

C. S. O.

1327

1
3
2
7

(Formerly)

SUBJECT :

VISIT OF WHALE CATCHERS

"OLYMPIC CRUISER" & "OLYMPIC RUNNER."

CONNECTED FILES.

NUMBER AND YEAR.

1327
No. ~~1184~~

MEMORANDUM.

27th November, 1950.

It is requested that in any reference to this memorandum the above number and the date may be quoted.

From The Collector of Customs,

To The Honourable,
The Colonial Secretary,
Stanley.

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

SUBJECT :-

I have the honour to record that the following whale catchers (having left Montevideo on the 20th inst.) were forced by stress of weather to seek shelter of the Falklands:-

"Olympic Cruiser" - in Port William and the
"Olympic Runner" in Berkeley Sound.

The Master of the former, Alfred Anderson, informed me that there were 12 catchers in all, and that the parent ship was the "Olympic Challenger" of the Ballenaros Whaling Company of Panama. The catchers were all en route for Antarctica while the factory ship had not yet left Montevideo.

2. He, Anderson, intimated his desire to enter Stanley to take fresh water and to contact his owners. Having no charts, he asked whether someone could pilot his ship into the inner harbour in the morning. With the consent of His Excellency, I arranged for Cmdr. Penfold and his boat to pilot the vessel in, and this Cmdr. Penfold was pleased to do. However, on proceeding to Port William this morning at 7.30 am, it was found that the vessel had put to sea - possibly because of the improvement in weather.

3. Before proceeding to Port William, I endeavoured to contact the Lighthouse to find out whether or not the vessel was still at anchor, but after repeated attempts both before and after 7 am, the exchange was unable to get a reply from the Lighthouse. This I consider to be very unsatisfactory, when considering that two men are maintained permanently there, and the Lighthouse being the only source of information as to what vessels are in or approaching Port William. Had someone answered the telephone, inconvenience would have been avoided to Cmdr. Penfold.

4. However, it was arranged between myself and Mr. Howkins to broadcast a weather report last evening, to the vessel in Port William and it is understood that this was satisfactorily received.

B. J. Giff
Collector of Customs.

27/11/50

Y.C. / li

29/11/50

Mc 307 109

ATP/50

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

2

From Colonial Secretary.

To Cons. ul. Montevideo.

Despatched : 7.12.50 19 Time : 1500

Received : 19 Time :

Grateful confirmation that whaling factory ship GLENVIC CHALLENGER was recently in Montevideo on her way to Antarctic waters and for any particulars you may have of her

CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY.

GTC.
WH.

In P. William 3

"Olympic Cruiser"
Capt. A. Anderson

In Berkeley Sound
"Olympic Runner"

Parent Ship

"Olympic Challenger"
(Has not yet left
Montevideo)

Co

Ballenaeros Co
Panama City

(American Company)

12 batches in all

Dr. R. M. Williams

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From The Consul Montevideo.

To Governor, Stanley.

Despatched : 11.12.50.

19.... Time : 1905

Received : 12.12.50.

19.... Time : 1345.

2. Your unnumbered telegram December 7th.

"Olympic Challenger" arrived Montevideo Roads repeat Roads
2200 hours November 24th sailed 1400 hours November 29th.

Owner Olympic Whaling Company, Panamanian flag, mixed crew, first
voyage in these waters as Whaling Factory. Was previously American
Tanker.

CONSUL.

G.T.C. - S.S.

5

ACS

Pl attach Norwegian Whaling Gazette which
was with these pp.

11

112 DEC 1950

ACS
at cover pt.

ACS
13/12/50

YE

query at back cover. Page 4 in reply to 2, received
yesterday. Draft tel. to SFS at cover s.f.c.

11

Issue.

huc 13/XII

113 DEC 1950

6

DECODE.

TELEGRAM SENT.

From GOVERNOR to SECRETARY OF STATE

Despatched: 14.12.50. Time: 1530 Received: Time:

No 291. CONFIDENTIAL. Whaling.

Whaling factory ship "OLYMPIC CHALLENGER" called at Montevideo Roads repeat Roads 24th to 29th November en route for Antarctic. Number of catchers, believed to total twelve, accompany her. Two of these put in here on 26th November owing to stress of weather but left next day. Master of one catcher stated that owners are BALLENDAROS Whaling Coy of Panama. Consul Montevideo believes owners are Olympic Whaling Company. Vessels fly Panamanian flag, crew mixed. The two catchers seen here are modern vessels and factory ship is said to be ex American Tanker. I have been unable to trace any information regarding either enterprise in the Whaling Gazette (No 7 of 1950 which gives particulars of Companies engaged) and should be grateful if you can ascertain whether their operations are legitimate or as might be the case irregular.

