

longer challenged, but it is quite apparent that parents are not as a rule favorable to the drastic extension of the principle set out in the Bill. Parents are required to enrol every child over seven and under nine years of age, provided there is a school within two miles of their place of residence, and every child between nine and fourteen if there is a school within three miles, unless such child "is receiving efficient instruction at home or elsewhere," or has been educated to the compulsory standard. Every child so enrolled is required to be in attendance at school on every occasion when the school is open, unless "reasonable excuse for non-attendance is shown." Reasonable excuses are, subject to the decision of the Minister, to include sickness, danger of being affected by infectious or contagious diseases, or temporary or permanent infirmity, and any other unavoidable cause. It is, however, stipulated that a medical certificate must be produced if required by the Minister.

Desirable as it undoubtedly is that attendance at school should be regular, these provisions must be admitted to be in excess of present requirements. That they would bear harshly on the poorer section of the community is apparent. Why, for instance, should parents be made subject to an obligation to call in the family doctor when a child is too unwell to attend school but not seriously indisposed? In many such cases the mother is both physician and nurse, and the little one receives all the attention that is really necessary. But there are other reasons than sickness for occasional absence from school of which parents are quite as competent to judge the merits as would be the Minister or "any person authorised by him in that behalf." A mother is surely entitled in circumstances making it necessary to avail herself of such small services as an elder child may be able to render her. An occasional holiday may be in the interest of the child and a convenience to the family. The provisions of the Bill for the establishment of higher primary and high schools are distinctly liberal, and will meet immediate requirements. Any public school may be declared a higher primary school, and on this being done the advanced classes are to be devoted to a two years' course in elementary science and manual and domestic subjects, in addition to instruction in the ordinary primary school subjects. High schools may be established only in cases where there will be a probable attendance of not fewer than forty pupils who have obtained a fifth class certificate or some other approved qualification.

Register, July 2/11

ANTARCTIC RESEARCH.

Arrival of Dr. Mawson.

Details of Polar Expedition.

Dr. Douglas Mawson, of Adelaide, the discoverer of the South Magnetic Pole, and who has been in England making arrangements for the antarctic scientific expedition which he is to lead this year, returned on Saturday by the R.M.S. Morea, and was welcomed at the Outer Harbour by many of his South Australian friends. Dr. Mawson, who appeared to be in the best of health, was interviewed later by a representative of The Register in reference to the work which is engaging his attention.

—The Two Parties.—

"I was late in bringing my project forward," said the young antarctic explorer, "and did not move in it until January last, when it was necessary for me to leave for England. My reason for delay was to allow Capt. Scott to secure from Australia all the money he could for his expedition, as it is right that the man first in the field should be given a fair chance. It will be a lasting benefit to the Empire if Capt. Scott reaches the south pole. My plans are very different to his. I shall not clash with him, as I am working on another area, and for a different object. Capt. Scott's objective is to secure the South Geographical Pole, and he has taken with him a specially qualified scientific staff, so as also to make observations in

all branches of science. The antarctic continent is about twice the size of Europe. Its great dimensions and possible future function in the economics of the world are not adequately understood by the public. I have followed the subject, and feel qualified to judge, and I think there is a great future for this continent—not a future such



DR. DOUGLAS MAWSON.

as that of Australia or any country with a more temperate climate, but in its own particular way it will certainly have a future. The part of the land holding forth most prospects is that nearest to the continent of Australia. It is to that part that my attention will be especially directed. Australia, if she will seize the opportunity, has a chance to lay claim by exploration to a large area of this territory.

—Plans for the Expedition.—

"My object is to proceed to this coastline most adjacent to Australia, to make charts and plans of its boundaries, and to collect scientific data as far as possible. Our party will be better equipped for that than any other which has set out. It is a scientific expedition, fathered and backed up by the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, and I have so far left no stone unturned to secure the best prospects by the use of suitable instruments and the most careful selection of staff. I do not intend to spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar, and everything is solid and of the best. Therefore, I expect that the energies of the committee and myself in Australia during the next few months will complete the arrangements satisfactorily. Before leaving for England I had the assurance of strong financial support from five leading citizens of Australia, the hearty co-operation and backing of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, and the sympathies of the leading members of the Federal Government. As I had not secured the Government backing at the time of my arrival in England, when it was necessary to go forward with the plans, I was in a rather difficult position, and only through the powerful assistance of Sir George Reid, Lord Denman, Lord Northcliffe, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and Mr. W. A. Horn (formerly of South Australia) that I could make important progress. Although I had delayed definite steps in purchasing and equipping a vessel, the time came when, if longer deferred, the project would have to be abandoned until next year on account of the season. Knowing what steps are being taken in Europe towards securing portions of the antarctic continent for foreign nations, I felt I was doing right in stepping boldly forward and purchasing and equipping the Aurora.

—The Ship Purchased.—

"The little vessel Aurora is one of the finest of her class. She carries about 650 tons of cargo, was built in Dundee of teak wood, and is practically a sister ship of the Terra Nova, now under commission by Capt. Scott in antarctic work. Her master is Capt. J. Davies, who commanded the Nimrod. The Aurora is a roomy vessel, quite different from the size of the Nimrod, which carried Shackleton's expedition. The success of that party was partially paralysed through not having sufficient room, and if it had had a ship of the capacity of the Aurora, I believe Shackleton would have reached the pole—the cramped quarters on board having been responsible for the death of several ponies.

