

1924

KENYA

27
C.O.
30112
25 JUN 24

FROM
PHIPPS, PICKERING,

DATE
24th June 1924.

OR CIRCULATION :-

Mr.
Mr.
Mr.
Asst. U.S. of S.
Perm. U.S. of S.
Part. U.S. of S.
Secretary of State.

436
CEDAR PENCIL INDUSTRY.

Requests interview to discuss industry.
Encloses copy of letter from Mr Bassett reporting
favourably on his visit to Messrs. Chambers'
factory, and copy of letter to Sir Coryndon urging
importance of proper cutting, seasoning, and grading

Previous Paper

MINUTES

In a letter (O/31194) of 2.6.24. Sir R. Coryndon says:-

"A recent order for 100,000 gross cedar slats for pencils came through from the Eagle Pencil Company and English firms are buying too. This number is equivalent to 4,800,000 6 ply or 7,200,000 4. ply slats and is a great tribute to the quality of Kenya cedar. I think however that it is urgent that you should do all you can at your end to stimulate the interest of English firms".

Mr. P. Phipps called on July 3rd and was very interesting, if diffuse.

(a) The late Commissioner Hutchinson joined Mr. S.S. Baker (ex-Forestry Department) and another in a farming enterprise and borrowed money

25669
28 JUN 1924 (P)
31 JUL 1924
copy & slips to go. C. Phipps - 23 OCT 1924
R.E.A.

Subsequent Paper

P/46562/24 T.T. (Forestry)
M.O.
46613/24

money from Mr. Phipps. In return he left him by will his interest in the concern - a damosa hereditas so far. Farming being at a discount, Mr. Baker turned his attention to the cedar on the estate, and Mr. Phipps, after trials with other firms, has got Messrs. Chambers really interested.

(b) As to conditioning, roughly cut and unseasoned slats sent home by Mr. Baker and made into pencils two years ago show no appreciable warping today.

Messrs Chambers have just installed a conditioning machine which prepares absolutely wet wood in nine hours. If this is really so, and Mr. Phipps was confident, we shall hear little more of the need for going slow over seasoning.

(c) The Royal Sovereign (Mr. Johnson) are mysteriously quiescent. By the beginning of 1923 (when our position with regard to him seemed to be satisfactory) Mr. Johnson was saying (according to Mr. Phipps) that he wished he had never heard of Kenya cedar. His local supplier, Mr. Bonsor, is practically ruined: he is bound to Mr. Johnson who rejects most of his wood for (as it is said) inadequate reasons.

It

It is clear that, so far as we are concerned Mr. Johnson's enthusiasm was for what he could get out of us. He got nothing. 437

(d) The Eagle Pencil Company.

(i) Mr. Phipps sent to them some of Mr. Baker's early wood-cutting efforts and they said the wood was so badly prepared that it would be practically all failures. Actually they produced 57 gross good pencils out of material for 72 gross.

(ii) Gradually they got interested and told Mr. Phipps that Kenya cedar was the pencil wood of the future; the end of the best American cedar was in sight (the tree does not now exist and the wood is obtained by sawing up railway sleepers) and there was no comparison between Kenya cedar and the third best.

(iii) They have now got a three year contract for large supplies from Mr. Ball (the "Burnt Forest") at a very low price.

(iv) Mr. Phipps has taken much trouble (who has cedar wood at their disposal) to tell others in Kenya that they mustn't bind themselves to unprofitable contracts like Mr. Ball's.

(e) Mr. Phipps is confident that there is no need to be afraid of Kenya cedar getting a bad name. The

prejudice

BURNT

prejudice against it (which he attributes to Major Grogan's early and unguided efforts) is a thing of the past.

The conclusion of all this seems to be that there is very little room for activity on our side. Although "Kenya" will not appear on the Eagle pencils, their purchases are public ^{knowledge} property and the value of Kenya cedar will necessarily be universally recognised. Possibly, owing to Mr. Ball's bad bargain, English competitors will be at a disadvantage for the time, but unless it is decided to ask the Stationery Office and other large users, and the general public, to give preference to British made pencils we must leave it alone.

