

*Letter dated 19 December 1950, from the Resident Minister for Australia  
in London to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations*

My dear Secretary of State,

I have the honour to refer to the letter from the Office of the United Kingdom High Commissioner in the Commonwealth of Australia, dated 23 December 1947, in which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom confirmed their willingness to transfer to His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia their rights in Heard Island and McDonald Islands.

In consequence of this communication, effective government, administration and control of these islands were established by the Commonwealth Government on 26 December 1947.

Accordingly, the Commonwealth Government for their part understand the position to be that as from that date His Majesty's sovereignty over these islands has been exercised by them and the rights of the United Kingdom Government in the islands have been transferred to them and that, by such transfer and by the establishment of effective Australian government, administration and control, the territory has been acquired by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Government would be grateful to learn whether this is also the understanding of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed] ERIC J. HARRISON

*Letter dated 19 December 1950, from the Secretary of State for Commonwealth  
Relations to the Resident Minister for Australia in London*

My dear Resident Minister,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your Note of 19 December 1950 on the subject of Heard and McDonald Islands.

In reply, I have to inform you that for their part His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom regard His Majesty's sovereignty in these islands as having been exercised by and their own rights as having been transferred to His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia and the territory as having been acquired by the Commonwealth by such transfer and by the establishment of effective Australian government, administration and control, as from 26 December 1947.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed] P. C. GORDON-WALKER

#### ADMINISTRATION OF THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS

[The following statement was issued by the Commonwealth Relations Office on 8 September 1950. The text of a South African Proclamation on these islands, dated 24 January 1948, was given in the *Polar Record*, Vol. 5, Nos. 35/36, 1948, p. 243-44. An account of the establishment of a South African meteorological station on Marion Island was given in the *Polar Record*, Vol. 5, No. 40, 1950, p. 576-79.]

"The South African Government took over the administration of Marion and Prince Edward Islands at the end of 1947, by agreement with the United King-

<sup>1</sup> The omission in Mr Gordon-Walker's letter represented by dots recapitulates the substance of the letter from Mr Harrison given above.

dom Government. The transfer was confirmed by the United Kingdom and South African Governments in February 1949, in a formal exchange of letters, which are now published. Marion and Prince Edward are two islands in the Indian Ocean, about 1200 miles south-east of Cape Town, in lat. 47° S., 38° E."

*Letter dated 15 February 1949, from the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa in London*

Sir

I have the honour hereby to confirm the arrangement that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom should transfer to His Majesty's Government in the Union of South Africa the rights, title and interests which they formerly possessed in Marion Island and Prince Edward Island. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have taken note that the national flag of the Union of South Africa was hoisted on Marion Island on 24 December 1947, and on Prince Edward Island on 4 January 1948, and that effective government and administration of the islands were established by His Majesty's Government in the Union of South Africa as from those dates; and consequently regard the transfer as complete as from those dates.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your Excellency's most humble and obedient servant,

[Signed] P. J. NOEL-BAKER

*Letter dated 22 February 1950, from the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa in London to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations*

Sir

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 15 February 1949. His Majesty's Government in the Union of South Africa have duly taken note of this declaration of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and for their part likewise regard the transfer as complete as from the dates referred to therein.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

[Signed] J. H. TORRANCE

#### RENEWAL OF ANTARCTIC NAVAL AGREEMENT FOR SEASON 1950-51

[The following statement was issued by the Foreign Office on 20 November 1950. The texts of the agreements made in 1948 and 1949 were published in the *Polar Record*, Vol. 5, Nos. 37/38, 1949, p. 361 (for season 1948-49), and Vol. 5, No. 40, 1950, p. 635-36 (for season 1949-50).]

"In order to avoid the risk of incidents during the last two Antarctic summer seasons which might disturb normal friendly relations, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and the Argentine and Chilean Governments have each year informed one another that they saw no need to send naval vessels south of latitude 60 degrees apart from such naval movements as have become customary. In view of the satisfactory results which have followed from these declarations, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Argentine and Chilean Governments recently entered into conversations in order to see whether an extension to the current season could be