

SCENIC BEAUTIES OF NATURAL COOL STORE

THE ANTARCTIC

Chains of Rocky Peaks

VOYAGE OF THE DISCOVERY

Canberra, February 24.

Full of incident is the voyage of the Discovery, as is apparent from the report of Sir Douglas Mawson, by wireless message dated February 17.

On February 14, in rising wind, we steamed along a magnificent stretch of mountainous coast, states the report. Here, high-peaked ranges extend from the coast in a south-westerly direction, fading from sight in the distant hinterland. These chains of rocky peaks rear themselves high above the island, which from sea level on the coast, rises to great heights in the interior, submerging all less elevated topographical features. From a scenic standpoint this portion of MacRobertson Land is certainly one of the most attractive sections of the Antarctic continent.

Dangerous Reefs

Our attention was soon diverted from this striking scenery by the discovery that the floor of the off-lying seas was extraordinarily uneven, repeatedly shoaling from great depths to dangerous submerged reefs. The ship had to progress with the greatest caution. Breaking seas gave warning of some of the dangers, but we actually passed over several five-fathom shoals without any indication other than soundings. Small islands began to appear in numbers, some as far as 25 miles from the mainland coast. The easterly wind had, by late in the afternoon, risen to a gale, and Captain MacKenzie headed the vessel to the open sea.

In thick falling snow and high wind we groped our way north, hoping to evade a collision with the ever-present icebergs. Great relief came with daylight, for we were given a range of vision, though limited by flying snow. It was then apparent that, in the darkness, the vessel had miraculously passed through an almost continuous line of large grounded bergs and was then in their lee.

The ship was found to be 40 miles north of the coast, and had 120 fathoms of water beneath her keel. The line of bergs made a fine breakwater, consequently we have maintained this position until now, when the gale has subsided sufficiently to contemplate steaming into land again.

Good Haul of Fish

In the morning, with calming conditions, the opportunity was taken to test this off shore bank for fish. The small otter trawl was paid out and soon returned with a splendid catch of vertebrate and invertebrate life. Among the items of more popular interest there were in the net about 200 fish of a number of varieties, and some large octopuses, one of quite unusual proportions.

Damage to Aeroplane

The aviators have now repaired the damage to the undercarriage of the aeroplane, sustained on the last flight owing to a collision with floating ice. Transparent ice floating on the water is difficult to see, especially when the machine is plunging along at high speed on the waves preparatory to taking off. Mr. Campbell caught sight of several pieces of such ice when it was too late to avoid them completely, though he made a fine save from complete destruction through swerving, and thus narrowly missing, within a few inches, one large mass, but fouled small pieces which taken between the floats, merely crumpled the distance bar.

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20-years-old Soup for Mawson Party EXPLOITS IN PACK ICE

Soup out of natural cold storage, in which it had been preserved for 20 years, was an unexpected treat for members of the British Australian New Zealand Antarctic Expedition, which returned to Australia in March.

In the last of the series of articles written by Sir Douglas Mawson, the leader of the expedition, he describes the visit made to Cape Denison, where he had spent two winters on a former expedition.

In an old living hut, which had withstood 20 years of ceaseless violent wind, he found soups and other items of the victualling of the 1911 expedition, all in an excellent state of preservation. These were consumed with relish in the wardroom of the Discovery.

Snow Blast Erosion

The hut had been buried in packed snow most of the time, and when it was unsealed, great masses of delicate ice crystals were seen hanging in festoons. Snow-blast erosion had reduced the thickness of some blanks by half an inch.

The wireless installation on Macquarie Island, also established in 1911, was found to be a total wreck. Only the strongest structures can long withstand the constant winds and drizzling rains of that storm-swept region.

Sanctuary for Seals

Nobody had lived on Macquarie Island for years. A sealing licence at one time issued was suspended in 1916, it then being resolved by the Tasmanian Government to maintain this outpost as a sanctuary for sub-Antarctic bird and seal life. The party was interested to find, from papers left in the sealers' huts and an inscription on a grave, dated May, 1918, evidence of poaching for two years after the licence expired.

The respite from slaughter enjoyed by the animals during the last decade had a salutary effect, and several species formerly in danger of extermination were found to be well represented. Sea elephants had increased, and the royal penguin had bred on a stupendous scale.

Many whaling vessels were encountered, and much-needed coal was obtained from two of them.

