

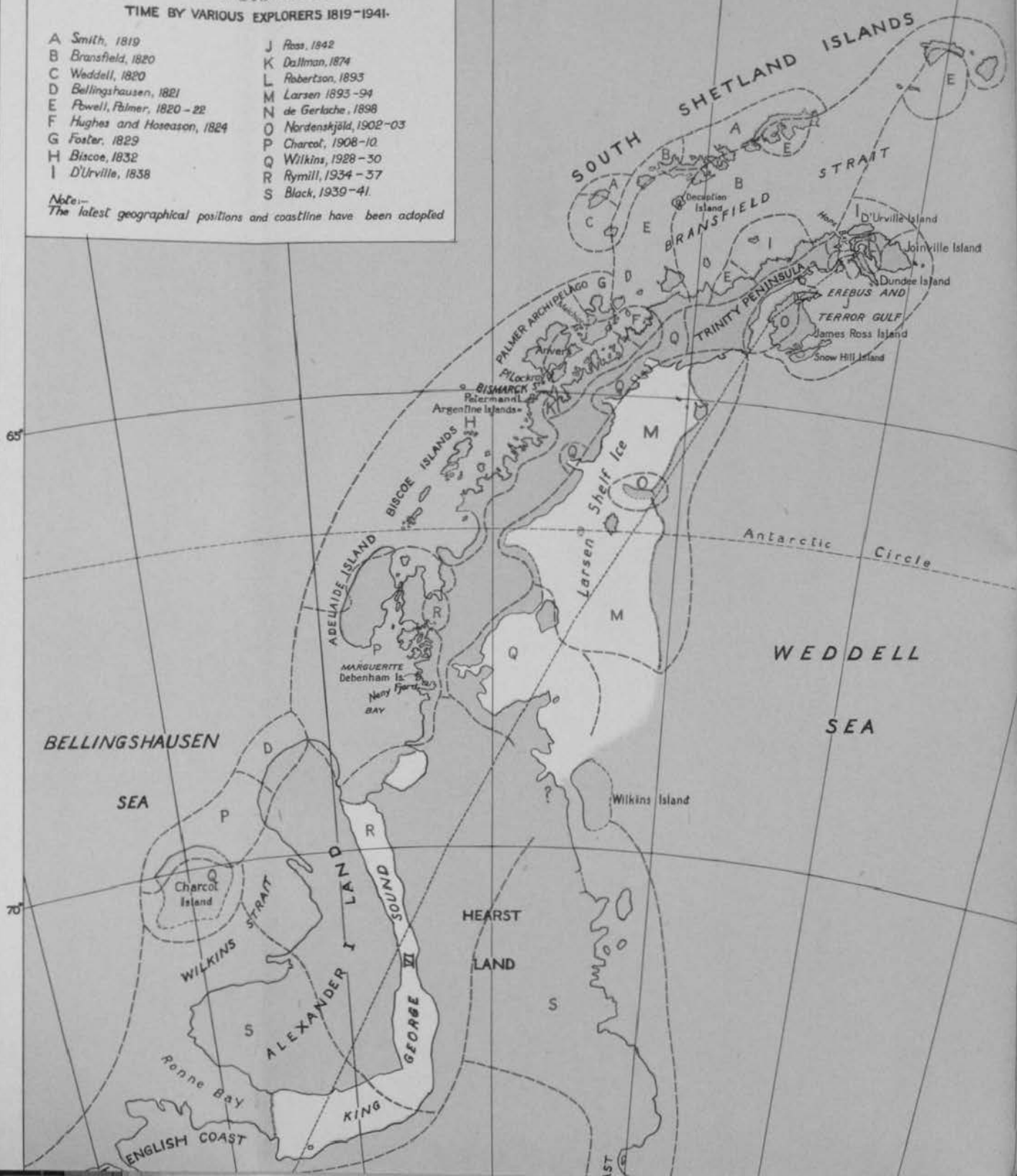
75° 70° 65° 60° 55°

# GRAHAM LAND

SHOWING DISCOVERIES OF LAND REPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY VARIOUS EXPLORERS 1819-1941.

- |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| A Smith, 1819               | J Ross, 1842            |
| B Bransfield, 1820          | K Dallman, 1874         |
| C Weddell, 1820             | L Robertson, 1893       |
| D Bellingshausen, 1821      | M Larsen 1893-94        |
| E Powell, Palmer, 1820-22   | N de Gerlache, 1898     |
| F Hughes and Hoseason, 1824 | O Nordenskjöld, 1902-03 |
| G Foster, 1829              | P Charcot, 1908-10      |
| H Biscoe, 1832              | Q Wilkins, 1928-30      |
| I D'Urville, 1838           | R Rymill, 1934-37       |
|                             | S Black, 1939-41        |

Note:-  
The latest geographical positions and coastline have been adopted



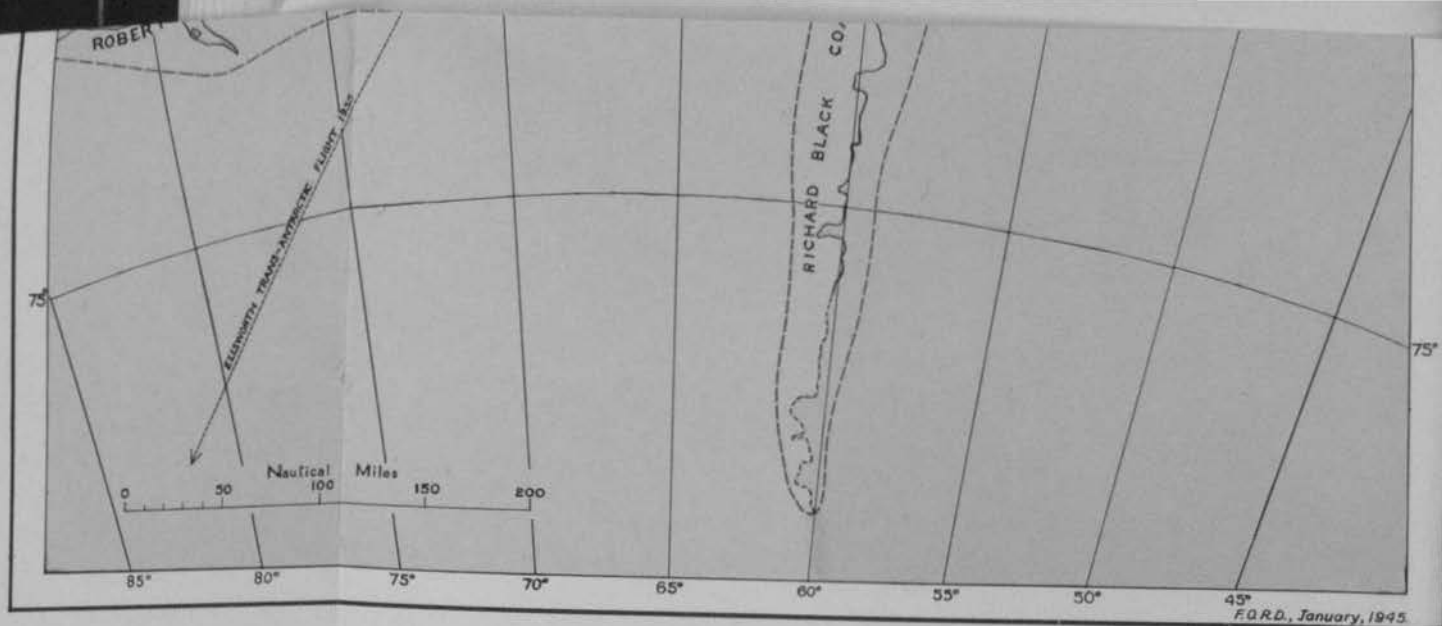


FIG 10

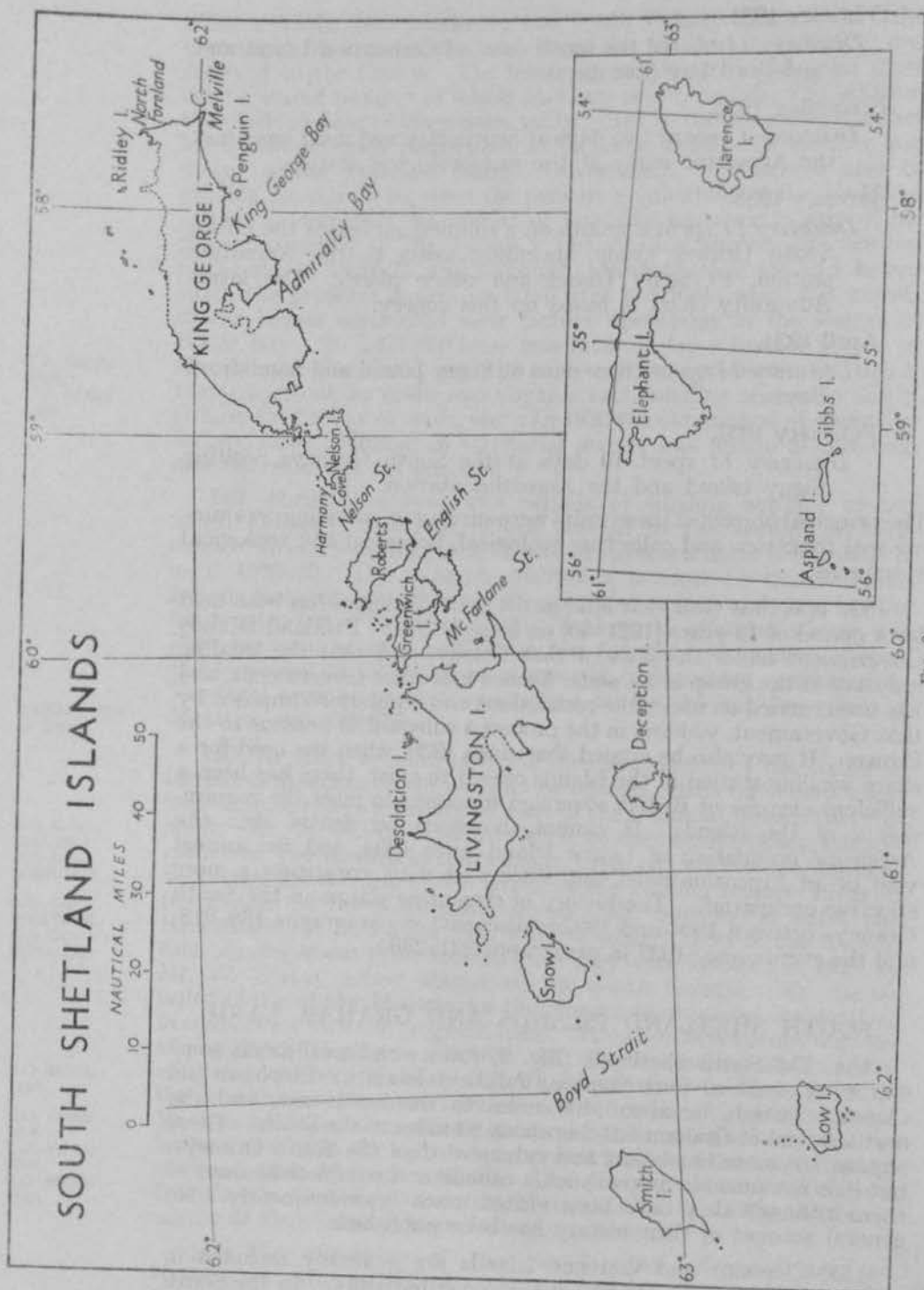


Fig. 9.

