

regions. Macquarie Island had now been taken over by the Commonwealth, and a station would be kept there at all events for a year. Meteorological records and forecasts were being sent almost daily by wireless to the headquarters of the Commonwealth Meteorological Bureau. Then there was the oceanographic work which had been performed by the expedition. A vast amount of information about the bed of the ocean between Australia and the Antarctic had been obtained. He understood that a kind of ridge beneath the sea between Tasmania and the Antarctic had been located that was hitherto entirely unknown. In marine biology, owing to the wonderful dredging operations that had been carried out by Captain Davis and the crew of the Aurora, a vast amount of entirely new animal and plant life had been discovered. In geology many new discoveries had been made. His Excellency did not pretend to have any knowledge of these things himself. What he had said was only the barest outline of

some of the achievements performed by the Mawson expedition. (Cheers.)

Appealing Heroism.

There was something more than this, and something that appealed to every man and woman in that gathering. There was a record of bravery, of heroism, and endurance equal to anything in the annals of Polar or Arctic explorations. (Cheers.) He was going to touch very briefly on what was, perhaps, the most striking feature of this expedition, and that was the sledging journey undertaken by Dr. Mawson in company with Lieutenant Ninnis and Dr. Mertz. Perhaps some day the tale of this particular sledging expedition would be told to the world, as to his mind it ought to be told. But he was a little doubtful about this, because, as they all knew, unfortunately, two members of the expedition lost their lives, and Dr. Mawson was the only one who came through. Dr. Mawson was, therefore, the only one who could give that narrative, and he knew Dr. Mawson sufficiently well to realise that he was not a person who was given very much to talking about himself. Possibly, therefore, they would never know the story as it ought to be known. If they would allow him to do so in a very few words, he would give the briefest possible outline of what occurred on this momentous journey. This party of three started out to explore new coastline, some 450 miles east of Commonwealth Bay. Three hundred miles out Lieutenant Ninnis, it was believed, fell down a crevasse, with a sledge and the bulk of the provisions.

The Crevasse Danger.

He gathered from what he had been told by a member of the expedition that the crossing of crevasses was one of the ordinary every-day risks that an Antarctic explorer had to take. Bridges were formed by drifting snow across crevasses sometimes 1,000 ft. or more deep, and sometimes the bottom could not be seen at all. If the explorer wished to ascertain whether the bridge of snow would bear him he had to go across it. If it did bear he got across; if not he fell in, and if it happened, as it often did, that the explorer was tied to a sledge, a comrade would come along, and pull him out if the sledge had not gone down with him. In the particular instance under review, Dr. Mawson and Dr. Mertz got over a crevasse in safety, but Lieutenant Ninnis was never seen again, and one more death was added to the roll of the Antarctic. Dr. Mawson and his companion were some 300 miles from their base. Most of their provisions were in the sledge that was lost, and they had to reckon on the possibilities of getting back to their base. They thought they had a chance—perhaps if all went well, a fair one, of getting there. For about a fortnight all went well. Then, unfortunately, Mertz, a specimen of strong and vigorous manhood, died in about a fortnight, and Dr. Mawson was left to struggle on by himself. He was about 100 miles from the base camp, and he could have had little hope of getting in. But he struggled on. Once he fell down a crevasse. He was tied to a sledge, and he managed to climb up the rope and gain safety. That was a wonderful feat of strength for a man worn by hardship and privation. (Cheers.)

Dr. Mawson's Terrible Struggle.

His dogs were killed, and the stock of provisions became exhausted. All the skin, he was told, came off his feet, his fingernails came off, and his hair came out and he was in a state of terrible mental depression because of the comrades he had left behind and the awful solitude of the Antarctic. His plight must have been as bad as it could possibly be. He would say a few words of what was done by the base party, who at the time were

under the leadership of a gallant South Australian, Mr. Cecil Madigan. (Cheers.) With a foresight which all through had been characteristic of the expedition, the base party had placed several depots containing food in the arc of a circle about 30 miles away from the base camp, so that any sledge party returning from any likely direction would be almost sure to come upon one of the depots and so obtain food. That was what happened in Dr. Mawson's case. When he was in the direst straits a man could be in he came upon one of those depots in which was a supply of food, and then he was able to push on another 25 miles to a cave dug out of the ice, about five miles from the base camp.

Imprisoned in an Ice Cave.

So awful were the weather conditions in the Antarctic that, owing to a blizzard, Dr. Mawson had to remain in the cave for nine days. Then the storm passed away, and he got safely in. (Cheers.) It was nearly a year ago that Commander Evans, of the Scott expedition, happened to be staying with his Excellency in Melbourne, shortly after the news from Dr. Mawson came through, and Commander Evans told him Dr. Mawson must have had a marvelous escape and a terrible time to get through as he did. Commander Evans also said it was pretty well an axiom of Arctic and Antarctic travel that it was almost impossible for a man to go any great distance or for any length of time by himself. Dr. Mawson was alone for about 30 days, and yet he completed his wonderful march under the most trying conditions that it was possible to imagine. (Cheers.) That was, and always would be, admitted to be one of the most splendid individual feats of endurance ever performed in the history of Arctic or Antarctic exploration. (Cheers.) He did not suppose any man had ever put up a finer fight against what looked practically like overwhelming odds than Dr. Mawson. (Cheers.) It was just about the time that Dr. Mawson managed to win his way back to the camp that Captain Davis, of the Aurora, had to come to a momentous decision. The winter was coming on again; the ice was closing in; terrible gales were springing up, and Captain Davis had to decide whether to leave Dr. Mawson's party and go to the rescue of the western party, who were some 1,500 miles away by sea. Dr. Mawson had the bitter disappointment of seeing the Aurora sail away, because Captain Davis realised that he had not time to take both parties away, and he had to make up his mind what to do. He did return close to the shore, but a gale sprang up and the boats were unable to get off. So Captain Davis had to sail away and do the best he could for the western party, who were so much worse off for provisions than the headquarters of the expedition.

