

**FALKLAND ISLANDS.**

No. *100/6*

Date of Receipt.

**Governor's Office.**

**WAR/WW1/1#25**

From

SUBJECT.

~~Secretary of State for the Colonies.~~  
GOVERNOR.

Two Cruisers and one Collier sighted off Lafonia Point.

No.

Date

*Telegram*

2nd March, 1916.

Colonial Secretary's  
Record No.

MINUTES.

Registered Number  
of last Despatch.

No. next Despatch.

(Cypher)

Governor to Secretary of State

Sent 8th March, 1916.

With reference to my cypher telegram 3rd March  
report of strange ships seen investigation by  
Senior Naval Officer discredits reports

Young

10 groups  
3 words.

Memo By Governor.

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At about 9 p.m. on 2nd March, 1916,  
Mr. A. Allan, Manager Darwin, telephoned to me that  
Mr. A. Simpson his overseer at North Arm, Lafonia,  
had sent a man into Darwin, a ride of six hours, to  
report that two Cruisers, painted black with a Collier  
had arrived off Lafonia, between Speedwell and  
George Island at about one p.m. and were coaling.

The telephone line here cut off and  
I was unable to get Mr. Allan again during the  
night though trial was made several times.

(It'd) D. Y.

3rd March, 1916.

Messages between Governor and Ship.

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Governor to H. M. S. Edinburgh Castle about 9.45 p.m. 2.3.16.

Have received report two cruisers painted black with  
a collier arrived off Lafonia between Speedwell and  
George Island at about one p.m.

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Ship to Governor.

Received 10.40 p.m.

2.3.16.

Before you have any further details. What importance  
may be attached information.

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Governor to Ship.

Set at 11.50 p.m.

2.3.16.

I consider information of paramount importance  
conveyed by six hours ride and telephone message  
from Darwin.

(Cypher)

Governor to Admiralty, London.

Sent 10.30 p.m. on the 2nd March, 1916.

Have received report two cruisers painted black with  
a collier arrived off Lafonia between Speedwell and  
George Island at about one p.m. Governor Falkland  
Islands 10 p.m. 2nd March.

23 groups  
2 words.

(Cypher)

Governor to British Consul, Monte Video.

Sent 10 p.m. 2nd March, 1916.

Have received report two cruisers painted black with a  
collier arrived of Lafonia between Speedwell and George  
Island at about one p.m. Governor Falkland Islands 10 p.m.  
2nd March please inform Senior Naval Officer.

The above message also sent to Captain Ascension.

(Cypher)

Governor to Secretary of State.

Sent 1.a.m. 3.3.16.

Chapelries London.

one a.m. 3rd March Reported two cruisers painted black  
accompanied by a collier arrived off Lafonia Point at  
one p.m. 2nd March. As I consider report reliable  
and movements suspicious I have telegraphed to Admiralty

Young.

StMS Edinburgh Castle.

Dear Mr Young

in reply to your note, if the report is correct, there is no use in our going to look at these ships as it would only sacrifice the Ship for no object, and a report from the Shore of their movements would be of equal value and more likely to be sent. Also, if Germans, it is unlikely that they will attack Stanley as it would give their movements away and if they were going to attack Stanley they would endeavour take us as much by surprise as possible and prevent news of their presence leaking out. If they are Japs they are hiding their presence in pursuance of orders.

If on the other hand the reporter has made a mistake and they are not cruisers, but armed merchantman (the absence of all details as to the number of funnels etc leads me to believe that a mistake has quite possibly been made) then I leave the harbour open to attack by one at least, if I go out. Of course I think they might just possibly be Whalers, but that is



outside the question, so what I think it  
best to do is to remain here and protect  
the harbour to the best of my ability and  
ask you to arrange for the reporting of  
all details and movements possible.

I shall be glad to hear whether  
Your Excellency agrees with me

Yours sincerely

J. M. Marshall

H.M.S.Edinburgh Castle.