GOVERNOR.

G.T.C.
S.S.

*ACS reply still awaited
10/1/51*

*BW 10/1/51
[Signature]*

7

ACS

I think we might send a reminder

11

11 JAN 1951

DECODE.

TELEGRAM SENT.

From GOVERNOR to SECRETARY OF STATE

Despatched: 11.1.51. Time: 1445. Received: Time:

No 10. My telegram No 291. CONFIDENTIAL. Whaling.

Grateful for reply.

GOVERNOR.

BU. 19/1/51

G. T. C.
SS

DECODE.

TELEGRAM SENT.

From SECRETARY OF STATE to GOVERNOR.

Despatched: 15.1.51. Time: 14.20. Received: 16.1.51. Time: 0900

8 No 7. Your telegram No 10. Whaling.

My Savingram and enclosure dated 3rd January refers.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

P/L.
S. S.

BN. 12/2/51.
Marrin

9

88442/50

~~Saving.~~

CONFIDENTIAL

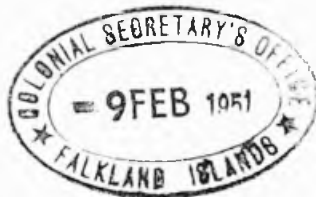
10

From the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

To the Officer Administering the Government of FALKLAND ISLANDS
(COLONY)

Date 12 January, 1951.

No. 3 Saving.



1327

6 Your telegram No. 291 of 1950.

Olympic Challenger.

11

Enclosed herewith is a copy of a letter from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries regarding the above vessel.

2. As you can see, the legal position is at present far from clear.

SECEB.

Reply at 13

Intending.

me.

12 FEB 1951

[Signature]

COFY.

FGB.4908
38442/50

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND
FISHERIES,
ST. STEPHEN'S HOUSE,
VICTORIA EMBANKMENT,
LONDON, S.W.1.

20th December, 1950.

Dear Burt,

In reply to your letter of the 19th December enclosing a copy of a telegram from the Governor of the Falkland Islands, the position as we know it regarding the "Olympic Challenger" is as follows:

The vessel, a former T.2. type tanker "Herman F. Whiton" and 12 Canadian built corvettes were purchased in Hamburg by the Olympic Whaling Co. Inc., an American company financed by a Greek, Onassis, and now registered in Panama. The reason given by the company for the switch from American to Panamanian flag was that under United States' law the expedition could not operate without having the whale oil subject to American duty. This expedition sailing under the Panamanian flag is causing some embarrassment to the International Whaling Commission which had, until November of this year, been under the impression that Panama had adhered to the 1946 Convention, but Panama now says that she has not yet formally deposited her instrument of adherence, with the result that the "Olympic Challenger" is free to whale when and where it will and is not subject to any of the provisions of the Convention.

The object of the exercise.

A note has been sent to the Panamanian Government by the Commission asking it to apply the provisions of the Convention to the "Olympic Challenger" and notify adherence to the Convention as soon as possible but no reply has yet been received. The misconception about Panama's position in relation to the 1946 Convention arose as a result of a misinterpretation of the

R. H. Burt, Esq.
Colonial Office,
Sanctuary Buildings,
Great Smith Street,
London, S.W.1.

/Panamanian

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Panamanian Government's note to the United States which acts as the depository Government for ratifications and adherences.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) A. S. Armstrong.

ACS send a copy of article at cover to S of S pl.

Dois
15-2-51

ACS better just draw their attention to it.

A
2/2/51

ADMINISTRATIVE.

From: The Governor of the Falkland Islands.

To: The Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Date: 21st February, 1951.

No. 45 21500.

10

Your leaving Telegram No. 3 of 18th January, 1951.

"Alpago Challenger"

2. In the above connection I would draw your attention to the article which appears in the Norwegian Mining Gazette No. 11 for November, 1950.

Yours faithfully,

[Handwritten signature]
2/4/51.

~~1000 3/3/51~~
~~1000~~
23/2/51

15

EXTRACT FROM THE "DAILY EXPRESS" OF THE 26th FEBRUARY 1951

x x x x x

The City

By Frederick Ellis

Aristotle makes a whaling coup

Mystery man of whaling, Aristotle Onassis - Greek-born, now an Argentine citizen - has just pulled off a gamble in whale oil said to bring him in more than £2,000,000.

