

Memorandum re Antarctic Reports

My Antarctic Expedition of 1911-14, known as the "Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911-14" was an undertaking of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, inaugurated at the meeting of the Association in January 1911 in Sydney.

On return of that Expedition, ^{in March 1914} after a successful campaign, the Federal Prime Minister, at the Town Hall reception to the Expedition in Melbourne, stated that it was generally found that such expeditions had liabilities to meet and he felt sure that this one was no exception to the rule. If such were the case, he felt certain that his government would be prepared to meet such liabilities.

I replied that there were considerable expenses yet to be met, but that I hoped that by sale of a popular book and by the exploitation of a cinema film and by public lectures, I would be able to balance my budget — that I had no intention of asking for further help from the Government if I could possibly settle my accounts otherwise.

Unfortunately the war broke out 4 months later and entirely altered the outlook. There was little return from the popular book and from the film. For 18 months I gave public lectures in Australia, New Zealand and America, eventually succeeding in paying off all debts on the expedition but could not provide a fund for printing the reports.

I then applied to the Prime Minister asking for about £5,000 to cover cost of printing the Scientific Reports. Mr Fisher replied that as 'was was on every penny and every man were required' for the war and that it would not be possible to allocate money for Scientific Reports.

As soon as the war was over I approached the N.S.W. Government with the result that the arrangement for printing was drawn up - it being understood that about £5,000 plus sales of parts would cover the cost.

However the cost of paper and of printers wages advanced - also the reports have proved more voluminous than expected.

Under these circumstances, some portion of the expense should be a fair call upon the Commonwealth Govt. notwithstanding that the assets of the Expedition ('specimens', 'relics', 'manuscripts', 'maps', 'negatives', etc) are the property of the N.S.W. Govt. by virtue of the Agreement of 1929.

In recent years the Commonwealth Govt. has taken over the section of the Antarctic Region dealt with in our reports - it is their territory; and consequently the Com. Govt. are interested in the investigation and development of it.

The consideration of the meteorology of Antarctica in its relation to Australia is a matter for the whole Commonwealth.

The charting of the coasts - investigation of the fisheries etc are all matters of general interest to the whole of the Commonwealth.

There is therefore every reason why the Commonwealth Government should now be prepared to assist the N.S.W. Govt. to complete the publication - and in doing this in some measure redeem the Prime Minister's offer of 1914 when he publicly stated in the Melbourne Town Hall that his Govt. would sympathetically consider the settlement of the Expedition's outstanding debts.

According to me I found the expenditure up to date has been £6000 and he says that nearly £5000 more is required to complete the job - making in all £11000.

My information indicates that the assets of the Expedition that have been handed over or will be handed over to the N.S.W. Govt. - or will be realized by this agreement - are as follows:

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| (1) Anticipated sale of parts and value of exchanges - not less than | £ 3000 |
| (2) Value of zoological, botanical, geological collections; relics; manuscripts; charts etc. not less than | £ 5000 |
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| | £ 8000 |

Leaving cost over return of £3000.

J. M. Mason
8/2/37