa House,
Trafalgar Square,
London, E.C.4.

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON,
Political Secretary.

64. 5/9 - H. J. C. L.
A.G. 2/7

TH/AG

19/88/2

14th January, 1952.

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 9th with enclosures, which has been transmitted to the Union authorities.

We are most grateful for everything you and your colleagues have done to provide us with the very valuable information, which I am sure, will be of great interest and assistance in South Africa.

Yours faithfully,

A. L. W. DE VILLIERS.
Acting Political Secretary.

Dr. B.B. Roberts,
Scott Polar Research Institute,
Cambridge.

Adv/PW

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON.
Political Secretary.

64. 5/9. H52
A.G. 2/7
TH/AG

Die Hoë Kommissaris vir die
Unie van Suid-Afrika,
Londen.

P.M. 1/96/2.

Ontvangs word met dank erken van
u diensbrief 19/88/2 van 14 Januarie 1952.

PRETORIA.

[Handwritten Signature]
SEKRETARIS VAN BUITELANDSE SAKE.

21-2-1952

DIE SEKRETARIS VAN VERVOER:

Ontwikkeling van Marion Eiland.



Met verwysing na u diensbrief nr. M.11/14 van 22 Oktober 1951 en vorige korrespondensie, stuur ek hiernevens 'n afskrif van 'n brief asook dié daarin vermelde bylaes wat Dr. Roberts, "Senior Research Fellow" van die "Scott Polar Research Institute", Cambridge, op 9 Januarie 1952 aan die Unie Hoë Kommissaris te Londen gerig het.

Die Kantoor van die Hoë Kommissaris het Dr. Roberts reeds bedank vir die waardevolle inligting vervat in hierdie dokumente. Dit is duidelik dat hy baie moeite gedoen het om die inligting in te samel en u sal dit ook miskien wenslik ag om direk aan hom te skryf om hom daarvoor te bedank.

D. SPIES

SEKRETARIS VAN BUITELANDSE SAKE.

[Handwritten Signature]

The Commonwealth Relations Office have mentioned that the Scott Polar Research Institute may be able to provide useful information and we are writing to the Institute.

I shall be grateful if you would meanwhile inform me whether you wish this office to purchase copies of the publications listed above.

T. HEWITSON.

Political Secretary.

64. 5/9. H.C. 2/7

TH/AG

Tel: 3-3081

P.M. 1/96/2
M.11/6

Sanlam Buildings,
PRETORIA, S.A.

Dear Dr. Roberts,

26-4-1952
22-2-1954

Your letter of 9th January, 1952, and annexures, addressed to the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, London, containing suggestions for possible ways of developing Marion Island, has now been received in this office.

It is apparent from the comprehensiveness of your letter and the wide field covered that you have gone to a great deal of trouble in compiling these notes and I would like to convey to you my sincere thanks and appreciation for the very valuable document you have submitted.

Your letter and annexures are being carefully studied by my Department in consultation with the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry with a view to seeing in what way we can develop Marion Island.

Yours truly,

J. A. GIBSON

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT.

Dr. B. Roberts,
Senior Research Fellow,
Scott Polar Research Institute,
CAMBRIDGE. ENGLAND.

Die Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake,
PRETORIA.

Ter inligting. U diensbrief P.M. 1/96/2 van 2 Februarie 1952, verwys.

(get.) W. H. S. Pieter

SEKRETARIS VAN VERVOER.

L/CJ 18/3/52

T. HOWSON



P.M. 1/96/2

UNIE VAN SUID-AFRIKA.
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.



Departement van Buitelandse Sake.
Department of External Affairs.


PRETORIA.

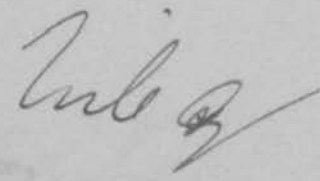
- 8 - 5 - 1952

The High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa,
LONDON.

Development of Marion Island.

I refer to your minute No. 19/88/2 of the 14th January, 1952, and enclose for your information a copy of minute No. M. 11/6 of the 26th April, 1952, in which the Secretary for Transport thanks Dr. B. Roberts for the useful information submitted by him in regard to the proposed development of Marion Island.


SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.



Ter inligting. U diensbrief P.M. 1/96/2 van 2 Februarie 1952, verwys.

(get) W.H.S. Lister
SEKRETARIS VAN VERVOER.

L/CJ 18/3/52

T. HENNING
SECRETARY



COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE
DOWNING STREET
LONDON, S.W.1

19/88/2.

Whitehall 2323/Ext.

Your Reference:

Please quote in reply:

WES 258/1

27th February, 1953.

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear de Villiers,

We are proposing to hold the Spring Meeting of the Polar Committee at 3 p.m. on Tuesday 24th March. I hope that this time and date will be convenient to you.

I wonder if you will have anything further to tell the Committee about developments on Prince Edward and Marion Islands?

*Yours truly,
A.H. Reed.*

(A.H. Reed)

A.L.W. de Villiers, Esq.,
South Africa House.

