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THE AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITION MAINLAND STATION SAFELY ESTABLISHED

Led by Mr P.G. Law, Director of the Antarctic Division, the Australian expedition to the Antarctic Continent has succeeded in setting up a camp on the MacRobertson Land coast. Mr Law will return to Australia on the expedition vessel "Kista Dan", so will the R.A.A.F. party, which consists of four men (not three as reported earlier): Flight-Lieut. D.W. Leckie, Sgt. R.K. Siever, Sgt. K.W. Duffle and Sgt. J.C. Morgan.

The mainland party of ten men is as listed in Bulletin No. II except that J.D. Gleadell has replaced L.C. Corby as cook and W. Harvey has replaced B. Warne as carpenter.

"Kista Dan" left Melbourne at 4.30 p.m. on January 4. A crowd of several hundreds gave the expedition a rousing send-off. Mr R.G. Casey, Minister of External Affairs, in a speech at the ship's side, said, "Great tasks lie ahead of you. Australia is looking to you to start something for which we may be grateful in the years to come." Sir Douglas Mawson sent a message wishing the expedition "all good luck."

RISKY LANDING

The ship reached Heard Island on January 19 after a voyage of fifteen days on eight of which there were strong gales. During the unloading in rain and snow of stores for the Island station two men, Flight-Lieut. D.W. Leckie and Bruce Stinear, the New Zealander who is the expedition's geologist, fell from landing pontoons into the freezing water. Both were kept afloat by their "Mae Wests" until rescued, and suffered no ill effects. Strong winds and a heavy swell made the unloading difficult and dangerous as the pontoon crews tossed at the ship's side half a mile off-shore. Motor-boats struggled to haul the loaded pontoons against the strong winds and icy spray. Men on shore waded into water only two degrees above freezing point, manhandling the cargo to sledges which a tractor hauled to the station. Work began at 4 a.m. and continued till 9 p.m., with meals snatched hurriedly between pontoon arrivals.

The big jobs were the loading of a seven-ton tractor and the transporting to the ship of 30 dogs specially bred and trained on the island. This resulted in frequent vicious dog-fights, but fortunately none was injured.

Departure from Heard Island was delayed a day by a south-west gale with gusts of 55 knots. Two abortive attempts were made to launch motor-boats and pontoons from the shore in the teeth of the gale and snow-squalls. Finally, at about 8 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, in steady 35 knot winds, the convoy of small craft got going and proceeded to the "Kista Dan", half a mile away. One motor-boat led, followed by another with a damaged rudder and a rubber raft carrying eight men, kitbags and personal luggage. Cold and wet, the party thankfully boarded the "Kista Dan", which sailed at 8.30 p.m.

KERGUELEN TO MACROBERTSON LAND

The expedition reached the French station at Kerguelen Island on the night of January 22, and left again on the 27th for the Antarctic Continent, heading for a landfall at 64 degrees E. longitude. Icebergs were encountered on 31 January and the packice was reached on 1 February. An island was sighted and later the David range of mountains on the Antarctic mainland. The following day, Law and Leckie took off in one of the Auster aircraft on a reconnaissance flight to see what lay behind the ship and the mainland mountains and to select the station site. A horseshoe-shaped area of rock was chosen and the following day reconnaissance flights were made and aerial photographs taken. From the site of the station, near the Masson Range, mountains run inland roughly at right angles to the coast, which consists mostly of sheer ice cliffs over fifty feet high. An ice plateau which begins a hundred yards behind the site has been swept clear of snow by the wind.

On 4 February, Dovers accompanied Leckie to the station site and later Captain Petersen was flown to survey the best route through the ice. The progress of the ship was slow through the packice but on February 5 a reconnaissance party led by Dovers left in the two weasels, guided by an aircraft overhead. The following day a blizzard blew up and one weasel broke through thin ice, though it remained floating and was later frozen in. On February 7 a party consisting of Dovers, Russell, Macey, Harvey and Schwartz took the two weasel caravans over the ice, transferring them to the island which is about a mile from the site and where the party camped. The ship was caught between two large areas of heavy pressure ice which wedged great blocks of ice high against the ship's sides. On February 8 sailors and expedition men worked picking, digging and blasting ice from the sides of the ship which was still 13 miles off shore. Cables received from Mr Law reported that all men were comfortably housed and provisioned, and had caught up on their earlier lack of sleep. The sledge caravans which include modern cooking facilities were proving vastly superior to tents.

ON TO THE MAINLAND COAST

In pleasant calm weather on Tuesday, February 9, Dovers and party transferred the caravan etc. from the island on which they had been for two days to the site selected on the mainland for the new station. The weasel which was earlier frozen in after breaking through the ice was hauled to safety. On Wednesday, Brooks joined Dovers' party ashore to undertake a variometer survey of the site for a magnetic observatory.

During both days the Auster aircraft were busy ferrying stores etc. between ship and shore, and on reconnaissance flights with Mr Law and Captain Petersen.

Meanwhile, the "Kista Dan" was freed from the ice and it was decided to move her to open water to the eastward some miles and endeavour to push through to the vicinity of Welch Island. Haulage thence to the site of the station would be a matter of three or four miles. On February 11, the "Kista Dan" was finally brought into a deep fiord-like harbour within 200 yards of the selected site. However, later the same day a gale blew up which reached hurricane force the following morning, severely damaging both the Auster aircraft which were tied down to the deck of the ship.

