

1919

NAT/SEA/1 # 9

Seal (Imm)  
No. 664.

C.S.

Treasurer  
1919  
1st September  
Previous Paper.

SUBJECT.

Towards Mr A.G. Bennett's Report on  
Inspection of Imm Seal Rookeny  
at Voluntera Rocks.

MINUTES.

Mr Treasurer

I am much obliged to you for  
arranging this visit and to Mr Bennett  
for making it. I am sorry for the difficulties  
experienced - Mr Bennett's report of the  
small number of the fur seal seen is very  
disappointing

Accounts to Mr Bennett and to  
Mr Bailey for the £3 each you recommend  
can be passed in the Col Sec Office and charged  
to X11 Transport 1. Passages etc of Est Officers

I shall be glad to send the specimens  
of the Porant Coon to England if Mr Bennett  
will kindly prepare the skins.

2.9.19

W.G.  
Cov

Subsequent Paper.

Hon. Col. Sec.

I have asked Mr Bennett to prepare the Brant goose skins.

M. Craigie Halkett

Sep<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 1919.

Sir,

Mr Craigie Halkett

I think the skins have been prepared by Mr Bennett and that you have kindly arranged to send them by parcel.

Post to the Director British Museum (Natural History Section) by present mail. Is that not so.

Yours

M. Craigie Halkett

25.9.19

Hon. Col. Sec.

Skins (2) of Brant Geese have been packed and sent by Parcel Post to the Director British Museum (Natural History Section).

2. Perhaps Mr Bennett can now be paid for his services in preparing the skins in question.

M. Craigie Halkett

26.9.19.

Hon. Treasurer

Vouchers for £3 each for Mr Bennett & Mr Bailey amounts.

T.H.

29.9.19

Hon. Sec. Des. for £3 in favour of Mr A. G. Bennett and for £3 in favour of Mr R. Bailey withdrawn

2. With reference to the concluding portion of my minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> inst., I beg to state that H.E. the Governor approved the sum of £1 being paid to Mr Bennett for preparing the 2 Beant skins, perhaps the amount can be charged to XIII Miscellaneous, item 9.

W. Craigie Walker

29.9.19.

H.E.

If approved I will pass vouchers as suggested by Mr Craigie-Walker.

T.H.

29.9.19.

Approved.

T.R.G.

Sept 29/19

Hon. Treasurer

Vouchers amount.

T.H.

30.9.19

STANLEY.  
1.9.1919.

Sir.

I have the honour to report that in following your instructions contained in your minute of the 25.3.1919, I proceeded by the "Cutter Breeze" (Mr Bailey), to Johnsons Harbour, at noon on the 25 th. After a rough passage we arrived after 11 pm. On the 27 th the gale grew worse, but abated later, and at 5 pm we left Johnsons Harbour, arriving inside Eagle Point shortly after 9 pm and anchored, The weather conditions becoming much worse during the night, a run was made at daylight on the 28 th over the sand-bar into the Volunteer Creek for shelter, and was compelled by the continuous gales and snow to remain there until daylight on the 31 st, when a start was made to get out, the weather meanwhile having moderated.

We stood for the Volunteer Rocks, and when fairly close Mr Bailey and myself boarded the dinghy, after a severe pull amongst a large number of rocks, and a heavy swell, we effected a landing in the gulchway on the principal rock. This safe landing was entirely due to the masterly skill of Mr Bailey in such a swell on a steep and confined beach, as was then running. As the tide was just rising after low water, no minutes could be lost for fear of a protracted stay on the rocks totally unprepared with supplies as we were.

The main rock is roughly 500 x 50 yards, extremely irregular and in common with the other rocks a series of wedges, of an irregularity impossible to exceed protruding from the water.

No Fur-seal was seen by us on the Principal rock, there was some Sea-lions that appeared to be in the last stages of starvation.

On the Second rock, divided from the first by a gulch some 2-3 yards wide, I could see a number of Fur-seal about 40 in all, on ledges. Owing to the irregularity of the surface, I possibly did not see one quarter of the number actually there. Landing on this rock was impossible, owing to the state of the sea. The light was very bad at this time (7-3 am), so that the photographs

photographs taken are probably failures. I could see no small seal.

After safely leaving the Main rock, we pulled some distance along the other- outer rocks, but, except on the 2nd rock, no Fur-seal could be seen.

Mr Bailey believes that he has the last man known to be on these rocks, sealing, 3 or 7 years ago. He then left a quantity of stores in tins, and a quantity of salt in sacks, in an impromptu shanty. This shanty was of sea-lion skins and canvas over a wooden frame, only the frame is left, and the salt is in perfect condition yet, we examined no stores in the rusty tins.

