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ANTARCTIC NEWS BULLETIN

A QUARTERLY BULLETIN

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WHALING SEASON ABOUT TO COMMENCE.

An armada of factory ships, catchers and attendant vessels is moving south for the commencement of the whaling season on January 2. Indications are that there will be 17 fleets in operation, one more than last season. Norway is sending nine expeditions, two more than last time, but there has been no reference to the Panamanian "Olympic Challenger" which was also in the Antarctic for the 1952-3 season.

To preserve whale-stocks, the combined catch of all pelagic expeditions is this season limited to 15,500 blue whale units, 500 fewer than for the past few seasons. A Sydney "Sun" report says that a ban has been imposed on the taking of blue whales before January 16 and that humpbacks can be taken on February 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Japanese Fleets.

A Tokyo report says that Japan will send a whaling fleet of two factory ships and 43 other vessels to the Antarctic this year, equipped with helicopters, 'ultrasonic' guns and sound-wave apparatus. The fleet was due to leave Japan in two sections in late October and mid-November. The two factory ships are "Tonan Maru" (19,000 t.) and "Nisshin Maru" (17,000 t.), both of which operated last season. The helicopters will be used to make weather observations and to spot whales and icebergs. A London message adds that the Japanese hope to take home 30,000 tons of salted whale meat as food for Japanese miners.

Norwegian Factory Ships.

Of the three Norwegian vessels which did not participate in Antarctic whaling last season, "Antarctic" has been withdrawn from whaling activity for good, and converted into a tanker; but "Thorshovdi" and "Kosmos III" will take part in whaling operations in the forthcoming 1953-4 season.

Catchers and Factory Ships.

During the seasons from 1946-7 to 1952-3, the average number of catchers per factory ship has steadily increased from 8.6 to 14.5. Owing, however, to the 16,000 blue-whale-unit restriction this has merely resulted in a shortening of the whaling season, and the economic advantage which this brings has not been proportionate to the cost of procuring and operating superfluous catchers. For this reason, Norwegian companies have been trying to get the number of catchers reduced to an economic level - such a reduction, to have the desired effect, would have to get the support of all companies. For the forthcoming season an agreement has been concluded fixing the number of catchers to be employed, in accordance with the capacity of the factory ships, e.g. "Sir James Clark Ross" and "Willem Barendsz", 12 catchers, (last season, 14 and 12 respectively): "Thershammer", 10 catchers, (13 last season). This agreement has been signed by all the companies

engaged in pelagic whaling in the Antarctic except the Soviet-Russian company. Representations have been made to this company, but without success. Last season the Russian factory ship, "Slava", had 15 catchers. Assuming that the "Slava" still employs 15 catchers, the average number of catchers per factory ship will be reduced by this agreement from 14.9 to 12.5, and the catching season will probably be a little longer.

Asdic to be Used.

The firm of Christian Salveson and Co. of Leith, Edinburgh, (owners of "Southern Venturer"), is equipping 22 of its whaling ships with Asdic sets, says a London press message dated November 1, and will employ operators with war-time experience who will attend a refresher course and learn whaling technique.

Antarctic Whale Stocks.

The committee set up last year by the International Whaling Commission in London met in Stockholm in March. In a statement published in the Norwegian Whaling Gazette, the Norwegian member says that there is a reduction in the abundance of whale stocks, although the degree of depletion may be a matter for argument. The bigger and more efficient catchers now in use and the greatly increased production capacity of the floating factories should have resulted in an increased catch per "catcher's day's work" (C.D.W.), but the actual position is the reverse. The catch in blue-whale units per C.D.W. in the 1946-7 season and the 1951-2 season, Antarctic pelagic whaling only, was as follows:

1946-7	-	0.61
1951-2	-	0.30

Moreover, the ratio of the most important species, the blue whale, has decreased to an even more alarming extent:

1946-7	-	Blue-whale percentage of blue & fin	40.77
1951-2	-	" " " " "	19.91

The position in Area V (roughly the Ross Sea Area) is not so serious as regards actual stocks, but here too there has been a decrease both in number of blue whales caught per C.D.W.,

1946-7	-	.76
1951-2	-	.36

and in the ratio of blues to blues and fins:

1946-7	-	58.9
1951-2	-	25.8

Whale Marking Plans.

The 'Times' Oslo correspondent reported on October 19 that Norway's biggest and most modern whale-catcher, the "Enern", was to sail for the Antarctic to mark whales in the area between South Georgia and Bouvet Island. All British, Dutch, and Norwegian whaling expeditions are to share the costs of the expedition and the British and Norwegian whale research institutions are to provide the men and equipment. It is hoped that marking whales will be of value both to the study of whales growth and to the effects of whale hunting on stock. Before the war 5,000 whales were marked. Three hundred marked whales have been shot, but it is believed that the marks in many whales have been overlooked after catching.

Final Figures for 1952-53.

The revised survey of the last Antarctic whaling season shows very little alteration in the figures published in our previous issue. The number of whales caught is unchanged; there is a slight increase

in the recorded yield of oil, from 1,994,190 to 1,998,085 barrels. This applies to pelagic whaling only. If the shore-station catch is added, whales caught numbered 30,653, and barrels of oil, 2,118,088. The corresponding figures for the 1951-52 season were 35,228 whales, 2,475,034 barrels of oil.