On Saturday, February 13, the Australian flag was raised at 67°36 South latitude 62°53 E. longitude and the task of establishing the new A.N.A.R.E. Station began. The station was named Mawson in honour of Sir Douglas Mawson, who carried out extensive work in Australian Antarctic Territory. A message of loyalty and good wishes was despatched to Her Majesty the Queen.

Cargo was swung directly from the hold to sledges on the sea-ice alongside. Weasels towed the sledges 200 yards to within thirty yards of the shore, which was then reached over a carefully tested route through the ice. The rocky site presented transport difficulties as the weasels are designed for working on snow, not rock. But unloading operations proceeded smoothly over February 14 and 15 and one hold was emptied when work finished that evening.

A LANDING FURTHER EAST

On February 23 the "Kista Dan" left Mawson and sailing eastward penetrated Prydz Bay, a deep indentation about 175 miles wide lying off the Lars Christensen and Ingrid Christensen coasts between 73° and 81° E. longitude. This was the southernmost point of the present voyage. A landing was made on Monday February 29 at a point in the Vestfold Mountains area about 400 miles east of the newly established station, Mawson. The weather cleared sufficiently to enable accurate observations to be made. These, together with the observations taken at Mawson and Heard Island, are expected to permit accurate revision of incorrect magnetic information appearing on sailing charts of the Indian Ocean sector of the Southern Ocean.

Before the "Kista Dan" departed for Heard Island a 90-minute survey was undertaken in an Auster aircraft.

While the "Kista Dan" was anchored close to the off-lying islands inside a long line of more than a hundred grounded icebergs on March 2, a full gale developed and the ship's diesel motor-boat tethered astern was struck by drifting lump ice and overturned and sank. It was salvaged but was out of commission. In order to raise the Australian flag in the Vestfold Hills area of Princess Elizabeth Land, on March 3, the petrol motor-boat was got going with great difficulty and driven two and a half miles to the mainland in snow storms, through a sea whose surface was freezing over.

The "Kista Dan" sailed on Thursday, March 4, for Heard Island, with its Antarctic programme completed.

A 103 m.p.h. hurricane which began on March 4 and lasted three days left the ship badly battered. It smashed and blew overboard an Auster aircraft lashed to the ship's deck. The ship was driven in a south-westerly direction before the storm, beam-on, and heeled over dangerously. It received some shelter in a bay from the brash-ice and old floes. Stability was improved by taking on salt water ballast. The ship has now resumed the journey to Heard Island.

STATION VKIEG

The Postmaster-General's department, says the Melbourne 'Age', has allotted Mr W.J. Storer, radio operator of the Australian expedition in MacRobertson Land, the call sign VKIEG. He hopes to be operating by mid-March and will forward QSL cards, on his return, to the stations he hopes to 'work' all over the globe. He has built himself a special compact amateur radio transmitter to withstand the MacRobertson Land winter. Should emergency strike the base and help cannot be raised through the commercial channels, the world of amateur radio will be standing by to take his message.

NEW ZEALANDER IN THE ANTARCTIC

Mr Bruce Harry Stinear, geologist of the Australian expedition now established on the MacRobertson Land coast of the Antarctic continent, is a New Zealander. Born in Christchurch forty years ago, Mr Stinear began climbing mountains when he was about ten years of age, and at twelve reached the summit of Avalanche Peak (6,200 ft.). He was a foundation member of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club and has done considerable climbing, chiefly in the winter, in the Southern Alps.

After six years at Christchurch Boys' High School, Mr Stinear went on to Canterbury College where he specialised in geology and chemistry, graduating B.Sc. in 1936.

After fifteen months oil-prospecting in New Guinea he returned to New Zealand as geologist for a prospecting company drilling at Midhurst. Joining the R.N.Z.A.F., he trained as a navigator with Edmund Hillary. After service in New Zealand and the Pacific area he was again oil prospecting in this country until in 1947 he joined the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources, where his work included prospecting for oil in Western Australia. Three years later he joined the Australian Department of Defence Production as officer in charge of the chemical and engineering section.

F.I.D.S.

The Falkland Islands Dependencies Scientific Bureau has kindly supplied the following information (24 Feb. 1954.).

R.R.S. John Biscoe: All F.I.D.S. bases, except base F, were relieved before Christmas in the course of the first voyage of the 1953-54 season.

Base A. Port Lockroy: Routine ionospheric work has been maintained.

Base B. The Deception Island base was relieved in mid-November in the course of the Biscoe's first southern voyage of the season, as although nine-tenths ice remained in Port Foster, Whalers Bay has been open since the end of October. Among the new personnel are two surveyors who have carried out a new topographical survey - the first since that of Charcot's "Pourquoi Pas?" Expedition of 1908-10. This will supplement the chart of Port Foster prepared for F.I.D.S. in 1948/9 by personnel of the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty.

Base D. Hope Bay: The survey of James Ross Island was completed in September. Early in October, half a ton of stores were placed near Cape Longing by a depot-laying party consisting of six men. Before returning to base on 30th October, the Geologists collected specimens in the Cape Obelish area, and the surveyors completed the survey of Victory Glacier.

ARGENTINE PERSONNEL IN MARGUERITE BAY

RELIEF BY HELICOPTER

The Argentine forces in the Falkland Islands Dependencies have been reinforced by two Sikorsky S55 helicopters, each accommodating ten passengers and a crew of two. They have a flying range of 400 miles and a carrying capacity of over a ton. Recently bought from the United States, they arrived in Buenos Aires on New Year's Eve, left there in mid-January and flew to the naval base at Ushuaia, capital of Tierra Del Fuego. Thence they were taken by the naval vessels Bahia Aguirre and Bahia Buen Suceso to the zone of operations of the Antarctic task force and operated there from the decks of the ships.

