

S
1471

CONFIDENTIAL

CLOSED
UNTIL
1988

WESTERN & UNITED NATIONS DEPT.

FILE BEGINS 15-6-54 ENDS

PART

PART

FILE TITLE

Establishment of a South African
weather station in the Antarctic

FILE NUMBER

WES

1471/4

D035/7096

INDEX HEADINGS

FILE NUMBER

WES 1471/4

Antarctic
Unif South Africa

SUMMARY OF INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRANSMISSION AND STORAGE IN THE COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE (DOWNING STREET AND KING CHARLES STREET) OF TOP SECRET, SECRET, AND CONFIDENTIAL FILES

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CONFIDENTIAL

C.R.O.R.12.

Have we pp on Bouvet Island or on South African weather stations?

H. Smedley
16. vi. 54

Mr. Greenhill.

We apparently have nothing except the pp on the Prince Edward + Marion Islands (F2876/20 Delno). May I leave this to you? It occurred to me that it was for the South Africans to take the initiative in circulating info to the Polar C. I. rather than ourselves. But we wd, I suppose, prompt them.

H. S. 19/vi/54

I have spoken this morning with Mr. J. J. Becker - South Africa House. He agrees to find out more about this from his G. out. and that subsequently we might well make the South Africa more the subject of a Polar Committee Paper. B.U. in 14 days.

26.
6.

VTT

B.U. as above.

5.
7.

VTT

Mr. Greenhill

B.U. as per memo of 26/6.

24/7/54 ← 10/7.

B.U. is 14 new days (Mr. Barker was not available today, but he would have let us know if there had been anything or this anyway).

(Bly) 13.
7.

222 Mr. Greenhill

B.U. is above.

27/7.

Nothing to hand yet (I spoke to Mr. Bicker). B.U. is 1 month. 25/8/54

(Bly) 28.
7.

24

Mr. Greenhill

B.U. is above

25/8.

And another month.

(Bly) 26.
8.

9 South Africa Hse. - 17/8/54 - 2.10.54

letter hw. Copy to Mr Hunt Pretoria

w/c of (2) w/c memo ref (1).

J. Medley
6.x.54

4

To FD. (M.L. Eschell) —
w/c (3) + encls — 5/10 — 5/11/54

5

To S.D. (S.R. J. Dent) —
w/c (3) + encls 7 (4) — Encls — 5/10/54

6 F.D.S.C. ————— F.D.S.C. (54) 12 ————— 29.9.54.
MEJ 60/3/54

This does not merit circulation to the Polan C' Bee
even if it were a UK + not a Union document.

Put by

H.P. 8/1/54

MA

4 Extract
7/1 Extract
7/5 Extract

Times

New Chronicle

Daily Telegraph

26.1.54
3.2.54
7.2.54

South Africa have seem to have

slipped up in passing information relevant to
(3) a des. file. It is now a bit late to
follow this up, but B.U. before the
next Polan Committee meeting with a
view to asking the Union representative to
tell the Committee about the Soviet
Soud adventure.

Noted
W.S. 1/10/54

Bly 21.
1.

MA

In view of later press announcements I have spoken and written to Mr. van Hirschberg.

(Bly) 9.
2.

~~PM~~

8 To: S. Africa House — C. F. G. Hirschberg
— Sec - 10/2/53—

~~PM~~

9. South Africa House — (C.F.G. van Hirschberg)

19/88/2 ————— 11.2.55.

B.U. in one month if no follow up to (9) has been received.

(Bly) 12.
2.

~~PM~~

Mr Greenhill

B.U. as above.

11A.
12/5.

Dispatch letter and then attach recent cutting from the "Times" on this subject.

(3) in
203.07/1/2.

(Bly) 14.
3.

10 To: S. Africa House — C. F. G. Van Hirschberg
— Sec - 15/3/53—

Bring up to date and B.U. in one month

note. (Bly) 18.
2.

11. S. Africa House — 19/88/2 — 16.3.56

MA

Ph. *WES*

1/4

MA

12. A. Comm. Union — A/15211/7 — 7/11/56. ? 10.56

memo
copy - WES 147/3
copy - " 147/52/1

12A I.F.S. Vincent Esq F.O. — ~~reference to~~ — 5-10-56
copy - WES 147/53/1
" 147/3

13. MA-Willis Esq CO - w/c(12) + encl - 5-10-56

Note

to Mr UK
what about
South Africa?