Dear Mr. Young,

In reply to your note, if the report is correct, there is no use in our going to look at these ships as it would only sacrifice the ship for no object, and a report from the shore of their movements would be of equal value and more likely to be sent. Also, if German, it is unlikely that they will attack Stanley as it would give their movements away and if they were going to attack Stanley they would endeavour take us as much by surprise as possible and prevent news of their presence leaking out. If they are Japs they are hiding their presence in pursuance of orders.

If on the other hand the reported has made a mistake and they are not Cruisers, but armed merchantman (the absence of all details as to the number of funnels etc leads me to believe that a mistake has quite possibly been made) then I leave the Harbour open to attack by one at least, if I go out. Of course, I think they might just possibly be whalers, but that is outside the question, so what I think it best to do is to remain here and protect the harbour to the best of my ability and ask you to arrange for the reporting of all details and movements possible.

I shall be glad to hear whether Your Excellency agrees with me.

Yours sincerely

W.B.Marshall.

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Reply Governor to Captain Marshall, H.M.S.Edinburgh Castle.

Sent at 1 a.m.

With reference to your letter agree with you remain where you are.

Memo by Governor.  
7. 15 a.m.

3rd March, 1916.

Mr. Allan informed me on the telephone after making further inquiry of man who was sent from Lafonia Point to Darwin arriving at Darwin late last night to report ships off Speedwell and George Islands, that one big Cruiser had four funnels second smaller Cruiser two funnels, and Collier one funnel. Cruisers and Collier appear to be painted black. They were close enough in shore to hear working coal on board.

At one p.m. ships left smaller cruiser going south big Cruiser with Collier going S.W. towards Brand (?Barren) Island passage. All information Mr. Allan can obtain.

(It'd) D.Y.

(Cypher)

Captain Ascension to Governor Port Stanley.

Dated 3rd March 12.20 a.m. Received 3rd March 9.15 a.m.

With reference to your message 2nd March please check and repeat group four. Please address all messages for transmission by W/T Station to Navy Wireless.

16 groups.

3 words.

(Cypher)

Governor to Secretary of State.

Sent 3rd March, 1916.

Chapelries London.

3rd March With reference to my cypher telegram of this morning further details state that two ships of war first seen off Lafonia afternoon of March 1st after coaling March 2nd left with collier one p.m. going southerly direction. One cruiser four funnel the other two I have telegraphed to the Admiralty.

Young.

(Cypher)

Governor to Admiralty, London.

Sent 3rd March, 1916.

3rd March With reference to my message last night's .  
Latest reports ships first sighted off Lafonia Point  
evening 1st March after coaling 2nd March ships with  
Collier left 1.0 p.m. when last seen going in southerly  
direction. One four funnel cruiser the other two  
funnel cruiser Governor.

32 groups.

2 words.

(Cypher)

Governor to Navy Wireless Ascension.

Sent 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1916.

For Senior Naval Officer S. E. Coast of America

3<sup>rd</sup> March With reference to my message last night's.

Latest report ships first sighted off Lafonia Point

evening 1<sup>st</sup> March after coaling 2<sup>nd</sup> March ships with

Collier left 1.0 p.m. when last seen going in Southerly

direction. One four funnel Cruiser the other two

funnel cruiser Governor.

34 groups

3 words.

(Cypher)

British Consul Montevideo to Governor.

Dated NOON 3rd March received 12.3 p.m. 3rd March, 1916.

Your message last night. Have you any further news  
for Commodore.

6 groups

2 words.



(Cypher)

Governor to Navy Wireless Ascension.

Sent 3rd March, 1916.

With reference to your message 3rd March group four  
Cruisers.

5 groups

3 words.

(Cypher)

Governor to British Minister Montevideo.

Sent 3rd March, 1916.

With reference to your message Thanks have communicated  
with Commodore via Ascension.

7 groups

3 words.

Admiralty to Governor, Falkland Islands.

Dated 3rd March 11 p.m. Recd. 3rd March 9.47 p.m.

