

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

ANT/GEN/1 # 10

1934  
~~1929.~~

C.S.

No.

C/2/34.

S. of S. Confidential(2)

SUBJECT.

1934.  
~~1929~~

2nd January.

CONSUL LARS CHRISTENSEN -

Proposed expedition to the Antarctic in the Norwegian Whaling vessel "THORSHAVN".

Previous Paper.

MINUTES.

1-3. S. of S. Confidential (2) despatch of 2/1/34  
4-6. S. of S. despatch, No. 7 of 15/1/34.

J.R. Submitted for information.

mcH  
by cs.  
20. 2. 34

J.R. C.S.

See.

J.R.

21. 2. 34.

P. A.  
mcH  
22. 2. 34

Subsequent Paper.

Despatch from S. of S. Conf. of 1/6/34.

P.A.

hch  
H.S.P. 18

Despatch no. 40 of 20/2/37.

(9-10)

Mr. Basu,

To see and then P.A.

hch  
es.  
29.4.37

H.C.S.

Seen, thank you

H.S. 29.4.37

P.A.  
30/4/37

S.O.S. despatch no. 76 of 27/5/37.

(11-12)

H.E.  
Submitted

Recd  
24.6.37

✓ hch  
30.6.37

P.A. 30/6/37

S.O.S. Despatch No. 65 of 9.7.38.

13-17.

✓ Submitted.

hch  
es.  
5.8.38

H.S.P.

hch 24/8  
P.A.

18-25.

S.F.S. despatch no. 129 of 20/1/39

*YR*

Submitted.

MCH

CS  
28. XI. 58.

~~Submitted~~ 5/1/39

26-29 S.F.S. despatch no. 6 of 30/1/39

*YR*

Submitted.

MCH

CS  
25. 3. 39.

~~Submitted~~ 30/3/39

P.A  
30/3/39

30-42.

S.F.S. despatch no. 31 of 14/4/39.

Y.R.

Submitted. Page 71 of the attached Gazette gives the limits of certain Dependencies. From the Chart sent herewith it would seem that Coats Land or a part of it is included. It would perhaps be more satisfactory if the Norwegian Gov. could state the degree of longitude for the western boundary of their claim.

M.H.  
C.  
17.5.39

Please send reply that I regard the boundary of Coats Land as an unsatisfactory definition and suggest 20° deg. of West longitude as an alternative. This definition would bring part of Coats Land under Norwegian sovereignty but there is no objection to that on the part of this Government.

Telegram No. 36. to S. of S. of 18.5.39.

(43)

S. of S. desp of 18/4/39.

(44-47)

Y.R.

Submitted.

M.H.  
C.  
21.7.39

ttttt 22/7

48-57. S. of S. desp. no. 63 of 27/6/39.

Scm.

McH  
Depty for Govt  
4. 8. 39.

52-57. S. of S. Despatch No. 88 of 20/9/39.

Yk.

Submitted.

McH  
cl.  
23. 11. 39.

~~ttttt~~ 27/11

P. A. inett

58-59. S. of S. desp. no. 100 of 18/10/39.

Yk.

Submitted for information.

McH  
cl.  
14. 12. 40

~~ttttt~~ 15/2/40

C O P Y.

(W 12904/209/50)

No. 307.

BRITISH LEGATION,

OSLO.

November 7th 1933.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that, according to statements in the press of the 4th instant, Consul Lars Christensen's ten thousand ton tanker "Thorshavn" left Sandefjord that day for antarctic waters via Aruba. The vessel is to take fuel, oil and provisions to the firm's fleet of tankers and bring back whale oil. The report adds that from Aruba the "Thorshavn" will proceed to Cape Town where Mr. Christensen and Mrs. Christensen and some guests will go on board and accompany the vessel to the catching ground. Mr. Christensen will continue with this expedition the scientific and practical observations and investigations which he has for several years carried on in the Antarctic. It is expected that these investigations will this year mainly be carried on in the sector between 60° and 83° east which was partly examined during his last stay in these waters in January and February 1931.

2. If conditions permit it is intended to continue the "Thorshavn"'s voyage eastwards, returning round the sector between the Ross Sea and South Shetland, where no whaling has hitherto taken place.

3. "Thorshavn" has on board apparatus from the Meteorological Institute in order that meteorological observations may be taken. There is also an automatic sounding apparatus which traces an exact profile of the

Sea-bottom

The Right Honourable  
 Sir John Simon, G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., M.P.,  
 etc., etc., etc.

Sea-bottom and registers automatically all depths. Geophysical observations will also be made in accordance with a plan prepared by Messrs. Bjørn Helland-Hansen and O. Krogness, professors at the Geophysical Institute in Bergen. Mr. Anton Jakhelln, oceanographical expert, will direct these investigations.

4. The expedition will be accompanied by Lieutenant Gunnestad, the aviator, who recently flew across the North Sea and back in Mr. Christensen's aircraft. An English hydroplane will be taken on the voyage and Lieutenant Gunnestad's work will be to take observations and photographs of the ice from the air and also to make flights in search of whales.

5. During his stay at the catching ground Mr. Christensen will watch the experiments in killing whales electrically. The electric gun was tested last year but was not then so satisfactory as could be wished. It has therefore been further improved. He will also watch experiments in vacuum boiling of blubber, meat and bones with the new American machines which have been installed in the floating factory "Thorshammer".

6. It is pointed out that the expedition will thus be of great scientific and practical importance.

I have, etc.,

(Sgd.) G. FULLERTON-CARNEGIE.

6 2

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

No. 7.

Downing Street,

15 January, 1934.



Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you, for your information, the accompanying extract from the "Cape Times" of the 19th December, 1933, recording an interview given by Consul Lars Christensen regarding a proposed expedition to the Antarctic in the Norwegian whaling vessel "Thersshavn".

Extract.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

(Signed) PLYMOUTH

for the Secretary of State.

OFFICE ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

PLYMOUTH

The

EXTRACT FROM "CAPE TIMES" 19.12.33.

TO SAIL ROUND ANTARCTICA.

CONSUL CHRISTENSEN'S EXPEDITION.

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VISIT TO WHALING FLEETS.

Consul Lars Christensen, Norway's "whaling king", arrived in Cape Town yesterday in the Winchester Castle. He is leaving in the whaling factory ship Thorshavn for another expedition to the Antarctic.

Accompanying him are his wife and son, a Norwegian friend (Mrs. Dedechen), Captain Gustav Bull and Director Aanderud-Larsen.

In an interview with the Cape Times, Mr. Christensen spoke of the objects of the expedition and the route that is to be taken.

The Thorshavn will sail from Cape Town to a point on the Antarctic Continent between South Shetland and Enderby Land.

