

2<sup>nd</sup> N.D. Ing,

12<sup>th</sup> Decemr, 1975.

LONDON SW1H 9NN, England.

Dear Mr Ing,

Ocean Island Phosphates: Royalty Action

I feel ashamed at not having replied before to your two letters T&M71/948/NDI of the 21st and 27th November. My excuse is that after writing to you I had to go into purdah in order to finish my work on Sabatier's Sous l'equateur du Pacifique for the Oxford University Press.

As a result of years of writing for a living I have found that unless one is a genius one has to live in seclusion and work to a rigid 9-7 schedule (including Sundays and holidays) if one is to get anywhere. Then when the particular job is done I come up for air and tackle the accumulated correspondence. Naturally anything urgent is answered immediately but once the thread of continuity is broken it may take a day of agonizing over a blank page to get back to immersion in another culture and era.

I was sorry to hear that Mr Price was laid up and trust that by now he is firing on all cylinders again. We read in the papers that the first case is over: let us pray that the second will take fully as long, for I have no desire to see the shores of England until March, or preferably April. The climate here suits me perfectly, for it is just over 100°F. outside at the moment; and Ocean Island would seem like Greenland in comparison.

It was indeed kind of you to send me an Application for Temporary Membership Form for the Royal Commonwealth Society and I am returning it through the High Commission, duly completed. I realized that we should have to become members to stay there, because we used the place a lot when we were last in England (especially the library) and were only able to do so because we were then members of the Canberra branch of the Society. When we retired, however, and decided that we should not be visiting England again, we let our membership lapse.

If you would be so kind as to sponsor us I should be most grateful. It might help that we are former members and are still Life Members of the Overseas League which, however, is too far away from the Strand. Anyway Paddy Macdonald is at home in the Commonwealth Club and is, I think rightly, set on us staying there; and you being a member too is a most pleasing surprise and added attraction. Last time we seemed to meet most of our ex-Colonial Service friends there; though many will by now be dead.

As regards the transcripts, whatever you are able to do will be fine by me. I appreciate the difficulty in obtaining the items mentioned in your (2) and (3) and shall lose no sleep if they cannot be procured. My main anxiety is to be sufficiently au fait with what has transpired in both cases to enable me to answer any questions put in examination or cross-examination reasonably intelligently. Presumably, however, we shall be fully briefed as to the tenor of the arguments advanced by the plaintiffs and defendents on our arrival (when, however, I shall not have my books and papers to refer to but merely my memory, which grows more hazy the older I get).

No doubt I shall hear from Richard Sands in due course, or else Gavin Hewitt will be back again to take over: he has always appeared to know the Banaban business from A to Z.

We get photocopies of the newspaper cuttings on the two actions and the independence issue from a kind friend at Australia House and I must say that they are pretty biassed in favour of the Banabans. I wonder that the Press is able to print such tendentious and inaccurate material

on an action still sub judice; some of it appears to be merely transcribed from the hand-outs of the Banaban public relations team, whom I'm bound to say seem on the ball. Its a pity that the B.G. don't employ someone to write up the real facts.

Tomorrow we go to vote (now become a six-monthly exercise in this country) but as the Liberals represent big business and Labour the trade unions the ordinary middle-class citizen has little choice between the two evils. If voting were not compulsory people would stay away in droves.

Yours sincerely,

*Leam*