

C.S.

PEAT

MIN/PEA/1#6

1922

No. 316/22

S. of S. No. 14

SUBJECT.

1922

8th February

Previous Paper.

Utilization of Peat Deposits in the
Falkland Islands

MINUTES.

S of S Despatch No 14 of 8th February 1922 — Encl (1)

C.S. In information

TTTTT 12/4/22

The Hon; Colonial Secretary.

Thank you. Noted and returned.

2. Shall I next season have 10 cwt of peat dried etc,
in blocks of 6" X 6" X 10".

R.B. Basely.
Colonial Engineer.

12/5/22.

Y.B. Submitted

2. Shall the report be published?
3. It certainly does not seem worth while
making up the blocks of dried peat
and sending them home.

TTTTT 15/5/22

Subsequent Paper.

H.P.S.

It is Mr Neepay to publish the enclosure
to de-patch.

2. Draft de-patch herewith: please also see draft of
confidential draft de-patch in C 25/4/21.

Mr.

31 January 1923

Despatch No 9 to S. of S. of 1st February 1923. — Encl. (2)

S of S despatch No 18 of 26th Sept 1923 —

(3)

Transferred
to 220/21
encl (8)

V.B. Submitted.

G.H. 13

Dir/Sec

13 Nov^r 1923

It seems to me that this should go
in Vol. 220/21 and I will deal with it } M.P.
220/21
H.H.H. 15 Nov 23

DUPLICATE

IMPERIAL INSTITUTE
of the
UNITED KINGDOM, THE COLONIES AND INDIA
South Kensington,
LONDON, S.W.7
23rd January, 1922

Sir,

With further reference to your letter No. 1262/1921 of the 27th July, 1921, I have the honour to send you the following information relating to the question of the possible utilisation of the peat deposits in the Falkland Islands.

As stated in Imperial Institute letter of the 7th January 1921, it appeared unlikely that British firms would be interested in this matter unless there were good prospects of disposing of the peat in South America. Enquiries as to the possible market for peat fuel in South America have been made and information has also been received from H.M. Commercial Officers and Consuls in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

According to the information furnished peat fuel is scarcely used at present in South America. There is not likely to be a market for it in Venezuela, Colombia and Paraguay, whilst in the other countries a demand would have to be created. Moreover Brazil, Uruguay and Chile possess considerable peat deposits which have scarcely been worked hitherto, though action is now being taken in this direction in Uruguay and Chile. It is not known whether deposits occur in Argentina, but no proposals for the utilisation of peat are under consideration there. The fuel requirements of Argentina are stated to be equivalent to 5,000,000 tons of coal per annum, and this country would appear to offer the best market for peat from the Falkland Islands provided that the price at which it could be

supplied would compare favourably with that of the other available fuels (coal, wood and oil) due regard being paid to their respective calorific values.

The present price of coal at South American ports is stated to be from 40s. to 44s. per ton. Air dried peat blocks(containing say 25 per cent of moisture) would probably have about half the calorific value of industrial coal, and in view of the disadvantages of peat as compared with coal their value in Argentina in competition with coal at the above prices would probably not exceed 15s to 16s. per ton.

Owing to the scarcity of labour in the Falkland Islands it would not be practicable to produce peat for export by manual labour and the possibility of employing machinery for the purpose was therefore investigated. Arrangements were made for technical trials of Falkland Islands peat, received at the Institute some years ago , to be carried out by a firm of engineers in this country who specialise in such materials. The firm have recently reported on the results of their trials. They confirm the view previously expressed by the Institute that the peat is of good quality and state that in their opinion air-dried blocks which would stand transport could be prepared by machinery from the fresh peat at a moderate cost. Detailed estimates which they offered to furnish of the cost of the necessary plant for the process have not yet been received but will be forwarded if required. In the meantime, the following particulars, taken from official reports, as to the cost of treatment of peat elsewhere may be of interest.

The cost of producing peat blocks at Ticknevin in Ireland by hand-method is stated to have been about 6s per ton

ton(pre-war) and about 8s per ton in 1917, and the opinion is expressed that machine-made peat would not have cost more. The cost of producing 600 tons per day of peat blocks(30 per cent moisture) in Canada in 1914 was given at \$1.15 per ton at the bog, and the cost of one peat manufacturing unit with an output of 60 tons per day at \$12,000.

Hitherto it has generally been found impossible to find a remunerative market for peat at any considerable distance from the deposit owing to cost of transport on account of the bulky nature of the material. As one ton of peat blocks occupy the space of two tons of coal the freight is heavy in comparison with that for coal. The results of the enquiries made by the Institute indicate that the question of freight will be an important factor in determining whether the preparation of peat blocks in the Falklands for export to South America will prove remunerative. No data are however available here on which to base an estimate of the probable cost of freight from the Falkland Islands to Argentina, and in order that the commercial possibilities may be further considered, it is suggested that enquiries on this subject should be addressed to the Governor of the Colony. It is however unlikely that freight rates will be favourable unless goods are carried on the forward journey from Argentina.

The period during which air-drying of the peat could be efficiently carried out in the Falkland Islands would have an important bearing on the preparation of the blocks and it would be desirable to ask for information

on

on this point in view of the rainfall. Artificial drying would add to the cost although peat might be used as fuel.

On the whole the prospects of finding an extensive market in South America for peat blocks from the Falklands do not appear to be promising, but as the high cost of freight would prohibit a remunerative market being found elsewhere for the peat it may be considered desirable to examine further the possibility of creating a demand for peat fuel in certain countries in South America. If so it is suggested that about 10 cwt of good, well-dried, peat blocks measuring when freshly cut not more than 6 ins. by 6 ins. by 10 ins. should be forwarded here for distribution for trial in those countries so that the views of possible users of peat fuel may be ascertained and more definite information obtained as to the price it would be likely to realise.

A number of experiments on the carbonisation by distillation of Falkland Islands peat have been carried out with a view to determining the yields of charcoal, acetic acid, ammonia and oils. Owing to the absence of a local demand for these products and the cost of transport this alternative method of utilising the peat need not be further considered at present.

I have the honour etc.,

(Sgd) WYNDHAM R. DUNSTAN.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
COLONIAL OFFICE
S.W.1.

3705/1922

DOWNING STREET

2 February, 1922

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Churchill to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 305/22 of the 23rd January and to express his thanks for the trouble which has been taken in investigating the question of the possible utilisation of the post deposits in the Falkland Islands.

2. Copies of your letter and this reply are being sent to the Governor for his observations and a further communication will be addressed to you when an answer is received. In the meantime it would not appear necessary to obtain detailed estimates of the cost of plant.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(signed) G. GRINDLE

THE DIRECTOR

IMPERIAL INSTITUTE

(2)

FAULKLAND ISLANDS.

No. 9.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

STANLEY,

1st February, 1923.

My Lord Duke,

With reference to Mr. Churchill's despatch No. 14 of the 8th of February, 1922, I have the honour to report that there is no maritime communication between this Colony and Argentina and that in the event of a market being found there for peat fuel it would be necessary to make special arrangements for the transport of the fuel.

2. The present rate of freight from Monte Video to Stanley by vessels of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company is 42s/6d per ton and the same rate was charged by the only vessel which has carried cargo direct from Buenos Aires to Stanley during the last two years. A reduction in this rate might be expected for large quantities of fuel but the rate would still be high in comparison with the value of the fuel and no allowance could be made for inward cargo as the total imports of the Colony exclusive of coal, amount only to about 2,000 tons a year and come almost entirely from England.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord Duke,

Your Grace's most obedient,

humble servant,

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE,

P.C., K.G., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.,

J. Middleton.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.