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The Australasian Antarctic Expedition: Discussion

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be possible; such journeys would be accomplished with seal meat and blubber as food, collected *en route*. Scientific knowledge of this area is entirely wanting.

The magnetic charting will be of value to navigation. The want of geological data from there is keenly felt, especially in Australia, where there is a dependence of the local geology upon that of Antarctica. Biological researches must be rich in new discoveries; it may be that there is the habitat of some of the rare types of seals and Antarctic birds. Certainly the southern ocean, in that vicinity, abounds in whale and seal life, and if we can establish convenient harbours or discover sub-Antarctic islands there is sure to follow commercial enterprise on these lines.

The meteorology of this area is very important in connection with shipping along the southern coast of Australia and New Zealand. It is thought that the erection there of a wireless weather station will be of very great service in connection with Australasian weather reports.

In putting ashore the landing parties the ship will coast along from east to west, continuing to explore the continent towards Africa after dropping the last party. An effort will be made to discover whether a deep gulf does exist to the west of Gaussberg. Driven northward by the advent of autumn, the ship will proceed to Australia under sail by the route shown in the accompanying map.

The winter will be spent in oceanographic work on the lines adopted by the Prince of Monaco. Deep-sea trawlings from between 500 and 2000 fathoms will be made at intervals in this as yet unexplored southern ocean, and almost every species brought up must be new to science.

The PRESIDENT (before the paper): When opening a meeting dealing with Antarctic exploration, I cannot refrain from expressing the satisfaction which every Fellow of this Society must feel at the safe landing which Captain Scott has made on the Antarctic continent, and at the prosperous beginning of his expedition. I say this, well remembering that he was unable to land his eastern party on King Edward VII. Land, and that, finding a Norwegian expedition already on the Great Barrier, that party landed at Cape Adare. One must remember that it is only in civilized lands where the traveller can reasonably expect to escape all misfortunes; whilst, as for true exploration, its course never does run quite smoothly. These misfortunes are to be regretted, but they do not in the slightest degree dim our confident expectations that Captain Scott will produce splendid scientific results, or shake our hopes of his reaching the Pole. As to the Norwegian expedition, it will be best to say but little about it until we have fuller accounts of their proceedings, both past and future. I am glad, however, to take this opportunity of expressing my own personal opinion that no explorer attains any vested rights merely by exploration, and that we should therefore welcome all foreign scientific competition on the Antarctic continent, wherever it may appear, if information is given in good time in advance. I hope also that cordial relationship will always exist between all Norwegian and British expeditions, as appears in this instance to have been the case. But I cannot refrain from expressing my regret that Captain Amundsen did not give us an opportunity of discussing his Antarctic proposals before he left Europe for the south,

Passing on to the subject of to-night's lecture, Dr. Mawson, the Australian explorer, whom we so cordially welcome, is well known to us all as one of the most valued assistants in Sir Ernest Shackleton's last Antarctic expedition. Dr. Mawson is an Englishman by birth, who left this country early in life for his new home in the Antipodes. He was educated at Sydney University, and in the course of his education, and afterwards, he studied mining engineering, chemistry, and biology, whilst geology has always been his favourite science. With this record, it is evident that there are few men better qualified than he is to lead an Antarctic expedition, and we shall therefore, I am sure, all listen with the greatest interest to his proposed plan of operations.

The PRESIDENT (after the paper) : In listening to Dr. Mawson's account of his proposed expedition every one must have been struck at the scientific character of the work he intends to do. Science really means nothing more than knowledge; and, when looking at the map of the southern hemisphere, we see that great continent of Australia and opposite to it another great continent—the Antarctic continent—we cannot feel surprised that the people of Australia are determined that, as far as in them lies, their present ignorance about this other great continent shall cease. Australians are wise from every point of view in endeavouring to hasten the solution of the problems thus raised. Truth should be sought for truth's sake, without any view of the reward, although ample reward will very often unexpectedly be obtained. Dr. Mawson speaks of the possibility of in future erecting a station on the Antarctic continent from which wireless messages to Australia concerning the weather could be sent every day. I believe the cost of such a station might be recovered in a very few years; for Australia will never be able to get any predictions of the general course of the weather for the coming seasons until meteorological stations are established on the Antarctic continent, where daily records of the weather are kept. If it were possible to prophesy a drought in advance, it would be an enormous advantage to Australia from the point of view of agriculture. Dr. Mawson's expedition to the Antarctic will be a step in the right direction, for he will ascertain where stations could be established, and he will also himself be taking valuable meteorological observations. As to his scientific results, I should like to take this opportunity of saying that the Council of this Society are so convinced of their value that we have decided to make a grant of £500 to this expedition. We wish we could do more for him, but I trust that he and his Australian friends will regard this as a token of our good-will and our strong sympathy with him in all his efforts. We are glad to welcome here to-night Sir George Reid, the Commissioner for Australia. I cannot help wishing that in his presence I was able to announce a larger grant, because we in England always look back with the greatest satisfaction to the great help Australia gave to all our British expeditions.

Sir GEORGE REID : I came here from a feeling of admiration I have for the gentleman who has delivered this address. During Sir Ernest Shackleton's expedition, Dr. Mawson was one of the chief men in that most heroic expedition who so nearly achieved the South Pole. Dr. Mawson has talked to us of great things with the stamp of great performances behind his utterances. Those who have read the history of the Shackleton expedition know that there has hardly been an expedition sent down in that direction which endured greater hardships. The worst of it is, that people who believe in these things have not got the money. There is nothing so easy as asking other people to give a thousand or two; I find it is the easiest thing in the world. The Australian Government has helped a number of British expeditions, why should not the British Government help this expedition? I quite admit that, especially

with the affairs of a nation like the British, which has such enormous liabilities, economy is a grand thing; but I think there is even room under the most economical Government for a little grant to be made to this Australian expedition. The Royal Geographical Society has done for Dr. Mawson's expedition a great deal more than the amount—the generous amount considering the calls upon their finances—which they are subscribing to this expedition. The fact that this most distinguished Society, whose fame is held in high esteem throughout the whole of the civilized world, has approved his project ought to strengthen his appeal to the wealthier people, to whom the task of finding the money should not be very great. I want to express, on behalf of the people of Australia, their admiration for this young Australian, and their hope that he will succeed in his great enterprise.

