

CONFIDENTIAL.

C.S.

1928.
1924.

No. 2/1928.

SHI/CUS/1#7

Hon. Treasurer.

SUBJECT.

1928

19th January

Mr. A. G. BENNETT, CUSTOMS OFFICER,
Behaviour of,

Previous Paper.

MINUTES.

- 1 Memo. from Hon. Treasurer to Mr. A. G. Bennett, 19/1/28.
- 2 Memo. from Hon. Treasurer, dated 21st January, 1928.
- 8 Minute from H. E. the Governor, 23rd January, 1928.

Extract from minutes of meeting of the Executive Council held on the 23rd of January, 1928.

His Excellency referring to recent complaints received regarding the discourteous and objectionable behaviour of Mr. A. G. Bennett in the exercise of his official duties as Customs Officer, and the lack of deference shown by him to his superiors in the Service and to leading members of the Public, stated that he had given directions for the appointment of the following Committee to enquire into and report on the matter:

The Hon. M. C. Craigie-Halkett, Treasurer.	}	Chairman.
The Hon. Dr. W. B. R. Jones, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Ag. Colonial Surgeon.	}	Members.
Mr. A. R. Hoare, Government Schoolmaster.	}	

Subsequent Paper.

W. B. R. Jones

Clerk of the Executive Council.

9 to Hon. M. C. Craigie Halkett 25 Jan 1928
 10 " " " D. W. B. R. Jones 25 Jan 1928
 11 " " " Mr. A. R. Hoare 25 Jan 1928

Report from Committee, 15th Feb. 1928. 12-23

Spoke W. Bennett 4. 2. 28.

Advised him of report of Committee
and asked him to cultivate humility
and to make a conscious endeavour on
all occasions to be polite.

W. Bennett professed himself at
first as unable to undertake the grounds
for the report but eventually promised that
he would do his best to give no
further ground for complaint on this score.

I made it clear to Mr Bennett
that no allegations were made against
his personal character - or devotion to
duty. I explained especially the value of
his work in connection with the shale records.

J.M.S.
2. 5. 28

24-25 Confidential despatch to S. J. of 9/2/28.

Hon. M. C. Craigie Kalkett

To see
S. J.
3. 3. 28 fore

Hon. Col. Sec.

Thank you, seen.

M. Craigie Kalkett

Wens.

8. 3. 28

26. Confidential despatch from S. J. of 5/5/28.

27. " " to " 8/6/28.

28. " " from " 28/7/28

by 17. 1. 28.

per 17. 10 28.



MINUTE

Senior Customs Officer A.G. Bennett,

Yesterday evening the 18th inst., while I was in company with a lady you passed by with your hands in your pockets and failed to acknowledge me in a proper manner.

2. As you are a subordinate officer in this Department I consider that you were extremely rude apart from the fact that you failed to show the ordinary deference which is due by a subordinate to the Head of his Department.

3. For the future you will represent through the Chief Clerk in this Dept., any matters which you may wish brought to my notice. Furthermore you will not take up the time of the Treasury officers or interrupt their work with gossiping as has been your practice in the past.

MCH
19.1.28

File in N. Bennett's

file file

J. J.

20.1.28.

(6)

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

15th January, 1928.

Dear Halkett,

As you know I dislike intensely to cause friction, but, the enclosed letter is necessary in my opinion as Bennett the Customs Officer has been allowed far too much licence in the past. It has gone on for years, mainly due to the late Treasurer and slackness all round in business circles - also to the fact that he is interested in birds and has talked with big men at the British Museum.

In my opinion he is totally unsuited to be a Customs Officer in this Colony. His manner is most familiar to those in superior positions in the Colony and offensive to the workmen with whom he has to do his duties as Customs Officer. A dictatorial and interfering manner, especially where shipping is concerned does not help matters when one considers the climatic conditions at this port.

It is true to say that we have received the utmost courtesy from you and your Officer, Riches, but, every time that Bennett arrives back from Leave or from the South, friction of some sort immediately arises. His capabilities as an obstructionist far surpass his knowledge of ornithology in which the consignees of cargo at this port are not particularly interested.