Mr Clift (F.O. American Dept.) telephoned to say that provisional F.O. opinion on Bowvet was that it had little strategic importance + that it would be impracticable to stop the Russians from setting up a weather station there if they wanted to. The only way to keep an eye on their activities seemed to be through the attachment of Norwegian scientists; + the F.O. was ~~working~~ in touch with our Oslo Embassy on the subject. Mr Clift thought we should await the outcome of this before saying anything to the S. Africans.

J.P. 31/10

Mr Jasper -
under action.

I shall, of course, keep the above

J.P. 1/11

Mr. Price-Jones

Mr. Stewart asked about

this last night. I must

the F.O. might be looked

for an answer in 2 wks.

It is an important question for

South Africa.

MS

2/11

B/U 2 weeks. JPJ 2/11

4/11

Mr. Price-Jones.

Acid. v. min. above.

By

21.11.56

B/U 2 weeks after issue of my letter
to F.O. (Mr Vincent).

JPJ 28/11

14. I.F.S. Vincent, Esq.,

Foreign Office

5/0

28/11/56

Mr Price Jones

Your B/U of 28/11 please

KB 2203 28/12

The filing is
correct. This
has been dealt with
in a letter from
me to Mr Stewart?
PC, speak. JPJ 28/12

15. F.O. — A. 15211/8 — 5-12-56.

16 J.G. Stewart — S.A. House — 17/12/56

17 S.A. House — 19/88/2 — 15/12/56

Mr Price Jones

Your mem. of 28/12. I have transferred (15)(16) - (17) to this file which seems to clear the picture. May this file now P. b. please

K6. R. 203. 11/1.

P/B WPJ 11/1

[Handwritten mark]

18 S.A. House — 19/88/2 — 3/5/57.
copy on WES 147/53/2

C.D. 5
R B 45

020

001

Please send copy of (18) to F.O (Mr Leon Vincent) and C.O (Mr Willis) w/ copies of (15).

ad. 7/5

Mr Price Jones to see.

19 To Foreign Office (Mr Leon Vincent)
Colonial Office (Mr MA. Willis)

Cape at (18) w/amps

10/5/57

see on envelope

2/5

147/53/2

Return to
Mr. Price-Jones
7/1/57

18



Telephone: WHITEHALL 4488.
Telegraphic Address:—
"OPPOSITELY, LESQUARE, LONDON."

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
LONDON, W. C. 2.

19/66/2.

Confidential

RECEIVED
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
6 - MAY 1957
LOCATION

3rd May, 1957.

Copy on WES 147/53/2

Dear Price-Jones,

(16)

Will you please refer to your letter to Stewart of the 17th December, 1956, reference WES.147/53/2, in which you posed certain questions relating to Bouvet Island. We have now had a reply from the Union which we have been asked to convey to you on a confidential basis.

According to the exchange of letters during October, 1956, between Admiral Sir A. Day, Co-ordinator of the International Geophysical Year, and Professor Bourkhanov, Russian representative on the International Committee, the Russians would appear more or less to have abandoned their scheme of setting up a weather bureau on Bouvet Island. They would, however, assist the Norwegians by providing transport facilities in the event that the Norwegians should decide to set up a weather bureau on the island. And they would send a reconnaissance expedition to the island to study landing conditions etc. According to later reports, the Russian ship "Lens" would reconnoitre the island during February, 1957, by means of a helicopter.

The Union Department of Transport is of the opinion that if any country should decide to establish a weather ~~station~~ on Bouvet, it would be desirable for an observer from the Union's weather bureau to accompany the expedition.

In regard to the possibility that the Russians might wish to establish a second air-link with the Antarctic via the Union, our authorities say that there has thus far been no indication that anything in this nature is being considered. The Secretary of Transport has, however, expressed the preliminary view that it is unlikely that his Department would agree to a Russian air service passing through the Union.

Yours sincerely,

C. P. G. von Hirschberg
(C. P. G. von Hirschberg.)

G. J. Price-Jones, Esq.,
Commonwealth Relations Office,
S.W.1.

147/53/2

R + pb-17 ¹¹³



SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
LONDON, W. C. 2

Telephone: WHITEHALL 4488.
Telegraphic Address:—
"OPPOSITELY, LESQUARE, LONDON!"

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

19/88/2

18th December, 1956.

