

DR. MAWSON'S EXPEDITION.

STATE AID WANTED.

£5,000 ASKED FOR.

An influential deputation waited upon the Premier (Hon. J. Verran) on Monday morning, with a request that the Government donate £5,000 towards the expenses of the Mawson Antarctic expedition.

Mr. T. H. Smeaton, M.P., in introducing the speakers, said the deputation was of a unique kind. Many requests had been made in that room in regard to local matters, but this matter extended far beyond the borders of the State, though not beyond the sphere which the State should touch. Dr. Mawson was organising an expedition for scientific purposes, and not necessarily to reach the South Pole. The desire was to add to the knowledge of the great Antarctic Continent, and probably bring profit to the people of Australia. Nothing could be done without money. This work was of great importance, and the country of which Dr. Mawson was such a distinguished citizen, was the country to which they should look for help. Dr. Mawson had received support in other parts of the world, and now they asked the Premier to say that the State would take a share of the burden. It would never do for South Australia to stand back when others were so valorously coming forward with assistance.

The Chief Justice (Sir S. J. Way) said the object they were seeking was one of world-wide interest. Great interest had been awakened in the Antarctic continent during the past 20 years. In area it was greater than Europe and Australia put together. It was within nine days' steam of Hobart, and therefore was practically close to our doors. There were now several expeditions in the field, and Dr. Mawson, with the magnanimity characteristic of explorers, had stood aside from agitating for his expedition until Captain Scott's plans had been completed. Dr. Mawson, thought, however, that Australia and New Zealand should have the honor of exploring the long stretch of the Antarctic continent nearest to Australia for a distance of from 1,500 to 2,000 miles from Cape Adair to Gaussberg. Only once in the history of the world—and then for a few hours—was that portion of the southern continent trodden by the foot of man. From a scientific point of view the value of the expedition would be worth ten times the amount of its cost, and from the practical side it would be a great advantage to Australia to have a knowledge of one of the great forces which had to do with the meteorology of this continent. (Hear, hear.) This would be effected by the establishment of wireless telegraphy between the Antarctic coastline and Australia. It was also believed that valuable guano and mineral deposits would be discovered there. The opinion was generally held by scientists that the Antarctic and Australia at one time formed one great continent, and therefore the geological conditions were similar. Though he was not such a young man as the Premier, he expected to see the day when Cornish miners, trained in the Peninsula mines and at Broken Hill, would be searching for the metalliferous treasures which, in the opinion of Professor David, were to be found in the recesses of that part of the southern continent. The great coal deposits had been traced for hundreds of miles, and in all probability would furnish an ample store of coal to furnish Australian needs for centuries. The expedition would be under the control of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science and the various Geographical Societies. The greatest good fortune of the expedition, however, lay in the fact that they would have as its leader the one man who, above all others, was best qualified to lead such a venture, their distinguished fellow-citizen, Dr. Mawson. (Cheers.) The scientists of Australia had already contributed nearly the whole of their accumulated capital (£2,000) for the support of the expedition, and Mr. Barr Smith had generously given £1,000. Many other equally handsome gifts had been received in Australia and Great Britain. The sum of £20,000 had already been spent, and the balance required was stated to be £20,000 or £30,000. Professor David thought the latter sum would be required, and he felt that would be the prudent estimate. They had to remember that the expedition would be out for two years. Fifty young Australians would accompany Dr. Mawson in his great undertaking. Twenty-five would be at sea and 25 would be engaged under Dr. Mawson in the exploration work. It would be a pity if for want of funds the usefulness of the expedition were jeopardised or the lives of young Australians endangered. Every man and woman in Australia would feel a sense of shame if the expedition went out inadequately financed. (Hear, hear.) They hoped therefore that the Government would respond liberally. (Cheers.)

Mr. G. H. Prosser (president of the Chamber of Commerce) said he supported the request from the commercial side, as he fully believed the expedition would be of inestimable value to the commercial world. The request in his opinion was a reasonable one.

Professor Henderson (representing the University) said he happened to be president of the geological and historical section of the British Science Association in Australia. As evidence of the genuine character of this expedition he wished to say the Science Association had had the matter before it in Sydney last January, and a committee of 50 appointed to deal with it had voted £1,000 to the expedition without a dissentient vote, although they knew they possessed only £3,000. As professor of history he had in his readings discovered that the people who had gone ahead were those who had had enough spirit individually and nationally to push a little further than others, and were prepared to take just a few more risks. (Hear, hear.) In this expedition they had an example of that. It was not the resources of a country, but the resources of its people which would make a people great.

The Acting Mayor of Adelaide (Alderman Bonython) supported the request on behalf of the citizens. Dr. Mawson was a citizen of Adelaide, and if the South Australian Government led with a grant of money he was sure other States would follow suit. To what State should the leader of the expedition look other than to his own State? Adelaide claimed him as a worthy citizen, and he hoped the State would come to the assistance of the expedition. (Cheers.)

Mr. A. W. Piper, K.C. (president of the Royal Geographical Society) said his society had passed a motion pointing out that the opportunity which lay at the door of Australia would not be there long. The Royal Geographical Society might be mainly scientific, but it recognised how much the British nation was indebted to scientific exploration for the development of its Empire. He felt that Australia's claim to be a nation could not be established until it had set out and taken up a part of the world's work which was not contained within its own coastline. (Cheers.)