### Discovery and Exploration

157. The South Shetlands were discovered by William Smith of the brig *Williams* on February 18th 1819. Later in the same year he returned and took possession at King George Island on October 16th (see p. 157). He returned again in December with Edward Bransfield, who surveyed the newly-discovered islands and took possession at King George Island on January 22nd 1820 and at Clarence Island on February 4th 1820 (see p. 157).

158. The northern part of Graham Land (now called Trinity Peninsula) was discovered by Edward Bransfield on January 30th 1820. A claim that the American sealer, N. B. Palmer, discovered Graham Land has since been discredited. Following Smith's return to Valparaiso in November 1819, sealing vessels began to visit the South Shetlands. Between January 1820 and early in 1822 the seals

February 1931.

*Discovery II* visited the south coast of Coronation Island and Sandefjord Bay (five days).

November 1932.

*Discovery II* spent two days at Scotia Bay and must have met the Argentine party at the meteorological station.

January 1933.

*Discovery II* spent a month on a running survey of the entire South Orkney group, including visits to the Argentine station, to Signy Island and other places. The latest Admiralty chart is based on this survey.

April 1934.

*Discovery II* spent three days at Signy Island and Sandefjord Bay.

February 1937.

*Discovery II* spent 10 days at the South Orkneys, visiting Signy Island and the Argentine station.

The principal objects of these visits were surveying, sounding, examining seal rookeries, and collecting geological, botanical and zoological specimens.

153. It is thus clear that land in the South Orkneys has been held for a period of 10 years (1921-30) on lease from the Falkland Islands Government under the laws of that Colony, and that the whaling industry in the group arose under licence from that Government, and has been carried on under the restrictions and regulations imposed by that Government, yielding in the process a substantial revenue to the Crown. It may also be argued that since 1930, when the need for a shore whaling station in the islands ceased to exist, there has been a sufficient exercise of British sovereign functions to meet the requirements of the islands. It cannot, however, be denied that the Argentine occupation of Laurie Island since 1904, and the annual visit of an Argentine relief ship since that date, constitute a more effective occupation. The history of Argentine claims in the South Orkneys between 1904 and 1937 is discussed in paragraphs 188-215, and the events since 1937 in paragraphs 221-256.

#### SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS AND GRAHAM LAND

154. The South Shetlands (Fig. 9) form a chain of islands some 600 miles south of Port Stanley, Falkland Islands. Elephant and Clarence Islands lie about 100 miles to the north-east, and the northern end of Graham Land is about 80 miles to the south. These regions are more important and extensive than the South Orkneys, but it is not possible to give such a concise and complete account of them although they have been visited much more frequently. No general account of their history has been published.

155. Elephant and Clarence Islands are generally included in the South Shetlands. They have no good harbours. In the South Shetlands proper the largest islands are King George Island and Livingston Island. Admiralty Bay (in the former) provides some good anchorages, but the principal harbour in the group is at Deception Island. In other parts there are plenty of more or less useful anchorages and there are many places where a landing can be made without difficulty.

156. Graham Land is part of the Antarctic continent, from which it extends northwards as a mountainous peninsula some hundreds of miles long. The east side is generally inaccessible on account of the pack-ice. The west side is accessible for a time in summer, but there are few places where it is possible to land. Off the west coast there are numerous islands, including the Palmer Archipelago, the Biscoe Islands and Adelaide Island. In the Palmer Archipelago there are good anchorages at the Melchior Islands and Port Lockroy.



other animals than whales in the South Orkney Islands, and the ownership of any mineral ore found in the leased territory was reserved to the Crown. The lessee agreed also to employ no more than a stated number of whale catchers, and to extract the oil from the whole carcass of the whales taken; thus he contracted to conduct his operations with restrictions as to scope and in the manner laid down by the Falkland Islands Government. He agreed also to provide passage if required for persons nominated by the Falkland Islands Government for official or scientific purposes in any of his ships proceeding to the islands. The whaling station was erected in the season 1920-21, and although, owing to pack ice and heavy swell, the pressure boilers on land were but little used, the vessels of the lessees conducted their factory operations in the waters of Borge Bay. In 1925 the lease was renewed for a further period of five years. The Company also renewed an agreement by which they undertook to make two voyages each whaling season to South Orkney for facility of mails, etc. In 1930 the old method of operating factory ships sheltered in territorial waters was finally abandoned, and the lease was not renewed.

C.O. 24831/  
1925.  
C.O. 30300/  
1925.

149. There have been two periods of whaling activity at the South Orkneys; the first, which started in the season 1911-12, came to an end with that of 1914-15. The second dates from 1920-21 until 1929-30. The industry yielded a revenue to the Falkland Islands Government made up of rent, licence fees and dues on the whale oil taken. The rent of the Tönsberg Hvalfangeri's lease was £250 per annum, with additional fees for an extra whale catcher, and barrelage on whale oil at a rate which fluctuated considerably. The total revenue to the Government during the last five years of operation was £26,675.

A 6524/1437/2  
of 1930.

150. In order to safeguard the due observance of the Falkland Islands Ordinances on the conduct of whaling, visits have been made from time to time by various officials of the Falkland Islands Government. Mr. W. Moyes, Customs Officer to the South Orkney Islands, spent over two months in the group in 1913, and while there, acted as auctioneer for the sale of the wreck of the floating factory *Tivga* at the request of the Norwegian owners. Mr. Spencer, in 1914, and Mr. Bennett, in 1915, both then whaling officers, went to the islands, each staying about three months, and they were followed in 1921 by Mr. W. Barlas, acting Magistrate for South Georgia. Mr. Barlas sailed in the whaler *Hercules* for the purpose of obtaining information in connection with the proposed lease. It was on this voyage that the site on Signy Island was selected. Mr. Simon, whaling officer, sailed with the Tönsberg Hvalfangeri's whale factory in 1922, to see that the conditions of the lease were carried out, remaining three months. Mr. Rumbolds, whaling officer, spent over three months in the islands in the season 1925-26, and an equal period in each of the two following seasons, 1926-27 and 1927-28. The Governor of the Falkland Islands, Sir Arnold Hodson, together with Mr. Amedroz, harbour-master of Port Stanley, visited the group in 1928.

C.O. Gov.  
8955/1913.  
C.O. Gov.  
16046/1913.

C.O. Gov.  
8183/15/16.  
C.O. Gov.  
61161/1921.

C.O. 49393/  
1923.

C.O. 15880/  
1926.  
C.O. 35105/  
1927.  
C.O. 56752/  
1928.

151. The surveying of the islands was advanced by the Norwegians, who published a chart based on running surveys by Captain P. Sörle in 1912-13, supplemented by Captain Hans Borge in 1913-14. An inferior Argentine chart was published in 1930. It is said to have been based on surveys by Argentine naval officers in 1915 and 1930, but appears to include little original work and has many mistakes and inaccuracies. There were, in fact, such large discrepancies between these surveys that R.R.S. *Discovery II* re-surveyed the whole group in 1933.

152. During the ten years preceding the present war the ships of the Discovery Committee have visited the South Orkney Islands on a number of occasions in the course of their investigations. These are as follows:—

February 1927,

*Discovery* visited Signy Island for three days and met the Norwegian factory ship *Orwell*.

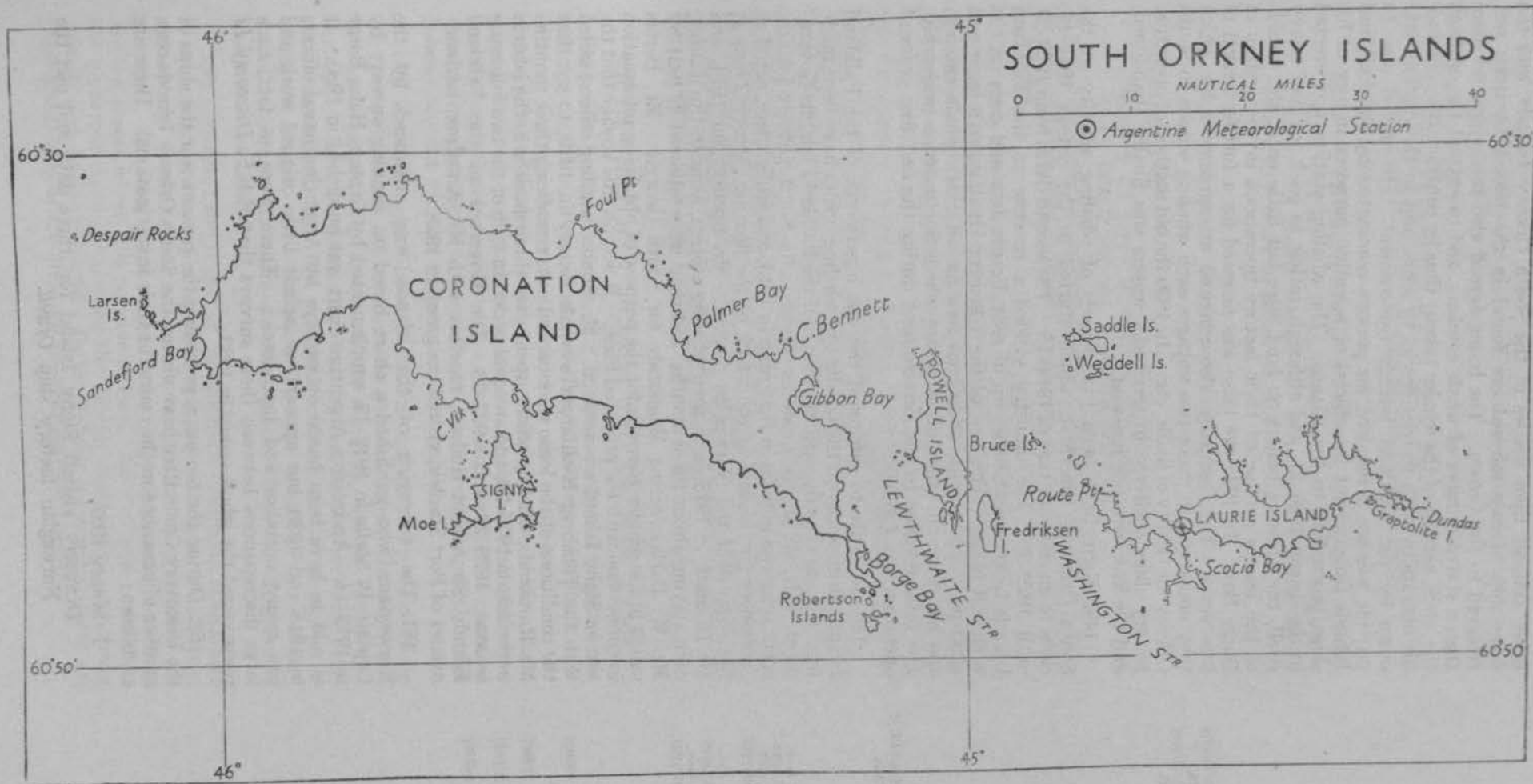


FIG. 8.

