

● PSF

Virgin Islands

What to do -
I can't ask
Jakes again
missy

CABLE ADDRESS "ATENT"
TELEPHONE KIRKLAND 6636



file personal
PSF: Virgin Islands

EUROPE — ORIENT
NORTH CAPE CRUISES
BERMUDA — CALIFORNIA

ATLAS ENTERPRISE TRAVEL COMPANY

1374 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

J. FORBES AMORY, PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON ADDRESS
2007 "EYE" St., N. W.,
Apartment 4.
October 12, 1938.

RE: VIRGIN ISLANDS

Dear Eleanor:

I sincerely meant it when I added in my "BIRTHDAY TELEGRAM" to you yesterday that you are one of the best friends I have ever had. As I told Franklin at Hyde Park, the week after his last Inauguration, "I am certainly looking forward to the time when he is no longer President so that I can drop in on you all, like old times."

What I am writing to you about is the Virgin Islands, knowing that you have been there yourself and are interested in one of their craft industries.

Thanks to Jimmy, I received a temporary appointment in the P.W.A. last July and promptly got ill again with that same threatened pneumonia over my old war wound. However, I am glad to say that I got back on my feet again and love both the work and associations down here.

However, the doctors say: "a mild climate is very important for this winter," so, added to that fact and realizing the revenue that could be secured for the Virgin Islands from tourist trade, I am hopeful of getting Franklin to send me there this winter to study and make a report on the CRUISE SHIPS scheduled for this coming season.

There are eleven cruise boats stopping there between December 1st and April 1st. These include the Kungsholm, Acquitania, Statendam, Georgic and the Nieu Amsterdam, all of which will carry approximately 500 passengers a trip.

The unfortunate part is that these ships are going to remain for only a few hours, and not long enough to be of any financial benefit to the Islands. Apparently, there are two reasons

for this. First, because the Virgin Islands have not been put on the map; and, second, because at the present time, except for the hotel and native craft work for sale, there are no inducements now to attract the tourists and induce them to want to stay longer.

I saw Franklin three weeks ago at Hyde Park, at which time he asked me to get the enclosed report from Thomas Cook, in which they state that 5,000 visitors a year could result from the improvements they suggest. Through the kindness of Missy, I got this original report to Franklin and he accordingly sent back word for me to see Secretary Ickes.

This I did, but under rather unfortunate circumstances, for although Miss Tully called up for the appointment, he entirely misinterpreted my visit and looked on me as some ambitious young P.W.A. clerk. However, the Secretary did point out that, due to the lack of collateral which the Virgin Islands could not offer, P.W.A. money therefore could not be used.

If Federal funds are out of the question, it seems to me that the next best thing to do would be to interest PRIVATE CAPITAL. However, to do this, I sincerely feel it is important for some one to be sent down to the Virgin Islands officially, not only to study the present situation, but to have a definite report which one could use as a background in arousing the necessary interest for private capital.

Therefore, Eleanor, would you be good enough to read the attached memorandum I have prepared for Franklin and if you think it is practical, would you like to present it to him for me. On the other hand, your having been to the Virgin Islands and knowing the situation down there may make you feel that my plan is impractical, and if you do think so would you then be kind enough to drop me a line to my Washington address, so that I will give up the idea.

I tried unsuccessfully to see Franklin when I went up to Poughkeepsie last Sunday to put my plan to him in person, and not having heard from Missy since then as to whether he could see me down here, I turn to you, for which please forgive me, knowing how busy you are.

With my usual grateful thanks,

Affectionately yours,

P. Tabu Bimery

P.S. Unless it could be an Executive Order direct from Franklin, I do not feel that the trip down there would carry enough weight to accomplish the purpose desired.

CABLE ADDRESS "ATENT"
TELEPHONE KIRKLAND 8636



ATLAS ENTERPRISE TRAVEL COMPANY
1374 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

J. FORBES AMORY, PRESIDENT

EUROPE — ORIENT
NORTH CAPE CRUISES
BERMUDA — CALIFORNIA

PSF: Virgin Islands

WASHINGTON ADDRESS
2007 Eye St., N.W.,
Apartment 4.
October 12, 1938

Subject: V I R G I N I S L A N D S

To: President Franklin D. Roosevelt

From: J. Forbes Amory

At the suggestion of The President, the writer interviewed Secretary Ickes on September 22, following the report received from Thomas Cook on September 20, (returned herewith).