Dr. J. C. Verco, as president of the Royal Society in South Australia, supported, and said that the expedition would be thoroughly equipped with instruments of precision. Their field for work would be a wide one, and the opportunities very great. It was certain that they would make valuable scientific observations, and bring back much scientific knowledge.

Mr. E. C. Vardon (president of the Chamber of Manufactures) said Australians had supported many other expeditions that were not of local import. Therefore how much greater was the necessity for help for this purely Australian project?

Dr. Mawson said if he were to launch out and explain the objects of the expedition in detail it would occupy too much of the Premier's time, but he wished to lay a few of the main points before the Government. Suppose, he said, they read in the newspapers the following day a report that a huge continent, twice the size of Australia, had suddenly appeared in the Southern Ocean, at no greater distance from Australia than across our own continent, would not that cause excitement? Would they not send someone to discover all there was to discover about it, to ascertain its resources and secure all possible scientific facts? This was not a new continent that they proposed to go to, but it had suddenly come to light, and had been little examined. The part they proposed to go to was entirely unknown, but the part that had been examined had proved that it would be of great interest and economic value. The portion in the Australian quadrant appeared to have greater possibilities than any other. Between Australia and this southern land there were 5 million square miles of ocean that was tracked by few vessels, and which might contain many islands valuable to Australia as naval or commercial bases. This southern land was too near Australia to be left without attention. If the South Australian Government would vote £5,000 the finances would be increased and £5,000 was not 3d. per head of the population of the State. Such a vote would stamp the expedition as more South Australian than anything else, and would immediately secure other State grants that would remove all anxiety in regard to the finances. He believed the expedition would be of great value to the State. In the first place four South Australians, and possibly more, would accompany the party, and receive valuable scientific training, which must be worth something to the State. Then there would be valuable material that would be presented to the national museums of Australia. They would be of considerable commercial value, and of intrinsic worth to the museums. If the Government would not make this grant those

materials, and other things, which they brought back with them, would have to be sold, and then if the Museum authorities wanted them they would have to pay, as would other people, and, probably, would approach the Government for a grant then.

The Premier said he fully appreciated all that had been said as to the debt the world owed to its scientists, who were daily revealing the hidden forces and wealth of nature. He was quite in sympathy with the object of the expedition which was about to set out under the direction of Dr. Mawson, and realised that South Australia had a duty to perform in lending support to the venture. He would bring the request of the deputation before his colleague in Cabinet during the afternoon. He was sorry the request had not come earlier, before the Estimates were under consideration, but he could promise that it would be considered carefully.

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CANADA AND AMERICA.

DANGERS OF THE RECIPROCITY TREATY.

The following points are taken from an instructive paper on "The Canadian-American Reciprocity Treaty," read before the Adelaide University Economic Society by Mr. Edward V. Clark, B.Sc. (Lecturer on Electrical Engineering at the Adelaide University). Mr. Clark briefly outlines the drafted agreement thus:—"Free passage across the border in either direction, to be allowed to most unmanufactured foodstuffs, including wheat, cattle, fruit, vegetables, and dairy produce, as also to timber, wood pulp, printing paper, tinplates, barbed wire, and a few other items. Then other goods, mostly foodstuffs in a prepared state—flour, oatmeal, fresh and salt meats, canned goods, and so on, are to be passed at a named duty, the same in both directions, somewhat lower than the rates now in force. Further, most agricultural machinery will be subject to a 15 per cent. duty either way, while certain other duties are agreed for goods in one direction only. The proposal affects no less than 48 per cent. of Canada's total exports to the States, or 90 per cent. of her dutiable exports, on last year's figures, while 16 per cent. of the trade the other way is affected. These figures also show that the concessions in tariff given by the States are far greater than she has demanded in return. No wonder Canadians stood spellbound at this great change in the attitude of America, which repudiated reciprocity in 1866, and has consistently refused it ever since."

Mr. Clark traces the history of the trade relations of the two countries for the last 60 years, and points out that the United States is steadily changing from an agricultural to a manufacturing nation, and must have cheap food to compete on an even footing with other countries. "To admit Canadian produce free will enable protection still to be the Republican bulwark, and food duties may be increased against the rest of the world without the harm of appreciable rise in price against the consumer. Further, Canada is the country whose surplus may best be admitted without injury to the home grown, for being more northerly her crops are later. American growers will still retain all the benefit of the new season market, which is of such importance with those foods that are not 'in' all the year round. It is the earliest lamb, new potatoes, and strawberries that realize fancy prices. These America will retain to herself, as climatic conditions will preclude Canada's competing until the gilt of the market is worn off, and normal prices reign."

—A Blow at the Empire.—

Mr. Clark considers that Canada stands to gain a great deal in many respects from the agreement, but he draws attention to drawbacks which merit serious consideration. "America in the past has proved no friend to Canada. This treaty is welcomed by many politicians and newspapers throughout the States as directly leading up to annexation, or, at any rate, to the control of Canada's markets and commerce for American ends. Canada, therefore, apart from all consideration of Empire, may well ask whether this is a bona-fide offer of friendship, or merely a variation of the old fable of the spider and the fly. But it is when the question of Empire is considered that the greatest objection to the treaty is seen, although the main British outcry raised against it is pure claptrap. This is that free admission of Canadian foodstuffs to the United States will raise the cost of living in England. Such an argument is typical of party politics. No doubt the statement is true to some extent."