Not only the Company's men resent his manner but during the years I have been here J.P.S. have appealed to me to represent the matter to the Governor, ^{about the making of} when examining their baggage. The P.S.N.C. look upon him as an arrogant sort of person.

The point is, that is not any use anyone outside the Government talking to him. He has walked into our private office with his hat on and smoking his pipe on many occasions in the past and under certain administrations it would not have been advisable to complain of such conduct as he would have put further obstacles in our way. On no occasions have we any trouble with Mr Riches, who as far as we know does his duty conscientiously, whereas our Marine Superintendent and Foreman have had to make many complaints to me about Mr Bennett.

Do you think as ~~Member~~ of Ex Co you could represent this matter as he is certainly not a good Govt servant as regards facilitating the shipping and trade of the Colony? With your long experience in the Colony you must know the popular opinion as well as I do and I am sure that it must carry weight. If some other job could be found for him in which he would have less scope for rubbing everybody up the wrong way it would be better.

I am sorry to worry you with this matter but there is no doubt that he has been out of hand for years and I doubt whether anything will make him realize that he is small beer and that any "special" C.O. you may appoint probably does the work better than he does without annoying everybody.

Yours sincerely,

W. H. G. Gresham

(4)

The Falkland Islands Company, Limited.

INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER 1851.

REGISTERED 1902.

Stanley

AGENT FOR LLOYDS

AGENTS FOR
THE PACIFIC STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

TELEGRAMS: FLEETWING PORTSTANLEY W. RADIO.

January 16th 1928.

Sir,

I beg to approach you on the subject of the discharge of mail cargo from overseas.

2. On the 12th instant we asked for the services of a Customs Officer before breakfast (6.20 a.m.) as we were discharging a lighter. The men were aboard the lighter at five minutes past 6 a.m. to heave up the anchor and the work of discharging commenced at 7 a.m. As you are aware quick discharge is given to vessels at this port and it is not possible to know what type of cargo is in each lighter.

On this occasion it was found that iron had to be discharged and cement was in the fore part of the hatchway with timber underneath and Mr Bennett greatly resented his being called for duty as there were no ~~causes~~ of general cargo.

We have always understood that a Customs Officer should be on duty when any mail cargo is being discharged during his official hours. Naturally we should not ask for the services of a Customs Officer unless we were convinced that we were going to work but it is impossible to work lighters to schedule and it seems peculiar that Mr Bennett should decide at what time he should be present as he has done on many occasions. He seems incapable of understanding that we cannot work to schedule and that if

we ask for his services at a stated time we may be able to

The Collector of Customs,
STANLEY,

get a lighter in earlier and no work is done until his arrival.

3. I regret to have to make a complaint about an Official but it is indisputable that any friction which arises is undoubtedly due to Mr Bennett's officious and interfering manner which annoys everyone he has to work with. We have always received the greatest courtesy and assistance from yourself and your Officer Mr Riches but it is an absolute fact that in our dealings with Mr Bennett we experience very great difficulty.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. A. G. Geoham

Manager.

(2)

MINUTE

Senior Customs Officer A.G. Bennett,

The Falkland Islands Company, Limited, have
complained as follows:-

" On the 12th inst., we asked for the services of a Customs Officer before breakfast (6.20 a.m.) as we were discharging a lighter. The men were aboard the lighter at 5 minutes past 6 a.m., to heave up the anchor and the work of discharging commenced at 7 a.m. As you are aware quick discharge is given to vessels at this port and it is not possible to know what type of cargo is in each lighter. On this occasion it was found that iron had to be discharged and cement was in the fore part of the hatchway with timber underneath and Mr. Bennett greatly resented his being called for duty as there were no cases of general cargo "

2. With reference to the foregoing, Customs Officers are required to be on duty during the prescribed hours whenever any mail cargo is being dealt with or is likely to be dealt with, and whenever they have knowledge that their services may be required, whether such services have been specially applied for by the consignee or not.