Confidential

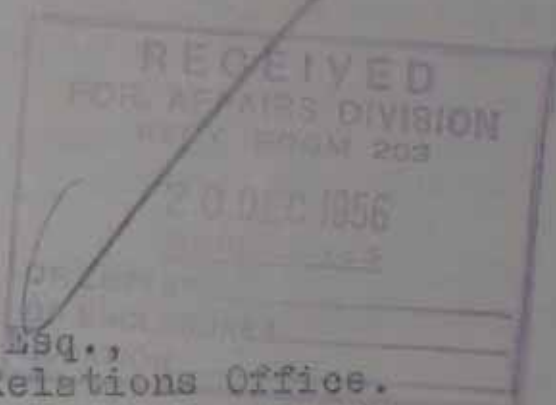
Dear Price-Jones.

(16)

(106)

Thank you very much for your letter WES.147/53/2 of December 17th about Bouvet Island. The Union authorities will be most interested in the views which you outlined.

Yours sincerely,
J. T. Stewart



G. J. Price-Jones, Esq.,
Commonwealth Relations Office.

RECORD COPY106
16CONFIDENTIAL/7
14th December 195653
WES.147/232/1

Mr. _____

Enclosures

I am sorry that we have not been able to send you an earlier reply about Bouvet Island. It has taken some little time to pursue the various points in the Memorandum which you left with Jasper some weeks ago.

2. Our information is that the only known real value of the Island is as a site for a meteorological station, the benefit from which would be almost entirely restricted to South Africa. It is not thought Bouvet offers any possibilities as an air base for long-range aircraft or as a submarine shelter. In both these respects the Russians could probably do much better on the Antarctic mainland. Bouvet might then be useful to them once they were established on the continent by providing weather reports, or for refuelling submarines by helicopter; but it seems unlikely that they could defend the Island in a war. So much for the strategic aspect.

3. The Russians are thought to have all the equipment for establishing a weather station, and

/12

J.G. Stewart, Esq.,
South Africa House,
Trafalgar Square,
W.C.2.

it would certainly bring them technical prestige if they succeeded where other nations have not tried. But in the absence of any strategic reward they might well not think it worth staying on Bouvet after they had acquired such experience and prestige as the operation is capable of yielding for their purposes. But if the Russians decided to remain on Bouvet, it would be difficult to stop them, since they have never specifically recognised Norwegian sovereignty.

4. The immediately important thing seems to be to ensure that the Norwegians send somebody to keep an eye on the Russians, and also to prevent their getting all the credit. We have checked with Oslo that the Norwegians are still alive to the situation. They would certainly send at least one scientist on a Russian expedition to Bouvet, although they apparently cannot provide an observer for the reconnaissance expedition.

5. The final aspect of the question is that, if the Russians went ahead with plans for a second air-link with the Antarctic (via South Africa as well as Australia) they could drop mails at Bouvet on non-stop return flights from Cape Town. We should be interested to know what your authorities think about this possibility.

RECORD COPY

6. Finally, have you considered offering to send a South African observer with the Russians?

Mr.

Enclosures

(G.J. PRICE-JONES)

Further Action

R. Rowe 149
15

RECEIVED
FOR AFFAIRS DIVISION
REC'D 10 DEC 1956
OF LETTER
OF ENCLOSURES
LOCATION

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

December 5, 1956.

(A 15211/8)

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Sirs. Jones, (103)

(12A) (103) Please refer to your letter of October 5 enclosing a Memorandum by the South Africans on possible Russian activity on Bouvet Island.

2. The only known real value of the island is as a site for a meteorological station from which the benefit would be almost entirely restricted to South Africa. It offers no possibilities as an air base for long range aircraft or as a submarine shelter. The Russians can do much better for both on the Antarctic mainland if they want to. Bouvet might be useful to them once they are established on the continent by providing weather reports, or for refuelling submarines by helicopter, etc., but they could not defend the island in a war. This seems to rule out any strategic aspect.

3. The Russians have all the equipment for establishing a weather station and it would certainly be a feather in their cap if they now succeeded where other nations had not tried. But for the reasons above they may well not wish to stay on Bouvet after they have gained prestige and experience. If they decided to stay it would be difficult to stop them since they have never specifically recognised Norwegian sovereignty.