The main task before the helicopters was to relieve the military and scientific base in Marguerite Bay, whose garrison of five officers and fourteen other ranks and civilians had been cut off by pack-ice for two years. Attempts last summer to relieve the garrison by sea failed, and aircraft dropped food and medicines by parachute.

A "Times" report (February 9) states that Captain Alicia Ogara took the new chief-of-base to Marguerite Bay in one of the helicopters and relieved part of the garrison. The helicopter flew 150 miles across the ice-field separating the naval vessels from Marguerite Bay.

The news caused considerable rejoicing in Argentina as the season for relief was nearly over and it was feared that the garrison would have to spend a third year in the Antarctic.

NEW AIR-BASE

The "Times" correspondent in Buenos Aires states that the air-base which Argentina proposed to establish on Dundee Island this summer is to be not merely an armed detachment like other Argentine Antarctic bases, but according to the Argentine Air Ministry will be used by the Antarctic air task-force, partly replacing the present southern-most air-field at Rio Gallegos in Patagonia. It will be the first Argentine air-base actually in the Antarctic, and will be permanent. Its purpose is to facilitate scientific work and reconnaissance flights over Deception and Melchior Islands. The task-force of two Avro Lincolns, either one or two Douglas DC3s and one Beachcraft, was to leave El Paloma southbound on 15 December.

(Dundee Island is a long, narrow, flat, snow covered island lying eastward of the tip of Graham Land: 63° 25'S, 56° 10' W.)

NAVAL TASK-FORCE ACTIVE

The Argentine Ministry of Marine reported in January that naval forces had completed the first part of the 18th campaign in the southern region. The work done included relieving of all naval, investigation, hydrographic, oceanographic and scientific personnel. The transport ship "Bahia Buen Suceso" after exploring the ice of the Bellingshausen Sea and crossing the Antarctic Circle, returned to Deception Island, carrying out hydrographic and scientific work in the northern part of Gerlache Strait and at the other end the hydrographic ship "Sanaviron" carried out exploration tasks. In this Strait the members of the Scientific Delegation of the Argentine Antarctic Institute carried out duties assigned to them. The transport ship "Bahia Aguirre" effected work in Bahia Almirantazgo, the hydrographic ship "Chiriguano" examined the Snow Hill route, and the tanker "Punta Loyola" supplied the various units with water and fuel.

NEW POSTAGE STAMPS

The first visit of the frigate "Uruguay" to the Antarctic on October 8 was commemorated by a blue 50 c. Argentine stamp showing the vessel and a map of the Antarctic.

A new stamp is to be issued called "Orcadias del Sur" (Southern Orkneys) to commemorate the office opened there 50 years ago.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

An announcement by the Argentine Ministry of Marine on February 17 said that Rear Admiral Anibal Olivieri, Minister of Marine, would leave Buenos Aires in the naval transport *Les Eclaireurs* on a voyage of 25 days during which he would make a visit of inspection to all the detachments maintained by the Navy in "Argentine Antarctica". The Minister would be accompanied by the Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine High Seas Fleet, the Director-General of navigation and hydrography, and other senior officers and guests. This will be the first visit of a Cabinet Minister to the Antarctic sector claimed by Argentina. It is understood, says the "Times" Buenos Aires correspondent, that the visit will include the detachments at Laurie Island, Gamma Island, Deception Island, Hope Bay, Moon Bay and Paradise Harbour, but not the southernmost base at Marguerite Bay which apart from being almost inaccessible, is maintained by the Argentine army. Indications suggest that this will be the most important foreign demonstration in British Antarctica since February 1948, when an Argentine fleet visited Deception Island and Dr Gonzalez Videla, then President of Chile, spent several days visiting Chile's three Antarctic bases.

A later message states that "*Les Eclaireurs*" warned the British frigate "*St. Austell*" at Deception Island that she was "sailing in Argentine territorial waters" but offering "any help it might need during its visit". The British, not to be outdone in courtesy, proceeded to "escort" the Argentinian vessel throughout its cruise in the Falkland Islands Dependencies!

TRANS-ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION ?

According to a press report dated December 7, a London newspaper states that the Polar Committee, a standing committee convened by the Commonwealth Relations Office and comprising representatives of the High Commissioners of Canada, Australia, South America and New Zealand, the service and other departments interested, the Royal Geographical Society, the Scott Polar Research Institute, etc., is considering the possibility of a joint trans-Antarctic expedition and the establishment of a permanent base, perhaps in the Ross Dependency. It was admitted that the discussions were "exploratory", and that some time would necessarily elapse while the various departments concerned were producing plans and arguments that would convince their Treasuries.

Meanwhile the New Zealand Department of External Affairs states (March 10) that there is nothing definite to report. New Zealand's representative on the Polar Committee is Mr F.H. Corner, who also represented New Zealand at last year's meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

THE INTERNATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL YEAR, 1957-58

Since the Second International Polar Year in 1932-33 there have been many important technical and theoretical developments in the study of the earth's atmosphere. It was therefore suggested in 1950 that a Third International Polar Year would go far towards solving outstanding problems of atmospheric structure, of movements in the high atmosphere, of magnetic and ionospheric storms, and of aurorae. Because the Second International Polar Year took place at a time of sunspot minimum, it was also suggested that the proposed international effort should be associated with the sunspot maximum in 1957-58. Subsequent discussions made it clear that the former emphasis on the polar nature of the project would need modification, since observations in tropical latitudes would also be of great interest. Accordingly it was agreed to change the title to "International Geophysical Year 1957-58".