The question of which description of cargo is to be dealt with does not enter into the question. Customs officers are required to supervise the discharge of all cargo.

3. It is clear that the consignees cannot always work cargo to scheduled time in which case the Customs must make the best possible arrangements to facilitate dealing with cargo.

M. William Hanley

Collector of Customs.
19.1.28

MEMO.

Departmental Number.

From..Colonial.Treasurer.....

Date.....January 21st 1928

To.....Hon.ble Colonial Secretary

Falkland Islands Company Limited and Honble
H.H.R.Gresham. Complaint regarding Senior
Customs Officer A.G.Bennett.

Reference
Numbers.

.....

Letter from F.Is.Co.Ltd dated 16th January 1928.
Letter from Hon.H.H.R.Gresham dated 15th Jany 1928.

Hon.Col.Sec.

Submitted. Instructions have been issued to
the Senior Customs Officer relative to the routine
hours for duty for Customs Officers,vide minute of
19th inst.,attached.

2. I fully agree with the remarks made by the
Hon.H.H.R.Gresham in his letter of the 15th inst.
Mr.Bennett is lacking in the essential qualities of
tact and courtesy and this coupled with his objectionable
manner renders him unsuited as a Customs Officer. As an
example,I would mention that when this officer was
instructed by me to see the Harbour Master relative to
boarding ships he replied "I will not speak to that
insulting swine".

3. I am personally aware of complaints having
been made by passengers and others relative to the manner
in which they have been treated. This officer's attitude
as an obstructionist together with the fact that he
cannot agree with the Assistant Customs Officer does

does not make for efficiency or smooth working,
furthermore his objectionable manner brings discredit
upon the Service.

4. Under the present arrangement the two Customs
Officers do no other work but Customs, this is highly
unsatisfactory and results in one or both officers being
at a loose end for the greater part of the time. With
increased work further assistance is required in the
Treasury and the most satisfactory arrangement would be
to have an officer who would perform Treasury work and
act as an additional Customs Officer whenever required.

5. In addition to his post as Senior Customs Officer,
Mr. Bennett is also Ag. Govt. Naturalist and as such his time
has been largely taken up with work in connection with
whaling and other matters coming under the Naturalists Dept.
With his knowledge of Sealing and Whaling, Mr. Bennett's
services would probably be of value for Dependencies
Research and I venture to suggest that consideration
might be given to the possibility of transferring him
from the Customs wholly for Naturalists work.

The present emoluments of this officer are as follows:-

Customs Officer.....	£200	p.a.	
Free Quarters &c....	50	"	
Free Uniform, say....	12	"	
Overtime fees, say	36	"	
As Ag. Naturalist...	<u>175</u>	"	Total £473 p.a.

M. Louis Kulkoo
Treasurer.
21.1.28

From His Excellency the Governor

to the Honourable the Colonial Secretary.

This is a serious matter. Please appoint a Committee to enquire into the whole matter and submit a report.

It is almost incredible that anyone could be so rude as mentioned in Part 2 of minute date, 21.1.28. More especially when ^{the insulting remarks} ~~it~~ ^{is} ~~made~~ ^{to} a Commissioned Officer of the Royal Navy. I can only say I am amazed that action has not been taken sooner to stop this sort of thing.

23/1 28.

A.H.

Spoke J.H.

Committee to be composed as under:-

Mr. W. C. Gray, Captain Chairman

Mr. J. D. B. Jones Members

W. H. R. Evans

J.H.

23.1.28.

C/2/28.

CONFIDENTIAL.

25th January,

28.

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor to inform you that His Excellency has been pleased to appoint the following Committee to enquire into and report on the matter of complaints that have been received regarding the behaviour of Mr. A. G. Bennett in the exercise of his official duties as Customs Officer, and generally as regards Mr. Bennett's comportment as befitting an official in his position.