Comparative figures for the countries participating in pelagic whaling, with the 1951-52 figures in brackets:

	<u>Factory Ships</u>	<u>Blue Wales</u>	<u>Fin Whales</u>	<u>Total Whales (Inc. sperm etc.)</u>
Norway	7 (10)	1067 (2091)	8742 (9691)	10,381 (14,763)
United Kingdom	3 (3)	1124 (1149)	3377 (3147)	6,173 (5,961)
South Africa	1 (1)	259 (613)	2019 (1511)	2,460 (2,494)
Netherlands	1 (1)	351 (425)	993 (718)	1,575 (1,650)
Panama	1 (1)	388 (424)	1728 (900)	2,365 (1,408)
Japan	2 (3)	539 (231)	1972 (2602)	2,645 (3,831)
U. S. S. R.	1 (1)	138 (191)	2366 (1951)	2,726 (2,459)
Total:	16 (20)	3866 (5124)	21,197 (20,520)	28,325 (32,566)

CAMPBELL ISLAND

LETTER TO THE ANTARCTIC SOCIETY

Received by R/T from Campbell Island.
(We regret that the following message arrived just too late to be included in our September issue. Ed.)

Midwinter's Day passed quietly enough marked only by a very tasty meal in the evening and a few noggins and cigars. There was no beard contest as three of the members have returned to the ranks of the cleanly shaven. The party are all very fit and are beginning to produce a sun tan from their daily ultra-violet sun-baths. It's a bit cold for swimming as one member of the party discovered when diving to recover a camera in Perseverance Harbour.

Rob Stanley is making a movie predominantly of the animal life on the Island, all in colour; we only hope that his first attempt will be successful. Most of the birds and seals have departed and, except for a friendly sea bear who always plays around the boat or with the dogs, not many seals are seen in the harbour these days. The fluffy Royal Albatross chicks look very forlorn on their exposed nests, especially after one of our occasional snowfalls.

The party are very interested in Campbell Island publicity - via Antarctic news and radio requests sessions, and would like to point out that the rigours of the climate are greatly overrated. The sun is seen much more than is generally believed and it is probably no colder than Invercargill. Admittedly a bit wet, but some of the party have seen more mud, and in North Auckland at that.

C.P.B. Sewell
Officer in Charge.

RELIEF CARRIED OUT

The M.V. Holmburn left Dunedin for Campbell Island on November 19. Very rough weather was encountered; some damage was done to deck fittings and ventilators, and the stern-post of the surf-boat was cracked. Campbell Island was not reached until November 23, after a voyage lasting nearly twice the usual time. The weather during the vessel's stay at the Island however, was good, and the twelve months' stores were landed without mishap. The Holmburn left on the return trip at 4 a.m. on November 27, and arrived in Dunedin on November 29.

Mr C.P.B. Sewell (leader) and Messrs Stanley and Bannister have returned to New Zealand, and have been relieved by Messrs L.P. McManus, C. Capper and M. Randall.

Mr Lawrence P. McManus, the new officer-in-charge, is a West-coaster who was educated at St. Patrick's College, Silverstream. On leaving school he joined the Ministry of Works, on the engineering side. During the war he was a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm for five years, serving in many parts of the world. Returning to the Ministry of Works, he spent nearly three years in charge of a party of 40 Ministry of Works men as well as contractors in the Haast area, based on Jackson's Bay. More recently he has been engaged on the Westport Harbour investigation.

Mr Colin Capper is to be a meteorological observer on the Island. He is an Englishman who has been some three years in New Zealand after serving in the Royal Navy during the war. He is an experienced radio technician.

Mr Murray Randall is a New Zealander, only 18½ years of age, who has been working with the Communications Centre of Civil Aviation. He is going south as an ionospheric observer.

Messrs McManus and Capper gained dental, medical and minor surgical experience at the Wellington Hospital in the weeks prior to the Holburn's sailing.

It is not intended that the Holburn will visit Campbell Island again until the relief takes place about this time next year.

FROM CAMPBELL ISLAND TO CHILE

A Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora*) ringed as a nestling by Mr J.H. Sorensen at Campbell Island on October 4, 1943, was recovered on the beach at El Tabo, Province of Santiago, Chile, during 1944. When found it was in an exhausted state, and it died soon afterwards. This belated information was recently supplied in a letter from Dr R.A. Philippi-B, Director of Ornithology, Natural History Museum, Santiago.

There are two varieties of the Royal Albatross: one, the larger, breeds on Campbell Island, and the other on Chatham Island and at the Otago Heads. Specimens of the smaller variety had previously been found by Dr R.C. Murphy in South America, and as there are no known breeding places there, Dr Murphy thought it likely that these birds had come from the New Zealand breeding grounds. This newly-reported discovery affords proof that the larger variety also makes the long journey from Campbell Island to the South American coast.

SCOTT'S "DISCOVERY".

The royal research ship "Discovery", which has been closed to the public, was to be taken over by the Admiralty at the end of September and later towed from her moorings alongside the Victoria Embankment for survey, says the London 'Times'. Her ownership by the Boy Scouts' Association is at an end. The "Discovery" has been familiar to London for 16 years, and her museums contain many relics of Captain Scott for whose first expedition the auxiliary barque was specially built in 1901. These will now presumably be dispersed, either to the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge or to the Greenwich Maritime Museum. What will happen to the vessel herself will depend upon the findings of the Admiralty survey. If suitable, she is likely to be used as a drill ship and recruiting centre. Considerable internal reconstruction may be needed.

A later report says that the ship is to become an additional accommodation ship moored at the Victoria Embankment for use by the London Division of the R.N.V.R. if survey shows her hull to be sound.

FALKLAND ISLANDS DEPENDENCIES SURVEY

The Principal Scientific Officer of the Falkland Islands Dependencies Scientific Bureau has kindly forwarded the following information regarding F.I.D.S. work:

"General: Routine meteorological and wireless schedules have been maintained by all bases.

