

SOUTH POLE BY AIR.

Commander Byrd's Project.

"Very Difficult Proposition."

Sir Douglas Mawson, who was a member of the party which, led by the late Sir Ernest Shackleton, penetrated to within 100 miles of the South Pole in 1909, and who later led the Australian Antarctic Expedition to Adele Land, characterizes Commander Byrd's project of flying to the South Pole as a very difficult proposition.

Recently Commander Richard E. Byrd, the American airman who was the first to fly to the North Pole, defeating Amundsen in that effort by a few hours, announced his intention to undertake a flight to the South Pole. His movements, as recently cabled, were to proceed to London from King's Bay, Spitzbergen, by the Arctic ship Chantier, and thence to



SIR DOUGLAS MAWSON.

New York, where he would complete arrangements for the expedition. He expected to sail for the Antarctic in September, in the specially constructed ship *Medio*, taking with him two Fokker aeroplanes similar in type to that used on his flight to the North Pole. He would endeavour to reach Framheim, the starting point of Amundsen's successful expedition to the South Pole, in the *Medio*, and would then attempt the flight. Lieut. Balchen, the Norwegian airman, who was the reserve man on board the *Norge*, would join Commander Byrd at the Framheim base at a later date, and would possibly pilot one plane. Mr. Floyd Bennett, who accompanied Commander Byrd to the North Pole as pilot, would act in a similar capacity on one of the aeroplanes to be used in the South Pole expedition, and an air ice pilot would also be taken to the Framheim base.

Sir Douglas Mawson's Views.

In commenting upon the possibilities of Commander Byrd's plans being successfully carried out, Sir Douglas Mawson, the eminent South Australian Antarctic explorer, said on Wednesday that he had always pointed out that flying to the South Pole was a very different proposition to flying to the North Pole. However, with the great improvements made in aeroplanes in modern times, anything was now possible. At the same time, to attempt to fly to the South Pole was a very risky business. At the North Pole the country was flat, but at the South Pole there was land 10,000 ft. above sea level. It was an extremely windy area, and the visibility was far from good, all of which militated against a successful aerial dash to the pole. Another point to consider was that if the planes were damaged, disabled, or crashed, and the explorers had to make their way back to their base without the aid of the planes, they would be unable to get food by the way. There were no seal or bear or suchlike animals in the Antarctic regions, unlike the Arctic areas. Commander Byrd was wise in his choice of Framheim as his base. Framheim was on the Ross Sea, and there he would secure the assistance of the whaling boats if necessary. Amundsen had found the Ross Sea one of the calmest of the whole Antarctic. Byrd was certainly wise not to have chosen Adele Land, where his (Sir Douglas's) expedition had conducted investigations. There the wind never ceased blowing a gale, and aeroplanes would be blown away immediately they were brought out of the hangars. One

thing, however, that made Framheim no so good a starting point was that, should Byrd be successful in reaching the Pole he would only have travelled over the same route as that already covered by Amundsen and, therefore, scientifically there would be little of value in the flight. From that aspect, it would have been much better if he had planned to take some other route, and thereby flown over new areas as yet unexplored. The area around the Weddell Sea were among those which could have been explored with great benefit to science. However, it was thought that if Commander Byrd succeeded in his enterprise it would be a great achievement, and he was sure every one would wish him well.

Previous Expeditions.

Should Commander Byrd be successful in his venture he will be the first to reach the South Pole by aeroplane, and the



COMMANDER RICHARD E. BYRD.

