

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

La/Co

Mr Stanley Newens (Harlow): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will introduce more rigorous conditions on the supply of arms and military equipment to military regimes in the light of the experience of supplying Argentina.

No W82MR DOUGLAS HURD

The Export of Goods (Control) Order already provides for the licensing of all exports of arms and military equipment. Such licences are only granted after strict scrutiny by both the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence. The Export of Goods (Control) Order also provides for the revocation of licences once they have been issued. This provision has now been implemented in the case of goods destined for Argentina.

7 April 1982

C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether any licences granted by the Argentine government for oil and gas exploration cross into Sovereign areas of the Falkland Islands; and what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards any such licences.

No 179W

MR CRANLEY ONSLOW

Not as far as we are aware. However in 1980, the Argentine authorities invited tenders for an exploration of an area known as the Magallanes Este Block, part of which lies beyond the median line between the Falkland Islands and Argentina. In the absence of an agreement of a delimitation of the continental shelf between the Falkland Islands and Argentina neither country would be entitled to exercise continental shelf rights beyond the median line. We protested then to the Argentines about the tender and made our position known to the oil industry.

7 April 1982

- C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether any licences for oil and gas exploration have been granted by Her Majesty's Government in offshore areas of the Falkland Islands.

No 178W

MR CRANLEY ONSLOW

No.



7 April 1982

- C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether there are licensing arrangements for exploration for oil and natural gas on the Continental Shelf of the Falkland Islands both in the Malinas Basin and the Burdwood Bank.

No 177W

MR CRANLEY ONSLOW

Under the terms of the Continental Shelf Convention of 1958 and the applicable rules of international law, the United Kingdom has exclusive jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf areas adjacent to the Falkland Islands. Certain powers to licence exploration and exploitation are conferred on the Governor of the Falkland Islands under the Falkland Islands (Continental Shelf) Order in Council 1950 and the Falkland Islands Mining (Mineral Oil) Regulations of 1964.

7 April 1982

C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether a median line has been established between the Argentine and the Falkland Islands.

No 176W

MR CRANTLEY ONSLOW

As a geographical fact, there is of course already a median line between Argentina and the Falkland Islands. But no agreement has been reached between the United Kingdom and Argentine Governments on the delimitation of the zones within which each enjoys the economic rights of a coastal state in that area. In the absence of an agreed boundary, neither party, in Her Majesty's Government's view, would be entitled to exercise coastal state rights beyond the median line.

7 April 1982

- C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many companies have shown interest or made representation to Her Majesty's Government for exploration or prospecting for oil and gas in and around the Falkland Islands.

No 174W

MR CRANLEY ONSLOW

A number of companies have expressed an interest in the hydrocarbon potential of the continental shelf adjacent to the Falkland Islands. There have been two seismic surveys of parts of the continental shelf authorised by Her Majesty's Government and carried out by American companies in 1978.

These reports are available to other international companies on a commercial basis.



6 April 1982

- C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what is the current position of the following locations of the British Antarctic Survey: Signy Faraday, Rothera and Halley and the number of staff engaged at each site; and whether there has been any evidence of intervention by the Argentine Government.

No 152W

MR FRANCIS PYM

There has been no evidence of intervention by the Argentine Government at any of the British Antarctic Survey stations in the Antarctic Treaty Area. All stations are continuing to pursue their normal scientific research programmes. There are 13 men at Signy, 13 at Faraday, 13 at Rothera and 19 at Halley.

6 April 1982

- C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what is the position of the British Antarctic Surveys Establishment in Grytviken and Bird Island in South Georgia; and how many staff are employed on each site.

No 151W

MR FRANCIS PYM

At the time of the Argentine invasion of South Georgia there were 13 British Antarctic Survey personnel at Grytviken, 4 at Bird Island, 4 at the Lyell Glacier Hut, 2 at Schlieper Bay and 3 together with 2 wild life television film producers at St Andrew's Bay. The position of those at Grytviken is not yet clear. Those at other places, according to our latest information, are safe and well. Further information is being sought urgently in order to arrange for the safe return of all concerned.



6 April 1982

- C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the British claim to the sovereignty of the British Antarctic Territory is in land dependent upon the Antarctic Treaty of December 1959; and whether it is the position of Her Majesty's Government that the Argentine as a contracting party has observed the terms of that treaty.

No 150W

MR FRANCIS PYM

British sovereignty in the British Antarctic Territory is dependent on discovery and acts of administration. It is not dependent on the Antarctic Treaty although Article IV of that Treaty protects our position from erosion by the acts of others as long as the Treaty is in force. Inspections carried out under the Treaty support the conclusion that Argentina is observing the terms of the Treaty.

6 April 1982

C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what is the extent of the land tenure held by the Coalite Group Ltd. in the Falkland Islands; and what is the number of people employed by the Falkland Island Co. and other local subsidiaries.

No 143W

MR FRANCIS PYM

The Falkland Island Company, a subsidiary of the Coalite Group Ltd, own some 45% of the farmland. Falkland Island Company's employees in Falkland Islands number 240.

6 April 1982

C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, of the present population of the Falkland Islands' dependencies prior to the recent occupation, what percentage were Argentine.

No 142W

MR FRANCIS PYM

The population of the Falkland Island Dependencies is as follows. There are 28 in South Georgia (26 British Antarctic Survey staff plus two wildlife television film producers). There is an illegal all the year round presence of some 11 Argentines in the scientific station on Southern Thule. The population of the Falkland Islands themselves at the last census was 1813 of whom 30 were Argentine residents.



6 April 1982

C Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the dispute over the Falkland Islands' dependencies has been referred to the International Court of Justice; and whether the Argentine was prepared to submit to the court's jurisdiction.

No 141W

MR FRANCIS PYM

In 1947 and subsequently the British Government offered to submit the dispute over the Dependencies to the International Court of Justice. In 1955 the Government approached the Court unilaterally. Argentina has refused to submit to the Court's jurisdiction on this issue.

6 April 1982

Mr T H H Skeet (Bedford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the South Sandwich Islands have been claimed by the Argentine Government; and whether they have in fact occupied any of the Islands.

No 140W

MR FRANCIS PYM

Argentina has claimed sovereignty over the South Sandwich Islands (of which Southern Thule is one) for more than 30 years. An Argentine scientific station has been on Southern Thule since the end of 1976. We have no doubts about British sovereignty and our legal position is fully protected. There are no British inhabitants on the islands. The current situation there is not clear.