

Tenth Anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty

THE following letter was received from the Head of the Office of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation, by Mr. D. G. Kingwill, Director of Information and Research Services of the CSIR.

"Like you, we have been celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty during recent weeks. The U.S. stamp that was issued on June 23, 1971, was the occasion for a ceremony at the Department of State attended by representatives from each of the 16 nations signatory or acceding to the Treaty. On the occasion, the Honourable William P. Rogers, Secretary of State, delivered the enclosed message from the President to the assembled group. It is with pleasure that I forward this message to you together with envelopes postmarked on the first day of issue of the stamp."

Dr. Kingwill has the first day covers mentioned in the letter in his possession.

Statement by President Nixon on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty, June 23, 1971 (as delivered by Secretary of State, William P. Rogers)

Today marks the tenth anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty, an inspiring example of co-operation among nations for the benefit of all mankind. Since coming into force in 1961, the Antarctic Treaty has provided a unique framework for international co-operation in science.

Within this framework, man's knowledge of his environment and his understanding of the Earth and its physical history have been considerably enriched. Each nation participating in Antarctic research has contributed to this enrichment both through its own activities and through the sharing and dissemination of information resulting from these efforts. The names of persons early associated with Antarctica, names such as Charles Wilkes and Richard E. Byrd of the United States, Robert Scott and Ernest Shackleton of Great Britain, Roald Amundsen of Norway and Thaddeus Bellingshausen of Russia, exemplify the truly international character of Antarctic exploration and research.

In his message to the Senate in February 1960, transmitting the Treaty for ratification, President Eisenhower noted that the Antarctic Treaty was unique and historic, providing that an area of the world equal in size to the United States and Europe combined would be used for peaceful purposes only. To further this aim, the Treaty bans nuclear explosions, radioactive contamination and military utilization of Antarctica. To ensure its effectiveness, the Treaty also provides for a broad inspection system. These landmark provisions were later reflected in agreements such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Outer Space Treaty.

The Antarctic Treaty and its objectives continue to be extraordinarily relevant in our time, for the overriding goals of the Treaty are the acquisition of knowledge for the use of all men, the preservation of a unique region from environmental degradation, and the extension of peaceful co-operation across national bounds. I am indeed happy that the tenth anniversary of this significant international undertaking has been recognized by the issuance of a special commemorative stamp and I offer my congratulations and warm good wishes to all who are assembled to mark this important event.

Secretary's concluding remarks at Antarctic Ceremony

On a personal note let me say how pleased I am to participate on this occasion. The Antarctic has served for the past 10 years as a laboratory of both science and politics without precedent in history. From this laboratory have come dramatic scientific discoveries and from my point of view perhaps even more important, the Antarctic experience has provided to the political leaders of the world a feeling of confidence that large-scale international co-operation can pay dividends, that areas of potential trouble can be kept free of conflict, and that political agreements designed to further the common good can work. For these reasons I predict that the exceptional political innovation known as the Antarctic Treaty will be credited by future historians as a major breakthrough of our time. Thank you.