

Falkland Islands NEWSLETTER

April 1979 No 6



TALKS STALLED

Talks between the British and Argentine governments over the future of the Falkland Islands appear to have failed. The most recent meeting took place in New York on March 21 - 23 between Mr George Hall of the Foreign Office and his Argentine counterpart, Senor Lopez.

The communique issued following the discussions gave no indication of their substance and was markedly less co-operative in tone than the statement issued following the previous round of talks in Geneva during December.

During the Geneva talks, proposals for scientific cooperation in the Falklands area were drawn up between Britain and Argentina. Legislative Councillors were briefed by Mr Ted Rowlands MP, the minister responsible, in Rio on January 7 but have not disclosed the proposals or their attitude towards them. The Falklands Office in London is concerned and the situation is being closely watched.



It was admitted in the House of Lords on February 7 by Lord Goronwy Roberts that the scientific cooperation proposals would legitimise the illegal occupation by Argentine scientists of South Thule Island in the Falkland Islands Dependencies.

The occupation of South Thule Island, the most southerly of the Falklands group, was described by Islanders as the 'thin end of the wedge'. Islanders fear continued Argentine encroachment, even under the name of science.

The Argentine continues to assume that the Falkland Islands will eventually become Argentine territory and efforts to that end are coordinated by a 'Committee for the Restitution of Las Malvinas' in Buenos Aires. Maps and documents issued by the Argentine government show the Falklands as part of Argentina and reinforce her territorial ambitions.

However, the Falkland Islands Office in London has sought and received absolute assurances of support for the Falkland Islanders' cause from all parliamentary parties and from trade unions.

200-mile zone vote by LEGCO

The Falkland Islands Legislative Council has called, on a motion by the Hon S B Wallace, for the declaration of a 200-mile maritime zone around the Islands and Dependencies to replace the existing three-mile limit. The British government is considering the proposal as part of a general review of maritime limits around other British territories.

The Legislative Council has also approved two motions put down by the Hon T S Miller, one of which thanks the UK Falkland Islands Committee for its continuing support for the Islanders and the other requests HMG to conduct a feasibility study into enlarging the Islands' airstrip by 1000 metres. The extension, says the motion, would allow aircraft such as the Boeing 707 and Britannia to use the airfield, which at present can only accept short-haul aircraft.

WHITE CARD AGREEMENT HONoured

Following repeated pressure from parliamentarians and the Falkland Islands Office over a period of six years, the Argentine government has now agreed to observe the Anglo-Argentine Communications Agreement of 1971. It will no longer insist on all travellers to the Falkland Islands carrying the infamous "White Card", a visa issued by the Buenos Aires Government.

In future, only Argentines and Falkland Islanders will be required to carry the card. Previously, all travellers had to wait in Buenos Aires for the card to be issued before travelling to the Falkland Islands. Islanders have been told that they should carry the card while in Argentina to avoid difficulties.

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EARLY DAY MOTION - DEVELOPMENT OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

TUC & MPs in petition

Thirty-six members of the TUC General Council and several MPs signed a petition presented to the Argentine embassy in London on March 22 which called for information on the 25,000 Argentines who are reported to have 'disappeared' during the last three years. The protest coincided with the announcement that Argentina and Britain were considering the re-establishment of full diplomatic relations, broken off in 1976 when the Argentine fired on a British vessel which was believed to be carrying Lord Shackleton to the Falkland Islands.

STOP PRESS

The NEWSLETTER now understands that Argentina has not officially followed up her suggestion that full diplomatic relations are restored with Britain.

WILDLIFE TOURISM

Mr Julian Fitter, an Englishman who has run a similar project in the Galapagos Islands, has been told that the Falkland Islands Government will make £25,000 available to assist the establishment of specialised wildlife tourism in the Islands.

Mr Fitter has visited the Islands and believes that a significant market could be developed for the Falkland Islands in North America, Germany, France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

In addition to wildlife observation and photography, the Islands offer the largest concentration of sailing shipwrecks and of hulks and early settlements of interest to archaeologists, as well as excellent fishing, riding and scuba diving opportunities among scenes of unspoilt natural beauty.

According to the proposal issued by Mr Fitter, tourists will be transported around the Islands in a ship with accommodation for up to 40 passengers. The ship, which will either be bought or chartered, will also have cargo space to supplement the service currently provided by the supply vessel MONSUNEN.

Mr Fitter hopes to raise about £275,000 through public subscription, government loans or grants for the project. His company would be registered in the Islands and will offer participating preference shares to individual Falkland Islanders on favourable terms.

