

C.S.

South Georgia
Shrikes.

1919

No. 345.

Governor.

SUBJECT.

1919.

16th April.

Previous Paper.

Requests report regarding Shrikes in
South Georgia.

MINUTES.

Letter to magistrate, S. G., 16.4.19.

M.G.

Returned in case required for further
action -

M.G. full.

17.4.19.

See offtate informed by disp. n^o 55
of 16th April 1919 - wait.

17.4.19

[Signature]
CW

File

Letter to magistrate, S.G. 14.5.19.

Subsequent Paper.

File

Telegram from magistrate, South Georgia 22.6.19.

Dep to Sec of State No 83 of 23 June 1919.

T.R.
26.6.19

File

Letter from S. W. South Georgia, 30.7.19.

H.E.

Submitted.

Other papers in connection with Strickland
attached - 561/19 r.p.

T.R.

31.10.19.

Office

B.F. when H.M.S. "Yarmouth" arrives.

T.R.

Oct 31/19

Letter from Magistrate, South Georgia, 15.10.19.

Seen. Keep in mind any last minute.

T.R.
Admin

Dec 9/19

H.E.

Brought up. H.M.S. "Dartmouth" is
expected back from South Georgia in the
course of the next day or two.

T.R.

29.1.20.

How P-A.
T.R.

FEB 5/20

345/19

345/19.

16th April, 1919.

Sir,

With reference to your reports of 18th December, 1918, 3rd and 10th January, 1919, on the strikes in June and December last on Leith Harbour, Prince Olaf Harbour, and Stromness Harbour Whaling Stations, I am directed by the Governor to inform you that it has been again reported that strikes have broken out and serious disturbances are apprehended at South Georgia.

2. In the absence of any report from you, either by letter to the British Consul at Monte Video or Buenos Aires, and from thence by cable through the British Consul to the Governor, or by wireless message from a vessel at South Georgia, or by whale catcher specially sent up by you from South Georgia to Port Stanley, the Governor is inclined to think that perhaps the report he has now received, might possibly refer to the strikes in December last. His Excellency will however be glad to know from you whether this be so or otherwise.

3. On receipt of the present report of strikes at South Georgia, the Governor caused a wireless message of inquiry to be sent out to you several times on the nights of the 11th, 12th and 13th April, in the hope that the s.s. "Neko" or "Thorpe Grange" or other vessel at South Georgia might pick it up, and be able to send your reply, but as the Governor has received no reply His Excellency thinks it probable that his message to you has failed to reach you.

4. As mail communication between Monte Video and Port Stanley is so very uncertain, I am to instruct you to write by first opportunity to the British Consul and enclose to him a short message to be by him sent on by cable to the Governor, reporting the present peace conditions of South Georgia. The Governor also directs you to make a full report to follow by post from Monte Video on the subject, dealing separately with each station the class of labour employed and its treatment by the employer.

5. The Governor further instructs you to send by first opportunity direct to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Downing Street, London, a copy of your report for the information of the Secretary of State.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

for Colonial Secretary.

E. B. Binnie, Esq.,
Stipendiary Magistrate,
SOUTH GEORGIA.

345/19

14th May,

19

Sir,

With reference to my letter of the 16th April, No 345/19, I am directed by the Governor to inform you that in the event of the occurrence of any further serious strikes at South Georgia, arrangements will be made if possible for a Man of War to visit the Dependency. I am to instruct you should there be any serious disturbance to make the earliest possible notification to the Governor, by wireless if possible from one of the vessels in harbour at the time fitted with a wireless plant.

The Governor has today sent to you the following message by wireless telegraph, which he hopes will be picked up by a vessel in harbour at South Georgia and delivered to you. The message will be repeated both on high and low power for several nights :-

"For Magistrate your reports eighteenth December third and tenth January should there be any serious recurrence you should inform me earliest opportunity by wireless if possible and if urgently wanted ask for assistance to be sent."

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,


Colonial Secretary.