4. Meanwhile the important thing seems to be to ensure that the Norwegians do send somebody with the Russians, to keep an eye on them and prevent them getting all the credit. We have checked with Oslo that the Norwegians are still alive to the situation. They would certainly send at least one scientist on a Russian expedition to Bouvet, although they cannot provide an observer for the reconnaissance expedition.

5. A final aspect of the question is that, if the Russians went ahead with plans for a second air-link with the Antarctic - via South Africa as well as Australia - they could drop mails at Bouvet on non-stop return flights from Cape Town. It would be interesting to know the South African attitude to this.

6. Incidentally, could not the South Africans offer an observer themselves? Or are their relations with the Soviet Union too bad?

Yours
I.F.S. Vincent

(I.F.S. Vincent)

G. Price-Jones, Esq.,
Commonwealth Relations Office.

RECEIVED
FOR AFFAIRS DIVISION
REPLY

10 DEC 1956

OF LETTER
OF ENCLOSURES
EDUCATION

RESTRICTED
1521/56

British Embassy,

Oslo.

November 17, 1956.

Dear Department,

(5)
147/238/11
In accordance with your letter A 15211/7 of the 6th, we have spoken to the Head of Department concerned in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry about the Russians establishing a weather station on Bouvet Island. He assured us that, if this came about, he certainly intended to see that at least one Norwegian scientist was attached to the station. But it was not practical for a Norwegian to accompany the Russian ice-breaker "Lena" this winter just for the reconnaissance.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY

American Department,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W.1.

C.R.O.

RECORD COPY

19 A
14

WES 147/4/1
Confidential

28 November, 1956.

Mr. _____
Enclosures

Further Action

(2R)

Please refer to my letter of the 5th October about the South African interest in Bouvet Island.

I gathered from a conversation with Clift that you were making enquiries of the Norwegians through H.M. Embassy, Oslo. I realise that you may be still awaiting a reply from Oslo, but I think I should tell you that Stewart of South Africa House has again asked whether we are in a position to make any comments on the last paragraph of his memorandum.

(G. Price-Jones)

I.F.S. Vincent, Esq.,
Foreign Office.

RECORD COPY

Copy - WES. 147/3
147/53/1

5 October, 1956.

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr.

Enclosures

Further Action

Copy (with
enclosure)

To:-
Mr. A. Willis
(Col. Office)

(12) You will be interested to see the enclosed copy of a memorandum recently left with Jagger by J. P. Stumpf of South Africa House.

You will see that the Union authorities would like to know that we think about the prospect of sustaining activity on South Island.

I have copied this letter and the enclosure to Willis at the Colonial Office.

(O. WILLIS-JAGGER)

J. P. Stumpf, J.P.
Foreign Office.

(A 152
CONFIDENTIAL

PS 28/12

CONFIDENTIAL

12
5

Reference: A15211/7.

OFFICE, S.W.1.
Nov 6, 1956.

G. J. Pyce-Jones, Esq.,
Commonwealth Relations Office.

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS

OF

Mr. R. D. Cift.

activity on
Longitude

Copies also sent to:

is not
if a weather
attach

out how
is. Some
desirable,
rely
after getting

FOREIGN OFFICE,
November 7, 1956.

8 (c)

The Chancery,
British Embassy,
OSLO.

(A 15211/7)

CONFIDENTIAL

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

RECEIVED
FOR THE
November 6, 1956.

8 - NOV 1956

OF LEY
OF CHUR
LOCATIONS

Dear Chancery,

We enclose a copy of a South African memorandum about the prospect of Russian activity on the Norwegian Bouvetøya (Latitude 3° 24', Longitude 54° 26'S) in the South Atlantic.

2. The Memorandum states that "Norway is not prepared to undertake the establishment of a weather station on the island, but would like to attach two scientists to the expedition".

3. We would be grateful if you can find out how likely the Norwegians really are to do this. Some participation by the Norwegians is most desirable, both to see that the Russians stick to purely scientific work and also to prevent the latter getting all the kudos.

Yours ever,

AMERICAN DEPARTMENT

The Chancery,
British Embassy,
OSLO.

147/4/1

4A

12

CONFIDENTIAL

Copy - WES 147/3
Boya - 147/53/1

1 Date
R203

During 1955 a South African naval vessel undertook a reconnaissance expedition to Bouvet Island, with the consent of the Norwegian Government, in order to establish whether it would be practicable for the Union Weather Bureau to erect a weather station on the island for scientific observations in connection with the International Geophysical Year. The Union Government eventually decided against the erection of a weather station on that island, and decided instead on the establishment of such a station on Gough Island.

