

THE ANTARCTIC.

Australian Expedition.

Mawson and Byrd Confer.

Sir Douglas Mawson, after having conferred on important matters concerning Antarctic exploration with Commander Richard Byrd, who is leading an elaborate expedition to the southern ice regions, returned to Adelaide on Saturday.

The conference was significant in view of another Australian expedition which is proposed to be sent to that locality.

Sir Douglas was the leader of the strongest expedition to date to the Antarctic, which was assisted by the Commonwealth Government, and returned in 1914. He is now in communication with the Commonwealth Government, with a view to sending another Australian expedition to follow up certain important



SIR DOUGLAS MAWSON.

discoveries made in 1914. It is very probable that Sir Douglas will be placed in charge of the next Australian expedition, but he was not in a position to communicate any information on the subject on Saturday. Mr. C. T. Madigan, who has been Acting Professor in Geology at the Adelaide University, who accompanied Sir Douglas on the last expedition, and one or two other South Australians, are likely to be members of the proposed expedition.

Line of Bases.

Commander Byrd, informed Sir Douglas that a chain of bases would be laid on a somewhat similar line to that of Capt. Amundsen. Petrol stores would be established, partly by means of dog-drawn sledges, of which the party had many fine teams. Provided aerial progress was found feasible, the flights across country should yield valuable results. In spite of the help of a whaling fleet, the task of getting the aeroplane ashore in those bleak regions, where the wind blows at hurricane force, would be most difficult. The Bay of Whales had been chosen as the main base, because the Amundsen expedition had discovered that this was the calmest known locality in the Antarctic regions. In addition to survey work, there was an ambitious programme in meteorology, including special attention to the upper air. Observations would be made with sounding balloons, equipped with instruments.

Although aviation would be the backbone of the Byrd expedition, it was not simply a flight to the Pole, but an attempt to fly over the Pole would be made. The main proposition was the laying of a line of depots at intervals of 100 miles due south from the Bay of Whales. From each of these it was proposed to ply east and west as far as conditions allowed. It was anticipated that by this means a large area would be covered, and aerial photographs would be taken with a view to ultimately publishing maps of the country traversed.

After having been absent from Adelaide for 12 months, during which time he secured his diploma in ophthalmology, at Oxford, and was resident house surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London, Dr. A. L. Tostevin, with Mrs. Tostevin, returned on Saturday by the Comorin.

THE ANTARCTIC.

COMMANDER BYRD'S EXPEDITION.

WELL ORGANISED.

Sir Douglas Mawson returned on Saturday from New Zealand, where he witnessed the departure of the expedition to the Antarctic under Commander Richard Byrd.

In an interview with a representative of "The Advertiser" Sir Douglas said the expedition would not simply be a haphazard dash to the Pole. It was well organised and systematically arranged, and its objects were strictly scientific. A fine crew had been gathered together, and an ambitious and useful programme mapped out. The fact that Commander Byrd had taken aeroplanes had given some persons the impression that flight was the main purpose of the expedition. That was not so, for, although aviation was undoubtedly the backbone, the main importance lay in the desire to establish



Sir Douglas Mawson

depots at 100 mile intervals due south from the Bay of Whales, reaching as far as possible to the Pole. With those established, much valuable work could be accomplished with the assistance of planes. By this means it was hoped to cover a very wide area, photographs of which would be taken for scientific purposes. The line to be followed was similar to that taken by Captain Amundsen. Commander Byrd would also follow the plan of Amundsen in starting out from the Bay of Whales, which Amundsen considered the calmest spot in the Antarctic region. Winds were unknown in the Bay of Whales, which was practically the sole place where such conditions existed. Other inlets near the foot of the mountains, or on the seaward face of the great continental plateau, were noted for their winds, which blew with terrific velocity. In addition to survey work, an ambitious programme of upper air observation would be carried out. Commander Byrd proposed to use small sounding balloons with instruments attached to study air currents. Magnetics would also receive attention.

Asked whether Commander Byrd was confident of success, Sir Douglas said the scientist was happiest when saying nothing. Very few people knew more about aeroplanes than he did, and it was his superior knowledge which had enabled him to make memorable flights. Commander Byrd's trip was expected to last through the summer and next winter, and a return was likely to be made the following summer. Provided stores could be obtained, the stay might be even longer. Sir Douglas considered that Commander Byrd's main difficulty would be in unloading his gear. There was a great deal of material, including aeroplanes and instruments, as well as a steel trawler and a wooden vessel known as The City of New York. Help would probably be forthcoming from the whaling fleets in the Ross Sea.

Mention of the proposed Australian expedition to the Antarctic, and of its vital importance to Australia was made by Sir Douglas. For various reasons he was unable to give many details of the proposed expedition. It was proposed to carry out a thorough survey of the Australian sector between the South Pole and the southern Australian coast. At present the plan was under consideration, but he

thought it would be given effect to. It would have more than scientific importance, because much would be learned of whaling prospects. Annual returns showed that New Zealand fleets brought back oil to the value of £500,000 yearly. They operated in the New Zealand sector, which was separated from the Australian only by an imaginary line, so that the inference was that similar wealth awaited Australian fleets.

