

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE
REF.



TELEPHONE: ARMIDALE 2911
TELEX NUMBER 66050
POST CODE 2351

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND
ARMIDALE, N.S.W.

Department of History
29 March, 1972.

Mr Harry Maude,
77 Arthur Circle,
Forrest, A.C.T. 2603.

Dear Mr. Maude,

In every way I was very pleased to have your letter of 26th March. It caught me as I was about to send off a letter to our friend, and so I was able to incorporate your valuable and instructive suggestions in toto.

For your sake and mine I shall keep this short, however much I regret the distance which keeps me away from developments on the Banaban front. With the best of wishes to Mrs Maude and yourself

Yours sincerely
Ross.

Enclosure.

Department of History

29 March 1972

Mr Neal Duke
Secretary
The Christmas Island Phosphate Commission
Phosphate House
515 Collins Street
MELBOURNE 3000

Dear Mr Duke,

Thank you very much for your letter of 3 March 1972 in reply to an enquiry of mine respecting the early records of the Christmas Island Phosphate Co. Ltd.

The only question that now arises is whether any of the officers in your employ who were involved in the transfer of the Company's business to the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission would kindly suggest anyone either here or in London of whom I could enquire as to the fate of the records of the old Company. As you may recall, I have been in correspondence with Mr J.A.J. Murray in London, but he has done as much to help as can be expected. It is possible then that your officers might wish to make one or two helpful suggestions.

I am indeed grateful for your goodwill in promising to advise me as to the decision on access to the Commissioners' records now in the care of the Commonwealth Archives Office. This is most reassuring, particularly in view of a no doubt inadvertent misapprehension conveyed by the statement that I was 'advised it was not possible currently to make available any of the records held in the Commissioners' offices or on their behalf by the Commonwealth Archivist'.

Recourse to the correspondence will indicate the actual sequence of events to have been as follows: no communication was received by me from the Melbourne representatives of the British Phosphate Commissioners - nor indeed expected; I did, however, receive a letter from Mr A.E. Gaze, in relation to a different matter, in which he stated:

"Some years ago one of Mr J.T. Arundel's daughters made available to us private papers she had retained from her late father's effects. These papers together with other records of the early days have now been deposited within the Commonwealth Archives.

I suggest your best approach would be to examine these early records by contacting Mr J.D. Morris, Senior Archivist, Commonwealth Archives Office, Outer Crescent, Middle Brighton, Vic. 3186."

Though this was not in answer to any application for access it does show that in July of last year I had not been advised that it was not possible currently to make available any of the records held in the Commissioners' offices or on their behalf by the Commonwealth Archives.

Furthermore, in answer to my preliminary enquiry directed to the Senior Archivist at Brighton, I received a reply dated 29 November 1971 of which the following is an excerpt:

"The records of the British Phosphate Commissioners are currently being examined and listed. However the early records are reasonably accessible, and can be made available to you for the dates you mention."

In the event, when I presented myself at the Commonwealth Archives Office at Brighton on Monday, 13 December 1971, I was informed that permission to consult the material had been withdrawn; this being, in fact, the first information I had received from any source that a reversal of decision as to access had been made.

My purpose in recapitulating these particulars is merely to place on record the sequential development of the relevant events since, in your letter under reply, these are perhaps stated with a conciseness which could, to someone unacquainted with them, convey a somewhat misleading impression as it does not, I feel, clarify sufficiently the time at which the reversal of the antecedent decision was made.

The above remarks are therefore intended solely to obviate any charge of obtuseness or obduracy on my part by someone not so well acquainted with the facts as yourself and do not, of course, have any bearing of the present situation as regards the records of the Commissioners.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Lamont.

77 Arthur Circle,
Forrest, A.C.T. 2603,
26th March, 1972.

Mr ROSS Lamont,
Department of History,
The University of New England,
ARMIDALE, New South Wales 2351.

Dear ROSS,

Sorry not to have replied before but I have been away working on Roberts' Argueson Journal. People complain that I never seem to be at home these days and I suppose it is harder to pin me down now that I no longer have to attend the University (even nominally). Recently, however, the Vice-Chancellor has given me a personal research grant from University funds and last week I was elected (if that is the right word) an Honorary Fellow, which entitles me to the use of Research Assistants and Typists, so I may find myself a bit more restricted than hitherto.

Thanks for the correction substituting Lachlan for Furdy. I wrote to Sir Alwyn Jones' solicitor as soon as you left and have been expecting a reply daily; but I suppose that they are having their difficulties with the B.P.C. solicitors and will not write until the matter at issue - the availability of the Commission's records - has been settled one way or another. My own feeling is that the B.P.C. solicitors were aiming to clean out the archives of everything relevant and then graciously agree to open them to the other side. So it seemed only fair to warn Brown that what he might conceivably find for his pains was s.f.a. I also mentioned your point that previous licences had been confined to uninhabited islands and if they show any signs of following this up will add that the case which evidences the rule is Lachlan.