## SOUTH ORKNEYS ISLANDS

I. W. S. Marr :  
The South  
Orkney Islands.  
*Discovery  
Reports*,  
Vol. 10, 1935,  
pp. 283-382.

144. The South Orkneys (Fig. 8) lie about 700 miles south-east of Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, and 200 miles east of the South Shetlands. The principal islands in order of size are Coronation, Laurie, Powell and Signy Islands. The best landing places are at Laurie and Signy Islands. The South Orkneys were discovered on December 6th 1821 by George Powell in the British sealer *Dove*, accompanied by N.B. Palmer in the American sloop *James Monroe* (see Appendix XI, p. 182). On December 7th Powell landed on Coronation Island and took possession (see pp. 157-158). The islands were re-discovered, independently, by Michael McLeod of the British sealer *Beaufoy* on December 12th 1821. During the next 80 years the South Orkneys were visited only on rare occasions. Instances are as follows:—

1822 and 1823. Landing by James Weddell (British) on Saddle and Laurie Islands.

1838. Landing by J. S. C. Dumont D'Urville (French) on Weddell Island.

1874. Landings by E. Dallmann (German).

1880. Thomas B. Lynch (American) visited the islands.

1892. C. A. Larsen (Norwegian) landed on Laurie Island.

145. These were brief visits during which no considerable time was spent ashore. They are the only visits definitely known to have taken place up to the beginning of the 20th century, though it is quite probable that sealers of various nationalities may have called at the islands without disclosing their movements. The important secondary revival of sealing which took place at the South Shetlands between 1872 and 1888 does not appear to have involved the South Orkneys. A notable chart was made in the first instance by Powell and published by Laurie in November 1822. Other charts were made by Weddell and d'Urville, and the first British Admiralty chart was published in 1839.

146. The first important expedition to the South Orkneys was the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition in the *Scotia*, led by Dr. W. S. Bruce. They landed on February 4th 1903. The ship then made a voyage into the Weddell Sea, and, returning late in March, wintered in Scotia Bay (Laurie Island), where a hut was built. She sailed for Buenos Aires at the end of the year, leaving a meteorological party behind. Dr. Bruce then offered to carry an Argentine meteorological party to the island, and this was done when the *Scotia* returned to Laurie Island in February 1904 (paragraph 188). Since then the meteorological station has been run by an Argentine party which has been relieved every year, at first by an Argentine gunboat and in more recent years by an Argentine whale-catcher from South Georgia. Dr. Bruce's expedition was mainly concerned with Laurie Island, of which a complete triangulated survey was made, but they also landed on Coronation Island. The published results of the work included accounts of the fauna, flora, geology and glaciology of the group.

147. Whaling has been conducted at the South Orkney Islands under licences issued by the Falkland Islands Government for many years. In 1908 a licence to take whales in South Shetland and Orkney waters was granted to the Newfoundland Steam Whaling Company. In the same year another company applied for a licence for the latter area, and similar applications were received from various companies in each of the three following years. Licences were held in 1913 by the Hektor Whaling Company, and in the 1914-15 season by four companies, namely, the Rethval and Thule, Hektor, Normanna, and Haugesund Companies, all of which were Norwegian.

148. In 1920 the A/S Tønsberg Hvalfangeri applied for a lease of land in the South Orkneys for the purpose of erecting a whaling station, and in the following year the lease was granted. The site chosen was at Borge Bay, Signy Island, and was 500 acres in extent. The landward boundaries of the area were in the schedule of the lease described as Crown Lands. The lessee bound himself not to take

C.O. 6814/1908.  
C.O. 25568/  
1908.  
C.O. 41971/  
1909.  
C.O. 27259/  
1910.  
C.O. 33027/  
1911.  
C.O. 18377/  
1911.  
C.O. 16707/  
1912.  
C.O. 36129/  
1913.  
Cmd. 657 of  
1930.  
(Details sum-  
marized in  
A 6524/1437/2  
of 1930.)  
C.O. 34527/  
1921.  
C.O. 47876/  
1921.  
C.O. 2092/1922.



licence for South Georgia. Accordingly, the Governor of the Falkland Islands was instructed to issue a lease of the land actually in their occupation. It was decided that, although it was still desirable for H.M.S. *Sappho* to visit the island, her Commander need not hoist the British flag, nor enter into any negotiations with the company at South Georgia.

141. H.M.S. *Sappho* reached South Georgia in February 1906. The officers visited the Argentine whaling station and surveyed the harbour at Grytviken. It is stated in the standard history of South Georgia that the Commander interviewed the Norwegians, who hotly disputed his assertion that they had no right to be there; and that the manager refused to comply with his order to lower the Argentine flag, but gave in when told that if it was not taken down within 30 minutes it would be shot down from H.M.S. *Sappho*. This story is still told by the South Georgia whalers. It is quite untrue, but has never been refuted. Captain Hodges' detailed official report to the Admiralty makes no mention of these alleged events, and indeed indicates that during the visit of H.M.S. *Sappho* relations between the British and Norwegians were most cordial. Neither Mr. Swinhoe's nor Captain Hodges' reports mention that the Argentine flag was flying over the station.

L. H. Matthews :  
*loc. cit.*, p. 132.

C.O. Adm.  
9925/1906.

142. The main result of the visit of H.M.S. *Sappho* was an ordinance of the Falkland Islands Government making it unlawful to take whales without a licence, and imposing royalties on each whale caught. On March 8th 1906 the Cia. Argentina de Pesca was granted a lease of about 500 acres of land, at an annual rental of £250, for 21 years from January 1st 1906. So successful was this pioneer whaling venture—it paid a 70% dividend in its first year—that other companies were soon in the field. Seven other leases of land sites for whaling purposes were subsequently granted for a similar term—three dating from 1908, three from 1909, and one from 1911. Of these companies, four were Norwegian and three British; the Cia. Argentina de Pesca obtained an additional lease in 1909. Since 1910 this company has also held a licence to take elephant seals (paragraph 26). In order to conserve the stock of whales, each station was at first allowed only two catchers, and to prevent waste was required to utilize the whole carcase of the whales. For the same reason the Government refused to grant any further licences.

11756  
(F 938/1906).

*Report of Inter-  
departmental  
Committee*,  
Cmd. 657,  
London, 1920.  
p. 58; L. H.  
Matthews :  
*loc. cit.*, p. 133.

143. In 1909 a resident Stipendiary Magistrate (Mr. J. I. Wilson) was sent to South Georgia and the British Government has been in continuous occupation ever since. At first the Magistrate was given quarters at the whaling station, but in 1912-13 a house was built for him at King Edward's Point across the bay, and his staff was enlarged to include two customs officers and a constable. Grytviken and Leith Harbour have been ports of entry for shipping since 1912 and 1914 respectively. A post office was established at Grytviken in 1912; until the issue of a special series of overprinted postage stamps in 1944 (paragraph 251), Falkland Island stamps were used, cancelled with a South Georgia post mark. New Government buildings (office, wireless station, laboratory, dwelling houses, etc.) were completed early in 1925. The Discovery Committee's Marine Biological Laboratory at Grytviken was occupied during each whaling season from 1925 until 1931. In the years immediately before the present war the summer population of South Georgia averaged about 750; most of whom were Norwegians. In winter the number was usually reduced to a maintenance staff of less than 200. In 1939, the only shore whaling stations still maintained in working condition were at Grytviken (Argentine), Husvik and Stromness Harbour (Norwegian), and Leith Harbour (British). Only the Argentine station has continued to operate since 1940. Finally, it should be recorded that the work of the Discovery Committee has been concentrated very largely on South Georgia and its surrounding waters, and that all the important harbours and anchorages have now been charted.

C.O. Gov.  
2397/1910.

C.O. Gov.  
5637/1913.

C.O. Gov.  
27583/1912.  
C.O. Gov.  
24241/1914.  
C.O. Gov.  
5314/1912.



and the British were soon followed by Americans. As in other southern islands the trade killed itself by indiscriminate slaughter. After 1865 very few ships visited South Georgia, and by 1880 the fur seals and elephant seals were so near extinction that it was unprofitable to hunt them. Thus, although the island was visited by a very large number of ships during the nineteenth century, little precise information about it was brought back except by three scientific expeditions, notably the *Vostok* and *Myrnyi*, under Admiral Bellingshausen (1819), the *Jane* and *Beaufoy*, under Captain James Weddell (1823), and the German Transit of Venus Expedition which wintered in Royal Bay (1882-83).

137. In 1902 the Swedish expedition under Dr. O. Nordenskjöld visited South Georgia. Their ship, the *Antarctic*, was commanded by Captain C. A. Larsen, a Norwegian who had previously visited South Georgia during a pioneer whaling voyage in the *Jason* in 1893-94. Larsen recognised the possibilities of the island as a whaling base. When the crew of the wrecked *Antarctic* were rescued in 1903 by the Argentine corvette *Uruguay* the crew were landed and fêted at Buenos Aires. Here Larsen was able to arouse interest in whaling and a company was immediately formed, the Cia. Argentina de Pesca, of which Larsen was made the first whaling manager. On his return to Norway he fitted out an expedition of three ships, returned to South Georgia, arriving at Grytviken in December 1904, and started to build a shore station.\* In June 1905 a fourth ship, the *Guardia Nacional*, brought additional stores direct from Buenos Aires, and the Argentine officers made a survey of Cumberland Bay.

138. The Governor of the Falkland Islands was entirely unaware of these developments when, on July 24th 1905, he granted a general grazing and mining lease for a period of two years to the South Georgia Exploration Company, a Chilean concern financed mainly by British subjects resident in Punta Arenas. This lease was granted under Section 4 of Falkland Islands Land Ordinance No. 9 of 1903, and, in fact, required the special sanction of the Secretary of State, which had not been obtained. In view of the scant information which had then reached England about the formation of the Cia. Argentina de Pesca, the Secretary of State neither confirmed nor disallowed the lease, and it was decided to send H.M.S. *Sappho* to investigate matters at South Georgia, to hoist the British flag, and, if necessary, to require the Argentine company to take out a licence.

139. Meanwhile, the South Georgia Exploration Company had fitted out an expedition to prospect for minerals and establish an experimental sheep ranch, and arrived at Grytviken in August 1905 to find an already flourishing whaling station working there. Their reception by the Norwegians was not cordial. On being shown the lease of the South Georgia Exploration Company, Captain Larsen disputed the authority of the Falkland Islands Government to grant it, and ordered the intruders off the island. Mr. Ernest Swinhoe, the British manager of the South Georgia Exploration Company, therefore addressed a note to Captain Larsen informing him that he must notify his company to withdraw from the island, for which his own company held the legal rights. Mr. Swinhoe subsequently reported these events to the Government of the Falkland Islands, and stated that he had flown the British flag on shore during the three months he was at South Georgia, an action which had elicited no response from the Argentine company. He further stated that the island had proved unsuitable for sheep raising and that sealing and whaling were the only operations likely to produce satisfactory financial results. His expedition had left South Georgia in November 1905, selling their equipment to Captain Larsen.

140. On November 2nd 1905 the British Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Aires (Mr. F. D. Harford) reported that representatives of the Cia. Argentina de Pesca had applied through him for the issue of a

\* The Cia. Argentina de Pesca was thus financed by Argentines, but equipped and staffed by Norwegians.

Admiralty R.O.  
Case, "Colonial  
Office 18th  
April 1906."

C.O. Gov.  
11618/06.

