

Confidential.

MEMORANDUM.

25th September, 1938.

From:-

To:-

The Commissioner for Native Lands,
Gilbert Islands,
at Ocean Island.

The Acting Secretary to Government,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony,
Ocean Island.

Local steps to be taken if and when approval of the
Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme is received.

In accordance with the instructions contained in paragraph 2 of His Excellency the High Commissioner's Confidential despatch of the 27th July, the following Memorandum is submitted on the subject of the immediate local steps to be taken in the event of the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme being approved. In view of paragraph 2 of the Secretary of State's Confidential despatch of the 24th June the proposals refer to Hull, Sydney, and Gardner Islands only.

2. As stated in my previous Reports, two main undertakings will have to be finished before the actual settlement of Gilbertese can be commenced -

- (1) The construction of two 30,000 gallon cisterns on Hull Island, one 30,000 gallon cistern on Sydney Island, and one 10,000 gallon cistern on Gardner Island;
- (2) The division of land and demarcation of boundaries on Hull and Sydney Islands.

The Building of Cisterns.

3. The construction of the four cisterns admittedly

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presents a serious problem, owing to the difficulty in finding anyone capable of undertaking the work, and the even greater difficulty in chartering a ship to take the cement and other building materials to the islands. It should be stated, therefore, that even if no means can be found of overcoming these difficulties it might still be possible to take settlers, in small batches at a time, to the islands, as it would appear to be reasonably certain that the well water, particularly on Sydney Island, is drinkable. The cisterns are only intended to be an emergency reserve against a possible failure in the well water supply and I personally doubt if they will ever have to be used.

4. His Honour has agreed that it would be far better if the construction of the cisterns were undertaken by Messrs. Burns, Philp and Co., Ltd., who have the necessary shipping facilities, and labourers already on the islands. Should this be impossible Mr. J.P. Jones of Hull Island might be willing to undertake the contract, with his labour, as an independent venture. Failing this, some contractor in Fiji or Samoa might consent to do the work.

Failing an outside contractor, it will be necessary for the local Public Works Department to attempt the work, although there are only two men on the local staff capable of undertaking it - Mr. D. Robertson, the Foreman of Works, and J. Pedro, a Senior Artisan. Mr. Pedro would appear to be specially suited, as he knows the local conditions, having spent many years on Sydney Island, and is especially good at working Gilbertese labour. His advice would be invaluable to the members of the first expedition in a variety of ways.

The only individual in the Colony outside the Public Works Department who could erect the cisterns is Mr. William Reiher, a half-caste living on Abemama Island. While I doubt if he would work for a salary of less than £300 per

annum it is suggested that, if necessary, the possibility might be considered of either putting him in charge of the work or of appointing him temporarily to the Public Works Department in substitution of whoever is seconded from the local staff.

5. In any case it is suggested that the Superintendent of Public Works should be requested to work out immediately full details of all materials required for the cisterns, including the landed cost at Ocean Island and alternatively at Tarawa. It would be possible then to order the materials without unnecessary delay should the Department have to undertake the work. A concrete mixer would be well worth the extra cost, especially as it could no doubt be sold to the Public Works Department at a second hand valuation at the conclusion of the work.

6. Should the Settlement Scheme be approved and it be impossible to get the work of cistern building done by an independent contractor it is suggested that a telegram should be sent immediately to the Sydney Agents ordering all materials. In the meantime Mr. Pedro could be detailed to build all the forms required, from materials already on the island, which would thus be ready by the time the cement and other items arrived. It would probably be best to land all material at Ocean Island, to avoid the heavy freight rates to Tarawa, and to require the chartered ship to call here to pick them up.

7. The only vessel that I know of which could undertake the work of carrying the cement and labourers to the Phoenix Group is the m.v. "Moana", owned by Messrs. Burns, Philp and Co., Ltd. I believe that the owners require £1,400 for the round voyage. This would appear to be a heavy charge but, as there is no competition, it is difficult to do anything in the matter unless the R.C.S. "Nimanoa" could undertake the work in instalments. At the same time it might be worth while

enquiring

enquiring whether any vessels exist in the other island groups, such as Fiji, Samoa, the Cook Islands, or Tahiti, who would do the work at a cheaper figure.

The Division of Land.