To clamouring Continental buyers he has been selling whale oil up to £170 a ton - highest price ever paid. And £70 more than Norwegian and British firms are getting.

Short, swarthy Mr. Onassis is a new boy to whaling. He sent out an expedition to the Antarctic whaling grounds for the first time in the autumn.

But when the old hands began selling for £100 a ton in October, Onassis sat tight. He refused to sell.

Had he done so he would have got only £1,300,000 for his catch. So for him there is a windfall of £700,000.

They call him the Mystery Man of whaling because the fleet he runs reads like an international shipping directory.

His factory ship is an old American tanker. It is said to be owned by a Montevideo company - but

/flies

flies the Panama flag. An escort tanker carries the flag of Honduras Germans make up most of the crew.

And his money-spinning is due to another international character - Red China's Mao Tse-tung. After Mao stormed into Korea, Peking put a ban on exporting soya beans and other oil seeds.

Continental countries who relied on supplies from China for making soap and margarine were in danger of going short.

So they bid for whale oil instead. And shrewd Aristotle Onassis is the only whaler with any left to sell.

How are the other whaling companies - like British-owned Hector Whaling - doing?

Now 1110.
Their new rival certainly cut into their catches, limited to 300,000 tons of oil each season. But the £100 a ton they get is £20 up on last year. So profits should be good.

But they are still wondering what the shadowy Mr. Onassis will do next.

One thing is certain. After his luck this season his fleet will head for the Antarctic next season.

At the head of the fleet will be his factory ship. Its name: Olympic Challenger.

x

x

x

x

x

17

JE 15-16 is interesting.

S.P.T. today reports hearing heard

W/T traffic from "Olympic" catcher

quite close to us.

JE

13/4/51

My information is that this

outfit has been doing most of its

business in the Bramfield Shoal

(Melchior - Danco Comd. areas); they

should have had a rich haul.

{ United Whalers have missed the bus.
COC

We might inform C.O. (d/o Bennett)

as above.

MEC 13/IV

JE

Duff at cover s.t.c.

Thompson. Fair. Me. 14/IV

14/4/51

19th Dec, 1951/8

14

I was interested to read the extract from the "Daily Express" of 26th February, 1951, forwarded under cover of the Secretary of State's despatch No. 12, about the pirate whaling company operated by Mr. Aristotle Onassis. He certainly seems to have brought off a good haul, and I expect Salvagens etc. are gnashing their teeth. My information is that Onassis's outfit has been doing most of its fishing in the Bransfield Strait area, where they would certainly find a rich harvest. I impressed on the Colonial Development Corporation in connection with their discussions with United Whalers on the subject of re-opening at Deception, that the fishing thereabouts would be particularly good. As you know their discussions came to nothing, and it certainly looks as if they missed the bus; I hope they are duly chagrined to find that Onassis caught it.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd) Miles Clifford.

J. S. Bennett, Esq.,
COLONIAL OFFICE.

Miles Clifford
27/4/51

20

BRITISH EMBASSY,
BUENOS AIRES



1523/51.
RESTRICTED
BY AIR BAG.

22nd June, 1951.

BY AIR MAIL.



Dear Department,

D/28/47

Please refer to our letter 1523/51 of the 2nd June about the possible sale of the Argentine whaling factory-ship "Juan Perón" to Germany.

2. The possibility of Germany's re-entry into the Antarctic whaling industry continues to arouse interest in business circles here. One of the leading trade journals recently printed an extract from the United States Department of Agriculture publication "Foreign Crops and Markets", dated 19th March, 1951, describing German participation in a whaling expedition under the Peruvianian flag. We enclose a copy of this extract in case you have not seen it.

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3. We are sending a copy of this letter with enclosure, to the Chanceries at Bonn, The Hague, Oslo and Washington and to the Colonial Secretariat at the Falkland Islands.

Yours ever,

BUENOS AIRES CHANCERY.

American Department,
Foreign Office,
LONDON.

(M. Brown)
(For) J.P.S.C. Henniker-Major.
Head of Chancery.



Extract from Foreign Crops and Markets Dated March 1951.

Western Germany is reported to have an interest in whaling operations in the Antarctic during the current season, according to information received by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

See
Craw
W
Kuroda

Operating under the Panamanian flag is the "Olympic Challenger", a former United States tanker, which has been converted into a factory ship in the shipyards in Kiel, Germany. Twelve United States and Canadian-built corvettes converted into killer boats in the same yards round out the expedition.

