



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 July, 1983

Prime Minister

A.S.C. 1/7.

Dear Sir,

Thurston -
a sorry story
MF

Return of the Wilton and Bowman Families to the UK from the
the Falkland Islands

You will have seen Port Stanley telegram number 397 of 24 June recording the return of the Wilton and Bowman families to this country having failed in their projects to establish a bar/restaurant and a fish and chip van in the Falklands. The two families are due back on 3 July; we know that ITN plan to interview them after they have arrived.

ITN allege that the Wiltons claim not to have been properly briefed by the FCO before leaving for the Falklands. But we have heard separately that Mr Wilton's main attack is likely to be on the Falkland Islands Government for their treatment of his case.

The FCO's involvement has been limited to arranging passages for the two families and to putting them in touch with the Government Freight Agents over the shipment of the mobile snack bar. We were not consulted about the advisability of the two initiatives. The Wilton family's first contacts appear to have been with the Falkland Islands Office (the London office established by the Falkland Islands Association before the Falkland Islands Government Office (FIGO) opened) and with Mr Des Peck, the owner of the Philomel store in Port Stanley.

As you will have seen from the telegram, Mr Wilton applied to the Standing Finance Committee of the Falkland Islands Government for a loan (£20,000) to finance the establishment of a bar/restaurant. The application was referred back for more detailed information. We understand however that Mr Wilton will claim that he was simply told that he could re-apply. He is especially bitter about this as a similar application made by a Falkland Islands Government employee, a Mr Michael Rendall, was approved. Port Stanley telno 406 (enclosed) gives further background.

RESTRICTED



If, when the Wiltons return, their case is taken up in the media, we will draw on the points above as appropriate in response to criticisms of HMG.

Yours ever

J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

HL

4 July 1983

Thank you for your letter of 1 July about the return of the Wilton and Bowman families to the UK from the Falkland Islands.

The Prime Minister has noted this information and has commented that it is a sorry story.

JOHN COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RESTRICTED

NR

IMMEDIATE

27

FI/FCO 002/01

ADVANCE COPY

[Minimal]

FD

NEWS

FIGO

OO FCO

GRS 580

RESTRICTED

FROM PORT STANLEY 011300Z JUL 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 406 OF 1 JULY

YOUR TELNO 370: THE WILTONS AND THE BOWMANS

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

1. THE PARTNERS' APPLICATION FOR GOVERNMENT FINANCE APPARENTLY RESULTED FROM AN UNSOLICITED COMMENT BY A PWD EMPLOYEE THAT THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH COMPONENT PARTS LEFT OVER FROM THE BREWSTER CONTRACT TO BUILD TWO OR MORE COMPLETE HOUSES. IT SEEMS THAT THE PARTNERS ASSUMED THAT THESE MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM FORTHWITH AT LITTLE OR NO COST. IN FACT, THE COMPONENTS ARE THE PROPERTY OF HMG UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE CONTRACT IS COMPLETED, WHEN THEY BECOME THE PROPERTY OF FIG.

2. CONSEQUENTLY, EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NOT SFC AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED) REFERRED THE LOAN APPLICATION BACK FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE COST INCLUDING FREIGHT AND AVAILABILITY OF BREWSTER HOUSING AND PROJECTIONS OF THE FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF THE PARTNERS' PROPOSED ENTERPRISE. THIS WAS NOT FORTHCOMING AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PARTNERS DID NOT PURSUE THE MATTER FORMALLY WITH BREWSTERS' LOCAL MANAGER. MR RENDELL'S APPLICATION WAS FOR FINANCE FOR THE PURCHASE OF AN EXISTING AND FLOURISHING BUSINESS, THE MALVINA (NOW HARRIER) GUEST HOUSE. THE FREEHOLD OF THE PROPERTY ALONE REPRESENTED ADEQUATE SECURITY FOR THE LOAN, WHICH WAS APPROVED.

3. IT IS UNDERSTANDING IS THAT MR WILTON CAME TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS TO COMPLETE THE PURCHASE OF A LOCAL GENERAL STORE. HE SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED THAT THE PREMISES WERE NOT SUITABLE FOR HIS INTENDED PURPOSE AND SOUGHT ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION. HE WAS UNABLE TO IDENTIFY SUITABLE PREMISES - THERE IS A SEVERE SHORTAGE OF ACCOMMODATION, BOTH RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL, IN STANLEY - AND HE AND MR DOWMAN, HIS PARTNER, THEN CONSIDERED ACQUIRING TWO PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS FROM THE CONTRACTOR ENGAGED IN ERECTING 54 HOUSES AS PART OF HMG'S REHABILITATION PROGRAMME AND HAVING THEM ERECTED ON A SITE TO BE DECIDED UPON AS A RESTAURANT/PUBLIC HOUSE.

4. THE PARTNERS' APPLICATION FOR A GOVERNMENT LOAN FOR THIS PURPOSE WAS CONSIDERED BY EXCO BUT WAS REFERRED BACK FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE AVAILABILITY AND COST, INCLUDING COST OF SHIPMENT, OF THE BUILDINGS, AND PROJECTIONS ON THE VIABILITY OF THE PROPOSED ENTERPRISE. THIS WAS NOT FORTHCOMING: IN FACT FIG HAD NO FURTHER COMMUNICATION ON THIS MATTER FROM MR WILTON OR MR BOWMAN BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE.