## SOUTH GEORGIA.

136. South Georgia (Fig. 7) is an island about 100 miles in length and 30 miles in greatest breadth. It lies about 800 miles east of the Falkland Islands. The discovery of this island has been attributed to Amerigo Vespucci (Portuguese), who possibly sighted it in 1502, and to Antonio de la Roché (English), who probably sighted it in 1675. It was undoubtedly sighted by the Spanish ship *León* in 1756, but was not explored until Captain Cook made the first survey and landed to take formal possession on January 17th 1775 (see p. 157). Following Cook's report of his discoveries, British sealers started work in South Georgia in 1778. The industry developed rapidly

L. H. Matthews:  
South Georgia,  
the British  
Empire's  
Subantarctic  
Outpost,  
London, 1931.

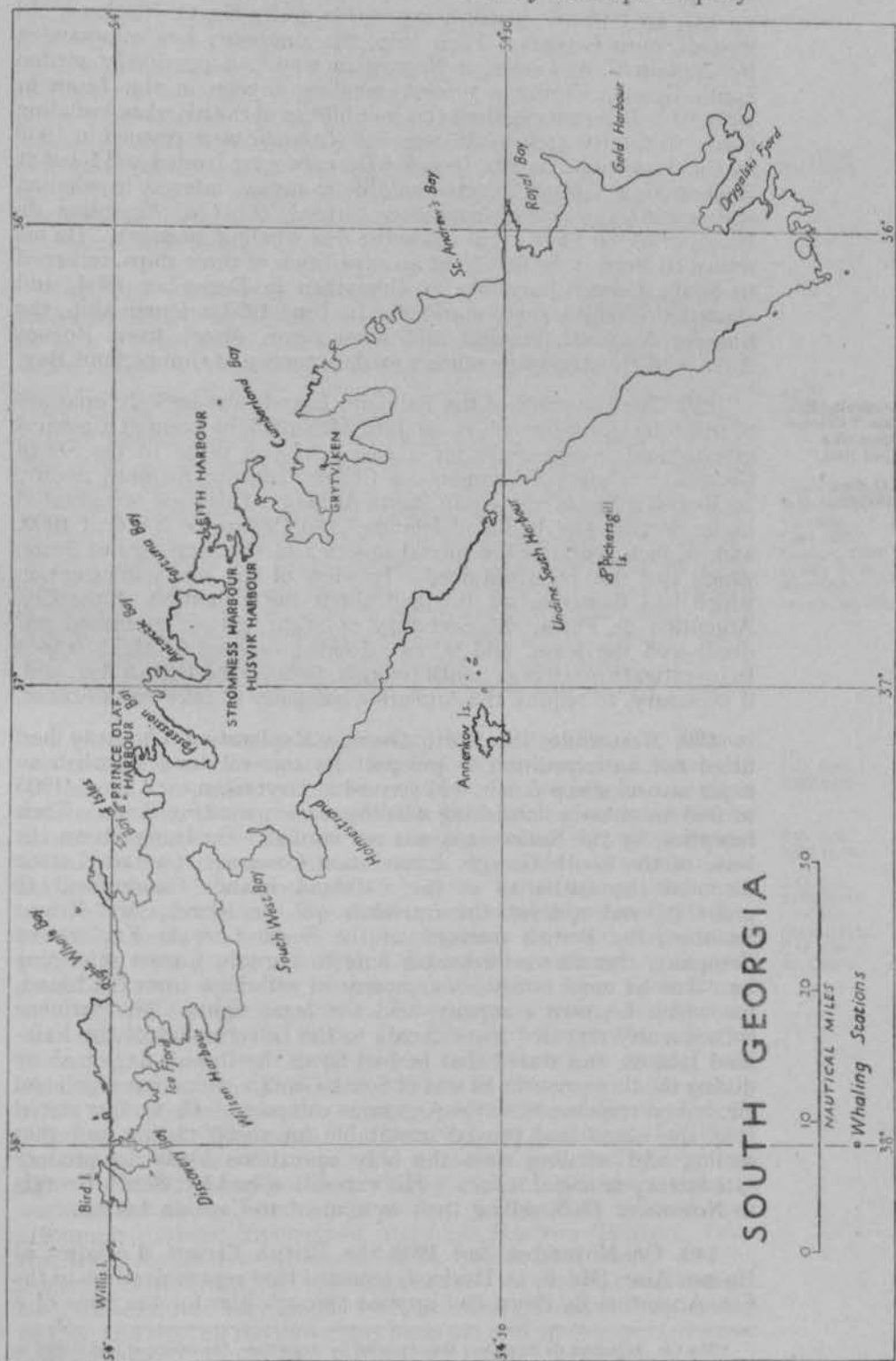


Fig. 7

and empowered to make and execute, in Our name and on Our behalf, grants and dispositions of any Lands which may lawfully be granted or disposed of by Us within the Dependencies." At the same time the Executive Council of the Falkland Islands was constituted an Executive Council for the Dependencies.

132. It will be noted that the Dependencies as first defined in 1908 included a large section of the southern extremity of South America. No explanation of this apparent error can be traced in the Foreign Office or Colonial Office archives; nor can any evidence be found that either Argentina or Chile protested against the inclusion of their territory\* under British jurisdiction. It is evident that the Letters Patent of 1908 entirely escaped the notice of both Argentina and Chile. In 1915, when the revision of the boundaries of the Falkland Islands Dependencies was being discussed, Argentina and Chile were involved in a dispute about the ownership of the islands south of Beagle Channel. Both Governments requested King George V to arbitrate in this dispute, a situation which could hardly have arisen if they were aware that His Majesty's Government had also, though apparently inadvertently, laid a claim to the territory in which these islands were situated.

F 39730/1915.  
F 2356616/1916.

133. Other doubts arose about the southern limits of the Dependencies, and in August 1912 the Colonial Office suggested that steps should be taken to obtain a more accurate definition of "Graham Land." After it had been ascertained from His Majesty's Minister at Buenos Aires that no claim to that region had been made by the Argentine Government, it was decided, upon the recommendation of the Admiralty, that the following description should apply: ". . . the territory generally known as Graham Land, extending from latitude 63° S. (approximately) to the south-west, with islands contiguous thereto." It was not, however, until March 28th 1917 that amending Letters Patent were issued, modifying the definition of the Dependencies to its present form:

File 35032 of  
1912.

*Falkland  
Islands  
Gazette,  
July 2nd 1917;  
British and  
Foreign State  
Papers, 1917-18,  
Vol. 111,  
London, 1921,  
pp. 16-17.*

"The Dependencies . . . shall be deemed to include and to have included all islands and territories whatsoever between the 20th degree of west longitude and the 50th degree of west longitude which are situated south of the 50th parallel of south latitude; and all islands and territories whatsoever between the 50th degree of west longitude and the 80th degree of west longitude which are situated south of the 58th parallel of south latitude."

134. The amended definition excluded from the boundaries of the Dependencies any territory in South America, but it asserted a claim to the whole of the Antarctic mainland lying to the south of the South Shetlands Islands, thus removing any difficulties which might arise from uncertainty about the extent of the region to which the term "Graham Land" could properly be applied. It asserted a title also to the south-west portion of Coats Land (the whole of which, however, was discovered by the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition under Dr. W. S. Bruce in 1904), and, incidentally, to land and islands which were discovered by the French explorer, Dr. J. B. Charcot, in 1910 (paragraph 163).

135. In view of the complex history of the Falkland Islands Dependencies as thus constituted, it is convenient to deal first with the history of exploration and commercial exploitation of each Dependency separately, and then to provide a summary of the resulting territorial claims that have been put forward by various countries.

\* In 1881 Argentina and Chile concluded a treaty which delimited the boundary between the two countries. In 1896 they agreed to submit any disagreement which might arise about the demarcation of this boundary for the adjudication of Her Britannic Majesty's Government, and in 1902 King Edward VII did, in fact, arbitrate in a dispute concerning part of this boundary (see *British and Foreign State Papers*, Vol. 72, 1888, pp. 1103-05; Vol. 88, 1900, pp. 553-54; Vol. 95, 1905, pp. 162-64).



a Norwegian whaling expedition, as to the ownership of islands in the Southern Ocean, the Colonial Office, referring to the correspondence of 1893 and 1901, said that it did not appear that in the interval the Argentine Government had taken, with regard to the South Shetlands, any action that might be said to weaken the British title to them. The national status of the group had not hitherto been considered a matter of any material consequence. It had, however, been learned from information furnished by the Governor of the Falkland Islands that fur seals were fairly plentiful and that whales abounded in the surrounding seas, so that the group might be said to have a commercial value which it was not held to possess a few years before. In any case, it appeared important to uphold the British claim to these islands, as, if they were allowed to fall into the possession of a foreign State, British subjects would be debarred from fishing or sealing within the territorial waters.

129. Enquiries were made of His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Aires as to whether the assertion that the South Shetlands, together with South Georgia, the South Orkneys and Graham Land, were British possessions would be likely to arouse the criticism of the Argentine Government or raise afresh their claim to the Falkland Islands; and, the reply having been favourable, the Norwegian Minister was informed, on May 16th 1906, that the South Shetland Islands were not international, as had been supposed by the Norwegian Government, but were British territory, that the other British possessions in the same region were South Georgia, the South Orkneys and Graham Land, and that Norwegian whaling companies should apply to the Governor of the Falkland Islands for any facilities they might desire in those territories.

16617  
(F 6793/1906).

130. When, in March 1907, the Norwegian Minister asked for further information respecting British territorial rights over the South Orkneys, the South Shetlands and Graham Land, he was told, on April 30th 1907, that the British claim to the South Shetlands rested on the fact that Captain Foster of H.M.S. *Chanticleer* took formal possession of the lands about the islands on January 7th 1829, landing at Cape Possession, Hoseason Island, and that Sir John Ross\* landed on Cockburn Island† in the South Shetland group on January 6th 1843, and took formal possession of this and contiguous lands. The Norwegian Minister was further informed that no question of title had hitherto been raised by foreign Governments, that the only notification made in any quarter was that to himself on May 16th 1906, and that it was not the practice of His Majesty's Government to notify to foreign Governments additions to British territory made by annexation, occupation or otherwise.

12108  
(F 660/1907).

131. Meanwhile, as a result of further information which had become available about the importance of the whaling industry in South Georgia and the South Shetlands, Letters Patent were prepared appointing the Governor of the Falkland Islands to be Governor of South Georgia, the South Orkneys, the South Shetlands, the Sandwich Islands and Graham's Land, and providing for their Government as Dependencies of the Falkland Islands. The Letters Patent were issued on July 21st 1908. The preamble read as follows:—

"Whereas the groups of islands known as South Georgia, the South Orkneys, the South Shetlands, and the Sandwich Islands, and the territory known as Graham's Land, situated in the South Atlantic Ocean to the south of the 50th parallel of south latitude, and lying between the 20th and the 80th degrees of west longitude, are part of Our Dominions, and it is expedient that provision should be made for their government as Dependencies of Our Colony of the Falkland Islands."

The Letters Patent vested all powers of Government and legislation in the Governor of the Falkland Islands, and provided that "the Governor is, and shall be deemed always to have been, authorized

*Falkland  
Islands  
Gazette,  
Sept. 1st 1908  
British and  
Foreign State  
Papers, 1907-08  
Vol. 101,  
London, 1912,  
pp. 76-77.*

\* Sir John Ross never visited the Antarctic. Sir James Clark Ross took possession of Cockburn Island.

† Cockburn Island lies off Ross Island, east of Trinity Peninsula; not in the South Shetlands.



## EARLY HISTORY OF BRITISH CLAIMS

12384  
(F 34/1909).

