

DEVELOPMENTS WITH REGARD TO MARION AND GOUGH ISLANDS

MARION ISLAND

The meteorological station originally established on Marion Island has, like Sanae, evolved over the last few years to include other scientific programmes in its terms of reference. The period 1971/72 saw the establishment of geomagnetic and ionosphere programmes on the island. The geomagnetic work resorts under Dr. G. J. Kühn who is also the programme director for the Sanae geomagnetic programme, while the ionosphere programme resorts under the National Institute for Telecommunications Research of the C.S.I.R.

The Association's medallist for 1972, Professor E. M. van Zinderen Bakker, who pioneered the biological research on Marion Island since the mid-1960's, continued his bio-energetics work on the island during 1973. Two new biological programmes were also implemented during the year and these are the mammal and ornithological programmes. The former resorts under Professor J. D. Skinner of the Mammal Research Institute (University of Pretoria), and the latter under Professor W. R. Siegfried of the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology (University of Cape Town).

Thus with a total of three individual yet interrelated biological programmes, it would be true to say that in 1973 the South African biological research effort on Marion Island was stronger than ever.

GOUGH ISLAND

South Africa has for many years operated a Meteorological Station on Gough Island which is a sovereign possession of Great Britain. The Marion Island biologists have often discussed the feasibility and potential for biological research on Gough Island too. At present there is no ongoing biological programme on Gough Island though a number of such studies have been conducted there, mostly by British scientists, during the last two decades.

With an eye to possible future biological research on Gough Island, the two "agencies" responsible for South African work in the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic regions, *viz* the Department of Transport and the SASCAR (South African Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research), agreed to support a Biological Reconnaissance Expedition to Gough Island during the October, 1973, annual relief. A three-man reconnaissance party, consisting of a botanist, a mammalogist and an ornithologist, were responsible for an assessment of the biological research potential and of the feasibility of such research on Gough Island. The party's report will act as a guide in considering future activities there.