

Australia



Agent General for Queensland,
392 & 393, Strand,
London, WC2R 0LZ

31st January, 1980.

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am directed by the Agent General to say that he was glad to receive your letter this morning confirming an appointment for the Premier of Queensland, the Honourable Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, to call on the Prime Minister on Wednesday, 13th February, at 1000 at 10 Downing Street. I know he will be most grateful to her for sparing him as much as half an hour and will be delighted to have the opportunity of calling.

Enclosed is some background information about Mr. Bjelke-Petersen. If you need anything further please do not hesitate to let Miss Penny know.

yours sincerely
[Signature]

Agent General.

Miss C. Stephens,
Office of the Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

BIOGRAPHY
OF
THE HON. JOHANNES BJELKE-PETERSEN
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND

A. POLITICAL

- 1947 Elected to Legislative Assembly as Country (now National) Party member for Nanango. This later became Barambah Constituency in a redistribution of electoral boundaries.
- Ten years in opposition to Labour Party Government.
- 1963 Appointed Minister for Works and Housing, which portfolio later included Police and Aboriginal and Island Affairs.
- 1968 Deputy Leader of Parliamentary Country Party.
- 1968 Thirty-first Premier of Queensland.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen's government has been in continuous office since 1957 in coalition with the Liberal Party. Both parties are conservative. He is now the longest serving Premier in the history of the Queensland Parliament.

B. PERSONAL

The Premier was born on January 13th, 1911 at Dannevirke, New Zealand, son of Carl George Bjelke-Petersen, a Danish-born Lutheran church pastor.

He arrived in Queensland in 1913 when his parents settled in the South Burnett district and he still farms in the area, which is in his constituency. His farming interests are Herefords, peanuts, grain and horticultural crops such as avocados.

Before entering politics after the war, he also engaged in contract harvesting and mechanical clearing of new land, later building up a successful fleet of crop spraying and crop seeding light aircraft. He is a qualified pilot and still uses his own aircraft for travelling about Queensland to political engagements.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen is a practising Lutheran churchman and speaks Danish. In earlier years he was a keen tennis player.

In 1952 he married Miss Florence Gilmour, of Brisbane, who is herself about to enter politics on her own account for the first time, having recently obtained National Party nomination for the next federal Senate election. They have a son and three daughters.

FILE

NR

BF for file 12-2-79

31 January 1980

Visit by the Premier of Queensland

You wrote to me on 28 January about Mr. Bjelke-Petersen's visit to London next month. The Prime Minister has agreed to receive Mr. Bjelke-Petersen for a brief courtesy call on Wednesday, 13 February. We are in touch direct with Agent-General, Queensland House. I do not think that any brief, beyond the personality note that you have already sent me, will be required.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

R. M. J. Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Jf.

~~B/F 11.2.80~~

Flx/16

30 January 1980

The Prime Minister is to see the Premier of Queensland, The Honourable Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, on Wednesday, 13 February at 1000 hours.

I would be grateful if you could let us have a brief to reach this office not later than Monday, 11 February.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Malcolm Adams, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

25

flex 8

30 January 1980

Further to my conversation with Miss Perry this morning, I am writing to confirm that the Prime Minister is looking forward to seeing your Premier, The Hon. Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, on Wednesday, 13 February at 1000 at 10 Downing Street. As her diary is rather over-crowded for this period, I am afraid it will only be possible for her to see the Premier for half an hour. Your office is kindly going to let me have any background information you have on Mr. Bjelke-Petersen.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

The Honourable Sir Wallace Raw.

~~MR. ALEXANDER~~

Paul

I am afraid I failed over the Premier for Queensland and have arranged for him to come and see the Prime Minister on Wednesday 13 February at 1000. I have confirmed this appointment with the Agent General and requested briefing from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

e.s.

30 January 1980

RESTRICTED



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

28 January 1980

Wed 13th

Dear Michael,

Visit by Premier of Queensland

Mr Bjelke-Petersen, the Premier of the State of Queensland, is making a private visit to London from 13-16 February to receive the Freedom of the City of London. He has asked informally, through Sir Walter Rae, the Agent-General in London, if he might pay a short, courtesy call on the Prime Minister on 15 February. Mr Bjelke-Petersen, whom I understand the Prime Minister may know, made a similar request last July, but in the event no meeting took place (Stephen Wall's letter of 9 July 1979 to Bryan Cartledge refers.)

As on the previous occasion, Lord Carrington sees no grounds for recommending such a call, although it would of course be much appreciated by Mr Bjelke-Petersen if the Prime Minister could see him briefly.

/ I attach a personality note.

Yours truly
Rodney Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON

RESTRICTED

CONFIDENTIAL

BJELKE PETERSEN, THE HON JOHANNES
(Proposed revision of Personality Report - October 1978)

Premier of Queensland since 1968.

Born Dannevirke, New Zealand 1911 of Danish parents: father Lutheran pastor. Came to Queensland as a boy. Educated at Taabinga Village State School, Kingaroy. MLA for Nanangro 1947-50 and Barambah since 1950. State Minister for Works and Housing 1963, and later for Police and Aboriginal Affairs. Leader of the Queensland Country Party (since 1974 National Party), Premier and Minister of State Development since August 1968.

