

1933

1933

3223

KENYA

3223

CO 533/437

Phosphatic material for fertilizers.

Acquisition of interests in Sudan phosphate islands.

Previous		Subsequent	
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1 A.M.M. Moore 5/18

18 May 53

State of Syria has drawn attention to the importance of an adequate supply of low priced phosphatic material for fertilizers & suggested that the phosphate islands off the Sudan coast should be secured for E.A. Trustees. Requests for information regarding these islands may be obtained.

Hidgum

Can you throw any light on this?

A. H. H. H.

We have no info as to the occurrence of phosphate on islands off the Sudan coast. There is a considerable production of phosphate in Egypt, but the deposits are inland.

M. L. H. H.  
27/6/53

It is inconceivable that exploitable phosphates should have remained unexploited on a main trade route like the Red Sea. But I suppose we must refer to the Sudan Office.

Write to the Controller, Sudan Food Agency, saying that the existence has been reported to S. I. B. of phosphate islands off the coast of the Sudan, but that he has been unable to obtain confirmation of the statement. S. I. B.

be grateful for any info on the subject  
which the Controller may be in a position  
to supply.

Make the other Conf!

J.P. [unclear]  
21/6 [unclear]

2 To Sudan Govt Agency. Same 27/5/33

14

3 Sudan Govt Agency 28 June 33

State that when application was made for a commission  
to work the [unclear] in some islands off the Sudan coast  
inspection was held that [unclear] was commercially negligible, but  
obtaining further information for other reasons.

N. 1. Acknowledge receipt, with  
thanks. The information  
in the letter might be  
sent to the [unclear].

C. J. [unclear]  
29/6

J.P. [unclear]  
28 June

To Sudan Govt Agency (3 copies)  
DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE  
By [unclear] 27/5/33  
(1 copy)

(C)

No further reply to No 2 has yet been received.

Wait a month. Noted [unclear] 16.8.33  
C. J. [unclear] 16/8/33 at once  
[unclear] 297.

6 J. M. Moore of [unclear] 27 July 33.  
DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE will be interested to hear result of reference to  
[unclear].

Put by. (By [unclear] or requested  
above)  
C. J. [unclear]  
27/8/33 above

(C) Brought up vide minute above.

[unclear] 22.9.33.  
[unclear] 297.

Noted with [unclear] 27/9/33

(C) Brought up vide minute above.

[unclear] 28.10.33  
[unclear] 297.

See [unclear] [unclear] 23/11

Brought up vide minute above.

[unclear] 25.11.33  
[unclear] 297.

On [unclear]  
I think [unclear]  
No need to  
send unless  
longer time.

Put by [unclear]  
[unclear]

Now write to Sudan Govt Agency, 27.3, saying  
that S. J. [unclear] will be interested to hear whether any  
[unclear] info is available regarding the phosphate islands  
[unclear] to exist in the Red Sea [unclear] 27/11/33

4. H.M.M. Moore (S.O) 20 Nov. 32  
Encls. copy of cases with Imperial Institute & enquire  
result of researches at Khartoum.

1. Enquire from the Controller Sudan Govt. London Office with reference to No 2 whether a reply from Khartoum may be expected shortly.
2. To Mr Stockdale as apphed in No 7

*J. R. Stockdale*  
13/12/33

The possibility of Maun phosphate might be worth investigating. We may arrange for an experimental shipment of 50 tons from Maun to the Falkland Islands!

*J. R. Stockdale*  
13/12.

Yes: we must now enquire of the Sudan Maun might be worth while but it's a long way off  
11/12/33

*J. R. Stockdale*  
above

To Sudan Govt. office Com. 19/12/33

I should have thought that the first place

DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE

to place which Kenya might look for its phosphatic requirements would have been the Seychelles group.

The main phosphatic guano deposits in the Seychelles are under lease but it is only the high-grade guano which is being extracted and exported. The supply of high-grade guano is in sight of being exhausted within the next few years but if low-grade phosphates would meet Kenya's requirements it is quite possible that considerable quantities might be available. It would be necessary for these to be analysed before importation into Kenya were advised, as some of them are ferrous.

