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<u>341/30</u>	

(Formerly)

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SUBJECT :

PRESERVATION OF OFFICIAL RECORDS IN COLONIAL TERRITORIES

CONNECTED FILES.

NUMBER AND YEAR.

53/36

Requests Information Relating to the Archives of the British Colonial Dependencies.

341/30

Records of the Falkland Islands in Public Record Office London.

EX. CO. NUMBER

CIRCULAR
7020/47



THE CHURCH HOUSE,
GREAT SMITH STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1.
11th March, 1948.

Sir,

I have the honour to address you on the subject of the preservation of official records in Colonial territories.

2. As you are aware my predecessors have from time to time drawn attention to the desirability of preserving records which may be of historical interest, and I have no doubt that the importance of this matter is generally appreciated. It is known that in certain Colonial territories steps have recently been taken for the more satisfactory listing of records, improving the conditions of storing, etc. In the case of the Central African territories a scheme sponsored by the Southern Rhodesian Government is now being carried into effect under which the Public Records of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, together with those of Southern Rhodesia, will be stored and made available to students and others who may wish to consult them in a special building in Salisbury equipped with all modern improvements and efficiently staffed. But my impression is that in some Colonial territories the arrangements for sorting, storing and preserving official documents have not kept pace with the accumulation of documents no longer required for current purposes, and that unless they are improved, documents and records of permanent historical value may be seriously damaged or even destroyed or lost. I recognise that the difficulties arising from shortage of accommodation, of staff and of funds, which have no doubt been accentuated by the war, may not be readily overcome. But I feel that the time is opportune for a survey of the present position to be undertaken in each Colonial territory. The survey would be directed to ascertaining and recording factual information, and apart from its value for other purposes it would provide the material necessary to consider whether, and if so in what directions, improvements can and should be effected.

2-4
3. The proposal for a survey of this nature originated with the Public Record Office in this country, and Mr. Hilary Jenkinson, C.B.E., Deputy Keeper of the Records, has prepared a Memorandum on the subject, of which copies are enclosed. Attached to the Memorandum is a Questionnaire which gives the headings under which information should be provided, and I am glad to be able to inform you that the Public Record Office have expressed their readiness to consider the replies to this Questionnaire as they are received from Colonial Governments and to furnish any advice or assistance which may be within their power. If you consider it desirable that expert advice should be obtained from this country on the organisation, methods of preservation or any other aspects of archive administration, it may be possible to make arrangements for the visit of a suitable expert.

4. It is true that requests, in the form of Questionnaires, for information on various subjects are being made with some frequency of Colonial Governments, nevertheless I feel that Governors will welcome the interest which the Public Record Office are showing in this important subject, and I should be grateful if you would take the Memorandum and Questionnaire enclosed with this despatch into consideration and furnish me, as soon as may be convenient, with a report compiled under the various headings in the Questionnaire, together with any observations, suggestions or enquiries which you have to make. It would be useful if two copies of your reply could be furnished for transmission to the Public Record Office.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

A. C. Jones

The Officer Administering
the Government of

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Reply at 7

COLONIAL ARCHIVES

Memorandum

1. The word ARCHIVES is used here to cover all Written Matter (whether written by hand or mechanically produced), of whatever Date, together with Annexures thereto; in whatever Form (Rolls, Volumes, Files, Single Leaves or Pieces), and upon whatever Material (Parchment, Paper, Cards, Film,* Waxed Surfaces,* Metal*): provided that such material has accumulated naturally in the course of the Conduct of Affairs; and been preserved for reference, either in the Office where the accumulation occurred or in some other place appointed for the purpose, by the persons responsible for the administration of the Affairs in question.

2. The emphasis in this Definition, which applies equally to the documents accumulated in all grades and kinds of Affairs, Public or Private, without exception, is on the *Natural Accumulation*, on the *Preservation for Reference* and on the conditions of *Custody*: upon which three points the quality and authenticity of the Archives depend. It is also important to stress the absence of any qualification of Date. The Office Papers of to-day are the Archives of to-morrow.

3. There has been in recent years in all European Countries, and in America, an immense increase in *Public Appreciation of the Importance of Archives*. As an example of this in the case of England may be cited the remarkable support given, since its foundation in 1932, both by Private Individuals and by Public Authorities, to the British Records Association, an unofficial body which endeavours to co-ordinate Archive work of all kinds in this country; and the fact that, during the late War, the War Office thought it necessary to organise a service for the Protection of Archives in Occupied Territories. Since the War a National Register of English Archives of all kinds, Public and Private, has been started on an official basis.