The Advertiser

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RESEARCH AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE.

Despite their alleged devotion to the "almighty dollar" the Americans think no sums excessive which are spent on popular education. Nothing, as Mr. W. T. McCoy (Director of Education in this State) shows in his invaluable report on his world tour last year, impressed him more than their devotion to the cause of juvenile training, which, more than most nations, they have reduced to a science. Their systems of vocational guidance have been widely adopted in other countries, and nothing could be more admirable than the work accomplished by their Bureau of Education, the Federal department which collects and collates information from all parts of the world in order that the forty-eight states of the Union may have all the knowledge required for the enhancement of educational efficiency in a hundred directions. This question of rendering world-wide information on matters educational available to Australia was a good deal before the inter-State Conference of Directors of Education held in Adelaide in May last, when a resolution approving of the establishment of an Australian Institute of Educational Research to carry out enquiries on the lines of the American Bureau was adopted. Rapid as the educational progress of the Commonwealth has been, further strides might have been made had more been known of recent achievements and experiments in other countries.

The conference of Directors expressed their indebtedness for information received from Dr. J. E. Russell, a representative of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, during his recent visit to the Commonwealth. They were even more interested to learn that the famous Carnegie Foundation includes among its benefactions a fund earmarked for the promotion of educational development in the British Dominions. Dr. Russell explained that it only needed an application for a grant to be made sufficient for the establishment and maintenance for a term of years of an Institute for Educational Service and Research. This "urgent need," as the conference of Directors called it, has now been met, the Carnegie Foundation having provided the desired grant without any restrictions or arbitrary directions, and it remains only to settle the constitution of the body which will supervise the Institute, and which will probably be modelled on that of the Commonwealth Bureau of Science and Industry, with local committees in the six States and annual conferences of the State chairmen. The endowment will take the form of an annual grant of £5,000 or £6,000 for ten years dating from January, 1930, and an additional grant is promised towards administrative expenses and the salary of an executive officer. The functions of the Institute will not be confined to those of an information bureau. It will collect all kinds of statistics concerning every branch of educational work, and give figures regarding the progress of

experiments, say, in vocational guidance and Daltonism, and intelligence tests, besides those relating to the ordinary work of the schools. But it will also provide facilities for research on given problems of administration or method by skilled teachers or members of administrative staffs, or with regard to changes and new departures in the several States of the Commonwealth and in other countries. The Institute will also arrange for enquiries abroad which are now conducted by the States individually and at their exclusive cost. The States have found such enquiries a good investment, but as the reports of the officials of one State are accessible to other States, the arrangement does not altogether accord with notions of fair play. If the fruits of overseas investigations are pooled the expenditure should be shared also.

This State will soon be reaping the results of Mr. McCoy's researches with regard to vocational training, which will be available to pupils attending super-primary schools, and will be coupled with a scheme of placement for boys and girls who have completed two years of a post-primary course in these schools. No experiment in connection with our educational system will be followed with greater interest than this arrangement for using the schools as recruiting grounds for industry. There is no tragedy more poignant than the discovery which too many have made that they are wholly unsuited to the employment into which they have drifted. The tragedy does not end with themselves, for they constitute a drag on industry, and though industry must be expected to furnish some of the training it needs, it is no undue requirement that it should be furnished from the start with suitable material. Workers have constantly to be replaced through being "tried and found wanting;" and an English estimate gives the cost of unsuccessful experiments with workers unable to "fill the bill" at not less than £16,000,000 a year. And to this must be added the heavy loss to the community by misplaced effort. In various parts of the world, especially America, schemes have been devised for determining the mental and physical requirements of certain branches of industry and selecting workers fitted to meet these requirements. There is hardly a Continental country without its vocational bureaus and institutes. The Greater Berlin tramways claim to have saved over twelve million marks through the better selection and training of operatives. In England and Scotland the training is largely done by the schools; and their experience has been utilised in framing a scheme for South Australia. Pupils who, having completed the primary course, desire the benefits of vocational training, will have to submit themselves to a close and constant examination in respect not only to their scholastic attainments, but to their physical, social, and moral attributes. When the recording angels have done their work, employers will be provided with a conspectus of the character and potentialities of every aspirant for employment whom they may invite from the schools. As experience elsewhere has shown, workshops, factories, banks, offices, shops, and Government departments greatly prefer those candidates for vacancies who by two years of effort have gained certificates of competence and good conduct in the vocational classes. After all, vocational guidance is only an elaboration and systematisation of procedure long familiar in South Australia. But henceforth the teachers will act as advisers not only to parents, but to employers, and at the same time will concern themselves with fostering and strengthening those aptitudes which will best serve the pupil when he embarks on the struggle for life.