The Hon. M. C. Craigie-Halkett,)	Chairman.
Treasurer.)	
The Hon. Dr. W. B. R. Jones,)	
M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,)	
Ag. Colonial Surgeon.)	Members.
)	
Mr. A. R. Hoare, Government)	
Schoolmaster.)	

2. I am to enclose the Colonial Secretary's file relative to this matter.

3. I am to add that Dr. Jones and Mr. Hoare have been requested to place themselves in touch with you for the purposes of the Enquiry.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

Hon. M. C. Craigie-Halkett,
Treasurer,
Stanley.


Colonial Secretary.

C/2/28.

CONFIDENTIAL.

25th January,

28.

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor to inform you that His Excellency has been pleased to appoint the following Committee to enquire into and report on the matter of complaints that have been received regarding the behaviour of Mr. A. G. Bennett in the exercise of his official duties as Customs Officer, and generally as regards Mr. Bennett's comportment as befitting an official in his position.

The Hon. M. C. Craigie-Halkett,)	Chairman.
Treasurer.)	
The Hon. Dr. W.B.R. Jones,)	
M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,)	
Ag. Colonial Surgeon.)	Members.
Mr. A. R. Hoare, Government)	
Schoolmaster.)	

2. I am to request that you will take an early opportunity of placing yourself in touch with Mr. Craigie-Halkett, under whose chairmanship the Enquiry will be conducted and to whom the relative documents have been sent.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



Hon. Dr. W. B. R. Jones,
M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,
Ag. Colonial Surgeon,

Stanley.

Colonial Secretary.

C/2/23.

CONFIDENTIAL.

25th January,

28.

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor to inform you that His Excellency has been pleased to appoint the following Committee to enquire into and report on the matter of complaints that have been received regarding the behaviour of Mr. A. G. Bennett in the exercise of his official duties as Customs Officer, and generally as regards Mr. Bennett's comportment as befitting an official in his position.

The Hon. M. C. Craigie-Halkett,)	Chairman.
Treasurer.)	
The Hon. W. B. R. Jones,)	
M. R. C. S., L.R. C. P.,)	
Ag. Colonial Surgeon.)	
Mr. A. R. Hoare, Government)	Members.
Schoolmaster.)	

2. I am to request that you will take an early opportunity of placing yourself in touch with Mr. Craigie-Halkett, under whose chairmanship the Enquiry will be conducted and to whom the relative documents have been sent.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. R. Hoare, Esq.,

Government Schoolmaster,

Stanley.

Colonial Secretary.

ENQUIRY INTO THE MATTER OF COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE
BEHAVIOUR OF Mr. A.G. BENNETT IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS
DUTIES AS SENIOR CUSTOMS OFFICER.

The Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor met at the Court Room, Town Hall Stanley at 2.30 p.m. on the 26th January 1928.

The Committee examined the following witnesses: The Honble H.H.R. Gresham, M.L.C., J.P. Mr. John Walsh and Captain R.T. Amadroz, R.N. (retd)

Henry Herbert Russell Gresham, sworn on his oath saith:
I am a Member of the Legislative Council and a Justice of the Peace for the Colony also local Manager for the Falkland Islands Company, Limited. My Company are Agents for the Pacific Steam Navigation Coy, Ltd and is responsible for all the discharging and loading of cargo at Stanley. I have been in business contact with Customs Officer Bennett for over twelve years as a junior in the Falkland Is. Coy's office in Stanley and also as Manager of the Company.

When vessels have been loading wool Customs Officer Bennett has been troublesome in appearing frequently in the purser's office to ask when the work will be finished. This has interrupted the work and the interruptions have been entirely unnecessary. During my term of Management both Captain Roberts (Marine Superintendent for my Company) and Mr. J. Walsh (foreman of our navy gang and who has most to do with the working of cargo) have made frequent complaints to me to the effect that Customs Officer Bennett was obstructing the work of discharging. Mr. Walsh has also complained to me that he and his men find Customs Officer Bennett difficult to get on with owing to his interference and his officious manner. For years Masters and Officers of vessels have expressed disapproval of Mr. Bennett owing to his manner not only in connexion with his work but also when sitting down with first class passengers in the saloons. Mr. Bennett's

general manner is objectionable. Mr. Bennett's demeanour to people holding superior positions in the Colony is objectionable and has been so for years, e.g., he walks into the private office of my Company with his hat on and smoking his pipe and has asked the question "Is Gresham in?". He also did this with a former Manager in ~~Mr. Gresham's presence~~ my presence.