First of all, Mr. Christensen intends to visit the whaling fleets. He has three factory ships "down South" and some 800 men, and whenever possible he likes to meet them during the height of the season.

ROUND GREAT ICE BARRIER.

When this inspection is over, the Thorshavn will sail eastwards and right round the Great Ice Barrier, through the Ross Sea and thence up to the South American Continent, the destination being Montevideo.

The

The purpose of the trip to Antarctica is to study the travelling routes of the whales.

In addition, an automatic electrical sounding machine has been installed in the Thorshavn, and Mr. Jackeln the oceanographer, will attend to this branch of the expedition's work.

A small aeroplane is part of the Thorshavn's equipment and Pilot Gunnestad will take the air to study ice distribution, whales, and so on.

Mr. Christensen pointed out that each year the whaling fleets are creeping further and further round the Antarctic Continent in the quest for whales, and that soon they will be operating right round the Continent so that information of conditions will be very valuable.

The expedition intends to be away about two months. It is hoped that good weather and ice conditions will be found and to this end the expedition is leaving five weeks earlier than did the similar expedition headed by Mr. Christensen last year.

This is Mrs. Christensen's third visit down South, but Mrs. Dedecken's first.



FALKLAND ISLANDS

CONFIDENTIAL

DOMING STREET,

June, 1934.

Sir,

7/4/34

I have the honour to refer to my despatch Confidential (2) of the 3rd January, and to transmit to you, for your information, the accompanying copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Representative at Oslo reporting on Consul Lars Christensen's recent Antarctic voyage.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

(Sgd.) P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER

THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING  
THE GOVERNMENT OF  
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

4 D

POLAR TERRITORIAL CLAIMS.

April 18, 1934.

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

[W 3633/23/50]

No. 1.

RECEIVED  
- 9 MAY 1934  
C. O. 3633

*Sir C. Wingfield to Sir John Simon.—(Received April 18.)*

(No. 91.)

Sir,

*Oslo, April 7, 1934.*

I HAD not previously furnished you with an account of the doings of the Lars Christensen expedition round the Antarctic continent, which formed the subject of your despatch No. 94 of the 28th ultimo, as I understood that the reports, published here exclusively in the *Aftenpost*, had been published also in England and other countries, whilst Consul Christensen, moreover, visited London on his return journey, so that I have been expecting to see a full account of his journey published in the London newspapers. But the reports in the *Times* and the *News Chronicle*, which formed enclosures to your despatch, show that any detailed account which Herr Christensen may have supplied to our press has been crowded out by other items of news, and I therefore beg leave to enclose a memorandum in which I have summarised the information contained in a number of articles published in the *Aftenpost* during the months of January, February and April.

2. You will observe that the land discovered between Lars Christensen's Land and Kaiser Wilhelm II's Land has been named Princess Astrid's Land and that search in the neighbourhood of 65° 5' E. longitude and 66° 28' S. latitude in clear weather is stated to have revealed no signs of the existence of the Douglas Islands.

I have, &c.

CHARLES WINGFIELD.

*Memorandum.*

CONSUL LARS CHRISTENSEN with his wife and son sailed from Cape Town on the 20th December last on the tank-ship *Thorshavn*. They met the *Torshammer* in 30° E. and 60° S. on the 27th December and the *Solglimt* in 50° E. and 65° S. on the 2nd January, after which they made for Lars Christensen's Land.

On the 10th January in clear weather they steamed over the position in 65° 5' E. and 66° 28' S., where the Douglas Islands are supposed to be. Their whale-boat searched the sea for 30 nautical miles round and saw no sign of the islands, whilst Lieutenant Gunnestad went up in an aeroplane and looked for them in vain. The automatic echo apparatus took soundings, which showed a depth of 2,640 metres, where the most easterly of the group was shown on the chart. In 54° 35' E. and 56° 40' S., however, they found that the depth decreased rapidly down to 310 metres, after which for 25 nautical miles southwards it decreased gradually to 250 metres. They, therefore, assumed that this bank was connected with the mainland and named it "Storeggen." They do not believe that the Douglas Islands exist.

On the 12th January the *Thorshavn* was in 65° 5' E. and 67° 5' S. She sent her whale-boat 10 miles to the south, but it was there stopped by pack-ice. Both vessels saw some 240 kilom. of the coast of Lars Christensen's Land from Fromnes Mountains in the west to Torlyn Mountain in the east. Lieutenant Gunnestad flew along this coast eastwards from 60° E., and he later flew with an observer to Bjerskö Point, which, with the neighbouring coastline, was clearly visible. The shallowest sounding taken at the point where the whale-boat turned back was 100 metres.

The *Thorshavn* then followed a course which, more or less, followed the ice-edge, meeting the *Taffelberg* on the 15th January.

On the 17th January, in  $87^{\circ}$  E. and  $64^{\circ} 56'$  S., the whale-boat was sent southwards and forced her way through the ice to  $65^{\circ} 22'$  S., from whence Lieutenant Gunnestad, with an observer, flew to  $86^{\circ} 45'$  E. and  $66^{\circ} 40'$  S., proceeding afterwards for 18 miles in a north-westerly direction before returning. In  $86^{\circ} 57'$  E. and  $66^{\circ} 20'$  S., an open channel was found, on the southern side of which were many icebergs amongst the unbroken pack-ice, to the south of which lay the ice-barrier. Yet further south, the entirely ice-covered land rose gradually. The weather was clear and they reckoned they could see some 90 miles to the south and west and rather less to the east. The land thus discovered lay between Lars Christensen's Land and Kaiser Wilhelm II's Land. Consul Lars Christensen obtained by telegraph the permission of King Haakon to name it after Princess Astrid.

On the 21st January the *Thorshavn* visited the *Ole Wegger* in  $90^{\circ}$  E. and  $60^{\circ}$  S.

Subsequently Lieutenant Gunnestad went on board a whale-boat to Princess Astrid's Land, and there undertook a number of flights with an observer.

The *Thorshavn* then proceeded on her way round the Antarctic continent. Lieutenant Gunnestad went up again in  $102^{\circ}$  E., but found no signs of land in a spot where it had been reported by a whale-boat.

On the 2nd February the *Thorshavn*, proceeding along the coast, passed  $150^{\circ}$  E. and shaped her course for the Balleny Islands, where her steering apparatus was seriously damaged. She was, nevertheless, able to proceed towards Scott Island and then eastwards. During this part of the journey her compass was much affected by magnetic disturbances. She continued keeping as close as possible to the edge of the ice, in order to study the stock of whales; but during this part of the journey practically no birds, whales or whale-food were seen.

