

C.S.

INDUSTRIES

(Peat).

1926.

No.

421/26

Est. Louis Williams.

SUBJECT.

1926.

1st September.

FORWARDS CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THE
PRODUCTION OF COMMERCIAL BRIQUETTES FROM PEAT.

Previous Paper.

404/26 375/16 183/16 392/14 289/14 157/13
353/12 187/11 293/11 246/10 352/12

MINUTES.

Letter from Estate Louis Williams of 1. Sept. 1926.

Y.C.

Submitted

M. L. G.

On receipt

9 Sept 1926

Y.C. This is most interesting correspondence, and the investigation is deserving of all possible encouragement. I have taken the opportunity of discussing the request with Hon. Mr. Craigie Stalketh, who concurs with me in thinking that it would be difficult for Government to assist in a private venture such as this at the present stage of the negotiations.

2. A copy of the correspondence, excluding Dr. Perkins' letter, should be made before it is returned to Mr. Rowe

3. Draft attached

10 Sept. 1926

Subsequent Paper.

29.

Letter to Mr. Rowe dated 13th Sept. 1926.

10.

Letter from Est. Louis Williams of 15. Sept. 1926.

V.C.
Submitted
W.H.B.
of Exec.
16 Sept 1896.

Of Secy. I have not seen a copy of the
 pamphlet in this office, but as Mr. Rowe has
 kindly agreed to endeavour to procure one, no
 further action necessary

B
16 Sept. 1896



RADIO ADDRESS
"WILLIAMS"
CODES USED:
BENTLEYS
A.B.C. SYSTEM
A. 1.

ESTATE LOUIS WILLIAMS

GENERAL MERCHANTS

PORT STANLEY
FALKLAND ISLANDS

1st September 1926



Sir,

We beg to attach a folder containing the following papers:-

1. Paper read by Dr. F. Mollwo Perkin, C.B.E., F.I.C. before the British Association, re "Peat".
2. Copy of letter from this firm to Dr. Perkin 25.10.26
3. Original of Dr. Perkin's reply, dated 11.1.26
4. Copy of our letter dated 4th March to Dr. Perkin.
5. Original of Dr. Perkin's further letter, 19.4.26

From the above it will be seen that Dr. Perkin lays claim to having evolved a system for the rapid production of commercial briquettes from peat - see pages 22 and 24 of his paper.

It will also appear that we have promised to send Dr. Perkin one ton (more or less) of Falkland Islands peat for experimental purposes.

It goes without saying that if the large deposits of peat now existing in the Falkland Islands, were to be successfully industrialized, a great change would be effected locally, and great benefits accrue to the population, who would then have a second industry to rely upon.

We therefore think that it is possible that H.E. the Governor will be interested in perusing the papers now enclosed, and, if favourably impressed, perhaps Government might see its way to pay the freight on the peat we are going to send to Dr. Perkin.

In this latter connection we shall be pleased if a reply can be furnished us in time for the next motor vessel. The papers can be returned to us in due course, and we shall esteem it a favour, should any Government action be taken in support of, or as a supplementary to our own efforts, that the name of Dr. F. Mollwo Perkin should not be disclosed locally.

Thanking you in anticipation for your kind attention in this connection, we beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,
p.p. Estate Louis Williams

The Honourable,
The Colonial Secretary
Port Stanley.

25th October, 1925.

Dr. F. Mollwo Perkin,
C/o The Brit. Assoc. for the Advancement of Science,
Burlington House,
L O N D O N, W.1.

Dear Sir,

By way of introducing this letter to your kind attention, we beg to state that we have recently read an extract of a paper delivered before the British Assoc. in Southampton, describing a new process for briquetting peat.

The extract we have perused is very brief so that our information really condenses to the fact that a new process for the treatment of peat has been evolved, and that you are presumably the originator of this new process.

The Falkland Islands are extensively covered with peat bogs. Most of the peat is of the black variety, and, we are led to understand it compares in quality with any other peat in the world, being superior to most European varieties.

At present the peat is only used for local requirements. Each house in Port Stanley has its allotted "bog" and in the early summer the peat is cut from the face of the bog (in steps of from 3 to 4 feet deep, into sods of about 6" x 9" x 9" - the top sod with grass and moss being replaced.

The wet sods are spread out to dry, and, according to prevailing weather, within 2½ to 3½ months are ready to be carted to the sheds, having shrunk to about 5/8ths of their original size.

There is an enormous amount of waste in the local method. Large quantities of peat disintegrate during drying on the bogs. If late frosts occur any recently cut sods caught by the frost are rendered useless. Further large quantities of peat disintegrate in the yards or sheds, where it is stored for fuel, and in the annual clearing out this "peat mold" is carted to the rubbish dumps.