The principal objectives of the International Geophysical Year are to collect information about the physics of magnetic and ionospheric storms and other disturbances; the physics of aurorae; and the structure and the circulation of the atmosphere. Among the methods of investigation which are being considered are radio, radiosonde, and rawin observations; the exploration of the upper air by means of rockets; cosmic ray research; solar observations; and studies of the troposphere and stratosphere, and of the distribution of ozone. Plans are now being prepared by a committee of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics and it has been suggested that special Geophysical Year Committees should be set up in each country.

J.D.M. Blyth.

THE INLAND ICE

A GLACIOLOGIST IN QUEEN MAUD LAND

There were innumerable indications that the inland ice had been some hundreds of meters thicker in bygone time. Ice polishing, striation, and erratics could be observed high up on the peaks. But there was also plenty of evidence that the ice level had remained relatively stable during recent decades at least. Perhaps most striking were the lichens growing on the rock slopes down to the edge of the ice. The vegetation-free zones so common in temperate latitudes, where they demarcate the area from which the ice has receded during the last 30-40 years, do not occur in the western part of Queen Maud Land. Lichens were even growing on some very small outcrops that would have been completely covered if the snow had been a few meters higher.

It is hardly likely that lichens could spread so much more rapidly in the severe Antarctic climate than they do in warmer latitudes, and when there are also several other evidences pointing to the same thing - for example, the pronounced frost weathering right down to the foot of the mountains - it seems almost certain that the present rapid recession of glaciers in other parts of the world has no equivalent in the inland ice of Queen Maud Land.

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The heavy transport was accomplished by means of the oversnow vehicles known as "weasels", which brought their three-ton loads rapidly and reliably over the vast ice desert. The expedition relied on dogs for movement in among the mountains. This meant that the men were able to devote no more than a small part of their time to their proper work, since they were mostly occupied with travelling - a disadvantage balanced to some extent by the sense of personal satisfaction that driving his own dog team into the unknown gives the polar traveller. Moreover, all were agreed that the sledge dog is not out of date in the Antarctic, but absolutely necessary where steep slopes and dangerous crevasses halt the weasel. Combined operation by planes, track vehicles, and dog teams is the most effective solution of the transport problem of a well-equipped modern Antarctic expedition.

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Thus ended the first half of the work of the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic Expedition - the part which was devoted to collecting scientific material, and which presented the expedition's members with new and impressive experiences. The other half, equally important, began after our return to Europe and will take several years. Calculations must be made on the primary observations, and the laws governing the natural phenomena reflected in the notebook figures must be sought - work that may sometimes lead to journeys into strange regions as fascinating and unexplored as the mountains of Queen Maud Land.

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From "Glaciology in Queen Maud Land" by Valter Schytt, chief glaciologist of the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic Expedition 1949-52, in "The Geographical Review", Vol. 44, No. 1, 1954., by courtesy of the American Geographical Society and the editor of "The Geographical Review".

WHALING EXPEDITIONS 1953-54

The Norwegian Whaling Gazette gives the following information with regard to the pelagic expeditions now operating in the Antarctic:-

(Whaling expeditions 1953-54 cont.)

	<u>Factory Ship</u>	<u>Catchers</u>	
<u>Norwegian:</u>			
	Thorshammer	10	
	Thorshavet	13	
	Thorshovdi	11	
	Kosmos III	13	
	Kosmos IV	13	
	Pelagos	9	
	Norhval	13	
	Suderoy	8	
	Sir James Clark Ross	<u>10</u>	
			<u>100</u>
<u>British:</u>			
	Balaena	14	
	Southern Venturer	13	
	Southern Harvester	13	
	Abraham Larsen	<u>13</u>	
			<u>53</u>
<u>Dutch:</u>			
	Willem Barendsz	12	12
<u>Russian:</u>			
	Slava	15	15
<u>Japanese:</u>			
	Nisshin Maru	13	
	Tonan Maru	<u>13</u>	
			<u>26</u>
	<u>17</u>		<u>206</u>

In all but four cases the number of catchers is the maximum allowed by the agreement entered into by all the companies operating except the Russian, for whose expedition a maximum of thirteen catchers was proposed. Thorshovdi (2), Pelagos (1) and Sir James Clark Ross (2) are using fewer catchers than the maximum allowed them.

DECISIONS OF THE WHALING COMMISSION

At the 5th meeting of the International Whaling Commission held in London on June 22-26, among the important decisions made were:-

1. That the pelagic expeditions be allowed to take humpback whales on February 1, 2, 3 and 4, instead of a limit being fixed (previously 1250 whales).
2. That the pelagic hunting of blue whales should not begin before January 16. (Fin whales and sei whales may still be caught from January 2. Ed.)
3. That the maximum catch of the pelagic expeditions should be reduced from 16,000 to 15,500 blue-whale units.

(The taking of sperm whales is permitted for eight consecutive months during a period of twelve months. These eight months must include the whole of the time the hunting of boleen whales is proceeding, but the sperm whale season may be different for the various expeditions; e.g. the Norwegians have fixed the period October 1 - May 31 for all Norwegian expeditions. Ed.)

As no protests were received, these rules are now in force.

A sub-committee of the Scientific Committee is to meet in Stockholm in the Spring of 1956

- I. to examine the catches of humpback whales and submit proposal for protecting the stocks;

2. to examine the catches of blue and fin whales in relation to the new rules;
3. to study and report on the increased catch of sperm whales in certain areas in recent years.