*Mr. v.H.
Mr. Hamilton suggests that you
take over our membership.
Will you let Reed
know? D.V.
3/3.*

on a copy
which the
the useful
used

~~SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.~~

W.H.S. Risten

Ter inligting. U diensbrief P.M. 1/96/2 van 2 Februarie 1952, verwys.

(get) W.H.S. Risten

SEKRETARIS VAN VERVOER.

L/CJ 18/3/52

T. HENNING

19/88/2

AIRMAIL

2nd March, 1953.

THE SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:

Meeting of the Polar Committee

We are informed by the Commonwealth Relations Office that the Spring Meeting of the Polar Committee will be held on the 24th March, and that it would be of interest if we could talk to the Committee about developments on Prince Edward and Marion Islands.

Your minute P.M.102/2 of the 29th May, 1951, contained some interesting material on Marion Island which we passed on to the Committee and I should be glad if any later information which is readily available and which you consider might usefully be presented to the Committee, could be sent to me before the 24th March.

A. L. W. DE VILLIERS.

Political Secretary

CvH/PW

Ter inligting. U diensbrief P.M. 1/96/2 van 2 Februarie 1952, verwys.

(get) W. H. S. Rister

SEKRETARIS VAN VERVOER.

L/CJ 18/3/52

19/88/2

3rd March, 1953.

Dear Reed,

Thank you for your letter WES.258/1 of the 27th February about the Spring Meeting of the Polar Committee which von Hirschberg will attend.

We have written to Pretoria about developments on Prince Edward and Marion Islands and if they can let us have some information before the 24th March we shall gladly pass it on to the Committee.

Your article P.M. 196/2 of the 24th Feb, 1952, contained some interesting material on which Island which we passed on to the Committee and I should be glad if any later information available and which you consider should be passed to the Committee, could be sent to us by the 24th March.

Yours sincerely,

A. L. W. DE VILLIERS.

A. H. Reed, Esq.,
Commonwealth Relations Office,
Downing Street, S.W.1.

F 6/4
24/3

CvH/PW

Noted
PW 3/3
Mr. von Hirschberg.
PW 23/3.

Ter inligting. U diensbrief P.M. 1/96/2 van 2 Februarie 1952, verwys.

(gat) W. H. S. Risten

SEKRETARIS VAN VERVOER.

L/CJ 18/3/52

T. HEY...

...

Projects in hand embrace meteorology, biology, botany, seismology, ionospherics, glaciology.

The radio branch is hub of a strategic communications network from Heard Island to incorporate New Amsterdam and Crozet Islands - other French possessions in the South Indian Ocean.

Weather officers hope to solve the mystery of why low pressure systems spring up each three days, causing the savage cyclones dreaded in the maritime belt that girdles Antarctica. With Heard's observations, there is no longer a meteorological and wireless desert to the south-west of Australia.

Mount Ross, 6400 feet, with hanging glaciers fringing its razor-back, is the outstanding peak of an unexplored central plateau on Kerguelen. Much of the archipelago is fairly flat and grassed, pocked with rocky blown-out craters.

Close to Port aux Francais are two fine natural air base sites. Plans for one include two international standard intersecting strips, of 3000 and 2000 metres.

The other airport area would contain two 2000-metres tarmacs. Fuel dumps will be available.

Co-operation with French interests in this region is of clear significance to Australia - which carries the unique responsibilities of territories from the equator to the Pole.

True, Colonel Sicaud did not say that the French Government itself had yet made any proposal for a sharing of expenses or joint use of the base at Kerguelen.

But, as he put it, when proposing toasts to the two nations during the recent visit of the A.N.A.R.E. expedition:

"It is our duty to stand together as allies in this part of the globe. We must be united and strong, for it is no place for weaklings".

Colonel Sicaud - who holds the reserve rank of commander with 15 years' military service - was the leader of the expedition. He is a high rank aviator, and is one of the best pilots in the world.

He said that France was building two air bases on the island, named Terraces, which is 50 miles long and 10 wide.

Runways would be dug in the hills. Work is going on for the first time being pushed ahead, with a 2000 ft runway about 1000 ft wide. A detailed flying boat was due soon.

Colonel Sicaud, narrated with enthusiasm. He was accompanied by Colonel Robert, who was under development. They would study - as large as the Corcoran and Sicaud were looking at the map - the island by N.E.A.R. Australia would be the first.

He added that, in case of another war, the base would be of importance. It would be the Cape of Good Hope with the Kerguelen base, and the Kerguelen base splendidly situated to protect them.

In case, Kerguelen's airstrip would be an important technical link in the trans-oceanic flights from London direct to Australia.

The base lay right in the centre of Great Circle (shortest) routes.

It was intended to bring aerodrome and port plans to fruition by about 1956.

A specially-built 86-ton motorship, carrying sails, is to arrive at Kerguelen in the next months to conduct topographical, scientific, geological and oceanographic surveys through the picturesque archipelago.

This will be aided by the Catalina, and may investigate settlement of other sectors of the islands.

Iles de Kerguelen are a dependency of Madagascar.

Since an initial expedition in 1949, the Ministry for French Overseas Territories has established a comfortable, permanent camp at Port aux Francais, in Baie du Morbihan.