We are therefore of the opinion that if a small peat briquetting plant can be installed without too great a capital expenditure, a considerable saving could be effected in the local cost of peat; its already high quality would be improved upon; the local bogs would last longer as present waste would be done away with; the cost of carting would be halved; storage space would be reduced; and handling would be reduced.

So much for the local household consumption.

Peat/

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Peat is an excellent fuel for certain industrial requirements. There are no industries whatever here. (The whole of the Islands are occupied in sheep grazing). We do not know whether peat briquettes would be suitable for replacing Welsh steam coal on ocean steamers, but as your process is said to reduce the peat to the same specific gravity as steam coal, we foresee the possibility of being able to supply several thousand tons of peat briquettes every year to the steamers of Norwegian whaling factories which operate from October to April in the South Shetlands and which often coal at Port Stanley, paying from £4.- to £4.15.- per ton.

Peat might also be supplied to such vessels of the P.S.N.C. which call here, and which usually coal either at Coronel or Punta Arenas (Chile) or at Montevideo -- but most of the P.S.N.C. boats calling nowadays at Port Stanley are motor vessels.

Furthermore, were it possible to reduce the f.o.b. price of peat briquettes to less than £3.- per ton (and always assuming that a ton of briquettes would be as good as a ton of Welsh steam coal) it would not be too adventurous to presume that it would be possible to attract other steamers to call at the Falklands for bunkers. For instance the Shaw Savill & Albion vessels on the return journey from New Zealand with frozen meat, etc. pass regularly by the Falklands, often within sight, going to Montevideo for bunkers. The South Georgia whaling fleet (which does not call at Port Stanley nowadays - we only get the South Shetlands whaling fleet), might also be induced to bunker here instead of getting special colliers sent out to them, and also bunkering at Rio Janeiro, St. Vincent, etc.

And, finally, if the cost could be still further reduced, peat briquettes could be exported to the ports of Punta Arenas (Chile), Rio Grande, Rio Gallegos, Santa Cruz, and San Julian (Argentina) at all of which there are large freezing establishments which import large quantities of steam coal every year - and the last three would also be interested in peat briquettes for household use, as all their fuel has to be imported, there being no timber or any other natural fuel on the spot.

After reading the foregoing you will doubtless agree that we have reason to be very much interested in any process likely to serve the purpose of making the enormous peat deposits of the Falklands an industrial profitable proposition.

Peat is to be found all over the Falklands. It is almost impossible to turn a sod in any place without revealing a peaty soil, but there are well defined bogs in different localities running from 4 to 20 feet deep.

If you are to refer to a map of the islands you will notice that there are innumerable harbours, so that when one district of peat was eventually worked out, the plant and depot could be removed to another suitable harbour adjacent to a peat deposit.

Under/

Under the circumstances can you favour us with further details of your process ?, also estimated cost of machinery, and details of working costs. Besides, if your process is a real success, no doubt some special companies will be formed for exploiting the European peat deposits, and the parties interested in such companies might think it worth their while studying the same propositions as applicable to the Falkland Islands peat deposits. You could perhaps place such parties in communication with us.

Our own capital is small and fully employed, so that "on our own", we could only be interested in a relatively small plant, but we should be happy to cooperate energetically in regard to any large local venture.

If you are interested in obtaining specimens of the local peat, we shall be very pleased to send you a ton or two.

We have only contemplated peat as fuel. Doubtless your process brings into play the utilization of by-products. The only by-product likely to be marketable here would be a sheep fluid disinfectant (something similar to the sheep dips manufactured from coal tar), of which a certain number of gallons could be sold locally, and many thousands of gallons to Punta Arenas and the other ports mentioned on page II.

We sincerely trust that you may see your way to favour us with a reply in due course, and thanking you in anticipation for your kind attention, beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,

p.p. ESTATE LOUIS WILLIAMS.

(Signed) E. G. Rowe.

F. MOLLWO PERKIN, C.B.E., Ph.D., F.I.C., F.C.S.

"Albion House"

Consulting,
Analytical, and
Technical Chemist.59, New Oxford Street,
L O N D O N, W.C.1.

Laboratories: SUDBURY, MIDDLESEX.

11th January 1926.

The Manager,
E.G. Rowe, Esq.,
Estate Louis Williams,
Port Stanley,
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 20th October, and I note that you have only seen a brief extract of my paper read before the British Association at Southampton. I have pleasure, therefore, in sending you two copies of the actual paper which I read.

