

SCIENCE CONGRESS.

IMPORTANT RESOLUTIONS.

SYDNEY, January 15.

The Council of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science concluded its thirteenth session on Saturday. It adopted motions strongly urging the establishment of magnetic stations at Perth and Port Darwin to supplement the magnetic work of the Melbourne Observatory. It was agreed to appoint a committee, consisting of Professors Masson, Warren, and Laby, with Dr. Love as secretary, to cooperate with the International Commission for the collection and annual publication of all determinations of physical, chemical, crystallographic, and engineering constants. The opinion was expressed that the governing bodies of the Public Libraries in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, and Hobart should communicate with the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking that duplicates of the despatches which passed between the Governors of the colonies and Secretaries of the States until a date fixed upon by the Secretary of State should be placed under their charge. The resolutions passed by the anthropology and philology section were passed with reference to the advisableness of adopting a uniform method of spelling Australian place names, and that an organized scheme for the future of Australian aborigines should be formulated and submitted for the consideration of the Federal and State Governments. The recommendations from the sanitary scientists and hygiene section were approved. These were to the effect that the anthropometric measurements under the control of the Australasian Governments should be based on the schedule of the British Anthropometric Committee, that the advantage of utilizing for this purpose the existing machinery for the medical inspection of schoolchildren in the various States and of compulsory cadet service should be urged, and that a committee should be appointed to investigate the subject of ventilation in buildings.

PRESERVATION OF ABORIGINES.

MELBOURNE, January 15.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Fisher) agrees with much that was said by Archdeacon Jelfroy before the Science Congress in Sydney on the subject of the preservation of the aborigines of Australia. "Anything that this Government can do to protect natives within Australia will be done," said Mr. Fisher, "both by special aboriginal reservation, and by investigations to ascertain how to guard against them being demoralized by disease. A policy for protecting the native is already being observed in Papua (New Guinea), and doubtless this policy will also be enforced when the laws for the government of the Northern Territory are put into operation."

SOUTHWARD HO!

MAWSON EXPEDITION.

SCIENCE CONGRESS
NOTE.

SYDNEY, January 15.

The Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science concluded its thirteenth session yesterday. The closing stage was a meeting of the general council. Chief in importance among the business matters was a resolution approving a vote of £1,000 from the funds of the association—which are £3,000 in credit—to Dr. Mawson's antarctic expedition. A proposal that the Federal Government should be asked to set aside £15,000 as premiums for the plans for the laying out of the proposed capital was rejected by recommendation of the committee, and therefore lapsed. In the afternoon members were entertained at a harbour excursion.

The President (Professor Masson) brought before the general council a proposal that the association should identify itself with Dr. Mawson's antarctic expedition by voting £1,000 towards the expenses of exploration. He pointed out that the committee appointed to go into the matter had unanimously recommended the vote, and the money could be made available without touching the funds earmarked for research work. The association was in credit to the extent of about £3,000, and it might be objected that there was no precedent for granting such a large vote as £1,000. To this, however, it might fairly be answered that the occasion was also unprecedented. Compared with the estimated cost of the expedition—£40,000—the vote was not large, but it was a substantial sum in proportion to the modest financial resources of the association. "And," continued Professor Masson, amid approving cheers, "it should be a substantial sum. The expedition should appeal strongly to the feeling of Australian nationality as well as to the feelings of all interested in scientific research." If they decided to support the Mawson expedition in the substantial manner proposed, then the association would be taking a very high position as a directing force in matters scientific in Australia, and no doubt it would strengthen their case in pressing on the Federal and State Governments the claims in support of the expedition. There were conditions attaching to the recommendations of the committee. The first condition was that the expedition should be under the supreme command of Dr. Mawson and free from control by any authority outside Australia. There was doubt in the minds of some regarding how far Sir Ernest Shackleton had declared himself as prepared to withdraw from the leadership of the expedition. The second condition was that Sir Ernest Shackleton's full consent should be obtained. There was a third condition that the details of the scientific work and the appointment of members of the expedition should be placed in the hands of a special committee of the association, such committee to exercise full powers, subject to the final approval of the leader of the expedition. This condition, however, should be open to modification after consultation with the Commonwealth Government. They hoped for liberal assistance from the Commonwealth Government, and it was but right that that Government should, if it desired, have a voice in the matter. There was another condition that the £1,000 subscribed should be spent in the purchase of scientific instruments, which should become the property of the association after the return of the expedition.

Mr. Knibbs thought they should make it clear that they did not require Sir Ernest Shackleton's leave in what they were doing. The manner in which the scheme had been placed before the meeting implied that Sir Ernest Shackleton really had some proprietary rights in the matter. It would be absurd to admit this.

Professor Masson said it was known to the committee that Sir Ernest Shackleton did have some proprietary rights of exploration in the area he had mapped out, but these rights, it was understood, were being waived in Dr. Mawson's favour.

Dr. Mawson said Sir Ernest Shackleton had contemplated leading another expedition, and had received large promises of financial support. There was a prospect of £70,000 being made available. He (Dr. Mawson) was to have joined the party as scientific leader. This expedition had been enlarged upon in the English press as "Shackleton's expedition," but he knew from letters and cable messages he had received that Sir Ernest Shackleton was not going. One letter contained the sentence:—"I cannot possibly go to the antarctic, and I am furthering the project for you as much as possible. Sir Ernest Shackleton still kept his name attached to the expedition, but that was done to give them time in Australia to take the project up. The name could now be withdrawn without the danger of any other nation asserting its right of exploration in the area which Sir Ernest Shackleton had marked out. Had his name been withdrawn before any movement was made in Australia a German expedition would in all probability have been sent to the area. He wished to make it clear that he was not acting for his former leader in raising a fund. The Nimrod had been offered to him for the interest on its cost.

Mr. Knibbs—Suppose Sir Ernest Shackleton said, in effect, "I am quite willing that Dr. Mawson should lead the expedition, but I want my name associated with it." Where will we be then?

Professor Masson (smilingly)—I think we will then be on the road to understand where we are. (Laughter.)

Mr. Teece failed to see how any man or country could claim exclusive rights of exploration in the antarctic regions. The fact that Sir Ernest Shackleton had paid two visits to the south did not give him rights there over others.

Mr. Duckworth said it appeared to him that the results of the expedition must go to England for publication.

Voices—No.

Professor Masson—This is to be an Australian national expedition. The results will be published from Australia. The Presidents of the Royal Society and the Geographical Society have promised us every assistance.

On the motion of Professor Masson, seconded by Professor Henderson, a recommendation, that the trustees vote £1,000 to the expedition, was carried unanimously. A representative committee was appointed to draw up a scheme of scientific work for the expedition, to appoint in conjunction with Dr. Mawson the scientific staff, to approach the Commonwealth Government with the object of enlisting its support to promote a collection of money in each State, and to promote the interests of the expedition generally.

Advertiser, Jan. 17, 1911.

T O B U I L D E R S.

TENDERS will be received by the undersigned until noon of THURSDAY, 26th of January, for making EXTENSIVE ADDITIONS to the MAIN BUILDING of the ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY. Particulars at our office.

No tender necessarily accepted.

WOODS & BAGOT, Architects.

Steamship Buildings.

January 16, 1911. 17-20