125. The question of the status of the South Shetland Islands first came to the notice of the Foreign Office in 1892,\* when a Buenos Aires newspaper announced that a Messrs. Linck and Co. had applied to the Argentine Government for the right of fishery in Argentine waters and of the products of islands and rocks lying between lats. 40° S. and 65° S., excluding the coast of the mainland. The firm were said to have promised, among other things, to erect a fishery station in the Falkland Islands. Enquiry by Her Majesty's Minister at Buenos Aires elicited the fact that the fishery station was to be established on the South Shetlands and not on the Falklands. From the *exposé des motifs* and the articles of the concession, which had been laid before the Argentine Chambers, it appeared that the firm desired to acquire fishing rights off the South Shetlands, South Orkneys, Graham Land and South Sandwich Islands, all of which, it was contended, belonged, by their geographical position, to the Argentine Republic. The firm (Messrs. Linck and Co.) stated that these islands were regarded by the ships which visited them from time to time as territories belonging to no jurisdiction because no act of sovereignty had been performed there; and the firm urged that there were reasons of the greatest importance why the Argentine Government should take possession of them and execute acts of sovereignty and occupation therein.

126. Investigations made in March 1893 failed to reveal anything in correspondence with the United States, Chile, or the Argentine Republic to indicate that Her Majesty's Government had ever asserted a claim of sovereignty over the South Shetland and South Orkney groups on the ground of priority of discovery. At this time Sir J. Bramston, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote to Sir T. Sanderson, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that a Mr. Leigh Smith had just returned from an exploring expedition in the Antarctic Ocean and had reported that the South Orkneys and South Shetlands abounded in seals and that the ships of the expedition had brought back 13,000 sealskins from those islands.† Sir J. Bramston added that the Admiralty knew nothing about the islands except "that Ross was supposed to have taken possession of them for England," and he enquired whether, if this were true, England was prepared to assert her title by public notification, and if, on the other hand, they were no man's land, she was prepared to forestall other nations and take them. Sir T. Sanderson wrote on the docket of Sir J. Bramston's letter, "I should think it was quite undesirable to annex these islands."

127. In October 1901 His Majesty's Minister at Buenos Aires telegraphed that he had heard privately that a gunboat was to be sent to hoist the Argentine flag on the South Shetlands. No action was taken at Buenos Aires on this occasion, and correspondence with the Colonial Office, Admiralty, and Board of Trade showed that there was little ground for moving in the matter. The Colonial Office were unaware of the extent to which British subjects resorted or were likely to resort to these islands for fishery or other purposes, but deprecated the acquiescence by His Majesty's Government in any proceedings that might possibly bring within the jurisdiction of a South American Republic British subjects until then outside such jurisdiction. The Admiralty were in no way interested in the control of the islands, which did not possess any navigational or strategical advantages. The Board of Trade were unable to ascertain that sealing and whaling vessels starting from the United Kingdom made use of these islands.

15726  
(F 6793/1906).

128. The next occasion on which attention was directed to the South Shetlands was in May 1906, when, in connexion with an enquiry made by the Norwegian Minister in London, on behalf of

\* It is significant that this application was made in the same year as the pioneer Antarctic voyage of the Dundee whalers (paragraph 172).

† This refers to the Dundee whaling expedition of 1892-93, which visited the islands off Trinity Peninsula. Mr. Leigh Smith was interested in but did not accompany the expedition.

120. *Queen Maud Land* came under Norwegian sovereignty by a Decree of January 14th 1939. This Norwegian claim has been formally recognised by His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. It has also been recognised, with reservations, by the Chilean Government. The German Government have interests which could conceivably provide the basis for a claim.

121. *The Pacific Sector* between the Falkland Islands Dependencies and the Ross Dependency has been partially claimed by the Chilean Government by a Decree of November 6th 1940, but no Chilean explorer has ever visited this region. The United States Government have strong interests which will almost certainly be made the basis for a claim to the whole sector. The Norwegian Government have reserved their rights to claim the sector between longs. 120° W. and 150° W., south of lat. 85° S. His Majesty's Governments also have interests in this sector. The only part of the Pacific sector and of the Antarctic continent itself to which no formal claim has yet been put forward by any Government is the sector lying between longs. 90° W. and 120° W. The Japanese Government have shown some interest in this region.

122. Certain islands in the Southern Ocean lie outside any of the claims mentioned above:—

*Peter I and Bouvet Islands* are under Norwegian sovereignty. These two claims have been formally recognised by His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

*The Prince Edward Islands* are under British sovereignty. This claim has not yet been disputed or recognised by any foreign Government.

*The Crozet and Kerguelen Islands* are under French sovereignty. The French claim to the Crozet Islands has been recognised by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. Whilst His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom clearly do not dispute the French claim to the Kerguelen Islands, they have never accorded formal recognition.

*Heard and McDonald Islands* are under British sovereignty. These claims have not yet been disputed or recognised by any foreign Government.

*Macquarie Island* is under British sovereignty; it is a Dependency of Tasmania. This claim has not yet been disputed or recognised by any foreign Government.

123. In conclusion, it may be noted that the United States and Argentine Governments have both issued statements, as recently as 1940, that they have not recognised the sovereignty of any other State in any portion of the Antarctic. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom take the view that absence of protest by foreign Governments may be accepted as tacit recognition of British rights. Apart from the above instances, no other Governments have protested against British claims in the Antarctic.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FALKLAND ISLANDS DEPENDENCIES

124. The Falkland Islands Dependencies were the first portion of the Antarctic to be brought under British control. The Dependencies are divided into two main groups, the one consisting of South Georgia with the South Orkneys and South Sandwich Islands, and the other of the South Shetlands with Graham Land. Large areas of land in the Antarctic continent are also comprised in the Dependencies.

113. A more direct threat, which could not be ignored, has been demonstrated by the renewed encroachments of the Argentine Government in the Falkland Islands Dependencies since 1938 and by more recent Argentine claims to a large part of this sector (paragraphs 221 *et seq.*). In 1940 the Chilean Government also claimed a large part of the Falkland Islands Dependencies (paragraph 260). These activities necessitated the despatch of a British expedition to the Dependencies in January 1943 (paragraph 237), and, since December 1943, have compelled His Majesty's Government not only to embark on an extended programme of administration and research but also to envisage the permanent occupation of certain islands (paragraphs 243-256).

114. British policy in the Antarctic has thus reached the stage when it may be considered necessary for His Majesty's Governments to take a much more active part in the development of these territories if they are not to be faced with the alternative of relinquishing some of the British claims. It seems possible that after the war a general Antarctic conference may have to be held, in which case a decision on these matters would become urgent.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PRESENT SITUATION OF TERRITORIAL CLAIMS

(See Fig. 14)\*

115. There are three areas of British territory in the Antarctic continent administered by His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, in the Dominion of New Zealand, and in the Commonwealth of Australia, respectively. The United Kingdom sector consists of the Falkland Islands Dependencies as defined by Letters Patent of July 21st 1908 and March 28th 1917. The New Zealand sector, known as the Ross Dependency, was defined by an Order in Council of July 30th 1923. The Australian sector, known as the Australian Antarctic Territory, was defined by an Order in Council of February 7th 1933.

116. *The Falkland Islands Dependencies* have not yet been formally recognised by any foreign Government. Definite overlapping counter-claims have been advanced by the Argentine Government at various dates since 1906, and by the Chilean Government in a Decree of November 6th 1940. The United States Government have not yet advanced any official claim, but they have given unofficial support to claims made by United States citizens. The Governments of Belgium, France, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the U.S.S.R. have interests, based on the discoveries of explorers of their respective nationalities, which might in the future be made the basis of claims, but none of these Governments have protested against the British claim. The Japanese Government have shown some interest in this region.

117. *The Ross Dependency* has not yet been formally recognised by any foreign Government. The Norwegian Government have reserved their rights to claim the sector between longs. 175° W. and 150° W., south of lat. 85° S. The United States and Japanese Governments have interests which might in the future be made the basis of claims, but only the former have reserved their rights.

118. *The Australian Antarctic Territory* has been formally recognised by the French and Norwegian Governments. The United States Government have interests and have reserved their rights.

119. *Adelie Land*, a French enclave, lies within the Australian Antarctic Territory and has been formally recognised by His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. It was annexed by France in 1924.

\* At end of book.



part of the American public to regard this territory as theirs. Admiral Byrd's expeditions also indicated United States interest in the unclaimed Pacific Sector.

108. In 1933, when various proposals for renewed British Antarctic exploration were being discussed, it was thus evident that any extension of British claims to the "Norwegian Sector" were out of the question. With regard to the Pacific Sector, the Foreign Office inclined to the view that so much territory in the Antarctic had recently been claimed as British that it might be better to continue the exploration of territory already partially explored than to explore new territory. Accordingly His Majesty's Government supported the British Graham Land Expedition of 1934-37 with a view to strengthening British claims in the Falkland Islands Dependencies, but did not support proposals for further exploration to the east of the Weddell Sea.

#### THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1937

109. The Committee on Polar Questions appointed by the Imperial Conference of 1937 gave special consideration to the French claim to Adélie Land, which His Majesty's Government in Australia desired to resist. In view, however, of the other areas in the Arctic and Antarctic to which the British title was based upon the "sector principle" it was agreed that, although the boundaries of the French claim might well be restricted to a very small sector, claims of a similar character by other nations would be difficult to meet if the general validity of the "sector principle" in the Antarctic had once been impugned. The Committee therefore concluded on grounds of policy that any French claim to a sector extending south to the Pole should not be challenged.

110. The Committee also considered what action could, in the future, be taken by His Majesty's Governments to consolidate their title to the territories which they administer in the Antarctic. The possibilities of co-operation in any scientific or economic activities which might be undertaken by or on behalf of His Majesty's Governments were discussed, as also the possibilities of establishing meteorological stations on the Antarctic continent and the co-ordination of other Antarctic investigations. It was recommended that the Dominion Governments concerned should be kept in as close touch as possible with the work of the Discovery Committee (Appendix XIII, pp. 184-187), and should for that purpose be invited to appoint representatives from their permanent staffs in London to attend meetings of the Committee.

#### THE PERIOD SINCE THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1937

111. Since 1937 there has been a period of great activity in the Antarctic, with increasing encroachments by foreign powers, and the policy of His Majesty's Government has been directed towards maintaining British claims. In April 1938 the boundaries of Adélie Land were finally settled in an agreement with the French Government (paragraph 371). In January 1939 a Norwegian Decree annexed the sector between the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Falkland Islands Dependencies (paragraph 413). This claim was recognised by His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand in exchange for Norwegian recognition of the boundaries of the Australian Antarctic Territory (paragraphs 397 and 415). Thus the only serious differences relating to Antarctic claims between His Majesty's Governments and the Governments of France and Norway were satisfactorily concluded.

112. The United States Government, however, have never recognised any British claims in the Antarctic, and their attitude still remains an outstanding problem. The explorations of Mr. Lincoln Ellsworth in 1936 and 1939, and of the United States Antarctic Service in 1939-41, have provided ample evidence that the United States may wish to contest British claims. During the war, however, discussion of these matters has been postponed.

Secret E(37) 6:  
Secret E(37) 22:  
Secret E(37) 36  
of 1937.  
W 10306/1365/  
50;  
W 11272/1365/  
50 of 1937.



for private satisfaction, so far as Arctic questions were concerned, public reference to the "sector principle" was to be deprecated as likely not only to irritate Norwegian opinion, which was still hostile to the principle, but also to give rise to inconvenient claims in the Antarctic. Any similar application of this principle in the south would include the greater part of the Falkland Islands Dependencies within the sphere of sovereignty of Argentina and Chile. The Committee noted in this connection that the progress made by His Majesty's Government in Canada in organising a system of police patrols covering the islands north of the Canadian mainland was such that the title to these islands now rested not only on the theoretical application of the "sector principle," but also on the solid ground of effective occupation.