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URGENT For Senior Naval Officer H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle

You should thoroughly investigate report of  
strange vessels between Speedwell and George  
Islands on 2nd March which we have received  
from Governor. Man who saw the Vessels should  
be interrogated. If report is substantiated  
take necessary action. Acknowledge and  
report result investigation.

Cypher.

Admiralty to Governor, Port Stanley.

Dated 11.45 p.m. 3rd March Received 10. 28 p.m 3.3.16

With references to your messages of 2nd March and 3rd March we cannot conjecture what ships these are. British Edinburgh Castle should be at Stanley now and armed Merchant Cruiser Orbita should arrive from Simons Bay on 5th March or 6th March. H.M.S.Kent with Collier Manchester Port and Prize Edna are due at Stanley from Pacific on 6th March. Senior Naval Officer has been directed to investigate and take necessary action

Admiralty.

53 groups

3 words.

Governor to Admiralty, London.

Sent 4th March, 1916.

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Your urgent message has been received by Senior Naval Officer H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle steps have been taken by him for investigation there will be a delay of a few days to get man in from outlying district.

Governor.

(CYPHER)

Admiralty London to Governor Falkland Islands.

Dated 5th March 1.45 p.m. received 11.40 a.m. 5.3.16

For H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle your telegram of 4th  
March. H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle should remain  
at Falkland Islands until matter of strange  
cruisers is cleared up. Acknowledge. H.M.S.  
Edinburgh Castle repeated to Senior Naval Officer  
S.E. Coast of America.

23 groups

3 words.

Transmitted, on receipt, by wireless to H.M.S.  
Edinburgh Castle.

(Cypher)

Governor to Admiralty, London.

Sent 5th March, 1916.

Your telegram 5th March for H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle  
received by Captain of Ship

Governor.

2 words  
7 groups.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

No.

37

Government House, Stanley.

9th March, 1918.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that at about 9 p.m. on the 2nd instant, Mr. A. Allan, Manager of Darwin, of the Falkland Islands Company, telephoned to me that his overseer at North Arm, Lafonia, had sent a man into Darwin, a ride of six hours, to report that two cruisers, painted black, had arrived with a collier off Lafonia, between Speedwell and George Islands, at about one p.m. and were coaling. I asked Mr. Allan if he considered the report to be reliable, and he informed me that he was quite satisfied that the report was correct, and that his overseer would not have sent in his man, a ride of six hours, had it been otherwise than correct.

4. On the receipt of this report and the weight given to it by Mr. Allan, I informed Captain H.J.T. Marshall R.N. of H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle, in Port, and Captain F.J. Newman, the Officer Commanding the Volunteers, and placed them on their guard. I at the same time by cable reported the matter to the Admiralty, and to you.

5. Early next morning, the 3rd March, I again spoke to Mr. Allan, who after making further inquiry of the man sent in from North Arm, informed me that the man reported that one of the cruisers was a big one with

four

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.



four funnels, the second a smaller cruiser with two funnels, and that the Collier had one funnel; that the cruisers were close enough in shore to hear the coaling going on; and that the ships left at one p.m. (it had previously been reported that the ships had arrived at about 1 p.m.) the smaller cruiser going south, the big cruiser going south west with the Collier. Mr. Allan could obtain no further information, but considered the report to be reliable.

I communicated this further report to Captain Marshall, and, by cable, informed you and the Admiralty.

4. On the 3rd March the Admiralty telegraphed to me for the Senior Naval Officer H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle directing him to make a thorough investigation and report. At the same time the Admiralty telegraphed to inform me that they could not conjecture what the ships reported were, that in addition to H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle, at Stanley, the armed Merchant Cruiser Orbita should arrive on 5th or 6th of <sup>March</sup> ~~January~~, and that H.M.S. Kent, with Collier "Manchester Port" and Prize "Edna", were due to arrive on 5th March.