Base D. (Hope Bay). A party which set out from base on 23rd August to lay a depot at Cape Longing was unable to reach their destination owing to a prolonged period of bad weather. The stores were left at Duse Bay and the party returned to base on 3rd September.

The survey of southern James Ross Island was completed by mid-September, and at the same time, extensive collections of specimens were made by Geologists working from fixed camps in the Seymour Island, Snowhill Island and Cape Obelisk areas.

A party of six men with three dog-teams was expected to set out on 4th October on another depot-laying journey. This party will continue survey and geological work south of base.

The intervals between these various sledging journeys have been spent in feeding up the dog teams at Duse Bay, (where seals are more plentiful) and in laying in stocks of seal-meat for use at the base.

Base F. (Argentine Islands). It has been impossible to carry out work on Weddell Seals as planned for this season, as very few Weddells have been breeding in the vicinity. This decrease in numbers at the Argentine Islands has been apparent over the past three years and has been coupled this year with a dearth of all seal species.

Relief of the Bases. The spring break-up of the sea-ice was reported to be well advanced in early October, and it was hoped that all bases (with the possible exception of F) would be relieved early in November on the first voyage of the "John Biscoe".

Among Those Present.

The London "Times" reports that there are 19 men in the relief parties who went south in the "John Biscoe". There are four meteorological assistants and a meteorological observer, six wireless operator mechanics, a diesel-electric mechanic, two assistant surveyors, a medical officer and two general assistants. At Hope Bay, the main sledging base, it is proposed to carry out investigations into the physiology of sledge-dogs, and the relief party also includes "dog-physiologist" R.J.F. Taylor. The 19th man is not a new-comer, but R.A. Lenton who will be spending his fifth season with the survey as a W/T operator and base-leader. The average age of the relief team is 24 years 8 months.

In South Georgia.

The "Times" states that Duncan Carse is leading a party to complete the survey of the Island begun in his 1951-2 expedition. Bernard Stonehouse, who was at Marguerite Bay in 1948-50, is to investigate the life-cycle of the King Penguin.

A Job with F.I.D.S.?

Vacancies occur each year in the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey for men who are trained meteorologists, surveyors, geologists and radio operators (Meteorologists are required for routine work at base only). As F.I.D.S. would not be able to finance travel to and from the United Kingdom, there are difficulties in the way of New Zealanders joining the Survey; but we are informed that if the New Zealand Antarctic Society were to recommend individuals for work with the Survey which would be useful to them in future, their applications would be considered.

F.I.D.S. Reports.

The first five F.I.D.S. Scientific Reports are announced for simultaneous publication by H.M. Stationery Office, London.

1. Organisation and Methods (posted 4/8)
2. A New Method of Age Determination in Mammals with special reference to the Elephant Seal (3/2)
3. The Upper Cretaceous Cephalopod Fauna of Graham Land (30/6)
4. Lower Cretaceous Gastropoda, Lamellibranchia and Annelida from Alexander Island (5/8)
5. Fossil Penguins from the Mid-Tertiary of Seymour Island (5/8)

The reports, and others to follow indefinitely, will be royal quarto in size and will contain colotype and half-tone illustrations. They may be ordered from H.M.S.O., P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1, or through a bookseller.

"John Biscoe".

Built of wood as a lend-lease auxiliary, the F.I.D.S. vessel R.R.S. "John Biscoe" is equipped with twin diesel-electric motors and all the latest navigational refinements. After being extensively modified and strengthened, she is now well suited for her purpose, being effective in all but heavy ice. In the course of her annual expeditions to relieve and re-victual the various bases she covers anything up to 30,000 miles.

F.I.D.S. aids Whalers.

In an article in the London "Times", Sir Miles Clifford, Governor of the Falkland Islands, states that the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey has given special attention to meteorology and hydrography because, as he says, "both are of immediate importance to whaling fleets."

RADIO LINK ACROSS ANTARCTICA

One of the radio channels to London from New Zealand's new radio transmitting station at Himatangi, which came into operation on 9 November, will go across the Antarctic continent. Announcing this in the House of Representatives on 16 September, the Postmaster-General (Mr Broadfoot) said that from the radio point of view, therefore, the Antarctic was important to New Zealand. The new station would allow New Zealand to communicate directly with the Northern Hemisphere instead of having to link first with Australia.

The aerials at Himatangi are disposed according to the direction of the transmission paths. Provision is made for transmitting to the United Kingdom over both the "short" and "long" paths, lying over the North and South polar regions respectively. The "long" path, which will be the one used during part of the day, follows a route somewhat to the east of true south, crossing Marie Byrd land and James W. Ellsworth land from a point just east of the Ross Sea (approx. 75° S, 140° W) to a point on south-east shore of the Weddell Sea.

A SOJOURN ON MARION ISLAND

by J.J. la Grange.

(We are privileged to publish the following account of life on Marion Island, South Africa's sub-antarctic outpost in lat. 46° 52' S. long. 37° 51' E., some 950 miles south-east of Port Elizabeth in the Union of South Africa. The weather-office on Marion Island was established in 1947 and has been in constant operation since then. Mr la Grange served on the Island from October 1950 till April last year. His article, here slightly shortened, was published originally in the "Newsletter" of the South African Weather Bureau, whose Director kindly forwarded the article to us for publication. Ed.)