From  $142^{\circ}$  W. and  $67^{\circ}$  S., the *Thorshavn* steamed through open water, arriving, on the 10th February, at the edge of the pack-ice in  $134^{\circ} 11'$  W. and  $71^{\circ} 44'$  S., which was stated to be the furthest south reached by any vessel in that part of the Antarctic. Soundings, taken from the Polar Circle southwards, varied between 4,520 and 3,980 metres, and showed the 4,000-metre contour on the American Society's chart of 1931 to be 3 degrees too far north. From the position given above Lieutenant Gunnestad flew with an observer to  $72^{\circ} 8'$ , where, from a height of 1,200 metres, they could clearly see the ice-barrier running east and west at a distance of some 35 nautical miles. They calculated that they could see about 120 miles of the barrier, which was marked 2 degrees too far north on the above-mentioned chart.

The *Thorshavn* then proceeded to Peter I Island, but for several days the fog was too thick for observations, so she proceeded round Cape Horn, passing Staten Island on the 22nd February. The charts showed all the waters between Peter I Island and Cape Horn as between the 4,000- and 5,000-metre contours; but, though the soundings as far as  $70^{\circ}$  W. and  $60^{\circ}$  S. showed such depths, in  $65^{\circ} 15'$  W. and  $59^{\circ} 43'$  S. they found a bank at a depth of 680 metres with depths of 4,650 metres to the south of it and 3,710 metres to the north. This they named Sars Bank, after Michael and Ossian Sars.

The Lars Christensen family left the *Thorshavn* in Montevideo and returned to Europe by the Italian liner *Augustus*, subsequently travelling from Genoa to London. They reached Sandefjord once more on the 31st March, where Consul Christensen told a reporter that he had been followed on his tour of the Antarctic by the *Solqlimt* with five whale-boats, which had found far fewer whales than he had expected. He therefore thought it would be best for the industry if the whaling fleet lay up during next season. Some of his colleagues did not, however, share this opinion.

Oslo, April 7, 1934.

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COPY.

No. 53.

(129/129)

BRITISH LEGATION,  
OSLO.

10th February, 1937.

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 432 of November 2nd last, I have the honour to report that the Norwegian press has published a message from the Lars Christensen Antarctic Expedition stating that it had discovered new land between 35° and 40° E Longitude, and that the Norwegian flag was dropped from the Expedition's aeroplane at a spot approximately 38° E Longitude 69.30 S Latitude. The newly discovered land is stated to be between Queen Maud's Land and Princess Ragnhild's Land.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) CECIL DORMER.

The Right Honourable

Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.,

&c., &c., &c.

Copy.

No:170

(451/129)

British Legation,

Oslo,

May 11th, 1937.

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No:53 of February 10th 1937 reporting a new discovery of land by M. Lars Christensen's expedition in the Antarctic I have the honour to inform you that the press announces that this new region which lies between Queen Maud Land and Princess Ragnhild Land is to be called, with Crown Prince Olaf's consent, Prince Harald Land.

I have, etc.,

(Sgd) Cecil Dormer.

The Right Honourable  
Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.,  
etc. etc. etc.

8 July, 1938.

32006/33

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary MacDonald to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, W.6703/1084/50, of the 10th June, regarding British claims in the Antarctic, and to request you to inform Viscount Halifax that he sees no objection to re-affirming the assurance conveyed to the Norwegian Minister in paragraph 4 of the Foreign Office note of the 23rd October, 1934.

2. The Secretary of State notes that in regard to the report of Soviet and United States activities in the Antarctic, it is proposed to furnish M. Colban with brief summaries of the information available in the Foreign Office.

3. With reference to paragraph 4 of your letter I am to inform you that Mr. MacDonald has no observations to make on the terms of the reply which it is proposed to

make

HIS UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,  
FOREIGN OFFICE.

make to M. Golban on the subject of French action in Adélie Land.

4. Copies of this letter are being sent to the Dominions Office and the Admiralty.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) A. B. ACHESON.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

S. S. I.

10th June, 1938.

Sir,

With reference to Foreign Office letter No. W 5340/33/50 of 8th November, 1934, enclosing a copy of a note to the Norwegian Minister on the subject of British claims in the Antarctic, I am directed by Viscount Halifax to state for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the Norwegian Minister has enquired verbally whether His Majesty's Government are aware of any recent developments in the Antarctic such as might alter the territorial position which Sir Robert Vansittart exposed to him in October 1934, or of any fresh claims to, or occupations of, territory in the Antarctic. M. Colban had seen press reports of French action in Adélie Land and of Soviet and United States action in other quarters and stated that he would be glad to receive an assurance that His Majesty's Government still maintained the attitude and views which had already been communicated to him.

2. So far as Lord Halifax is aware there has been no change in the general policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to Antarctic claims laid down by the Imperial Conference, 1930, and it would accordingly appear that there is no objection to re-affirming the assurance conveyed to M. Colban in paragraph 4 of the Foreign Office note of 23rd October, 1934, referred to above. Lord Halifax proposes therefore, subject to Mr. Secretary Malcolm MacDonald's concurrence, to take a  
suitable

The Under Secretary of State,

Colonial Office.

suitable opportunity of conveying the desired assurance to  
M. Colban.

3. With regard to Soviet and United States activities  
in the Antarctic it is proposed to furnish M. Colban with brief  
summaries of the information received in this department on  
these matters. In this connexion, I am to invite reference  
to Foreign Office letters W 5784/1984/50 of 10th May and  
W 5826/1984/50 of 23rd May last and to previous correspondence.

4. As regards French action in Adélie Land, Lord Halifax  
proposes, provided Mr. Macdonald sees no objection, to inform  
the Norwegian Minister that such action has been confined to  
defining the limits of this territory, which represents the  
full extent of French claims in the Antarctic, by a Decree  
of 1st April, 1933, and that the claim to Adélie Land is  
recognised by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom  
and does not appear to have been disputed by any other  
Government.

5. A similar letter is being addressed to the Dominions  
Office and a copy is being sent to the Admiralty.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sd) WALTER ROBERTS.

F.O. (24)  
FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

No. W 14013/1084/50.

11th November, 1938.

*Dear Monsieur Colban,*

You called at the Foreign Office on the 27th May in order to enquire whether His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom were aware of any recent developments in the Antarctic such as might alter the territorial position as set out in Sir Robert Vansittart's letter to you of the 5th October, 1934, or of any fresh claim to, or occupations of, territory in the Antarctic. You stated that you had seen press reports of French action in Adélie Land and of Soviet and United States action in other parts of the Antarctic, and you expressed the desire to receive an assurance that His Majesty's Government still maintain the attitude and views which had previously been communicated to you.

You will recall that Sir Robert Vansittart's letter of the 5th October, 1934, was followed by an official note No. W 9240/23/50 of the 23rd October, 1934, in paragraph 4  
of/

Monsieur Erik Colban.