X  
The Seychelles Department of the Office could give particulars of the existing leases and the Department of Agriculture in Kenya might get into touch with the operating company. A copy of the Report of the visit made by the Governor and the Director of Agriculture to the outlying islands of the Seychelles in July and August, 1929, might also be sent to Kenya for their information. In the report are references to the nature of the guano deposits on the principal islands of the Seychelles and some indications of quantities available.

*J. R. Stockdale*  
11. 12. 33.

*Eastern Dept.*

Can you help?

*J. R. Stockdale*  
For lease, see 54924/11/33 Seychelles  
For companies operating see 44407/11/34 Seychelles  
For report on Guano visit see 68953/11/33 Seychelles  
Advised 2/1/34

9

Sudan Govt Office 20 Dec 1933  
(Further enquiries shd. be made through wind channels)

After speaking to Mr. Tait, I rang

up the British Phosphate Commission's office  
& obtained the data abt. Nauru in the  
dept. herewith to Mr. Morse.

(I understood from Mr. Stockdale  
that there is room for two opinions  
whether unlimited phosphates are the  
panacea for E.A. agriculture.

*AP*  
8/1

\* No. could challenge  
D.

I can't make out why the Sudan got so stuffy  
about a simple enquiry. Obviously the best thing to do  
is for Kenya to go direct to Khartoum.

J.C.W. Hunt  
8.1. 1934

10

To Hammamoor 210 10/1/34  
(see Report in 3 on 64953/29 by 12/22)

(m)

pc 5  
70

C. O.

Mr. Freeston.

Mr. Flood. 8.1.34

Mr.

Mr. Parkinson.

Mr. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shackburgh.

Perm. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

For Mr. Flood's signature.

Downing Street,

10 January, 1934.

C.D.  
R  
D  
8 JAN  
9

Dear Moore,

DRAFT.

H.M.M. MOORE, ESQ., C.M.G.

Our enquiries into the possibility of obtaining phosphates for E. Africa have resulted as follows:-

(a) The Sudan Govt. has not been very helpful. After ineffective correspondence with the Sudan Govt. Office in London we are now politely informed that any further enquiries on the subject should be made through the usual <sup>official</sup> channels of the Foreign Office.

~~This is now being done.~~

(b) I notice that Wolfe writes throughout of "rock-phosphates". We learn that ~~Norway~~ <sup>Norway</sup> could supply unground phosphate at a F.O.B. price of about 24/- a ton; freight to Mombasa for a steamer-load, say 7,000 tons, is to

Report enclosed in No. 3 on 14953/89 Seychelles.

It would probably save further delay if you would now write officially to Khartoum.

FURTHER ACTION.

be at about 26/- per ton. Smaller consignments could not be shipped direct, and would therefore be much more expensive. Add the cost of grinding, and the price would, I imagine, be far too steep for the E. African pocket.

(b) Stockdale suggests that the most promising source of supply is the Seychelles Islands.

The main phosphatic guano deposits in the Seychelles are under lease, but it is only the high grade guano which is being extracted and exported. The supply of high grade guano is in sight of being exhausted within the next few years, but if low grade phosphates would meet Kenya requirements it is quite possible that considerable quantities might be available. It would be necessary for samples to be analysed before importation into Kenya as some of them are ferruginous.

The present leases are held by

(1) The Seychelles Co., Ltd., Mollavey

Kenya.

4 on 11/17/53 Sydh.

C. O.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr. Parkinson.

Mr. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shackburgh.

Perm. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

House, Blackfriars, E.C.4; who ship about 10,000 tons annually to New Zealand, Europe and India;

(2.) The Syndicat <sup>des Isles Malgaches</sup> Baïles Malgaches,

who export mainly to New Zealand; and

(3.) Temooljee and Company, who

used to send regular shipments to

Mombasa - they sent 138 tons in 1932.