4. *Archives have in fact a threefold importance*; first, while they are still current, for the immediate purposes of Administration; a little later because they furnish Precedents and give the Historical Background of the work of the Office; and finally for long-term purposes—the interests (many of them at present unpredictable) of Historians and other Students in the future. For all these purposes they constitute, if properly kept, a kind of evidence to which no other can be compared for value; being

themselves an actual part of the facts of the case, of unquestioned authenticity. Modern Archives may indeed be regarded as, potentially, the ultimate answer to one of the greatest dangers of Modern Civilisation—the unscrupulous use of Publicity and Propaganda. The Proper Keeping and Use of the Archives of the State is seen from this angle to be a very important Function of Government: and there is a strong movement in England at present towards a measure of Public Control over non-State Archives whose ultimate preservation may be considered a matter of national interest.†

5. *At the present time this Proper Keeping and Use must be interpreted in many cases almost entirely in terms of the Protection of Archives rather than their Exploitation*. Even when such primary considerations as the organisation and rules, under which Documents which are to be permanently preserved are distinguished from those which may be destroyed,‡ have been satisfactorily settled (and in a surprisingly large number of cases such a settlement has not been reached) it remains to make sure that arrangements for Safe Custody and correct Storage, for Numbering, Registering, Sorting and Listing, and for Production when required for Inspection, have been duly made and are in the hands of competent persons.

6. These may seem at first sight elementary matters, easy (if they have been neglected in the past) to be put right. Actually, the quality of Archives depending on their relation to each other, to the Administration which produced them and to the place and connexion in which they were preserved, § *it is fatally easy for them to sustain damage in many ways much less obvious, and much less easy to guard against, than outright loss or destruction*: the removal, for example, of a single paper from a connected series, or even so little as a change in its position or the severing of an attachment, may alter the significance of all the remainder. To make the necessary provision for safety and convenience in Arrangement, Packing, Storage and Production for Study and at the same time to neglect no necessary precaution against such dangers as those just indicated is a task requiring a very high degree of special training and experience: a task, moreover, which is continually complicated by the invention of new methods and forms of communication or record,

* It is now generally recognised that, though they have not yet done so in England to any great extent, Picture and Sound Recordings may presently have to take their place among written Archives, at least as Annexures.

† The first suggestion of this may be seen in the institution of the National Register mentioned in paragraph 3 above. In most Continental Countries the movement has already gone much further, producing something in the nature of the National Inspectorate of Archives which has existed in France for many years.

‡ The decision of this question (made very necessary by the enormous accumulation of papers in modern offices) is a very delicate and difficult matter, particularly in view of the long-term interests mentioned in paragraph 4 above: and the best methods of reaching it have been everywhere much debated. In England, the case of the Archives of Public Departments is provided for, under the Record Office Acts, by means of a Committee of Inspecting Officers acting in consultation with Officers of the Department whose Archives are under discussion: so far as other Archives are concerned—those of Local Authorities, for instance, or of Public or semi-Public Corporations—no Public Provision has been made of a general nature nor is there any agreed form of Procedure.

§ It is difficult to illustrate such points as these without citing very numerous cases: but one rather striking example of recent occurrence may perhaps be given. At the time of the Allied entry into Rome in 1944 the Archives Officer with the Advanced Troops arrived just in time to prevent the unceremonious eviction of a large quantity of uninteresting looking Documents from a certain building to provide accommodation for some important purpose: a considerable part of them being numerous files of multi-graphed copies of 'Situation Reports'—things of which copies presumably existed in numerous other places and which were *per se* of little value. He was able later to intervene again to prevent the same series being dismembered for Intelligence purposes. The point of the story is that the building proved to contain the *Archivio Ordinario* of Mussolini, a fact which of course gave to the 'Situation Reports' (and to certain blue chalkings with which they were found to be marked) an unique significance: provided their connexion with the '*Archivio*', and with each other, was not severed. The Archivist in this case was fortunate. Necessary precautions are not always so easily or so soon justified in the eyes of the layman.

and new means of facilitating their use,* and by the improvement or (more often) deterioration of quality in modern materials. In short, it is becoming recognised not only that Archives deserve and require great and special attention but that such special attention can be supplied only by a particular kind of Custodian—the Trained Archivist.

