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Patrons/Beskermhere: Prof. S. P. Jackson, M.A., D.I.C., Ph.D.
Dr. S. Meiring Naudé, M.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc.h.c., L.L.D.h.c.

Uitgegee deur die Suid-Afrikaanse Antarktiese Vereniging
Westbrook 605, Devenishstraat, Sunnyside, PRETORIA

Editor/Redakteur: André v. d. Merwe

REDAKSIONEEL — EDITORIAL

South Africa is one of 12 countries probing the secrets of Antarctica, the loneliest and coldest place on earth. From the men who work there in the grimmest conditions has come knowledge which benefits mankind in many ways.

“Antarctica will never be conquered. At best we will tear aside a little of the veil which conceals its secrets,” said Admiral Richard Byrd, one of the greatest Antarctic explorers.

Nearly 200 years before him Captain James Cook, the first man to circumnavigate the Pole, said: “It is condemned to everlasting rigidity . . . for whose wild and desolate spirit I have no words . . . and I make bold to declare the world shall derive no benefit from it.”

For as long as 150 years after Cook the world took no real interest in Antarctica. Apart from whalers and bold explorers who touched its frozen shores nobody gave it a thought. Then, at the beginning of the century came Amundsen and Scott and the dramatic race to the Pole which ended with Amundsen's victory and Scott's death.

Shackleton and Mawson and others helped open an era of exciting exploration. Byrd took two expeditions south before the war, but only in the last 20 years has man really tried to find out what makes Antarctica.

It was the last uncharted continent and it keeps its secrets well, but those secrets are valuable. Man in his quest for knowledge needs them and slowly, ever so slowly, he is tearing aside the veil which hides them.

We can never know everything about Antarctica, but we will learn a lot that will help man to a better understanding of the world he lives in.

South Africa's part in this research is a small part, but just as valuable as that of the bigger and richer countries, who all contribute their knowledge to central data stations for the benefit of everyone.

Each year a South African team goes south in the RSA to the base at Sanae, 30 ft. under the ice. They live there for a year, working in conditions which many would think unbearable. They are all volunteers, carefully selected to stand up to the hardships and self-imposed discipline.

I was fortunate to go south with the relief team, SANAE VIII, who faced the unknown with a spirit of adventure and determination, and just a trace of fear and wonderment and I returned with the veterans, SANAE VII, who had seen and conquered, each in his own way.

JOHN PITTS, *The Star*

Fifth Annual Dinner of the Antarctic Association

The Fifth Annual Dinner of the South African Antarctic Association was held at the Constantia Club in Pretoria on Saturday, 10th June, 1967. The guests of honour were our two patrons, Prof. S. P. Jackson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, and Dr S. Meiring Naude, President of the C.S.I.R., Mrs. Naude, the representatives of British Petroleum (South Africa), Mr. R. Kirton, Regional Director Transvaal, and Mr. G. Fitzgerald, Head of Public Relations, and

Mrs. R. Kirton and Mrs. G. Fitzgerald and Dr. Edna Plumstead.

Besides the well-arranged dinner, the highlights of the evening were the thought-provoking speech by Prof. Lester King of the Department of Geology, University of Natal, and the presentation of the Antarctic Medal, donated by British Petroleum (S.A.) to Dr. Doug. Torr by the Regional Director of B.P., Mr. Kirton.