Re your draft letter to the B.P.C., I fear that you will have already taken action owing to my unconscionable procrastination, but if not I should, if I were you, certainly send the letter, but perhaps change from para. 3 onwards to read more or less as in the attached.

You may well wonder at some of my amendments, but 20 years of work as chief draftsman for the W.P.C. secretariat has taught me that it is best never to give anyone the direct lie, but merely the suggestion that an 'inadvertent misapprehension' may possibly have been conveyed; and that the best way to deal with someone who is endeavouring to pull a fast one on you, provided he is the type of customer that I imagine Mr Duke to be, is to tie him up in smooth verbage.

As you say to our friend in your letter, 'with every good wish',

Yours,

John

Draft

I am indeed grateful for your good will in promising to advise me as to the decision on access to the Commissioner's records now in the care of the Commonwealth Archives Office. This is most reassuring, particularly in view of a no doubt inadvertent misapprehension conveyed by the statement that I was 'advised it was Commonwealth Archivist'.

Recourse to the correspondence will indicate the actual sequence of events to have been as follows: no communication was received by me from the Melbourne representatives of the British Phosphate Commissioners - nor indeed expected; I did, however, receive a letter from Mr A. E. Gaze, in relation to a different matter, in which he stated:-
'Some years ago Middle Brighton, Vic. 3186.'

Though this was not in answer to any application for access it does show that in July of last year I had not been advised that it was not possible currently to make available any of the records held in the Commissioner's offices or on their behalf by the Commonwealth Archives.

Furthermore, in answer to my preliminary enquiry directed to the Senior Archivist at Brighton I received a reply dated 29 November 1971, of which the following is an excerpt:-

'The records of dates you mention.'

In the event, when I presented myself at the Commonwealth Archives Office at Brighton on Monday 13 December 1971, I was informed that permission to consult the material had been withdrawn; this being, in fact, the first information that I had received from any source that a reversal of decision as to access had been made.

My purpose in recapitulating the ^{se} ~~above~~ particulars is merely to place on record the sequential development of the relevant events since, in your letter under reply, these are perhaps stated with a conciseness which could, to someone unacquainted with them, convey a somewhat misleading impression, as it does not, I feel, clarify sufficiently the time at which the reversal of the antecedent decision was made.

The above remarks are therefore ^{solely} ~~intended~~ to obviate any charge of obtuseness or obduracy on my part by someone not so well acquainted with the facts as yourself and do not, of course, have any bearing on the present situation as regards the records of the Commissioners.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Ross Lamont.

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TELEPHONE: ARMIDALE 2911
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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND
ARMIDALE, N.S.W.

History

10 March, 1972

Dear Mr Maude,

I have a guilty conscience. As soon as I left you a month ago my mind said "not Purdy" but "Laehlan". The two islands are in fact linked because the same man a Mr G.C. Roberts applied for a lease of both. Purdy was not inhabited but Laehlan was. At any rate I have only just now checked about the cancellation of the lease.

In his despatch No 158 of 25 August 1884 the Governor of NSW, Lord Loftus, advised the Secretary of State that the Laehlan Islands were inhabited by natives and by a German Firm.

"5. As there can be no doubt that persons are living on these Islands, I have to submit for your consideration as to whether the lease granted to Mr Adams [G.C. Robert executor of the will of G.C. Robert - R.S.L.] ought not to be cancelled ... This was registered in C.O. in NSW despatch 16985, 10 Oct. when presumably minutes are to be found as it was not Destroyed Under Statute [this from Register of NSW despatches - R.S.L.]. It was sent across to Treasury and F.O. —

which looks ominous for my argument as presumably the declaration by Bismarck in June of the same year had to be taken into account.

At any rate The despatch No 158 was answered on 11 November thus

"As it is proved that these Islands are inhabited, I have to request your lordship to cause a notification to be sent to Mr Adams of the determination of the lease."

The F.O. incidentally replied in their letter of 19 November (Hey! that's interesting The C.O. didn't wait until they received the F.O. observations, and indeed pudding-brain here didn't notice from the Register that the SSC → Gov NSW on the same day as F.O. and Treasury were communicated with: - so we are back in business). All this indicates what course-work does to research in wavy towers.) which was registered 19801 which also survives. There are two others, one despatch from the Gov NSW and a F.O. letter both of which have gone: i.e. Destroyed Under Statute, which also happened to the Treasury's reply. But I see that the Governor's despatch No 9 of 22 Jan 1885 notifying the cancellation of the lease has survived in C.O. 201 and presumably has minutes. It is registered. ~~3551~~ 3551/85 and concludes the business of the cancellation.

I do regret the scrapping of this but I am racing to catch the mail.

Please find an enclosure of a letter from the B.P.C. (alias CIPC) in Melbourne, and my draft reply which characteristically our typist messed up. I should like you to advise if my reply should not go — I have lost my perspective on the point. If you say "No", which single word would suffice to save your time, I shall still write a pretty "Thank you".

With very best wishes to both Mrs Mause and yourself

Very sincerely
Ross.

