

(RE-PRINT.)

NEW ZEALAND ANTARCTIC SOCIETY.

ANTARCTIC NEWS BULLETIN No. 1. AUGUST 1950.

CURRENT ANTARCTIC EXPEDITIONS.

ENGLISH.

Presumably F.I.D.S. is carrying on at the various bases from Deception Island down to Stonington Island in Marguerite Bay, South West Graham Land. The relief ship, John Biscoe, which in 1948 was held up by heavy pack and thereby unable to rescue the eleven scientists on Stonington Island, managed to reach Deception Island early in December 1949. From there the five men who had been in the Antarctic for three years were all successfully rescued by plane, the last three of them being taken out on 7th February, 1950. Meanwhile the John Biscoe forced her way through 30 miles of dense pack, reached Stonington Island and embarked the remainder of the party, six men, on 12th February.

ARGENTINE.

It was announced in the House of Commons on June 21st, 1950, that an Argentine post had, without permission and in spite of two written protests, established itself on Deception Island. It had been agreed previously that warships would not be sent by Argentine, Chile or Great Britain, south of 60 degrees during the 1949-50 season, with the exception of "the usual ship movements that have been taking place for some years." The Argentine Ministry of Marine reported in February that a party was making "geological, glaciological and magnetical observations" in Graham Land.

FRENCH.

The Commandant Charcot, an ex U.S. Navy net-layer, landed members of the French expedition, under Andre Liotard, in Adelieland, south of Tasmania, late on 19th January, 1950, after a two weeks battle with violent gales. In the previous year the expedition had been unable to effect a landing, but skirted the Adelieland coast, and members of the expedition were enabled to spend some hours on Sabrina Island in the Balleny's, due south of New Zealand, and to do much valuable geological and survey work. The base now established is about 50 K.m. East of Dumont D'Urville's landfall in 1840. The "Commandant Charcot" left for the Kerguelons on February 8.

AMERICAN.

The projected American Expedition, under Admiral Byrd, comprising eight ships and some 3,500 men, was called off in August 1949 "for compelling reasons of economy". On March 20th last it was reported that Admiral Byrd might lead a party of 4,000 men to Little America, due South of New Zealand, next October, "for training in polar warfare" and to survey the area for minerals.

RUSSIAN.

For the 1948-49 whaling season, their third, the Russians planned a target of 2,500 whales as well as large scale scientific research. It was reported in October 1949 that a group of scientists left Odessa early that month to engage in unspecified work. On June 15th, a Washington message reported a Moscow broadcast which claimed that Russia planned to send south a new whaling and exploring expedition this year. The scientific leader is Vladimir Arsoniou, a prominent polar biologist, and the presence of helicopters on board suggests that whaling is not the sole aim of the expedition.

GENERAL.

Six nations in all intimated their intention of engaging in Antarctic whaling operations in the season commencing December 22nd, 1949.

Norway, with no less than ten factory ships; Britain, with four; Japan, Holland, Russia and Argentina, the latter planning a shore station. The season was due to end not later than April 7th, 1950. American participation is expected next season and Argentina has under construction at Belfast the factory ship, Juan Peron, of 32,000 tons the largest ship of its kind in the world. The Terje 10, which brought to Wellington in January 1950, four sick or injured men, reported "a very poor season", but the two Japanese factory-ships claimed a catch of some 1941 whales, and the British Balaena is said to have dealt with no less than 2759 captures.

#### INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITION.

The Norsel, a 700 ton Norwegian sealer with a complement of six Norwegian, five British and four Swedish explorers, under the command of Captain John Glaevar, and an R.A.F. reconnaissance unit, reached Queen Maud Land, to the south of Africa, after a difficult rendez-vous, for dogs, stores, etc. with the Norwegian factory-ship "Thorshovdi" in the South Atlantic early in February 1950. A satisfactory landing-place was found on the 10th and the erection of "Maudheim" about three miles inland was at once commenced.

On February 16th, Squadron-Leader Walford sighted two groups of mountains about 73 S. and 13 W, possibly the same largely ice-free range discovered by the German aviators under Captain Ritscher in 1939.

Sweden is responsible for the glaciological work of this combined operation; Norway undertakes the meteorology, and Britain the Geology. It is their intention to remain more than thirty months on the ice-cap. The two Auster planes employed for the preliminary reconnaissance work were manned by five Royal Air Force personnel.

The Norsel with the R.A.F. unit has already returned to Europe and will go south again at the end of this year with a large plane for the purpose of more extensive air-survey. With the added security of the large plane it is intended then to commence the long sledging journeys across the ice-cap to the mountains above mentioned.

Two observers, one the Australian physicist, P.G. Law, accompanied the expedition and returned with the "Norsel".

---