S.A.S. Transvaal departed from Salisbury Island (Durban) late on the afternoon of October 12, 1950, for one of the loneliest inhabited islands in the world. Most of the members of the fifth relief party were seasick and confined to sick bay. Heavy seas through the "Roaring Forties" made conditions worse, but the 16th brought relatively fine weather and at 0700 G.M.T. Prince Edward Island was seen on the radar screen. At 1200 G.M.T. the "Transvaal" dropped anchor near Transvaal Cove. The scenery was most delightful with strong contrasts of white snow, pale blue sky, red hills, green and brown grass, the deep blue sea and clouds of all types. The wind was almost calm and the sea like a mirror.

Personnel and stores were put ashore by means of a small boat ferrying between the ship and the landing stage which hangs down the side of Gunner's Point.

The following day the ship left and the "islanders" were cut off from the rest of the world, except for radio communication: the next ship they could expect would be the one to take them away.

Work started immediately. Everyone was in good spirits for the adventure had just started. The hoisting of the landing stage, the unpacking of some 10 tons of provisions and the initiation into the routine work gave the newcomers a taste of what was in store for them. During the following six months they built a sheep pen and hut, a landing platform and a wooden "walk" joining it to the staircase, which links the beach with the higher ground. (The first heavy swell washed the platform away). They also built a refuse chute leading into the sea, reconstructed the pig sty and planted the first trees and vegetable seeds on Marion Island.

WILD LIFE ON THE ISLAND

Most of the newcomers are interested in the animal and bird life of the island right from the start of their stay. And, in April 1952 (as was the case in some previous reliefs), the returning party brought back a very fine collection of invertebratae consisting mainly of earth-worms, spiders and insects. The only "animals" (vertebratae) consist of amphibious mammals and birds. The former are sea-elephants and fur seals. On rare occasions a sea-leopard has been known to visit the island but it never mates there. Killer-whales frequently appear near the coast (the writer has a healthy respect for them) but they are of course, not confined to Marion. Mice abound in large numbers, but it is almost certain that they were taken there by ships.

With the exception of the popular nuisance, the paddy, the sea-birds normally constitute the bird-life. On April 13, 1951, a solitary egret was found near the station. This landbird is a natural inhabitant of South America and must have been blown all the way to Marion. There are four types of penguins - king, gentoo, rockhopper and macaroni.

The wandering-albatross has a wingspan of over 10 feet and must be the master in the art of gliding. Hundreds (possibly thousands) come to Marion during November for the breeding season. The male seeks out a spot for its nest; the females then come to the males, but a male may not be satisfied with the first female and may prefer a second or even a third one. The female lays one egg during December.

Other typical birds are the stinker, southern skua, sea-gull, cormorant, mutton bird, Cape hen, Kerguelen tern or sea-swallow, Kerguelen diving petrel, grey petrel and the medium billed prion. The

Cape hen is also found in the South Western Cape Province where it flies during daytime. It would appear that after migrating to Marion Island, it became the prey of the skua and adapted itself to night flying, remaining in holes in the ground during daytime. The skua never "fishes" for its victims, but preys, chiefly, on "night" birds (it also feeds on the eggs of other birds). Its egg is not white like those of most sea-birds, but is a dark green with brown specks.

On the other hand, fish are not very abundant, but several were brought back for identification. A few specimens of a very small sardine type were caught as well as four black fish about 18 inches in length. When the latter were cut open, young ones of the same species were found in their stomachs; they taste very much like cod.

With regard to the island itself, the coastal plain shows a beautiful green colouring, due to the vegetation which consists of several grass species, mosses, ferns and two types of angiospermae (plants which flower). The Kerguelen cabbage, like the grasses, also seeds but it flowers internally (like the fig tree). There are no bushes or trees (except those which were planted in 1950 and 1951).

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Marion and Prince Edward Islands lie in the belt of the "Roaring Forties", between 40° and 50° S. Between these parallels land comprises only three per cent of the earth's surface. Marion Island is approximately 13 x 8½ miles in extent. Prince Edward lies 12 miles to the NNE and is about one-quarter of the area of Marion. The Prince Edward group was discovered on January 13, 1772, by Marion du Fresne. In 1776, Captain Cook named them the Prince Edward Islands not knowing that du Fresne had already forestalled him. He later called the larger one, Marion Island, and the smaller one, Prince Edward.

The following buildings form the settlement: weather office, living quarters, food store, equipment store, Tristan Hut (formerly gymnasium, now aeradio store and part of living quarters), power station, radiosonde hut, radio station, and two water pump houses. The weather office building includes the office, a backroom for the anemograph and stationery, a double bedroom and a store for meteorological equipment; the size of the building is 30 x 17½ ft. The roof is painted in squares each 3 x 3 ft, white and black, in order to distinguish it from the other buildings, for purposes of navigation. During a ship's visit a light beacon is maintained during night time. The position of the weather office is Lat. 46° 52' 34" S and Long. 37° 51' 32" E.

The living quarters include a dining room, photographic dark room, five bedrooms, bath room, passage and kitchen; collectively they measure 20 x 60 ft. At the back has been added a geyser room, store room (used as pantry and drying room) and latrines. Three bedrooms have been built into the Tristan Hut.

All the buildings are linked together by telephone and "duck-board" walks. The latter are a necessity as much of the terrain of Marion is extremely boggy. Some of these bogs are known to be at least 15 ft deep and are very treacherous as the greenest moss, ferns and grass grow over them. At some places one can walk reasonably comfortably, only to sink right up to the knees in a bog quite unexpectedly. There is no possibility of pleasant walking. On the mountain slopes and in some parts of the coastal plain, one finds what the "Marion Islanders" call "klinker veld" - sharp loose rocks very much like cinders. The islanders have achieved almost the impossible by walking (or rather struggling) around the island, carrying bags weighing up to 50 lb.