5. In accordance with arrangements made by me with Mr. Allan, the man who reported having actually seen the three <sup>strange</sup> ships was sent in from North Arm, LaFonia, to Stanley, in order that Captain Marshall might question him. The man arrived on the afternoon of the 7th March, and was immediately on arrival cross-examined by Captain Marshall, on board H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle, with the result that Captain Marshall considers

the

the man's report quite unreliable.

On receipt yesterday of a letter from Captain Marshall, a copy of which I enclose for your information, giving me the result of his investigation, I telegraphed to you that investigation by Senior Naval Officer discredits reports made.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

*Douglas Young*  
Governor.

H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle.

Port Stanley.

March 9th, 1916.

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose for Your Excellency's information a copy of the Cable sent by me to the Admiralty after investigation by myself and Captain J.E. Allen C.F. R.N., into the report made by Mr. Wilson of Lafonia.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Excellency's Obedient servant,

(SOT) H. J. Marshall

Captain R.N.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Copy of Telegram sent to Admiralty  
from H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle.

March 7th, 1916.

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In accordance with Admiralty Message March 4th. I have interrogated and who reported Cruisers, he states he only saw them for 5 minutes from several miles inland, that they were proceeding to the northward between George Island and the mainland, and estimates their distance from him at eight miles. No other person saw them and I consider his report quite unreliable. This was the first time he had seen any ship excepting small local coaster, and he has given several different accounts. As 5 days have elapsed since they were reported and no one else has seen them, no further action appears necessary, and I propose to sail for River Plate March 8th.

Edinburgh Castle March 7th, 1916.

H.M.S. "Edinburgh Castle"

Port Stanley.

March 8th 1916.

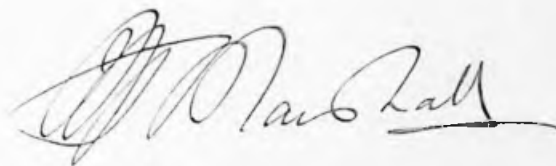
Sir,

I have the honour to enclose for Your Excellency's information a copy of the Cable sent by me to the Admiralty after investigation by myself and Captain J.D. Allen C.B. R.N., into the report made by Mr Wilson of Lafonia.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Excellency's Obedient Servant



CAPTAIN R.N.

To His Excellency the Governor  
Falkland Islands.

Copy Of Telegram sent to Admiralty. March 7th 1916.  
From H.M.S. "Edinburgh Castle"

In accordance with Admiralty Message March 4th. Have interrogated man who reported Cruisers, he states he only saw them for 5 minutes from several miles inland, that they were proceeding to the Northward between George Island and the Mainland, and estimates their distance from him at eight miles. No other person saw them and I consider his report quite unreliable. This was the first time he had seen any ship excepting small local coaster, and he has given several different accounts. As 5 days have elapsed since they were reported and noone else has seen them, no further action appears necessary, and I propose to, sail for River Plate March 8th.

"Edinburgh Castle" March 7th 1916.

Copies of these Telegrams

sent to

Captain Marshall, R.N.

H. M. S. Edinburgh Castle

enclosed in a letter from the Governor.

4th March, 1916.

Memo by Governor.

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At about 9 p.m. on 2nd March, 1916, Mr. A. Allan, Manager Darwin, telephoned to me that <sup>Mr. A. Simpson</sup> his overseer at *North Arm*, Lafonia, had sent a man into Darwin, a ride of six hours, to report that two Cruisers, painted black with a Collier had arrived off Lafonia, between Speedwell and George Island at about one p.m. and were coaling.

The telephone line here cut off and I was unable to get Mr. Allan again during the night though trial was made several times.

(ITT) D. Y.

3rd March, 1916.



Governor to Captain Marshall, H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle.

<sup>about</sup>  
Sent 9.45 p.m. on 2nd March, 1916.

---

Have received report two cruisers painted black  
with a collier arrived off Lafonia between Speedwell  
and George Island at about one p.m.