Climate at the outpost is temperate compared with that of Heard Island - which stands in much colder Southern Ocean waters. Snow falls are rare, although winds rage constantly.

At Port aux Francais, a farm yard boasts a mule, milking cows, fowls, chickens in incubators, vegetables in hot-houses, pigs, goats - and rabbit pests.

Yet there are also penguins, seals and whales in the vicinity!

Within a year, the settlement hopes to be self-sufficient in food, by employing chemically augmented stock feeding.

French air force, army and civil service personnel enjoy what can only be termed remarkable comforts. Twelve hundred tons of supplies are dumped there by a relief ship every 12 months.

The spacious dining room would be accepted in a first-class hotel. Murals of Paris flavour back up a long, fluorescently-lighted liquor bar.

An excellently appointed hospital of 10 rooms is sewerred, possesses a tiled operating theatre - and plugs for electric shavers

Hot and cold water and central heating run throughout the encampment, neat private bedrooms have every convenience, macadamised roads will ultimately extend 1200 metres.

A priest is attached to the station. There is a full-time barman and also a team of Madagascan native boys to wait on table. The kitchen features a dish washing machine.

And, of course, no matter where they are, the French know how to cook.

Equipment, from scientific instruments to clothing, has been secured with nothing in mind but the best.

It all gives the impression of a well-run guest house.

Administrative and living quarters occupy two barrack-like structures of timber.

Spread around are a two-story radio and meteorological office, a modern power house, workshops, a dam with pumping station, solid store huts.

Hydro-electricity may be harnessed later. The strictly scientific programme is expanding rapidly.

/Projects

ALLIES IN ANTARCTICA

FRENCH ENTERPRISE IN THE KERGUELEN ISLANDS

Australia may one day be able to share the use of a new naval-air base being developed at the strategic Kerguelen Islands, 2300 miles south-west of Perth.

(The Chief of France's Southern and Antarctic Territories (Colonel Pierre Sicaud) gave this personal opinion frankly, in a special interview at the base).

Virtually unknown to most Australians, these French islands command attention now.

They are obvious crossroads in peace and war for main ship and air routes covering the Southern and South Indian oceans.

Colonel Sicaud said that maintenance of the outpost imposed financial strain on France. He believed that Australia or South Africa might contribute towards the expense.

"In return, they would gain invaluable meteorological, radio, harbour and aerodrome facilities", he said.

In the vast sea wastes, Iles de Kerguelen seem to have been placed by a providential hand as a perfect stepping-stone between Australia, South Africa and the Antarctic continent.

Nazi maritime raiders exploited them as a refuelling depot in the second world war; two armed vessels sank or captured more than 250,000 tons of Allied shipping. Australia's south-western flank may in the future come within range of any hostile airfields there.

Scientists of the Antarctic Research Expedition, after a year on Heard Island, made a courtesy call at the Kerguelens, 280 miles north of Heard Island, on the voyage home to Melbourne.

The French camp of 50 men offered superb hospitality. The arriving Australians were enthusiastically greeted by a salute of half a dozen blasts of gelignite on a headland.

Colonel Sicaud - who holds the reserve rank of commandant with French paratroop forces - has the Croix de Guerre, French Military Medal, British D.S.O., a high Dutch decoration, and is one of the Legion of Honour.

He said that France was building two major aerodromes on the main island, named Kerguelen, which is 90 miles long and 45 wide.

Hangars would be dug in the hills. Works to provide for seaplanes were being pushed ahead, with a 50 by 35 metres shore hangar. A Catalina flying boat was due soon.

Baie du Mobrhan, serrated with sheltered fiords and as spacious as Sydney Harbour, was under development. (The islands group - as large as the Corsicas and endowed with scores of anchorages - was mined by H.M.A.S. Australia during the war).

He added that, in event of another war, the Suez Canal might be impassable. Convoys round the Cape of Good Hope would then perform a crucial role, and the Kerguelens were splendidly situated to protect them.

In peace, Kerguelen's airstrips would be an important technical link in the trans-oceanic flights from South Africa to Australia.

The base lay right in the centre of Great Circle (shortest) courses.



19/88/2.

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE

DOWNING STREET

LONDON, S.W.1

CONFIDENTIAL

Whitehall 23239Ext.

Your Reference:

Please quote in reply: WES.147/43/1

16th June, 1953.

Don Von Hirschberg,

Thank you for your letter 19/88/2 of 6th June about French activities on Kerguelen Island.

You will have seen P(53)9, giving the results of the enquiries made by our Civil Air Attaché in Paris. Dr. Roberts of the Foreign Office has since commented that there is still quite a wide discrepancy between this information and what M. Sicaud had told him about his plans for further development (see minutes of P(53)1st Meeting, Item 8) and he intends to ask M. Sicaud for more details when the latter returns to Europe in a month or so.

Meanwhile, I enclose two copies of a press cutting from "Melbourne Age" which the Admiralty received in response to enquires made in Melbourne and which may be of interest to you. I shall of course, let you have any further information on this question that may come our way.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Ross

(R. Ross)

C.F.G. VON HIRSCHBERG, *Copy*
SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE.

Let me have file for.

