

FOG BOUND IN ANTARCTIC

SUN NOT SEEN FOR DAYS BY DISCOVERY'S CREW

STILL ABLE TO WORK

Canberra, January 28.

Sir Douglas Mawson, in a wireless message sent on January 26 from the Discovery, described how the expedition's scientific work had been conducted, despite the fact that the vessel was fog bound and the sun had not been seen for days.

"Although," he said, "a clearance in the weather seemed imminent on the 21st, we were sadly disappointed, for no sooner had the Discovery pushed out of the pack to the open sea than an easterly gale arose, and the ship then hove to for two days. The wind gradually abated and the clouds cleared from the southern horizon, where an appearance of land was presented. While awaiting the subsidence of a heavy cross swell and for suitable conditions for the launching of the aeroplane, a heavy fog with snow descended, and still remains unchanged. Evidently this is an exceptionally foggy locality.

Scientific Work Continues

"This morning we decided that we could wait no longer. Hoping for a clearance, we moved west and are now in 240 fathoms of water, in latitude 10, longitude 109.30. This is a dead-reckoning position, for the sun has not been seen for several days. "Although fog and weather bound, we are still able to prosecute much scientific work. Thus, without delaying the purely scientific operations, an important series of marine stations have been conducted throughout the cruise. Data relating to temperatures, chemical characteristics, current movements, and peculiar life of the seas, have been accumulated at frequent intervals along the route. Each of these stations deals with serial observations from the surface to the ocean bottom.

"To-day marine life has been particularly abundant, and Professor Johnston and the other zoologists are working overtime effectively to deal with our catches. A netting taken at between 500 and 550 fathoms surpasses anything thus far experienced at such a distance below the surface. In this instance there is more life in the deep water than nearer the surface. Many varieties of fish, in addition to multitudinous invertebrate life, are represented.

Inquisitive Blue Whales

"While one of the nets was being hauled in two blue whales became interested in the operation. After examining the steel wire hauling cable at the stern of the ship, one of the whales followed the cable down towards the net. For a time we contemplated with anxiety the possibility of securing an undesirably large and embarrassing catch, but the monster evidently lost interest before reaching the net."

(Publication without permission in whole or in part in Australia or overseas is strictly forbidden).

Special Coal For Discovery May Be Used For Making Huts

For use on Sir Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expedition ship, the Discovery, 300 tons of coal briquettes arrived in Melbourne on the Berwickshire yesterday. Made of the best anthracite, in Belgium, the only country from which they can be obtained, they give more miles steaming than any other form of coal. Of 25 lb. each, the briquettes are easily handled, and will be stored in every spare corner of the ship, and piled on deck. On land they can be used for walls for huts.

AMONG THE PENGUINS

Quaint Bird-Life on Macquarie Island

BEACH LIKE DEAUVILLE

Canberra, December 15.

A wireless message from Sir Douglas Mawson from Macquarie Island states that the Discovery is anchored in a comparatively open roadstead, the only approach to the harbor on Macquarie Island.

The scientific staff, with instruments and camping paraphernalia, were transhipped to a motor boat and the landing was made through the surf. A regiment of penguins waded down to gaze perplexed at the invaders.

"I am making these notes," says Sir Douglas, "in the shelter of a crumbling hut, which was once the quarters of a sealing party engaged in rendering down penguins and sea elephants for oil. For more than 100 years this traffic thrived, with serious consequences to the quaint denizens of this land of wind and mist. The wild life of the island was threatened with extinction until the Tasmanian Government, which controls the islands, decided in 1916 to discontinue leasing it to sealers, whose extensive but precarious business annually entailed boiling down a vast number of sea elephants and penguins for their oil.

Sanctuary for Sub-Antarctic Life

"For some years now the island has been maintained as a sanctuary for Australian sub-Antarctic life. As a result of this commendable action our observations indicate that the penguins and seals are slowly recovering from the persecution of former times. It is now more necessary than ever zealously to preserve this haven for the order of life is becoming rarer from year to year. At the moment of writing the prospect stretching before me suggests fashionable Deauville during the zenith of the carnival season. Here on Nugget Beach is the popular seaside resort of Macquarie Island, and thousands of royal penguins are shooting the breakers and being jostled in the surge of the undertow. Others look on and nestle down on the sands, or form talkative coteries, no doubt to discuss the scandals of their metropolis.

