

In regard to the eastern limit of 142°, an exhaustive investigation by the Commonwealth Government during the last year showed that there can be no justification for any French claim beyond 142° E. The broad reasons for the stand taken by the Commonwealth Government are set out in the draft note, and have been concurred in and supported by the United Kingdom Government. In addition to the reasons set out, the following pertinent facts might be noted.

The Commonwealth Government feels that the desire of the French Government to secure an extension eastward is an attempt to include Commonwealth Bay within French territory.

Commonwealth Bay is the most accessible and the best anchorage on the Antarctic coastline to the east of Queen Mary Land. The loss of this anchorage would gravely prejudice any future efforts to develop the Australian Antarctic Territory. Moreover, Sir Douglas Mawson has reported to the Commonwealth Government that from a territorial point of view the most valuable stretch of coastline in the Antarctic lies between 138° and 146° E. There is always free water every season off this coast thus rendering it certain of access, it offers sure landing places for occupational purposes, and it lends itself readily to the economic development of the coast and coast products. When it comes to real coast occupation and production, this sector must take first place, especially for whaling and sealing operations.

In regard to (c), the Commonwealth Government feels that any French claim to a sector should be resisted on the following grounds:—

- (i) At the 1926 Imperial Conference the Antarctic Committee reported that the French claim should not be allowed to extend *beyond* the area actually *sighted* and *charted* by d'Urville in 1840, namely, the area between 136½° E. and 142° E. d'Urville himself in his original proclamation claimed newly sighted land extending south to 67° south latitude only. The French Government have never defined any of the limits of their claim, even in their Adélie Land decrees of March, 1924.
- (ii) In January, 1909, Shackleton took possession in the name of His Majesty of the South Polar Plateau extending across the longitudinal limits of Adélie Land.
The Australian Expedition of 1911-14 effected the first landing on the mainland of Adélie Land; it was the first to explore and reside upon it, and the first to raise a flag upon the mainland when it was formally annexed in March, 1912. Incidentally, Mawson has stated that at no time could d'Urville ever have seen land as far south as the 67° of south latitude. He thought at the time the French were no longer interested, as they had never taken steps formally to annex Adélie Land. He therefore proclaimed as British territory the whole of the mainland.
- (iii) In the summer of 1912-13 a party under Bickerton journeyed westward over the plateau covering practically the whole of the longitude within which is embraced the coastline actually seen by d'Urville. This party traversed a plateau which could not have been seen by d'Urville from the ship. Bickerton raised the flag and took possession of this land, which is below 67° south latitude.

Apart from the above-mentioned arguments for resistance to any French claim for a sector, the Commonwealth Government feels that this narrow French enclave would gravely jeopardise future control and administration of Australian Antarctic Territory as well as complicate further work of exploration. If the French claim could be restricted to the south, say to 67°, a passage would be provided from navigable waters and an anchorage at Cape Denison to the territory west of Adélie Land. A French enclave extending southwards to an absurd strip would also hamper the operation of aircraft, which will no doubt be used largely as an adjunct to future exploratory work.

The Commonwealth Government realises that the non-acceptance of the sector principle to French territory in the Antarctic raises an important question of principle. It does not desire to contest any French claim to the sector principle on grounds which might impair the validity of other British claims, but at the same time feels that a proper distinction can be made and sustained between the recognized sector principle and a southern limitation to Adélie Land. The Commonwealth Government would therefore like this question to be considered by the Conference before the note to the French Government is presented. Quotations from the reports of the Antarctic Committee at the Imperial Conferences of 1926 and 1930 are submitted as Appendix "B."

II.—GENERAL ANTARCTIC QUESTIONS

In addition to the specific question of Adélie Land, the Commonwealth Government would also like consideration to be given to some questions of a general nature pertaining to the Antarctic. At the Imperial Conference of 1926 it was recommended that there should be a gradual establishment of British control over the whole of the Antarctic continent apart from those areas to which a good foreign title already existed. The 1930 Conference laid down certain principles for the extension and consolidation of British interests; limitations, however, were placed on the areas which should be brought under British control, and at the present time there is no indication of any desire for any further extension of British interests. The first objective has been largely attained and it remains for consideration as to how the objective of consolidation might be achieved.

It was previously agreed that discovery along with the formal act of annexation does not constitute a valid title. There must be occupation consisting of two elements: (a) intimation to foreign Powers of intention to acquire title; and (b) the establishment and exercise of control. It is in regard to (b) that the Commonwealth Government is mainly concerned at the moment, and it would like an exchange of views as to what is being contemplated by the United Kingdom and other Dominions in regard to any measures which might be taken for the continued assertion of title and for the development of Antarctic territory.

The Commonwealth Government has not participated in any Antarctic expedition since 1931. It is, however, taking steps to publish manuscripts, maps, and scientific data of previous expeditions along the following lines:—

(a) Australasian Antarctic Expedition, 1911-14

In 1920 an agreement was entered into with the Premier of New South Wales, Mr. Holman, for the publication of Sir Douglas Mawson's records in the spare time of the Government Printing Office. In return, provided that not less than £5,000 were expended on the printing of the reports, the whole of Sir Douglas Mawson's specimens and manuscripts were to be handed to the New South Wales Government as a national collection for the Public Library and Museum, Sydney.

Approximately £6,500 was expended on these records, but, in 1929, the New South Wales Government, after the larger portion of the work had been done, decided to discontinue the publication. In 1935 the New South Wales Government intimated that if Sir Douglas Mawson handed in all his unprinted manuscripts they would vote money to pay for the printing. Sir Douglas Mawson estimated that the cost would be £2,000, but, on handing in all the unprinted manuscripts in December last year, it was estimated that they would cost £4,250. The unprinted manuscripts include the most important of the collection, namely, the results of the geographical work of the expedition. These have hitherto been deliberately withheld by Sir Douglas Mawson. So far 46 manuscripts have been published and 45 remain to be printed.

