

# THE NEW GOVERNOR

ADVERTISER

## SIR GEORGE BRIDGES APPOINTED

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### DISTINGUISHED MILITARY CAREER

ONE OF THE "OLD CONTEMPTIBLES"

LONDON, August 25.

Major-General Sir George Tom Molesworth Bridges, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., has been appointed Governor of South Australia in succession to Sir Archibald Weigall

#### HOLIDAY-MAKING IN SCOTLAND.

LONDON, August 25.

Sir George Bridges is at present on a holiday in Scotland. He will return to London in a fortnight. He was the hero of a famous exploit during the retreat

troops with a penny whistle.

#### THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir George Murray) has received the following telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—"His Majesty the King has been pleased to approve of the appointment of Major-General Sir George Tom Molesworth Bridges, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., to be Governor of South Australia, in succession to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Ernest George Archibald Weigall, K.C.M.G."

"A Very Good Appointment."

The Premier (Sir Henry Barwell) on his return last night from a visit to Clare, said the Government were perfectly satisfied from what they knew of Sir George Bridges, as a soldier and one who had served the Empire in other ways, that it was a very good appointment. Sir Henry Barwell said he had not had the pleasure of meeting the new Governor when in London. He believed Sir George Bridges was, at the time, out of England. The name was not submitted until subsequently, but the Secretary of State for the Colonies had supplied a good deal of information concerning him by cable, quite enough to convince the Cabinet that the choice was above criticism.

#### Lost a Leg in Action.

General Bridges has the distinction of being one of the "Old Contemptibles," having played a heroic part in the memorable retreat of the "first hundred thousand" from Mons. When commanding the 4th Royal Irish Dragoons he was the first British officer to make contact with the German advanced cavalry and won the engagement. He was wounded a few days later, and narrowly escaped capture by the Germans. He was the hero of an incident at St. Quentin referred to in our cable messages. Promotion was rapid, for he was a courageous and capable officer, extremely popular with the troops because of his genial personality and strong character. His record as a soldier goes back to before the Boer War. In that campaign he served with great distinction, and by turning General de Wet in February, 1901, prevented an invasion of Cape Colony. He was then Captain Bridges, in command of the Imperial Light Horse, and came upon de Wet's forces when reconnoitring. His excellent judgment of the position enabled him to do exactly what General Plumer was then wanting to have done, although he had not received instructions from the general.

The new Governor is 51 years of age, having been born on August 20, 1871. He is a son of the late Major T. W. Bridges, of the Royal Artillery. He entered the British Army in 1892, and became a captain in 1900, brevet-major in 1902, a major in 1908, in the 4th Dragoon Guards; a lieutenant-colonel of the 4th Hussars in 1914, and battalion colonel in 1916. He served in the South African war with the Imperial Light Horse, and was in command of the Western Australian Mounted Infantry from 1899 to 1901. In that campaign he was severely wounded, and was twice mentioned in dispatches. He was present at the relief of both Ladysmith and Mafeking. In recognition of his services he was awarded the Queen's Medal with six clasps. During the Somaliland campaign in 1902-4, he raised and commanded the Tribal Horse. In the fighting he was severely wounded, and received special mention in dispatches. For this he was made a member of the Distinguished Service Order. During the European war 1914-18, he was mentioned in dispatches 37 times. On three

General Bridges was created a Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George in 1919. He was the head of a military mission with the Belgian Field Army, and subsequently in command of the British 19th Division. While holding this command he lost a leg as a result of a wound received in action. He was appointed military member of the Balfour Mission to the United States in 1917, and was head of the British War Mission in that country in the following year. For some time he was military attaché at The Hague, Brussels, Copenhagen, and Christiania. He also rendered important service as head of the British Mission to the Allied armies in the Orient, until 1920, when he returned to England. The new Governor married in 1907, Mrs. Janet Florence Marshall, widow of Major Wilfred G. Marshall, of the Grenadier Guards. Sir George Bridges, in addition to his British military distinctions, is a Commander of the French Legion of Honour and a member of the Order of Leopold (Belgium). He wears the Croix de Guerre, the Order de la Couronne, and the

American Distinguished Service Medal. His London residence is at 27, Chesham-street, S.W., and he is a member of the Cavalry and Beefsteak Clubs. Sir George and Lady Bridges have one daughter, who was born in 1909. Lady Bridges' father was the late Mr. Graham Menzies, of Haliburton House, Cupar Angus, Scotland. Sir George is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of England.

#### A Man of Character.

The principal work of Sir George Bridges in America was in connection with the Balfour Mission, which made a memorable journey across the Atlantic on a warship in 1917. The entry into the war of the United States was immediately followed by a decision on the part of the British and French Governments each to send on one of their warships a High Commission to convey greetings and a sense of the appreciation of those Governments to the United States, and also to discuss ways and means for securing the most effective co-operation of the United States in the war. General Bridges was the chief army representative on the British mission.

According to Colonel Repington (formerly war correspondent of the London "Times") his report to the Cabinet on his return was most disquieting. In his book, "The Great World War, 1914-18," Colonel Repington says:—"General Tom Bridges, the military representative, recently with the Balfour Mission to America, left for France to-day, and I went to see him in the morning. He had given his view to the War Cabinet, and Curzon described it as the most depressing statement Cabinet had received for some time. Tom thinks that the first American division will reach France in June or July, and that thereafter one division a month will probably come. We can only count on six divisions this year, say, 150,000 men, and twelve more in 1918, a total of 18, with 300,000 men in the divisions and 140,000 in the services. This assumes that the present programme is followed. Cabinet were expecting a million and were proportionately depressed. I said that this reduction would incline the Cabinet to peace, but Tom said that this could not be helped as he had to report what he believed to be the truth. Tom says that 40,000 fine young fellows have joined the officers training corps in America, and he has great hopes of these camps. The universities have been almost cleared of fine young men. Balfour, he said, had been splendid. He had never put a foot wrong, and his hosts had been delighted with his statesmanship and his intellect. Tom thought that the Americans wanted the French and English Missions to boom the war more than for anything else, and this they had done. He had strongly advocated compulsion, and when



SIR GEORGE BRIDGES.