TOO BUSY TO BE DULL

A question which members of the relief parties often have to answer when they are back in the Union is: "How do you manage to pass the time?". On Marion Island, those who honestly pull their weight never have idle moments. For example, the three meteorological personnel start work at about 0400 G.M.T., and with the exception of breaks for tea and meals, work until 1600 G.M.T. (the last synoptic observation is, however, taken at 1800 G.M.T.). Frequently, the radiosonde man works until 2000 G.M.T. to have everything in order and ready for the start in the morning. Everybody takes part in communal activities such as cleaning the living quarters, washing dishes, feeding domestic animals, transferring provisions from the store to the house,

painting and general maintenance (including concreting work and hoisting the radio aerials when necessary). The Met. staff also have the routine job of cleaning out the hydrogen generators and re-loading them - hard labour for several hours, as those who are familiar with this task will agree. And, often when two or three ascents fail due to strong surface winds, the situation can become most annoying.

The radio operator transmits all weather reports to the Union; he also transmits and receives the private and administrative correspondence, the former being limited to 200 words in each direction per person per week. Except when radio matters demand his attention, the radio technician is free to help other members of the staff. The diesel mechanic sees to the maintenance of the diesel and petrol plants and also does all the plumbing. In addition, he has a lathe and complete welding and brazing outfits. The carpenter is always occupied with maintenance or new additions to the buildings or furniture. The medical orderly (fortunately so far) does very little medical work but makes up for this as he is also the cook. And, it is by no means an enviable job to feed the men and satisfy them with what resources he can muster among his stocks of tins. Once a month the monotony of this diet is relieved by fresh mutton. The ninth member was formerly a biologist but is now a storeman.

BLEAK, BOISTEROUS AND FOGGY

The dominating element of "bad" weather on Marion is an almost continuous wind. Few can have any idea of what a depressing influence such winds have on the human being. One never gets used to it. In comparison the little sunshine and the heavy rains (almost daily) are tolerable. Several gales a month is not exceptional and gusts of over 100 mph have been recorded. Before or at the passing of warm fronts, strong NW'ly winds sometimes cause a very heavy swell on the NE coast of Marion. Striking photographs of such heavy swells have been taken; one shows a wave breaking on Gunner's Point (40 ft above M.S.L.). Low temperatures do not result in as much hardship as one would think, due to the small diurnal variation of temperature. One soon gets used to constant low temperatures (often lower during daytime than night time). From October 1950 to April 1952 there was not a single instance of a cloudless day, and in June 1951 the mean hourly sunshine value was 0.93 hours. In summer, light snow-falls occur about once a month; but showers of soft hail or freezing rain are more common and sometimes cover the ground completely. Even in winter, when the snow-line descends below 2000 ft, dry snow (which may envelop the whole island in a white blanket for a few days at a time) does not fall very often. Usually, snow is accompanied by rain, which quickly melts the snow. The weather on Marion Island is perhaps best summarised according to the description which appears in the "ANTARCTIC PILOT", viz. 'bleak, boisterous and foggy'.

To enable the members of the party to live under such weather conditions, they are (before departure from the Union) issued with warm, protective clothing such as comforter caps, inner flying suits, flying boots, battle-dresses, long underclothing, gloves or gauntlets, gum boots, army boots, woollen socks, great coats, khaki overalls and warm bedding.

Recreation mostly takes the form of games, such as darts, poker dice, cards, chess, table tennis, weight-lifting and billiards. There is an interesting library, covering subjects from Religion to Mathematics and "Penny Horribles". About 300 gramophone discs, including classical recordings and four complete operas, provide a wide range of choice for musical evenings on Sundays.

ANTARCTIC DOCTOR FOR N.Z. HOSPITAL

The senior medical officer on the British whaling factory-ship "Southern Venturer" at present en route for the Antarctic whaling grounds, Dr K.S. Fitch, has been appointed resident medical officer of the Silverstream Hospital, near Wellington. Dr Fitch will return to England with the ship in the middle of next year before coming to New Zealand to take up his new appointment.

A.N.A.R.E.

Australian Activities in the Antarctic

The Antarctic Division of the Australian Department of External Affairs is working at pressure on the final stages of the preparations for the despatch in January of the Australian Expedition to the Antarctic continent.

R.A.A.F. Will Fly in Antarctic.

Two R.A.A.F. pilots and a groundstaff man will fly and service the two light aircraft carried by the Australian Antarctic Expedition.

The small R.A.A.F. party will be led by Flight Lieutenant D.W. Leckie of Melbourne. The aircraft are Austers, which will be flown with floats and skis as required. These aircraft will guide the Australian Antarctic Expedition ship through the ice of the Antarctic Continent, and will make aerial reconnaissances of the coast to help find the site for the Antarctic mainland base, which will be established next year.

Flight Lieutenant D.W. Leckie, who is 33, was born in Melbourne. Before enlisting in the R.A.A.F. in 1940 he had considerable experience as a civil flying instructor. He served with No.4 Squadron in New Guinea in 1942-43. He returned to the R.A.A.F. in 1951 and has since been engaged in flying instruction.

The second pilot is Sergt. S.R.K. Seaver, who flew Meteor Jets for six months in Korea, and the "ground-staff man" is Sergt. K.W. Duffel.

The Auster aircraft to be used were put through exhaustive tests at Point Cook, Victoria, during November.