I have heard Customs Officer Bennett speak disrespectfully of an official Member of Councils at a time when the person concerned was Head of Mr. Bennett's Department, and also of the present Harbour Master.

Mr. Bennett has failed to show proper respect to me, walking up to speak with his hands in his pockets and pipe in mouth.

I consider Mr. Bennett to be over officious and interferingⁱ and hindering in the fulfilment of his duties. When other officers are in charge of Customs work these difficulties never arise. Directly Mr. Bennett commences duty again, trouble starts. On the 16th January this year I had to write a complaint about Mr. Bennett to the Collector of Customs and also a personal letter to the Collector, Mr. Craigie Halkett. Letters exhibited to witness who confirmed the statements made in them.

I consider Mr. Bennett quite unsuited to hold the post of Customs Officer.

John Walsh, sworn on his oath saith: I am foreman for the Falkland Is. Coy's naavy gang. I have charge of the working of cargo into and out of vessels at this Port. I have had dealings with Customs Officer Bennett who affects the working of cargo as the working of cargo is carried out under Customs supervision. I have had difficulty with Mr. Bennett but none with Assist: Officer Riches, there is no comparison between the two men's methods. At times when I have told Customs Officer Bennett that he will not be wanted till 11 a.m., and later find that the officer will be required earlier he refuses to come, this causes delay in carrying on the work. Mr. Bennett's manner is officious and objectionable ; he has a far higher opinion of his importance than his position warrants. It is invariably disagreeable to work with Mr. Bennett. I have had to complain on various occasions to the Manager (Mr. Gresham) of delay in the working of cargo caused by Mr. Bennett. I never obstruct the Customs but assist as much as possible.

I have heard Mr. Bennett when on duty making adverse criticism of the Government.

I consider Mr. Bennett over officious in his duties and have heard the same complaint from ship's officers and passengers -- hardly a P.S.N.C. vessels enters the port but that I hear complaints of Mr. Bennett from various officers.

I consider that Mr. Bennett's methods and manner retard the smooth working of cargo, which involves pecuniary loss to the shipping company and the agents. I have never had trouble with any other Customs Officer, and to see Mr. Bennett and Mr. Riches (Assist: Customs Officer) separately at Customs work one would never suppose they were administering the same Customs Ordinance.

Reginald Thornton Amedroz sworn on his oath saith:
I am a Captain R.N. retired also Harbour Master for the Colony. I have come into contact with Customs Officer Bennett when receiving vessels. I have seen Mr. Bennett entering vessels. I have never seen Mr. Bennett's manner courteous; have never seen him take his hat off when entering a room on a vessel. Mr. Bennett's manner is offensive. I have never had any trouble with Mr. Bennett. I have never seen Mr. Bennett show any deference or even respect to myself or to a ship's officer or to anybody. I was informed by the Colonial Secretary that Mr. Bennett had referred to me as an "insulting swine". The Captain of a New Zealand steamer on which Mr. Bennett was trying to get a passage about 10 months ago told me that Mr. Bennett had been so rude to him that he would not have taken him as a passenger on any terms. I consider that Mr. Bennett's manner is consistently most offensive. I have heard frequent complaints about passengers having been called on by Mr. Bennett to open their baggage on deck.

At this point the Committee adjourned until Friday the 27th January 1928 at 2.30 p.m.

Enquiry continued from Thursday the 26th January 1928.

Friday the 27th January 1928 at 2.30 p.m.

The Committee examined the following witnesses:

Mr. A. W. N. Vincent J.P., Captain D. Roberts and Assistant Customs Officer Riches.