The operation, reported to be financed by an Argentine citizen living in the United States, left for the Antarctic early in November, 1950, under the command of a naturalized Argentine, formerly a Norwegian citizen. The crew consists of 13 harpooners of Norwegian origin and 530 experienced German personnel.

The conversion costs, amounting to over DM 20,000,000 (US\$ 4,760,000) plus wages and other costs are to be paid with the whale oil produced. It is estimated that through this transaction, western Germany will receive approximately 22,000 short tons of whale oil. It is reported that an organization to distribute the whale oil in Germany has been formed by a soap company in Busseldorf.

Germany, a fat-deficient country without colonies or territories, finds it necessary to import large quantities of whale oil and other fats and oils to satisfy a strong domestic demand for these commodities. Prior to the war, in the years 1935-38, Germany imported an average of 204,300 tons of whale oil. During the 1938-39 seasons, Germany's own whaling industry produced an average of 57,500 tons.

Terms of the Potsdam Agreement (Article III, Paragraph II) prohibit Germany from building or maintaining sea-going vessels of the whaling class. Moreover, the loss of most of her whaling fleet through reparation payments has prevented Germany from engaging in whaling operations since the war. However, it is believed in some quarters that this expedition may be a forerunner of future German participation on a scale approaching her pre-war activity in whaling.

6 of 6
4.2 pc
H.C.S.
12/1/51

H.C.S.
Noted th. 4.



MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE,

KING EDWARD COVE,

SOUTH GEORGIA.

No. S.G. 6/GEN.

12th, January, 1956.

(It is requested that, in any reference to this letter, the above Number and the date may be quoted.)

CONFIDENTIAL.

The Whale Factory 'Olympic Challenger'.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that on the 10th, November, 1955 this vessel signalled that due to heavy weather damage, she would proceed to Grytviken Harbour proceeded by her catchers.

2. On arrival the vessel, and all her catchers carried out the normal courtesies on entering harbour and presented their papers as required by Customs in complete good order, this compares most favourably with vessels of the Whaling Companies permanently established at South Georgia who over a number of years have been allowed to conform only to limited Customs Formalities.

3. The co-operation of this fleet was excellent. The Captain of the Factory being German with a Norwegian Whaling Manager and a Greek Sea Captain as representative for the Company and the crew German. The catchers have Norwegian Gunners with German crews and the four buoy boats all German.

4. I believe it is known that this Factory last season broke the INTERNATIONAL WHALING REGULATIONS, but not to the same extent as a certain Norwegian and Russian Factory.

5. Shortly after her arrival, however, on the instigation of the Manager of Husvik Harbour the Norwegian Union ashore banned any fraternisation and proposed that no material assistance should be given to the vessel as she is considered 'Blackleg' or possibly it would be more true to say 'German'. But it so happens that she was capable of completing her own repairs, and simply required shelter of the harbour.

6. I feel that it was most unfortunate that this attitude should have been taken by Norwegians, who are permitted to earn their livelihood on British Sovereign Territory and the visitors in my view will no doubt take away memories of a most inhospitable island.

7. I should like to mention that although there was plenty alcohol available on the ships of this fleet, never did I observe the crews behaving in the same disgraceful manner as often occurs on ships of the Whaling Companies at South Georgia.

8. I attach for information the formal Note of Protest and Extract of the ship's log.

23

24.25

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
B. J. ...
Administrative Officer.

The Honourable the Colonial Secretary,
Stanley,
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

*Ref
C
1956*

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE
18 JAN 1956
* FALKLAND ISLANDS

[Form S.C. 1.]



NOTE OF PROTEST.

BE IT KNOWN that this day personally appeared and presented himself at the Notarial Department of the Dependencies of the Falkland Islands before me the Magistrate thereof

Wilhelm Reichert Master of the "Olympic Challenger"
Official number _____ and 8433 tons register, which sailed from Port au Pierre, Trinidad on or about the 24th day of October last past, with a cargo of Fuel Oil and Whaling Equipment bound for Whaling Grounds and arrived at South Georgia on the 12th day of November instant, and fearing damage, owing to* "Boisterous weather"

during the voyage, he hereby notes his protest against all losses, damages, &c. reserving right to extend the same at time and place convenient.