To facilitate the fixing of the closing date for baleen whaling it was decided that the usual weekly reports to the Bureau of International Whaling Statistics be sent in until the Bureau considers that the total catch has reached 14,000 units, but that the reports from then on shall be daily. The present fourteen day's notice of the termination of operations has been reduced to four.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held in Tokyo, opening on 19 July next.

(Condensed from Norwegian Whaling Gazette)

WHALER'S CHRISTMAS

The Norwegian Whaler's Welfare Council planned to send recordings of carols, church bells and other Christmas festivities, as well as IIO films to the men on Antarctic whaling vessels in time for Christmas - Recorder-tape greetings from their friends at home were also to be sent. Each ship was to organise its own Christmas orchestra.

MORE HELICOPTERS

The Society of British Aircraft Constructors announced in October that Norwegian whaling firms were ordering the new British Westland S55 helicopter "in quantity". The society believes that factory ships fitted with turn-table flight decks for helicopters will soon be standard equipment for Antarctic whaling vessels. It is estimated that a helicopter with an endurance of nine hours could survey an area of 13,000 square miles during one flight. A small catcher would take 60 hours to cover the same area. Experts are reported as saying that in future helicopters may be fitted with harpoon guns and inflation equipment, so that only tow-boats would be needed to bring the whales to the factory ship.

It is reported that the factory ships Thorshavet, Norhval, and Nisshin Maru will make use of helicopters in the present season.

WHALE-GUN

A new type of electric whale-killing gun, the only one of its kind, has been fitted to the catcher Setter V (586 tons) owned by the T. Hector Whaling Company of London. The gun weighs 1700 lb. and its force is said to equal that of a 75 m.m. howitzer.

PRICES DOWN

The British Ministry of Food has bought "forward" the entire British and South African output of whale-oil for the 1953-54 season at £67.10.0 per ton. Last year the price ranged from £70 to £78 per ton.

The Norwegian Whaling Companies' Sales Pool has sold practically the whole of the current season's production at £68 per ton.

The Netherlands Whaling Company of Amsterdam, proprietors of the Antarctic factory ship "Willem Barendsz", reports a gross profit of only 238,000 florins as against 5,615,000 florins in the previous year. In virtue of the State agreement, the Government has granted a loan of 6,136,000 florins as against 968,000 florins in the previous year and the dividend of 6 per cent is unchanged. The unfavourable result is due to a price drop. The 1953-54 catch has been pre-sold for an average of £68.5.0, £3.5.0 less than last season.

CORSETS TO THE RESCUE

Forty years ago, next to oil, the baleen, the plates round the whale's mouth through which it sieves its food, was the most sought after part of the whale. In recent years it had been discarded, but Whale Industries Ltd. recently sold 35 tons of whalebone to European corset manufacturers. This, said the Company's general manager, meant that the entire whale could again be commercially used.

THE LOSS OF THE "SETTSU MARU"

The 9330-ton twin-screw steam-turbine refrigerator ship Settsu Maru, which was built in 1944 at Innoshima in Japan, sank in the Southern Ocean in March 1953. No official report on the loss of the vessel is available as yet, but press reports indicate that on 7 March a young apprentice mistakenly opened a valve and flooded the engine-room. Despite the efforts of the crew to keep the ship afloat, she slowly filled and sank on 11 March. No lives were lost, but because of high seas it proved impossible to transfer the cargo, which included some 4,000 tons of whale meat and oil, to other ships in the whaling fleet. It is not known exactly where the disaster occurred.

(We are informed by Norsk Polarinstitutt that the vessel was operating in conjunction with the factory ship "Tonan Maru" belonging to Nippon Suisan Kaisha Ltd. of Tokyo. "Tonan Maru" is again in Antarctic waters this season. Ed.)

WHALE-MARKING RE-COMMENCES

The marking of whales in Antarctic waters in order to provide information which would facilitate the conservation of whale stocks was carried out extensively as part of the "Discovery" investigation between 1924 and 1938. Of some 5,350 whales marked from R.R.S. "William Scoresby" about 300 were subsequently recovered.

Since the outbreak of the war, marking has been carried out only on a small scale. Dr N.A. Mackintosh, Director of the National Institute of Oceanography, which now controls "Discovery II", has been chiefly instrumental in persuading the British, Norwegian, Dutch and South African whaling companies to finance a new whale-marketing venture.

The diesel-engined Norwegian whale catcher "Enern", launched in October 1952, preceded the whaling fleets to the Antarctic in order to carry out a marking programme for a month before the commencement on January 2 of the current boleen whaling season. This would provide ideal conditions from the fishery biologists' point of view, as the marked whales would have time to mix into the stocks of whales unmarked.

The "Enern" is one of the largest and most powerful vessels of this type ever constructed. The vessel, of 720 tons, has a length of 210 feet and a breadth of 33 feet. The engine is a Nordberg diesel developing 2700 h.p. at 225 r.p.m. and a speed of 16 knots. Oil-operated hydraulic governors regulate engine speed automatically in heavy seas and prevent overloading, so that high speed can be maintained even in bad weather. The fuel capacity is exceptionally large, giving an unusually wide range. The blades of the reversible, variable-pitch, stainless steel propeller can be adjusted either from the bridge, the engine room, or the harpoon gunner's platform. The chart room and radio room are enclosed, but the bridge and crow's nest are open. Electro-hydraulic steering gear is fitted. The gyro compass is mounted below deck, with repeaters on the bridge and in the chart room. The chart room, funnel and lifeboats are made of aluminium. Electricity for the auxiliary machinery is provided by two diesel generators. The whale winch is driven by an oil-fired boiler, which also heats the living quarters. There is accommodation for a complement of twenty-nine.