—Support in the United Kingdom.—

"As soon as it became known that a British antarctic expedition was to proceed south, many of the old and well-established firms in Europe kindly offered substantial donations of their wares. In this way the greater part of the provisions, and a considerable amount of other general equipment, has been received. I have steadfastly refused to take English or foreign preparations of similar classes to those produced on a large scale in Australia or New Zealand, so that the Australian producers would not be debarred of a fine opportunity of demonstrating the value of their goods. Such commodities as spirits were offered on a most liberal scale; in fact, we could almost have floated the Aurora in whisky, for every whisky firm in the United Kingdom offered to supply the expedition. We appreciated their liberality, but found it necessary to refuse any more than a few cases to be used for medicinal purposes.

—Plans of the Party.—

"The Aurora is now about to take her departure from London, and will sail direct for Hobart via the Cape. It is expected that she will arrive in Tasmania toward the end of October. The ship has auxiliary steam, and can do nine knots an hour; but on the way out she will rely mainly on her sails. She will leave Hobart for Melbourne and Sydney to collect cargo, and if there is time she will visit Adelaide also before returning to Tasmania. We hope to go south from Hobart about the end of November, and expect to make our first base at the 156th parallel of east longitude. After landing one party there the ship will proceed west, making plans of the coastline. About 500 miles westward of the first depot it is intended to land a second and smaller party with another hut, and to allow them to winter separately from the rest. The Aurora will then proceed further westward, with the hope of landing a third party another 500 miles from the second base. Thus about 2,500 miles of coastline will be divided into four sections by the three depots, and sledging parties will proceed east and west and make surveys, and geological and other scientific examinations. I expect to land with the first party, as we will have a larger scientific programme to carry out there. After dropping the third party the ship, coal permitting, will proceed further westward, and make additional investigations in antarctic waters. When the coal is used up she must proceed north, the latitudes where the strong westerly winds will bring her to Australian waters, and we expect she will get to Fremantle early in April, 1912. There she will load with coal. She will not remain idle, but will be employed in taking systematic soundings, dredging, and other oceanographical survey work on a zig-zag course as far south as the ice

will permit her to go. She is particularly well fitted out for this work. No ship has ever been in those waters with a better equipment. The Aurora, with scientific apparatus, supplied partly by the Admiralty, and largely by the Prince of Monaco, who is an enthusiast in oceanographical research. I spent a day with the latter in Paris, and he pointed out that there is absolutely nothing known of the scientific conditions of the greater part of the Southern Ocean, and there is scarcely a sounding on record in reference to it. As that particular part of the coastline along which we intend to operate has not been visited before we are much in doubt as to how our work will have to be conducted. When on the Nimrod we saw 50 miles of this new land, but it has not been landed upon, and the conditions are probably different from those in the neighbourhood of McMurdo Sound, where the previous expeditions have wintered.

—Sledge and Aeroplane.—

"For sledging purposes I intend to restrict myself to dogs, as sledging over sea ice with ponies is not safe. I have secured 50 dogs from Greenland, some of the best teams available, which were selected for me by the Danish Government. For exploratory work and for depot laying, in the event of good surface being met with, I have obtained a combined aeroplane and motor sledge. In half an hour this can be converted from a flying machine to a sledge, and vice versa. It is the heaviest, but the best monoplane made, being constructed of nickel steel, and it is the make that seems most likely to be adopted by the British military authorities. I have left instructions for it to be sent on to Australia at an early date, so that demonstrations of its capabilities can be given in the Commonwealth. The demonstrations will be of value to our own defence officials. I have taken air trips myself, but it would be useless for me to take an appliance of this kind if I were not prepared at the same time to secure the services of a thoroughly qualified aviator. This has been done, and Lieut. H. E. Watkins, of the Essex Regiment, who has been flying for three years, and in that time has taken up 300 passengers, is in charge of the aeroplane, which will carry a passenger in addition to the driver and a good deal of gear. Lieut. Watkins was described by Mr. Grahame White as 'the safest flyer in England.' Mrs. Scott, the wife of Capt. Scott, is an enthusiast in aviation, and she imbued me with the idea of using the aeroplane, and also arranged for both Lieut. Watkins and his machine.

—Posts for Australians.—

"As I always intended, I have kept practically the whole of the positions on the staff free for appointments to be made by nomination by a special committee of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. All these are to be filled by Australians, but I had to appoint five specialists, viz., the aviator and a specialist in motor engines; Dr. Mertz, a champion Swiss iceman, who has been spending six weeks with the Prince of Monaco in the Mediterranean, perfecting himself in dredging, sounding, and other deep-sea work; Mr. Frank Wyld, an expert sledger, who was a member of both the Scott and Shackleton's parties; and Lieut. B. E. S. Ninnis, of the Royal Fusiliers, a specialist in field-survey work and sketching, as well as a specially good sledger.

—An Australian Advertisement.—

"I shall now be busy (with my headquarters in Adelaide) from now up to the time of sailing in securing the co-operation of Australians in the work. I am convinced that this exploration is going to be of permanent advantage to Australia, and it will afford the world an opportunity of seeing what Australians can do. The project is well founded and well set out, and I feel confident that the residents of the Commonwealth will not allow it to languish for want of funds when the conditions have been explained to them. In London I found the people most enthusiastic. This high-minded project has done much to bring Australia prominently before the countries of Europe. They are looking on the Commonwealth in a new light, and it is a fresh idea to them that Australia is strong enough to investigate and claim new territory. Lord Denman, the new Governor-General, gave me some money for the expedition, and then went to the British Government with a recommendation in my favour, with the result that it voted £2,000 towards the purchase of the Aurora."