

Advertiser, March 17/10

—Sea of Bergs.—

After describing the voyage to Wild's base and the picking up of the party on February 23, Capt. Davis says:—"The following day we were traversing the sea of bergs again, but this time in fine, clear weather. For nearly 400 miles we made north among great numbers of bergs and floes. It appeared astonishing how we could have escaped running into them during the last blizzard. We did not get out of icebergs until north of the 60th parallel. There appears to be some current or meeting of currents which collects the ice in this locality, as I have seen nothing like it in any other part of the antarctic. The last icebergs were sighted in 55° S., and the Aurora continued her voyage towards Hobart before strong westerly gales and high seas."

Will the Aurora be Kept in Commission.

MELBOURNE, March 16.

Professor Orme Masson, of the Australasian Antarctic Exploration Committee, yesterday expressed himself as being delighted at the safe return of the Aurora with most of the party under such trying experiences. While regretting that circumstances arose to prevent Dr. Mawson from being picked up, the committee and he were sure the public well realized that he was perfectly safe in the winter quarters, and there need be no anxiety on his account.

When asked to say something about plans for Dr. Mawson's relief, Professor Masson said:—"Of course, the vessel will have to return next summer to bring the party back, but I cannot speak definitely about what will be done. The question of funds will have to be considered, but until Professor Davis and other members of the committee have had an opportunity of meeting personally and discussing the position with Capt. Davis and Mr. Eitel, as well as with the Government, I am not in a position to say whether the Aurora will be permanently kept in commission carrying out further oceanographical survey work, or whether the vessel will merely go south for Dr. Mawson when summer conditions render it possible."

Capt. Davis "Absolutely Right."

SYDNEY, March 16.

Professor David, when interviewed tonight, said "The news of the safe arrival of the Aurora at Hobart with Frank Wild and his party, and the remainder of the party from Dr. Mawson's main base comes as an immense relief after what has undoubtedly been a time of anxious suspense. The statement by Capt. Davis makes it absolutely clear that at a very critical time, when he was recalled by Dr. Mawson at the moment he was starting on his voyage to Wild's base, his decision not to risk the ship by attempting to land in order to take Dr. Mawson and his party off was absolutely sound. Commander E. R. Evans, now in charge of Capt. Scott's antarctic expedition, as well as Commander Naves, of H.M.S. Fantome, are both emphatic in the opinion that at this most critical juncture Capt. Davis did absolutely the right thing. There can be no doubt that when Dr. Mawson hears the details he will be one of the first to commend the decision of his captain. The results of the Australasian antarctic expedition will be considered throughout the scientific world as brilliant. They have far exceeded anticipations. Probably no expedition in any part of the world has ever experienced winds of such terrific force and persistency as those which have been harassing Mawson's party. To Australian and New Zealand meteorological observers the facts gained about air movement will be of the utmost importance. The outrush from the antarctic continent of vast avalanches of cold dry air enormously intensifies the force of the great belt of cyclones which is moving slowly around the Southern Ocean a little to the north of the antarctic circle. These great cyclones constitute the antarctic depressions that so frequently affect our Australian weather. Macquarie Island is almost directly in the path of these secondary cyclones. The magnetic observations taken will certainly prove of the utmost scientific value."

THE MAWSON EXPEDITION.

LAST PART OF THE MESSAGE.

TERRIBLE EXPERIENCES RECOUNTED.

"THANK GOD, THEY ARE ALL THERE."

The following is the concluding portion of Mr. Eitel's graphic account of the trip of the Aurora. The first part of the message was published in "The Advertiser" on Saturday, and ended at the point where the Aurora was starting for Wild's Base to pick up the party there.

Hobart, March 14.

We were suffering from great anxiety. We scarcely understood the risks underlying our voyage. One day the captain called me to take the lee wheel. The scales fell from my eye. A gale of wind abeam projected snow into our faces with stinging force. Sometimes it was hard to steer with only one eye open. On occasions both eyes would be shut. All this while the vessel was threading her way southward through narrow leads between vast fields of pack ice. Haste necessitated full speed ahead, and occasionally we missed our aim. Then would come a loud crash, and the ship would shiver from stem to stem before rebounding from the impact. Usually the officer saw the blow coming, and telegraphed to the engineer, "Full astern," and so reduced the shock. It was wonderful how many collisions were averted.

