

ANNUAL REPORT

of the President, 1972-73

South African Antarctic Association

THE MAIN EVENT during the year was a very well attended meeting in Pretoria on 25th March, at which we were privileged to have as our guest speaker, Dr. Phillip Law, Chairman of the Australian National Antarctic Committee. At present Vice-President of the Victoria Institute of Colleges, Dr. Law was for 25 years Director of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE). During that period he gained a reputation as one of the most distinguished Antarctic explorers and scientists. He also built up a collection of slides and we were treated to a viewing of a selection of the best. On the same occasion, the British film "Scott's Last Journey" was shown.

This film was also shown at a meeting arranged by Pat Turner in Johannesburg in September, 1972. Illustrated lectures were also presented to schools and other groups by members of your Committee - all in the name of the Association.

The production of the *Antarctic Bulletin* was held up by technical problems, which were further complicated by the absence of the Editors, Drs. Douglas and Marsha Torr, in the U.S.A. However, Pat Turner and Dr. Duncan Baker have stepped into the breach and the September, 1972, and March, 1973, issues have been printed and distributed - in the enlarged format made possible by the generosity of BP Southern Africa. (They will continue as temporary editors until April, 1974.)

Thanks to the efforts of Pat Turner, the story of the husky "Viking", which was told to us by Andy Paterson and his Borga team of Trevor Schaefer and Jan Bredell at last year's A.G.M., was featured in the *Sunday Times* colour supplement of 9th July, 1972. We are informed that Andy Paterson is to receive the Silver Medal of the S.P.C.A. for his daring rescue of "Viking" from the ice crevasse into which he had fallen. I am sure that all members will join me in extending hearty congratulations to Andy on this well deserved recognition.

Pat Turner has also arranged for a feature on radar echo sounding to appear in the *Sunday Times* colour supplement on 24th June, 1973.

Your Committee met on four occasions. We tried hard to arrange the Annual Dinner in conjunction with a meeting of Antarctic Programme Directors in Pretoria. Unfortunately, that meeting had to be postponed and it just was not possible to find a suitable date or occasion. The indications are that a meeting of Antarctic Scientists and Programme Directors will be held during the second half of 1973 - probably in September or October. It is hoped that the incoming Committee will be able to arrange a dinner to coincide with that occasion and provide an opportunity for the award of the BP Antarctic Medals for 1972 to Prof. E. M. van Zinderen Bakker and Mr. P. A. le Roux. The Medal Committee has once again done its job and your Committee was pleased to endorse a recommendation that the BP Antarctic Medal for 1973 be awarded to Captain K. T. McNish, in recognition of the contribution of the crews of the *RSA* to the South African National Antarctic Expeditions, under his distinguished leadership. I am sure that this award will be acclaimed by all.

Pretoria.
June, 1973.

D. G. Kingwill,
President.



BP ANTARCTIC GOLD MEDAL FOR 1973

CAPTAIN K. T. McNISH (above) has a record of continued, indispensable, and distinguished service to South Africa's National Antarctic activities as Captain of the *RSA*.

For thirteen years, from 1962, he bore the full responsibility of bringing expeditions safely through the most perilous and lonely seas on earth, in the knowledge that an error of judgment could bring untold hardships or lose many lives. Through his enterprise and perseverance he has demonstrated to a very high degree his courage. On numerous occasions, through his experience of ice conditions, he has taken action that prevented essential supplies from being lost when the bay ice broke up.

Although the nature of his work does not permit of much scientific research, he has made full use of his opportunities, as exemplified by his radar surveys of the continental shelf and the ice front along Princess Martha Coast.

His qualities of leadership are evident, for example, from the large measure in which he has contributed to the building up of an *esprit de corps*, especially on the outward voyage with new expedition members.

In South Africa he has fostered interest in the South African National activities in Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands. His book *The Eternal Ice* was published in 1971, and he has delivered many illustrated talks to schools and other groups.

The BP Antarctic Gold Medal for 1973 is awarded to Captain Kenneth Thomas McNish in recognition of the contribution of the crews of the *RSA* to the South African National Expeditions to Antarctica and to the weather stations on Marion and Gough Islands, under his distinguished leadership.