At the international conference on the programme of activities in Antarctica and its surrounding ocean during the International Geophysical Year, which took place in Paris from the 30th July to the 3rd August, 1956, the subject of Bouvet Island cropped up again. At the suggestion of Prof. Seurchanov, the Russian representative, the following resolution was adopted by the conference:

"The third Antarctic Conference recommends that Norway, the Union of South Africa and the Soviet Union jointly examine all questions concerning the organisation of a station on Bouvet Island on an international basis; and, if possible, take practicable measures for the establishment and maintenance of the station during I.G.Y."

According to information gained by the Union delegate at that conference, Norway is not prepared to undertake the establishment of a weather station on the island, but would like to attach two scientists to the expedition. Russia is apparently willing to take full responsibility for the erection and maintenance of the weather station. The Russians have expressed the opinion that when one of their ships goes to the Antarctic during December, it would be possible to reconnoitre the eastern plateau of the island by helicopter with a view to the establishment of a weather station a few months later.

As a result of these developments the Union Government again carefully considered the matter, but decided to adhere to its previous decision, namely that the Union should not concern itself with the establishment of a weather station on the island.

The Union authorities would be interested in United Kingdom views on the prospect of Russian activity on Bouvet, particularly in view of the opinion expressed in Foreign Office Research Department Print No. B. 367 (R) of August, 1956, on "Soviet Interest in the Antarctic" that there are indications that the Soviet Union will express a desire to maintain all its Antarctic stations for an indefinite period after the end of the International Geophysical Year, although current Soviet planning covers only the period of the present Geophysical Year.

Telephone: WHITEHALL 4488.
Telegraphic Address:—
"OPPOSITELY, LESQUARE, LONDON!"



R 11
SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
LONDON, W. C. 2

Ref: 19/88/2

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

REC

17 MAR 1955

RELATIO

2
16th March, 1955.

Dear Greenhill,

(12) Thank you for your letter
WES 147/4/1 of the 14th about the South
African expedition to Bouvet Island.

We have not yet had a reply from
the Department as to whether they can let
us have a report on the expedition. We
shall let you know as soon as we hear from
them.

Incidentally, Becker has now
returned from home leave and will be taking
over the Antarctic again.

Yours sincerely,

W. G. van der Schuer

B. J. Greenhill, Esq.,
Commonwealth Relations Office,
Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W. 1.

C.R.O.

RECORD COPY

1A

10

15th March, 1955.

REF 147/16/1

Mr. GREENHILL

Enclosures

Dear von Hirschberg

(9)

Could you please refer to your letter 19/88/2 of 11th February, about the recent South African Expedition to Nouvet Island. I see that there have been further fairly detailed press reports recently and I wondered if you had yet heard anything from your Government.

Further Action

(B. J. GREENHILL)

C.F.G. von Hirschberg, Esq.,
South Africa House,
Trafalgar Square,
W.C.2.

R 9



Telephone: WHITEHALL 4488.
Telegraphic Address:—
"OPPOSITELY, LESQUARE, LONDON!"

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
LONDON, W. C. 2

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

19/88/2.

12 FEB 1955
RELA OFFICE

11th February, 1955.

Dear Greenhill,

(8)

Thank you for your letter WES.147/4/1 of the 10th February. I have written to the Union authorities to ask whether a report could be provided and will let you know the outcome as soon as a reply is received.

Yours sincerely,

C.F.G. von Hirschberg

(C.F.G. von Hirschberg.)

B.J. Greenhill, Esq.,
Commonwealth Relations Office.

8

10th February, 1955.

WES. 147/4/1.

Dear Von Hirschberg

We spoke on the telephone yesterday about the recent press reports of the return of an Expedition in the South African frigate Transvaal from Bouvet Island. The object of the Expedition was, it appears, to test the suitability of this Island for the establishment of a weather station.

(3) I mentioned to you that it would be in our view useful to the Polar Committee to have some report of this South African activity in the ~~South~~-Antarctic Regions and I wondered if you would be so kind as to enquire of your Government with a view to producing a note suitable for the Committee. I can give you a previous reference on this subject, Becker's letter 19/88/2 of 2nd October to me in which he said that at that time there was no information available regarding the proposed Expedition.

(B. J. GREENHILL)

C. F. G. VON HIRSCHBERG, ESQ.,
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA,
SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.2.