On Sunday, the 23rd, we sighted the Barrier at a point 30 miles from Wild's Base. We steamed to the lee of the Barrier, from which, last season, the sea ice extended some miles. Evidently our approach was early discovered, as when the camp was sighted two sledge teams, loaded with provisions, were already progressing to the ice edge. Eagerly we counted the men. Yes; thank God, eight were all there. At this we cheered from deep thankfulness, and our anxiety was over soon. The nose of the ship pressed against the edge of the sea ice, and the men at the second base stood in a row on the ice. We crowded the fore-castle head, exchanging greetings, but they could see something had happened. We saw exchanging whispers, then their eyes searched our ranks. More whispers were exchanged. We knew they were looking for Dr. Mawson. Finally there came a wild shout, "Is all well with the first base?" Many of us felt a lump in our throats. The death of two comrades seemed too sacred for roughened men to shout aloud. None answered, but our solemn countenances told all was not well. The silence was significant, but explanations came later.

King George the Fifth Land.

Frank Wild holds Scott and Shackleton polar medals. He told us his base accomplished an aggregate of 1,524 miles in sledge journeys, without counting relay work. They had formally taken possession for Great Britain of the whole area of land from Kaiser Wilhelm Land to longitude 101.30 east, and as far south as 67.30. The trend of the land was almost due east and west, the coastline being almost on the Antarctic circle. This land was ceremonially named King George the Fifth Land. The leader delivered a patriotic address, and cheers were given for the King. Wild's party had originally nine dogs, but only two survived. Three had been killed for dogs' food, two died from natural causes, and the other two wandered off, probably engulfed in crevasses. The Aurora only remained at Wild's base long enough to take on board the specimens and scientific instruments and a few stores. The water tanks were replenished with ice. At 9 o'clock that night the Aurora sailed for Hobart.

A Three Days' Blizzard.

Referring to the passage from the main to the second base, Captain Davis reports:—"On the evening of February 9 we left Commonwealth Bay, and met an ice pack the following day. After a very trying morning we got through. However, our chances of getting to the second base were looking gloomy, when an easterly gale burst, and soon developed into a heavy blizzard, which lasted three days. We drove westward before it under steam and sail, and often were unable to see length ahead of the vessel. There was no alternative if we were to get west in time but to keep going. As daylight came each morning we felt thankful that another night had passed without disaster. We made good progress until February 18, when the icebergs became very numerous. On the 19th we were brought up by a heavy pack extending right across our course. At this time we were 80 miles from the northern point of Termination Barrier, and had found open water right up to this barrier on our previous voyage. We had no alternative but to follow the pack northward for 80 miles before we were able to steer west again. The position of the pack was a terrible disappointment. It appeared unlikely we would be able to penetrate to the second base at all. Countless bergs made navigation after dusk difficult. The following afternoon we reached the longitude of Termination Barrier, but a 20-mile close pack intervened. We tried to push south through the pack, but a couple of hours showed that progress in that direction was impossible. Anxious to retain the ship's freedom, we decided to go westward. February 21 found the ice looser, and we pushed south into it, and were able to progress without much difficulty. At noon the next day we had penetrated eight miles of heavy floes, fortunately separated by water leads. We reached a region where the bergs were very numerous, and only avoided with difficulty even in clear weather. The wind rapidly growing to a blizzard, our position was one of great anxiety. At 8 o'clock darkness and snow rendered it impossible to see any distance. The night that followed was one of the worst we experienced. Never was dawn awaited more anxiously. Soon after 4 o'clock in the morning Shackleton glacier was sighted, and we reached the second base in the afternoon."

DR. MAWSON'S ENFORCED STAY.

"TIME WELL SPENT," SAYS CAPTAIN DAVIS.

Hobart, March 16.

Captain Davis, speaking of Dr. Mawson's forced sojourn in the Antarctic, said it would betime well spent in the interests of science. These signals were to be transmitted by wireless from the Melbourne Observatory, and that would enable Dr. Mawson to establish the fundamental meridian of longitude. Captain Davis leaves for Sydney at the end of the week.