7. The preceding remarks must be taken only as intended to stress the primary and urgent need, in a large number of cases, to ensure, as a first measure, the mere safety of Archives—a safety which may be, and often is, threatened with many dangers besides the most obvious ones of physical destruction or neglect. They are not intended to suggest that the interests of Research should be shelved. On the contrary, the Facilitation of Research (once his Archives are safe) is a primary duty of the Archivist; since it is largely for the furtherance of Research that Archives are preserved.

8. It is indeed highly desirable, in the case of many categories of Archives, in order to present most forcibly their claim to public attention, that the Policy of Archive Organisation should be closely linked not only with Public Administration but with those Cultural Developments which the Archives are destined to serve. In the case of a Colony, for example, nothing could be more suitable than that Graduate Students in History and Economics (and in other subjects too; for there is none which may not have recourse to Archives) should have at least their first training in Documentary Research upon Archives preserved by the Colony.

9. In this connexion it must be admitted that, save in the case of a very few Colonies, there is at present a regrettable lack of information in this Country in regard to Colonial Archives: extending in some cases to almost complete ignorance of the most elementary facts concerning their nature, date and volume and the conditions under which they are preserved. On two occasions in the past† some preliminary steps have been taken to remedy this: and in particular in 1936, when the Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle (a permanent Committee of the League of Nations) contemplated a second volume of its 'Guide International des Archives' to deal with Colonial Archives, a circular despatch‡ invited replies to a questionnaire upon which it was hoped some contribution might be based which should give a reasonably complete account from a British standpoint. The returns, however, to this despatch were of very varying degrees of completeness; and in fact, taken as a whole, could not be considered satisfactory from any point of view: since they not only failed in a number of cases to supply the desired information, but also seemed to indicate in some instances that up to that time very little importance had been attached to the subject locally. Indeed it was perhaps not altogether a misfortune that preparations for War, and the War itself, put a stop to any attempt to provide, on the basis of these returns, a Survey of British Colonial Archives for general publication.

In any case, since that date sufficient time has elapsed to make even the best of the returns obsolete

in many particulars: and moreover during that period (as has already been indicated) so much progress has been made by Archive Science in public estimation, and so many changes have occurred in the nature of Archives themselves, that it may be considered not unreasonable to suggest at the present juncture an examination of the whole subject *de novo* by means of a fresh Inquiry.

10. It is submitted, however, that the General Survey of British Colonial Archives as a whole which returns to a new questionnaire might make possible should serve many purposes besides that of supplying Students with a rough idea of the material for future Research which these Archives may have to offer. Notably it should provide a comparative view of the extent to which in different Colonies a Public Policy in regard to Archive Conservation has been adopted and practical steps taken for its implementation. Naturally it will appear that in some cases circumstances have made possible a much more elaborate and more advanced Archive organisation than they have permitted in others: but that does not mean that the proposed Survey is intended to provide material for criticism. Rather it should be regarded as furnishing (when made available for the information of all concerned) criteria for development in Colonies where so far little development has taken place; and as putting at the service of those which have yet to deal with questions such as Rules for the Elimination of Ephemeral Papers, or Storage, Custody and Public Access, or the Relation of State and non-State Archives, the experience of others where these problems have already been the subject of careful consideration followed by active measures.

11. Finally, but not least important, comes the question how far, as the result of the proposed investigation, the Home Government should be able, without undue interference in the planning of local arrangements to meet local requirements, to effect some general co-ordination of Archive Policy in the Colonies and to offer its aid in the solution of the numerous technical problems which must arise wherever new arrangements are proposed or a more active policy planned following a review of the present situation. While it would be premature at this stage to make any definite proposals as to the form which such assistance might take it may be mentioned that there have been already indications that some Colonies would welcome, if it could be arranged, an Inspection and Report by a Visiting Expert; and that a number of requests have recently been received (and have been met, so far as possible, by *ad hoc* arrangements) for advice or practical assistance in such technical matters as the methods to be employed in Arranging and Listing old Papers, the equipment of Buildings to act as Archive Repositories, the provision of qualified Archivists and the training of expert Repairers.

The Questionnaire annexed to this Memorandum has, therefore, been planned to act as a first stage towards the realisation of the simple proposition that all Colonies should have well organised Archives and should receive from time to time from the Home Government any advice or practical assistance they may require in the furtherance of that object.