Governor to Admiralty, London.

Sent 10 p.m. on the 2nd March, 1916.

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Have received report two cruisers painted  
black with a collier arrived off Lafonia  
between Speedwell and George Island at  
about one p.m. Governor Falkland Islands  
10 p.m. 2nd March.

Governor to British Consul, Monte Video.

Sent at 10 p.m. on the 2nd March, 1916.

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Have received report two cruisers painted black  
with a collier arrived off Lafonia between Speedwell  
and George Island at about one p.m. Governor Falkland  
Islands 10 p.m. 2nd March. please inform Senior Naval  
Officer.

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The above message also sent to Captain Ascension.

Memo by Governor.

7.15 a.m. 3rd March, 1916.

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Mr. Allan informed me on the telephone after making further inquiry of man who was sent from Lafonia Point to Darwin arriving at Darwin late last night to report ships off Speedwell and George Islands, that one big Cruiser had four funnels second smaller Cruiser two funnels, and Collier one funnel. Cruisers and Collier appear to be painted black. They were close enough in shore to hear working coal on board.

At one p.m. ships left, smaller cruiser going south big Cruiser with Collier going S. W. towards Brand (?Parren) Island passage. All information Mr. Allan can obtain.

(It'd) D. Y.

Governor to Admiralty, London.

Sent 3rd March, 1916.

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3rd March With reference to my message last night's . Latest reports ships first sighted off Lafonia Point evening 1st March after coaling 2nd March ships with Collier left 1.0 p.m. when last seen going in southerly direction. One four funnel cruiser the other two funnel cruiser

Governor.

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*Telegram.*

Also sent to Navy Wireless Ascension for Senior Naval Officer S.E, Coast of America.

Admiralty to Governor Falkland Islands.

Dated 3rd March 11p.m. Recd. 3rd March 9.47 p.m.

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**URGENT** For Senior Naval Officer H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle.

You should thoroughly investigate report of strange vessels between Speedwell and George Islands on 2nd March which we have received from Governor. Man who saw the vessels should be interrogated, If report is substantiated take necessary action. Acknowledge and report result investigation.

Admiralty to Governor, Port Stanley.

Dated 11.45 p.m. 3rd March Recd. 10.28 p.m. 3.31

With references to your messages of 2nd March and 3rd March we cannot conjecture what ships these are. British Edinburgh Castle should be at Stanley now and armed Merchant Cruiser Orbita should arrive from Simons Bay on 5th March or 6th March. Kent with Collier Manchester Port and Prize Edna are due at Stanley from Pacific on 6th March. Senior Naval Officer has been directed to investigate and take necessary action.

Admiralty

Governor to Admiralty London.

Sent 4th March, 1916.

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Your urgent message has been received by Senior  
Naval Officer H.M.S. Edinburgh Castle steps  
have been taken by him for investigation there will  
be delay of few days to get man in from outlying  
district

Governor.



British Consul Montevideo to Governor.

Dated 2nd March received 2nd March, 1916.

Please direct Orbita to coal from Gorsemore and  
leave Photinia intact. Unless otherwise ordered  
by Admiralty Orbita should proceed as soon as  
possible to Valparaiso for orders H.M.S. Newcastle  
1st March message ends.

Fresh message to H.M.S. Kent begins turn your west  
coast position table over to Orbita H.M.S. Newcastle  
1st March.

Admiralty to Governor Falkland Islands.

Dated 2nd March 7.53 p.m. Recd. 2nd March 8.55p.m.

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For Senior Naval Officer when Orbita arrives she  
should be directed to remain until relieved by

H.M.S.Kent and then proceed to Valparaiso.

H.M.S.Edinburgh Castle will be free to leave

when Orbita arrives.

Admiralty.

(Cypher)

Governor to Secretary of State

Sent 8th March, 1916.

With reference to my cypher telegram 3rd March  
report of strange ships seen investigation by  
Senior Naval Officer discredits reports

Young

10 groups  
3 words