Kenya, however, can do much, in the way of replanting to keep up the supply in the future, and in advising cutters to the contracts they should make - though the warning of Mr. Ball's and Mr. Benson's example should suffice.

I should be inclined to reply to Sir R. Coryndon accordingly (without using Mr. Phipp's confidences more than is necessary) but first you may think it best that we should ask Professor Troup to call sometime when he is in London.

Done Wedg.
May call in about
next

C.S.
3.7.26

Yes - I think that it will be well to see him first. To judge from his reports he is sound & helpful at once
H.J.R. 9/11/26

S.P.R.

Sir H. Read

Professor Troup called on Monday but I have been unable before this to locate the conversation.

He sees no reason to suppose that Messrs Chambers are in too much of a hurry, & he agrees that the talk about King's pencil would be very hastily prepared is largely due to Messrs Grogan's unregulated production of what you.

He knows of no other British firm (how that Mr. Johnson's will emerge has cooled) which we could safely try to investigate in this matter.

The main ground for concern is that our supplies should be entirely depleted. On this he suggests:

- (a) Systematic forest surveys & working plans. — as recommended in the report, & which we are still waiting for his comments.
- (b) Great caution in issuing cutting licenses.

It follows that we do not intend to fill in known what we have got.



NORTHAMPTON.

24th June 1924.

W. C. Bottomley Esq.,
Colonial Office,
Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

Dear Sir,

I was lunching one day last week with Col. Eric Hammond, who suggested to me that it might be mutually advantageous if I were to ask you if you can give me an *appointment* opportunity, to suit your convenience, to discuss the new Kenya Colony Pencil Industry, in which the Governor of the Colony, with whom I am in close touch, takes a very keen interest. I have myself devoted much time and spent a very considerable sum of money to promote the industry, and have been fortunate in getting into contact with Messrs. Chambers & Co., Pencil Manufacturers of Stapleford, Notts., who, at my instigation, have turned their factory over entirely to Kenya Cedar and are staking their reputation upon it.

They have been well supported by the Kenya Colony Exhibition Committee, and, through their instrumentality, have a stand in the East African Section of the Exhibition, which is proving very attractive.

I first saw Sir Robert Coryndon about a year ago

W. G. Rattomley Esq. (Contd)

24. 6. 24.

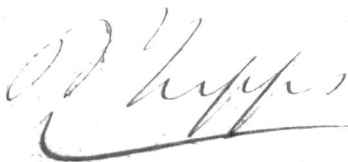
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when he was over here, and I also had interviews with him during my recent visit to Kenya, when I impressed upon him, and he fully appreciated, the great possibilities for the industry, if properly handled.

In connection with this, I enclose copy letter from Mr. N. B. Brasnett and copy letter to the Governor, which throw a little light upon the situation. I also enclose Chambers & Co's Exhibition Catalogue and a small sample box of pencils.

You are no doubt aware that Professor Troup of Oxford is also very keenly interested in the matter. I have already had two interviews with him, and am due to see him again next week, to report upon my recent visit and the present position.

Yours faithfully,



S.A. G. SA

(Contd) Mr. G. P. Phipps, Esq.

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You are no doubt aware that Professor ... at ... Kenya ... had had two interviews with him ... next week to report upon his visit and the present situation.

Yours sincerely,

COPY

Redcliffe,
97, Palace Road,
Streatham Hill, S.W.

6. 6. 24.

Dear Mr. Pickering Phipps,

I want to thank you very much indeed for taking me over Messrs. Chambers & Co's pencil factory the other day and arranging that the Manager should be there to explain the various processes to me. I was very interested in all I saw and came away feeling that Kenya pencil cedar is being given every chance to establish itself in the worlds market, through the care with which it is handled in the factory.

Mr. Smith's drying plant struck me particularly, as, in spite of the large percentage of moisture it removes in a very short time, the slats do not appear to suffer in any way.

From what I have seen in your mills and now at Chambers' factory, I shall be in a position to advise any other millers with whom I come in contact in future as to how to prepare their slats for the market, and I shall certainly take every opportunity of impressing on them that our cedar must not be damaged by bad cutting, making up into pencils while wet, and many other of the pitfalls you take so much care to avoid.