7.2.55 7B.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

ANTARCTIC ISLE
INVESTIGATION

From Our Own Correspondent
CAPE TOWN, Sunday.

The South African frigate Transvaal, 1,435 tons, returned to Cape Town to-day bringing back members of an expedition to the uninhabited Bouvet Island, a Norwegian dependency half-way between South Africa and the South Pole. They investigated the possibility of establishing a weather station there.

Meteorologists and engineers who went ashore were the first men to land on the bleak ice-bound island since 1934, when the Norwegians last visited it.

Int Greenhill

7A

S. AFRICANS LEAVE BOUVET ISLAND

Expedition Returning

CAPETOWN, FEBRUARY 2.

The South African frigate *Transvaal*, carrying a scientific expedition to Bouvet Island, 1,900 miles from here, left the island to-day to return to Capetown. The frigate, which arrived at Bouvet on Sunday, had not been expected to leave the area for another ten days. No immediate reason was given for her departure.

A report from the *Transvaal* earlier said that the expedition was investigating the chances of making its first big landing on the island, where it hoped to set up a weather station for the international geophysical year from August, 1957, to December, 1958. The first landing on the ice-covered island was made yesterday in a temperature of seven degrees above zero Fahrenheit. For the first time since the frigate reached the island on Sunday morning the weather was fine.

26 JAN 1953

7

From the	
Secretary	
Country	
Date	26 1 53

147/4/1

TIMES

The South African frigate Transvaal sailed yesterday for Bouvet Island in the Antarctic with a survey party who will try to land on the island to see if a weather station can be established there. Norway, which owns the island, has given permission.

... by the Chief ...
 Department of ...
 ... of the South ...

22 9 53

6.
R

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE
SECRETARY F. I. D. SCIENTIFIC
COMMITTEE
DATE 27 9 54

MED 60/3/06

11/4/06

F.I.D.C.S. (54)..... 12.....

Falkland Islands Dependencies Scientific Committee

I enclose for the information of members a copy of a letter received by the Chief Forecasting Officer of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies Meteorological Service from Dr. W. Schmitt the Assistant Director of the South African Southern Hemisphere Project.

27 9 54

R.A.R. BENT
Secretary.

COPY

Dr. A. Schmitt

c/o Weather Bureau,
Private Bag 97
Pretoria.

9th July, 1954.

Mr. D. McNaughton,
Acting Chief Meteorological Officer,
Falkland Islands Dependencies Met. Service,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.

Dear Mr. McNaughton,

This is to acknowledge your letter FIDMS 400/54/96, of 24th November, 1953. I must apologise for not writing earlier but I have been very busy with the analysis of the historical surface and upper air charts of the Southern Hemisphere Project.

In the course of this work, which is progressing steadily, it appears that the Falkland region and the southernmost part of America are actually the most strategic weather regions probably of the entire globe. Pressure systems which are brought up there from the Pacific Ocean, undergo profound changes, the most conspicuous being a persistent tendency for rapid deepening and formation of energetic secondaries when approaching the area to the southwest of the Chilean station 930, i.e. at the entrance of the Drake Passage. The Pacific Ocean area is fairly well covered by ship reports north of 45 south and west of 120 west longitude (approx. longitude of Pitcairn Island), and mature systems, which are easily recognised there round the Maria Theresa Reef, could either be transported east-southeastwards to reach the Drake Passage two days later or alternatively a process of degeneration and regeneration by secondaries may be applied to fill space and time until the arrival at the South Shetlands. The less likely situation is transportation of mature systems without major variation in intensity, and, assuming series development, it would appear that low centres enter your area with pressures in the vicinity of 980 - 990 mbs. There, the centres undergo rapid deepening to 970 - 960 mbs., and secondaries form frequently.

The thermal winds of Port Stanley (gradient level to 500 mbs) reveal the existence of sharp cold and warm tongues which in no case would fit the picture of mature systems brought up unaltered in intensity and structure. These tongues must have been originated on the spot, in lee of the Andes etc., and therefore necessarily pointing to rapid formation of secondaries.