E. L. Minnie Esq.,
Stipendiary Magistrate,
South Georgia.

345/19
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THE WESTERN TELEGRAPH COMPANY, LIMITED.

OFFICE STAMP.



The following TELEGRAM received at 2.0pm

From Buenos Aires

Foreign No. No. of Words 43

Dated 22nd. Time 12.45pm

To Colonial Secretary

NO. AND CIRCUIT.

24V.

REMARKS.



CLERK'S STAMP.

ER

Port Stanley.

Present peace conditions satisfactory majority strikers accepting
payment at given sum per month without participation of catch at
termination of season leaving for Argentina and Norway stop about
fifty remaining under renewed contracts 150 still to leave.

Magistrate South Georgia

Telegrams for Europe and beyond should be marked "Via Madeira" to ensure
transmission by the direct cable route.

This form must accompany any enquiry respecting this telegram.

Head Office:—"ELECTRA HOUSE," FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON, E.C.

345/19.



S.G.No. 123/19.

The Magistrate's Office,

South Georgia,

30th. July 1919.

Sir,

I have the honour (with reference to your letter no 345/19 of 16th. April) to report on the present peace conditions of the Dependency and also on the late strikes which have occurred during the past whaling season. In dealing with each company individually, the first strike took place on the station of the SOUTHERN SEALING AND WHALING COMPANY. There were 170 men engaged in Buenos Aires for the season Labourers, Firemen, and Blubber cutters, at the following rates

Labourers	Kr. 60.00	per month	and 2	¢	re	per barrel.
Firemen	80.00	"	4	"	"	"
Blubber cutters	80.00	"	3	"	"	"

On arrival at South Georgia or shortly after a strike took place and the men demanded higher wages and part as follows:

Labourers	90.00	per month	and 4	¢	re	per barrel.
Firemen	90.00	"	5	"	"	"
Blubber cutrs.	100.00	"	5	"	"	"

After several days discussion (which has already been fully reported on vide. M. Lr. 77/18 of 18th. December 1918.) the men accepted the following:

Labourers	80.00	er month	and 3	¢	re.	per barrels.
Firemen	90.00	"	5	"	"	"
Blubber Cttrs.	100.00	"	4	"	"	"

And accounts were ultimately made up according to the latter rates, the Strike commenced on December 12th. and the men recommenced work on 17th.

Several of these men were strikers at Leith harbour station

*The Hon.
The Colonial Secy.
Stanley.*

station, a few months previous, and were black listed by all stations according to an agreement between the managers, with the exception of the Manager Andersen of the Southern whaling and Sealing Co. who was in Buenos Aires and to a great extent personally engaged these men knowing them to have been strikers at Leith. I personally advised him not to engage any of these men to prevent a recurrence of the strike during the season, but in spite of protests from the other managers he engaged several with the result, which has been felt all over the Dependency, in my opinion Capt Andersen is entirely to blame for the strike on this station (Irvin & sons.)

I give here a statement made to me by the manager present.

"We were compelled by the strikers to omit certain stipulations and one clause of the contract, in order to resume work and avoid further loss, the men took advantage of the position, which they will no doubt do from time to time knowing that the companies have no alternative if they wish to avoid financial disaster, but to make concessions to them. At present there is no redress. A display of force in the shape of a Gunboat stationed on the island during the season would no doubt have the desired effect, and settlement of wages with a Man of war present before leaving the Dependency would undoubtedly facilitate the more peaceful pursuit of the companies operations.

The irony of the state of affairs under review, is that the companies are compelled to continue the housing and feeding of the strikers who legally could be ejected off the station but no Government forces being available, the position in which the management is placed is absolutely hopeless and the only remedy is to make concessions which place the employers in subjection to the employees."

OCEAN WHALING COMPANY.

This company engaged at the same time as the Southern whaling and sealing co. some 100 or more men, at Kr. 60.00 and 2 1/2 re per barrels of oil, on arrival in South Georgia the manager called the men up to the office and altered their contracts to Kr. 80 and 3 1/2 re. and to the surprise of everyone on the following day a general strike was declared and a demand was made for Kr. 90.00 per month and 4 1/2 re per barrel.

