

WHALING INDUSTRY IN ANTARCTIC

Opportunities Missed by Australia

The opportunities missed by Australia in not developing the whaling industry in the Antarctic were pointed out to members of the Rotary Club at their weekly luncheon yesterday by Captain Frank Hurley, official photographer to the British, Australian, and New Zealand Antarctic Expedition.

Captain Hurley said that, although the immense possibilities of the whaling industry in the Antarctic had been pointed out to Australian business men and financiers on three occasions—after the 1911, 1929, and 1930 expeditions—nothing had been done, and practically no interest had been taken in the scheme. About seven or eight years ago the Norwegians sent an expedition to the Antarctic, and discovered what was already known to Australians, namely, that the seas were teeming with whales.

No time was lost by the Norwegians, Captain Hurley said, in sending a fleet of whalers to the south, and those vessels returned to Norway with wonderfully rich cargoes of whale oil. During the last expedition he had seen 40 parent ships, and about 140 whale chasers operating. The Norwegians spared no expense in equipping their fleet, which was thoroughly up to date. The parent ships were floating factories, and could dispose of a 70-ton whale in 12 minutes.

"It seems a pity," concluded Captain Hurley, "that we did not realise the possibilities of the whaling industry. It will not be long before the whales are gone, unless the Norwegians carry on the industry in a more restricted manner. The present wholesale slaughter is most foolish."

MAWSON BOOKS

N.S.W. Discontinues Printing

10 YEARS' WORK

SYDNEY, Today.

ALTHOUGH £6,500 of public money has been spent on printing the records of the Australian Antarctic Expedition (1912-14) under agreement with Sir Douglas Mawson, the New South Wales Government has decided, after a dispute with the famous explorer, to go no further with the project.

The Government is also seeking legal opinion about the possibility of recovering from Sir Douglas certain assets of the expedition which they were to receive for the work.

The agreement for publication of the work was made in 1920, when Mr. W. Holman was Premier. The original estimate of expenditure has been exceeded, but the work is little more than half-completed. Government officials blame Mawson, and Sir Douglas complains of delays in the Government printing office and other difficulties.

"I have been heart-broken to find that the manuscripts have been held up for printing so long," wrote Sir Douglas on July 15.

SIR DOUGLAS EXPLAINS

Sir Douglas Mawson explained today that the publication of the scientific reports had been greatly delayed by the war.

"Since 1920, I have had to find a large sum to defray incidental expenses, and even salaries for such hack work as computations.

"Most of the publication is now printed, but chiefly because of the rise in the cost of paper and printing, the Government has, I am told, reached the limit of expenditure agreed upon. Mr. Lang's Government is not agreeable to spend more.

ANTARCTICA

While the Mawson expedition is receiving such attention as can be spared from more momentous happenings nearer home, there are growing signs that the continent of Antarctica and adjacent seas may sooner or later become a subject of international contention. It is not long since America put forward a claim to what was called an "indefinite portion" of that extensive area, and this week we have learned that Norway is now asserting a right to priority in the acquisition of territories in virtue of a declaration of sovereignty by Amundsen. It is admittedly not an abstract honor of proprietorship over a frozen if not quite uninhabitable region that is coveted, for the Norwegian Minister at Washington explains that there are large economic interests in question. And apart from territorial claims there are whale fisheries of incalculable value—of such value in fact that their exploitation is proceeding at a rate which provoked an expression of alarm at the recent Imperial Conference.