That you have given me opportunities to learn these things and are also letting me take Rummell to the factory shows that the general good of the colony does interest you, and not the good of the Harmanet Syndicate only - for we shall endeavour to improve the standard of your rivals pencils.

Wishing you and Chambers the best of luck in your sporting enterprise.
Yours sincerely,
N.V. Braasnett.

10th June 1924.

His Excellency Sir Robert T. Coryndon, K.C.M.G.
Government House,
N A I R O B I.

Dear Sir Robert,

Miss Hammond, who has been staying with us, has suggested to me that it might interest you to see the enclosed copy letter from Mr. Brasnett, who recently paid us a visit, and whom I ran over to see Chambers & Co's factory. He was particularly struck with Mr. Merton Smith, the General Manager, and his very wonderful seasoning machine.

The two essential points for the success of the Kenya Pencil Cedar industry are (1) proper cutting (2) proper seasoning.

I have already drawn your attention to the first, which should not be a difficult problem, but at present, apart from (1) Captain Baker, and (2) The Burnt Forest under the Eagle Pencil Co's tuition, and, perhaps, (3) the Anglo Baltic, whom we have done our best to instruct, I doubt if there are any saw mills that can be relied upon to cut correctly and send over reliable slats.

The seasoning is a most important matter and is a more difficult problem. I am satisfied, and so is Mr. Brasnett, that Mr. Smith has absolutely mastered it, but what is to happen with other manufacturers? Up to now they are practically off Kenya Cedar altogether on account of so much bad and improperly cut wood having been sent over, but assuming that this is

His Excellency Sir Robert T. Coryndon, K.C.M.G. (Contd) 10.6.54

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corrected, and also that in consequence of Chambers & Co's success, which I think is now assured, they turn their attention to it again, I fear that unless proper provision is made to overcome the seasoning difficulty, disappointment must follow, greatly to the detriment of the industry.

To give you an idea of what Mr. Smith has had to contend with, and has successfully overcome, I might say that our slats, which come straight away from cutting, as now coming over, contain a most excessive percentage of moisture, and yet after only a few hours treatment they are ready to be made up into pencils, without any fear whatever of trouble arising.

The situation might perhaps be relieved to some extent by keeping the slats at the mill to enable a considerable quantity of moisture to dry out, and I have written to Captain Baker to consider this, but, even so, the moisture remaining would still be very considerable, and also there is a tendency for the slats to harden if kept for a long period.

Mr. Smith has made the suggestion to me that for the convenience of other manufacturers, perhaps a central grading and seasoning station might be arranged, so that slats sent over for the English market could be handled on arrival and sold as grades 1.2.3. and as duly seasoned and ready for use. I think this is worth consideration.

The grading might perhaps more conveniently be done before despatch, but I should think that the seasoning would be better done after the voyage.

His Excellency Sir Robert T. Coryndon, K.C.M.G.
Government House,
LONDON, E.C. 4

Dear Sir Robert,

Miss Hanson, who has been staying with me, has suggested to me that it might interest you to see the enclosed copy letter from Mr. Brewster, who recently was on a visit and whom I ran over to see Chambers & Co's factory. He was particularly struck with Mr. Boston's slat grader, and his very thorough seasoning process for the purpose of the slats. I have already given your attention to the letter which would not be a difficult matter, but at present, from (1) Captain Baker, and (2) the Trade Director and (3) the American Lumber Co's Station, and perhaps, (4) the American Lumber Co. I don't know how far you will be able to raise them to our country and ever reliable facts.

The seasoning is a most important matter and to do this I am satisfied, and as I have mentioned, the mill has been equipped with a most efficient slat grader and a most efficient seasoning station. I don't know how far you will be able to raise them to our country and ever reliable facts.

10.6.24

His Excellency Sir Robert T. Coryndon, K.C.M.G. (Contd) 10.6.24.

Hoping you will excuse me for troubling you, and with most sincere thanks to Lady Coryndon and yourself for your great kindness.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) P. Phipps.

NORTHAMPTON.

2nd July 1924.