NOTE

The Archives resulting from the activities of any single autonomous unit of Administration—such as a Colony, a Ministry, a Parish or (in private practice) an Estate Office, are technically known as an Archive Group. The series of documents within this (normally corresponding with the working divisions of the Administration) are known as Classes. Within the Classes come the numbered Pieces (Volume, Bundles, etc.); and within these so far as they are subdivisible, the sub-numbered Individual Documents. Thus the reference to the first document in the first bundle of a famous series of Colonial Papers now in the Public Record Office is (in the order Group/Class/Piece/Document) Colonial Office/America and West Indies/1/1.

* Rapid improvement in the machinery of Microphotography, and the corresponding extension of its possible applications, alone provide the Archivist with a whole series of new problems; touching his work at every point, from Insurance against War Damage to Production in the Student's Room: not excluding the problem of the

Economist who would like to microphotograph all Documents and destroy the Originals in order to save house-room.

† Viscount Harcourt's circular despatch of the 9th March, 1914, and Mr. Amery's despatch of the 2nd January, 1929.

‡ Lord Harlech's circular despatch of the 16th October, 1936.

no trace
9a in 34/30
12 in 34/31
Records of the
Tahkland St in
Public Record Office
London!

Questionnaire

1. NATURE OF ARCHIVES

(a) What are the Administrative Departments whose Archives are preserved by the Government of the Colony (i.e. Archives of the Administration; of the Attorney General's Office; of the Finance Department; etc.), and what are approximately the earliest and latest date in each case?

(b) Do they include the Archives of any Government or Authority which administered the territory of the Colony before the institution of the present regime, or extraneous Archives from any other Source?

(c) Are there in the Colony any other important bodies of Organised Archives (e.g. of the Church; of large Private or Semi-Public trading or other Corporate Bodies; or Private Families, etc.)?

2. CONTROL AND DISPOSAL

(a) How are the Government Archives indicated under paragraph 1 (a) and (b) organised?

(i.) as an independent Department of Government? or

(ii.) as dependent on some other Department or Departments?

(b) Are there any Formal Rules regulating

(i.) the Transfer of Documents to Archive Repositories when they cease to be in current use? and

(ii.) the Elimination of Documents not considered worthy of permanent preservation?

If so, please annex copies.

(c) Are there any known Rules governing Disposal of Archives other than those of the Government?

3. PLACE(S) AND CONDITIONS OF DEPOSIT

(a) In what Buildings are the various Archives preserved?

(b) Are any of these Repositories specially constructed for the purpose?

(c) Are any of them particularly subject to danger from Fire or Defects of Structure?

(d) Are there any special Local Dangers to Archives (Insect Pests; Climatic Conditions; etc.)?

4. STAFF

Are any of the Archives indicated above in the charge of

(a) whole-time Officials specially deputed for the purpose? or of

(b) trained Archivists?

5. MEANS OF CHECKING AND REFERENCE

(a) Is there any General Guide (printed) to the Archives of the Government, or of the Colony as a whole?

(b) Are the Archives in any or all of the Classes enumerated above adequately labelled or otherwise marked with numbers by which their presence in the Repository can be checked? Does this numbering extend to individual Documents or only to the larger pieces (volumes, boxes, bundles, etc.) in which they are made up? In this connexion please see Note at end of Memorandum.

(c) Are there Lists for any or all classes describing individual pieces in each class?

(d) Have any such Lists been printed and published?

(e) Have any other publications been based on research in the Archives of the Colony? and is there any local College or other Establishment in which such research is encouraged?

6. ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDY

(a) Apart from the lists and publications mentioned in paragraph 5 are there any arrangements for study

(i) by personal access of students?

(ii) by the furnishing of replies, based on examination of the documents, to Students' inquiries?

(iii) by the supply of photographic copies?

(b) What are the Rules (if any) governing access of Students, etc.? Please annex copies if available.

(c) What are the Fees (if any) payable by Students or other Inquirers?

7. STATE OF REPAIR AND MAKE-UP

(a) What is the general condition of the various classes indicated above?

(b) Are there any facilities for Repairing, Filing or Binding in the Repositories, or elsewhere?

8. ANY OTHER OBSERVATIONS OR QUESTIONS

D. Hamison.

Re. please his Pleasantly
Eighteenth Century - like Memorandum
- let us speak about it at your
Convenience.*

4

by
25.5

pls.
Please see
(5) 28.10
23.07.48

* Nota Bene: I cannot write in Italian unless I underline.

Referring to our recent conversation the following may be of use as a (rather rough) foundation for further consideration.

References are to the Questionnaire on (4).