I note your remarks as to the manner in which the Peat is worked in the Falklands. The overlying Peat consisting of moss and grass is of practically no interest in the process. It is the wet Peat underlying this which is of value. It may contain about 80% or a little more of water. In my process I can produce the finished briquette from the peat within 10 to 12 hours. Drying on the bog I have entirely done away with. I see no reason why Peat briquettes should not be used on steamers in place of the expensive Welsh coal, as the Specific Gravity is practically the same. In fact it should turn out to be an extremely useful proposition to you.

The deeper the bog generally speaking the better the Peat. You offer to send me one to two tons of Peat. Now I should like at least one ton sent over and I wish it to be cut below the top spit, that is to say about 2½ feet from the top. It might perhaps be advisable to send this peat from different bogs as then I could get a better average idea as to its value.

In reference to your remarks as to the cost of machinery, a plant to deal with one thousand tons a week, that is to say with a thousand tons of finished product, is approximately £18,000. This, however, does not include the freightage by ship to your district.

You also refer to the question by-products. Peat when carbonised, produces oils, together with tar acids, which makes a splendid sheep fluid disinfectant, which disinfectant is, as a matter of fact, better than those made from coal tar products. In carbonising the Peat briquettes, very valuable charcoal is obtained of very great use in the iron and steel industries and also as a brazier fuel.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J. MOLLWO PERKIN.

C O P Y.

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4th March, 1926.

Dr. F. Mollwo Perkin, C.B.E., &c.,
"Albion House",
59, New Oxford Street,
L O N D O N, W.C.1.

Dear Sir,

We beg to own receipt of your favour dated 11th January last (to hand to-day), together with two copies of the paper read by you before the British Association.

We have immediately sent up one copy of your paper to H.E. the Governor of the Colony, as he should be interested in the subject.

We shall take steps to send you about one ton of peat as soon as possible, though we cannot do so by the mail now in harbour.

In due course we shall again address you in this connection, and thanking you for your kind attention, beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,

p.p. ESTATE LOUIS WILLIAMS.

(Intld) E.G.R.

C O P Y.

2

F. MOLLWO PERKIN, C.B.E., Ph.D., F.I.C., F.C.S.

Consulting,
Analytical, and
Technical Chemist.

"Albion House"
59, New Oxford Street,
L O N D O N, W.C.1.

Laboratories: SUDBURY, MIDDLESEX.

19th April 1926.

E. G. Rowe, Esq.,
Estate Louis Williams,
General Merchants,
Port Stanley,
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you for yours of the 4th March, and note that you are sending me one ton of Peat.

I am just looking into the question as to whether it is possible to patent in the Falkland Islands, or, in what district I should patent in order to cover you. I think, however, it would be better for me to examine the Peat in the first place.

Looking forward with interest to receiving the Peat,

I am,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) F. MOLLWO PERKIN.

421/26.

13th September, 26

Sir,

I am directed by the Acting Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, and to thank you for the correspondence enclosed therein which His Excellency has read with great interest.

2. His Excellency desires me to say that he considers that you have been most enterprising in taking up the question of utilisation of Falkland Islands peat, and trusts that successful results may accrue. He regrets, however, that at the present stage of the negotiations, he is unable to see his way to authorise any expenditure from the funds of the Colony in connection with the proposed consignment of peat which the Estate Louis Williams has already promised to despatch to Dr. Perkin.

3. It is noted that in paragraph 2 of your letter of the 4th of March to Dr. Perkin you state that/

The Manager,
Estate Louis Williams,
PORT STANLEY.

8.

that a copy of his paper read before the British Association was sent to the Governor. There is no record of this having been received, and I am to enquire whether you are in a position to furnish a copy for record purposes.

4. The enclosures to your letter under acknowledgment are returned herewith.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. L. Brown

for Colonial Secretary.



RADIO ADDRESS
"WILLIAMS"
CODES USED:
BENTLEYS
A.B.C. 5TH ED
A.I.

ESTATE LOUIS WILLIAMS

SUCCESSORS TO CHAS. WILLIAMS.

Established 1863.

GENERAL MERCHANTS



PORT STANLEY
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

15th September 1926

Sir,

We are in receipt of your favour dated 13th inst.
No. 421/26 re 'peat', contents of which we have noted with
due attention.

We regret we have no further copy of Dr. Perkin's
paper read before the British Association, but we shall
endeavour to procure one.

The spare copy we received, we sent up immediately
it was received by us, addressed direct to Sir John
Middleton at Government House, with our card, and very
possibly this copy may still exist in His Excellency's
office.

We are, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

p.p. Estate Louis Williams

The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary
Port Stanley.