second to have reached both poles, the honour of being the first belonging to Amundsen. Capt. James Cook, the great navigator, whose name will ever be associated with Australia, was the first explorer of any consequence to penetrate far into the Antarctic, and in 1774 he penetrated as far south as lat. 70 deg. 10 min. James Weddell, after whom the Weddell Sea was named, came next, and then followed the expeditions of Admiral Charles Wilkes in 1839, and Capt. James Clark Ross in 1842. The Ross Sea, now a famous resort for whaling vessels, keeps fresh the memory of that explorer. At that time sailing vessels had been the means whereby these southern regions had been reached. In 1900 the first expedition to use steamships and take advantage of sledges for exploratory work was sent to the Antarctic under the leadership of Ceustens E. Borchgrevink at the Academy of Science Experimental Station at Jomte, Oslo, Norway. That expedition penetrated 70 deg. 34 mi. south, the furthest point reached up to that time. In 1902, the late Capt. Robert F. Scott made his first attempt to reach the South Pole, but was doomed to failure and had to turn back after reaching 8 deg. 17 min. south. In 1912 he succeeded in at last reaching his goal on January 18, only to find that on December 1, 1911, Amundsen had reached the same destination. It was while on his way back from the Pole that Scott and his companions were frozen to death. Scott was the last man to reach the Pole. Three years prior to his tragic expedition another, led by the late Sir Ernest Shackleton, nearly secured the honour of being the first to reach the further point south. That expedition penetrated to within 100 miles of the Pole, reaching lat. 88 deg. 23 min. south, when they were forced to return. Sir Douglas Mawson was a member of that expedition, and later (1911-1914) he led the Australian Antarctic Expedition to Adele Land.

IMPERIAL DEBATES.

LAST OF THE SERIES.

The third and last of the Imperial debates between the English team and the University of Adelaide took place at the Liberal Club Hall on Tuesday night, the subject being "That Western civilisation is becoming a degenerating influence to mankind." The visitors, who took the affirmative, were Messrs. R. N. May, A. H. E. Molson, and P. Reed, the Adelaide trio in the negative being Messrs. M. R. Kriewald, G. C. Harry, and A. L. Pickering. The adjudicators were Mr. F. Kelly and Professor McKellar Stewart. There was a large attendance.

Professor Rennie, who presided, said it was nearly 60 years since he entered the University of Sydney, so that he had seen an enormous development in the Australian universities. Under the old conditions such debates as these would have been impossible. It was a good thing that members of the Australian universities should have the opportunity of meeting their fellow-students from overseas, not only in matters of sport, but on the intellectual side. (Applause.) He accorded a hearty welcome to the visitors.

Industrial Revolution.

Mr. May led off for the visitors, and thanked all who had helped him and his colleagues to have a pleasant time in Adelaide. The primary object was to learn something about the universities and the country generally. Taking up his subject, he spoke in an easy, almost conversational style. He would not argue that the white man's civilisation should be demolished and an Eastern system substituted. He paid particular attention to the system which had grown up since the industrial revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, and argued that such an industrial, mechanical civilisation which had arisen was certainly a degenerating character. One of the greatest fruits of the system was the prevalence of the terrible slums, which bred all kinds of disease. Even the men in the great Ford factories had developed into mere machines, putting in a cog here and tying up a bit of string there. He wondered if the price the public paid was really worth while. (Laughter.) The black peril of to-day was the slums. He also humorously referred to the kind of music and literature developed as a result of modern civilisation.

Some Hopeful Factors.

Mr. Kriewald said all they had done for the visitors had been a pleasure, and he hoped to see them here again. He had no fear that music, or even jazz, would destroy civilisation, nor even the publication of the "Green Hat," which he had not read and did not want to. He certainly would not read it after what Mr. May had said. (Laughter.) Mr. Kriewald, who made his best speech of the series, said there were three hopeful factors in Western civilisation—Christianity, education, and knowledge. Discoveries were made, and knowledge was being enlarged, and those features would be made socially useful. They would certainly counteract the jazz and the "Green Hat" tendencies. Western civilisation was by no means decadent. (Applause.)

Degenerate Tendencies.