2 encl

3rd March 1972

Dear Mr. Lamont,

(a) I refer to your letter of 21st February 1972 in which you request information on records of the Christmas Island Phosphate Co. Ltd..

As far as I am aware the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission did not take over either in London or on Christmas Island official records of the Christmas Island Phosphate Co. Ltd. (registered in the United Kingdom).

This is substantiated from a search of a listing of the Commission's records and by officers who were involved in the transfer and still remain in our employ.

(b) In a discussion with you late last year you referred to documents which you understood were in the possession of the British Phosphate Commissioners relating to early activities of the Pacific Islands Co., J. T. Arundel etc. prior to the commencement of phosphate operations on Ocean Island in the early 1900's and although both the Commonwealth Archives Office, Victoria and ourselves advised it was not possible currently to make available any of the records held in the Commissioners' offices or on their behalf by the Commonwealth Archivist, you enquired whether an exception could be made in regard to these particular documents as they referred to a period before commencement of Ocean Island phosphate operations.

Seagrams's solely as to this → but hope for a reply to point (b)

- 2 -

I confirm that at this stage access is not available; the records held by the Commonwealth Archives Office have been transferred for the purpose of being assessed for their archival worth and pending further consideration by the Commissioners and partner Governments have not been cleared for access.

When a decision has been made on this matter I will advise you.

Yours sincerely,

for THE CHRISTMAS ISLAND PHOSPHATE COMMISSION,

Neal D. Gube

SECRETARY.

Draft for Mr. H.E. Maude

Department of History

Mr Neal Duke
Secretary
The Christmas Island Phosphate Commission
Phosphate House
515 Collins Street
MELBOURNE 3000

Dear Mr Duke,

Thank you very much for your letter of 3 March 1972 in reply to an enquiry of mine respecting the early records of the Christmas Island Phosphate Co. Ltd.

The only question that now arises is whether any of the officers in your employ who were involved in the transfer of the Company's business to the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission would kindly suggest anyone either here or in London of whom I could enquire as to the fate of the records of the old Company. As you may recall, I have been in correspondence with Mr J.A.J. Murray in London, but he has done as much to help as can be expected. It is possible then that your officers might wish to make one or two helpful suggestions.

Thank you for promising to advise me as to the decision on access to the Commissioner's Office. I am indeed grateful for your good will, but may I point out an apparent error in your account of my visit to Melbourne last December. It is simply not a fact that you "advised it was not possible currently to make available any of the records held in the Commissioner's offices or on their behalf by the Commonwealth Archivist". In the first place in reply to my enquiry of the Commonwealth Archives Office as to the availability of the documents, I received no communication whatsoever from the Melbourne representatives of the British Phosphate Commissioners - nor did I expect one from that source. However, in relation to an enquiry on a different matter, I did receive a letter from Mr A.E. Gaze dated 14 July 1971 in which he states.

^ records now in the care of the Commonwealth Archives &

"Some years ago one of Mr J.T. Arundel's daughters made available to us private papers she had retained from her late father's effects. These papers together with other records of the early days have now been deposited within the Commonwealth Archives.

I suggest your best approach would be to examine these early records by contacting Mr J.D. Morris, Senior Archivist, Commonwealth Archives Office, Outer Crescent, Middle Brighton, Vic. 3186."

I had not been /

Even though this was not in answer to any application for access it does show that in July of last year ~~you had not advised~~ it was not possible currently to make available any of the records held in the Commissioner's offices or on their behalf by the Commonwealth Archives. *that /*

Furthermore /

~~In the second place in answer to my preliminary enquiry of the Senior Archivist, Brighton, I received his reply dated 29 November 1971, in which he stated:~~ *directed to /*
of what the falling is a script :-

"The records of the British Phosphate Commissioners are currently being examined and listed. However the early records are reasonably accessible, and can be made available to you for the dates you mention."

In the event, when I presented myself at the Commonwealth Archives Office, Brighton on Monday 13 December 1971, I was informed that ~~your permission to consult the material had been withdrawn;~~ *and* ~~this was~~ *in fact,* the first information I had from any source that a reversal of decision as to access had been made. *place on record the sequential development*

of relevant events since, for you little info only there are

My purpose in recounting these happenings is ~~to arrive at an accurate account of my behaviour.~~ *merely* ~~As your letter under reply stands,~~ the sequence of events is unduly compressed. Your record, omitting *perhaps* as it does any representation of the reversal of decision by either yourselves or the Commonwealth Archives Office, can be read to imply, no doubt unintentionally, either stupidity or stubbornness on my part which was not the case. I am not wishing to waste your time in idle controversy, but I think a moment's reflection will convince you that I have justification in questioning your abbreviated account. At the same time, let me assure you that I quite understand that my present observations have no bearing on the present situation as to the records of the Commissioners.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

helps stated with a candour that could, to reveal unacquainted with the facts, convey a mischievous impression, since it does not, I feel, clarify sufficiently the facts and the situation at which the reversal of the antecedent decision was made.