Norwegian Legation.

of which Sir John Simon stated that he desired to repeat the assurance already given informally to the Norwegian Government that there was no intention of claiming British sovereignty over the region lying between the Western boundary of the Australian Antarctic Territory as defined in the Order in Council of the 7th February 1933, and the Eastern boundary of Coats Land, as mentioned in the summary of proceedings of the Imperial Conference of 1926. I have pleasure in informing you that His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand now desire to reaffirm that assurance.

The Commonwealth Government, however, feel it necessary to express their concern at the failure of certain Norwegian explorers on occasions in the past to respect British sovereignty over the Australian Antarctic Territory, and I would mention the following cases of flights and landings for which no authorisation was sought:-

- (1) 22nd December, 1929. A flight was made from "Norvegia" over Enderby Land 46° - 52° East. A landing was made and a flag hoisted. This act, it

is recognised, was repudiated by the Norwegian Government (see memorandum communicated to the Norwegian Government by His Majesty's Legation at Oslo on the 20th January, 1930 and connected correspondence).

(2) January 1934. Flights were made from the "Thorshavn" in the vicinity of 65° - 86° East.

(3) January 1935. A landing was made from the "Thorshavn" at 80° East. A flag was hoisted and a depôt established.

(4) January 1937. M. Lars Christensen made flights over land at 68° and 50° East, and a flag was dropped. A landing was made at 70° East and at 66° East and a flag was hoisted and a depôt established.

These cases are readily available from Norwegian sources and have been published over a number of years. In this connexion, it will be recalled that in view of a contemplated expedition to the Antarctic by the "Norvegia" and of the authority given to her captain to take possession of land hitherto occupied, Sir Francis Lindley, His Majesty's Minister at Oslo, in a note dated

13th February 1928, reminded the Norwegian Government of the discussions in regard to those regions which took place in 1926 at the Imperial Conference in London, and referred to the account of the discussions contained on pages 33 and 34 of the published Summary of Proceedings. Sir Francis Lindley added that the motive of his communication was merely the desire to avoid the risk of complications arising as a result of any acts which might be performed by the expedition in ignorance of the existence of a British title to the areas referred to in the Imperial Conference report. It will also be recalled that in a memorandum dated the 14th November, 1928, which was communicated by M. Vogt to this department, it was stated that the Norwegian Government had not sufficient knowledge of the basis upon which are founded the British claims to each one of the territories which the Imperial Conference of 1926 asserted to be British, but that the Norwegian Government were prepared to express their willingness to refrain from occupying any land within these territories.

While appreciating that in view of this assurance no Norwegian claim could be or has been made on the basis of these events, His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia, in associating themselves  
with/

with the renewed assurance to the Norwegian Government as above mentioned, now desire in view of these repeated events to receive, in return, from the Norwegian Government a specific assurance of their recognition of the Commonwealth boundaries in the Antarctic as defined in the Order in Council of the 7th February 1933.

As regards French action in Adélie Land, the Norwegian Government will be aware of the decree dated the 1st April 1938 which appeared in the French "Journal Officiel" of the 6th April 1938. As this decree merely defined the extent of Adélie Land, and as the French claim to this territory is recognised by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and does not appear to have been disputed by any other government, His Majesty's Government see no cause for concern in this matter.

The information of His Majesty's Government with regard to recent United States action is limited to a letter from Mr. Lincoln Ellsworth which appeared in the "New York Times" of the 6th May, 1938. In this letter Mr. Ellsworth announced his intention of undertaking another Antarctic expedition in the region of the "Enderby quadrant", and he specifically disclaimed any intention/

intention of asserting any rights over territory in this region already claimed by Australia.

In the early part of this year the attention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom was drawn to a press report from Moscow relating to a proposed Soviet expedition to the Antarctic. As it appeared from the report that it was the intention of the expedition to establish its main base within the boundaries of the Falkland Islands sector of the Antarctic, an enquiry was made at Moscow as to the truth of this report, and the Soviet authorities stated that it should not be taken as being in any way an official announcement, and, further, that if the Soviet Government decided to organise any such expedition and if it were proposed that the expedition should establish its base within the dependencies of a British Colony, they would not fail to approach His Majesty's Government in the first place with a view to obtaining the necessary permission.

I am sorry for the delay in replying to your enquiry, which, however, you will realise has been due to the necessity of consulting the Dominion Governments concerned. I trust that the information now given will prove

satisfactory/

satisfactory to the Norwegian Government and that they will be in a position to give the assurance desired by the Commonwealth Government.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd) George Morrison.

NO DISTRIBUTION.

Decode Sir C. Dormer (Oslo).  
 16th January, 1939.  
 D. 11.05 a.m. 16th January, 1939.  
 R. 10.50 a.m. 16th January, 1939.

No. 1. (R).

:--:--:--:--:--:--:

Royal decree issued 14th January annexing to Norwegian Antarctic territory and waters washing it between 20 degrees West longitude and 40 degrees East longitude, i.e. between Coats land and Australian Sector.

Object stated to be to serve Norwegian whaling in that area.

Decision to issue the decree may have been due to the activities of Ellsworth in it.

F.O. 21/1/39.

21

COPY

(W 811/481/50)

No.12/1939.

Norwegian Legation,

London.

14th January, 1939.

My Lord,

Referring to my other note of this date concerning the Antarctic, I have the honour to bring to your knowledge that the Norwegian Government recognise the boundaries of the Australian Commonwealth Dependency in the Antarctic, as defined in the Order in Council of the 7th February, 1933.

I have, etc.,

(signed) ERIK COLBAN.

The Right Honourable

The Viscount Halifax, K.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,

etc., etc., etc.

21

COPIE

(W 810/481/50)

No.11/1939.

Norwegian Legation,

London.

le 14 janvier 1939.

Excellence,

D'ordre de mon Gouvernement j'ai l'honneur de porter à la connaissance de Votre Excellence ce qui suit:

Par Decret Royal du 14 janvier 1939 est placée sous la souveraineté de la Norvège la partie de la côte du Continent Antarctique qui s'étend de la frontière des Falklands Islands Dependencies à l'Ouest (frontière du Coats Land) jusqu'à la frontière de l'Australian Antarctic Dependency à l'Est (quarantecinq degrés longitude Est) avec le territoire situé en dedans de ladite côte et avec les eaux adjacentes. Le Ministère de la Justice a été autorisé à prendre les dispositions nécessaires concernant l'exercice de l'autorité de Police dans cette region.

J'ai l'honneur de prier Votre Excellence de bien vouloir agréer les assurances de ma plus haute considération.

(Signé) ERIK COLBART.