8. I have given very careful thought to the question of the division of land and the demarcation of boundaries and have come to the conclusion that the only practicable method of carrying out the work will be for me to proceed to the Group with a Cadet and a small party of Gilbertese led by three responsible leaders chosen from amongst the older generation. We could then mark out the lands and sink numbered pegs at each corner, the Cadet making a rough survey of the plots and their relative positions. Should this be done I consider that the services of a qualified surveyor will be quite unnecessary and would indeed hamper and delay the whole project, while any money saved on his salary will be needed to meet extra shipping charges and other expenses. I regret that I originally suggested that a qualified surveyor was desirable but at the time I had not worked out the system of numbered cement boundary pegs, which will solve any boundary difficulties better than any survey, however accurate, while it is proposed that in this case they should be supplemented by a rough sketch survey, which any of the three Cadets are capable of undertaking. I imagine, moreover, that anything like an accurate survey of say 1,000 lands would be a difficult undertaking which would take a very long time indeed, and throughout that period it would be necessary for myself and a party of Gilbertese to remain on the islands to point out the boundaries, thus resulting in the whole settlement scheme being unnecessarily delayed. I can give my personal assurance as Native Lands Commissioner that, should cement boundary pegs be employed, there would be very few, if any, boundary disputes in the future and certainly fewer than would be the case if a survey only was undertaken.

9. It is respectfully suggested that either Mr. E.R. Bevington or Mr. G.B. Gallagher would be competent to assist in the work of division and demarcation. In view, however, of Mr. Bevington's impending marriage Mr. Gallagher would appear to be the obvious choice. Should His Honour concur with this suggestion Mr. Gallagher should be instructed to hold himself in readiness for secondment at short notice. His secondment would be for a short period only and I would release him at the first opportunity. As already explained to His Honour I do not recommend that Mr. J.P. Jones should be put in charge of the work of division or demarcation.

10. Apart from Mr. Gallagher, it is proposed that the demarcation party should consist of the Lands Commission staff, under Ten Mautake, plus Ten Eritai, the Native Magistrate of Beru Island, and Teng Koata, the Native Magistrate of Onotoa Island, and two or three young men as workers. It is submitted that both these men can be spared from their substantive posts for a few months, the respective Chief Kaubure acting as Native Magistrates during their absence. It will be necessary for the R.C.S. "Nimanoa" to be detailed to take me to the Southern Gilberts to pick up the demarcation party as well as, possibly, the unskilled workers for the cistern building, and take us to Ocean Island or Tarawa to await the departure of the vessel for the Phoenix Group. Communication would be kept up with headquarters from the Phoenix Group via Canton Island, by means of the Lands Commission Teleradio set, thus enabling the "Nimanoa" to be sent to take the party from island to island as the work is completed.

Miscellaneous.

11. It is recommended that the Senior Medical Officer should be requested to supply a full set of drugs and minor surgical instruments, packed securely in a water-tight chest,
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to be under the charge of a Native Medical Practitioner who would accompany the expedition. The party is particularly liable to suffer from fish poisoning, dysentery, coral sores, and tropical ulcers. I would suggest that N.M.P. Tutu is specially suited to accompany an expedition of this nature, owing to his ability to rough it under any conditions and his gift of facing emergencies, and he is the only Native Medical Practitioner in whom I would have entire confidence under all circumstances.

12. The following are among the minor points which will have to be dealt with before the first expedition can leave for the Phoenix Group -

- (a) Purchase of rations for natives accompanying the expedition;
- (b) Two Ellice Islands canoes to be obtained and brought to Tarawa by Mr. Gallagher;
- (c) A compass and any other instruments required by Mr. Gallagher to be obtained;
- (d) Purchase of sufficient cement for the boundary pegs.

Summary of Recommendations.

Steps to be taken immediately.

- (1) The Superintendent of Public Works to be requested to prepare full details, including cost and freight, of the materials required for the cistern building;
- (2) Every endeavour to be made to ascertain whether, in the event of the scheme being approved, an independent contractor would undertake the building of the cisterns;
- (3) Failing an independent contractor, the freight or charter charges of any vessel willing to take the building materials to the Phoenix Group should be obtained.

Steps to be

Steps to be taken on receipt of approval of the Scheme. (Based on the assumption that the cistern building cannot be carried out by contract).

- (1) The m.v. "Moamo", or other vessel, to be chartered;
- (2) Materials for the cistern building, cement for the boundary pegs, and rations for the working party to be ordered;
- (3) Mr. Pedro to proceed with the construction of the necessary forms;
- (4) Myself to proceed south in the R.C.S. "Nimanoa" to pick up Mr. Gallagher, N.M.P. Tutu, and the labourers, etc.;
- (5) Mr Gallagher to procure two good Ellice Islands canoes;
- (6) The Senior Medical Officer to prepare the medical requisites;
- (7) Mr. G.B. Gallagher, N.M.P. Tutu, and Mr. J. Pedro to be seconded to the Settlement Scheme for the duration of the preliminary work.

13. In conclusion it must be emphasized that, once approval of the scheme has been received, the speed at which the work can be carried out will depend principally upon the arrangements that can be made for transport to the Phoenix Group. At the moment it would appear that we are entirely dependent on the m.v. "Moamo", which may not be in a position to undertake the work for some time. The cost of the scheme will, furthermore, depend largely on the charges made for shipping and here again we are dependent, as far as can be seen, on Messrs. Burns, Philp and Co., Ltd. This absence of competition may well result in the shipping charges being double the amount estimated.

(Signed). H. E. Maude.