Under these conditions, the Daily Weather Report of the Falklands Service constitutes a most welcome aid for analysis. It was therefore much regretted that as from July 1st, 1953, the D.W.R. had to be discontinued temporarily, and the D.W.R. for January 1954 was greeted with much relief when it arrived a few weeks ago. I wish to express our most sincere thanks for your very kind assistance in supplying your original data to fill the gap between July 1953 and January 1954. The data arrived here three days ago, on July 5th, and in record time of three days the surface data were plotted (we use the data of all four main synoptic hours) and the upper air data processed (conversion to metres and Celsius, thermal winds computed, tabulated etc.) and also entered. The data will be sent back tomorrow by air mail.

There was another surprise on July 2nd and 3rd, when a Mesran version of a new radio sonde Temp for station 952 (near the 65th parallel!) appeared in FICOL. The Falkland Met. Service is to be congratulated, indeed, for this most notable achievement. For upper air information from that meteorologically vital region will weigh more than several stations in

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the subtropical latitudes. With Fort Stanley and its excellent TEM² - unsurpassed indeed in the entire Southern Hemisphere, even not by the most ably run New Zealand stations, - and the extrapolated 500 mb data for the mountain station Cristo Redentor in the Andes, there now exists a controlling gate between 35°S and 65°S.

Recently I learned from a friend in Buenos Aires, that a new Brazilian radio sonde station has been opened at Fort Allegre (30° ?) but reports are not yet available for us.

Perhaps you will be interested to learn that the U.S. Weather Bureau has discontinued its own Southern Hemisphere Map Analysis Project as from 1st July 1954. Both meteorologists engaged in the surface analysis there since 1948, Mr. Rubin and Mr. van Loon, are joining the South African Southern Hemisphere Project and will arrive at Pretoria within the next few weeks. I understand that the U.S. Weather Bureau are notifying all services which have sent data, to direct these to Pretoria. Informally I might suggest that no specially mailed data are needed here and that it will be sufficient to have the Daily Weather Report available in due time, i.e. some four months after the date. It is presumed that any additional information, like the new TEM² 952, will be included with the D.W.R. in extenso.

I wish to thank you for your most valuable assistance in the past, I am sure that close co-operation will continue.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) W. Schnitt.

Doc R Copy

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5th October, 1954.

WSS 147/W/1

Dear Cahill,

You may be interested to see the enclosed letter and its enclosure from our High Commissioner's office in the Union of South Africa.

You no doubt also saw the reference in the Times of 30th June to the fact that Norway had indicated her willingness to permit a South African expedition to Bouvet Island.

We have delayed circulating this letter since we had asked South Africa House here whether they wished to circulate the paper to the Polar Committee. They in turn enquired of their Government who now belatedly state that they have no information available regarding the matter at this stage. Obviously there will be no Polar Committee paper at present.

I am copying this letter to Bent.

Yours sincerely,

(H. SMEDLEY)

M. L. CAHILL, ESQ.,
AMERICAN DEPARTMENT,
FOREIGN OFFICE,
S.W.1.

3



UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
LONDON, W. C. 2.

Telephone: WHITEHALL 4488.
Telegraphic Address:—
"OPPOSITELY, LESQUARE, LONDON."

19/88/2.

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4-10-54
RELATIONS OFFICE

J.J. Becker

2nd October, 1954.

Dear Greenhill,

You will remember that in June you asked me to enquire whether our authorities had anything to report on the negotiations which were taking place at that time with the Norwegian Government regarding the proposed expedition to Bouvet Island.

We have now been informed that our authorities have no information available regarding the matter at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

J.J. Becker

(J.J. Becker.)

B.J. Greenhill, Esq.,
Commonwealth Relations Office.

TIMES

WEATHER STATION IN S. ATLANTIC

BOUVET ISLAND PROJECT

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PRETORIA, JUNE 29

Norway, who was approached by South Africa for cooperation in exploring the possibilities of establishing a weather station on Bouvet Island in the South Atlantic, has indicated her willingness that the Union should send an expedition there if she wishes. Consultations are now taking place between Union meteorological officials and the Defence Department to decide whether the South African Navy shall attempt to land a party at Bouvet Island, which is notoriously inhospitable.

The director of the Union's weather bureau, Dr. T. E. W. Schumann, is a member of the committee deputed to complete the meteorological programme in the southern hemisphere for the international geophysical year of 1957-58, and is anxious to mark the occasion by establishing a new weather station on Bouvet Island, which belongs to Norway, or alternatively on one of the south Sandwich Islands, which belong to Britain.