Paris of Sub-Antarctica

"Penguin City, the Paris of sub-Antarctica, is set in a tussock verdured valley some 500 yards inland, with populated environs higher up the mountain slopes. It is a long, rough trudge for our little friends up the shallow stream, and as a ceaseless traffic of pedestrians is always passing the laws of the road are rigidly observed to avoid congestion. To this scene, so whimsical, social, and quaintly human, fate has added an ironical touch. The factory where millions of penguins were boiled down for oil has succumbed to the ravages of decay. Penguins now haunt the ruins, and elephants snore away peacefully amid the perished oil barrels.

Specialised Jobs of the Party

"On landing each member of our party has set out upon some specialised job. Hurley, Campbell, and Douglas have a cinematograph apparatus down on the beach, and are surrounded by an inquisitive crowd, evidently anxious to have their say in the talkies. Dr. Ingram and Fletcher have disappeared into the mists of the interior highland to collect life from the lakes and Alpine plants from the higher levels. Falls, Howard, and Simmers are taking notes on birds and securing rare specimens for exhibition and collection. Professor Johnston is combing the foreshores in the interests of the biological section, and Kennedy is carrying out magnetic observations on the identical site occupied 19 years ago by Eric Webb, magnetician of the Australasian expedition."

(Reproduction in whole or in part in Australia or overseas without permission is strictly forbidden).

DISCOVERY TO LEAVE NEXT MONTH

Will Be In Antarctic All Summer

To make final arrangements for his forthcoming Antarctic expedition, Sir Douglas Mawson will leave for Melbourne today. He will return to Adelaide next week and will leave to join the Discovery at Hobart on November 4.

Sir Douglas expects to leave Hobart about the middle of next month, and to be in the Antarctic during the summer. All being well, the Discovery should return to Australia early next April. Whether the ship will call at Adelaide or Melbourne on her return will largely depend on circumstances.

SOUTH AGAIN

Sir Douglas Mawson Preparing

GENEROUS CONTRIBUTOR

With the necessary funds in sight to ensure the completion of the remainder of his two-year programme of exploration in the Antarctic, Sir Douglas Mawson (leader) is now in a position to proceed with his arrangements.

He stated today that the Discovery would leave Hobart probably early in November. The majority of the staff which accompanied him on the recent trip south would be available for this expedition.

"I would like to clear up the wrong impression held by some people that this will be a new venture," said Sir Douglas. "It is the continuation of a programme which had already been prepared and made widely known, and which was to extend over two years. It is my intention to continue the scientific survey in Antarctica of that expanse lying between meridian 160 east and the point farthest east in our last voyage. This is a stretch about 1,500 miles across."

Filling Gaps on Chart

Sir Douglas explained that it was hoped to fill gaps which exist on charts of this area. Portion of this field came within the scope of operations of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition which he led from 1911 to 1914.

On the forthcoming trip particular attention will be paid to fishery possibilities of the seas visited. "By this," Sir Douglas explained, "fishery" is used in a wide sense, and in addition to the commercial possibilities of obtaining edible fish in large quantities, consideration will be given to the prospects of determining whether the area offers scope for whaling, and the taking of seals.

"When we went south last year," proceeded Sir Douglas, "it was anticipated that the funds provided by private supporters would, with the help expected from the Commonwealth Government, be sufficient to defray the cost of completing the programme of two summer cruises.

£16,000 Given

"Unfortunately the financial difficulties in which Australia has since become involved has limited the measure of Government support. However, Mr. Macpherson Robertson, of Victoria, who contributed £10,000 toward the first section of the exploratory work, has earned the gratitude of Australia by stepping into the breach, and promising to help to the extent of £6,000 in defraying the cost of the next voyage.

"The name of Mr. Robertson," proceeded Sir Douglas, "will henceforth be bound up with the history of Antarctica as one of the great forces in helping to unveil its mysteries. His generosity has prepared the way for the extension of the bounds of commerce into regions of the globe at present untapped.

"Mr. Robertson is a great Australian, and whatever measure of success this expedition may achieve it will be due largely to his beneficence."

Antarctic Voyage

"Binnacle," Woodville Park:—"The News" of yesterday reported that the exploration ship Discovery would make another trip to the Antarctic.