Arthur William Neville Vincent sworn on his oath saith: I am a Justice of the Peace for the Colony also Accountant to the Falkland Is. Company, Limited, Stanley. Shipping is part of my work, and this brings me into contact with Customs Officer Bennett. I have frequently been on board vessels when Mr. Bennett has been performing Customs duties. I consider that Mr. Bennett does not perform those duties in a courteous or proper manner. I have heard shipmasters and officers complain of Mr. Bennett's manner. I consider Mr. Bennett's manner is objectionable. I consider also that Mr. Bennett acts in an offensive and over officious manner in carrying out his duties. There is a very great difference between Mr. Bennett and Assist: Customs Officer Riches in this respect. Mr. Bennett is a nuisance when a vessel is being despatched. When he knows that the work will take say 2 or 3 hours as the case may be, and also it is a matter of course that he must remain on board till the vessel departs, he comes into the purser's office every half-hour to inquire when the work will be finished. Assist C.O. Riches never does this. I consider that Mr. Bennett's methods retard the working of cargo: there was no delay or difficulty during the period in 1927 when Mr. Bennett was away. Mr. Bennett's manner to people holding superior positions is objectionable. When on duty Mr. Bennett addresses me as "Vincent".

David William Roberts sworn on his oath saith: I am a Master Mariner also Master of the steamer "Falkland" and Marine Superintendent to the Falkland Islands Coy, Limited, Stanley. I have supervision of loading and unloading of cargo from P.S.N.C. and other vessels. I have had difficulty with Customs Officer Bennett in connexion with his manner of discharging cargo. I consider that Mr. Bennett's manner obstructs the working of cargo. Mr. Bennett is over officious and interfering, and he criticises the manner and method and order of discharging cargo. The manner he adopts would lead people to suppose that he was more than a Customs Officer. Mr. Bennett's name is a joke with tolerant people. Mr. Bennett does not act in a proper manner in fulfilling his duties, in that he exceeds his duties. Mr. Bennett has on various occasions caused direct financial loss to the shipping agents through not being on the spot when his services were required.

Sidney Herbert Riches sworn on his oath saith: I am Assistant Customs Officer. I have worked with Mr. Bennett the Senior Customs Officer since 1912 both in -and / out - doors duties. I have had many difficulties with Mr. Bennett. For years I have not seen eye to eye with him as to his methods of facilitating work on the jetties, nor have I agreed to his oppressive attitude towards the workers. It is usual to land incoming cargo at the F.I.Co's jetties after permission has been received from the Customs Officer to do so, otherwise it would be landed at the Public jetty. In the course of the landing of cargo, the bulk of which is imported by the F.Is.Coy, when packages for small importers turned up Mr. Bennett has insisted that they should be landed at the Public jetty, requiring all lines holding the lighter to be cast off, the lighter taken to the Public jetty and refastened, about half a dozen packages landed, and the lighter to be returned to its original position. When the F.Is.Coy's foreman has remonstrated against this, Mr. Bennett has spoken to him in a most disrespectful and oppressive manner, and insisted on its being done. Mr. Bennett's general manner to the workers is that of a bully; in one instance I have heard him call one of the workers "a God damned bloody fool". On one occasion about two years ago a lady shopkeeper who has a store on the front road went to the Public jetty just about noon and inquired of Mr. Bennett about some boxes just landed from a lighter. At the time it was well known that she had a houseful of sickness. Mr. Bennett bullied her so that she broke down and cried on the jetty before all the workers. No Importer gets civility from Mr. Bennett - most of them come to me to get business done but being the junior officer I cannot act. There has been friction between myself and Mr. Bennett owing to his manner with the general public. I consider Mr. Bennetts manner in conducting his work is not befitting to a public servant. The ships officers of the P.S.N.Coy and also the Whaling ships do not like to have any dealing with Mr. Bennett owing to his bombastic attitude; he has a ~~flax~~ false idea of his

position and power. In the case of a young lady coming to the Colony to be married, Mr. Bennett required her to open her baggage on the deck of the steamer and went through all her trousseau garment by garment making sarcastic remarks. I have repeatedly seen Mr. Bennett require passengers to open their baggage on the deck and empty out the contents there.

