

March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1914, cont'd 344

## GOVERNOR-GENERAL DELIVERS MASTERLY ADDRESS

READS CABLE MESSAGE FROM KING GEORGE V.

THE STORY OF AN INTREPID EXPLORER.

TOLD IN GRAPHIC TERMS BY LORD DENMAN.

Lord Denman, who was heartily applauded on rising to speak, thanked the gathering for the kindly welcome extended to him. As Sir Samuel Way had said, he happened to be in New South Wales when he received the courteous invitation of the chancellor to attend that ceremony. On Saturday afternoon he was at the Flemington Racecourse in time to see the Newmarket Handicap won by the South Australian horse rejoicing in the name of Iownit. (Laughter.) He wished he did. (Renewed laughter.) He could assure his hearers there was no function he had attended during his term of office in Australia at which it had given him greater pleasure to be present than at that welcome to so distinguished a member of the Adelaide University as Dr. Douglas Mawson. (Applause.) From the way they had received mention of the name of Dr. Mawson he could see that they in Adelaide were proud of him, and well they might be. (Cheers.) Australia was proud of him, too. Far away in the old country the people had received the news of Dr. Mawson's exploits and achievements with just the same interest and admiration that was being shown in Adelaide that day. (Cheers.)

King George's Congratulations Conveyed by Cable.

Lord Denman stated that he had two or three hours before received a cable message from his Majesty the King. (Cheers.) "Addressed to the Governor-General, Adelaide—Please express my hearty congratulations to Mawson and the members of his expedition on their safe return after their arduous experiences and upon the successful achievements. At the same time I deeply regret the loss of their brave companions.—Signed, George, R.I." (Loud applause.) He was very glad that this message had arrived in time to permit him to read it at that great gathering. (Applause.)

The Sordid Monetary View of Exploration.

The Governor-General, continuing, stated that he was well aware that they had come there principally to listen to Dr. Mawson and the gallant commander of the Aurora, Captain Davis—(Hear, hear)—but having himself taken some interest in the expedition, he asked them to allow him to offer one or two brief observations. In the first place—and he hoped no member of the expedition would think him discourteous for saying it—some people asked what was the value of Polar exploration at all. Some people, of course, looked at the question in the terms of pounds, shillings, and pence—people who lived themselves in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence—and who could see nothing good where they could not obtain so much interest and sinking fund upon the capital invested. To people of that kind he would have very little to say. He had not very much use for them at all. (Cheers.) There were other people, however, who did not take that sordid view, but who were still somewhat hazy as to the value of Arctic or Antarctic explorations.

Exploring Instinct Innate in British Race.

Lord Denman pointed out that the instinct of exploration was, after all, innate in men, and particularly in men of the British race. (Applause.) It

was an inevitable instinct, and it was certainly a higher instinct. (Applause.) There was nothing mean or sordid about it. Exploration of this kind was not undertaken in any hope of gain or for any petty personal ambition, but chiefly with the purpose of finding out something hitherto unknown and of adding to the sum of human knowledge. (Applause.) Exploration of that kind always appealed to the bravest, most intrepid, and the ablest members of their race. (Applause.) Sometimes it had been undertaken in vain with no tangible results, but that certainly could not be said of the Mawson Expedition.

Valuable Geographical Work.

If they would allow him he would touch very briefly upon one or two of the immediate results of the expedition. First of all, there was the geographical work. Some 2000 miles of coastline had been explored and would shortly be charted. A great inland plateau, whose existence was practically unknown, had also been explored. In meteorology a record had been taken of the weather—and, from all accounts, very disagreeable weather—in the Antarctic for a period of something like two years. That, he thought, should be a matter of particular interest to the people of Australia, because Australia, particularly the southern portion of the continent, was, as it were, the battleground between the weather from the Antarctic and the weather from the tropical zones, and he was bound to say that lately the weather from the tropical zone appeared to have had all its own way. (Laughter.) It must be of value to the people of Australia to know how the weather which reached them from the Antarctic regions was manufactured, so to speak.

Meteorological and Oceanographic Data.

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 from there 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 which was hitherto entirely unknown. In marine biology, owing to the careful 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, and in geology many new discoveries had been made. He (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. (Applause.)

Record of Bravery, Heroism, and Endurance.

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. (Applause.) 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 in a way that, 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 (his Excellency) knew Dr. Mawson sufficiently well to realize that he was not one who was given very much to talking about himself. Possibly they would never learn 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 is believed, fell down a crevasse, with a sledge and the bulk of the provisions.

Bridges of Snow Across Crevasses.

He gathered from what he had been told by a member of the expedition that the crossing of crevasses was one of the ordinary everyday risks that an Antarctic explorer had to take. Bridges were formed by drifting snow across the crevasses—sometimes 1000 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 would sustain his weight he got across; if not he fell in; but if it happened, as often was the case, 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 had passed over a crevasse in safety, but Lieutenant Ninnis, who followed, fell in and was never seen again. Thus 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 back. For about a fortnight they made good progress. Then, unfortunately, Dr. Mertz, a specimen of strong and vigorous manhood, became ill from exposure and weakness and died in about a week after Ninnis had succumbed.

Dr. Mawson's Brave and Manly Struggle.

Dr. Mawson was now left to struggle on alone. He was about 100 miles from the base camp, and he could have had little hope of getting through. He struggled on and on. Once he fell down a crevasse, but, being tied to a sledge, he managed to climb up the rope and regain safety. That was a wonderful feat of strength for a man worn by hardship and privation. (Applause.) His dogs were killed one by one, and the stock of provisions became exhausted. All the skin (he was told) came off his feet, his fingernails came out, and his hair came off, and he was in a state of terrible mental depression because of the tragic end of the comrades he had left behind and the awful solitude of the Antarctic. His plight was as bad as it could possibly be.

An Intrepid South Australian.

He would say a few words of what was done by the base party, who at the time was under the leadership of a gallant South Australian, Mr. Cecil Madigan. (Applause.) 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 their headquarters camp, so that any sledging party returning would be almost sure to strike one of the depots and so obtain food.

Fortune's Turn in Favor of Dr. Mawson.

Dr. Mawson, when in very dire straits, experienced a change of luck and came across one of these food caches, from which he obtained food which enabled him to renew his failing strength and then to push on another 25 miles to a cave dug out of the ice, with the base camp only five miles distant.

Terrible Blizzard Holds Sway.

Nearing his journey's end, and with aid almost within reach, Dr. Mawson hoped for an early re-union with his party. Then—and this shows the terrors of that climate—a terrible blizzard came down and shut out everything from sight or sound to the man in the icy cave. There Dr. Mawson was compelled to remain for nine days until the storm had passed. His brave spirit had withstood the rigor of the storm, and at length he was able to get safely into the headquarters camp after a fight with Nature such as few men could endure alone. (Applause.)