W. Reichert
Master

NOTARIAL DEPARTMENT
SOUTH GEORGIA
FALKLAND ISLANDS DEPENDENCIES

Signed before me by the Master this 12th, day of November
One thousand nine hundred and Fifty Five

B. Murray
Magistrate, South Georgia.
Falkland Islands Dependencies.

* "Boisterous weather," "Collision," "fire."

R.F.S "CHALLENGER"

Captain's Report on heavy weather damage
on November 8th 1955
during voyage from Trinidad to the Catching Grounds.



November 8th: At 0145 we had to reduce speed from 81 R.P.M. to 75 due to heavy sea from W SW. At 0430 we further reduced speed to 73 R.P.M., at 0925 we further reduced speed to 60 R.P.M. and finally, as the weather conditions were deteriorating, we had to reduce our speed to 50 R.P.M. at 0955.

At about 1015 the foreship was hit by a breaker and the whole ship shook badly, shipping a lot of water. At about 1020, some factory workers reported to the bridge that they heard a suspicious noise in the vicinity of tanks 3 to 6 stbd. At 1030 we observed patches of fuel oil floating alongside the stbd side. We adjusted our speed to 47 R.P.M. which gave us just enough headway to steer the vessel. 1100 hrs: After sounding all tanks we ascertained that the level of fuel oil of tank Nr. 3 stb outboard (which contained originally 609 c.m. of fuel) was receding. Apparently we got a crack on the ship's side in the vicinity of tank Nr 3 stbd. 1115 hrs: A meeting was held between the ship's command during which it was decided that under the circumstances the best we could do, was to proceed to South Georgia for repairs as soon as weather conditions permitted.--

At this time, Catchers Nr. 1 - 15 - 5 and 13, which were approximately 350 miles ahead of us, were ordered by us to stop there and wait for us in case of emergency. We also ordered the remaining 11 catchers, which were further ahead, to reduce speed to 7,5 knots.--

1200: Noon Position: Lat. 42° 11' S - Long. 27° 05' W - wind W-SW 7, sea very heavy. High swells. Barometer: 1008,8 falling.--

In order to avoid having all the cargo of tank Nr 3 stb. lost or contaminated by sea water we decided to pump as much of it into other tanks as possible.

The above transfer operations were completed at about 1710, as the water content of the fuel oil in the damaged tank was becoming higher. By that time the ullages of Nr 3 tank were 21 feet from the inspection hole.--

1720: As the remaining 11 catchers reported that the weather was improving, we ordered them to proceed to South Georgia, at 7,5 knots.--

2200: Weather improving but it is still too rough for us to shape course for South Georgia.

November 9th 1955

0800: Increased speed to 65 R.P.M. - Weather improving.

0810: Shaped course towards South Georgia.

0830: We commenced pumping through the hatch of tank Nr 3 stb. over the top, using a small electric pump.--

1045: Increased speed to 70 R.P.M. - 1140: Increased speed to 75 RPM.

1200: Noon Position:

Lat. 44° 04' S - Long. 26° 31' W. Wind: SW 3 to 4.

SW'ly moderate sea. Barometer: 1011,8, rising.--

November 10th 1955

25
18 JAN 1956
ALKLAND ISLANDS

0800: According to this morning's soundings, the level of fuel oil in wing tank Nr 4 stb. receded from 4' 00" to 7' 00".

1020: Increased speed to 84 R.P.M. -Weather improving.

1200: Noon Position: Lat. 47° 27' S - Long. 29° 01' W.
Wind: S-SW 2. Barometer: 1018,2. Sea moderate.-

November 11th 1955

0530: We stopped the small electric pump which was running since 0830 on November 9th, as there was practically no oil floating above the sea water which entered tank Nr 3 stb.

The 11 catchers of ours, which were heading for South Georgia, started entering GRITVIKEN harbour since early in the morning.

We are proceeding in company with catchers Nr 1- 5- 13- 16.-

Noon Position: Lat. 51° 24' S - Long. 33° 30' W. Wind: W-SW
4-5. Sea moderate. Barometer: 1002,.-

November 12th 1955

0938: Anchored in GRITVIK BAY.

0950: Commenced bunkering the Catchers.

1130: Our diver, who was lowered to have a look in the vicinity of tanks Nr 3 and 4, reports a crack extending for about 8 to 9 meters from tank Nr 3 stb. to tank Nr 4 stb. We intend to proceed to the open sea as soon as we finish bunkering the catchers in order to gas-free the above two tanks.



W. Reichert
(W. Reichert)
Master