Secret E(30) 10;  
Secret E(30) 20  
of 1930.

104. The Committee had before them two memoranda dealing with the Antarctic prepared by His Majesty's Governments in the Commonwealth of Australia and in the United Kingdom. The whole situation was reviewed with particular reference to the developments which had taken place since the Imperial Conference of 1926, and a general policy involving consolidation rather than extension of British interests in the Antarctic was recommended. In connection with the expedition then operating in the proposed Australian sector under the leadership of Sir Douglas Mawson, the Committee considered it desirable that the published *Summary of Proceedings* of the Conference should contain a reaffirmation of British interest in the areas specified in the *Summary of Proceedings* of the Imperial Conference of 1926 (paragraph 93).

#### FROM THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1930 UNTIL THE END OF 1937

Treaty Series,  
No. 14 (1931).

Canadian  
Treaty Series,  
No. 17 (1930).

105. In November 1930 His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom recognised Norwegian sovereignty over Jan Mayen Island, and in 1931 His Majesty's Government in Canada arrived at an agreement with the Norwegian Government for the formal recognition by the latter of the Canadian claim to the Otto Sverdrup Islands. These settlements removed from the sphere of controversy the only areas in the Arctic where Norwegian interests clashed with those of any of His Majesty's Governments. The approach to Antarctic problems was thus simplified, for the Norwegian Government had resisted the application of the "sector principle" mainly because of their interests in the Arctic.

106. The B.A.N.Z.A.R. Expedition having accomplished the second of the three stages envisaged for the Antarctic by the 1926 Conference (paragraph 92) the next step was to ensure that, in the execution of the third, conflict with the Norwegians should be avoided. The policy of diverting their attention to the Enderby Land-Coats Land area was continued, and in August 1931 the opportunity was taken of the recognition of Norwegian sovereignty over Peter I Island to remind the Norwegian Government that His Majesty's Government looked for the same friendly disposition towards British claims.

106A. By February 1933, it was possible to proceed to the formal third stage, and the Australian Antarctic Territory was established by Order in Council (paragraph 355).

106B. Norwegian enquiries resulting from this step were answered by a formal assurance to the Norwegian Government in 1934 that there was no intention of claiming British sovereignty over the region between the western boundary of the Territory and the eastern boundary of Coats Land. There was also desultory correspondence with the French Government about the boundaries of Adélie Land, which did not reach a conclusion before the Imperial Conference of 1937.

107. At this time there were also diplomatic exchanges with the United States Government relating to the Ross Dependency, since Admiral Byrd's expeditions of 1928-30 and 1933-35 had led a large

the Commonwealth Government for the Antarctic seasons of 1929-30 and 1930-31 (at a cost to the Treasury of £8,000 per annum); New Zealand to contribute £2,500.

99. The objects and accomplishments of Sir Douglas Mawson's expedition are discussed elsewhere in this Handbook (paragraphs 352-354). It is sufficient here to note that His Majesty granted to Sir Douglas a formal commission of authority to take possession of all the areas outside the Falkland Islands Dependencies which were specified in the Imperial Conference *Summary of Proceedings* (paragraph 93), as well as any new territories which might be discovered.

W 7116/98/50  
of 1929.

100. The *Discovery* sailed from London on August 1st 1929. In diplomatic exchanges with the Norwegian Government during the progress of the expedition the intention to uphold British claims was made clear, and the attention both of the Norwegian Government and of the *Norvegia* expedition was directed to the area between the western boundary of Enderby Land and the eastern boundary of Coats Land. In effect, an informal understanding was reached that Norway, in return for a free hand in that area, would not interfere in the areas mentioned in the Imperial Conference statement. The French Government were informed of the despatch of the expedition and asked to give facilities at Kerguelen Island.

W 9078/98/50  
of 1929.

101. In 1928 Sir Hubert Wilkins was also preparing an expedition to the Antarctic. His intention was first to proceed to Graham Land, with a view to establishing whether that territory was an island or formed a part of the mainland. Having established this, he hoped to fly from Graham Land to King Edward VII Land across the unexplored sector between the Ross Sea and the Falkland Islands Dependencies. At that time it was believed that the Norwegian expedition in the *Norvegia* intended to visit and possibly annex Dougherty Island (which does not exist, see paragraph 503) and Peter I Island, both situated in this unexplored sector. It was possible that the *Norvegia* might discover and annex other territories in the area, and it was also possible that Commander Byrd might fly over portions of the unexplored sector from his base on the Ross Shelf Ice.

102. These considerations led to a suggestion that use might be made of the Wilkins' expedition to forestall possible Norwegian or United States claims. Accordingly in November 1928, Sir Hubert Wilkins was authorised to take possession of any land which he might discover between long. 80° W. and 150° W. in the name of His Majesty's Government. During the course of this expedition he did not succeed in reaching the area in question (paragraph 166). However, he planned another attempt for the following year, and in August 1929, he was granted a Royal Commission, similar to that given to Sir Douglas Mawson, empowering him to take formal possession of any territory then unknown which he might discover in the Pacific Sector. It was recognised at the time that this Commission could not be regarded as binding the Foreign Office to a policy which could not be modified in case of need. Though Sir Hubert Wilkins again failed to discover new land to the west of the Falkland Islands Dependencies, he made some important flights (paragraphs 166 and 426), and while on neither occasion had his operations provided grounds for the assertion of title to any fresh territory, the extension of British control to that area had been approved in principle.

W 10081/532/50  
of 1928.

W 336/98/50  
of 1929.

W 7879/98/50  
of 1929.

#### THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1930

103. As in 1926, the Imperial Conference of 1930 appointed a Committee to study polar questions. In their report, the Committee noted that the spheres of sovereignty of the countries bordering the Arctic Ocean were generally well defined, and that the "sector principle" (paragraph 523) was then in a fair way to securing general acceptance. They agreed, however, that while this might be a matter

Secret E(30) 38  
of 1930.

" (iv) Queen Mary Land.

" (v) The area which lies to the west of Adélie Land and which, on its discovery by the Australian Antarctic Expedition in 1912, was denominated Wilkes Land.

" (vi) King George V Land.

" (vii) Oates Land.

" The representatives of the Governments concerned studied the information available concerning these areas with special reference to their possible utilisation for further developing exploration and scientific research in the Antarctic regions."

#### FROM THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1926 UNTIL THE END OF 1930

94. After the Imperial Conference a period followed in which His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand were actively engaged both in carrying out the policy laid down at the conference and in dealing with the claims of foreign countries. The questions involved had often to be considered concurrently, but for the purpose of this Handbook it has been more convenient to deal with each separately.

95. The main problems of this period were connected with Norwegian claims in the Ross Dependency, in the Australian sector, to Bouvet Island, and to Peter I Island; French claims in the Falkland Islands Dependencies; Argentine claims to the South Orkney Islands; and United States claims arising from Admiral Byrd's expedition of 1928-30. The activities of foreign nations soon rendered it necessary to consider the dispatch of a British expedition to the Antarctic in order to carry out the second stage of the measures recommended by the Imperial Conference of 1926. In order to do this effectively, it was not only necessary to establish a British title by discovery and occupation, but also, in the meantime, to ward off encroachments by foreign powers.

W 496/98/50  
of 1929.

96. On July 28th 1928, the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia proposed that a joint British expedition to the Antarctic should be organised. He recommended that the ship *Discovery* should be utilised, that Sir Douglas Mawson, who led the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-14, should be in command, that Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand should contribute £7,500, £7,500 and £2,500 respectively, and that the balance should be raised by public appeal.

97. These proposals were carefully considered by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and the general conclusion was reached that, although there were many practical difficulties to be overcome, the need for the expedition was becoming acute and that, in the meantime, use might be made of a South African firm, the Kerguelen Sealing and Whaling Company, Limited, which was planning a whaling expedition to the Antarctic. As a result of these discussions, a whaling licence was granted in October 1928 by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to the South African firm on condition that the British flag was planted as opportunity offered. It was realised, however, that, since the movements of a whaling expedition must be governed by commercial, rather than political, considerations, little reliance could be placed on this arrangement, and that the project of sending the *Discovery* could not be abandoned.

W 848/98/50  
of 1929.

98. In January 1929, the decision was taken to send out the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (B.A.N.Z.A.R.E.) in the *Discovery*, under the command of Sir Douglas Mawson, on the following terms: Australia to bear the cost of the expedition for 1929-30 and for the following year, if it lasted two years; the United Kingdom to arrange with the Government of the Falkland Islands for the *Discovery* to be placed at the disposal of



Committee considered that a number of other territories, with their off-lying islands, between the Falkland Islands and Ross Dependencies, could reasonably be annexed. The Committee also recommended that, as in the cases of the Falklands Islands and the Ross Dependencies, the British claims should be so defined as to include the whole of the land lying within the various prescribed meridians and between the coast and the South Pole, and that the French claim to Adélie Land should be regarded as having the same extension to the South Pole.

92. The views and recommendations of the inter-departmental committee were generally approved by the Committee set up by the Imperial Conference to consider the question of British policy in the Antarctic. This Committee made a report in which, after reviewing the position, they included the following definite recommendations:—

W 11121/456/50  
of 1926.

" We recommend that the gradual process of establishing British domination in the Antarctic area should be divided into three stages.

Secret E 130  
(Revise) of  
1926.

" The first should be an intimation to the world at large, through the publication in the proceedings of the Imperial Conference of a reference to the intention to perfect the title to the seven areas mentioned above.\* All these areas may be treated as British by discovery, and such discovery should be regarded as having conferred an inchoate British title.

" The second should be a formal local-taking possession, by an officer authorised for the purpose, of such of these areas as are not known to have been so taken possession of at the time of discovery.

" The third should be the issue of Letters Patent annexing the area and making provision for its Government.

" In the first stage, *i.e.*, the public intimation of the intention to appropriate, the territories should be mentioned only by name; no limits by latitude and longitude should be given. In the case of No. 5, named 'Wilkes Land' by the Australian Antarctic Expedition, it should be described as lying to the west of the territory of Adélie Land without specifying the limits of that land. Any attempt at the present stage to dispute the French title to Adélie Land or to question the extent of that territory given in the Embassy note of the 29th March 1913 (paragraph 358), would provoke controversy with the French at a moment when controversy should be avoided.

" The second stage will render desirable the despatch of an expedition to the Antarctic. How soon such an expedition may be feasible and what areas it should visit are questions for future consideration and arrangement.

" The third stage, the issue of Letters Patent, will give an opportunity of enlarging the areas to be annexed in the light of the discoveries made by the expedition to be sent out to visit them, and will also give an opportunity of fixing boundaries to the areas annexed by meridians converging at the South Pole."

93. The discussion at the Imperial Conference of the Antarctic question was recorded in the following statement, which was embodied in the published *Summary of Proceedings* of the Conference:—

" The question of Antarctic exploration was discussed between representatives of the Governments interested. There are certain areas in these regions to which a British title already exists by virtue of discovery. These areas include:—

" (i) The outlying part of Coats Land, *viz.*, the portion not comprised within the Falkland Islands Dependencies.

" (ii) Enderby Land.

" (iii) Kemp Land.