Wool price rise

As the sheep-shearing season ends in the Falkland Islands a rise of 20 per cent in the value of wool is reported from the London market following strong international demand, particularly from China and USSR. The wool is sold by telephone auction to dealers in Liverpool and Bradford, where it is processed. Falkland Islands wool is unique in being sold by description: the rest of the world's wool is sold by sample.

The 600,000 sheep on the Islands, mainly Romney and Corriedale, produce 2½ million kilos of fine soft wool each year but this is not enough to supply the vast potential market. The wool is particularly attractive for knitwear but tends to be marketed as "Shetland Type". The limited quantities available cannot support the advertising necessary to establish its own brand name in sophisticated international markets.

Shearers from the Falkland Islands, who can handle more than 300 sheep each day, work around the world and regularly compete internationally.

Britain's new North Sea?

The results of the seismic surveys conducted off the Falkland Islands during 1978 are still being evaluated, the Foreign Secretary, Dr David Owen, told Mr Ian Gow MP (Con, Eastbourne) in a Written Answer on February 23.

The belief that oil could be found in the Falkland Islands region predates by many years the major seismological research, by Western Geophysical Services Inc., presented to its sponsors in 1978.

OIL PROSPECTS

The US Geological Survey has estimated that the area could provide more than nine times the oil believed to lie under the North Sea. Columbia Lamont University has conducted its own research and is particularly interested in the Burdwood Bank, south of the Falklands. At least one major US oil company is known to have established a comprehensive data bank on the region, based on local research. The Argentine oil company (YPF) has an offshore drilling programme underway and wells are now producing off the Patagonian coast opposite the Falkland Islands.

The sponsorship in 1978 of seismological surveys of the Falklands waters by British Petroleum was particularly significant, in view of the company's exceptional oil strike record. Argentina, alongside BP and the British and Falkland Islands governments participated in these surveys. However, it is recognised that cooperation on offshore developments may be of mutual benefit.

A guarded analysis of hydrocarbon potential was included in Lord Shackleton 1976 Survey, largely based on limited evaluations conducted by Birmingham University in 1975.

Since then total known oil reserves on the American continent have leapt, not least the US East Coast offshore prospects, which form the basis for the US Geological Survey's view of the Falklands' potential.

Whatever the outcome of the evaluations and in spite of the close and continuing interest of oil companies and the certainty of a world oil shortage by 1985, the true potential of the Falklands will not be known until exploratory drilling takes place, at a cost of approximately £7.5 m.

New highway

The Falkland Islands, which have the highest number of motor vehicles per capita in the world, are now to get their first highway.

Work has started on the construction of an all-weather road between the capital, Port Stanley, and the settlement at Darwin/Goose Green. Construction is being carried out by the Public Works Department.

The new road is the first to be built in the Islands outside Port Stanley, which has only six miles of surfaced road. The 60-mile journey by Land Rover to Darwin at present takes up to ten hours over rough terrain.

FIGAS gets 'Islander'

The Falkland Islands Government Air Service (FIGAS) will soon be operating a Britten-Norman 'Islander' aeroplane in addition to its two 'Beaver' seaplanes.

Nearley £½ m of finance for the new aeroplane and equipment - including a new hangar to be built at Stanley airport - has been provided by the Ministry of Overseas Development.

Grass landing strips are being prepared at many farm settlements for the 'Islander', which is a light feeder passenger/cargo aircraft with a fixed undercarriage.

Fish study

The Ministry of Agriculture has commissioned a "desk study" by the White Fish Authority into the fisheries potential of the South Atlantic. The announcement follows representations from the South Atlantic Fisheries Committee (SAFC), whose president is Mr James Johnson MP (Lab. Kingston-upon-Hull).

Last year, the SAFC submitted a lengthy memorandum of the fish potential of the South Atlantic prepared in collaboration with the White Fish Authority, to the Minister of Agriculture.

INSHORE FISHING

A team of experts from the Ministry of Overseas Development (ODM) is examining the possibility of coastal fishing and salmon ranching in the Falkland Islands. An important factor in producing the high value fish is the cost of feeding. But the ODM team suggests that the salmon could be fed on surplus mutton carcasses.

Strong international interest is being shown in the shellfish potential of the Falkland Islands. Lord Shackleton's report identified abundant resources of the cherished Centolla crab, among other species. There is a thriving shellfish industry in the Beagle Channel opposite the Falkland Islands, where similar species are found.