Son Excellence  
Le Très Honorable  
Viconte Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.N.,  
etc., etc., etc.

C O P I E.

Traduction.

La souveraineté norvégienne  
dans les régions antarctiques.

R a p p o r t  
à Sa Majesté le Roi

Proposition

du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères,  
en date du 14 janvier 1939, approuvée  
par Décret Royal du même jour.

(rapportée par M. Halvdan Koht,  
Ministre des Affaires Etrangères).

Par Décret Royal du 23 janvier 1926 l'île Bouvet,  
située dans l'Océan Antarctique, fut placée sous la  
souveraineté de la Norvège et par Décret Royal du 1<sup>er</sup> mai 1931,  
il en fut de même de l'île Pierre 1<sup>er</sup>, située également dans  
l'Océan Antarctique.

L'île Bouvet est située à 3<sup>o</sup>24' de Longitude Est et  
54<sup>o</sup>26' de Latitude Sud, donc dans la partie de l'Antarctique qui,  
souvent, fut appelée le secteur de l'Océan Atlantique. L'île  
Pierre 1<sup>er</sup> est située à 90<sup>o</sup>35' de Longitude Ouest et 68<sup>o</sup>50' de  
Latitude Sud, donc dans le secteur de Pacifique de la région  
antarctique.

En soumettant ces îles de l'Océan antarctique à la  
souveraineté de la Norvège, on se proposait de pourvoir les  
pêches norvégiennes dans les parages de bases fixes qui pourraient  
leur servir de point d'appui et les mettre à l'abri contre des  
interventions éventuelles de la part de puissances étrangères.

Depuis lors des discussions ont été entamées entre les  
autorités

autorités publiques et les parties intéressées norvégiennes sur la question de savoir s'il ne serait pas juste et utile de soumettre une partie du continent antarctique à la souveraineté de la Norvège.

La Grande-Bretagne proclama en 1908 l'annexion d'une partie de ce continent avec les eaux et les îles adjacentes, qui fut appelée Falklands Islands Dependencies. Le territoire appelé Ross Dependency fut rattaché, en 1933, à la Nouvelle Zélande, tandis que le plus grand de tous les territoires du continent antarctique, celui compris entre le 110° et le 45° de Longitude Est fut rattaché à l'Australie en 1933. La France avait toutefois annexé déjà une terre de petite étendue avec quelques îles, situées au-dedans de ce territoire, la Terre Adélie qui se trouve à environ 140° de Longitude Est.

L'île Bouvet est située dans la mer au large du continent qui se trouve entre le territoire britannique et celui de l'Australie. Le territoire qui comble cet espace intermédiaire est celui qui, fort souvent, a été appelé le secteur de l'Atlantique, et dont aucun état n'a, jusqu'ici, revendiqué la souveraineté.

Les terres continentales de ce territoire ont été longtemps totalement inconnues et inexplorées. Nous savons que dans une époque déjà reculée quelques expéditions d'exploration réussirent à se frayer un passage dans les eaux au large de ce continent; il en fut ainsi d'une expédition russe en 1820 et de deux expéditions anglaises en 1831 et 1843. Aucune de ces expéditions ne parvint toutefois à pénétrer si loin qu'elle vit terre et, bien moins encore, put mettre à terre des membres de l'équipage.

Ce ne fut qu'en 1929 que des expéditions d'exploration parvinrent à atteindre la côte continentale de cette partie des régions

régions antarctiques et ce furent alors des expéditions norvégiennes. L'armateur de baleiniers, M. Lars Christensen, envoya, l'été de 1929/30, une expédition dans ces parages sous les ordres du capitaine Riiser-Larsen. Celui-ci ainsi que le capitaine Lützow-Holm qui l'accompagnait, prirent des observations et dressèrent des cartes photo-aériennes d'une grande partie de ces terres, entre autres du territoire appelé ensuite Terre Princesse Royale Martha. Au cours d'une nouvelle expédition, envoyée par M. Lars Christensen en 1930/31, un territoire de grande étendue fut également découvert et exploré par avion; cette terre fut appelée Terre Princesse Ragnhild. Ce fut ici que le capitaine Riiser-Larsen et ses compagnons descendirent à terre au cours d'une expédition qu'il firent dans ces parages en 1932/33 avec le concours du gouvernement norvégien. Des baleiniers norvégiens furent aussi, durant ces années, maintes fois sous terre tant à cet endroit qu'à d'autres, à l'intérieur du secteur dont il est question ici. Et, enfin, M. Lars Christensen envoya, l'été de 1936/37, une nouvelle expédition dans les régions antarctiques, au cours de laquelle le lieutenant Widerøe survola et découvrit de vastes étendues de nouvelles terres et en dressa des cartes. Ces terres étaient situées tant au dedans qu'au dehors du territoire auquel les expéditions antérieures étaient parvenues déjà. Une partie du territoire exploré maintenant et qui était situé entre la Terre Reine Maud et la Terre Princesse Ragnhild, fut appelé Terre Prince Harald. Pour ainsi dire presque toute la terre continentale en bordure de la mer à l'intérieur du secteur de l'Atlantique fut explorée au cours de toutes ces expéditions d'une manière si méthodique et il en fut dressé des cartes si détaillées, qu'il est permis de dire que peu de parties du continent antarctique sont mieux connues.

Il y a lieu de signaler que des explorateurs norvégiens, Roald Amundsen et d'autres, ont exploré les terres aussi dans d'autres parties de l'Antarctique. Au cours des dernières années ils ont surtout exploré une grande partie du territoire qui fut rattaché à l'Australie en 1933 et en ont dressé des cartes. Nonobstant ce fait, il n'entre aucunement dans l'idée de la Norvège de faire valoir des droits à des territoires qui ont déjà été soumis à la souveraineté d'un autre état. Ceci s'accorde d'ailleurs avec la déclaration que le gouvernement norvégien fit au gouvernement britannique en 1929, de ne pas élever des prétentions sur des terres se trouvant au dedans de territoires qui, alors, étaient soumis à la souveraineté de l'Empire britannique.

Mais le territoire qui jusqu'ici a été une terra nullius, que personne d'autre que des norvégiens n'a exploré et dont ils ont été les seuls à lever des cartes, ce territoire, la Norvège estime, de plein droit, pouvoir le revendiquer et le soumettre à sa souveraineté.

Ce territoire est justement celui qui, au cours des dernières années, a eu le plus d'importance pour la pêche de la baleine. La pêche s'effectue actuellement en haute mer mais cherche, dans le courant de l'été, de plus en plus vers terre. La côte continentale dans ces parages suit à peu près le 70° de Latitude et la lisière des glaces se trouve au commencement de l'été, c'est à dire au mois de décembre, généralement au 60°; ce n'est qu'au mois de février que les raffineries flottantes arrivent assez près de terre.