French parachute forces - has the Croix de Guerre, French Military Medal, British D.S.O., a high Dutch decoration, and is one of the Legion of Honour.

He said that France was building two major aerodromes on the main island, named Kerguelen, which is 90 miles long and 45 wide.

Hangars would be dug in the hills. Works to provide for seaplanes were being pushed ahead, with a 50 by 35 metres shore hangar. A Catalina flying boat was due soon.

Baie du Mobrhan, serrated with sheltered fiords and as spacious as Sydney Harbour, was under development. (The islands group - as large as the Corsicas and endowed with scores of anchorages - was mined by H.M.A.S. Australia during the war).

He added that, in event of another war, the Suez Canal might be impassable. Convoys round the Cape of Good Hope would then perform a crucial role, and the Kerguelens were splendidly situated to protect them.

In peace, Kerguelen's airstrips would be an important technical link in the trans-oceanic flights from South Africa to Australia.

The base lay right in the centre of Great Circle (shortest) courses.

of a new
elen Islands,

rritories
on frankly,

nch islands

main ship
oceans.

ost imposed
ia or South

gical, radio,

o have been
tone between

ling depot in
red more than
estern flank
rfields there.

after a year
as, 280 miles

ity. The
a salute of

ommandant with

19/88/2

AIR BAG

Confidential

25th June, 1953.

THE SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:

French Activities on Kerguelen Island

We duly reported the information in your minute P.W.102/2 of the 23rd May, that you had no knowledge of French intentions to open an air route between South Africa and Australia, to the Secretary of the Polar Committee.

You will have seen in P(53)9 of the 11th May that the United Kingdom Civil Air Attache in Paris learned from the French authorities that the air-strip at Port-aux-Francais was constructed for emergency use only and would not be developed further. Dr. Roberts of the Foreign Office has since commented that there is still quite a wide discrepancy between this information and what Mr. Sicand had told him about his plans for further development (see minutes of the meeting of the Polar Committee on the 24th March, Item B) and he intends to ask Mr. Sicand for more details when the latter returns to Europe in a month or so.

Meanwhile, I enclose four copies of a press cutting from the "Melbourne Age" which the Admiralty received recently in response to enquiries made in Melbourne. You will see that there are a number of references to South Africa and Australia in relation to the Kerguelen Islands.

The United Kingdom authorities have undertaken to let us have any further information on this question that may come their way.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/PW

[Handwritten signature and date: 26/6]

19/88/2

25th June, 1953.

Dear Ross,

Thank you for your letter WES.147/43/1 of the 16th June about French activities on the Kerguelen Islands. The press article which you enclosed is likely to be of considerable interest to the South African authorities and I have accordingly passed it on to them.

I should be very grateful if, as you have stated, you would let us have any further information on this question that may come to your notice.

Yours sincerely,

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.

R. Ross, Esq., M.B.E.,
Commonwealth Relations Office.

CvH/PW

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/PW

[Handwritten signature]
26/6

CIVIL AIR ATTACHE,
BRITISH EMBASSY,
PARIS,
FRANCE.

SECRET

CA.67/53/488

12th June, 1953.

Kerguelen Islands

You will wish to know that the Naval Attache at this Embassy, in conversation recently with Admiral BARJOT, had the opportunity to ask a direct question about the airstrip on Kerguelen. The Admiral said that the present intention is to use this airstrip purely for emergency and for meteorological research. In the latter connection, the French hope to obtain the co-operation of the South African and Australian Governments in carrying out a survey to increase meteorological knowledge in this area, which at the present time they consider to be inadequate.

2. The Admiral continued that it is intended to increase this airfield to one which would be strategically useful when and if the money is forthcoming. There is no possibility of obtaining the necessary credits at the present time.

(Sgd) Raymond Birkett
Civil Air Attache

Ministry of Civil Aviation,
Ariel House,
Theobald's Road,
London, W.C.1.

the
e
Kingdom
t
sent
nd
he
can
crease
it
use
ent

POLITICAL SECRETARY

Mr. von Hirschberg

B.F. 14/7.
noted
P.W. 10/7.

P.W.
15/7.

CvH/JP

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/PW

DUPLICATE

WES 147/43/1

9 July, 1953.

SECRET

I am now able to give you some further information about French activities in the Kerguelen Islands which you requested in your letter of 25th June, No. 19/86/2. Another report has just been received from our Civil Air Attaché in Paris. I enclose a copy of this in the hope that it may be of interest to you.

2. I have sent a similar letter, together with a copy of the enclosure, to Morris, Colonial Office, Garvey, Foreign Office, Robinson, Canada House, Cooper, Australia House, Corner, New Zealand Government Offices and the Joint Planning Staff in the Ministry of Defence.

(R. Ross)

C.F.G. von Hirschberg, Esq.,
South Africa House.

CVH/JP

B.F. 14/7. Mr. von Hirschberg
noted P.W.
P.W. 15/7.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg,
Political Secretary

CVH/PW

the
e
ise
Kingdom
it
sent
nd
he
can
increase
nt
base
sent

CIVIL AIR ATTACHE,
BRITISH EMBASSY,
PARIS,
FRANCE.

SECRET

CA.67/53/488

12th June, 1953.