A diesel engine uses appreciably less fuel than the average steam-driven, oil-burning engine at present fitted to whale-catchers. Another advantage, especially in view of recent experiments in the electrocution of whales, is that electric power can be generated very economically by diesel machinery.

The marking is under the supervision of Prof. Johan T. Ruud of the Norwegian State Institute for Whale Research, Robert Clarke of the National Institute of Oceanography, W.L. van Utrecht of the Dutch Whale Research Institute and Assistant Per Oynes of the Norwegian Institute. At the conclusion of the expedition, Ruud, Clarke and van Utrecht were to go ashore at South Georgia and travel to Europe by S.S. "Orwell". Oynes was to join a Norwegian factory ship until the end of the whaling season.

The "Enern" left Sandefjord on October 26. In a letter to the Norwegian Whaling Gazette, Prof. Ruud says life on "Enern" is "much too luxurious Did you ever before hear of a whale catcher which had an electric potato-peeler in her galley?"

Prof. Ruud is concerned about the possibility of whales being killed in the marking process. This, he argues, would not only keep down the percentage of recoveries but "would be indefensible in research which aims at protecting the stocks of whales". Tests had appeared to show that the "Discovery" whale-mark can be used without seriously injuring the whales provided the whales' maximum exposure is that in normal travel and behaviour. But in the present day method of hunting, the whales burst so much out of the sea that there is danger of hitting below the line of normal exposure and so injuring vital organs. "We on no account intend to continue the marking", says Prof. Ruud, "if we have the slightest suspicion that in doing so we are killing a significant number of whales". Cine-films will be made to facilitate decisions on such points.

(Information from "Norwegian Whaling Gazette" and "Polar Record".)

ACTIVITIES IN THE SUB-ANTARCTIC

AN ASSAULT ON BIG BEN

Big Ben, the 9,000 ft. monarch of Heard Island, remains unconquered. Bechervaise, Elliot and Shaw, in the 18-day attack on the mountain in November, mentioned in our last issue, reached a point just below the final slopes. Radio-sonde balloons showed a summit temperature of -20°F . and a wind of over 100 m.p.h. Heavy cloud and a dangerously crevassed surface made the going harder still. A five-day blizzard covered the party's tent to a depth of 15 inches above the centre-pole. They had built an ice igloo as a precaution and when they dug the tent out after the blizzard it was re-pitched on top of this igloo.

On the return journey, at 4,000 ft. they were again held up by bad weather on the Abbot-Smith Glacier. Bechervaise and Shaw broke simultaneously through bridged-over crevasses and in Bechervaise's words "inspected the depths together it was most awkward". The three men reached the base all well but "somewhat reduced". They consider it would be necessary to carry a month's provisions to achieve success.

MACQUARIE RELIEF

The "Kista Dan" which left Melbourne on 12 December carrying 14 reliefs for Macquarie Island under Mr K.R. Campbell, was delayed on her return trip by heavy gales, reaching Melbourne on 27 December. Group Captain Robert Dalton, officer in charge of the 1953 party, told Melbourne reporters that the stage was now set for photographing and measuring the Aurora Australis. A research station had been erected at Hurd Point, the southern tip of the island, 22 miles from the main base. A landing-party, it is reported, was almost stranded here when a supply pontoon was hurled ashore by breakers and kelp choked the safety line out to sea. A ship rocket line was fired on to the beach-head. Mr P.G. Law fought in the surf with the rest of the group to save the pontoon.

The change over was effected in record time, four and a half days instead of the usual eight. The relief party took with them twelve sheep and four pigs to provide fresh meat, and a cow. The Melbourne "Herald" published photo of "Strawberry" being slung from the "Kista Dan" into a waiting duck.

Macquarie Island is now "a very elaborate observatory", says Mr Law. The station is collecting information on radio-physics, meteorology, cosmic rays, earthquakes, the Aurora Australis, the earth's magnetism and biology.

STATELY SPANISH GALLEON

Several of the A.N.A.R.E. party from Macquarie Island who recently returned to Australia claim that they saw, some hundred yards off the west coast, the bones of a vessel of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. A search for treasure in the flotsam on the beach was, however, unrewarded. The remains of many vessels ~~lie~~ rotting on the coast of Macquarie Island.

The "Spanish Galleon" story has been recurring since 1949, Dr A.M. Gwynn being, it is thought, the first to report seeing the figurehead and prow. It seems almost certain that there is something in the story, but not enough evidence yet to justify a salvage attempt.

NEW ZEALAND VESSEL TO THE RESCUE

In response to an appeal from the Australian Government, the 527 ton M.V. "Holmlea" left Wellington, New Zealand, on March 12 for Macquarie Island in order to bring out a member of the Australian expedition there who requires medical attention.