\* See paragraph 93.



the whole of the Antarctic should ultimately be included within the British Empire, and that, while the time had not yet arrived when a claim to all the continental territories should be put forward, it seemed desirable that a definite and consistent policy should be followed of extending and asserting British control. It was considered that France was the only other country in a position to put forward reasonable grounds for a share in these lands and that the most important practical step at the time was the assertion of British sovereignty over the Ross Sea coasts and their hinterland. After discussion it was decided that the Commonwealth and New Zealand Governments should each have separate spheres of control in the Antarctic, and that the Ross Sea area should be placed under New Zealand.

88. In June 1922 a Norwegian firm applied for a whaling licence for the Ross Sea, and, after consultation with the New Zealand Government, a licence was issued in December 1922, granting the use, in connection with the proposed whaling operations, of the territorial waters in the Ross Sea and Antarctic Ocean between long. 160° E. and long. 150° W. (paragraph 302).

89. In July 1923 an Order in Council was issued establishing the Ross Dependency, and placing it under the Government of New Zealand (paragraph 302). This Order aroused no comment from any Government except the Norwegian Government, who reserved all their rights based on the discoveries of Captain Roald Amundsen (paragraph 307).

90. In 1924 the French Government took steps to assert their claim to Adélie Land (paragraph 359). This led the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia to raise the question of taking action to establish British sovereignty with Australian control over the Antarctic regions between longs. 160° E. and 90° E. (the sector which His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand had agreed should be the Australian sector). In September 1925 the Commonwealth Government stated their views at length. They may be summarised as follows:—

(a) Any efforts made by France to extend her control over regions to which she could not adduce good title should be strongly resisted.

(b) Control and administration of Antarctic lands should be in the hands of countries whose territories are situated nearest to them.

(c) If the French Government consented to apply this principle to the Australian sector, they might agree to surrender Adélie Land in return for control of a certain portion of the Antarctic mainland south of Kerguelen Island, the Crozets and Madagascar.

(d) The general object of Australia was to prevent the establishment by any other country of a considerable enclave in the Australian sector.

#### THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1926

91. In 1926, when the Imperial Conference met, the question of British claims in the Antarctic was one of the items on the agenda. The preparatory work was done by an inter-departmental committee composed of representatives of the Foreign Office, Dominions Office, Colonial Office and Admiralty. The Committee considered the Australian statement summarised above, and came to the conclusion that if the principle advocated by Australia were admitted and applied, it would give an opening to Argentina, which had never abandoned her claim to the Falkland Islands themselves, and had in recent years indicated that this claim extended also to the Falkland Islands Dependencies. The Committee took the view that a French enclave in the Australian sector was inevitable (paragraph 360). On the assumption that the French claim to Adélie Land would be confined to the area between longs. 136° 30' E. and 142° E., the

W 11930/154/50  
of 1925.

W 11121/456/50  
of 1926.  
W 115/1/50 of  
1930.  
Secret E 101 of  
1926.

own experience too often by repeating the errors of its predecessors. There was no body in any country particularly entrusted with the task. The British Admiralty did most, but it acted in an executive capacity and rarely initiated expeditions of its own. Apart from the Discovery Investigations since 1925, and the Norwegian expeditions sponsored by Consul Lars Christensen since 1927, almost all these expeditions have followed much the same procedure. As each came home, moreover, it was disbanded, the stores were sold, the ships which had been built or specially equipped at great cost were disposed of for a fraction, the explorers who had been trained to their work were scattered in the pursuit of other occupations, and the results were seldom fully recorded and published. Perhaps the most promising development of recent times has been the steady systematic investigations of the "Discovery" Committee, which have provided an outstanding example of the rapid and efficient progress that can be made by an organisation capable of maintaining a long-term policy.

85. The discoveries of land in the Antarctic regions have thus been made at different times, sometimes by comparatively well-equipped exploring expeditions, sometimes by sealing or whaling vessels, whose reports are, of necessity, not very accurate. Even of the land area now known, not one-tenth has been accurately surveyed. In many cases the discoverers have been unable to land, and have remained uncertain about the reality of their discoveries. Land has been confidently reported, and afterwards demonstrated by succeeding explorers not to exist; on the other hand, land afterwards proved to exist has been entered on the charts by the discoverer as an "appearance of land" only. Even when a portion of land has been explored and roughly charted by some discoverer, later explorers have often been totally unable to reconcile his charts with the facts before their eyes, and doubt has, in consequence, been thrown on his veracity. Some discoverers have left practically no record of their work, while others have described it in general terms which prevent its extent from being determined with precision. For all these reasons, therefore, it will be seen that the majority of territorial claims in the Antarctic must of necessity be based upon discoveries reported with varying accuracy by explorers of varying ability and resources.

## CHAPTER VII

### BRITISH POLICY IN THE ANTARCTIC

#### THE PERIOD BEFORE THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1926

86. The first step taken to assert British control over any part of the Antarctic mainland was the creation by Letters Patent in 1908 of the Falkland Islands Dependencies. These Letters Patent (paragraph 131) do not appear to have evoked any protest from other Powers, although part of the coast claimed had been discovered by foreign explorers. In 1917 amending Letters Patent were issued in which the definition of the Dependencies as modified into its present form (paragraph 133).

Confidential  
(16550) of 1944.

87. The annexation of the Falkland Islands Dependencies was effected owing to the importance of the whaling industry. Subsequent experience confirmed the opinions held about the value of the whaling industry and the desirability of ensuring that it should be as far as possible conducted under British auspices. Further consideration was accordingly given in 1919 to the question of extending British control over the Antarctic regions.\* In 1920 the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand were informed that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had come to the conclusion that

Dominions  
No. 78 of 1921.  
W 11255/8949/  
17 of 1924.

\* Admiralty Monograph, Dominions No. 99 of 1925, Compiled in 1919, details claims to discovery and possession up to that date.

geography effected by the sealing and whaling interests in the first half of the nineteenth century were connected with the firm of Enderby Brothers, a British firm which operated throughout the southern hemisphere. There is probably no other instance of a private mercantile firm undertaking so extensive a series of voyages of discovery with almost no hope of financial return.

79. The sealing period, initiated and sustained by commercial interest, was soon to give way to a new motive. The rising tide of science had resulted in the foundation during this period of the principal geographical societies of western Europe, as well as other scientific bodies such as the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The need for observations in the unknown southern regions was acutely felt. It found expression in the despatch of four major expeditions—those of Bellingshausen, D'Urville, Wilkes and Ross—between 1819 and 1843.

80. This work, however, was not followed up. There now intervened a period of more than fifty years before serious exploration in the Antarctic was resumed. Attention was diverted to the Arctic, when the search for the North-West Passage and for the lost expedition under Sir John Franklin absorbed all the energies of those who might otherwise have continued the work in the south.

81. In 1895 the Sixth International Geographical Congress passed a resolution strongly urging all nations to undertake a share in the work of Antarctic discovery, "the greatest piece of geographical exploration still to be undertaken." This led to the expeditions of de Gerlache, Bruce, Drygalski, Nordenskjöld, Scott and Charcot between 1897 and 1905. These expeditions marked the beginning of modern scientific exploration, a phase in which the investigations have become increasingly specialised as knowledge accumulates.

82. Most recent exploration differs in one particular from that in the earlier period. Until 1905 nearly all the great exploring expeditions and many of the minor voyages of discovery were planned by learned societies or government departments or enlightened ship-owners, and the leader was in each case appointed by some authority at home and told where to go and what to try to do. Thus between 1776 and 1903 Cook, Bellingshausen, Bransfield, Biscoe, Wilkes, D'Urville, Ross, Nares, Scott and Drygalski were set their tasks and executed their commissions. Later, de Gerlache, Borchgrevink, Bruce and Charcot each on his own initiative took the first steps in establishing the form of organisation which has predominated in the twentieth century. In each case a man fired by personal enthusiasm for exploration or scientific research planned an expedition for himself to lead, and then sought until he found the funds necessary to carry it out.

83. Broadly speaking, there have been four main incentives to Antarctic exploration during the present century. First, the determined efforts to reach the South Pole which concluded with its attainment by Amundsen and Scott in 1911 and 1912; second, the development of the whaling industry with its commercial inducement to find new anchorages and whaling grounds; third, the precautions taken to safeguard direct or indirect strategic or economic interests; and fourth, the scientific attraction of innumerable and fascinating unsolved problems. The introduction of mechanical transport, and especially of aircraft, together with other radical improvements in equipment and technique, enormously increased the range of travel and the scope of reconnaissance. It may, in fact, be argued that the commercial and political motives mentioned above, in combination with the improved methods of transport, have led some explorers to go ahead too fast. The use of aircraft has unfortunately allowed a tendency for personal ambition and the desire for new discoveries to override the necessity for careful and accurate investigation.

84. Antarctic exploration has been a spasmodic affair, proceeding by great efforts separated by intervals of inertness and inattention. Each fresh expedition had to begin at the beginning, acquiring its



around the Antarctic continent and five other stations on sub-Antarctic islands. Largely because the advantages which he has stated would result from these stations were uncertain, his proposals have met with little support in the British Commonwealth, but he has never ceased to advocate them, both privately and publicly, in Europe and the United States. His suggestions appear to have received more favourable consideration in the United States than elsewhere, and he continues to urge them.

74. The Committee on Polar Questions appointed by the Imperial Conference of 1937 discussed the possibility of establishing meteorological stations in the Antarctic, and the attention of the Governments concerned was drawn to a memorandum on the subject prepared by the Director of the Meteorological Office. Mention may be made here of the plans of the Australian Government to set up a permanent station in King George V Land (paragraph 405), of the plans for at least two permanent stations to be maintained by the United States Antarctic Service (paragraphs 338-343), and of the strategic meteorological station which the Germans proposed to establish on the Kerguelen Islands in 1942 (paragraph 57).

W 11272/1365/  
50 of 1937.

75. The possibilities of post-war research on problems of Antarctic meteorology and related subjects are now under discussion (see Appendix XVI, pp. 194-195). Any comprehensive plan must involve co-operation with interested foreign Governments and also the occupation of selected islands in the Southern Ocean. Questions of sovereignty over the islands are therefore almost certain to arise.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION

76. In order to save space, the amount of information presented in this Handbook about each Antarctic expedition is in no way proportional to its relative importance. Details have been treated solely in relation to their bearing on possible disputes, and only the briefest reference to certain expeditions is made. Further information will be found in the chronological list in Appendix I, pp. 141-154. It will be sufficient here to give some account of the principal phases through which Antarctic exploration has passed.

77. Until the middle of the eighteenth century the southern hemisphere appeared on all maps as the seat of a great continent awaiting discovery. The particular motive to Antarctic exploration has varied from age to age as the special problem it was expected to solve has changed with the growth of knowledge and the development of thought. When first stated, the problem was no more than a philosophical speculation. Later, it was related to the struggle of rival powers for commercial and political supremacy, and was a force in Empire building.

78. The series of great pioneer voyages, culminating in Captain Cook's circumnavigation of the Southern Ocean in 1772-76, gradually reduced the size of the legendary "Terra Australis Incognita", and narrowed the field of search to the region south of lat. 60° S. With Cook's voyage, the myth of a great habitable south land with facilities for trade was gone, and a fresh incentive was required to draw men to the southern seas. It was not long before Cook's own reports of abundant seals and whales led to great activity. The seals were soon exterminated wherever they were found, and new localities were constantly being sought. American and British sealing fleets directed their attention more and more to the remote southern islands, but so great was the competition that new discoveries were kept secret. Almost all the more outstanding advances in Antarctic

*Antarctic Pilot,*  
1930, p. 165.

consists of five men, one of whom is the wireless operator. The staff is relieved in February of each year. Primarily because of the difficulties in providing an adequately trained staff, the observations made at Laurie Island have not been of a very high scientific quality, but at present they form the only continuous records over a long period from a high southern latitude. Since the beginning of the present war the Falkland Islands forecasting station has picked up the Laurie Island reports when re-broadcast from Buenos Aires. The reports have proved adequate for synoptic purposes but have been rather irregular.