5. FIG NATURALLY REGRETS THAT MR WILTON AND MR BOWMAN'S ORIGINAL PLANS DID NOT COME TO FRUITION AND THAT THEY FELT COMPELLED TO RETURN TO BRITAIN. IT IS A PITY THAT THEY DID NOT SEEK APPROPRIATE ADVICE BEFORE EMBARKING ON THEIR VENTURE. FIG AND FIGO STRONGLY ADVISE THAT ANYONE PLANNING TO SET UP A BUSINESS REQUIRING A SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT IN THE FALKLANDS SHOULD PAY AN EXPLORATORY VISIT BEFORE COMMITTING HIMSELF.

6. IN RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS ON MR RENDELL'S LOAN, PLEASE REPLY TO THE EFFECT THAT IT IS NOT FIG'S POLICY TO DIVULGE DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT LOANS., WHICH ARE DECIDED UPON IN THE LIGHT OF ALL THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT REGARDING HIS FINANCIAL STANTING, AVAILAILE COLLATERAL AND THE PROJECTED VIABILITY OF THE ENTERPRISE. FIG'S FINANCES FOR THIS PURPOSE ARE VERY LIMITED AND ONLY THOSE APPLICATIONS WHICH SATISFY THE MOST DEMANDING CRITERIA CAN BE MET.

7. WE ARE UNABLE TO TRACE ANY RECORD OF HAVING ASKED FOR PASSAGES FOR WILTONS AND GRATEFUL YOU DELETE QUOTE AT THE REQUEST OF FIG UNQUOTE IN PARA 3 OF YOUR TUR.

8. GRATEFUL YOU COPY MY TEL 397 AND THIS ONE TO ADRIAN MONK, FIGO.

GRS

RESTRICTED

360

RESTRICTED

FROM PORT STANLEY 241420Z JUN 83

TO ROUTINE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 397 OF 24 JUNE

THE WILTONS AND BOWMANS

1. YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE WILTONS LEFT THE UK IN FEBRUARY IN A BLAZE OF PUBLICITY AND WERE DESCRIBED AS THE FIRST NEW IMMIGRANTS. THEY WERE LATER JOINED BY THE BOWMANS, THEIR BUSINESS PARTNERS. THEY ARE ALL RETURNING TO UK ON THE UGANDA WHICH DEPARTED 23 JUNE, SOMEWHAT DISILLUSIONED.
2. IT HAS BEEN AN UNHAPPY SAGA. THE WILTONS HAD NOT, AS HAD BEEN IMPLIED, BOUGHT THE PHILOMEL STORE SIGHT UNSEEN AND, AFTER TAKING ONE LOOK, DECIDED IT WAS NOT UP TO THEIR REQUIREMENTS. THE PRICE WAS TOO HIGH AND THE PREMISES TOO SMALL FOR THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE, A BAR/RESTAURANT. HOWEVER, AFTER MAKING UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS OVER SOME WEEKS TO FIND ALTERNATIVE COMMERCIAL PREMISES THEY APPARENTLY RECONSIDERED THE PHILOMEL STORE BUT AT THE LAST MOMENT AGAIN REJECTED IT.
3. THEIR FINAL THROW WAS A SCHEME TO PURCHASE TWO BREWSTER HOUSES AND JOIN THEM TOGETHER AS A RESTAURANT/PUB TO BE CALLED THE THATCHER INN. THE PARTNERSHIP SUBMITTED AN APPLICATION FOR A SUBSTANTAIL LOAN FROM FIG. THIS WAS CONSIDERED BY THE SFC WHO REFERRED IT BACK FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON COSTINGS AND AVAILABILITY OF BREWSTER HOUSES. THIS WAS NOT FORTHCOMING AND THE NEXT WE HEARD WAS THAT THE PARTNERSHIP HAD BOOKED THEIR PASSAGES HOME.
4. THERE MAY WELL BE ADVERSE PUBLICITY WHEN THEY ARRIVE IN UK BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT:
 - A) THE WILTONS DID NOT SEEK ADVICE FROM ANYONE HERE WHO WAS QUALIFIED TO GIVE IT BEFORE COMING.
 - B) HAD THEY DONE SO, WE WOULD HAVE ADVISED THEM THAT THE PHILOMEL STORE WAS, AS THEY FOUND OUT TOO LATE, UNSUITABLE FOR THEIR PURPOSE AS WELL AS TOO EXPENSIVE. (THE OWNER, DES PECK, HAS BEEN TRYING TO SELL IT FOR YEARS AT AN INFLATED PRICE).
 - C) ONCE HERE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, DEVELOPMENT OFFICER AND OTHERS GAVE ALL THE ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE THEY PROPERLY COULD.
 - D) THE FISH AND CHIP VAN THE PARTNERSHIP IMPORTED IS UP FOR SALE. ITS CONDITION IS DEPLORABLE AND WE DOUBT WHETHER THE BOARD OF HEALTH WOULD HAVE PASSED IT AS FIT FOR SERVICE.

RESTRICTED

(E) THE

RESTRICTED

E) THE WILTON FAMILY HAVE BEEN BOARDING WITH DES PECK SINCE ARRIVING AND HAVE APPARENTLY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO PAY. PECK IS CONSIDERING LEGAL ACTION.

F) THERE IS APPARENTLY A CONTAINER LOAD OF BAR EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE EN ROUTE., THE PARTNERS HAVE LEFT INSTRUCTIONS THAT IT SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE UK.

5. THIS RATHER SORRY STORY REINFORCES OUR VIEW THAT ANYONE PLANNING TO SET UP A BUSINESS REQUIRING A SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT IN THE FALKLANDS SHOULD PAY AN EXPLORATORY VISIT BEFORE COMMITTING HIMSELF.

BAKER

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

FALKLAND ISLANDS GENERAL

FCO

FID

CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

FALKLAND ISLANDS

2

RESTRICTED