Magnetic South Shifts

After six days' battling against a hurricane a landing was made at Cape Denison, where magnetic determinations by Mr. A. L. Kennedy (physicist) showed that the South Magnetic Pole had steadily moved to the north-west during the last 20 years and now was probably not more than 250 miles away from Cape Denison.

Driven by an easterly gale, the Discovery was later, according to reckoning, in danger of being forced on to the towering ice wall of Termination Tongue, which had been mapped by the 1911 expedition as the northernmost extremity of the Shackleton shelf ice sheet. A course, calculated to bring the vessel on the western or lee side of Termination Tongue, was set, but to the astonishment of the party the Tongue was found to exist no longer, many large grounded bergs being all that remained. It had broken up in the interval since last seen in 1914.

New Discoveries Named

Seaplane flights were made continually. Flight-Lieutenant S. Campbell took Sir Douglas aloft on February 9, and at a height of 5,200 ft. the leader saw ice-covered land in the distance, south of the furthest south point reached by the Challenger in 1874. This discovery was named Princess Elizabeth Land. On February 11 Flight-Lieutenant Campbell and Lieutenant K. Oom (Naval Surveyor) got into the air and Oom made a sketch map of a great extent of the coast. A sea of open water, landlocked on the south and west and limited by pack-ice on the sweep from north to west, was named McKenzie Sea after the captain of the Discovery.

Bowling Home By Sail

Dwindling coal supplies prompted a speedy return and for days, with only a couple of half-furled rags on the foremast, the Discovery drove before the gale, across mountainous seas, at a speed more than twice that of her best steaming pace under normal conditions. Hobart was reached on March 19.

Thus was completed a busy season's work which has resulted in the discovery of new lands, in the charting of a considerable stretch of Antarctic coast, in the corroboration or otherwise of certain doubtful problems, and in the collection of a vast amount of scientific data which made concrete the knowledge of a wide arc of the Antarctic, formerly but little known.



Sir Douglas Mawson

SIR DOUGLAS MAWSON HOME

"Antarctic Cruise Was Most Successful," He Declares

IMPRESSED WITH POSSIBILITIES OF WHALING

"Generally speaking, our cruise in the Antarctic was most successful," said Sir Douglas Mawson, who returned from Melbourne by the express this morning. "We covered more ground than expected."

"The value of that part of the globe was never better illustrated than this year, when 42 or 43 whaling enterprises comprising a mother ship and six to 10 catchers obtained full capacity catches of oil."

"One whaler which we met south of New Zealand had obtained oil valued at £500,000 during the short four months' season, despite a drop of £4 10/ a ton in the value of the product."

SIR Douglas said that another whaler, the Kosmos, which was operating almost exactly south of Adelaide, obtained oil valued at £900,000 during that short period. Others had made tremendous catches.

"The whalers are operated partly by British companies and partly by Norwegian concerns," he added. "The British ships are largely manned by men from Norway. Men are also picked up in New Zealand and Hobart."

"If the industry is properly administered it should continue for a long time. Last year there was too much killing of whales. There should be some restrictive measures in future so that the industry can continue for all time. Discussion with that object in view has already taken place between Britain and Norway and by the League of Nations."

"Australia is situated closer to the whaling region than any other country. Eventually the Commonwealth should share in the benefits that accrue therefrom. Even if Norwegian companies made Australia their base it would be beneficial. One organisation which operates from Hobart spends £40,000 a year in that city in food-stuffs and equipment."

NEW LANDS DISCOVERED

"There are many other industries that could be exploited in the Antarctic, including seals, penguins, and edible fish. During the cruise just completed we covered much ground. This was made possible by the use of aeroplanes from which members of the party were able to map large areas of land."

"We found that the Antarctic ice came much closer to Australia than for many years past. This must have something to do with the climatic conditions in Australia since June of last year. We are trying to trace the effects of conditions in the Antarctic on the Australian climate."

"Several new lands were discovered during this trip, including Banzare Land and a long stretch of new coast west of Queen Mary Land. This was called Princess Elizabeth Land on account of the interest

shown by the Duke and Duchess of York in the expedition.

"Much mapping was also done in MacRobertson Land, where there was little pack ice this year. We were able to steam along and land almost anywhere."