Une question qui peut avoir de l'importance lorsqu'il s'agit de la liberté de se livrer à la pêche, est celle de savoir jusqu'à quelle distance en mer s'étend la limite de la souveraineté.

Cette

Cette question se trouve toutefois encore quelque peu dans l'indécision. Il a été soutenu que la limite des glaces dans l'Océan Antarctique devait être considérée comme frontière. La Grande Bretagne et les deux Dominions britanniques qui ont occupé des territoires dans ces parages ont, en général, tracé leur frontière le long du 60° de Latitude. Ce qu'implique cette mesure quant au droit à la souveraineté ne semble pas tout-à-fait clair; mais le fait est que la pêche norvégienne de la baleine fut frappée, pendant quelques années, d'un droit à l'intérieur de cette frontière.

Etant donné que des questions de cette nature au sujet de la frontière, demeurent encore ouvertes, il pourrait être fort désirable pour l'activité de pêche norvégienne dans ces eaux, que la Norvège soit maître d'une large bande du continent et de la mer contigue. La Norvège n'as pas l'intention, pour ce qui la concerne, d'exclure les autres nations du territoire maritime dont elle pourrait ainsi avoir la souveraineté, ni de les empêcher, d'aucune manière, à s'y livrer à la pêche. Mais les pêcheurs norvégiens doivent, de leur côté, avoir l'assurance que d'autres non plus ne peuvent les en exclure ou procéder à des mesures pouvant causer des dommages ou porter préjudice à leur activité.

Cette revendication a déjà longtemps retenu l'attention du gouvernement norvégien et il s'est efforcé, pendant les années qui se sont passées depuis que la question a été soulevée, de jeter les bases d'un arrangement propre à satisfaire les revendications norvégiennes. Le gouvernement estime le moment venue maintenant de prendre une décision définitive.

Le fondement juridique de la Norvège pour soumettre à sa souveraineté la terra nullius en question se base, comme

il a été mentionné déjà, sur les recherches géographiques norvégiennes faites dans ces territoires et auxquelles les norvégiens ont été seuls à se livrer jusqu'ici.

Les considérations d'ordre pratique qui amèneraient la Norvège à faire usage du droit qu'elle estime ainsi avoir acquis, se rapportent à la pêche norvégienne de la baleine dans l'Océan antarctique et surtout dans les eaux au large du territoire dont il est question ici.

Le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères se permet par conséquent

de proposer

que S.M. le Roi approuve et souscrive le projet de décret Royal qui lui a été présenté, portant que la partie de la côte continentale de l'Antarctique qui s'étend de la frontière des Falkland Islands Dependencies à l'ouest (la frontière de Coats Land) jusqu'à la frontière de l'Australian Antarctic Dependency à l'est (45° de Longitude Est) avec le territoire au dedans de ladite côte et les eaux adjacentes, soient soumis à la souveraineté de la Norvège et que le Ministère de la Justice soit autorisé à prendre les dispositions nécessaires concernant l'autorité de police dans cette région.

W 2161/431/50.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

S.W.1.

2nd March, 1939.

Sir,

With reference to Foreign Office letters W 795/431/50 of 21st January, and W 2161/431/50 of the 18th February, on the subject of the assertion of Norwegian sovereignty over certain territories in the Antarctic, I am directed by Viscount Halifax to offer the following observations for the consideration of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

2. As regards the sector of the Falkland Island dependencies, Mr. Secretary MacDonald will observe that the western boundary of the Norwegian claim is not defined by any degree of longitude, the claim merely referring to the "boundary of Costa land". I am to enquire whether Mr. MacDonald is satisfied as regards the position in this respect.

3. As regards the northern boundary of the Norwegian claims, British sovereign claims in the Antarctic to sectors extending from 60° latitude to the South Pole, do not involve claims to the high seas, but only, so far as Lord Halifax is aware, to the land, with the accompanying territorial waters, within the boundaries concerned. He is not aware of any British claim to regulate whaling within those boundaries if it takes place outside territorial waters, and he is rather disposed to the view that British claims are confined to regulating

whaling/

The Under-Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office.

whaling by means of licences for shore stations only. Lord Halifax will be grateful however for the views of Mr. Macdonald, and for his opinion whether it is desirable or necessary to return any reply to the Norwegian Minister on this point.

4. It appears from the communication received from the Norwegian Minister, copy of which was enclosed in the above-mentioned Foreign Office letter of the 16th February, that the basis of the Norwegian claims is prior discovery and exploration of terra nullius.

5. Subject to the position with regard to the boundary of the Falkland Island dependencies being satisfactory, Lord Halifax proposes, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Macdonald formally to recognise the Norwegian claims.

6. A copy of a letter which is being sent to the Dominions Office is enclosed and a copy of this letter has been sent to the Admiralty.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sd) D. F. HOWARD.



C O P Y

ROYAL NORWEGIAN LEGATION

No. 31/1939.

The Norwegian Minister presents his compliments to His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and, with reference to his note No. 11 of the 14th January last on the subject of the Norwegian occupation in the Antarctic, has the honour to forward herewith two copies of the French translation of the proposals of the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs dated the 14th of January, 1939, and approved by Royal Decree of the same date.

London, 6th February, 1939.

COPY.

Enclosure to Oslo despatch No. 41 of 30th January, 1939.

(W 2253/431/50).

Translation.

Extract from "Norwegian Laws" No. 2.1939.

Royal Resolution, 14th January, 1939.

The King agrees to and endorses a proposed draft Royal Proclamation to the effect that that portion of the shore of the Antarctic continent which stretches from the boundary of the Falkland Islands Dependency in the west (Coats' Land Boundary) to the boundary of the Australian Antarctic Dependency in the east (45° east Longitude) with the territory lying inside this shore and the waters washing it shall be incorporated under Norwegian supremacy.

The Ministry of Justice is empowered to determine regulations regarding police authority within this area.

Royal Proclamation, 14th January, 1939.

That portion of the Antarctic continent which stretches from the boundary of the Falkland Islands Dependencies (sic) in the west (Coats Land boundary) to the boundary of the Australian Antarctic Dependency in the east (45° east longitude) with the territory lying inside this shore and the waters washing it, are to be incorporated under Norwegian supremacy.

(W 2253/431/50).

No. 41.

His Majesty's Minister at Oslo presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper.

Oslo,

30th January, 1939.

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Reference to previous despatch:

From H.M. Minister No. 22 of 16th January, 1939.

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Description of Enclosure.

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| Name and Date.  | Subject.   |
|---|--|
| Text and translation of<br>Royal Resolution and<br>Royal Proclamation of<br>14th January, 1939. | Incorporation of portion<br>of shore of Antarctic<br>continent under<br>Norwegian supremacy. |

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(41)

C O P Y.

