The winds come down like the whirr of a thousand whistles you get in the north. They sweep over the inland ice, and have terrific force. Any part of the hut that is exposed receives a tremendous wrench, and the whole thing cracks. It is a most-reassuring experience to be inside, and hear one of these gusts at work. The houses were designed for 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 fuse. 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 ten days. Of course, the Macquarie Island station is still there. The Aurora took three ships down there to maintain 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 on, on the whole remarkably successful. There were times when we could not use it on account of the ice, but it was always reassuring 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 worked in such circumstances, and as the code was by night you can understand the difficulty. We did not know whether people were talking or whether it was the blizzard outside that was rushing away. No ship can go to the antarctic without a wireless outfit."

"Did the Aurora have any narrow escape this time?"

"Oh, yes; several very narrow ones. There were two exceedingly severe hurricanes which struck the ship, and for a time it was in danger. It was against these odds that people were working. Trove showed his remarkable skill and calm as a navigator. It was wonderful how he got the ship through these treacherous circumstances. I cannot say too much is praise of his work. It seemed impossible upon occasion to be able to pull the ship through. In the pitch dark the water was absolutely frozen. You could not see where you were going. On one occasion we came into collision with an iceberg. In the pitch dark we had some icebergs out to 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 as fast as we all the time."

"And what have you to report in the way of mineral discoveries?"

"Everything has to be big and rich to pay off down there, but we saw evidence 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 coastal west of Western Australia. Mostly very iron. There was an abundance of copper ones that are very widely scattered. We found no rich deposits. We saw other stones scattered along the coast, showing big formations, but of course the ice covered pretty nearly everything.