

1914 cont'd

The winds come down like the whirlwinds you get in the north. They sweep off the inland ice, and have terrific pace. Any part of the hut that is exposed receives a tremendous wrench, and the whole thing creaks. It is a most sensational experience to be inside, and hear one of those gales at work. The houses we erected were designed for the worst conditions, and, my word, they were needed."

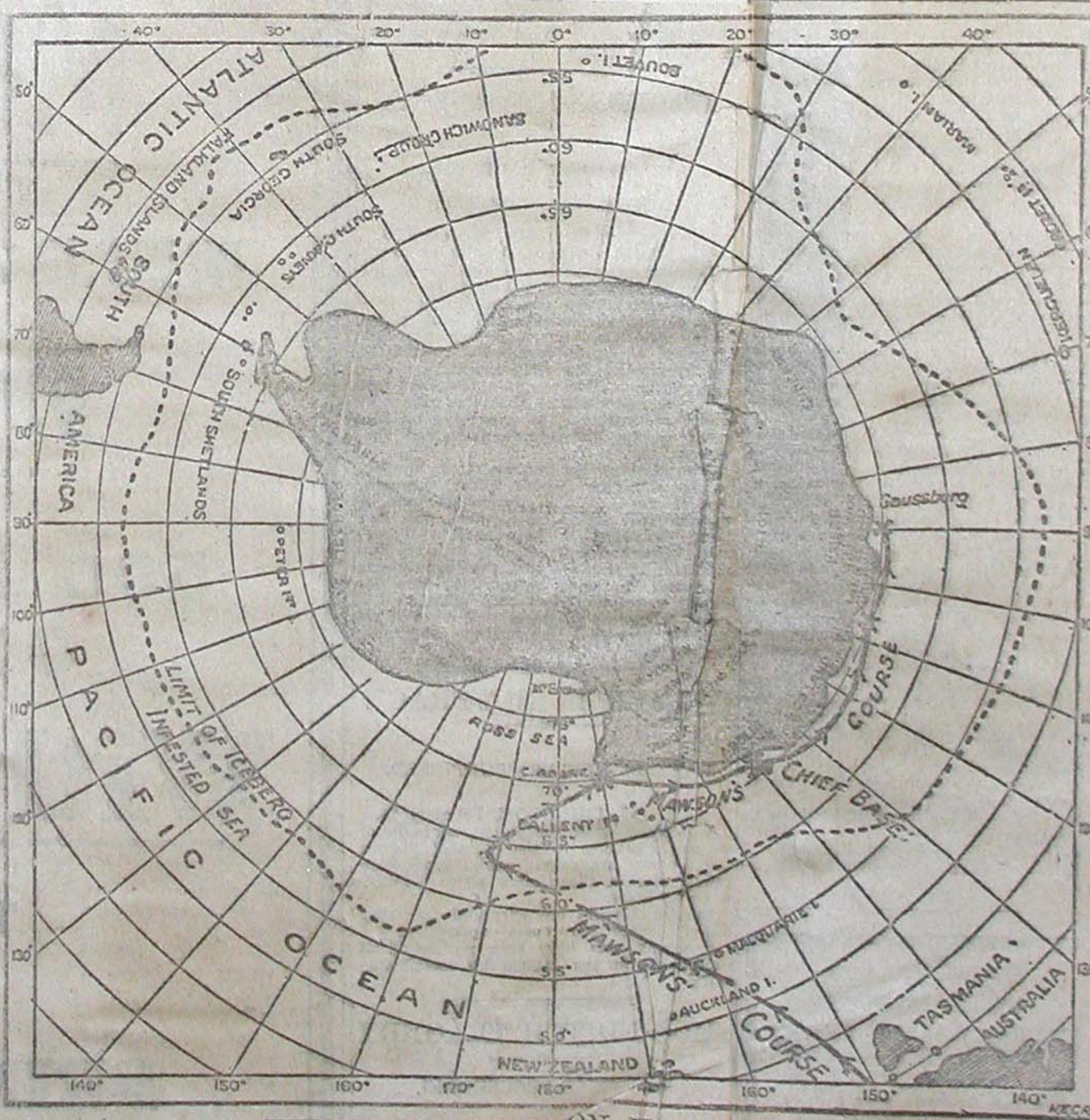
"Why was it that the wireless telegraphic apparatus of the Aurora was not working upon her return journey?"—"You've got to remember that there are two tons of delicate stuff to handle and erect. Apart from that, there was not much room on the Aurora. Her accommodation is very limited, and we needed all the space for other purposes. In any case, even if we had had the wireless telegraph on board and in operation, it would have meant only an earlier message by a week or 10 days. Of course, the Macquarie Island station is still there. The Aurora took three men down there to manage it. As you must know, it is now in charge of the Federal Government. I ought to tell you that the wireless plant we had was, on the whole remarkably successful. There were times when we could not use it on account of the hurricanes, but it was always assuring to know that it was there in case we wanted assistance. The trouble was that the drift snow came along charged with electricity, and the wires sparkled and glowed. The whole thing fizzled in such circumstances, and as the code was by sparks you can understand the difficulty. We did not know whether people were talking or whether it was the blizzard outside that was rattling away. No ship can go to the antarctic without a wireless outfit."

"Did the Aurora have any narrow escapes this time?"—"Oh, yes; several very nasty ones. There were two exceedingly severe hurricanes that struck the ship, and for a time disastrous consequences threatened. It was against these odds that Capt. Davis showed his remarkable skill and calm as a navigator. It was wonderful how he got the ship through these terrible disturbances. I cannot say too much in praise of his work. It seemed impossible upon occasions to be able to pull the ship through. In the pitch dark the water would come aboard absolutely frozen. You could not see where you were going to. One night we came into collision with an iceberg. In ordinary weather we would have seen it 20 or 30 yards away, but we did not know of its presence until we heard the ship scratching its side against the ice. She was going at full speed all the time."

"And what have you to report in the way of mineral discoveries?"—"Everything has to be big and rich to pay down there, but we saw evidences of some marvellous deposits. Obviously a lot is hidden by the ice. A lot of the rocks we saw were similar to those on the south and west of Western Australia—mostly very ancient. There was an abundance of copper ores that are very widely scattered. We found no rich deposits. We saw other stone scattered along the coast showing big formations, but of course the ice covered pretty nearly everything."



DR. DOUGLAS MAWSON.



WHERE DR. MAWSON HAS BEEN.