Lord LAMINGTON: For five years I was closely associated with Queensland and Australia, but it was a part of Australia which had not very much to do with the Antarctic. But I think anybody who has been in the Antipodes feels, naturally, that that great continent should do a great deal in the way of exploring in the Antarctic ocean. Our President said he did not know sufficiently whether any material result would follow from the expedition that Dr. Mawson is going to undertake, but he did mention the fact of the great benefit which might result from the establishment of a wireless telegraph station, and I understand from Dr. Mawson that he does believe there will be great advantages, and material advantages, from the exploration of the mineral wealth that lies in the Antarctic. What appears to trouble Dr. Mawson now far more than the possible or certain hardships that await him, is the difficulty of getting the funds together, but I am confident in ultimate success of the appeal that he has made. The Australians will take too great a pride in such an expedition for one moment to allow it to be impossible for the realization of it on account of money. Whether in work or in play, when they take a matter up they put their whole heart and soul into that project, and this is the case, I think, with Dr. Mawson. His qualifications have been described to us by our President, and the way in which he described to us what he hopes to accomplish, and his accurate knowledge of all that may be ascertained by this expedition, I think enforces his arguments that all possible public support ought to be given in furtherance of his object. I hope he will have absolute success in his project.

Sir ERNEST SHACKLETON: I will be very brief. Naturally, Dr. Mawson having been a member of the late expedition that I had the honour to command, it is of great interest to me to see him going again, and I have spoken to him and strongly advised him not to go £35,000 in debt. He is making great efforts not to go like that, and I must say the support given to him by the Royal Geographical Society is of more value than the actual money that is given, because this, the greatest geographical society of the world, the most influential, though it may not have the funds, has the name, and when Dr. Mawson is able to cable to Australia to-morrow that the Royal Geographical Society has given to him the same amount of money that it gave to Captain Scott, it may make Australia look up and take even more interest than it does at present. I feel that as regards Australia, we on this side should do everything possible to help, for Australia has always helped English expeditions. I wish Dr. Mawson, my old comrade, every success in the scientific work he is undertaking. It may not have the glamour of the Pole around it, but it is work that will stand for ever if successfully accomplished. As to Captain Scott, who is away now in the Far South, we, sitting here in comfort to-night, only wish him success in the undertaking he is doing—to plant the Union Jack flag on the geographical south pole. We regret he did not reach King Edward VII. Land,

but there is a lot of work to be done in the Antarctic, as Dr. Mawson has shown us to-night, and we wish him success in the future, and everything he has to do. It is a hard thing to raise funds.

Dr. MILL: All the speakers have laid stress on the importance of securing funds for this expedition, and that, after all, should be the easiest part of it, because there are hundreds, even thousands, of people who are perfectly able to give money, and large sums of money, for such work, but there are very few people indeed who have the qualifications of Dr. Mawson for applying that money to the purpose for which it might be given. For one born explorer who is an enthusiast for his work, there have always been in the past dozens, if not hundreds, of people who have the money, and who can be brought to see that the best use they can make of it is to enable a man like Dr. Mawson to do the special work for which he came into the world. There is no part of the Antarctic area which is so promising for exploration as that which lies nearest to Australia, which Dr. Mawson has determined to explore. Every expedition which has gone along that coast in the right direction made important discoveries, and initiated long controversies; but no steamer has ever attempted seriously to make exploration on that coast, and the first steamer that goes there following the coast as closely as the ice may permit from Cape Adare towards the Gaussberg, is absolutely certain to make great and important discoveries, perhaps also to give rise to new controversies that will stimulate exploration right on throughout the century. My earnest hope is that Dr. Mawson will not start with a programme as large as his own enthusiasm. It would be a great mistake to attempt to do too much on the first expedition, because I hope this first expedition will be such a success that the people of Australasia will refuse to follow the example set by this country of discarding the whole Antarctic machinery after the expedition comes home, and will keep exploration going on until the whole of the mystery of that coast has been definitely cleared up, to the eternal honour of Australasia.

Mr. R. N. RUDMOSE BROWN: At this late hour I do not want to detain you any longer, but I should like to join in the good wishes that have been expressed to Dr. Mawson. I think there is something undeniably heroic in his programme, in that he has left out the pole. Now, the attainment of the pole and the penetration of the interior of the Antarctic is certainly most important, but there is just as good work and as important work to be done by an expedition that does not include the pole in its programme, although of course there is not the same sensational aspect in such a programme, and consequently it will be more difficult to raise the money. I do not want to be held to disparage a southern journey—far from it. It is very important we should reach the pole along many different meridians, but at the same time it is equally important that we should not neglect the outlying regions of the Antarctic, and Dr. Mawson has set a good example in that way—an example which it is high time that geographical societies were able to teach the public was worth following, because it is almost impossible to convince the public that there is anything in polar exploration except the attainment of the pole. I can only express my good wishes and the good wishes of the other members of the Scottish Antarctic expedition, and I am asked by Dr. Bruce to convey his good wishes to Dr. Mawson in his forthcoming expedition. I trust he will not have great difficulties in raising the funds for this very worthy object.

The PRESIDENT: Finally, in the name of every one here present, let me bid Dr. Mawson and his companions God-speed on their arduous journey.