W. C. Bottomley Esq.,
 Colonial Office,
 Downing Street, W.1.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Phipps desires me to thank you for
 your letter of yesterday, and to say that he hopes
 to have the pleasure of calling upon you tomorrow,
 Thursday, at 6 o'clock.

Yours faithfully,

A. A. Wolaw
 Private Secretary.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.

31 July, 1924.

My dear Coryndon,

In your letter of the 2nd of June you referred, among other things, to the question of Kenya pencil wood, which had already given us food for thought as a result of your confidential despatch No. 48 of the 18th of February. We sent you on the 27th of June a copy of correspondence with the Department of Overseas Trade on this subject.

The position then stood that we had been advised from one side or the other (1) to go slow in the matter, especially as the use of the wood was being prejudiced by a United Kingdom firm which was using wood not properly seasoned and of poor selection, (2) to do everything we could to encourage the Royal Sovereign Company, who, however, would not make any forward movement in the use of the wood, (3) that

we

YR ROBERT CORYNDON, K.C.M.G.

should stimulate British firms to take a livelier interest in this industry in view of the foreign competition of the Eagle Pencil Company, and (4) that the greatest caution in giving cedar cutting rights would be necessary both in order to avoid waste and because of present ignorance of the amount of this wood which is available.

This position was rather penning, especially as we and Battiscombe had failed to come to any agreement with the Royal Sovereign Company last year. I welcomed the opportunity which Mr. Pickering gave me for a long talk with him. What he said, of course, he regarded as confidential, but I see no reason why this letter should not be put on your confidential file if you think it worth while.

(a) Messrs Chambers, who are presumably the firm which is said to be too much in a hurry, have a millicing machine which in a few hours will make the slabs which they receive free kangs fit for manufacture. Their pencils (as I know) are good and it would appear that their supply (which, so far as I know

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is confined to the partnership which I associate with the names of Phipps and Guy Baker) is, after this conditioning process, of quite good quality.

(b) Mr. Phipps says that Mr. Johnson, of the Royal Sovereign Company, appears to be "fed up" with Kenya wood and is rejecting much of the supplies which he receives.

(c) The Eagle Pencil Company have told Mr. Phipps that they can now see the end of the best American cedar (which, as you know, is not now growing and is obtained by sawing up old railway sleepers), and that there is no comparison between Kenya cedar and the third best. They have now got a three year contract for large supplies from Mr. Ball, of the Burnt Forest, at a very low price, and Mr. Phipps has gone to some trouble to tell other cutters that they can do much better for themselves than Mr. Ball did.

(d) Mr. Phipps is confident that there are no grounds for prejudice against Kenya cedar, although the supplies sent in former years from the Ravine Forest were undoubtedly poor.

I then asked Professor Troup to come and discuss the matter with me. He sees no reason to suppose

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 I think, was in no way sceptical about their new
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 think we must, that it is no use trying to entice Mr.
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 Macdonald, and urges that we should get on as quickly
 possible with systematic Forest surveys and working
 up. He refers to his report, which you have told me
 will comment on as soon as you can. He also emphasises
 need for caution in issuing cutting licences, that is,
 to those who have shown that they do not waste wood
 preferably only to those who use those parts of the
 which are not suitable for pencil purposes.

The conclusions which we draw from all this are

as follows:-

- (1) We have no need to teach anybody his business
 the matter of the selection and preparation of the
- (2) Although the word "Kenya" will not appear on
 Eagle pencils, the Company's purchases are a matter

of common knowledge and the value of Kenya cedar will naturally be universally recognized. The good terms which they have made with Mr. Bell will place the Company at a great advantage for the next year or two as compared with English competitors.

(3) Until we know what the supplies will be, we cannot do more in the way of pushing the manufacture of pencils from Kenya wood by asking large users in this country to confine themselves to it; and as the Department of Overseas Trade say that the Eagle Company themselves, though a foreign Company, are large manufacturers in this country, we may hope that the home consumer will get some of the advantage which they derive from the good bargain they have made.