Possibly the <sup>Department</sup> Director of

Agriculture may think it worth while to <sup>get into</sup> ~~keep in touch~~ with these people.

Further particulars can be extracted from the enclosed Report by the Governor and the Director of Agriculture on a visit to the outlying islands in 1929.

We will let you know if anything comes from the official correspondence with the Sudan Govt.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) J. E. W. FLOOD

FURTHER ACTION

3223/Q  
SUDAN GOVERNMENT  
LONDON OFFICE.

WELLINGTON HOUSE, FEC/WB.  
BUCKINGHAM GATE.  
LONDON, S.W.1.

TELEGRAMS BRANCH  
"TELEANOLOGY, BOWETT, LONDON."  
TELEGRAMS BRANCH  
"TELEANOLOGY, LONDON."  
TELEPHONE  
VICTORIA 8212

150  
2/27

L.O. 410.1.

20th December, 1933.

CONFIDENTIAL.

RECEIVED  
21 DEC 1933  
C. O. REGY

Sir,

Replying to your letter No. 3223/33 of the 19th instant, I have to confirm my telephonic conversation with you to-day when I explained that the question of the existence of phosphate islands off the coast of the Sudan, mentioned in your letter of the 27th June last, had been referred to the authorities in the Sudan, and that a reply had been received <sup>[the effect]</sup> that it would be appreciated if any further enquiries concerning this matter could be made through the usual channels, via the Foreign Office.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

*H. Charles*  
GENERAL SECRETARY.

The Under-Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office,  
Downing Street,  
S.W.1.





THE SECRETARIAT,  
NAIROBI,  
KENYA.

WHEN REPLYING  
PLEASE QUOTE  
No. S/C. AGR.  
AND DATE

25/5/22.

RECEIVED  
11 DEC 1933  
C. O. REGY

November, 1935.

Dear *Mr. ...*

No 5

With reference to your letter of the 5rd July on the subject of phosphate deposits, I enclose copies of letters which have passed between the Mineral Resources Department of the Imperial Institute and Wolfe, the Acting Director of Agriculture.

2. Perhaps you will be able to say whether researches at Khartoum have revealed anything. If not, you may care to consult Stockdale as to whether the Colonial Advisory Council of Agriculture and Animal Health should be approached on the subject. Wolfe has informed me that he considers the matter to be of sufficient importance to warrant such consideration.

Yours sincerely,

*J. E. W. Flood*

J. E. W. FLOOD, ESQ:

COPY

No. M. 4861.

IMPERIAL INSTITUTE,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
LONDON.

25th July, 1933.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of June 19th, No. C/Mamur/8/11, we have no information about phosphate rock deposits on any of the islands off the Sudan coast.

The only island in that part of the world about which we have any information concerning phosphate deposits is Mait Island off the coast of British Somaliland. No adequate description of the deposit is available, the most complete being that of R.A. Farquharson in his First Report on the Geology and Mineral Resources of British Somaliland (1924).

The material as bagged for shipment by the local Somalis for the Sultan of Makulla was found by Farquharson to consist of a miscellaneous collection of minerals and feathers, bones etc. The portion passing a 20-mesh sieve contained the most phosphate (18.5%  $P_2O_5$ ). Further analyses showed that the greater part of the phosphate was present in combination with iron and alumina, but the report points out that if the deposit were properly examined it might be possible to produce much better material.

Yours faithfully,

sd. Thos. Crook

Principal.  
Mineral Resources Department.

The Director of Agriculture,  
Nairobi,  
KENYA.

MANUR/8/60.  
24th August, 1955.

COPY.

The Director,  
Imperial Institute,  
South Kensington,  
LONDON, S.W.7.

Dear Sir,

I have to thank you for the information conveyed in the letter from the Principal of the Mineral Resources Department dated 25th July on the subject of phosphate rock deposits.