- 1.(a) Administration. The most important are almost certainly the In and Out Despatches in the Secretariat. They go back to the time of Governor Moody, and contain much information.

Attorney General. There is none. Most of the old Court records were destroyed in the T.H. fire or severely damaged.

There is a mass of salvaged paper which I would suggest might be inspected by yourself one day but I fear it will have to be destroyed since it is so badly damaged.

Registrar General. The Land Registers go back to 1847 and continue.

Births,	1846	Continuing
Marriages,	1854	"
Deaths,	1849	"

Finance, Education, and Medical Depts.
I cannot say what exists within these Depts, but suspect that the earlier records are inextricately involved with the Administration.

The Post Office probably lost what it had in the fire.

Other Depts. are of recent date.

2. (a) There is no independant Archival Department. Records ^{are} reside in their original homes-- but see note on Finance etc. *present*

(b) No.

(c) No.

3. (a) Secretariat Building.
R.G.'s. Office.
? School.
? S.M.O.'s Office.

(b) There is said to be a "record room" in the Secretariat: I have a vague idea that the Treasury has infiltrated.

(c) No more than other buildings here.

(d) No.

4. (No.

5. (a) No.

(b) Yes, we hope so.

(c) Doubtful if there are in all cases.

(d) No.

(e) I do not know of any.

6. (a) (i) No.

(ii) No actual arrangements, Your "Miscellaneous Query" files are a more or less affirmatory answer;

(b) None.

(c) None.

7. (a) On the whole good.

(b) No.

8. Not from me.

J.P.W.
23. vi. 48

D: Hamilton.

Thank you I do know
or can you ascertain the amount
to 4 \$1000 c.s. Cambridge?

Ans.

L
24.6

I have enquired of the vicar and the
F.I.C. Neither has any form of in-
formation as records. If the F.I.C. has records they
are probably in the office of the
at Westbridge. 25.vi.48

YE.

1-4 is (1 image) rather
aimed at chronic than the ravages
of insects or more destruction than
in the F.I's.

2. Unless YE has any specific
remarks I propose to reply to the
? and in an abbreviated version of

5.

L
26.6

Yes.

As to para 1 above there have been some
disastrous losses, particularly in Nigeria.

MC 26.vi

Ans
28.6

F.I. Ref: 9748.
Your ref: 7020/47.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

STANLEY.

12th July, 1946.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

No. 65.

Sir,

8-9

With reference to your Circular despatch No. 7020/47 of the 11th of March, 1946, on the subject of the preservation of official records in Colonial territories, I have the honour, in the absence of the Governor in the United Kingdom, to enclose a report compiled under the various headings in the questionnaire.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient,
humble servant,

(Sgd.) A. B. MATHEWS.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
ARTHUR CHURCH JONES, F.C., M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

DM.

1. NATURE OF ARCHIVES.

- (a) The most important Administrative Departments whose Archives are preserved are:-
 - (i) The Colonial Secretary's Office. Despatches to and from the Secretary of State date back to the time of Governor Woody 1842.
 - (ii) Attorney General. There is none. Most of the old Court records were either destroyed or severely damaged in the Town Hall fire in 1944.
 - (iii) Registrar General. The Land Registers go back to 1847; the Birth Registers to 1846; the Marriage Registers to 1844 and the Deaths Registers to 1849.
 - (iv) Finance, Education and Medical records are inextricately involved with (i).
 - (v) Other Departmental records are of recent date and only of slight interest.
 - (vi) No private archives are known to exist.

2. CONTROL AND DISPOSAL.

- (a) There is no independent Archival Department. Records are preserved in their original offices and Departments.
- (b) No.
- (c) No.

3. PLACES AND CONDITIONS OF DEPOSIT.

- (a) Colonial Secretary's Office. Registrar General's Office.
- (b) No.
- (c) No more than other buildings in Stanley.
- (d) No.

4. STAFF.

- (a) and (b) No.

5. MEANS OF CHECKING REFERENCES.

- (a) No.
- (b) On the whole. Yes.
- (c) Probably not.
- (d) No.
- (e) As far as is known. No.

6. ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDY.

- (a) No: but arrangements for (i) and (ii) could be made.

(b)/

(b) None made.

(c) None.

7. STATE OF REPAIR AND MAKE-UP.

(a) On the whole good.

(b) No.

8. OBSERVATION ON DEFECTS. Nil.

DEM.

Handwritten signature and date
1973