Every member of the expedition who has not already had his appendix removed will have had an appendix operation before Christmas. The seven men concerned are having the operation at their own expense to guard against any possible interruption to field work while away from Australia. When Dr Serge Udonikoff suffered an acute attack of appendicitis on Heard Island in 1950, H.M.A.S. Australia had to be sent down to his rescue.

Members of the expedition will wear Australian-made boots of "Alpine Toughide" leather from Leicester, England. Impervious to moisture, this leather remains supple in temperatures as low as 25 degrees below zero. The successful British Everest team had Alpine Toughide lining in their boots, and the leather has been used in the Falkland Islands Dependencies and other Antarctic areas.

Post Office in Australian Antarctic Territory.

The Australian Postmaster-General announces that a post office is to be established early next year on the mainland of Australian Antarctic Territory.

One of the party of ten Australian scientists and technicians who are expected to leave Melbourne in the "Kista Dan" in January, 1954, will be appointed Postmaster, and the office will be established at the base to be set up by the party. A special postmark will be used and registration facilities will be available.

As there will be little opportunity in the near future to secure covers bearing the special postmark unless they are forwarded with the expedition in January, arrangements have been made for such covers to be received at the Philatelic Bureau, General Post Office, Melbourne. They will be handed to the Postmaster before he leaves for the Antarctic. All mail matter posted will be brought to Australia in sealed bags as opportunity offers, but some time must necessarily elapse before collectors can reasonably expect the return of their covers.

Collectors outside Australia should send fully addressed envelopes under pre-paid separate cover addressed to the Director, Posts and Telegraphs, General Post Office, Melbourne, Victoria, together with a remittance by bank draft or international money order to cover the cost of the Australian stamps which must be affixed. It is essential that fully addressed envelopes be included as the Department cannot

undertake to provide and address covers. All covers must reach the Director no later than the 1st January, 1954.

The rate of postage from the Antarctic base to Australia and to countries to which British Empire rates apply is 3½d. for the first oz. and 2½d. for each additional oz.

If air mail transmission is required after the mail has reached Australia, the following charge applies:-

To New Zealand - 8d. each ½ oz.
Registration is 9d. extra.

All covers received too late for despatch on the "Kista Dan" will be held for transmission at the next available opportunity.

Robert Dovers, Expedition leader, is down-to-earth in his approach to modern Antarctic research. "Talk about uranium and other minerals in Antarctica is still largely guess-work," he told a Brisbane "Courier Mail" interviewer. "The simple fact is that there is no real reason to suppose that Antarctica is either richer or poorer geologically than any other continent. We are making an exploratory trip to see what's there - and we may find something very interesting."

Visitor to Heard Island.

A Ross seal, the world's rarest seal, appeared at Heard Island in September. The Antarctic Division says that only 50 of these seals have been recorded, and the one at Heard Island is the first recorded outside the limits of the pack-ice.

Ascent of Big Ben.

John Bechervaise, leader of the 1953 Heard Island expedition and an experienced mountaineer, led a party of three during November in the most determined assault yet made on Big Ben (9,005 feet). The party was on the mountain for eighteen days and reached the highest altitude so far attained (5,000 feet). Bechervaise reports that from this point the summit seemed "completely attainable", but unfortunately bad weather and insufficient rations defeated the party.

MORE ANTARCTIC EXPEDITIONS IN THE OFFING

The Explorers' Journal, published by The Explorers Club, New York, says:

"By, or before 1955 - or, possibly, 1956-57-58 - at least two great United States Antarctic expeditions are expected to get under way. In this writer's rather complete article on 'Geography and Exploration', appearing in The Explorers' Journal for the Summer of 1952, a detailed plan for Antarctic research under a coordinated program was set forth in considerable detail, heightening the importance of exploration for scientific purposes. Two of the world's foremost explorers - Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, U.S.N. (Ret.), Medalist 1926; and Commander Finn Ronne, U.S.N.R., AcNR 1937, and to whom credit is given for the great geographical accomplishment which definitely established that Antarctica is one continent - are said to be planning new outstanding scientific exploration expeditions to the vast continent....

...A number of leading American scientists forming a special committee appointed by the President of the National Academy of Sciences, meeting twice during the year 1948, suggested a coordination of scientific work with over-all command requirements of the military services that make possible expeditionary efforts on a large scale, which necessarily is a problem of great complexity. It is to be assumed that the two proposed big Antarctic expeditionswill carry out the virtually all-inclusive coordinated program outlined in this article on 'Geography and Exploration.'

ARGENTINA IN THE ANTARCTIC

It was announced in Buenos Aires on September 23 that three Argentine students at the Eva Peron School of Mining, accompanied by Professor Monroy, will visit Deception Island, Moon Bay, Marguerite Bay and other places in the Graham Land area to prospect for minerals. The students were invited to go by General Pujato, Chairman of the Argentine Antarctic Institute.

The Minister of the Army announced on September 29 that personnel of the General San Martin Base have successfully completed an inspection tour on skis and sledges, of Marguerite Bay south of the polar circle. The expedition travelled 14 days covering a distance of 150 milometres and had to struggle against exceptionally bad weather conditions. They made a survey of the region between Marguerite Bay and Cape Alexandra, south of Adelaide Island.

The survey tugs "Sanaviron" and "Chiriguano" left in advance of the remaining units of the Antarctic Naval Force to commence the 18th. campaign of the Argentine Navy in the Southern regions. There are no war-ships among the six vessels.