It is estimated that the moderate sum of £12,000 will cover the expense of the project. I doubt whether this amount will be sufficient.

If it is important that survey work should be done by the Discovery, and the money expended, why not man the vessel with a full complement from Australia? There are hundreds of seamen and a number of officers out of work.

LEAVING TOMORROW

Discovery Nearly Ready

MELBOURNE, Today.

In preparation for its departure tomorrow for Antarctica the last stores and blankets were taken aboard the Discovery today.

The vessel will proceed to Hobart, where it will remain until Saturday, November 22.

Adventurers were still making last-minute applications today to go with the ship, but there were no vacancies.

SOUTHWARD WITH MAWSON

King Penguin's Reign At Macquarie Island

IN THE ICEBERGS

(By wireless from Sir Douglas Mawson on the Discovery. All rights reserved.)

BENEATH four tents in our camp on the first night at Macquarie Island, we twelve snuggled down, but sleep was impossible for a westerly gale roared down from the mountains, carrying away one of the tents.

Sea elephants stirred into activity during the night, and above the howl of the gale could be heard a running serenade of grunts and snorts. One animal tried to enter a tent, but found the occupants over hostile. An early breakfast of sea elephant steak and liver fortified everybody for the arduous day's work ahead.

An inspection of the huts and wireless station left intact in 1916 found the latter a complete wreck and of no value. For further occupation the huts need much renovation.

That evening when returning to the ship, spray from the wind-torn sea soaked us all, but did not damp the ardour with which the party clambered from the motor boat to the rolling sides of the Discovery. The westerly gale continued, but did not prevent the ship from steaming 15 miles down the east coast to Lusitania Bay, the stronghold of the king penguins of the Australian region.

Sealers formerly visiting the islands boiled down for oil hundreds of thousands of these noble birds. Originally the rookery covered some 30 acres, but the birds were severely slaughtered, only a few hundred having escaped when the factory was abandoned. Now three rusty boilers stand on the outskirts of the rookery, grim reminders of a chapter in the island's history scarcely less deplorable than the extermination of the fur seals which abounded.

EXCITING LANDING

It was obvious that the landing would be exciting, as a considerable swell was running and was breaking in white foam over the reefs and surging through the kelp. It needed some deftness in handling the boat to prevent the entanglement of the 60-hp. throngs of kelp with the propeller. All were relieved when eventually we were borne thrillingly on to the beach.

Among several million subjects at Macquarie Island, the king penguin is every inch a king. Standing about 31 inches in height, these splendid birds are the most handsome of the penguin species. The grotesque mannerisms of these friendly creatures are most diverting. They enjoy promenading along the sea front, or strutting about the neighbourhood of their homes in long single files, heads erect, and chests swelling proudly.

The queens are sitting, or rather standing, incubating eggs. One egg only is laid, and this is kept pressed by the upper sides of the feet in a small feathery pouch just above them.

The birds make no nest, which leaves them free to move about, clinging to the egg in a slow, awkward shuffle. The bird may be lifted without releasing the egg. It is gratifying to record that the population has increased since the island was proclaimed a sanctuary, the king penguin population now amounting to about 4,000.

RABBITS A MENACE

In this portion of the island rabbits brought here years ago by sealers have become very abundant, and may eventually prove a serious menace.

The party returned to the ship in the evening. The weather improved and an early morning departure was made from the island. Dredging and sounding were carried out as the vessel proceeded southward through the mists which had enveloped the island during most of our visit.

Numerous icebergs were found aground at the south end of the island, and on a shallow bank that extends south for some miles. Some of these bergs were of considerable dimensions, one at least extending to a height of about 200 feet.

(Publication in whole or in part without permission in Australia or overseas, is strictly forbidden.)

FROM THE DISCOVERY

LEADER'S GOOD-BYE MESSAGE

Canberra, November 26.

Sir Douglas Mawson has sent the following message to the Acting Prime Minister:—

"On behalf of my comrades and self, I warmly thank you for your inspiring message and good wishes. We depart from Hobart on our Polar pilgrimage ably manned and splendidly equipped to confront those problems which it is our purpose to investigate and solve. I am proud to lead such a body of men, whose enthusiasm and courage should, I feel confident, enable the programme of scientific research and discovery to be achieved in the face of formidable hazards and difficulties."