PARLIAMENTARY

EARLY DAY MOTION

The following 118 Members of Parliament have signed Sir Nigel Fisher's Early Day Motion "That this House, mindful of the potential benefit to both the Falkland Islands' economy and the United Kingdom economy of developing the resources of the Falkland Islands, their dependencies and their surrounding seas, calls on Her Majesty's Government to draw up and implement, as a matter of urgency, a development plan based on the recommendations in Lord Shackleton's Report, and to improve communications both with and within the Islands, thus fostering the economic expansion and immigration to the Islands":

Adley, Robert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Arnold, Tom
Bell, Ronald
Jennett, Sir Frederic
Jennett, Dr Reginald
Jenyon, W.
Jiggs-Davison, John
Jody, Richard
Jowden, Andrew
Joyden, James
Joyson, Dr Rhodes
Kraime, Sir Bernard
Kray, Dr Jeremy
Krocklebank-Fowler, Christopher
Krotherton, Michael
Kudgen, Nick
Kulmer, Esmond
Karter-Jones, Lewis
Kegg, Walter
Cook, Robin F.
Kormack, Patrick
Krouch, David
Krowther, J.S.
Kean, Paul
Krayson, Burnaby
Kurant, Tony
Kyk, Hugh
Klery, Peter
Kyre, Reginald
Kairgrieve, Russell
Karr, John
Kaulds, Andrew
Kell, Anthony
Kinsberg, Geoffrey
Kisher, Sir Nigel
Kookes, Miss Janet
Kowler, Gerry
Kraser, Rt Hon Hugh
Kilmour, Sir John
Kinsburg, David
Klyn, Dr Alan
Koodhew, Victor
Koodlad, Alastair
Kow, Ian

Grant, Anthony
Grieve, Percy
Griffiths, Eldon
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hawkins, Paul
Hicks, Robert
Hutchison, Michael Clark
Irving, Charles
James, David
Jeger, Mrs Lena
Jessel, Toby
Johnson, James
Johnson Smith, G.
Johnston, Russell
Jones, Arthur
Kaberry, Sir Donald
Kerr, Russell
Knox, David
Langford-Holt, Sir John
Lee, John
Lewis, Kenneth
Lloyd, Ian
Loveridge, John
MacKay, Andrew
McNair-Wilson, M.
Marshall, Michael
Marten, Neil
Mawby, Ray
Miller, Hal
Mills, Peter
Mitchell, Austin
Moate, Roger
Molloy, William
Monro, Hector
Morris, Michael
Morrison, Charles
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Ogden, Eric
Pavitt, Laurie
Perry, Ernest
Price, David
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Peter
Renton, Rt Hon Sir David
Rifkind, Malcolm
Rodgers, Sir John
Sainsbury, Tim
Shaw, Giles
Shelton, William
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, T.H.H.
Spicer, Jim
Stainton, Keith
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stewart, Rt Hon Donald
Stokes, John
Taylor, Robert
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Jeffrey
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thorpe, Rt Hon Jeremy
Torney, Tom
Townsend, Cyril
Trotter, Neville
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, John
Wall, Patrick
Warren, Kenneth
Williams, Alan Lee
Winterton, Nicholas

HOUSE OF LORDS

[16 JANUARY 1979]

Viscount MASSEREENE and FERRARD: My Lords, since, apparently, we are going to give £38 million to Tanzania to build a road across a wilderness, would the noble Lord not agree that we should "lean over backwards" to give financial help to the Falkland Islands which have strong ties of blood and loyalty with this country?

Lord GORONWY-ROBERTS: My Lords, I willingly support the central point put by the noble Viscount. There are in this country strong feelings of solidarity with the Falkland Islanders. Indeed, I see that our aid provision for the Islands *per capita* exceeds that which we make to any other country, including the one mentioned by the noble Viscount.

Baroness ELLES: My Lords, as the population of the Falkland Islands is only 1,800, I imagine that it is not very difficult to reach that figure. In relation to the future of the Falkland Islands, would the Minister let the House know what is the Government opinion of the proposal that the territory might be handed over to the Argentine and the Islanders remain British; and whether the Government would give an absolute assurance that no decision will be taken either with regard to the territory or with regard to the future of the Islanders without not only full consultation but also public consultation with the Islanders?