No. W 810/431/50

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

7th February, 1939.

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the note No. 11/1939 of the 14th January in which you were so good as to inform me that by a Royal Decree of the 14th January 1939, the portion of the Antarctic continent stretching between the Falkland Islands Dependency on the west and the Australian Antarctic Dependency on the east has been placed under Norwegian sovereignty.

2. I have the honour to enquire whether you are in a position furnish me with a copy of the Royal Decree in question, and to inform me of the acts of discovery or occupation upon which the claim of the Norwegian Government is founded.

3. I have, at the same time, the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note No. 12/1939 of the 14th January stating that the Norwegian Government recognise the boundaries of the Australian Commonwealth Dependency in the Antarctic as defined in the Order in Council of the 7th February, 1933.

I have, etc.

(For the Secretary of State)

(Signed) WALTER ROBERTS.

Monsieur Erik Colban,  
etc., etc., etc.

C/2/34

(A2)



FALKLAND ISLANDS.  
NO: 31.

Downing Street,  
14 April, 1939.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you copies of communications with the Norwegian Minister in London in continuance of the correspondence which was transmitted to you in my despatch No.6 of the 31st of January.

7.2.39.

30.1.39.

✓ Read 29

2.3.39.

2. In connection with this subject, I have also to transmit to you a copy of a letter from the Foreign Office of the 2nd of March relating to the Norwegian claim to sovereignty over certain territories in the Antarctic. It will be observed that in the Royal Decree which was issued in Norway on the 14th of January, 1937, the western boundary of the Norwegian claim is not defined by any degree of longitude but reference is merely made to the "boundary of Geste land", and I should be glad to receive your observations as to whether this definition may be regarded as satisfactory.

3. It would be appreciated if a telegraphic reply could be sent to this enquiry.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient,  
humble servant,

(Sgd) MALCOLM MacDONALD

GOVERNOR

SIR HENRY HENRIKSEN HEATON, K.C.M.G.,

etc., etc., etc.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From His Excellency the Governor,

To Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Despatched: 18th May, 1939 Time: ...

Received: ... .. 19 ... Time: ...

Red H 2.

No. 36. Your despatch No. 31 of 14th April, I regard the boundary of Coats Land as an unsatisfactory definition and suggest 20th degree of West longitude as an alternative. This definition would bring part of Coats Land under Norwegian Sovereignty but there is no objection to this on the part of this Government.

GOVERNOR.

70. 14/5/39 (W. 4304/431/30) (114)

NO DISTRIBUTION.

Decode. Sir C. Dormer (Oslo).  
10th March, 1939.

D. 10th March, 1939.

R. 3.10p.m. 13th March, 1939.

No. 5 Saving. R.

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The Press states that Germany is making difficulties regarding the declaration of January 14th respecting Norwegian Sovereignty in the Antarctic on the grounds that a recent German expedition had discovered a large area in the Zone at the time the decree was issued.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs inform me that no communication has yet however been received from the German Government on the subject.

Report follows by despatch.

Addressed to the Foreign Office, repeated to Berlin Saving.

(46)

7.D. 17/3/39

Co.

(W 4380/431/50)

BRITISH LEGATION,

No. 82.

OSLO.

(49/9/39)

10th March, 1939.

My Lord,

With reference to my despatch No. 22 of the 16th January, I have the honour to report that the Norwegian press publishes an announcement by the German Telegram Bureau regarding a German Antarctic expedition of 1938-39 under the leadership of Captain Ritscher in the M.S. "Schwabenland".

2. The announcement states that the German expedition has discovered over 350,000 square metres of territory and surveyed it from the air. The area visited by the expedition lies within the region claimed for Norway under the decree of January 14th. As regards this area the announcement states that, contrary to the theory of international law which Norway in particular has maintained hitherto, the Norwegian decree is based exclusively on Norwegian explorations in the Antarctic. As far as one can tell in Germany, the Norwegian explorers have not once flown over, let alone set foot on that portion of the coast in the so-called Westland which has now been discovered by the German expedition and explored in detail. This area, according to wireless information, embraces the coast between 5 degrees west longitude and 15 degrees longitude, and the region from the coast southwards to the so-called Polar Cape - a region which for the first time has been seen by human eyes in these weeks.

3. The return of the expedition to Hamburg must

be/

Right Honourable

Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,

etc., etc., etc.

(45)

awaited before further details can be given. When Captain Ritscher has returned in person and an account in writing of the expedition is to hand, together with photographic material, it will be possible to arrive at a decision regarding the steps which are necessary to secure to Germany the results of the expedition.

4. Commenting on the above announcement M. Koht informed the press that, as far as he could see, this same region has already been explored by Norwegians and explorations had been carried out in the same manner, namely principally by aerial photography. A large quantity of material had been collected which was now being revised. M. Koht denies that the Norwegian decree was issued while the German expedition was already at work and states that the latter expedition only sailed from Bremen on the 17th December and that therefore it could not have reached the Antarctic as early as the 14th January, or in any case in time to do anything of note. The Norwegian notification of sovereignty was made in the proper form. Up to the time when the resolution was taken the land had been visited and explored solely by Norwegians.

5. On enquiry at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this morning I was informed that when the Norwegian decree was first communicated to the German Government the latter acknowledged receipt under a general reservation, and this was repeated when the Norwegian Government communicated to them the reasons justifying the decree. But the Ministry have so far received no communication regarding the announcement referred to in this despatch, and it was thought that the German Government would hold their hands until the "Schwabenland" expedition has returned.

6. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin.

I have, etc.,

(SD.) CECIL DORMER.



FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Bowling Street,

NO: 63.

27 June, 1939.

Sir,

*Recd (43)*  
To F.O. 22.6.39.

I have the honour to refer to your telegram No. 36 of the 19th of May, and to transmit to you for your information a copy of the reply which is being sent to the Foreign Office letter of the 2nd of March, concerning the Norwegian claim to certain territories in the Antarctic, a copy of which was enclosed in my despatch No. 31 of the 14th of April.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,  
humble servant,

MALCOLM MacDONALD

GOVERNOR

SIR HERBERT HENNIKER HEATON, K.C.M.G.,

etc., etc., etc.

22 June, 1939.

82006/39

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary MacDonald to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. W 2161/431/50 of the 2nd of March, concerning the Norwegian claim to certain territories in the Antarctic.