"Additions to the geography of the world in the two visits recently completed have been tremendous. We visited Knox Land, which was discovered by Admiral Wilka (an American) with five ships in 1840. Almost all of the exploration that has been done over one-third of the Antarctic has been accomplished by the Australasian expedition which I led in 1911-14 and those just completed."

"We have done a great deal of meteorological investigating—sending up small balloons each day to ascertain the different strata of air. We brought back much information about the upper air currents. We did much research work regarding the character of the sea water at various depths and the surfaces at the bottom. Much information concerning temperatures of the water, its movements, and the rate of movement was also gained."

MARINE LIFE SPECIMENS

"Prof. T. Harvey Johnston has brought back 30 to 40 tons of specimens of marine life for investigation. This is sufficient to provide years of research work."

Questioned about the future movements of the Discovery, Sir Douglas said that it was in dock at Williamstown. It belonged to the Falkland Islands Government, which had asked that it be delivered back without fail on July 15. This meant that arrangements for its return would have to be hastened.

It had been hoped to take the vessel to Sydney, but that was now impossible. The Discovery would leave for Melbourne in a few days. It would visit Wellington on the return journey, and would call at a South American port for coal. The next stop would be London.

Sir Douglas said that there was a tremendous amount of work still to be done in the preparation of scientific reports. He had not given consideration to his future movements, and would not do so until these reports were published. In them lay the real value of the expedition.

(Interview with Lady Mawson on Page 5. Illustration on Back Page)

MAWSON SIGHTS
R. 3/2/31 NEW LAND
Plane Badly Damaged
After Reconnaissance

TALE OF WHALES
 (By wireless from Sir Douglas Mawson on board the Discovery. All rights reserved.)
 Latitude 65.10, Longitude 107, Monday.—
 During an aeroplane reconnaissance today we saw the fourth new landfall sighted between Adelle Land and Queen Mary Land. From an altitude of 5,700 ft. I had a fine view of the line of a high ice plateau on the southern horizon. No rock outcrop was visible. The continuity of the Antarctic coast throughout this sector appears to be effectively demonstrated.

In descending the plane was badly damaged in the attempt to lift it from the sea on to the ship. There was a heavy swell and a wind blowing across the swell. When the plane was on the lifting tackle a wave caught the right wing and smashed part of the tackle.

Everything loose fell into the sea, but Pilot 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 waterlogged 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.

Douglas and I suffered no damage as a result of these wet and exciting moments. The aviators expect to have the plane ready for use again within a week.

SEA OF WHALES
 Having rescued the plane we then discovered that Matheson, one of the sailors, who was some distance away rescuing gear which had floated from the plane, had become the object of interest of several whales, which, in a most disturbing manner, sported and snorted around his small boat.

Though a hardy fisherman, Matheson had never before been so closely associated with these monsters, and was obviously glad when the Discovery steamed alongside his cockle-shell.

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DISCOVERY IN BUSY ANTARCTIC SEAS
Meets Three Whaling Ships And Many Chasers

(By wireless from Sir Douglas Mawson on board the Discovery. All Rights Reserved.)

It is becoming more and more obvious to us that the Antarctic this season is a busy shipping centre.

Repairs to the aeroplane have been completed, but unfavourable weather has limited its use. One flight made by Campbell and Douglas proved the extension of the heavy pack to the south for at least 30 miles.

On Friday morning we sighted a whale chaser and next day bore down on the factory ship the Norwegian vessel Falk. When we arrived she was just finishing coaling from the Swedish vessel Vestris, which, acting as a collier and oil transporter, had brought down a cargo of Durban coal. Though the Vestris was just on the point of leaving, the whaling managing (Mr. Lars Anderson) kindly agreed to transfer about 20 tons to the Discovery.

We learned that another whaler belonging to the same company had gone east to operate to the north of Queen Mary Land.

TWO MORE SHIPS
 Approaching the 80th meridian the main pack field was found to recede to the south just as was the case in the days of the Challenger expedition. Now in sight of summer there is open water in this region where last season in December the Discovery threaded her way through an enormous area of pack ice.

Progress to the south during the last 24 hours has been rapid, but soundings are still deep, doubtless indicating a corresponding recession of land to the south.

This morning, as we emerged into this open sea from an area of loose pack through which our vessel had travelled all night we are surprised to see many chasers and a large factory ship, the Tafelberg, of Capetown. Within an hour another factory ship, the Southern Express, came into view.

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