(4) The function of the local Government is to investigate the available supplies of the wood, to take pains to replant a timber the economic value of which must increase, to take what opportunities offer to advise cutters as to the terms of contracts which they should make with pencil manufacturers, and (as a corollary to the advice of Battiscombe and Professor

Troup)

), to avoid giving cutting licenses to pencil
panies themselves, who will not primarily be interested
making full use of the trees which they cut.

We shall no doubt hear from you later on this
question, and the chief object of my letter, in a matter
which it is difficult to see clearly, is to put you
in possession of what information we possess.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) ^{W.C.} W. C. Bottelley

P. H.
30112

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218 JUN 1894

Stony in
his

Dear Mr. Richard Phipps,

DRAFT.

Henry Phipps

I shall be very glad
to have the opportunity
of discussing the Henry a

MINUTE.

pencil wood with you,
say you
and as you are going to

- Mr. Norwood
- Mr. 26/6
- Mr.

Oxford next week we
can probably fit in one
talk then for that week.

- Sir G. Davis
- Sir G. Grindle
- Sir H. Read
- Sir J. Masteron Smith
- Lord Arnold
- Mr. Thomas

So I have booked
10.30 for either Wednesday
or Thursday, but there
are prospects of other conferences

or committee meetings
fixed up at short notice
which my personal
appointments have to
give way, and I suggest that
it will be best if you will
ring me up when you ~~are~~
are in London, so that we
can arrange something
more definite than is
possible now.

I have already seen twice
your very truly
penned Chambers' very interesting
exhibit at Wembley.

(Sd) W.C. Bottomley

Handwritten notes at top left, including "Personal & Confidential" written in large letters.

Stamp: O.L. 103 JUL 31 1924

Oto for my sig.

Handwritten initials/signature

DOWNING STREET,
31 July, 1924.

DRAFT.

Robert Coryndon, K.C.M.G.,

My dear Coryndon,

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- Mr.
- Mr.
- Sir C. Davis.
- Sir G. Grisdale
- Sir H. Read
- Sir J. Musterton Smith.
- Lord Arnold.
- Mr. Thomas.

Vertical handwritten note: copy to Mr. Baginwale (SOT) - 23 OCT 1924

wood not properly seasoned and of poor selection, (2) to do everything we could to encourage the Royal Sovereign Company, who, however, would not make any forward movement in the use of the wood, (3) that we should stimulate British firms to take a livelier interest in this industry in view of the foreign competition of the Eagle Pencil Company, and (4) that the utmost caution in giving cedar cutting rights would be necessary both in order to avoid waste and because of our present ignorance of the amount of this wood which is available.

This position was rather puzzling, especially as both we and Battiscombe had failed to come to any agreement with the Royal Sovereign Company last year, and I welcomed the opportunity which Mr. Pickering Phipps gave me for a long talk with him, in which he gave me his views on the subject. What he said must,

must, of course, be regarded as confidential, ^{but} I see no reason why this letter should not be put on your confidential file if you think it worth while.

(a) Messrs. Chambers, who are presumably the firm which is said to be too much in a hurry, have a conditioning machine which in a few hours will make the damp slate which they receive from Kenya fit for manufacture. Their pencils (as I know), are ~~of~~ good quality and it would appear that their supply (which, so far as I know is confined to the partnership which I associate with the names of Phipps and Guy Baker) is ~~subject to~~ this conditioning process, of quite good quality.

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I then asked Professor Troup to come and discuss the matter with me. He sees no reason to suppose that Messrs. Chambers are in too much of a hurry and I think, was in no way sceptical about their

I did not record this but my memory is fairly clear on this point

their new machine. He knows of no other British firm (supposing, as I think we must, that it is no use trying to entice Mr. Johnson again to take an interest in the matter), which we could usefully stimulate. He considers that the main ground for caution is lest our supplies should be unduly depleted. ^{On} With this he is in close agreement with Battiscombe, and urges ^{on} that we should get/as quickly as possible with systematic Forest surveys and working plans. ^{On this} ~~He~~ refers to his report, which you have told me you will comment on as soon as you can. ^{He also} ~~It~~ emphasises the need for caution in issuing cutting licences, that is, only to those who have shown that they do not waste wood and preferably only to those who use those parts of the tree which are not suitable for pencil purposes.

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Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) W.C. Bottanler