

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

1928.  
~~1927.~~

C.S.

No. *C/6/28.*

H. E. the Governor.

SUBJECT.

1928.

9th March, 1928.

BOUVET ISLAND -

Visit of s.s. "Norvegia" to

Previous Paper.

MINUTES.

P.P.  
12/9/28

- 1 Telegram to S of S of 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1928
- 2 Minute to Hon. C.S. of 9<sup>th</sup> March 1928
- 3-4 Minute from Hon. Col. Treasurer, of 12. 3. 28
- 5. Newspaper cuttings referring to Bouvet Is
- 6-7 Confidential Despatch to S of S of 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1928.
- 8 Telegram to J. J. J. of 3. 7. 4. 28.
- 9. 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Note from U.S. of S. 3. 7. 28.

Off 1/2 Sub

Draft 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Note & reply

to sub 9 herewith for filing, please.

2. Please report as requested

verbally as to the circumstances

Subsequent Paper.

attached on the despatch

or ton. despatch of this telegram.

122  
2.

Oct 9. 28

- 3rd: Person note to S. of S. of 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1928 10
- Telegram from S. of S. 17/10/28 11
- " to Magistrate, S.G. 20/10/28 12.
- " from Magistrate, South Georgia of 24 10 28 13
- " to Secretary of State of 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1928 14

y.2. Substant. Re Cabot

information which I have been  
able to gather in regard to  
the "Norwegian" expedition in 1492  
The vessel which is privately owned  
by ~~Wm~~ Byrd and Dath called at  
Jouffin Island during February and then  
left to winterize near Shalij  
frank - presumably outside the ~~west~~

4/6/28

2

Patrolled West coast - C. C. Southby  
or salt-water division.

2. Re expedition is said to

have the sympathy of the Norwegian people.

*W. J.*

15. 3. 28.

14 C.S

Deal 2000.

MA

$\frac{1427}{0}$

P. H. J.

15. 3. 28

15. Telegram from whaling office,  
South Shettanas, 12/1/31.

P. A.

*W. J.*

15. 1. 31.

*Pa*

12. 5. 28

(1)

TELEGRAMS.

TELEGRAM.

Chapelries,  
L O N D O N.

*How C.S.  
To You  
33-27  
A.M.*

24th February, 1928.

EDIEHZYXEC	YENWYPEUAJ	AUPRAIAOKU	ZYXAGJYICO
XAGNJKLENO	OCBOVXYBKU	IBYTAROGAP	RAOHOWITFY
ICVOHRABAI	IBYTAPEONG	NUAFOGYWAA	ULIHGFUVMU
OCBOVSRACC	EHGAJKLENO	IBYTAERKVA	GUVNE

Meaning:-

Confidential. "Norvegia" arrived here from Bouvet Island on 22nd January. She secured 740 fur seal. Reported Norwegian flag was erected on South West corner of Island. Despatch follows

Governor.

(2)

From His Excellency the Governor

to the Honourable the Colonial Secretary.

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I attach a copy of a cable I despatched to England on my recent visit to South Georgia. Please confirm by despatch stating inter alia.

- (1) "Norvegia" is a small wooden ship.
- (2) She is at/<sup>the</sup>present moment unseaworthy and badly damaged by worms.
- (3) It is probable she will have to remain several months in South Georgia to be rendered fit to proceed to sea.
- (4) She belongs to the Bryde and Dahl Company and it is commonly stated that she was sent to Bouvet Island to try and find a new whaling base.
- (5) She killed 740 fur seals there. Approaching the land she hit a submerged rock - ensuing damage not great. It is stated that a Norwegian flag was erected on the south-west corner of the island. Rumour states many whales were seen in the vicinity but I could not obtain any definite information.
- (6) I presume that this activity on the part of Bryde & Dahl is in view of the fact that they probably think that their licence at South Georgia will not be renewed.

J. N.  
C

9th March, 1928.



Minute.

To The Hon: Collector of Customs.

The "S.S. Norvegia" entered at S Georgia  
22 Jan 1928 having on board Scientific gear and  
740 Fur Seal skins in transit.

This ship, 128 tons, cleared from Cape Town  
on or about 18<sup>th</sup> November 1927.

Presumably all land in her voyage  
is within British jurisdiction, & except for  
Gough Isd & the Tristan da Cunha group, within  
the colony.

There is no statement as to where the  
skins came from, it is however reasonable  
to suppose, or at least suspect, them to be the  
property of this Government.

A. Bennett.  
Customs Officer.

12. 3. 28.

24



FALKLAND ISLANDS.

C.S. No.....