30 JUN 1954

File

(1803)

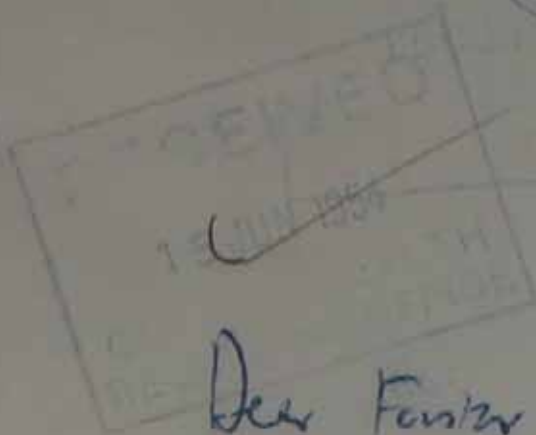
Mr Greyhill

RECEIVED
JUN 30 1954
S. ATLANTIC

2 Dups



1.
R



OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM,
CAPE TOWN.

10 June, 1954.

recd 14 " " " " " "
WS

Dear Forster

I do not know whether this is a matter which falls within the ambit of the Polar Committee but, according to the attached press cutting, the Union Government have opened negotiations with Norway for permission to send a reconnaissance expedition to Bouvet Island this year with a view to establishing a permanent weather station there.

2. We have not made any enquiries about this of the Department of External Affairs, but if you would like us to elucidate anything no doubt you will let us know.

Yours sincerely

R.C.C. Hunt
(R.C.C. HUNT)

O.G. FORSTER, ESQ.,
COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE,
LONDON.

8011

UNION PLANS NEW WEATHER OUTPOST ON LONELY ISLE

NEGOTIATIONS OPEN WITH NORWAY

The Union Government has opened formal negotiations with Norway for permission to send a reconnaissance expedition to Bouvet Island this year to investigate the possibility of establishing a permanent weather station on this ice-clad and forbidding Norwegian dependency 1,700 miles south-south-west of Cape Town.

Officials of departments concerned will not discuss the high-level negotiation--or even confirm that they are under way--but the "News" understands that as soon as Norwegian approval is obtained an announcement will be made by the Prime Minister.

Plans will then be made for an expedition to the island--seven degrees further south than Marion Island and permanently capped with ice--to take place early next summer.

As far as is known, only one South African has ever visited Bouvet. He is Mr. S. A. Engelbrecht, now in charge of the weather station at Jan Smuts Airport, who spent an afternoon on the island in January 1939 when a British-Norwegian expedition called there in the Discovery.

Mr. Engelbrecht said today that the Discovery inspected the northern, eastern and southern shores of the island, and the landing was made on the only beach detected--on the eastern coast.

"We found Bouvet as inhospitable a place as any you can imagine," he told the "News". "It would be very difficult to set up permanent quarters on the island, and in summer there would be a constant danger of any camp on the ice-cap being carried over the cliffs by the thaw.

SHEER CLIFFS

While we were there, there was water rushing all the time from the line where the ice and the sheer cliffs meet and it was bringing stones and rock away with it.

Mr. Engelbrecht said, however, that a thorough reconnaissance might reveal a site for a weather station and that the western end of the island, which he had never seen, might fall away gently to the sea.

If no site could be found on the main island, it was possible that a station could be built on Lars Island, a large rock to the south of Bouvet. There were many submerged rocks, dangerous to shipping, in the approaches to Bouvet, but Lars stood clear of the water, although it was not known whether it was washed by waves in stormy weather.

DESIRABLE

The occupation of other southern islands. (Bouvet and Gough were named as the most obvious in a "News" report in October 1952) has long been thought desirable by meteorologists anxious to extend the Tristan da Cunha-Marion Island reporting service--to keep a closer watch on the weather advancing on the Union.

The South African born American expert, Professor Athelstan Spilhaus, who reported on the Union's meteorological services in 1947, stressed that forecasting in the Union would be greatly improved by the establishment of additional island reporting posts.

Writing in "Notos," the journal of the Atmospheric Project, Southern Hemisphere, 18 months ago, Dr. T. E. W. Schumann, Director of the S.A. Weather Bureau, commented that the occupation of Bouvet, Gough and islands of the Sandwich and Crozet groups had become an "urgent necessity." He urged the establishment of ten new island weather stations.

The Weather Bureau received its first regular reports from Gough when two trawlers visited the island last summer and reported that it found these "extremely useful."