

# Mawson Expedition Narrowly Escapes Death In Hurricane

## DISCOVERY IN PERIL

### Thrilling Battle With Ice

#### CAPTAIN'S STRATEGY

(By Wireless from Sir Douglas Mawson on Board The Discovery. All rights reserved.)

Only skilful handling by her captain saved the Mawson expedition ship, Discovery, from being crushed to pieces, when a terrific hurricane hurled her into an ice mill last Wednesday. Her company were within an inch of their lives, but yesterday the gallant vessel, battle-scarred, broke her way into the open sea.

Since my last message, Providence has sustained our best efforts to cope with an exceptional hurricane which caught the Discovery under most inopportune circumstances.

The blizzard we thought to weather out in the pack, when threading our way from the Kosmos, developed into a hurricane from the south-east. We were then almost at the southern edge of the pack facing the open berg-strewn waters of Durville Sea, which was lashed into fury, consolidating the pack into a grinding mass against the ship.

"This pack was of no ordinary nature, but was composed largely of weather-worn masses the size of Atlantic bergs. Our position being thus untenable, the Discovery escaped from the pack into the freezing waters, setting under the lash of wind which increased rapidly to 70 m.p.h. velocity.

Frozen spindrift and fleeing snow obscured the view so effectually that only by a miracle did we miss crashing into a gigantic tabular berg which loomed up about a length ahead. With the bergs and pack behind us, we could not run from the wind. The brave ship tumbled and staggered in the unequal onslaught, but steadily drove back to leeward on to the most gigantic mill ever conceived.

#### FURY OF THE ICE

Here the conquering ice warriors of many stormy engagements were assembled to meet us. They raised themselves high on every sea, peering at us in anticipation and with evil intents, then as suddenly descended into the trough and were submerged in a sheet of blinding spray.

Rising more triumphant, and in glee, they appeared to reach out at us, nearer and yet nearer. Could our staunch vessel be a match for these cruel rocks of ice? That was the question in every mouth on the morning of Wednesday last.

No word was spoken. Every soul was engaged to the utmost in preparing the ship to meet the onslaught. We survive to relate that by skilful handling the ship escaped impending destruction. Capt. Mackenzie succeeded in working her through God's great will into the calmer waters of a slack area within.

The hurricane then raved on as if infuriated at our escape, and in the evening hours, under a murky atmosphere, tore back the pack and thrust viciously at us a reserve bombardment of grinding bergs.

Once more, when all seemed hopeless, we slipped out of the noose into a large slack area. We had now worked through towards the northern side, and for a time the raging was of no avail. Within sight now were several Kosmos chasers, sheltering under a lee of streaming ice.

#### CAUGHT AGAIN

Unwilling to give up the assault, other forces were now marshalled against us. In one day a whole body of pack ice under cover of hurrying snow was driven west 50 miles, and crumpled against the immovable grounded barrier ice and bergs, charted as Clari Land.

The slack water closed in a moment. The trap was well set, but after an anxious struggle we emerged staggering into leaping spurning sea, now so clear of ice as to make navigation possible.

For two days past our stout ice-encrusted vessel, with engines strained to the utmost, has fought her way east, mile by mile, through high seas. Now the wind has moderated, and if it continues thus we may land tomorrow on the shores of high ice-cast land, which now lies on our starboard beam.

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#### Mr. Mac Robertson Honoured

MELBOURNE, Tuesday.—Mr. Macpherson Robertson has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, London. The fellowship was awarded on the recommendation of Sir Douglas Mawson and Sir Edgeworth David, and was conferred because of Mr. Robertson's generous gifts to aid research in the Antarctic.

## ANXIOUS TIME FOR DISCOVERY

### Huge Iceberg Across Course

#### BARELY TIME TO AVOID IT

(By Wireless from Sir Douglas Mawson, on Board The Discovery.—All Rights Reserved.)

For days past The Discovery has headed west through a pack stream. The seas have driven us for a time far to the north, and now again we are making some southing.

Recent experience has amply illustrated the fact that this is certainly an abnormal year for ice in this region. Indications are that the pack ice hereabouts extends over at least a million square miles more of ocean than normally, but it may be that the extension is even much greater than this.

The masses of ice through which we are threading our way are practically derived from the breaking up of a very heavy floe, and as they are much weather beaten must have been storm tossed for a long time. Hence it is probably sheet ice from the Antarctic far to the west, for it is drifting steadily to the east.

These weather-worn fragments of ice are in endless variety of form, but the fascination of artistry is lost upon us now in our anxiety to push south. The glaring whiteness of the pack ice is relieved by a pleasant dappling of blue and green tinctures, while towering above it are majestic bergs sculptured in every variety of form.

From the foretop yesterday I counted in view at the same time. Never before have I seen such an assemblage of fantastic shapes which, curiously enough, seldom bear any resemblance of the tabular bergs which are usually characteristic of the Antarctic.

#### BERG AHEAD

Thick mists alternating with falling snow and a gale of wind have made navigation difficult for several days past.

Bergs loom up only a few ships' lengths ahead. Last night we had an anxious reminder of what may have been the fate of the Copenhagen, when a towering berg about half a mile in length was seen through the mist square across our course, leaving barely time to swing the ship to avert a collision.

Our approximate position at eight o'clock this evening (December 22) is latitude 64, long. 158.

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## DISCOVERY FINDS NEW LAND

### No Trace Of Ice Barrier Reported 90 Years Ago

(By Radio from Sir Douglas Mawson on Board The Discovery. All Rights Reserved.)

AT SEA, January 9.—After having crossed the Durville Sea, the Discovery arrived off Cape Robert, the extreme western point of land seen by Admiral Durville in 1840. The passage further west is effectively blocked by a shoal area upon which innumerable large grounded bergs holding the pack. Extending to the north-west from this locality both Wilkes and Durville some 90 years ago reported the existence of a sheer walled ice barrier extending for about 180 miles.

With a view to further investigation of this blockage to east and west traffic and to delineate the coast line in the blocked area, Campbell and Douglas ascended in the aeroplane. They observed new land extending westward from Cape Bickerton towards the eastern extremity of the land sighted by the Aurora in 1912 and then named by us Wilkes Land. No floating barrier ice tongue was within their range of vision in the blocked area, which was apparently entirely occupied by grounded bergs firmly consolidated into pack ice. Thus nothing has been seen yet of the floating ice barrier which existed in 1840.

#### PUSHED BACK TO EAST

We are now on our way around the north end of this blockage, but owing to the serious invasion of pack ice into Durville Sea we have been pushed back far to the east in an endeavour to break through from the coastal water to the open sea. Progress through the pack ice is satisfactory, and we hope to emerge into open sea tomorrow. For some days the weather has been ideal.

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## AMONG THE PACK ICE NOW

### Discovery Rides Gale Into Quiet Crystal Seas

#### WHERE 32 DEG. IS COSY

(By wireless from Sir Douglas Mawson on board the Discovery. All rights reserved.)

WE departed from Macquarie Island in thick weather, but were able to creep up near enough to Bishop and Clerk Islets for close observations and soundings.

These islets, located some miles south of the main island, are a serious menace to ships. They rise from the Macquarie submarine shelf to a height of 140 feet above the sea. Several kinds of birds nest there, including a rookery of royal penguins.

Soundings demonstrate the existence of a submarine rise extending to the south. In the latitude of the charted position of Emerald Island we found a depth of only 800 fathoms, with a deep abyss on either side of the ridge. In thick, misty weather and with a gale of wind blowing conditions were unfavourable for prosecuting a search for the elusive Emerald Island, reported over 100 years ago, but the existence of which was never confirmed.

#### ROLLING FRANTICALLY

The gale increased, and for days the Discovery laboured in heavy seas, with flooded decks, and rolling frantically. During this period wireless communication was partially suspended. Everybody was constantly wet through and storm weary. Icebergs, first met with north of Macquarie, were now in constant attendance, later supplemented by scattered pack ice, first met with in latitude 62 south.