MEMO.

Departmental Number.

From....Colonial Treasurer.....

Date.....12th March 1928

To Hon. Col. Secretary.....

Norwegian s.s. 'NORVEGIAN' ENTERED AT SOUTH GEORGIA ON 22nd JANU 1928 HAVING ON BOARD 740 Fur seal skins.

Reference Numbers.

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Minute from C.O. Bennett dated 12.3.28

Hon. Col. Sec,

I have no information regarding this vessel beyond Customs papers received from South Georgia showing that the vessel cleared from Cape Town on the 18th Novbr 1927 and arrived at S. Georgia in Jany 1928.

2. From the Inward Report of the vessel it would appear that the seal skins were obtained at Bouvet Is., but I have been unable to find where this Island is situated.

*A. George Gaithe*

Treasurer.

12 5.28

## LONELY ISLANDS IN S. ATLANTIC.

### GRANT OF WHALING RIGHTS.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies announces that Messrs. Johan Rasmussen and Co., of Sandefjord, Norway, are being granted an exclusive licence to occupy certain islands belonging to his Majesty named Bouvet Island and Thompson Island. The islands in question are uninhabited and situated in the South Atlantic Ocean in or about latitude 54° 26' South, longitude 3° 24' East. The licence permits the company to take and treat whales in the territorial waters of the islands and to remove guano, subject, *inter alia*, to the payment of a yearly rent for the islands and of royalties on whale oil and guano exported. The licence is for a term of 10 years.

\*\*\* Bouvet Island and Thompson Island (which is of volcanic origin), together with Lindsay Island, lie some 2,000 miles S.S.W. of Cape Town and about an equal distance S.S.E. of Tristan da Cunha. Bouvet, the largest of the three islands, is named after its discoverer, the French naval officer Pierre Bouvet, who in 1739 endeavoured to find the then half-fabled South Land, to-day known to be the Antarctic Continent. Bouvet, though he navigated a great area of ice-encumbered sea, failed to penetrate farther than 55deg. south.

### BOUVET ISLAND.

In the House of Commons yesterday Sir Auston Chamberlain informed Lord Sandon that the British Government considered valid its title to Bouvet Island, which title had been acquired by virtue of the occupation of the island by Captain Norris in 1825. The Norwegian Government had been so informed.

Our Oslo Correspondent says that the Norwegian Foreign Office describes a statement that Great Britain had recognized the Norwegian occupation of the island as "misleading"; negotiations are proceeding.

Bouvet is an uninhabited island in the South Atlantic. On January 17 the Colonial Office described it and another island, as to the position and even existence of which there is doubt, as "belonging to his Majesty" and said that a lease of it was being granted to a Norwegian firm for whaling purposes and the collection of guano. The next day the Norwegian Government announced that Bouvet had been occupied on behalf of Norway on December 1 last.

## BOUVET AND THOMPSON ISLANDS.

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The controversy now proceeding as to the ownership of Bouvet and Thompson Islands, induces me to suggest one or two trifling corrections on matters of fact to the account of this little-known group given in your leading article of January 24 last.

The best maps, such as the Admiralty charts, no longer show the Bouvet group as composed of three islands—Bouvet, Lindsay, and Thompson. Lindsay Island is now known to be identical with Bouvet Island and with the "Liverpool Island" of George Norris, captain of the English sealer *Sprightly*, who hoisted the Union Jack there on December 16, 1825. The German Admiralty charts, in fact, go farther than ours, since they only show Bouvet Island and omit Thompson Island. This is probably due to the fact that Chun, of the *Valdivia* (the "German scientist" referred to in your article), failed to find it in 1898, and so charted one island only, Bouvet Island, not "all three islands" as stated. The German s.s. *Meteor* also searched unsuccessfully for Thompson Island in 1926. There seems, however, to be little doubt that this island actually exists, although its position is at present uncertain. It must undoubtedly lie within a circle of 80 miles radius drawn from Bouvet Island, and probably in the N.E. quadrant of this circle. It was sighted and charted by Norris in 1825 (no one has yet landed on it), and again sighted by an American sealer, Captain Fuller, of the *Francis Allen*, in 1893. So far as I can ascertain, no other navigator has ever seen it.

Bouvet Island, by the way, was twice searched for unsuccessfully by Captain Cook—in 1772 and 1775. It appears to be invisible to naval officers. None has ever sighted it, although at least four—Cook, Furneaux, Ross, and Moore—have looked for it at different times, without success. As a matter of geographical interest, there is one respect in which the Bouvet group—Bouvet and Thompson Islands—are unique. They form the only land on the earth's surface around which one can draw a circle of 1,000 miles radius including no other land whatever.