Lord GORONWY-ROBERTS: My Lords, on quite a number of occasions, I have given the assurance sought by the noble Baroness and I willingly and enthusiastically give it once more today. Proposals will not even be put to Parliament without the full acceptance of the Falkland Islanders. As to the first part of the supplementary question put by the noble Baroness, the answer to the second part governs it. Our policy is based firmly on the agreement of the Islanders to whatever may be proposed.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Falkland Isles

Council President Jean Francois-Poncet told John Osborn (Con/UK) that the Falkland Islands received Community aid by virtue of being a territory for which a Member State has responsibility. He did not know of any further discussions between the Commission and the UK on the subject.

Falkland Islands NEWSLETTER

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GOOD APPEAL RESPONSE

The Falkland Islands Office has received a generous response from the Islands to its recent appeal for funds. Brian Frow, director general of the Office, said:

"This response from the Islands is most encouraging to supporters in the UK. However, finance is still badly needed because the level of funds determines the scale and scope of our work, which cannot be conducted by volunteers alone, however willing. The recent upsurge in our activities results from a marriage of voluntary and professional help."

LOGO COMPO

The Falkland Islands Office is offering a modest prize to the winner of a competition to design a new device to be used on its letterhead, publicity material etc. The new "logo" will replace the design to be seen at the masthead of this Newsletter.

Suggestions and sketches for the logo, which must reflect the nature of the Office's work, should be sent to the Falkland Islands Office.

AGRICULTURAL SEMINAR

The Falkland Islands Office is organising an agricultural seminar to take place while Falkland Islanders are on leave in Britain during the summer. The seminar is entitled "The Diversification and Improvement of Agriculture in the Falkland Islands" and will be held at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge from 15 - 17 June. Residential accommodation at nominal charges can be arranged through the Falkland Islands Office.

1979 RECEPTION

The annual reception for Falkland Islanders and their supporters in the UK will be held at 6.30 pm in the Great Hall of Lincoln's Inn on Thursday June 19 1979.

'A first step towards affirming our presence in the Malvinas'

Geneva

AGREEMENT between Britain and Argentina on scientific cooperation in the Malvinas (Falkland) Island dependencies constitutes a first step to affirm Argentine presence in the region, Argentine sources said yesterday.

Commenting on the three-day talks here, the sources said the negotiators discussed all the issues, including sovereignty over the islands and the dependencies of South Georgia and South Sandwich islands, all ruled by Britain and claimed by Argentina.

A press communique issued Wednesday night on the talks made no specific mention of the sovereignty issue.

It said the delegations "reached agreement in principle on the outline of a scheme of cooperation in their scientific research activities in the island dependencies."

The sources said Argentina saw this as "a first step towards affirming our presence in an area where other countries are carrying out fishing activities without accepting any regulation or control, leading to possible prejudicial effects on the preservation of the natural resources of the region."

BUENOS AIRES HERALD
BUENOS AIRES, ARGEN

RADICAL Party leader

León also maintained that Argentina should do all in its power to reaffirm its sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands. "We can't work ourselves up about Chilean abuses and then turn our heads at English piratical behavior"

THE GUARDIAN

Australia to ban whaling

From Reuter in Canberra

AUSTRALIA is to prohibit whaling within its proposed 200-mile fishing zone, and may declare a similar zone off Australia's Antarctic territory.

Japan and the Soviet Union are the countries most affected by Australia's decision.

EL UNIVERSAL
CARACAS, VENEZUELA

Este archipiélago perteneció originariamente Argentina, pero fue ocupado en 1837 por Oliver López y por Gran Bretaña G.E. Hall.

Printed in F

BILL SLOMAN LEAVES

Bill Sloman, who took up his post in the Falkland Islands as Development Officer in late 1978, has had to retire through ill-health. He has now returned to the UK and a replacement is being sought.

DISCOVERY MOVES

The survey and research ship DISCOVERY, re-registered in Port Stanley in 1925 and which has been lying in the Thames for many years, is being taken over by the National Maritime Trust for preservation.

The vessel is to become the focal point of an exhibit describing her work from the days of Scott's Antarctic explorations to the Discovery Report voyages of the Southern Seas during the Twenties which are still authoritative.

The Falkland Islands flag was raised during the ceremony on April 3 when DISCOVERY was handed over by the Ministry of Defence to the National Maritime Trust.

STAMPS BOOST

The international status of the Falkland Islands in the philatelic world, which has been fostered by the responsible issuing policies of the Islands' government, has been enhanced by the BBC TV series "In the Post". The programmes prominently featured Falkland Islands maritime mail history and the current mailship issue which has brought substantial revenue to the colony.