Mr. Reed, for the visitors, said it was not denied that there was hope for Western civilisation. His position was that it had to turn back and change its tactics. He believed it would, but it must be realised that it had undoubtedly degenerate tendencies. There was distinct degeneracy in the physical sphere, and he humorously alluded to women losing their hair and people generally their teeth. He had a poor opinion of some modern inventions. The telephone, for instance, had resulted in a large increase in the number of people who failed to speak the truth. They also told their friends what they were ashamed to tell them to their face. (Laughter.) Then there was the quick lunch, which had done little other than cause indigestion. His friend Mr. Kriewald had mentioned Christianity as a hopeful factor. So it was, if people would only turn to it. (Applause.) But was there any sign that Christianity was exercising more influence on the minds of men during the last ten centuries? He doubted it. Then, what was the use of laying good literature at the feet of some people? They only kicked it away. (Laughter.) What was the use of teaching people to read and write when they read such stuff as was produced to-day? Then there was the tendency of the laboring class to revolt, whether rightly or otherwise, and he submitted that Western civilisation was largely responsible for that. Again, where were there any great artistic productions during the last ten years? Western civilisation had overwhelmed the artistic impulse. (Applause.)

The Existence of Slums.

Mr. Pickering opened by asking the pertinent question whether slums had never been known until Western civilisation came on the scene. He argued that civilisation was doing away with the slums, so many of which were wiped out by the great London fire. He spoke of the great advances in science and material wealth, and said the fact of something being wrong somewhere did not prove that Western civilisation had degenerated. (Applause.)

plause.) The point he wished to stress was that civilisation was a great process of change for the better. Inventions had changed every thing, and jazz was not the dominant note of music. In the political world there was no more corruption than 200 years ago. In the days of Walpole votes in the House of Commons were bought and sold, and a certain Countess auctioned kisses for votes for Fox. He submitted that the visitors had failed to establish a case. (Applause.)

Based on Mathematics.

Mr. Molson claimed that all the progress the world was making was based on mathematics, which were invented by the Greeks. In most countries, too, everything was due to the pioneers rather than to those who afterwards pushed in. The great mass of civilisation had not really made any intellectual progress. The inventions were kept going by a small class of highly specialised scientists and engineers. Votes might have been bought in Walpole's days, but to-day the politicians purchased votes with the taxpayers' money. (Laughter.) Christianity had not made the remarkable progress they had all hoped. It certainly had less influence on the daily actions of individuals than in the Middle Ages and the great days of faith. Could they say with reason that western civilisation was impregnated with the spirit of Christianity? He doubted whether it was a good thing to shorten the hours of labor which Western civilisations had brought about. Like luxury, such a change in conditions did not necessarily conduce to greater happiness. In spite of the speeding-up of life and other conditions, he did not believe people were any better or more intelligent than their remote ancestors. (Applause.)

Mr. Harry wound up for the local team. He told a story of a Ford car having covered a certain distance on its reputation and without an engine. His friends the visitors were, he feared, relying on their reputation in debate instead of adhering to facts. (Laughter.) The University of Adelaide were content to depend on their logic. He said Western civilisation had made material advancement, and had become so efficient in all its branches that there were indications that when intellectual advancement caught it up they would be in a very satisfactory state. (Applause.) Western civilisation was not departing from its ideals, and therefore it could not become degenerate and have a detrimental influence on mankind.

Messrs. Kriewald and May replied. The adjudicators and the audience awarded the palm to the visitors on the merits of the debate, and the audience showed by a large majority that Western civilisation was not becoming a dangerous influence to mankind.

Professor Rennie wished the visitors a pleasant journey home to England.

Mr. Justice Angus Parsons

Tomorrow Mr. Justice Angus Parsons will celebrate his fifty-fourth birthday. His Honor, who is visiting England, is a great-grandson of George Fife Angus, "the father of South Australia." The judge is one of our best orators. The oratorical gift he inherited from his father, the late J. Langdon Parsons, who was a Baptist minister and afterwards a Minister of the Crown. After leaving Prince Alfred College his Honor attended the Agricultural College at Roseworthy, evidently intending to settle on



Mr. Justice Angus Parsons

the land. He decided to study for the legal profession, and having graduated at the University he was called to the Bar in 1897 and took silk in 1916. Before that he had been a member of Parliament and a Minister of the Crown. His Honor has been on the Bench for the last five years. The Navy League and the English Speaking Union branches here are two of the institutions in his native State to which he devotes much attention. He has been president of the Adelaide branch of the Royal Society of St. George.