Heroic and Uncomplaining.

He (Lord Denman) might describe himself as a mild and peaceable sort of person, but if he had been a member of Dr. Mawson's party, and if Captain Davis had left him to endure another winter in Adelie Land, and if he ever saw Captain Davis safely on shore again, he would have addressed him in language more forcible than polite. (Laughter and cheers.) He hardly dared to hint at the kind of language he would have used. (Laughter.) Absence of complaint had been a characteristic of the fine spirit that had pervaded the expedition. He believed he was right in saying no member of the party had ever uttered one word of reproach or regret to Captain Davis for the course he had had to take. (Cheers.) Let them just think what it had meant to those left behind. They were doomed to pass at least six months in practical darkness, in a little hut, with a hurricane raging outside, so that they had to crawl on their hands and knees when they emerged. They had to face this prospect, with none of the amenities and concomitants of civilisation that more fortunate people took as a matter of course. For example, there were no race meetings, no picture shows, no general elections, no strikes, no speeches from Sir George Reid—and no Sydney "Bulletin"—(laughter)—in fact, nothing that made life interesting. (Laughter.) He thought it was highly to the credit of the party that under those circumstances no word of reproach or regret had ever been spoken by them. (Cheers.)

Mr. Madigan's Sacrifice.

Another rather fine instance of that spirit might be mentioned. Mr. Cecil Madigan—(cheers)—had had an opportunity of coming back with Captain Davis last year to take up the Rhodes scholarship, but he had preferred to stay behind, because he thought he could be of use to the expedition. (Cheers.) He felt sure the trustees of the Rhodes funds would still give Mr. Madigan an opportunity to take up the scholarship in due course. (Cheers.) His Excellency Sir Samuel Way told him that the trustees

had just telegraphed to say they would do so—(cheers)—and, further, that they were proud of what Mr. Madigan had done. (Cheers.) When all members of the party behaved so finely one did not like to single out individuals, but he would like to say just one word about the part performed by Captain Davis, the gallant commander of the Aurora. (Cheers.) It had been Captain Davis' fifth expedition to the Antarctic seas. Twice he had had to go down to relieve members of the expedition. On him had rested a very grave responsibility, and it had been in a great measure due to his skill and seamanship that the members of the expedition had come back to them that day. (Cheers.) Last Christmas Eve their ship was caught in a blizzard—but as Captain Davis could give a better account of what had happened on that occasion than he could, he would leave it to him. It was also to Captain Davis that the success of the marine dredging work and the oceanographic work was largely due. (Cheers.) On the whole, it was pleasing to learn that the health of the party had been good. Possibly the leader himself had suffered more than any of the members who had come back with him.

The Main Fact.

The main fact, and the fact over which they rejoiced that day, was that Dr. Mawson had returned to Australia, home, and beauty. (Cheers.) They all wished every possible happiness, and the best that this world could give, to Dr. Mawson and to the lady who before long was to become his bride. (Cheers.) In regard to Dr. Mawson and his gallant comrades, he would just say that whether one was an Englishman or an Australian, the qualities one respected and admired perhaps above all others were courage, grit, and determination. (Cheers.) It was because the members of the expedition had shown they possessed these great qualities in so high a degree, it was because they had fought against nature and wrested secrets from nature in her sternest and most cruel moods, because they had faced, uncomplaining, bitter hardship and dire peril, because in the quest of knowledge they were ready to lay down their lives—and, after all, a man has nothing more than his life to give—it was for these reasons that they were met to welcome them and do honor to them that day. (Loud cheers.)

Messages From the Other States.

The Lieutenant-Governor humorously remarked that even on a happy occasion like that, when one could almost hear the wedding-bells ringing, there were some disappointments. He had had a telegram from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, and when they remembered that the Commonwealth Parliament voted £10,000 to this expedition, they would be glad to hear what the Prime Minister very briefly said:—“I regret unable to accept your kind invitation to the Mawson welcome. My welcome will best heroism and achievement be recipient.” (Cheers.) The eloquent Premier of New South Wales, a State that contributed £7,000 to the expedition, sent this message:—“Extremely regret that opening of Parliamentary session on Tuesday precludes my participating reception in honor of Mawson. Will you be good enough, on behalf of this State, to convey to him a warm welcome on his safe return, and congratulations on his great work?” The Premier of Victoria, a State that contributed £6,000, plus £1,500 in repairs to the Aurora, sent the following message:—“Deeply appreciate invitation contained in your letter of yesterday, and regret engagements render it impossible to accept. Heartiest congratulations and kindest regards to Dr. Mawson.” There was no apology from South Australia, and he would ask Mr. Peake to address them.

The Premier's Speech.

The Premier said they realised that that was a great and impressive congregation, and it had come together for one purpose, and that was to do honor to a man who, by his achievements, had stamped himself as a leader of men, and to do honor to his companions, because they had joined to do honor to South Australia and the Commonwealth. (Cheers.) Those proceedings were stamped and invested with great lustre. First of all because of the message from his Majesty the King, which gave a significance to the gathering that could not be misunderstood, and of which they were all highly proud—(cheers)—and, secondly, because of the appearance upon the platform of his Excellency the Governor-General, and more particularly still, because of the great speech he had delivered. (Cheers.) Deep as they might consider the interest of the Commonwealth was in those proceedings, they might be pardoned if they felt pride in the fact that Dr. Mawson and several of his companions were South Australians.