On November 4, the transport vessel "BAHIA AGUIRRE", and the tanker "PUNTA LOYOLA" left for the south. The hydrographic tugs "Sanaviron" and "Chiriguano" were expected to leave later. The crews were seen off by the Minister of Marine who transmitted General Peron's salutations to the members of the expedition. At a press conference Capt. Ogaro, the Commander of the Force, stated that the expedition would last five months. Its object was to relieve the permanent detachments in that region and to intensify hydrographic, photographic, oceanographic and glaciological work to be carried out by the military personnel, while a group of scientists who have joined the expedition would carry out biological, geological, geophysical, astrophysical and other similar research in the territory.

The Argentine Department of Posts and Telegraphs has announced the opening of a second-class postal and radio office at Moon Bay in the South Shetlands. "This base was established during the last Antarctic summer", says a London Times report, "and is Argentina's seventh base in British Antarctica. The opening of the postal-radio office is evidently a propagandist gesture rather than a development of practical importance."

Still Hoping.

The Melbourne "Argus" reports a further declaration by the "sportsman" Enrique Diaz Saenz Valiente that he will be proceeding with his plans to establish a direct air-route between Rio Gallegos, in the southern tip of Argentina, and Melbourne, Victoria; across the Antarctic continent. In Bulletin No. 3 (October 1951) we reported Sn. Valiente as scheduled to start "shortly". The "Argus" despatch from Buenos Aires states that he "has been making meteorological studies for two years, aided by 500 Argentine and Australian weather stations."

TREATY TO BE RENEWED?

A report from Santiago, Chile, states that the Chilean Foreign Minister, Mr Oscar Fenner, informed press representatives that Argentina, Chile and Great Britain are negotiating the renewal of the tripartite agreement which bans naval operations in the Antarctic regions between December and February.

ANTARCTIC BOOKSHELF

SEVENTH CONTINENT: Saga of Australian Exploration in Antarctica 1895-1950. By Arthur Scholes, London: George Allen and Urwin Ltd., 1953, 221 pages; maps and illustrations. 26/-.

In this attractively produced volume Arthur Scholes, author of the Heard Island story "Fourteen Men", and himself a member of one of the Heard Island parties and a participant in a "Discovery II" cruise, tells the story of Australia's part in the unveiling of the Antarctic. While his limited scope prevents the author from giving the complete story of Antarctic exploration, it permits him to tell in more detail the stories of expeditions which were led by Australians: Bull, Borchgrevink, Mawson, Wilkins, Rymill; and the work of A.N.A.R.E.

until 1948. Some other expeditions are selected - rather arbitrarily it would seem - for more sketchy treatment, but the general motif is often maintained even here, as Scott's 'Discovery' expedition is seen through the eyes of Australian Bernacchi, Shackleton's 'Nimrod' expedition through those of Mawson and David, and the 'Endurance epic' is told as the story of Hurley of Australia and Worsley of New Zealand.

Mr Scholes has an eye for the dramatic, and his narrative is racey and colourful. One may dislike the journalese of "flat-topped monarchs of the Antarctic drifting ghostly .. to inevitable destruction in the waiting embrace of warmer waters". One may regret such misleading statements as "no English translation of the Russian voyages to the Antarctic in 1819 has yet appeared," although Debenham's translation was published as early as 1945. And one would like to have seen at least a mention of New Zealanders Falla, Simmens and others. But we are in Mr Schole's debt for a very useful and entertaining account of a section of the Antarctic story which is of special interest to Australians and New Zealanders.

AIR-PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE ANTARCTIC

Through the good offices of the Department of External Affairs and the New Zealand Legation in Washington the Society has received from the American Government two massive volumes entitled "Contributions to the Study of Antarctic Surface Features by Photogeographical Methods", written by Dr J.H. Roscoe of Virginia, U.S.A., as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and sponsored jointly by the U.S. Departments of Navy and Air Force and the University of Maryland. Dr Roscoe was on the staff of U.S. Task Forces 68 and 39 which operated in the Antarctic in 1946-7 (Operation High-Jump) and 1947-8.

The author's purpose is to show how the interpretation of aerial photographs can be used for the purpose of geographical research, and his success can be judged by the fact that the Dept. of the Air Force has published three of his seven chapters as an official Air Force manual, a copy of which has also been forwarded to the Society.

There are 15 folding maps. It is unfortunate that the general map of the Antarctic regions perpetuates errors in the U.S. Navy Hydrographic Office Map of Antarctica, 1943. It will certainly surprise New Zealanders that the only South Island towns on the map are Nelson, Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, Westport, Ross, Weldtown, Jamestown and New Haven.

Dr Roscoe frankly admits that "the actual landscape may differ from that conceived solely through air-photo interpretation", but claims that by the provision and proper study of "photo interpretation keys" photo-geographers (i.e. those skilled in air photo interpretation as a geographic research technique) can arrive at a much more accurate estimate of land-features for which air-photo information only is available. Some 340 such keys are included in the photographs which make these volumes surely the most comprehensive visual guide to Antarctic topography yet published.

The area chosen to illustrate the application of the method is the Ingrid Christensen Coast (70° S. 75° 80' E.) first sighted by Mawson from the air in 1931, extensively photographed from the air by Norwegian and U.S. expeditions, but never otherwise explored.

While much of the book is intended chiefly for the specialist geographer, Dr Roscoe defines his terms and arranged his material so lucidly that the layman is enabled to follow him much of the way with interest and profit.

L.B.Q.

AN "ENDURANCE" DIARY

(continued)

Further extracts from the unpublished diary of Harry McNeish, carpenter on Shackleton's 1914-17 Expedition. The "Endurance" has been caught in the pack, and is apparently "going to pieces fast".

Wed. Oct. 26th.