En route, the vessel will call in at the Auckland Islands, where three New Zealanders will go ashore on Enderby Island, the north-easterly member of the group. The men are Mr R.K. Dell, marine biologist at the Dominion Museum, Wellington, and Mr P.C. Bull and Mr R.H. Taylor of the animal ecology section, D.S.I.R. These three scientists will be concerned especially with the curiously homogeneous blue rabbit population of the island. The origin of this strain is obscure. There were rabbits on the island when the "Erebus" and "Terror" of Ross's expedition called there in 1840; Charles Enderby added more when he attempted the colonisation of the Aucklands in 1850; and more still were introduced by the Australian government in 1865. The way in which the vegetation of the island has adapted itself to the rabbit infestation will be one of the problems studied. The cattle remaining on the island will be investigated, and collections of marine shore-life and of small invertebrate animals will be made. As both men are trained bird observers, the bird life will be studied too. If time and weather permit, further photographic records of the sea lions, common on Enderby, will also be made.

The "Holmlea" will pick up the three scientists on its way back from Macquarie Island to Dunedin a few days later.

If a suitable dinghy can be obtained at short notice the New Zealanders will cross to nearby Rose Island during their stay at Enderby and investigate the rabbit population there, a more mixed strain.

BUSY DAYS ON CAMPBELL ISLAND

In a radio-telephone conversation on March 4, Mr L. McManus, officer in charge of New Zealand's station on Campbell Island, gave an interesting account of recent activities there.

The weather, he said, had not been "too bad". Only minor damage had been done by wind. Before Christmas, following the "Holmburn's" arrival with stores and reliefs, there was the heavy task of unloading the 12 month's stores and transporting them to the camp. There were 580 bags of coal and coke alone, and even the Oliver crawler tractor could only haul ten bags at a time. Repairs to the camp road were necessary, and 750 ft. of Marsden matting had to be laid. But the unloading was completed by Christmas Eve.

After Christmas there was further road-making and raising the level of the causeway, painting of buildings, and the construction of a slipway. Then came preparations on the site of the projected new camp at Beeman Cove, a mile N.E. of the present camp. A jetty has to be built and a shed 33 ft. by 24 ft. This involved excavating ten feet of peat and a further two or three feet of rock. This excavation has been completed, 150 bags of gravel have been carried to the site, and the laying of the foundations was to be commenced the following week.

Mr McManus is pleased with the gardening efforts of his party. Plants given by Dr R.G. Simmers and the Agriculture Department are flourishing, and greens have been a very welcome addition to the diet. The number of livestock, too, is increasing, and in addition to a cat and two dogs, there are now 22 lively chickens, bred on the island. Some are destined for the pot, others for breeding purposes. A sea-bear and her pup have been friendly visitors to the camp.

Two more extensive journeys have been made. One was to North West Harbour. On this trip many penguins were seen, and albatrosses were unusually numerous. About half-a-dozen cattle were also seen by this party. The other journey was to Eboulé Peninsula on the south coast of the island. Here a number of sheep and lambs were seen and seemed to be in good condition.

An auroral display the previous week had been, Mr McManus said, the best since the party's arrival.

All are well and in good spirits.

LES ILES KERGUELEN

We are indebted to l'Administrateur de la France d'Outre-Mer, Chef de la Section des Terres Australes Francaises, for the following information regarding the French station on the Kerguelen Islands.

"The ship St. Marcouf left Marseilles on October 30 with five members of our expedition and stores for the 1954 relief of les Iles Kerguelen and of la Nouvelle Amsterdam. The rest of the expedition, 41 members, left by plane on November 2 for Tamatave where they were to join the St. Marcouf en route for Port aux Francais (Kerguelen). M. Schwartz, who is joining the Australian expedition to Enderby Land, accompanied the members of our own expedition.

"The party at present in occupation is preparing to receive the new men. The landing jetty is completed and leading lights have been installed. The seismographic station at Point Molloy is also completed.

"A week's visit to Australia Island afforded an opportunity to study the soil and the flora of the island. The green-house has been in use since November 5."

AUSTRALIAN GUESTS

The Australian mainland party were hospitably entertained with champagne and roast duck by M. Francais Armengaud and his staff when the "Kista Dan" reached Port aux Francais on its way south on January 22. The Australians were impressed by the new seismic station which has taken almost a year to build. It is of concrete and blasted from solid basalt, and contains living quarters for an operator as well as a seismic laboratory. When seismographs are installed shortly, M. Daniel Florence will live here alone for a year, twelve miles from the camp.

When French guests dined on the "Kista Dan" they had a rough run through half-a-mile of white-capped, choppy seas, and arrived wearing Mae Wests instead of black ties.

AN "ENDURANCE" DIARY
III

Further extracts from the MSS diary of Harry McNeish, carpenter on Shackleton's "Nimrod" expedition. The previous extract ended with the sinking of the ship and McNeish's curt comment, "So we have seen the last of her".

Sunday Nov. 21st

.....I have been busy all day with the boats there was a seal came into the camp this morning and the party who went back to the first camp to bring me some more wood killed another seal there is a whole string of bergs to the SW of us & going N of us the whole floe has become loose now it only means a few days of this wind to give us an opening

Tuesday 23rd

Lat 68-34 South Long 52-29 West Temp Plus 15 we got 4 seals today I am still busy at the boats

Wednesday Nov 24th

Lat 68-27 South we have drifted 7 miles North since yesterday noon but I expect we have done a lot of easting as it is blowing hard from SW the ice is getting more loose every day we are only waiting for a lead to open close to our floe then we start west for Robinson Island & if all goes well there is a party of 4 to cross Graham Land to Deception (Deception) Harbour to find a relief vessel as there are a lot of whalers around that district during the summer I have finished the whale

boat only a few odds & ends which can be done any time I am putting thwarts in another one to tow after us with stores