Enquiry continued from Friday the 27th January 1928.
Wednesday the 1st day of February 1928 at 2.30 p.m.
The Committee examined the following witness:- Miss
Frances E. Kirwan.

Frances Elizabeth Kirwan, sworn on her oath saith:-
I am a General Merchant trading in Stanley and in the
course of my business I come into contact with
Customs Officer Bennett. This officer has needlessly
obstructed the delivery of my cargo, resulting in delay
in the sale of goods. Mr. Bennett has shown undue
inquisitiveness in matters that did not concern him
and has acted as if the cargo was his and not mine.
The officer's manner has been rude and obnoxious on
various occasions. He has adopted a bullying attitude
towards me. I have in the past complained to the
Collector of this officer's rudeness to me on the
Public jetty. The Officer's general manner is
objectionable. Mr. Riches, the Assist: Customs Officer,
has an affable manner and facilitates business; he is
the exact opposite of Mr. Bennett.

Stanley, Falkland Islands,
1st February 1928.

Sir,

With reference to your letter C/2/28 "Confidential" of the 25th January 1928, We have the honour to report that we met on the 26th and 27th of January and again on the 1st February for the purpose of inquiring into the matter of complaints regarding the behaviour of Mr.A.G.Bennett in the exercise of his official duties as a Customs Officer, and generally as regards Mr.Bennett's comportment as befitting an official in his position.

2. We examined seven witnesses, namely:-
The Honble H.H.R.Gresham, J.P., M.L.C., Mr. John Walsh, Captain R.T.Amadroz R.N. (retd) Mr.A.W.N. Vincent J.P., Captain D.W.Roberts, Mr.S.H.Riches and Miss Frances E.Kirwan. The evidence taken is attached hereto. We would point out that most of the evidence was obtained from persons in the service of the Falkland Islands Company, Ltd, but this was unavoidable in view of the fact that the Falkland Islands Company as Agents for the Pacific

The Honourable,
The Colonial Secretary.
&c., &c., &c.,
Stanley.

Pacific Steam Navigation Company, are responsible for the working of all cargo at this Port.

3. We were reluctant to take evidence from Assistant Customs Officer Riches, but in the circumstances we considered it necessary.

4. After careful consideration of the evidence we are satisfied that Mr. Bennett's behaviour in the exercise of his official duties as Customs Officer has been objectionable, and further that his officious and interfering methods have caused delay in dealing with cargo, which delay has resulted in financial loss to the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's Agents and probably also to importers.

5. With reference to the question raised in your letter as to this Officer's comportment as befitting an official in his position, we consider that his having, in public and while on duty, adversely criticised the Government, and his having spoken disrespectfully of senior officers in the Service, show that he has been both disloyal and insubordinate. The evidence also shows that the officer has failed to give proper deference and respect to his superior officers and to leading members of the public.

6. The evidence also shows that Mr. Bennett's manner towards ships' officers and others with whom he comes into official contact is thoroughly objectionable, and arouses feelings of irritation and antagonism which cannot help but cause friction and unnecessary trouble in all parts of the work with which he is connected.

7. Apart from the points raised above we have no reason to believe that this officer has performed his duties in any other than a conscientious manner, but as a result of our inquiry we are of opinion that Mr. Bennett is not a suitable person to hold the post of Senior Customs Officer.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servants.

M. Brajendra Nath

Colonial Treasurer.

W. B. Jones

Ag. Colonial Surgeon.

R. M. ...

Government Schoolmaster.

} Committee
of
Enquiry.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
STANLEY,

9th February, 1928.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that in consequence of complaints received through the Treasurer and Collector of Customs in the matter of the behaviour of Mr. A. G. Bennett, Customs Officer, both in the exercise of his official duties and generally in his demeanour towards his superior officers and members of the public, I appointed a departmental Committee consisting of Mr. H. C. Craigie-Halkett, Treasurer, as Chairman and Dr. W. B. R. Jones, Acting Colonial Surgeon, and Mr. A. R. Hoare, Government Schoolmaster, as Members to enquire into the allegations made against Mr. Bennett. I enclose a copy of the report submitted by the Committee.