Kerguelen Islands

You will wish to know that the Naval Attache at this Embassy, in conversation recently with Admiral BARJOT, had the opportunity to ask a direct question about the airstrip on Kerguelen. The Admiral said that the present intention is to use this airstrip purely for emergency and for meteorological research. In the latter connection, the French hope to obtain the co-operation of the South African and Australian Governments in carrying out a survey to increase meteorological knowledge in this area, which at the present time they consider to be inadequate.

2. The Admiral continued that it is intended to increase this airfield to one which would be strategically useful when and if the money is forthcoming. There is no possibility of obtaining the necessary credits at the present time.

(Sgd) Raymond Birkett
Civil Air Attache

Ministry of Civil Aviation,
Ariel House,
Theobald's Road,
London, W.C.1.

CvH/JP

B.F. 14/7.
noted
P.W.
10/7.

Mr. von Hirschberg
P.W.
15/7.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/PW

DUPLICATE

WES 147/43/1

9 July, 1953.

SECRET

I am now able to give you some further information about French activities in the Kerguelen Islands which you requested in your letter of 25th June, No. 19/88/2. Another report has just been received from our Civil Air Attaché in Paris. I enclose a copy of this in the hope that it may be of interest to you.

2. I have sent a similar letter, together with a copy of the enclosure, to Morris, Colonial Office, Garvey, Foreign Office, Robinson, Canada House, Cooper, Australia House, Corner, New Zealand Government Offices and the Joint Planning Staff in the Ministry of Defence.

(R. Ross)

Ministry of Civil Aviation,
C.F.G. von Hirschberg, Esq.,
South Africa House.

CvH/JP

B.F. 14/7.
noted
P.W. 10/7.

Mr. von Hirschberg
P.W.
15/7.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/PW

he
ease
ul
ingdom
ent
d
e
an
crease
it
ise
ent

CIVIL AIR ATTACHE,
BRITISH EMBASSY,
PARIS,
FRANCE.

SECRET

CA.67/53/488

12th June, 1953.

Kerguelen Islands

You will wish to know that the Naval Attache at this Embassy, in conversation recently with Admiral BARJOT, had the opportunity to ask a direct question about the airstrip on Kerguelen. The Admiral said that the present intention is to use this airstrip purely for emergency and for meteorological research. In the latter connection, the French hope to obtain the co-operation of the South African and Australian Governments in carrying out a survey to increase meteorological knowledge in this area, which at the present time they consider to be inadequate.

2. The Admiral continued that it is intended to increase this airfield to one which would be strategically useful when and if the money is forthcoming. There is no possibility of obtaining the necessary credits at the present time.

(Sgd) Raymond Birkett
Civil Air Attache

Ministry of Civil Aviation,
Ariel House,
Theobald's Road,
London, W.C.1.

CvH/JP

B.F. 14/7. Mr. von Hirschberg
noted P.W.
P.W. 15/7.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/EW

[Handwritten signature]

DUPLICATE

WES 147/43/1

9 July, 1953.

SECRET

I am now able to give you some further information about French activities in the Kerguelen Islands which you requested in your letter of 25th June, No. 19/88/2. Another report has just been received from our Civil Air Attaché in Paris. I enclose a copy of this in the hope that it may be of interest to you.

2. I have sent a similar letter, together with a copy of the enclosure, to Morris, Colonial Office, Garvey, Foreign Office, Robinson, Canada House, Cooper, Australia House, Corner, New Zealand Government Offices and the Joint Planning Staff in the Ministry of Defence.

(Sgd) Raymond Hiskett

(R. Ross)

Ministry of Civil Aviation,
C.F.G. von Hirschberg, Esq.,
South Africa House.

CvH/JP

B.F. 14/7. Mr. von Hirschberg
noted P.W.
P.W. 10/7. 15/7.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/PW

SECRET

CA.67/53/488

CIVIL AIR ATTACHE,
BRITISH EMBASSY,
PARIS,
FRANCE.

12th June, 1953.

Kerguelen Islands

You will wish to know that the Naval Attache at this Embassy, in conversation recently with Admiral BARJOT, had the opportunity to ask a direct question about the airstrip on Kerguelen. The Admiral said that the present intention ~~is~~ to use this airstrip purely for emergency and for meteorological research. In the latter connection, the French hope to obtain the co-operation of the South African and Australian Governments in carrying out a survey to increase meteorological knowledge in this area, which at the present time they consider to be inadequate.

2. The Admiral ^{added} continued that it ~~is~~ intended to increase this airfield to one which would be strategically useful when and if the money ~~is~~ forthcoming. There ~~is~~ no possibility of obtaining the necessary credits at the present time. //

(Sgd) Raymond Birkett

Civil Air Attache

Ministry of Civil Aviation,
Ariel House,
Theobald's Road,
London, W.C.1.

CvH/JP

B.F. 14/7. Mr. von Hirschberg
noted P.W.
P.W. 10/7. 15/7.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/PW

[Handwritten signature]
26/6



COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE
DOWNING STREET
LONDON, S.W.1

Whitehall 2323/Ext.

Your Reference:

Please quote in reply: WES 147/43/1

8th July, 1953.