Saturday Nov 27th

Lat 68-18 Long 52-24 West I have been busy finishing up the boats & now I have got all three ready for the water I have started to raise the Dudley Docker a strake higher at my leisure it is pass time for me & it makes the boat carry more & more seaworthy we have had 4 seals since Wednesday so we are living like fighting cocks now plenty of good seal stakes & seal stews we never fared better & we are still drifting North which makes us all happy & if all goes well we are looking to be in civilisation about April & if not we will spend the winter most likely at Paulet Island or Snow Hill we know there is a hut at Snow Hill & a stone hut and stores at Paulet Island

Sunday Nov 28th

Lat 68-II South Long 52-24 West Temp Plus 20 We got 3 seals today they have been exercising the dogs round the floe I expect we will have to part with the dogs one of those days as we cant take them with us in the boats it will be a sad day as we all have taking to the dogs I had to part with my pet Misses Chippie the day after we left the ship I was hurt but I knew it was impossible to take her with us

Monday Nov 29th

Lat 68-7 South Long 52-23 West Temp plus 23 I have been busy at the Dudley Docker & the teams have been exercising round the floe

Friday Dec 3rd

Lat 67-56 South Long not known we have had 12 seals since I last wrote I have been busy at the boats I finished the Dudley Docker on Wednesday & I have started to make pumps for the three of them as it is much handier than bailing with a dish & there are sundrie small jobs to finish them ready for the water we shifted our camp to a higher position yesterday as we were getting pretty near the water through the snow melting we are still drifting N & the ice is much more loose than it was there was three teams went to our first camp & brought back all the blankets & clothing they could get as we will probably have to winter on some part of Graham Land but if there is a possible chance of getting to civilisation in the boats we intend to make a bold attempt

Saturday Dec 4th

Lat 67-54 South Long 52-29 West They have been exercising the dogs round the floe while some have been clearing up around the camp I have been working at the James Caird getting all in order for the water the Boss is laid up with Siaticie

Sunday Dec 5th

Lat 67 - South Long West This is a holiday in the Ocean Camp There are a few taking exercise round the floe I am reading McClintock's voyage in the fox in serch of Franklin sent by Lady Franklin when the British government curse them refused her appeal to send a ship it is a year today since we left South Georgia

Monday Dec 6th

Lat 67-46 $\frac{1}{2}$ S Long 52-16 West The usual routine We got 3 seals & 1 penguin today We had a visit from 8 bottle nose whales which was rather a good sight as they lay & breathed on the surface for a good 5 minutes the(y) were about 26 ft in length

Tuesday Dec 7th

Lat 67-45 $\frac{1}{2}$ S Long West Temp Plus 12 the usual routine in camp I made a mast & finished a pump for the Stancomb Wills Bickinson and McLeod are my assistants the wind now is NW but light we have drifted back a bit but I think it will be for our good as it will give the ice between us & the Land a chance to get out & us a chance in

Wednesday Dec 8th

Lat 67-44 $\frac{1}{2}$ S Long 52-5 West Temp Plus 18 We Launched the James Caird today & Loaded her with six sledges loads & 11 men about 3 tons but she will take another ton handy & be in a better sailing trim

Thursday Dec 9th

No observation as it has been very thick & it has started to blow hard from NE but it has veered round to E by S with heavy snow it is the hardest breeze we have had since August 1st we are all in our bags with everything on ready for a call but the floe seem to be a good one as there is pressure all round us & the edges of it is only chipped I cut the motor sledge in two & it makes a sledge for the Dudley Docker and the Stancomb Wills so we have all three boats on sledges now

Saturday Dec 11th

Temp Plus 12 It has been blowing a blizzard since Thursday night it started from the NE with snow and it has wore round to SW by W with hard drift there has been nothing done in camp this last two days this is my forth day off since we came ashore 2 Sundays included in 6 weeks

(There followed days of waiting and hoping; for McNeish busy days:

"I made wooden tops and bottoms for canvas cases for our cookers as they will stow in the boats better"

"making Dure Hide cases for the primus lamps to take with us in the boats"

"reducing the weight of cases for Smaller stowage in the boats")

Monday Dec 20th

Lat 67-11 South Long 52-22 West Temp Plus 23 Still Blowing hard from E by S there was a party went out to the berg today again but there was nothing to be seen but if it is a fine day tomorrow there is a party of 4 going away with 2 dog teams as far as they can to see if there is any open water west of us we had 3 seals today

Tuesday Dec 21st

Lat 67-10 South Long 52-33 West We got 2 seals today The Boss Wild Green & Hurley went out 6 miles from here & returned with good news there is plenty big floes about a mile from here and the surface is very good some are going to make a start west as soon as I get the second sledge ready as we are only taking 2 boats I cut a sledge in two but I will have it all right by tomorrow night we are holding Xmas tomorrow as we want to eat up the best of our stores before leaving them then we leave here with 90 days rations

Wednesday 22nd

Xmas Day with us and I hope you are all having a good Xmas at Home I have been busy today but I managed to get the sledge ready & as well as we start at 4 AM tomorrow there has been no scarcity of food and we can lift and eat anything we want today as we have to leave a lot behind

Thursday Dec 23rd

We started this morning at 5 AM and relayed the boats for $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles and shifted camp to the same floe and finished at 1 PM and turned in

(To be continued.)

"THE BARRIER" NO LONGER

It has been officially agreed that in future all official British Commonwealth publications will use the term ICE SHELF for those ice formations in the Antarctic to which the terms "ice barrier", "ice shelf", etc. have been variously applied, and the term ICE FRONT for the floating seaward-facing cliffs of an ice shelf.