

VOL.

NO.

**SECRET**

167/9

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR  
THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA  
OTTAWA

SUBJECT

ANTARCTIC AND PRINCE EDWARD  
ISLAND

*Closed 31.12.59*

6/191 ON

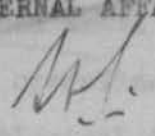
of an air route from the Union to Australia and/or New Zealand of possible strategical value. Apart from above-mentioned considerations the islands have little potential value. Their terrain and climate are most inhospitable. They may present possibilities regarding guano and sealing but these aspects have still to be investigated.

The frigate "Transvaal" arrived off Marion Island on 25th December at 11 a.m. South African time but was able to effect a landing and hoist the South African flag at 11.32 a.m. South African time on the 29th December only. The flag was hoisted on Prince Edward Island on the 4th January, 1948, at 3.55 p.m. South African time. This vessel landed shore parties on both islands which will continue in occupation for a few days, pending the arrival of permanent staff to undertake administration of the islands and the provision of meteorological data and wireless contact. The frigate found both islands entirely unoccupied.

We have under consideration the issue of a Proclamation concerning which you will be further advised.

Pending the issue of a public statement, about which you will also be advised, secrecy is being maintained.

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



*12*

FROM: THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA.  
TO: THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, OTTAWA

CYPHER

PRETORIA, January 6th, 1948.

NO. 1

Addressed to Ministers of External Affairs,  
Ottawa No. 1, Canberra No. 2, New Delhi No. 1, Karachi No.1,  
Wellington No. 2, repeated to High Commissioner, London,  
for information of British Government.

You will have noticed recent press reports regarding certain operations undertaken by the Union Government in connection with the Prince Edward Island group (Prince Edward and Marion Islands) situated some twelve hundred miles south-south-east of Capetown. These reports were unauthorized and were based entirely upon press conjectures built up on circumstantial evidence.

The position is that the Union Government have, for some time, felt the need of additional meteorological information to supplement that available locally and from Tristan da Cunha. Such additional information in large measure would be forthcoming were meteorological data continuously available from the islands in question.

The Union Government has, accordingly, resolved to establish a permanent meteorological station on one or other or both islands and after consultation with the Government of the United Kingdom to annex them.

Though primary object of the operation is the making available of much-needed meteorological data it will be appreciated that possession of these islands might also be of value in the event of the establishment

FROM: THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA  
TO: THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, OTTAWA

TOP SECRET

IMMEDIATE

CYPHER

CAPE TOWN, February 19th, 1948.

NO. 8

Addressed High Commissioner London No. 144, repeated External Ottawa No. 8, Canberra No. 13, Wellington No. 14, South African Legation, Washington No. 36. (S A Leg please inform British Embassy). Top Secret.

Reference Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations telegram Circular D. 97.

Antarctic.

The Union Government take note of the proposals of the United Kingdom Government and approve the contemplated approach to the United States Government.

As regards British claims to the Falkland Dependencies, they are sufficiently well founded to place them before the International Court of Justice or similar judicial tribunal.

With regard to the rest of Antarctic, the Union Government consider the international trusteeship idea inadvisable. It may bring undesirable parties on the scene, and in any case create confusion and put whole area into the melting pot. It may open up prospect of similar action in the north polar regions and North Pole itself and raise issues of far-reaching importance for the future security of the West. Both north and south polar regions should be kept out of reach of the Security Council as at present constituted and their control postponed until the international situation has been stabilized on a more satisfactory foundation than present United Nations Organization basis.

WARNING

This message must be paraphrased if it is to be communicated to persons outside of the Canadian Government service

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS