

MAWSON'S RETURN

Sir Douglas Mawson has returned with his scientific and other companions from the Antarctic rather earlier than he would have done had the coal supply of the Discovery not given out. Before he started, he had calculated on the presence of whalers to replenish his bunkers, and, in the vicinity of the Balleny Islands, he obtained some help from them; but, to his disappointment, when he reached Queen Mary Land, these resources were not available, and he had therefore to shorten his stay in Antarctic waters. The consequence was that, while he did what he set out to do, which was to explore the coastline between the Balleny Islands and Queen Mary Land, he could do nothing more, and what is known as the Australian quadrant has still to be fully mapped. In addition to charting the coastline hitherto represented by dots, he and his associates have sounded ocean depths, taken weather and magnetic observations, and subjected to as close an examination as the conditions admitted, birds, fishes, and rocks. Thus they have been able to make contributions of positive value to geographical, meteorological, and other branches of knowledge.

Apart from gains to science, is the unsettled question of territorial rights, always a matter of deep concern to Australia, and with which Mawson's holding of the British flag at quite a number of places may be assumed to have some connection. The question of ownership might have remained an open one indefinitely, but for the possibility of the white continent proving, like Alaska, a veritable Tom Tiddler's ground, and for the rich harvest afforded by the whaling industry. The Antarctic lies almost on the threshold of Australia, which therefore has, if any country has, proprietary rights over at least the contiguous sector. But when the American, Rear-Admiral Byrd, was planning his expedition, the British Government went further and politely reminded the American authorities of its claim to the greater part of the South Polar continent, including the site of the alleged discoveries in 1840 by Captain Wilkes, another American. The Washington authorities have protested against this claim, but apparently not wishing to prejudice the success of the disarmament negotiations, have not of late pursued the question, leaving it in a condition where, if thought desirable, it might some day be revived. The solution of the difficulty receives no help from international law, which recognises discovery as a valid title to territory, only where it is followed by occupation and settlement. So far as Britain is concerned, Sir Douglas Mawson considers that the requirement might be sufficiently answered as regards the Ross Sea area by the erection on its shore of a wireless and meteorological station. As yet, nothing has occurred to make this ownership problem a burning one. The "immense beds of coal," at which Shackleton hints in "The Heart of the Antarctic," and the iron he observed in the "red mountain" he climbed in search of a highway to the Pole, the "pure quartz in situ, with large lumps of copper in it, the first find of minerals suggestive of the possibility of working," reported by Scott, and the ores which he indicated to Mawson, "the probability of mineral wealth beneath the continental cap," will not always lie dormant; and if the development of these resources is to proceed without international friction, there will be a call for the voices of diplomatists and statesmen, as well as savants, to be heard in regard to the frozen South.

MAWSON EXPEDITION

LEAVING IN NOVEMBER

RETURNING NEXT APRIL

Melbourne, July 6.

The Discovery will leave Australia early in November on the second voyage to the Antarctic, and will return about the beginning of April, 1931.

This decision was arrived at at a meeting of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Expedition Committee, held on Saturday. Those present were Sir David Orme Masson (chairman), Sir Douglas Mawson (leader of the expedition), Rear-Admiral Munro Kerr, and Sir Edgeworth David. The chairman stated at the close of the meeting that the officers and scientific staff for the second cruise would be substantially the same as the first cruise. A resolution introduced in the American Senate urging that a claim be made to lands in the Antarctic recently discovered by Rear-Admiral Byrd, was referred to Sir Douglas Mawson on Saturday. He said that until a definite claim was made by the American Government, setting out clearly in maps the lands that it was suggested should be claimed for the United States, the matter was not one for serious comment.



THE LONG JOURNEY OVER:—Sir Douglas Mawson (leader of the Discovery expedition to the Antarctic) and Captain K. N. McKenzie (commander of the vessel) wore smiles of achievement when the ship berthed at Williams-town (Victoria) from Hobart.

MAWSON'S PROGRESS VALUABLE AIR OBSERVATIONS

COTE CLAIR NOT LAND

Canberra, January 15.

The Discovery, after having run through bad weather, is now making west under bright skies, according to the message sent by Sir Douglas Mawson on January 14. The report states:—The Discovery reached the open sea north of the pack off King George V. Land on January 9, and thence proceeded westward; but a gale with falling snow obscured our view, and lasted until this morning. During this time we have been either hove to or running in a heavy sea along the pack margin. Unfavorable conditions for wireless communication have intervened.

Meteorologist's Job

The aerial has been carried away on several occasions in gales, but with the advent of fine weather, repairs were quickly effected. If the weather be good or bad the meteorologist is the one man whose job never ceases. In a gale he is fully occupied maintaining the instruments in good recording condition. In finer weather his duties are extended by the inclusion of upper air investigations by means of pilot balloons. In this department already much information has been recorded, including results of many observations to a height of over 30,000 ft.

During the recent gale period we have delineated the continental shelf between Meridian 140 and 130, and secured additional data indicating that Cote Clair, seen by Durville and Wilkes, was really nothing more than grounded tabular bergs of extremely large dimensions.

The sun is now shining brightly, and the Discovery is making west along the heavy pack ice, with scattered large bergs grounded on the off-shore shoals. Our position at 6 p.m. was about latitude 65, longitude 128.

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DISCOVERY TO LEAVE FOR HOBART TODAY

To Remain There Until
November 22

MELBOURNE, Friday.—The last of the stores and baggage were put aboard the Discovery today. Tomorrow she will leave her berth at Williamstown for the first stage of her journey to the Antarctic. She will go to Hobart, where she will remain until November 22.

The Chairman of the Committee (Sir David Orme Masson) will bid the staff and crew farewell when she leaves tomorrow. The official departure of the ship, however, will be from Hobart, where Sir Douglas Mawson and the remainder of the scientific staff will join her.

When his flagship (H.M.A.S. Australia) berthed at Prince's Pier this morning, Admiral Evans went to Williamstown to see the Discovery. As an old Antarctic explorer he is greatly interested in the expedition, and spent the morning going round the ship with Capt. MacKenzie.

The last time he saw her was 30 years ago in the Antarctic.

The total complement sailing in the ship will be 34. Capt. MacKenzie has been appointed second in charge of the expedition.

ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION CANBERRA, Today.

The Prime Minister announced in the House of Representatives this afternoon that the Federal Government had decided to continue exploration in the Australian sector of the Antarctic. The Discovery would be available, and Sir Douglas Mawson would be in charge of the expedition.

MAWSON EXPEDITION'S SECOND TRIP

Discovery Likely To Leave For South In October

CANBERRA, Thursday.—It almost certain that Sir Douglas Mawson will return to the Antarctic in the Discovery as soon as the weather is suitable, probably in October, when the expedition will leave Hobart for the south. A two-year programme was mapped out when the expedition was decided on.

Although Federal Ministers are anxious to economise, finance is not expected to cause serious difficulties. Commonwealth expenditure on the expedition to date has been more than was anticipated, but it is thought likely that more gifts will be made towards the cost by wealthy patrons.

The chairman of the Antarctic Expedition Committee (Senator Daly) will dine with Mr. MacRobertson, one of the chief supporters of the project, on Saturday, and will then meet members of the committee and Sir Douglas Mawson. Senator Daly will report to Cabinet, which will decide the future of the expedition.

FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION, £2,251

Of the total cost of £18,910 of the Antarctic Expedition, the Commonwealth Government provided £2,251, said the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives today.

PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE OF ANTARCTIC

Mawson Expedition Obtains Many Specimens

Professor T. Harvey Johnston, who was in charge of the work of obtaining specimens of plant and animal life carried out by the Mawson Antarctic expedition, returned to Adelaide yesterday.

He said much material had been preserved for study. Some had been sent to New Zealand and to the British Museum. Most of the specimens would be brought to Adelaide and allocated to various places for detailed study. Particular attention had been paid on the trip to minute marine life which formed the basis of other higher life such as seals, fish and birds in those parts.

Sir Douglas Mawson was now in Sydney, said Professor Johnston, and would return to Adelaide probably next week. Paying a tribute to the leader, he said few realised the preparation necessary for such an expedition. Sir Douglas had arranged that all requirements were supplied, and his assistance had enabled the scientific work to be carried out successfully. Members of the expedition had been a happy family.

DISCOVERY'S STORE RAIDED AFTER PARTY

"What Was Watchman Doing?"

MELBOURNE, Tuesday.—"The evidence discloses great laxity of those in charge of the Discovery," said Mr. Jackson, J.P., at the Williamstown Court today, when two men were fined for having stolen tinned salmon and preserved fruit from the Antarctic exploration ship, which is in dry dock at Williamstown.

A constable said that the men admitted having taken the goods from the store on the Discovery, where a party had been held that night.

Mr. Jackson—What was the watchman doing to allow them to get those things?

Sgt. Ellis—I would rather you did not refer to what took place that night, as it is desirable that there should not be too much publicity given.

Mr. Jackson—I do not agree. It must be remembered that the stores were partly paid for by the public.

MAWSON'S PLANE

DAMAGED

A 3/2/31

Explorer Gets Soaking

NEW LAND CHARTED

Canberra, February 2.

The seaplane carried by the Discovery was damaged last week, after Sir Douglas Mawson and Pilot Douglas had made a reconnaissance flight.

Neither man was injured, but when the plane was swamped by a heavy wave they got a soaking, as they clung to the struts. The wireless message from Sir Douglas, dated January 28, says—

"The fog lifted yesterday at noon when the ship was approximately in latitude 65.10, longitude 107, with 300 fathoms beneath the keel. The prospect of a greater improvement in the weather appeared so small that we decided to seize the opportunity of another aeroplane reconnaissance. It was a case of making the most of the only opportunity presented for a long time.

New Land Sighted

"Pilot Douglas and myself were swung over the side, and the machine was launched successfully. The take-off was found to be difficult on account of the ocean swell and the waves. There were many unsuccessful essays wherein, after rising hopefully from the crest of a great wave, we would fall back with a resounding smack into the succeeding trough. Eventually to our great relief, and due to Pilot Douglas's skill, we got the machine into the air. Then, until the plane entered the first stratum of clouds at an elevation of 1,300 feet, there was presented a fine panorama of an ice-strewn sea, extending unbroken east and west, and to the southern horizon."

Emerging into clear air at 1,600 feet we found still higher clouds over all the sky, except in the south. This second cloud stratum was met at an increased elevation of 300 feet. Rising through it we eventually came out into brilliant sunshine, with the sky almost clear of any other cloud. At 5,700 feet we had a fine view over a cloud gap to the south, and could discern on that horizon the line of a high ice plateau, extending approximately east and west. No rock outcrop was visible. This makes the fourth new landfall sighted between Adelie Land and Queen Mary Land. In association with the data from the soundings the continuity of the Antarctic coastline throughout this sector appears to be effectively demonstrated.

Sling Carried Away

"On reaching the sea again the embarkation of the plane proved to be fraught with considerable hazard. The machine had to be taken on to skids on the starboard side. To minimise rolling, the ship steamed slowly across the swell. Dancing and plunging uncomfortably the plane taxied alongside. At length a favorable moment arrived, and in an instant the tackle was hitched, and all hands on the ship threw their weight into an effort to lift the plane from the water before the next sea should catch it. Unfortunately, the right wing dipped, and a sea struck it, throwing so great a weight on the right hand sling attachments that they were carried away by the strain. Douglas and I managed to hang on dangling from the struts.

Then, as the remaining sling attachments on the plane were not able to support the water-logged machine, the final crash came, and the plane fell into the sea. Fortunately, it remained afloat, and was got on board in a battered condition. Mr. Douglas and I suffered no damage as a result of those wet and exciting moments.

Surrounded By Whales

"Having rescued the plane, we discovered that Mr. Matheson, one of the sailors who was some distance away rescuing lifebuoys and gear which had floated from the plane, had become an object of interest to several whales, which in a most disturbing manner sported and snorted round his small boat. Although a hardy fisherman, Mr. Matheson had never before been so closely associated with these monsters, and was obviously glad when the Discovery steamed alongside his cockleshell.

"Later in the evening I was relieved to be advised by the aviators that the damage was not beyond repair, and that, with help, they expected to have the plane ready for service again in a week."

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