SECRET

Dear Von Hirschberg,

I am now able to give you some further information about French activities in the Kerguelen Islands which you requested in your letter of 25th June, No. 19/88/2. Another report has just been received from our Civil Air Attaché in Paris. I enclose a copy of this in the hope that it may be of interest to you.

2. I have sent a similar letter, together with a copy of the enclosure, to Morris, Colonial Office, Garvey, Foreign Office, Robinson, Canada House, Cooper, Australia House, Corner, New Zealand Government Offices and the Joint Planning Staff in the Ministry of Defence.

Yours sincerely

R Ross

(R. ROSS)

C.F.G. von Hirschberg, Esq.,
South Africa House.

the
the
se
Kingdom
ut
esent
and
the
ican
increase
sent
case
resent

CvH/JP

B.F. 14/7.
noted

P.W.
10/7.

Mr. von Hirschberg

P.W.
15/7.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

CvH/PW

[Handwritten signature]

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE
DOWNING STREET
LONDON, S.W.1

19/88/2

13th July, 1953.

Dear Ross,

I am much obliged to you for the further information about French activities in the Kerguelen Islands which you sent me with your letter WES.147/43/1 of the 8th July. I have informed the Department of External Affairs along the lines of the letter of the Civil Air Attache in Paris.

Yours sincerely,

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.

R. Ross, Esq., M.B.E.,
Commonwealth Relations Office,
Downing Street,
S.W.1.

the
the
Kingdom
ut
esent
and
the
ican
increase
sent
rease
resent

FB

CvH/JP

*B.F. 14/7. Mr. von Hirschberg
noted P.W.
P.W. 10/7. 15/7.*

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.
Political Secretary

[Handwritten signature]
26/6

CvH/PW

projects in hand embrace meteorology, biology, botany, seismology, ionospheric, glaciology.

The radio branch is hub of a strategic communications network from Heard Island to incorporate New Amsterdam and Crozet Islands - other French possessions in the South Indian Ocean.

Weather officers hope to solve the mystery of why low pressure systems spring up each three days, causing the savage cyclones dreaded in the maritime belt that girdles Antarctica. With Heard's observations, there is no longer a meteorological and wireless desert to the south-west of Australia.

Mount Ross, 6400 feet, with hanging glaciers fringing its razor-back, is the outstanding peak of an unexplored central plateau on Kerguelen. Much of the archipelago is fairly flat and grassed, pocked with rocky blown-out craters.

Close to Port aux Francais are two fine natural air base sites. Plans for one include two international standard intersecting strips, of 3000 and 2000 metres.

The other airport area would contain two 2000-metres tarmacs. Fuel dumps will be available.

Co-operation with French interests in this region is of clear significance to Australia - which carries the unique responsibilities of territories from the equator to the Pole.

True, Colonel Sicaud did not say that the French Government itself had yet made any proposal for a sharing of expenses or joint use of the base at Kerguelen.

But, as he put it, when proposing toasts to the two nations during the recent visit of the A.N.A.R.E. expedition:

"It is our duty to stand together as allies in this part of the globe. We must be united and strong, for it is no place for weaklings".

It was intended to bring aerodrome and port plans to fruition by about 1956.

A specially-built 86-ton motorship, carrying sails, is to arrive at Kerguelen in the next months to conduct topographical, scientific geological and oceanographic surveys through the picturesque archipelago.

This will be aided by the Catalina, and may investigate settlement of other sectors of the islands.

Iles de Kerguelen are a dependency of Madagascar.

Since an initial expedition in 1949, the Ministry for French Overseas Territories has established a comfortable, permanent camp at Port aux Francais, in Baie du Morbihan.

Climate at the outpost is temperate compared with that of Heard Island - which stands in much colder Southern Ocean waters. Snow falls are rare, although winds rage constantly.

At Port aux Francais, a farm yard boasts a mule, milking cows, fowls, chickens in incubators, vegetables in hot-houses, pigs, goats - and rabbit pests.

Yet there are also penguins, seals and whales in the vicinity!

Within a year, the settlement hopes to be self-sufficient in food, by employing chemically augmented stock feeding.

French air force, army and civil service personnel enjoy what can only be termed remarkable comforts. Twelve hundred tons of supplies are dumped there by a relief ship every 12 months.

The spacious dining room would be accepted in a first-class hotel. Murals of Paris flavour back up a long, fluorescently-lighted liquor bar.

An excellently appointed hospital of 10 rooms is sewered, possesses a tiled operating theatre - and plugs for electric shavers.

Hot and cold water and central heating run throughout the encampment, neat private bedrooms have every convenience, macadamised roads will ultimately extend 1200 metres.

A priest is attached to the station. There is a full-time barman and also a team of Madagascan native boys to wait on table. The kitchen features a dish washing machine.

And, of course, no matter where they are, the French know how to cook.

Equipment, from scientific instruments to clothing, has been secured with nothing in mind but the best.

It all gives the impression of a well-run guest house.

Administrative and living quarters occupy two barrack-like structures of timber.

Spread around are a two-story radio and meteorological office, a modern power house, workshops, a dam with pumping station, solid store huts.