The period of storm and gloom has passed. Now the sun shines and we are traversing a crystal sea of bobbing ice that sparkles and glitters in the flounder of the swell. The ice, which is in an advanced state of dissolution is very picturesque, and has been broken by wave action into countless fanciful forms. There are fleets of crystal gondolas, menageries of glacial birds and beasts, dazzling spires, arches, and ruins, with here and there a mammoth berg looming like a spacious castle.

#### SEVEN BELOW ZERO

A chill wind is blowing, but the thermometers seem more susceptible to the fall in temperature than ourselves. We scarcely heed the meteorologist's exhort that the temperature on deck is 25 degrees. That is seven below zero.

Likewise the knowledge that the temperature of our cabins and wardrobe lurks at a wintry 32 leaves us cold. It only promotes sleep and stimulates the appetite.

The frost appears to have quickened the growth of beards and whiskers, and most members are exhibiting fine forward crops.

At last, after days of vain effort, we are in touch with the Sir James Clark Ross, which has on board for us 100 tons of coal. To our great mortification she is not in the vicinity of the Balleny Islands, where we had expected to meet her, but is four days' steam further east, which is quite exasperating

## MAWSON AT HOBART TO-DAY

Canberra, March 18.

In a wireless message received from him to-day, Sir Douglas Mawson says he hopes to arrive at Hobart at 2 p.m. to-morrow.

The Discovery put into Southport for the night. She will probably leave Hobart on Sunday for Melbourne. It is understood that the Discovery is short of coal and that she has met with engine trouble, as the agents in Hobart have been asked to have in readiness three fitters and a laborer.

## WHALING IN ANTARCTIC

### Modern Equipment

#### DISCOVERY TAKES IN SUPPLIES

Canberra, December 22.

Sir Douglas Mawson in a wireless message from the Discovery, gives an account of the work of an up-to-date whaling vessel in the Antarctic.

He says—The Sir James Clark Ross began whaling operations early in the season near Balleny Islands, but conditions caused her to move east to the entrance of Ross Sea, north of Scott Island. After locating her I took up five days' steaming through thick pack ice before reaching her. Captain MacKenzie brought the Discovery skilfully alongside, and we lashed up against the Sir James Clark Ross, with dead whales interposed as a buffer while coaling operations proceeded.

The Discovery was like a small tender, compared with the gigantic floating whale factory. Built this year expressly for the whaling industry, the Sir James Clark Ross is the most up-to-date thing of its kind afloat.

#### 20,000 Tons of Whale Oil

The speed and efficiency with which whales are disposed of is a revelation. A 150-ton whale drawn up on to the deck through the stern tunnel is entirely dismembered and cleaned in one hour. By the end of the season they hope to return to civilisation with 20,000 tons of whale oil. We cannot speak too highly of Capt. Nilsen and the men of the Sir James Clark Ross for the help they gave us in the transference of coal. With their assistance the transfer of 100 tons of coal and 25 tons of fresh water took only five hours.

#### Oceanographic Work

The Discovery was then cast off, and one oceanographic station was made in 2,400 fathoms, while awaiting the return of our photographer, Captain Hurley, who was away on a chaser harpooning a whale. We are in latitude 64.20, longitude 175, working our way west.

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when our objectives lies to the west.

Our position this evening is approximately latitude 63 south, longitude 168 east.

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## ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

### Discovery Making for Melbourne

MELBOURNE, Today.

The Discovery, which is returning from the Antarctic, has left Hobart for Melbourne.

When it arrives Sir Douglas Mawson (leader of the expedition) will confer with the Australian section of the Antarctic Committee. Sir David Orme Masson (chairman of the committee) said today that he would defer any answer to published criticism of the expedition until Sir Douglas returned. The Discovery had been sent on scientific research work, and the presence of Scandinavian whalers in the Antarctic seas did not affect the purpose of the expedition.