Believe me, yours faithfully,

RUPERT T. GOULD,

Lieutenant-Commander, R.N. (Retd.),  
F.R.G.S.

Downside, Woodfield-lane, Ashted, Surrey.  
Feb. 21.

7

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
STANLEY,

7th April, 1928.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Sir,

*Red 1*

I have the honour to confirm my confidential telegram of the 24th of February, 1928, and to report more fully on the operations of the "Norvegia" at Bouvet Island, whence she returned to South Georgia on the 22nd of January, 1928.

2. I would explain in the first place that the "Norvegia" is a small wooden ship and that she is at the present moment so unseaworthy and badly damaged by worms that it is probable that she will have to remain several months in South Georgia in order to be rendered fit to proceed to sea.

3. The "Norvegia" belongs to the Bryde and Dahl Company of Godt Hull Harbour and it is commonly stated at South Georgia that she was despatched to Bouvet Island with the object of finding there a new whaling base. It is also stated that while at Bouvet Island she killed 740 fur seals.

4. In the course of approaching the land she is believed to have struck a submerged rock; the resulting damage, however, was not great. Report has it that many whales were seen in the vicinity but I have been unable to obtain any definite information as to

this/

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

L. C. H. S. AMERY, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

this point. Another report is also current that a Norwegian flag was erected on the south-west corner of the Island.

5. I presume that this activity on the part of Messrs Bryde and Dahl is due to their fears that their licence at Godt Hull Harbour may not be renewed on its expiration next year.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

ARNOLD HODSON.

c/6/28.

(8)

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

*From* His Excellency the Governor.

*To* The Secretary of State for the Colonies.

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*Despatched* : 7th April, 1928. *Time* : 16.00.

*Received* : ... 192 *Time* :

CHAPELRIES  
LONDON<sub>2</sub>

Confidential. With reference to Bouvet Island and islands in the vicinity suggest advisability of annexing them to Dependencies.

GOVERNOR.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

*From* The Secretary of State for the Colonies

*To* His Excellency the Acting Governor.

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*Despatched* : 17th October, 1928. *Time* : 1345

*Received* : 19th October, 1928. *Time* : 1102

GOVERNOR

STANLEY.

Confidential. Should be glad to learn when it is expected s.s. "Norwegia" will leave South Georgia for Antarctic. Reported here that damage sustained is such that departure is likely to be delayed some time and I would welcome any reliable information you may be able to obtain.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From The Colonial Secretary

To The Magistrate, South Georgia.

Despatched: 20th October, 1928. Time: 1100

Received: ... .. 1928. Time: ...

MAGISTRATE

SOUTH GEORGIA

Urgent Confidential. Please telegraph as soon as possible when it is expected that s.s. "Norwegia" will leave South Georgia for Antarctic. What is the present condition of the vessel and is crew available. Telegraph fully any reliable information you may be able to obtain regarding this expedition.

Colonial Secretary.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

*From* The Magistrate, South Georgia.

*To* The Colonial Secretary.

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*Despatched:* 24th October, 1928. *Time:* 1128.

*Received:* 24th October, 1928. *Time:* 1400.

SECRETARY

STANLEY.

Your telegram of 20th October, Confidential, Norwegia at present in dock undergoing repairs to hull ship expected to leave for Bouvet 5th November, and return to South Georgia. Subsequently programme of movements unknown vessel is fully manned. Crew arrived by Thor I.

MAGISTRATE.

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

*From* His Excellency the Acting Governor.

*To* The Secretary of State for the Colonies.

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*Despatched:* 24th October, 1928. *Time:* 1700.

*Received:* ... .. 192. *Time:* ...

CHAFELRIES

LONDON.

October 24<sup>th</sup>. Confidential. Your telegram of the 17th of October, Norwegia at present in dock at South Georgia undergoing repairs to hull which is stated to have been last season so badly attacked by worms as to render vessel unseaworthy. She is expected to leave for Bouvet Island November 5th and to return to South Georgia. Subsequent programme of movements unknown. Vessel is fully manned by new crew which has arrived from Norway recently. It is believed that among other objects of expedition is to take fur seals.

GOVERNOR.

DECODE.

15

TELEGRAM.

*From* The Whaling Officer, South Shetlands.

*To* The Colonial Secretary.

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*Despatched:* 13th January, 1931. *Time:* 23.00.

*Received:* 15th January, 1931. *Time:* 11.00.

Norvegia arrived here 11th January leaves here 14th  
January bound for Bouvet.

WALING OFFICER.