Joffre arrived he had done the same thing and thus had greatly helped to get the "Selected Draft Bill" through. He thought America was keen about the war, but there were elements which did not wish to fight. He liked General Pershing very much. The only other leading general, Leonard Wood, was put aside because President Wilson was politically opposed to him. Tom thought the mission had New York solidly with them, owing to the support of the three most influential men—Mitchell (the mayor), Malone (head of the port), and Wood (head of the police), all men under 40 and very energetic. He had made good friends in America, including Sunday, the preacher. Wilson had been admirable, but had never said a word to Tom on military affairs.

These remarks indicate the strong moral sense of South Australia's new Governor. America came into the war at a very critical stage, and all the Allies, and particularly the British Government, were anxious for a sign of a tremendous and surprisingly quick movement on the part of America. It would have been a fine thing for General Bridges to have reported optimistically, but he preferred to tell the truth, no matter what adverse effect it might have upon his career. Clearly Sir George Bridges is a man of character. The Repington interview, too, indicates the importance of his work and the high circles in which he moved.

#### How He Saved the Stragglers.

The incident of the drum and tin whistle, in which the new Governor was the principal figure, is referred to by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the first volume of his history of the British campaign in France and Flanders. Dealing with the retreat following the battle of Le Cateau, and specifically with the exhausted condition of the British troops, the historian says:—"The troops snatched a few hours of rest at St. Quentin, and then in the breaking dawn pushed upon their weary road once more, country carts being in many cases commandeered to carry the lame and often bootless infantry. The paved chaussées, with their uneven stones, knocked the feet to pieces and caused much distress to the tired men, which was increased by the extreme

heat of the weather. In the case of some of the men the collapse was so complete that it was impossible to get them on. Major Tom Bridges, of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoons, being sent to round up and hurry forward 250 stragglers at St. Quentin, found them nearly comatose with fatigue. With quick wit he bought a toy drum, and, accompanied by a man with a penny whistle, he fell them in and marched them, laughing in all their misery, down the high road towards Ham.

When he stopped he found that his strange following stopped also, so he was compelled to march and play the whole way to Roupy. Thus by one man's compelling personality 250 men were saved for the army."

Mr. Frederic Coleman, the war correspondent, who was with the British army in the retreat from Mons, gave a more detailed version of this incident when lecturing in Adelaide during the war. Major Bridges, accompanied by a bugler, upon entering St. Quentin, found the stragglers sitting on the kerb round the town square. They had come in in little groups, hoping to catch up with the main army there, but upon discovering that the retreat had progressed beyond that point they were incapable of going farther, and squatting on the kerb gave themselves over to despair and awaited the coming of the Germans to take them as unresisting prisoners. They sat with heads bowed upon hands, oblivious of everything that went on. Major Bridges found them insensible to orders, exhortation, or pleading. The men took not the slightest notice of him, and heeded not a word he said. He realised that only the British Tommy's sense of humor could save these men. "Can you play a tin whistle?" he enquired of his bugler. "A little sir," was the reply. "Well," said Major Bridges, "we will see what you can do." He entered a shop nearby and purchased a child's toy drum and a penny whistle. The whistle he gave to the bugler, the drum he slung over his shoulders. Then, beating a lusty tattoo all out of time as an accompaniment to "The British Grenadiers" on the tin whistle, the improvised band moved round the square. Several times they traversed the course, but the despairing men took not the slightest notice of the commotion. Then one or two languidly raised their heads, and their droxy eyes opened wide at the extraordinary spectacle of an officer playing a toy drum. Their sense of humor gradually overcame their fatigue. A smile began to illumine the dust-covered faces, and eventually one man got up and fell in behind the band. In time all the stragglers were on their feet, laughing merrily at the joke. When the last man fell in the major turned into the main street and out on to the high road. For some time he led this curious troop, and then he halted and said:—"Now, my men, you are well on your way; you have not far to go. I must leave you to carry on." But they would have it that he must continue to lead, and so the gallant "Major Tom" led them to Roupy, the resting and refitting quarters. Only a man of the indomitable spirit, determination, and sound judgment of Sir George Bridges would have achieved what he did on that occasion.

#### Appointment Appreciated.

At a united service of the Protestant Federation in the Town Hall yesterday afternoon, the chairman (Mr. H. C. Richards, M.P.) suggested that the meeting should offer congratulations to his Majesty the King and his Ministers upon having appointed to be Governor of South Australia so distinguished a gentleman as Sir George Bridges. The appointment would form another link that would bind the State closer to the motherland and the King. All would join with him in the hope that Sir George and Lady Bridges would have a happy and prosperous term in South Australia. The remarks were warmly applauded.

#### COMMANDED A WESTERN AUSTRALIAN UNIT.

Perth, August 27.

The new Governor of South Australia has never resided in Western Australia, although he commanded the Western Australian Mounted Infantry in the South African war from 1899 to 1901. Another army officer of the same name came to Perth from India to assist in training the citizen forces. He subsequently went to France.