The Secretary pointed out to the writer that P.W.A. funds were out of the question for carrying out the ideas expressed in the Cook report, due to the fact that the Virgin Islands could offer no collateral.

As an alternative, the writer suggests securing "Private Capital" to further the work which would bring in revenue to the Islands from the 5000 annual tourists that Thomas Cook guarantees.

The writer takes the liberty to suggest that if The President would be willing to appoint, through an Executive Order, some one to go there this winter and work in cooperation with the Governor and the eleven cruise ships which are now scheduled for merely a three or four hour stop, that such an official investigation would give the needed background for interesting private capital.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Forbes Amory

J. Forbes Amory

Forwarded to The President
through the kindness of
Mrs. Roosevelt.

PSF: Virgin Islands

To President Franklin D. Roosevelt

From J. Forbes Amory

Subject CONCERNING THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

The attached letter is from the President of Thos. Cook & Son. He says St. Thomas has the advantage of safe anchorage for very large ships - docking facilities for ships of 20,000 tons registered. It has colorful scenery, the right climate all year, and especially for winter visitors. Also excellent beach facilities are waiting developments, and a good hotel.

He states there is an opportunity to build a good reputation and subsequent popularity resulting in at least five thousand visitors in one season.

He suggests -

Building a colony of cottages

Building bath houses - 150

Building a restaurant - 300 capacity, with music, dancing and colorful beach shelters.

Building a nine hole golf course (to be extended into eighteen holes)

Supplying five fishing boats

Supplying more modern automobiles.

With such attractions Thos. Cook & Son,
Inc. promise their interest and cooperation,
and if quick action in this connection is taken
St. Thomas could still be included in the winter
1938-1939 cruises.

J. Furber Emery.

2007 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

Submitted
September 20, 1938.

THOS. COOK & SON - WAGONS-LITS INC.

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SOUTH AMERICA

Santiago.	Santiago.
Bartoche.	Lima.
Buenos Aires.	Rio de Janeiro.
	Sao Paulo.

587 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

September 17th,
1938

Mr. J. Forbes Amory,
2007 Eye Street, N. W.,
Washington, D. C.

ST. THOMAS, VIRGIN ISLANDS

Dear Mr. Amory:

I have not visited the Island, therefore I shall give you my own impressions - why the Island is not popular - and a digest of suggestions which occur to me after consulting our men who have visited the Island recently.

We recently were concerned with the itineraries for two cruise ships to visit South America next Summer. All passengers would be residents of the United States. The organizers could have included St. Thomas instead of either one of two other Islands. Why did they miss it? The answer is - Reputation of poor sightseeing facilities and amenities ... a small area - and a one street town. In general not comparable in these items with other Islands along the route.

What do we think could be done about it?

1. First improve the facilities, then impress upon Cruise Operators the changes which are being made.
2. Plans for the Winter 1938/9 Cruise operations are well advanced and quick action must be taken if St. Thomas is to be featured in their itineraries.
3. Assuming that St. Thomas may always lack some of the attractions of other Islands, meet that situation by inducing Cruise Operators to make the Island their first port of call. After a few days at sea any colorful Island is a welcome attraction, and while subsequent ports may provide greater glamour, the first Island always leaves a good impression on a large number of passengers.

4. Build up:

- a - The motor car facilities - There are now about 50 or 60 cars - many of them not comparable in quality or organization with vehicles available in other Islands.
- b - Improve the bathing facilities. There are now two beaches available - one where bathers use the bushes as dressing rooms - the other a club with restricted accommodation. There is need for facilities to entertain 500 to 600 landing from a cruise ship - say 150 bath houses - a restaurant to serve 300 luncheons at each service - music - dancing - colorful beach shelters - etc.
- c - A 9 hole golf course on a property which will allow extension to 18 holes later if desired.
- d - Five fishing boats - fully serviced for the visitor who arrives with no equipment.
- e - Cottages to be built, serviced by and adjoining the Bluebeard Hotel.