2. Perhaps I had better inform you of the object of this Government in making these enquiries. The object is not confined to the purposes of this Government alone, but those also of the neighbouring territories of East Africa. The soils in these territories are preponderantly deficient in phosphates and this will always be the limiting factor in production. This Government is anxious to explore the possibilities of securing rights to substantial rock phosphate deposits, of sufficient phosphatic content, so that a scheme may be evolved for working these deposits for the benefit of the East African territories. Phosphatic fertilisers of all kinds entering East Africa are priced beyond the means of most of the European farmers and of all native farmers, and it is highly desirable, almost essential, to ensure for the future a supply of cheap rock phosphate. In addition to the value of the phosphate content, distance is an important factor, and in view of the high charges for transport through the Suez Canal, it is desirable that deposits south of the Canal should first be explored.

3. The Government would be grateful for any assistance which your Institute may be able to afford, by way either of information, advice or suggestion.

Yours faithfully,

ed. H. Wolfe

AG: DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE.

© COPY

IMPERIAL INSTITUTE,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
LONDON, S.W.7.

No.N.4351

22nd September, 1953.

Dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter Mamur/O/CO of the 24th August regarding deposits of high grade phosphate rock which might be worked to meet the agricultural needs of East Africa. As you do not mention the production of superphosphate, I presume it is intended to use the rock in a finely ground condition for direct application to the soil.

I regret to say that I am not aware of any deposit of good quality phosphate south of the Suez Canal and convenient to East Africa which is not already being worked.

It is possible that one of the islands off the west of Madagascar may contain a deposit worth attention. For details regarding these islands, which are French possessions, you should consult Service des Mines de Madagascar at Tananarive, Madagascar.

Other possible sources, already referred to in our letter of the 1st June last, which might be worth consideration are the Egyptian deposits at Wadi Safaga and in the Seybilles. As regards the latter, much of the guano obtained is shipped to New Zealand. The best quality guano is stated to come from the outlying islands, but supplies of this material seem to have been largely exhausted. There is a large deposit of ferruginous phosphate on Aldabra. The phosphate possibilities of this group of islands is not well known and they might possibly be worth investigation. In any case, however, it seems unlikely that any large tonnage of high-grade phosphate will be located there.

Another possible source which might be investigated are the Laura and Ocean Island deposits which are worked by the British Phosphate Commission for the benefit of the Governments of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, without profit. Each country can take its quota of the production for home consumption but owing to the heavy cost of freight, the United Kingdom never takes its allotment (40%); this is divided between the two other countries.

It is possible, however, that some arrangement might be negotiated whereby the United Kingdom quota might be taken in part at least, by the Governments of the East African Dependencies. It may be mentioned that the shipments

The Director of Agriculture,  
Nairobi,  
Kenya.

from Maun during the year 1931-2 amounted to 434,858 tons and the f.o.b. price averaged £1.7.7 per ton.

Recently attention has been directed towards the unworked phosphate deposits of the Zerga district of Transjordan, some of which appear to contain good quality material. Although material from these deposits would have to be brought through the Suez Canal the occurrences might possibly be worth your consideration, falling others nearer at hand, in which case you could apply to the Trans-Jordan Government for details regarding possible concessions.

Yours faithfully,

Ed. Theo. Crook

Principal.

Mineral Resources Department.

16.13  
JH  
5

3223/33

K. C. C.

4<sup>th</sup> for Dr. Flood.

C.D.  
R 30 JUN  
D 3 July

C.O.

Mr. F. H. ... 30/6/33

Mr.

Mr. Parkinson.

Mr. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Permt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

3 JUL 1933

Dear Sir

After vain researches in the C.O. Library we write to the Sudan Office in London for information about Major Grayson's "phosphate islands". They have replied:-

" [Insert [ ] in No 3 ]

We will, of course, pass on anything further that comes

DRAFT.

H. H. H. None by C.M.

2 off.

to read. But I shall be  
surprised to learn that copyrightable  
projects shall without leave  
remain uncopyrighted uncopyrighted  
on a main trade route like  
the Red Sea.