We have passed our first night on the floe and we had to shift our

camp about 1 am this morning as the ice split about 1 yard from our tent I am in a tent with Mr Wild Dr McIlroy and Mr Wordie it is Thursday night now & we have shifted our camp 3 times we got a seal today I am busy getting the two boats fixed on sledges we have all been fitted out with a new rig out of warm clothing & 1 pound of tobacco & sleeping bags there was only 18 skin bags & we cast lots for them & I was lucky for the first time in my life for I drew one.

Friday Oct. 28th.

We have everything about ready for the march which is 270 miles to the nearest known land over very rough floes as it is all knocked up with the pressure the ice has cut clean through the ship so she has had a short career.

Saturday 30th.

We got everything ready & started on our first sledging journey but we only managed 1 mile it is very hard going & we have a relay with the boats which means taking one for a bit & then going back for the other.

Sunday Oct. 31st.

We have done $\frac{3}{4}$ a mile today to a fine large floe & as far as things went today it was very well only the dogs done exelent they took one boat & the men the other which meant a lot less labour.

Monday Nov. 1st.

We got two seals yesterday & we had a fine feed as we are on half sledging rachions which is good but we have only as much as keep us for 70 days & God only knows when we will get to the land even when there it may be another year after that befor we get to civilisation have made up our minds to stop on this floe untill the ice opens up then take to the boats & if all goes well I hope we will get out as fast as we would have got out in the ship.

Thursday Nov. 4th.

Lat 69-1 South Long 51-57 West Temp Plus 10 We have been busy at the ship getting all the wood & stores that is possible to get I have cut 2 holes through the deck which is 2ft 9 inches under water above the store room we got 3 tons of stores out today I am cutting another hole tomorrow & we expect to get all that is in that store but there is another store that we cant get at as there is 12ft of water over it we are hoping now that this floe wont break up for a month at least untill we have gorged ourselves properly.

Friday Nov. 5th.

We have had another good day at the stores we got about $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons today & now we are quiet satisfied with the results as we have 6 months provisions now which I hope we will never eat here & it leaves us our sledging food intact for to go in the boats as soon as the ice opens up.

Saturday Nov. 6th.

There is a blizard on at present so we are not doing anything only keeping ourselves warm which is a hard job in such low tempretures.

Sunday Nov. 7th.

Lat 68-50 South Long 52-10 West The blizard still continues but we all hope it lasts for a month as we have done 16 miles NW since our last observation there has been nothing done today only a few have been rigging up a range for cooking out of the ash shoot it has turned out very well we had a fine hush tonight of corned meat preserved potatoes it was a treat now we are lying smoking in our bags.

Monday Nov. 8th.

Lat 68-39 South long 52-26 West it was blowing hard from SE untill noon but it has died away till a light breeze now we still hope it will last as we are going in the right direction I have started to make a sledge for the boats all hands have been busy clearing away drift.

Tuesday Nov. 9th.

Lat 68-35 $\frac{1}{2}$ South Long 52-18 West There was four teams away seal

bunting & brought back 3 penguins & the seal meat we had in the ship which was lying on the floe along side where we had thrown it the day we left her she is down level with the decks now but there is a lot of ice under her & when the floe opens we expect she will sink as she is broken in two halves I am still busy at the sledge.

Wednesday Nov. 10th.

Lat 68-38 South Long — West We had a sealing party out today & they brought in 5 seals so we are pretty well off for food now we had under done steaks for dinner & they were a treat I and McLeod went to the ship to find some nails this evening & found her all but gone so we went back without.

Tuesday Nov. 15th.

Lat 68-30 South Long 52-23 West Temp Plus 20 I have been busy since Saturday finishing the sledge for the boat & now I am building the boat up 1 foot higher & decking her in half way making her fit to carry the whole party in case we have to make a longer journey than we intisipate at present we had 1 seal on Saturday but none since the wind has been NE this last 3 days but we have held our own against it as yet which looks as if there was a current setting north.

Thursday Nov. 18th.

Lat 68-38 South Long 52-23 West Temp Plus 15 we had all hands bar myself & my mate on a seal hunt today they only got 3 penguins but we had a seal this morning which came almost up to the tents I & McLeod are busy at the boat & everybody is very well pleased to see how it is progresing I have only a saw hammer & chisel & adze but we are managing all right.

Sunday Nov. 21st.

We have got a fine fair wind at last although it is our unlucky day for all our disasters happen on a Sunday the ship sank this evening at 5.20 p.m. so we have seen the last of her

(To be continued)

ANTARCTIC SHIPS ON STAMPS

Ships connected with Antarctic exploration are featured on each of fifteen new stamps to be issued for the Falkland Islands Dependencies, as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1/2d. green | - "John Biscoe" 1947-52 |
| 1d. brown | - "Trepassey" 1945-47 |
| 1 1/2d. olive-green | - "Wyatt Earp" 1934-36 |
| 2d. red | - "Eagle" 1944-45 |
| 2 1/2d. buff | - "Penola" 1934-37 |
| 3d. blue | - "Discovery II" 1929-37 |
| 4d. magenta | - "William Scoresby" 1926-46 |
| 6d. violet | - "Discovery" 1925-27 |
| 9d. black | - "Endurance" 1914-16 |
| 1/- reddish-brown | - "Deutschland" 1910-12 |
| 2/- cerise | - "Pourquoi Pas?" 1908-10 |
| 2/6 grey | - "Francais" 1903-05 |
| 5/- purple | - "Scotia" 1902-04 |
| 10/- pale blue | - "Antarctic" 1901-03 |
| £1 black | - "Belgica" 1897-99 |