The Island already shows the following advantages:

- a - Safe anchorage for very large ships. Docking facilities for ships of 20,000 tons Register.
- b - Colorful scenery.
- c - A good hotel.
- d - Beach facilities awaiting development.
- e - The right climate - especially for winter visitors.

We do not consider that St. Thomas can at once compete with the long established reputation of the other resort Islands.

There is an opportunity to build a good reputation and subsequent popularity by presenting an enjoyable visit to say 500 passengers per cruise ship - and during one season that could reach at least 5,000 visitors - Estimate that a percentage of them would carry home a wish to return and a speaking recommendation to their friends.

We do not visualize St. Thomas as a possible competitor to the attractions of Cuba (Havana). Puerto Rico is the more logical Island for that development.

If the attractions of the Island can be improved along the lines suggested - we can promise our interest and cooperation. We believe that this could be effective

Mr. J. Forbes Amory

-5-

September 17th, 1936

in connection with the two Cruises to South America mentioned above.

Hoping our suggestions may be of assistance to you,

Yours very truly,

W. S. White

President

WHW:LB

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 13, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

ADMIRAL BEARDALL:

Take up with O.N.I. and F.B.I.

F.D.R.

PSF: Virgin Islands
Folder

GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

CHARLOTTE AMALIE, ST. THOMAS

January 6, 1942

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I would feel derelict in my duty were I not to call to your personal attention certain facts and circumstances concerning the alleged disappearance of two British ships, the "Proteus" and the "Nereus", which left St. Thomas on November 23 and December 10, respectively, destined for Portland, Maine. These ships each carried upwards of 13,000 tons of bauxite, which were the two largest cargoes of this valuable aluminum ore ever to be shipped from this port. As you know, most of the bauxite from South America is trans-shipped here at St. Thomas to the Aluminum Company of Canada.

The last few weeks it has been rumored in St. Thomas that these two ships were missing. The Resident Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation felt that, inasmuch as it was a naval matter, he had no jurisdiction and could make no investigation. I, therefore, interviewed the British Consul and the British Resident Naval Officer and Consular Shipping Adviser, who informed me that these two ships definitely had been lost. They thereupon officially requested me, on behalf of the British Commander in Chief, America and West Indies Station, to have United States authorities make "searching enquiries as to the possibility of sabotage being the cause of the recent loss of ships sailing from St. Thomas." With this request the Federal Bureau of Investigation felt free to go ahead with its investigation. I have therefore turned the matter over to its representative here.

The loss of these large cargo ships, each with its crew of approximately 60 men, is extremely serious in itself, but of even graver import is the danger that the

- 2 -

cargoes of aluminum ore may have fallen into enemy hands.

I dislike intensely to add to your numerous worries and burdens at this crucial period in the nation's history, but I feel that unless something is done to insure the delivery of bauxite to the Aluminum Company of Canada our defense efforts will suffer a serious blow.

With personal regards, I remain

Faithfully yours,

CHARLES HARRISON,
Governor of the Virgin Islands
of the United States.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*Personal
Confidential*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

January 31, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The information to the effect that the PROTEUS and NEREUS may have been lost as a result of possible sabotage before they left St. Thomas, set forth in the attached letter from Governor Harwood, has been given to both ONI and FBI, at the President's direction.

ONI has directed the Commandant, Tenth Naval District, to extend the facilities and assistance of the Intelligence Office of his District to the Special Agent in charge of the San Juan Field Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Commandant Tenth was also directed to report to ONI what security arrangements are now in effect for the protection of merchant vessels against sabotage while in the Virgin Islands.

Very respectfully,

John L. McCrea

JOHN L. MCCREA

DECLASSIFIED
By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.
By W. J. Stewart Date FEB 22 1972

GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

CHARLOTTE AMALIE, ST. THOMAS

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Washington, D. C.

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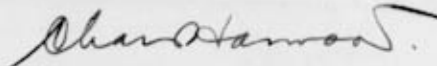
- 2 -

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With personal regards, I remain

Faithfully yours,



CHARLES HARWOOD,
Governor of the Virgin Islands
of the United States.

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