Hydro-electricity may be harnessed later. The strictly scientific programme is expanding rapidly.

COPY.

SPARE COPY.

ALLIES IN ANTARCTICA

FRENCH ENTERPRISE IN THE KERGUELEN ISLANDS

Australia may one day be able to share the use of a new naval-air base being developed at the strategic Kerguelen Islands, 2300 miles south-west of Perth.

(The Chief of France's Southern and Antarctic Territories (Colonel Pierre Sicaud) gave this personal opinion frankly, in a special interview at the base).

Virtually unknown to most Australians, these French islands command attention now.

They are obvious crossroads in peace and war for main ship and air routes covering the Southern and South Indian oceans.

Colonel Sicaud said that maintenance of the outpost imposed financial strain on France. He believed that Australia or South Africa might contribute towards the expense.

"In return, they would gain invaluable meteorological, radio, harbour and aerodrome facilities", he said.

In the vast sea wastes, Iles de Kerguelen seem to have been placed by a providential hand as a perfect stepping-stone between Australia, South Africa and the Antarctic continent.

Nazi maritime raiders exploited them as a refuelling depot in the second world war; two armed vessels sank or captured more than 250,000 tons of Allied shipping. Australia's south-western flank may in the future come within range of any hostile airfields there.

Scientists of the Antarctic Research Expedition, after a year on Heard Island, made a courtesy call at the Kerguelens, 280 miles north of Heard Island, on the voyage home to Melbourne.

The French camp of 50 men offered superb hospitality. The arriving Australians were enthusiastically greeted by a salute of half a dozen blasts of gelignits on a headland.

Colonel Sicaud - who holds the reserve rank of commandant with French paratroop forces - has the Croix de Guerre, French Military Medal, British D.S.O., a high Dutch decoration, and is one of the Legion of Honour.

He said that France was building two major aerodromes on the main island, named Kerguelen, which is 90 miles long and 45 wide.

Hangars would be dug in the hills. works to provide for seaplanes were being pushed ahead, with a 50 by 35 metres shore hangar. A Catalina flying boat was due soon.

Baie du Mabrhan, serrated with sheltered fiords and as spacious as Sydney Harbour, was under development. (The islands group - as large as the Corsicas and endowed with scores of anchorages - was mined by H.M.A.S. Australia during the war).

He added that, in event of another war, the Suez Canal might be impassable. Convoys round the Cape of Good Hope would then perform a crucial role, and the Kerguelens were splendidly situated to protect them.

In peace, Kerguelen's airstrips would be an important technical link in the trans-oceanic flights from South Africa to Australia.

The base lay right in the centre of Great Circle (shortest) courses.

It/....

projects in hand embrace meteorology, biology, botany, seismology, ionospherics, glaciology.

The radio branch is hub of a strategic communications network from Heard Island to incorporate New Amsterdam and Crozet Islands - other French possessions in the South Indian Ocean.

Weather officers hope to solve the mystery of why low pressure systems spring up each three days, causing the savage cyclones dreaded in the maritime belt that girdles Antarctica. With Heard's observations, there is no longer a meteorological and wireless desert to the south-west of Australia.

Mount Ross, 6400 feet, with hanging glaciers fringing its razor-back, is the outstanding peak of an unexplored central plateau on Kerguelen. Much of the archipelago is fairly flat and grassed, pocked with rocky blown-out craters.

Close to Port aux Francais are two fine natural air base sites. Plans for one include two international standard intersecting strips, of 3000 and 2000 metres.

The other airport area would contain two 2000-metres tarmacs. Fuel dumps will be available.

Co-operation with French interests in this region is of clear significance to Australia - which carries the unique responsibilities of territories from the equator to the Pole.

True, Colonel Sicaud did not say that the French Government itself had yet made any proposal for a sharing of expenses or joint use of the base at Kerguelen.

But, as he put it, when proposing toasts to the two nations during the recent visit of the A.N.A.R.E. expedition:

"It is our duty to stand together as allies in this part of the globe. We must be united and strong, for it is no place for weaklings".

It was intended to bring aerodrome and port plans to fruition by about 1956.

A specially-built 86-ton motorship, carrying sails, is to arrive at Kerguelen in the next months to conduct topographical, scientific geological and oceanographic surveys through the picturesque archipelago.

This will be aided by the Catalina, and may investigate settlement of other sectors of the islands.

Iles de Kerguelen are a dependency of Madagascar.

Since an initial expedition in 1949, the Ministry for French Overseas Territories has established a comfortable, permanent camp at Port aux Francais, in Baie du Morbihan.

Climate at the outpost is temperate compared with that of Heard Island - which stands in much colder Southern Ocean waters. Snow falls are rare, although winds rage constantly.

At Port aux Francais, a farm yard boasts a mule, milking cows, fowls, chickens in incubators, vegetables in hot-houses, pigs, goats - and rabbit pests.

Yet there are also penguins, seals and whales in the vicinity!

Within a year, the settlement hopes to be self-sufficient in food, by employing chemically augmented stock feeding.

French air force, army and civil service personnel enjoy what can only be termed remarkable comforts. Twelve hundred tons of supplies are dumped there by a relief ship every 12 months.