Yours sincerely  
SIGNED J. E. W. FLOOD

TELEGRAMS INLAND:  
"SUDANOLOGY, SOWEST, LONDON"  
TELEGRAMS OVERSEAS:  
"SUDANOLOGY, LONDON"  
TELEPHONE:  
"VICTORIA 6318."

SUDAN GOVERNMENT  
LONDON OFFICE,  
WELLINGTON HOUSE,  
BUCKINGHAM GATE,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

34  
AH/VB.

RECEIVED  
29 JUN 1933  
C. O. REGD

28th June, 1933.

L.O. 410.1.

CONFIDENTIAL.

*Handwritten:*  
2/26  
C  
C

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter No. 3223/33 of June 27th, 1933.

I understand from information available here that a considerable time ago, before the war, some sort of application was made to the Sudan Government for a concession to work phosphates in some of the islands off the Sudan coast in the Red Sea. An inspection was made and it was reported that though phosphates existed, they were, commercially speaking, negligible and the matter dropped.

I have this information from a private source but I can obtain fuller particulars from Khartoum. I am therefore sending out a copy of your letter with the request that a search be made for the report in question, and I will let you know as soon as possible what reply is received.

I am,  
Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,

*Handwritten signature:*  
A. B. B. Maxwell

Controller,  
Sudan Government London Office.

The Under Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office,  
Downing Street,  
S.W.1.



C. O.

Mr. Grossmith

Mr. *Preston* *22/6*

Mr.

Mr. Perkins

Mr. Tomlinson

Sir T. Buchanan

Sir J. Shackburgh

Pres. U.S. of S.

Pres. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State

3223/33.

O. D.  
R 25 JUN  
D 26  
No 3

*Answered by No 3*

pe. 15

2

CONFIDENTIAL

27 June, 1933.

DRAFT.

THE CONTROLLER,  
SUDAN GOVERNMENT AGENCY.

Sir,

I am etc. to inform  
you that the existence has  
been reported to him of  
"phosphate islands" off the  
coast of the Sudan, but that he  
has been unable to obtain  
confirmation of the statement.

2. Sir Philip

Qualiffe-Lister will be grateful  
for any information on the  
subject which you may be in  
a position to supply.

I am, etc.

(S/244) L. H. PRESTON



THE SECRETARIAT,  
NAIROBI,  
KENYA.

WHEN REPLYING  
PLEASE QUOTE  
No. S. \_\_\_\_\_  
AND DATE

18th May, 1933.

RECEIVED  
14 JUN 1933  
C. O. H. E. L.

Chas (5)  
" (10)

Dear Sir,

Major Grogan has stressed to me in private conversation the importance to the Colony of an adequate supply of low-priced phosphatic material for fertilisers. Wolfe, the Acting Director, entirely agrees with him as to the necessity which already exists and is likely in the near future for European farmers and in the more distant future for native farmers to have such a cheap source of supply available. In common with the soils of the rest of Africa, the greatest deficiency in Kenya is that of phosphates and constant cropping without replenishment is likely to be disastrous to the crop industry of the Colony.

In the course of the same conversation Grogan referred to what he called "phosphate islands" off the Sudan coast, and suggested that it would be very good business for the three East African Territories as a whole to secure these islands, or some controlling interest in them, before it was too late. He was exceedingly vague as to the location of these "phosphate islands" and what was the composition of the phosphates on them. He mentioned, if I remember aright, that he had raised the point with some Sudan official in the course of one of his flights and thought that it would be possible to obtain accurate information about them. The whole idea is exceedingly nebulous at present, but I wonder if you could find out from the Sudan Office in London or elsewhere any particulars as to the existence of these islands and whether

17  
END

2.

their economic importance is realised and being exploited.  
Wolfe is writing to the Imperial Institute for any information  
they may have in their possession.

I am writing demi-officially as the whole matter  
is far too nebulous to form the subject of an official  
despatch.

Yours sincerely,

*Mr. Mulhove*

J. E. W. FLOOD, ESQ., C.M.G.