BACK TO SCHOOL FOR S.A.

ICE TEAM

EXPRESS REPORTER

HIGH on the Pretoria "ice-cap", 14 of the 16 men picked for the tenth South African National Antarctic expedition went back to school last week.

From now until December 28, when the expedition vessel RSA sails from Cape Town for the White South, the team will undergo a rigorous and comprehensive training course.

For the men of the tenth expedition will be carrying an exercise in Antarctica that no South Africans have done — they will be spending the winter high up in the mountains of the interior of the continent in temperatures expected to drop to as much as minus 50 degrees centigrade.

The fire peril in the Antarctic was emphasised by the leader of the expedition, Mr. H. J. Fulton, when he talked to me of the expedition's plans and prospects.

TIN-OPENERS

"More lives have been lost in the Antarctic through fire than from any other single cause," he told me.

So starting tomorrow the expedition members will be joining the Pretoria Fire Brigade for a week to learn everything they should know about fire-fighting.

The comprehensive training for the expedition team even includes instruction on how to use a tin-opener.

Mr. Fulton insists that in spite of the hazards and dangers of the journey to the mountains the object of the expedition is purely scientific.

"The position changes and dashes to the Pole are out," he says. "This is research. We want to find out what is there and why.

"Under the Antarctic treaty all scientific knowledge is pooled with an international body, the Scientific Council for Antarctic Research. There are no national boundaries and no territorial claims are made.

"And if the South Africans were to run into danger or meet with an accident with which we were unable to cope, they could radio for help and get it from any other national expedition area. It could even be from the Russians.

DOG SLEDGES

The journey to the mountains and back over some of the worst terrain in the world will total 3,797 miles.

Mr. Fulton points out: "One kilometre over the Antarctic ice is equivalent to 30 miles over the Republic's roads because of the atrocious surface conditions, the weather and the topography."

The mountain party will travel on dog sledges, motorised toboggans and snowmobiles. Mr. W. Hudson will lead the mountain party of geologists, a radiotelephone installer and a diesel mechanic.

They will carry sledging rations which will include pemmican, the biltong-type preparation favoured by Polar explorers since the days of Scott and Amundsen, consisting of dried meat and fat pressed and ground into cakes and usually flavoured with currants.

Mr. Fulton: "We shall carry pemmican on journeys where it is necessary to keep down the weight of supplies. Otherwise our food is excellent and varied — apart from the fact that it is mainly dehydrated or canned."

The expedition will be based at the headquarters of SANAEx - South African National Antarctic Expedition — which for the navigational precision is at the point 20 deg. 21 min. west and 18 deg. 55 min. south.

"The position changes a bit as the base is established on floating ice," says Mr. Fulton. The H.Q. consists of living, sleeping and recreational quarters, a power station and an auxiliary power station, huts for scientific activities, an animal laboratory, a balloon hut from which weather testing probes are released — and a hospital.

Some time in the next few years the whole base will have to be rebuilt. For the only permanent thing about the White South is the ice and the ice that covers it.

The RSA will land the expedition at the SANAEx base two to three weeks after she sails from Cape Town, depending on the weather and how much pack ice she has to cut through.

There she will pick up the Ninth Expedition. But two of its members, Mr. R. W. Johnston and Mr. A. P. H. Aucamp, will remain behind to complete the tenth expedition.

By the time these two men return home they will have spent two winters in Antarctica.

HIS THIRD

It will be the third expedition Mr. Fulton has led.

For those taking part in it, the expedition means not only adventure but the chance to save.

They are paid according to their qualifications and receive generous allowances. They cannot spend a cent. Says Mr. Fulton: "There are two forms of barter — in beer and in cigarettes."

The money the men earn is banked at home. When they come back many will use it to pay off study bills or to purchase small items. In South Africa or overseas.

The opportunity of being able to further their studies and work is the motive most of the young men have for going.

But to be picked they must meet strict fitness and aptitude tests. They are psychologically examined, too, to find out whether they are likely to make a team — survival could depend on this.

Until then, the training at the South African Army College at Voortrekkerhoogte will be rigorous and detailed.

NEW TRUNK CALL SYSTEM — PRETORIA FIRMS COMPLAIN

PRETORIA BUSINESSMEN are unhappy with the new national trunk dialling system from Pretoria to other centres because no check can be kept on unauthorised trunk calls, or on the time taken by other out-of-town calls.

Businessmen said this week that they regarded the system as a mixed blessing. On the one hand it was a valuable step forward to telephoning Cape Town, Durban and other centres directly.

On the other hand, calls to these centres were metered on a local call basis.

This meant that only a total number of metered calls was given on telephone accounts — without any indication being given of how many long distance calls were made.

The complaint of businessmen is that they themselves have to keep a check on time taken on authorised long distance calls. But there is no check at all on unauthorised calls.

The only effective way of circulting the way it is at present is for people to estimate the cost of a call and add it on the telephone bills.

CLINIC FOR ALCOHOLICS

a success

Express Reporter

PRETORIA'S Castle Carey Clinic for alcoholics this week claimed a recovery success figure of nearly 100 per cent in the case of follow-up studies conducted last year.

Eight per cent considered the Government's policies an "acceptable approach", 10 per cent believed they would get better service in the future.