The only National Party State Premier, arguably the best known and certainly the most controversial State Premier nationally, he is a conservative man leading a generally conservative state. His family background, limited formal education and personal struggle to overcome polio in early childhood are perhaps an indication to his toughness, single mindedness and fundamentalism. He is a somewhat enigmatic and contradictory character. His hard line opposition to many aspects of trade unionism and the civil rights movement are undoubtedly dogmatic; he is probably more frequently than is true regarded as a dictator over his Cabinet. These considerations contrast strongly with his personal kindness and courtesy and he can be modest sometimes as his personal opponents find him arrogant at others.

With all this, he is a politician of great shrewdness and tactical skill with a thorough grasp of the traditional attitudes of the ordinary Queenslanders towards public affairs. His political opinions are clear and forthright. Even when wrong, he gathers support for not being mealy-mouthed and for standing up for Queensland. This helps to explain why early in 1979 he will have achieved an ambition by becoming the longest serving Queensland Premier. He has informally declared his intention of carrying on to contest the next State Elections.

He sets great store by the Monarchy, the monarchical system and the British connection, partly it is to be supposed out of tradition but more practically because he regards them as Queensland's main protection against encroachment upon State's rights by a centralist Federal Government - of what political flavour. He worked closely with Mr Fraser towards ousting the Whitlam Government but has resisted attempts by Mr Fraser's Government to gain a greater say in State Aboriginal affairs. His "States-rights-ism" and this positive personality and style strongly evoke either support or opposition and are significant reasons for his public prominence. In personal conversation he is quiet and agreeable, although attempts to initiate a discussion sometimes lead him to take off on to another theme. Not a good public speaker, but his personality and conviction help to put over the forthright and fundamentalist views which he expresses.

In office, his personality accentuates and dramatizes the tensions which always exist between the National Party and the Liberal Party in Coalition - to the delight of the media. It would be mistaken to conclude that the Premier does not enjoy the support in Government of a fair proportion of the Liberal membership, but his domination of the Cabinet has made it difficult for his Liberal partners to square the circle of preserving Cabinet loyalty and working to become the dominant partner themselves by increasing their voting strength. In 1978 the accusations that he had used his position for personal gain became louder.

/In

Australia 1



- 1. Miss ~~Stephens~~ — (agree *cf.*)
- 2. Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

I think we should
 regret on your behalf, whilst expressing
 the hope that you may see him at
 the Garden Party tomorrow

9 July 1979

Dear Bryan,

John
9/7

You may wish to know that Mr Bjelke-Petersen, the State Premier of Queensland in Australia, is visiting the United Kingdom from 9-13 July. The Queensland Agent General (Sir W Rae) has asked informally if Mr Bjelke-Petersen could pay a short courtesy call on the Prime Minister, whom he apparently met in Australia. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office sees no policy grounds for recommending such a call, although it would, obviously, be much appreciated by the Queensland authorities if the Prime Minister agreed.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen will be seeing Sir Derek Ezra and a Department of Energy Minister, although his visit is basically a private one. He will be at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party on 10 July.

--- I attach a personality note.

Yours ever,
Steph
 (J S Wall)

*Will be here
 for 15 mins &
 we can find 15-
 mins.*

B G Cartledge Esq
 10 Downing Street

*Not possible to
 find 15 minutes
 so refused.
 cf.
 10/7.*

CONFIDENTIAL

5 BJELKE-PETERSEN, THE HON JOHANNES

Premier of Queensland since 1968.

Born Dannevirke, New Zealand 1911 of Danish parents. Came to Queensland as a boy. Educated at Taabinga Village State School, Kingaroy. Father was a Lutheran pastor. MLA for Nanango 1947-50 and for Barambah from 1950. State Minister for Works and Housing, and later for Police and Aboriginal Affairs, 1963. Leader of the Queensland Country Party (since 1974 renamed National Party), Premier and Minister of State Development since August 1968.

The only National Party Premier in Australia, and arguably the best known State Premier in national terms, he is a conservative man leading a generally conservative state. A tough anti-unionist and ill-disposed to civil rights movements and other such manifestations which he associates with the left of the political spectrum. Reputedly an 'iron man' and rather dogmatic in his views in Cabinet he is, nevertheless, an extremely kind and courteous man. Sets great store by the Monarchy, the monarchical system and the British connection, all of which he regards as being Queensland's main protection against attempts at encroachment upon States' rights by any centralist-inclined Federal Government - of whatever political flavour.

Worked closely with Mr Fraser towards ousting the Whitlam Government, assisting materially by appointing against convention, a non-labor man to fill a casual Senate vacancy after the death of an ALP Senator: this enabled the opposition to defer Supply in the Senate.

Relations with his Coalition partners are usually tense, although the electoral pact continues to hold up and Liberal parliamentarians support the coalition despite increasing pressures from rank and file to distance the party from the Premier's authoritarian views and style.

"Joh", as he is known, evokes strong, even passionate support and opposition. Much admired in Queensland for standing up for his state, even when wrong. Hated by many people of liberal inclinations and regarded by Australians outside Queensland as a maverick beyond comprehension but who has to be treated with caution and respect because of his determination and toughness. In personal conversation he is surprisingly quiet, gentle and agreeable.

Has agricultural and grazing interests near Kingaroy. Flies his own plane. An active member of the Lutheran Church, he still teaches at Sunday School. A quiet and retiring personality. Non-drinker and non-smoker.

Visited London June 1973 and January 1975 to discuss States' rights with UK Ministers; and July 1976 to examine trade possibilities.

Married 1952 Miss Florence Gilmour. When not required to attend official engagements she prefers to stay at Kingaroy and handle constituency matters. A confident public speaker. Lutheran. 1 son, 3 daughters.