

# "HOME OF THE BLIZZARD."

## France's Polar Annexation.

### Description of Adelie Land.

It was announced in The Register on Friday that the French Government had decided to annex Adelie Land, which forms part of the great continent that lies immediately south of Australia, and is roughly 2,000 nautical miles from this country. The Australian National Antarctic Expedition, under Sir Douglas Mawson, in 1911, took possession of that region, and in commenting upon the announcement of annexation, Sir Douglas Mawson said, "The French claim is based upon a very flimsy argument, and will not be received with any degree of pleasure."

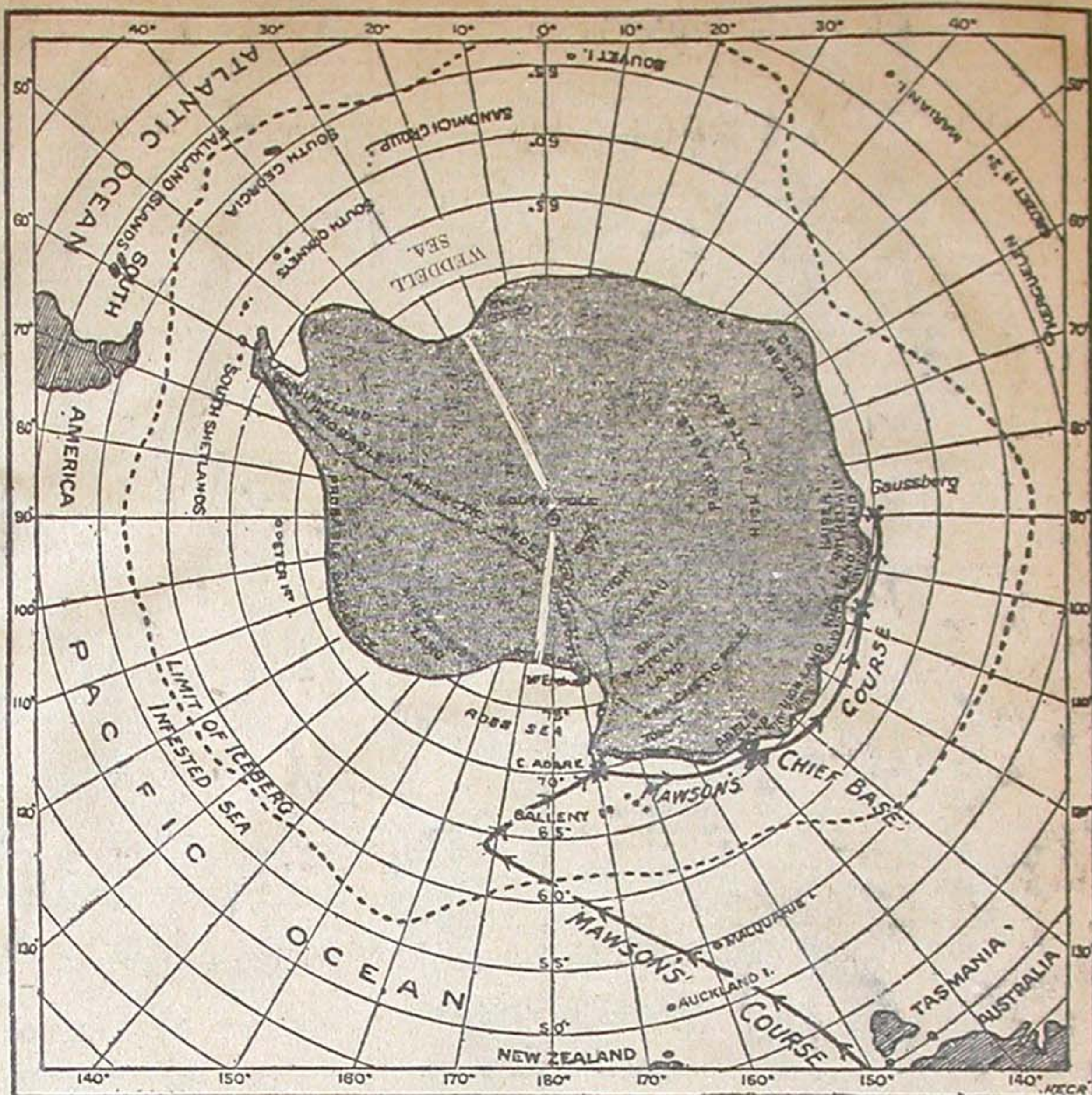
In his absorbing narrative of the voyage of the Aurora, the distinguished South Australian explorer gives a vivid description of Adelie Land. "At 10 p.m. on January 20," he writes, "our progress to the west was stopped by a fleet of birds off the mainland and an extensive field of berg-laden pack-ice. Adelie Land could be traced continuing to the west. The stretch of open water to the north of it has been named the D'Urville Sea, and its freedom from obstruction by ice is due to the persistent gales which set off the land in that locality."

