

Cape Argus 3 Jan 1948

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WEEK-END

Argus

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92nd YEAR

Stage on this issue . . . . . African Territories within Postal

A HAPPY 1948 ASSURED WITH A

**PIANO**

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• MOORE & MOORE

FROM

**POLLACKS**



# TWO SOUTHERN ISLANDS ADDED TO S.A.

## Strategic Importance Explained

### RIGHT GRANTED BY BRITAIN

(The Argus Correspondent)

Pretoria, Saturday.

GREAT BRITAIN has recognised South Africa's right to occupy the twin islands of Marion and Prince Edward which lie, strategically important, some 1,200 miles off the southern coast of the Union.

That is the story behind the mysterious voyage from Cape Town of H.M.S.A.S. Transvaal.



Commander H. E. Fougstedt, commanding officer of the frigate Transvaal.

South African history touched on the islands after the mysterious disappearance of the Waxatah, from like a The Lieuten: four mi

The Transvaal stood off Prince Edward Island shortly before Christmas Day, a party was landed, the Union flag was run up, and the men celebrated a "white Christmas" when snow fell.

On December 30 they took formal possession of Marion Island, the larger of the two.

Both the Union's new "colonial possessions" will be consolidated this month when a second frigate and a transport—probably a well-known South African coaster—leave Cape Town with hutments—prefabricated at the Pretoria Mint—and supplies of many kinds.

Information on the two islands, which were discovered in the 18th century, is limited, hence the reports that small parties of army and air force officers accompanied the naval force in the Transvaal.

#### "MET" OUTPOST

The extent to which the air force will be able to use the islands will only be known when fuller information is available.

For the present the Union Government will establish a meteorological outpost, and thus the country's new possessions will be put to immediate valuable peacetime use in forming one of a chain of stations in the southern seas to fill in the gaps which have prevented longer-range weather forecasting in the Union.

### Gough Island in Tristan Group Also To Be Occupied

(The Argus Shipping Correspondent)

SOUTH AFRICA, it is learned on good authority, is about to occupy another Antarctic island on the other side of the African continent—Gough Island in the Tristan da Cunha group, 1,700 miles south-west of Cape Town, in the South Atlantic. An expedition will set out shortly to establish a weather station there.

Gough Island lies 300 miles south-east of Tristan, on which a South African meteorological station has been in existence for the last six or seven years.

All the islands in the group, including Nightingale and Inaccessible, are British. The South African station on Tristan was established and is maintained in agreement with the British Government, as will be that on Gough Island.

#### UNINHABITED

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The cruise of the Transvaal—with all the conjecture and speculation aroused throughout South Africa, coinciding, as it did, with the visit to the Cape of a Russian whaling expedition and the Australian flag-hoisting ceremony at Heard Island—was the first outward sign of "Operation Snoektown," planned with as great secrecy as has ever characterised any peacetime activity in the Union.

## GRADED TOP SECRET

### Premier Kept in Close Touch

Regarded as a matter of highest national importance, and graded "top secret," the plan was drafted at general headquarters in Pretoria. The Prime Minister was kept in constant touch with developments.

However, the speculation aroused by the sudden order for seamen, who were preparing for Christmas at home, to report to the Transvaal for an immediate cruise, described as "purely routine," opened the eyes of many private citizens to unusual happenings, and little bits of information added together into a story which came close to the real truth.

When framework and girders for hutments were stacked outside the Mint in Pretoria ready for transport to Cape Town, many people wondered what the painted letters, "Met. Officer, Snoektown, Table Bay Docks," meant.

But the greatest secret of all remained unguessed at—Britain's

(Continued on page 3, column 5)

# Be Occupied

(The Argus Shipping Correspondent)

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#### UNINHABITED

Gough Island is uninhabited, the terrain being less suitable for settlement, and the climatic conditions more severe, than at Tristan. It has, however, substantial advantages over Tristan as a site for a weather station.

Chief of these is the fact that it is 200 miles nearer the Antarctic continent, where the southern hemisphere's weather is formed.

Another advantage is that being only 2,270 feet high it seldom collects cloud at its summit. Tristan's high peak is invariably cloud-capped.

#### TO TAKE SUPPLIES

The S.A.N.F. frigate Good Hope is scheduled to leave Cape Town on Monday afternoon for Tristan da Cunha to take reliefs and stores to the meteorological staff and supplies for the islanders.

Her departure has been advanced nearly a week at short notice in order, it is believed, to enable the next expedition to the Antarctic islands to get away as quickly as possible.

The Good Hope will not visit Gough Island on this trip.

It is understood that the S.A.N.F.'s remaining frigate, the Natal, will leave Cape Town about January 12 or 13 to relieve the Transvaal's party on Prince Edward and Marion Islands, and that she will escort the Union Government's 800-ton coaster Gamtoos, which will carry the equipment and stores necessary for setting up permanent establishments on the islands.

Because the Union Government has decided that the establishment of the stations on the Antarctic islands must be given the highest priority the S.A.N.F. has had to change its plans to send a frigate and both its new minesweepers to East London for the centenary celebrations there. Only the minesweepers will now be able to go.