The spacious dining room would be accepted in a first-class hotel. Murals of Paris flavour back up a long, fluorescently-lighted liquor bar.

An excellently appointed hospital of 10 rooms is sewered, possesses a tiled operating theatre - and plugs for electric shavers.

Hot and cold water and central heating run throughout the encampment, neat private bedrooms have every convenience, macadamised roads will ultimately extend 1200 metres.

A priest is attached to the station. There is a full-time barman and also a team of Madagascan native boys to wait on table. The kitchen features a dish washing machine.

And, of course, no matter where they are, the French know how to cook.

Equipment, from scientific instruments to clothing, has been secured with nothing in mind but the best.

It all gives the impression of a well-run guest house.

Administrative and living quarters occupy two barrack-like structures of timber.

Spread around are a two-story radio and meteorological office, a modern power house, workshops, a dam with pumping station, solid store huts.

Hydro-electricity may be harnessed later. The strictly scientific programme is expanding rapidly.

COPY.

ALLIES IN ANTARCTICA

FRENCH ENTERPRISE IN THE KERGUELEN ISLANDS

Australia may one day be able to share the use of a new naval-air base being developed at the strategic Kerguelen Islands, 2300 miles south-west of Perth.

(The Chief of France's Southern and Antarctic Territories (Colonel Pierre Sicaud) gave this personal opinion frankly, in a special interview at the base).

Virtually unknown to most Australians, these French islands command attention now.

They are obvious crossroads in peace and war for main ship and air routes covering the Southern and South Indian oceans.

Colonel Sicaud said that maintenance of the outpost imposed financial strain on France. He believed that Australia or South Africa might contribute towards the expense.

"In return, they would gain invaluable meteorological, radio, harbour and aerodrome facilities", he said.

In the vast sea wastes, Iles de Kerguelen seem to have been placed by a providential hand as a perfect stepping-stone between Australia, South Africa and the Antarctic continent.

Nazi maritime raiders exploited them as a refuelling depot in the second world war; two armed vessels sank or captured more than 250,000 tons of Allied shipping. Australia's south-western flank may in the future come within range of any hostile airfields there.

Scientists of the Antarctic Research Expedition, after a year on Heard Island, made a courtesy call at the Kerguelens, 280 miles north of Heard Island, on the voyage home to Melbourne.

The French camp of 50 men offered superb hospitality. The arriving Australians were enthusiastically greeted by a salute of half a dozen blasts of gelignite on a headland.

Colonel Sicaud - who holds the reserve rank of commandant with French paratroop forces - has the Croix de Guerre, French Military Medal, British D.S.O., a high Dutch decoration, and is one of the Legion of Honour.

He said that France was building two major aerodromes on the main island, named Kerguelen, which is 90 miles long and 45 wide.

Hangars would be dug in the hills, works to provide for seaplanes were being pushed ahead, with a 50 by 35 metres shore hangar. A Catalina flying boat was due soon.

Baie du Mabrhan, serrated with sheltered fiords and as spacious as Sydney Harbour, was under development. (The islands group - as large as the Corsicas and endowed with scores of anchorages - was mined by H.M.A.S. Australia during the war).

He added that, in event of another war, the Suez Canal might be impassable. Convoys round the Cape of Good Hope would then perform a crucial role, and the Kerguelens were splendidly situated to protect them.

In peace, Kerguelen's airstrips would be an important technical link in the trans-oceanic flights from South Africa to Australia.

The base lay right in the centre of Great Circle (shortest) courses.

construction of an air strip.

Commander Macbean said that the French Admiral within whose command the islands fell was a very energetic officer and might conceivably be having the constructional work carried out for strategic reasons.

During May the United Kingdom Civil Air Attaché in Paris reported that he had been able to obtain further information from the French authorities about the air-strip. It was 1100 yards long, had been constructed for emergency use and would not be developed further.

On the 23rd May (P.M.102/2), External Affairs wrote that neither they nor the Department of Transport had any knowledge of French intentions to open an air route between South Africa and Australia.

... We remained in close touch with the United Kingdom authorities and on the 25th June sent the Department copies of a press cutting from the "Melbourne Age" which the Admiralty had received in response to enquiries made in Melbourne which contained a number of references to South Africa and Australia in relation to the Kerguelen Islands. A copy is enclosed. We also reported that quite a wide discrepancy still existed between the information received by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and what M. Sicaud had told Dr Roberts and that the latter intended to ask M. Sicaud for more details on his return to France in a month or so.

On the 9th July we reported to External Affairs (No.19/88/2) that the Naval Attaché at the United Kingdom Embassy in Paris, in conversation with Admiral Barjot, had had an opportunity to ask a direct question about the air-strip on Kerguelen. The Admiral had said that the present intention was to use this air-strip purely for emergency and for meteorological research. In the latter connection, the French hoped to obtain the co-operation of the South African and Australian Governments in carrying out a survey to increase meteorological knowledge in this area, which at the present time they considered to be inadequate. It was intended to increase this airfield to one which would be strategically useful when and if the money was forthcoming. There was no possibility of obtaining the necessary credits at the present time.

C. F. G. von Hirschberg.

Political Secretary.

CvH/JvN