#### At Home in Adelie Land.

The party and stores were landed on the ice quay at Cape Denison, and after many exciting experiences a large and comfortable home was erected. The regularity of the high velocity winds was quickly recognised as one of the most remarkable features of Adelie Land. Nothing like has been reported from any other part of the world. When accompanied by dense volumes of drifting snow it prevented most outdoor occupations. (It has been suggested that this steady hurricane should be employed to provide power by means of windmills). "On March 19," Dr. Mawson writes, "the first well-marked hull during the equinoctial period intervened at the height of a gale. Towards evening the air about the hut was quite still, except for gusts from the north and rather frequent "whirlies." Beyond the strange stillness of the immediate vicinity, broken occasionally by the tumult of a passing wandering, whirly an incessant seething roar could be heard. One could not be certain whence it came, but away on the icy promontories to the east and west where the slopes were visible mounting to an altitude of several thousand feet, clouds of drift snow blotted out the details of the surface above a level of about 600 ft. It appeared as if the gale had lifted and was still raging overhead. At 7.30 p.m. the sound, like the distant lashing of ocean waves, became louder. Gusts swept in and a volley raked the hut and within a few minutes we were once more enveloped in a drifting sea of snow." That was the first breath of the winter blizzard. So fast was the wind that throughout the season "lying on the wind," that is, firmly planting the feet on the ground, keeping the body rigid, and leaning over on the invisible support, was practised. Sledging was impossible in a wind racing at a speed of 86 miles an hour. "Crawling out of the verandah, one was immediately swallowed in a chaos of hurtling drift, the darkness sinister and menacing," the book proceeds. "Cowering blindly, pushing fiercely through the turmoil, one strove to keep one's course—such and such a bearing on the wind—until a few surrounding objects were recognised." Thus for long weary months did the Australians maintain their gallant struggle against the fury of the elements.

#### Coming of Spring.

Incredible as it seemed to the occupants of the hut, five days of calm weather intervened, and the comparative balminess of the atmospheric conditions encouraged several trips. The party spent a night in "Aladdin's Cave." The dogs slept on the ice, exposing as little surface as possible to the biting wind. Their thick coats became frozen down to be used ice, so that an ice axe had to be used to chop them free. Winds of from 40 to 75 miles an hour blew during September,



The Antarctic Continent, showing Adelie Land, almost directly south of Tasmania, and the course followed by Sir Douglas Mawson's expedition.

and October closed with an average wind velocity of 56.9 m.p.h. The sun was high spells of calm were longer and more frequent, and preparations were made for a big exploring tour across King George V. Land in the summer. "The first penguin came waddling up the icefoot against a 75-mile wind late on the afternoon of October 12. The bird was taken to the hut, and received a great ovation. It apparently brought bad luck; for the following day became known as Black Sunday. The party were seated at dinner and the hut was quivering in the tornado-like gusts which followed a heavy blow, reaching a maximum hourly average of 91 miles. The mighty blast was followed by a crack and the sound of a fall. The messman ran outside and found that the wireless mast had been blown down. On October 21 there was a marked thaw inside the hut, and melting ice ran down the walls and damaged the books and pictures slightly.

#### "The Windiest Place in the World."

All those who have read Sir Douglas Mawson's book feel that they know something of Adelie Land, and the heroism of the explorers in that cheerless region makes the news of its annexation by France more unwelcome. In the interview published in The Register on Friday Sir Douglas gave a sketch of the history of the region known as Adelie Land, and advanced reasons why it should be regarded as an Australian possession. He pointed out that apart from the possibilities of payable mineral deposits, there is a great wealth of life in the seas, and there are



SIR JOSIAH SYMON.

done this State the honour of selecting Sir Josiah Symon, K.C.M.G., K.C., as a delegate of that university to the congress. As member for many years of the Council of the University of Adelaide, and President of the South Australian Law Society, Sir Josiah has rendered eminent service to the cause of university education, and his wide and intimate knowledge of Commonwealth politics in their bearing upon educational progress is a guarantee that Australia will be worthily represented at this unique assembly. Sir Josiah is a native of Wick, in the County of Caithness, and is in his 79th year. He came to Australia in 1866, and by remarkable intellectual gifts and indefatigable industry rapidly attained to eminence at the Bar. His services in the South Australian House of Assembly, and later on behalf of the Federation movement, were so noteworthy that he was elected as one of the 10 South Australian delegates to the Convention which formulated the Commonwealth Constitution—a work in which he played an important role. Subsequently he was for several years a member of the Federal Senate. Sir Josiah has refused the offer of judgeships, both in the Commonwealth and the State. He is recognised as one of Australia's greatest legal authorities and leaders of the Bar.

A Congress of the Universities of the British Empire will assemble in London on Monday, July 12, and adjourn to Cambridge next day, by invitation of the historic university of that town, to consider important questions of common interest to higher education in the Empire and throughout the world. Australia, of course, will be represented at this momentous gathering, and it will be highly gratifying to South Australians to learn that the Senate of the University of Sydney—the oldest and most richly endowed seat of higher learning in Australia—has

Dr. A. E. V. Richardson (Waite Professor of Agriculture at the Adelaide University) has acceded to a request made by the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. T. Butt, field) to accept a seat on the Advisory Board of Agriculture.

## ADELIE LAND

### Annexed by France

#### MATTER NOT REPORTED

MELBOURNE, Today. Interviewed regarding the special message to "The Herald" stating that France had annexed Adelie Land, Mr. Rene Turck (French Consul) said that he knew little more than had been published. He could officially confirm the facts regarding the decree which had been gazetted in "The Journal Officiel." Senator G. E. Pearce (Acting Prime Minister) said that as far as he knew the matter had not been reported to the Commonwealth Government. Professor Orme Masson, who was closely identified with the organisation of the Australian expedition, said today that he thought that Sir Douglas Mawson's expedition was the first that had actually landed on Adelie Land. He could not remember if Sir Douglas was armed with a commission from the Commonwealth Government to take possession of any new land he might discover. "I am not sure what the International Law on the subject is," the Professor continued, "but these matters are generally settled by acts of courtesy."

#### ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

The Director and members of the teaching staff of the Elder Conservatorium will interview students enrolling for the first term on Friday and Saturday, February 27 and 28, when timetables will be arranged. The term will begin on Monday, March 2, but all entries should be made before this date. Full information in reference to degree and diploma courses and forms of application may be obtained from the secretary at the office of the Conservatorium.