In duplicate.

2. I consider that the finding of the Committee is substantially correct as I fear that Mr. Bennett is suffering from an exaggerated idea of his own importance and is lacking in the courtesy naturally to be expected of an official in the public service. I do not, however, consider that there is sufficient ground to justify me in taking action for his removal from the public service, and I think that the matter can best be settled by the administration to Mr. Bennett of ^a direct and serious warning as to his future conduct.

3. The Colonial Secretary has therefore seen Mr.

Bennett/

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

L. C. M. S. AMERY, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Bennett at my direction and has told him that while his work is not called in question and his zeal particularly in the direction of whale research is fully appreciated his personal behaviour is not such as befits an officer in his position and that while it is not the desire of this Government to dispense with his services, valuable as they are in more than one way, it will be impossible not to regard in a most severe light further complaints of this nature which may be brought to my notice. In short Mr. Ellis has advised Mr. Bennett to cultivate humility and to make a conscious endeavour on all occasions to be polite.

4. I am glad to say that Mr. Bennett appears to have taken this admonition in a proper spirit and I trust that the matter may be considered as satisfactorily settled. I have considered it advisable nevertheless to bring the full facts to your knowledge against any possible sequel.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

ARNOLD HODSON.

26
DUPLICATE

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Confidential.

Downing Street.

1st May, 1928.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential despatch of the 9th February transmitting the report of a departmental committee appointed by you to enquire into allegations made against Mr. A. G. Bennett.

2. If you considered these allegations grave enough to involve the question of Mr. Bennett's removal from the public service, the procedure laid down in Colonial Regulations 54-71 should have been observed. In fact, assuming that you were satisfied that this officer's conduct had been unsatisfactory, the case appears to have been one which should properly have been dealt with by a warning without the institution of an inquiry, and especially one which took evidence from the public and from a subordinate officer in the Customs Department, but did not, as far as I can gather, hear Mr. Bennett himself.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

(Signed) L. S. AMERY

GOVERNOR,
ARNOLD BODSON, ESQ., C.M.G.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
STANLEY,

8th June, 1928.

FAKELAND ISLANDS.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Confidential despatch of the 1st of May, 1928, relative to the report of a departmental Committee appointed by me to enquire into certain allegations which had been made against Mr. A. G. Bennett, Customs Officer, and to state for your fuller information the reasons which prompted me to take the course of action followed in the matter, it would seem, to your disapproval.

2. I should explain that it was because I was not in a position to judge whether the allegations made against Mr. Bennett were grave enough to warrant either proceedings being taken against him under Colonial Regulations 54 to 71 or a warning being administered to him as you suggest, that I caused the preliminary enquiry in question to be held. Upon receipt of the report of this preliminary enquiry I did in fact, as you will have seen, adopt the latter alternative.

3. I would therefore respectfully submit that I fail to see the precise nature of the objection to which my action in this matter is exposed.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

ARNOLD HODSON.

L. C. M. S. AMERY, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.



21
DUPLICATE

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Confidential

Downing Street,

28 July, 1923.

Sir,

Red. 26
I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Nelson's Confidential despatch of the 6th of June regarding the departmental Committee appointed to enquire into certain allegations made against Mr. A. G. Bennett, Customs Officer.

2. I have noted the explanation of the circumstances which occasioned the enquiry, but desire it to be placed on record that the Governor of a Colony is not at liberty to appoint a committee to take evidence from the public regarding the behaviour of a public officer unless the procedure laid down in Colonial Regulations Nos 54 to 71 is observed.

3. The matter has been discussed with Mr. Nelson in London. You should bring this despatch to his attention on his return to the Colony.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,
humble servant,

(Signed) L. S. AMERY

THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING
THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.