The manager did not give any decision at once and waited to see if the men would return to work, however after 3 days he agreed to their demands under protest. The accounts were ultimately made up for Kr.80.00 per month and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ re per barril. which the men all accepted when they were paid off in B'videc. The strikers did not comprise the whole of the crew only those who were engaged for the season from Buenos Aires, those men engaged from Norway sign for 2 years and receive (for staying over 2 winters) Kr.90.00 and 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ re. The strike was settled without my intervention. The whale boat crews also were on strike for a higher bonus Masters included. The Gunners at present are paid at the rate of Kr.80.00 for a Blue whale. 200.00 for a Right whale. 70.00 Fin, and 40.00 Humpback. and demanded Kr.100.00 for Blue, 70.00 Fin and all others excluding Right.

There was no strike on the station of the Compañia Argentina De Pesca, owing possibly to its isolation from the other station.

TOMSBERG WHALING COMPANY.

On the 7th. January I was asked by a number of men from this company's station if I would see them, I went by whaler and arrived on the morning of the 8th. January and was approached by a committee of 4 men. They explained they had contracts with the company for the season and were asking the manager for more salary and a reduction of prices in the store. The Manager had explained to them already that the company was selling 10% under cost prices but were willing to reduce another 10%, but that he would not grant higher wages. They further explained to me that they did not think their contracts legal as they were not signed by any British authority, upon which I informed them their contracts were legal and binding and that it would

would be far better for them to return to work as they had no grounds for refusing to work, this they refused to do. Up to this time they had been off work since 28th. December 18, being housed and fed by the Company, later on a few of the men who had been working on the station in former years returned to work and the leaders were licked out and sent off in the PENTAUR, after which the few remaining also resumed work.

The strike at Leith harbour was similar to that on the station of the Southern whaling and Sealing Co. the difference being the men demanded that the season should close on the 15th. May and that they should be repatriated not later than the end of May. There was little whaling and several chances of getting away before that date, and a good number of them approached the manager with a view to getting away, the manager explained that it was themselves who had arranged about the date of leaving and that if anyone left before that date they forfeited a certain part of their bonus, to which they all agreed. These were mostly Scandinavians the Spaniards preferred to hang out their full time. Those who left before the 15th. May were paid at the rate of Kr. 200.00 per month with no part of the catch. exchange at that time being approx. 16.00 to the £.

There is no doubt that if the whaling season was officially marked off say from 1st. September to 15th. May each year the remaining months to be considered as a close season, and the Companies making proper arrangements to have the men sent away at the right time there would not be so much labour trouble to contend with. Again if they were to come to some definite arrangement regarding wages, this also would help, as some men doing the same work receive different amounts rates,

rates, One station probably paying the Flencers some few £re more than another, the others hear of it and consequently want the same, and so on.

A Wireless Station would be a great asset, as in cases of labour troubles, the companies at home could be advised and could also give advice, if matters got serious assistance could be called for, and when the men understood that we could call a man of war, I am quite sure they would not be inclined to make trouble, if such an example could be given it would have a great effect.

At present everything is very peaceful, as there is practically no whaling, everybody is well fed, and the prospect of a good season, makes for peace, though it is probable that on the arrival of new men during the next month, there will be fresh outbreaks until the wages question is settled.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



Magistrate.

314 5/19.



S.G.No. 134/19.

The Magistrate's Office,
South Georgia,

15th. October 1919.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 345/19 of 14th. May, 1919, informing me that in the event of a recurrence of the strikes at South Georgia arrangement would be made for a warship to visit the Dependency.

2. The Cable mentioned in your letter was not received by any of the vessels in South Georgia, owing probably to the fact that the operators were not on watch. The operators accompanying these vessels do not seem to have any interest in getting connection while here and are seldom on watch.

3. Should any further labour trouble arise I will endeavour to call for assistance either by wireless or whale boat to the Falklands.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Stipendiary Magistrate.

Honourable,

The Colonial Secretary,