

HERBERT AUSTIN LETTER AUG 1899

Patentees and Sole Manufacturers of the CELEBRATED WOLSELEY SHEEP SHEARING MACHINE.

B' HAM
TELEPHONE N° 2654

LONDON
TELEPHONE N° 1170 AVENUE

TELEGRAMS,
"DICHROISM" LONDON.
"SHEARING" B' HAM.

THE WOLSELEY

Sheep Shearing Machine Co
LIMITED.

HEAD OFFICE,
170, GRESHAM HOUSE, OLD BROAD STREET,
LONDON, E.C.

SYDNEY WORKS,
ALMA STREET.

Works Manager,
MR H. AUSTIN.

Birmingham, August 19 1899

To Dear Mr Kayser

Special Machine Tools.

Automatic Screw
Machines.

Automatic Turning
Lathes.

Automatic Cam Milling
Machines.

Lathe Milling Machines.

Gas Furnaces for
Hardening.

Case Hardening.
Annealing
Melting.

Stampings in High Carbon
and Mild Steels.

Kind of Screws, Pins,
Nuts, and fine machine
work.

Wheel-Making Machinery.

High Speed Steam
Engines.

Horse Gears.

Portable Oil Engines.

Carriage Motors.

Horse Clippers.

Cycle Fittings,
etc., etc.

Castings in Aluminium,
Copper, Tin, Zinc,
and their other Alloys.

Nickel-Plating,
Bronzing, etc.

I much regret that work here won't admit of my coming over to see you this week end. Have been at the works till 10 & 11 every night this week trying to get off various pressing jobs & as you will be here Tuesday we can talk over any matters that occur to you as being necessary to ventilate.

About what time do you think you will arrive? Will send the autocar for you if you would like to do the 1½ mile in 8 minutes.

Orders are coming forward but we must have one or two representatives in other centres to look up odd jobs to fill up the corners. There is plenty of work to be got but it requires pushing for.

It has occurred to me that it might relieve the Wolseley Co if the works were separated & held by another concern who would

August 19 1899.

From The Wolseley S.S. Machine Co., Ltd.

To Mr K

do the S.S. work for the Wolseley Co at a fixed rate & take all home trade on their own acc.

I mention this as being perhaps a good way to fix up matters as I believe I could influence a good amount of capital if a new concern were started & in any case, as perhaps you are aware, my engagement is up in Feb next and present arrangements won't suit me by any means.

The Company are not in a position & never will be under the present Board to take advantage of the many valuable patents they hold and which in the past have been allowed to die out or become obsolete before anything has been done.

I suggest that the Wolseley Co could get say £40,000 for the work & their home trade giving the new concern a right to make all their requirements at such a price that would reserve to them a 10% dividend ~~or~~ taking the orders direct or we could make their goods at a fixed price which could easily be arranged beforehand.

After Feb it will be necessary to give me a stake in the Company that will be progressive.

Just to shew you my feelings on the subject I will give you a rough sketch of the last 8 years work

August 19th 1899.

From The Wolseley S.S. Machine Co., Ltd.

To Mr K

I came over here to find absolutely nothing in the shape of a workshop or any kind of effective stock. Everything was in a very bad state. The lot of the realisable assets would not have fetched £10,000. Since then I have organised a works which together with the plant & tools has cost & is quite worth £40,000. Outside the heavy amounts paid to agents & as establishment charges the whole amount has been paid for out of revenue with the exception of £10,000 received from debentures & your good self. This is outside the fact that our stocks today are at any time worth at least £25,000 and are readily saleable.

Of course it doesn't look much for a Company to have in say 6 years with a capital of £120,000 but that is where the ridiculousness comes in. Our real capital at the time I started was ~~worth~~ perhaps £20,000. The amount gained should be compared with the amount turned over which is not more than £25,000 a year on the average. The first 2 or 3 years was spent remedying old stocks & the errors of the past years work.

At the present time I admit we have no working capital but we have a good reason for being in that position & cannot help the position of the Cycle Trade.

August 19 1899.

From The Wolseley S.S. Machine Co., Ltd.

To Mr K

Now I would like to point out what I consider ~~are~~ rather hard lines on me. As you know I have worked like a slave ever since I came here & have refused several offers at double my salary to go elsewhere, and yet today despite having lived a very quiet retired life I couldn't raise £200 outside my household goods. I have repeatedly paid my expenses out of my own pocket rather than let the Company get into difficulties.

I claim without reservation that the whole of the home trade now amounting to over £1,000,000 a year has been got together by my personal ~~executions~~ without assistance from anyone - also that the most of it depends on patents of mine which I hold & also a good part of the Sheep Shearing business from patents & improvements introduced by me. Without wishing to be egotistical, I believe I could do what I have done, again; and I ought to be in a position to ~~to~~ start better than I did the first time. Do you wonder at my being dissatisfied? Would you be pleased with the position? after spending years of hard work which has always been successful so far as the work has been concerned. If I had been a drunken waster or an incompetent mechanic then I should expect to be low down but I have got energy still left to make a good bid for something better.

The machine is about finished & I hope to show you it working on Tuesday. Next week I will call at home including your good old tour & visit.