

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The written answer given to a question by Mr. Eldon Griffiths on 12th April was

The freehold of the islands named, which are parts of the British Indian Ocean Territory, have been acquired to ensure that they will be freely available for facilities, such as refuelling or communications, which we might wish to establish. Their strategic value would derive from those facilities.

2. Details for the individual purchases are as follows:-

Desroches: bought from Andre Delhomme for £153,200, and leased back to him.

Farquhar: bought from M.T. Moulinie for £200,000, and leased to Chagos-Agalega Ltd.

Chagos Archipelago (less the island of Nelson, which geographically forms part of the Archipelago but which is not included in the BIOT): bought from Chagos-Agalega Ltd. for £660,000 and leased back to the same company.

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for Paul

3. The purchase money will not be paid until a few weeks' time, to allow other claimants for shares in it to put in an appearance (titles are not always unassailably established in these remote islands). However, our title is secure by virtue of an ordinance providing for acquisition of land by the Crown for public purposes, and any dispute would be between the vendors and any other claimants.

4. Compulsory purchase powers were available, but were not used.

5. Agreed compensation of £3 million was paid to Mauritius in respect of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago. No conditions were made as to the uses to which the money should be put. We are also building a civil airfield in the Seychelles as compensation for the separation of Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches; there is no firm estimate of cost for this.