Norway, while deferring a definite promulgation of her claims, is prosecuting the whaling industry with an energy which threatens the extermination of the cetaceans, unless the Commonwealth Government, to whom appeal has been made, can secure international action to avert the disaster. The industry is exceedingly profitable, and one object of the Mawson expedition is to ensure the Commonwealth against the danger, through ignorance, of losing rights appertaining to its own whaling grounds. In early days whale-hunting "by the long wash of Australasian seas" was a profitable pursuit. Remunerative markets were open for the disposal of sperm oil for lighting and other purposes, but since more modern means of illumination have come into requisition the demand for sperm oil has fallen off considerably. Still, there is a demand for it as there is for whalebone and it is desirable that Australia should acquire a share of it. As for Antarctica itself, in spite of its atrocious climate, questions of sovereignty have been raised

from time to time, which will become acute if minerals in payable quantities should be found there. Several years ago Sir Douglas Mawson reproached the Commonwealth with not having long before taken the Antarctic Continent under its protection. It was a large order, the region being twice the size of Australia, but if proximity could establish a title, the claim would be incontestable. Few realise that the continent is nearer Hobart than Melbourne is to Perth, so that when Mawson speaks of it as "our natural heritage," his dictum is incapable of refutation. Unhappily some antiquated discoveries by Wilkes have been taken by America to give her a prior claim to large areas which she is not disposed to relinquish, especially since Commander Byrd's discovery of mineral deposits, possibly petroleum, in the so-called Rockefeller Range and Marie Byrd Land. It will have been observed that Mawson is more confirmed than ever by his latest expedition as to the economic possibilities of Antarctica.

DOES NOT FEEL ADELAIDE'S COLD

Sir Douglas Mawson Wears Wool; But is Eager for Summer

Sir Douglas Mawson is one of the few people in Adelaide who have not felt the cold this winter.

While others have grumbled at the piercing winds and biting frosts, the Antarctic expedition leader has smiled.

HE explained why. "The secret lies in wearing plenty of woollen clothes," he said. "Wear more wool," as the slogan advises."

"I wore so much wool in the Antarctic that I am inclined to wear too much here," he said. "Yet there were days in the Antarctic when we could strip off most of our garments without any discomfort."

Sir Douglas was seated in his office at the Adelaide University, where he is professor of geology. An electric radiator stood on the floor beside his chair—but it was not turned on. Perhaps it was because the sun was shining at the moment through the clouds which have hid it so consistently during the past few months.

DREAMED OF ADELAIDE

"On overcast days in the Antarctic," said Sir Douglas, "we thought of Adelaide and dreamed of the bright sunshine that would be pouring down on its citizens. Adelaide has a name for sunshine. I am sadly disappointed. We have seen so little of the sun this winter."

Sir Douglas had reason to grumble. Last month the sun shone for only 82 hours, or 2.7 hours a day—a record.

One looked at the pictures in Sir Douglas' office, and despite the sunshine

outside—shivered! Huge icebergs, glistening white, seemed as if they would topple from their frames and crash down into the room.

"Have you suffered from chilblains this winter, Sir Douglas?"

"No," he replied, "but I suffered from something worse in the Antarctic," and he proceeded to tell the story.

It was midnight. Sir Douglas was on night watch. While the others were asleep he took advantage of the quiet to give his clothes their fortnightly washing. Suddenly he thought of the meteorological instruments outside, and dashed out of the shelter of the hut into the cold to read them. Then he returned to his washing. Not thinking, he plunged his hands into the hot water in the kerosene tin that contained his garments.

Immediately blood blisters formed on the tips of his fingers through the sudden heating after intense cold. They stung fiercely. It was just as if I had burned them in a fire," he said.

MUST HAVE GOOD FOOD

Every precaution had to be taken against the cold, Sir Douglas said. "Woolens were not the only things we needed. Plenty of good food was required."

Sir Douglas was asked whether he thought that the months in the Antarctic had helped him to bear the Adelaide winter.

"I do not think so," he answered. It was easy to see that Sir Douglas pinned his faith to warm clothing and good cooking.

This Antarctic explorer does not seem to enjoy the winter, even though he is not troubled by the cold.

"I am looking forward to the summer," he said.



ANTARCTIC GEOGRAPHERS MEET AGAIN—Lieut. K. Oom (cartographer of Sir Douglas Mawson's last expedition to the Antarctic, right) arrived in Adelaide today to complete survey maps of the Antarctic coastline and islands. He was met by Sir Douglas (left).