2. The Governor of the Falkland Islands has been consulted on the subject of the proposed western boundary of the sector claimed by the Norwegian Government. The eastern boundary of the Falkland Islands Dependencies (see Article 1 of the Letters Patent of the 23th of March 1917) is now the twentieth degree of west longitude; and Mr. MacDonald concurs in the recommendation which the Governor has made to the effect that, as the "boundary of Coats Land" is an unsatisfactory definition, the twentieth degree of west longitude should be suggested to the Norwegian Government

if

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,  
FOREIGN OFFICE.

if Viscount Halifax sees no objection, as an alternative boundary, even though this would bring part of Coats Land, to which there is a British claim, though it has never been incorporated in any British territory, under Norwegian sovereignty.

5. Mr. MacDonald agrees with Lord Halifax that British sovereign claims in the Antarctic to the sectors in question do not involve claims to the high seas, but only to the land and the accompanying territorial waters within the boundaries concerned. As regards whaling, the position generally is governed by the Whaling Industry (Regulation) Act 1934 and the Whaling Industry (Regulation) Act (Newfoundland, Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandated Territories) Order 1936 (S.R. & O. 1936 No. 716) which was made thereunder. It will be observed that, since in respect of the coastal waters of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies there are provisions of the local law substantially corresponding with the provisions of sections 3 and 4 of the Act of 1934, the 1936 Order provides that

those

(H8)

those sections shall not apply in relation to anything done within the coastal waters of the Colony and Dependencies. The local law in question is the Whale Fishery (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1936, of which a copy is enclosed.

No. 9/1936.

4. Mr. MacDonald would suggest that the point discussed in the preceding paragraph should be left open in the reply to the Norwegian Minister.

5. Copies of this letter are being sent to the Admiralty and to the Dominions Office.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) A. BEVIR.

COPY.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

1st September, 1939.

No.W.12397/431/50

Sir,

With reference to your notes No.11/1939 of the 14th January and No. 31/1939 of the 6th February last, in which you were so good as to forward to me particulars regarding the Norwegian Royal Decree of the 14th January 1939 placing under Norwegian sovereignty the portion of the Antarctic Continent stretching between the Falkland Islands Dependency (frontier of Coats Land) on the west and the frontier of the Australian Antarctic Dependency (45° east longitude) on the east, I have the honour to state, for the information of your Government, that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand, recognise Norwegian sovereignty over the territory in question.

2. I have the honour to point out, however, that the Norwegian decree does not define the western boundary of the Norwegian antarctic territory by any degree of longitude, and as the eastern boundary of the Falkland Islands Dependencies, under Article 1 of the Letters Patent of the 28th March 1917, is the 20th degree west longitude, I have the honour to suggest that, in order to avoid any ambiguity on this point, the western boundary of the Norwegian territory should be defined as the 20th degree<sup>of</sup>/west longitude.

I have, etc.,  
(sgd.) H.L. FARQUHAR.

Monsieur Erik Andreas Colban,

etc., etc., etc.,

88006/39

24th August, 1939.

53

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary MacDonal'd to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. W 9608/431/50 of the 14th July, regarding the Norwegian claim to certain territories in the Antartic.

2. Mr. MacDonal'd agrees that it is undesirable to leave undefined in the region in question any territory to which neither the Norwegian Government nor His Majesty's Government lay definite claim. He notes that Viscount Halifax considers that it is probably not the intention of the Norwegian decree to assert Norwegian sovereignty over any territory where there exists a British claim. But for his part he sees no reason to differ from the recommendation made by the Governor of the Falkland Islands in which he observes that Lord Halifax is disposed to concur that the 20th degree of West longitude should be suggested to the Norwegian Government as the Western boundary of their Antartic sector.

I am, etc.,

(Sgd.) A. B. ACHESON.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,  
FOREIGN OFFICE.

W 9608/481/50.

F.O

68

FOREIGN OFFICE,

S.W.1.

14th July, 1939.

Sir,

I am directed by Viscount Halifax to acknowledge the receipt of your letter 88006/39 of the 22nd June regarding the Norwegian claim to certain territories in the Antarctic.

2. Lord Halifax agrees with the view expressed by the Governor of the Falkland Islands that the "boundary of Coats Land" is an unsatisfactory definition of the proposed western boundary of the sector claimed by the Norwegian Government and that it is desirable that some specific degree of longitude should be substituted for this definition.

3. As regards the recommendation made by the Governor that the 20th degree of west longitude should be suggested to the Norwegian Government for this purpose Lord Halifax desires to offer the following observations for the consideration of Mr. Secretary Macdonald. Lord Halifax is aware that although there is a British claim to that part of Coats Land which would under this arrangement be placed under Norwegian sovereignty, that is to say, the portion not comprised within the Falkland Islands Dependencies, this territory has never been actually incorporated in any British possession. It is moreover appreciated that in view of the indications which have been

received/

The Under-Secretary of State,

Colonial Office.

53

received of the possibility of other countries, such as the United States of America, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Germany, entering claims for territory in the Antarctic it is extremely undesirable to leave undefined in the particular region in question any territory to which neither the Norwegian Government nor His Majesty's Government lay definite claim.

4. Lord Halifax is of opinion, having regard to the terms of the letter addressed by Sir George Mounsey to the Norwegian Minister on the 11th November 1948, that it is probably not the intention of the Norwegian decree to assert Norwegian sovereignty over any territory where there exists a British claim, including the outlying portion of Coats' Land referred to in the published Summary of Proceedings of the Imperial Conference of 1926, and consequently that the Norwegian Government probably intend their western boundary in the Antarctic to be  $16\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  west longitude. Unless, however, Mr. MacDonald considers it practicable or desirable for His Majesty's Government to assert a definite claim to the region lying between  $20^{\circ}$  west longitude and  $16\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  west longitude by its incorporation in the Falkland Islands Dependencies, Lord Halifax is disposed to concur in the view that the 20th degree of west longitude should be suggested to the Norwegian Government as the western boundary of their Antarctic sector, in order that there should be no gap in this region between British and Norwegian territory. Before, however, making this suggestion to the Norwegian Government when formally recognising their claim, Lord Halifax will be glad to receive

any/

any further observations which Mr. MacDonald may have to offer.

5. Copies of this letter are being sent to the Dominions Office and Admiralty.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

WALTER BURNETT

250

COPY.

(W 14297/13963/50)  
No. 270/1939.

Royal Norwegian Legation,  
London,  
3rd October, 1939.

My Lord,

I beg leave to refer to your note of the 1st September, 1939 (No. W 12397/431/50) on the subject of the Antarctic Continent. As I had the honour of explaining in my provisional answer of the 2nd September (No. 211/1939) I at once communicated your note to my Government. I have now been instructed to inform you that they agree that the Western boundary of the Norwegian territory should be defined as the 20th degree of West longitude.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) Erik Colban.

The Right Honourable

The Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I., .G.C.I.E.,  
etc., etc., etc.