On rounding a rock wall at the shanty Mr Bailey was more than than surprised to find a well stacked heap of large timber, a copper gunpowder kettle, a large stone demijohn (identical to the 2 gallon jars in local use) 2 water breakers, and a number of bottles stowed, that could not be identified by Mr Bailey. Proving that these rocks have been visited since then.

The timber had the appearance of a quantity now on the beach of the North Coast some 3-4 miles away, at the creek 'Sirtus', which I saw in situ on the 30th. Nothing but a local cutter could or would go in and remove this timber, The professional poacher would merely provide himself with a tent.

The whole thing was necessarily carried out with the greatest possible speed, as the weather was far from desirable, thus a close examination of some hours duration necessary, without the gravest risks, and expense to all. <sup>could not be made</sup> As I could not get up to one Fur-seal I regret that the desired specimens could not be collected.

We were absent from the cutter two hours in all, 7-9 am.

The configuration of these rocks, make it impossible to move a seal in life more than a yard or two at the most, and I should say it was difficult, if not impossible, to part the sexes under such conditions.

I returned to Stanley at 5 pm Aug: 31 st.  
Later when the weather improves, a more extended examination could be made, and the desired specimens, more or less easily obtained.

To The Hon: the Collector,  
of Customs.

I have the honour to be Sir,  
Your obedient servant.  
*Al. Bennett*  
Officer of Customs.

MINUTE

1919

664/19

His Excellency the Governor,

I beg to report that Mr. A. G. Bennett returned to Stanley on Sunday the 31st inst.

On Tuesday the 26th inst., Mr. Bennett sailed in the cutter "Breeze" for the purpose of visiting the Fur Seal rookery at the Volunteer Rocks but owing to the extremely bad weather prevailing last week the Cutter was held up at Johnsons Harbour, Berkeley Sound, until Wednesday evening the 27th inst., On the evening of the 27th the cutter left Johnsons Harbour to make for the Volunteers and after reaching Eagle Point at about 9 p.m. at night she had to anchor inside the point in a heavy swell. The following morning the wind veered to a bad quarter and the cutter had to make for the Volunteer lagoon for shelter. From Thursday morning to Saturday evening it was impossible for any attempt to be made to go near the Volunteer Rocks on account of the heavy sea that was running. On Sunday morning, the wind and weather having moderated, the cutter sailed at daylight and made for the Rocks. Mr. R. Bailey and Mr. A. G. Bennett succeeded in effecting a landing on the principal rock - the undertaking was extremely risky owing to the very high swell which was running into the only available place where a landing could be made, viz., a gulch with high rocks on either side. No Fur seal were seen on this rock but Mr. Bennett reports that he saw a certain number on the high ledges of the second rock, but owing to the high swell it was impossible to land on this rock to obtain any specimens.

From Mr. Bennetts report which I beg to attach herewith it would appear that -

1. That there were no Fur seal seen on the principal Rock (at one time a fair quantity were always obtained on this Rock)
2. That the Rocks are not of considerable size and therefore the Rookery cannot obtain to any considerable numbers.
3. That there are no level places on the Rocks, but the whole are jagged and irregular.
4. That if the second rock could have been properly examined it would probably have

revealed the fact that there were a considerable number more Fur seal than seen by Mr. Bennett as he was only able to see one portion of the Rock.

Apparently operations can only be successfully carried out at the Volunteer Rocks with a North westerly wind when the sea in the vicinity of Volunteer Point is then quite calm. The distance from Stanley is not far and a cutter can usually do the distance in about two hours.

Mr. A. G. Bennett and Mr. R. Bailey were extremely disappointed at not being able to procure the specimens required by Y. E.

When I arranged with Mr. R. Bailey to take Mr. Bennett out I informed him that he would be paid a fee of £2, but at that time it was thought the trip would not take longer than two days. The trip actually took 6 days. Perhaps Y. E. will sanction £3 being paid to Mr. Bailey instead of £2 as he was unable to obtain any quantity of tussock to make up for loss of time. I arranged with Mr. Bennett (he had to take food) that he would receive travelling allowance at the rate of 10s/- per diem - as he was away 6 days the amount payable to him will be £3.

Two very good specimens of the Brant goose were brought in. I believe that the Colonial Office applied some time ago for specimens of these birds. If it is desired, Mr. Bennett can cure the skins for transmission to England, if it is not desired to send them home then they could be taken over by the Museum. A fair price for such skins when properly cured for mounting is about 10s/- each.

*M. Craigie Barker*

sepbr 1st 1919