69. *Macquarie Island.*—The only British attempt to establish a permanent Antarctic meteorological station was at Macquarie Island. This was occupied by a party of Sir Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition from December 1911 until December 1913. The station was then taken over by the Commonwealth Meteorological Service and kept in operation until December 1915. Owing to the difficulty of securing a vessel for the annual relief during the war it was decided to close the station temporarily, but after the war of 1914-18 it was not restarted. During the four years that the station was in operation, daily weather summaries for Macquarie Island were transmitted by wireless to the Weather Bureau at Melbourne.

70. *Other Projects.*—At the conclusion of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition of 1902-04, the importance of establishing Antarctic meteorological stations was strongly urged by Mr. R. C. Mossman, meteorologist of the expedition, who had then entered the service of the Argentine Meteorological Office. In 1905 the Argentine Government developed plans for observatories in South Georgia, Booth (Wandel) Island in Gerlache Strait, one of the South Sandwich Islands, and possibly also in West Falkland. That these plans did not come to fruition was principally due to the lack of trained meteorologists willing to undertake the work. In December 1907 the *Austral* (formerly the *Français* of Charcot's expedition of 1903-04, which had been purchased by the Argentine Government to maintain communication with the South Orkney station) was wrecked in the Río de la Plata, while on her way to found a new Argentine observatory at Charcot's old winter quarters on Booth Island.

71. The Norwegian Government has also shown some interest in Antarctic meteorology. In consultation with the Norwegian Meteorological Institute at Oslo, Consul Lars Christensen has attempted to establish a permanent meteorological and wireless station on Bouvet Island. It was considered that such a station would be of value to the whaling fleet, and it was also thought expedient to "occupy" the island in order to strengthen the Norwegian claim to sovereignty. In 1927 the *Norvegia* took out the necessary equipment, but the plan had to be postponed owing to unfavourable conditions. In the following year the *Norvegia* again took out a fully equipped station with a staff of three observers. A careful search was made, but no suitable site for a permanent hut could be found and the whole scheme had to be abandoned. In 1929 a further attempt to build a house on Bouvet was made. Although very strongly built, this house had entirely disappeared when the island was revisited a year later. In view of the fact that Bouvet is by far the most isolated island in the world—more than 1,000 miles from any other land—its value as a site for a meteorological station is unique. It appears, however, that the establishment of a station there will be a matter of considerable difficulty.

72. During the Second International Polar Year of 1932-33, attention was directed mainly to the Arctic, but a very valuable series of Antarctic oceanic observations were made from nine Norwegian whaling factory ships between November 1932 and March 1933. *Discovery II* has also kept a meteorological log at all times during her voyages.

73. Since about 1928 Sir Hubert Wilkins has attempted to arouse interest in a plan to establish, with the support of the Governments of countries in the southern hemisphere, seven meteorological stations

W 3687/98/50  
of 1929.

high degree of uniformity and symmetry of the earth's surface in the southern hemisphere. The systematic study of weather conditions over the southern oceans and continents might well throw light upon not only local but world-wide weather processes (see Appendix XVI, pp. 194-195). The scientific importance of establishing permanent meteorological stations in the Antarctic has long been appreciated, but until the present time almost all the progress made in this field has been inspired, not by scientific, but by political or strategic considerations. Only a small number of stations have aimed at prolonged observations. Some notes on these stations are appended:—

64. *Falkland Islands*.—Since the beginning of the present war a fully equipped naval forecasting station has been established in East Falkland to deal with fleet requirements for the south-west part of the South Atlantic and to act as a collecting station for South American and Southern Ocean meteorological observations.

65. *Tristan da Cunha*.—Although outside the area dealt with in this handbook, the establishment of a meteorological station on this island in April 1942 has altered the whole position in respect of synoptic charting of the South Atlantic area. The station is operated by the Meteorological Section of the South African Air Force in conjunction with the Royal Navy and has proved an invaluable source of information bearing upon the development and movement of depressions.

66. *South Georgia*.—Meteorological observations were made at Grytviken by the Cia. Argentina de Pesca from 1905 until 1907, when a meteorological station was built there by the Argentine Government. Observations have been recorded continuously at this station until the present time. The Argentine Meteorological Office pays the salary of the single observer and is responsible for the upkeep of the station.\* Before the war, the observations were of a low scientific quality. The daily reports from this station are now picked up by the naval forecasting station in the Falkland Islands and are proving adequate for fleet requirements. The regular return of meteorological observations is one of the conditions of the leases granted to whaling companies operating from South Georgia, the earliest of which dates from 1906. It does not seem, however, that these reports have ever been collected or co-ordinated by a proper supervising organisation.

67. *South Shetland Islands*.—A fully equipped meteorological station in the charge of a qualified meteorological officer was established by the Colonial Office at Deception Island early in 1944. Reports are passed twice daily by radio to Port Stanley for incorporation in the Falkland Islands fleet synoptic messages. Observations are also being made under the supervision of the above officer at Port Lockroy in the Palmer Archipelago, but this station is less well equipped and observations are made by an untrained observer.

68. *Laurie Island, South Orkneys*.—Meteorological observations were first started by the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition at Laurie Island, on board the *Scotia* as she lay fast in the ice in Scotia Bay, during the winter of 1903. On November 1st they were transferred to a shore station. A magnetic hut was also built. While the *Scotia* was being refitted in Buenos Aires, a small party under Mr. R. C. Mossman remained to carry on the observations at the South Orkneys. In 1904 the station was transferred to Argentine control (paragraph 188). Since then the station has been continuously occupied. Various changes have taken place in the original equipment of the station: a new magnetic hut was built in 1905 and a wooden building was erected in 1906 in place of the original stone one. A long-wave wireless station was erected in 1927 and this was replaced in 1932 by a short-wave station. The station sends meteorological data twice daily *en clair* in telegraphy to the Ministry of Agriculture, Buenos Aires, through Pacheco/Bernal stations. The staff normally

Admiralty Case  
5051, Vol. 2  
No. 450/87 of  
1941.

\* In recent years this station has been maintained by Norwegian observers employed by the Cia. Argentina de Pesca.



the near future. The potential demand for commercial air traffic between the most southerly parts of the inhabited continents is still too insignificant to encourage development in this direction, although the position might be altered by changing circumstances, such as the discovery of minerals. Moreover, at the present time a stage of 2,000 miles is about the economic limit for commercial flights, and not more than about 1,200 miles is desirable if a satisfactory load is to be carried. The great distances across the Southern Ocean, and the special technical difficulties due to local conditions, would preclude anything but the largest scale approach to the problem. If the sub-Antarctic islands are used as staging points, any southern routes between Australia and New Zealand, South Africa and South America would all involve flights approaching the present economic limit.

AS 2660/2142/51  
of 1944.

61. In May 1944 the Air Ministry considered the situation in the Antarctic from the point of view of air transport. The Air Staff concluded that "the Antarctic, if suitably developed, might make possible an air route from the United Kingdom to Australia and the Pacific via South Africa. This would probably require the establishment of staging points on the Prince Edward Islands and Macquarie Island, as well as at several points on the Antarctic continent. Such a route could only be of first rate importance if the main Empire route to the East was broken by enemy occupation or domination of India or of some other essential link. This is at present a remote contingency and the Air Staff do not think they would be justified in recommending that effort should be expended now even on preliminary steps toward the development of the route. It is, however, a future possibility of great interest, and they will be glad to be kept in touch with any developments affecting the sovereignty or exploitation of these territories . . . they would also wish to be associated with any proposals for survey or exploration parties, so that airfield possibilities and requirements can be kept in view." At the same time the Department of Civil Aviation also considered the situation and concluded that at the present time there are no possibilities for commercial aviation in the Antarctic.\*

62. So far as is known, the United States Government has not shown any particular interest in air routes over the Southern Ocean or the Antarctic continent. This is in direct contrast, however, to the amount of space and time given in the press and in lectures in the United States to the possibilities of trans-Arctic travel. It is enlightening to note, nevertheless, that no United States airline company has yet applied to the United States Government for permission to operate airlines after the war either in the Arctic or the Antarctic regions.† Moreover, early in June 1943, the United States Federal civil aviation regulating authority (the Civil Aeronautics Board) announced—presumably with the approval of the State Department—the network of international air routes which it considers United States air transport companies should operate after the war. This network does not extend further north than Iceland and Bering Strait, or further south than Buenos Aires, Cape Town and Sydney.

## CHAPTER V

### ANTARCTIC METEOROLOGICAL STATIONS

63. As a result of observations made during a large number of expeditions a general idea of the meteorological conditions holding around the coast of the Antarctic continent and the islands of the Southern Ocean has now been obtained. Further spasmodic observations will add little to that general knowledge; what is now required is a long series of co-ordinated observations made at several well chosen stations. In contrast with the northern hemisphere there is a

\* A note in *International Aviation*, Vol. 2, No. 7, November 17th, 1944, states that the Argentine Government will not permit foreign commercial aircraft to fly over or to land in "Argentine South Pole Territory." The information in this periodical is usually reliable, but the Air Ministry has not yet received any notification of this ban through official channels (March 1945).

† Information supplied by the Department of Civil Aviation, Air Ministry, March 1945.

harbours were thoroughly searched with the assistance of aircraft. No signs of enemy activity were seen except traces in one place which might have been made by a ship's recreation party, perhaps two months earlier. In January 1941 the German raider "33" intercepted the Norwegian whaling fleet in about lat. 59° S., long. 2° 30' W., and captured two factory ships, one supply vessel and eleven catchers. It is believed that only three catchers escaped. In March 1941 raiders "33" and "45" both used Gazelle Basin in the Kerguelen Islands as a rendezvous with their supply ship, and raider "16" is also known to have used Gazelle Basin for this purpose in January 1941. Before they were destroyed, these raiders were operating with considerable success in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. During their long cruises the crews were able to rest and go ashore only once—at Kerguelen. Prisoners stated that the German Operations Directorate had planned to use this group of islands as a hide-out for prize ships when it became too risky to attempt to run them back to Germany. The evidence collected from prisoners also suggested that the Crozet Islands may have been used by German raiders in 1941. Accordingly, in November 1941, H.M.A.S. *Australia* made a further search by sea and air at both the Kerguelen and Crozet Islands. She also mined certain areas, but no definite evidence of further use of these islands by enemy vessels was found.

57. In the following year the Germans planned to establish a meteorological and radio station on the Kerguelen Islands. In May 1942 raider "28" transferred a meteorologist and two radio operators with full equipment to the supply ship *Charlotte Schlieman*, which then proceeded into the Indian Ocean with the intention of landing the party at Kerguelen. At this stage, however, the orders were countermanded, and so far as is known the project was abandoned. There has been no evidence of Japanese activities in the Southern Ocean.

Admiralty  
C.B. 4051 (29),  
1941, pp. 8,  
18-19, 23,  
25-26, 35.

Intelligence  
Report.  
O.N.I., 251-G  
of 1943.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ANTARCTIC IN RELATION TO AIR COMMUNICATIONS

58. The only existing international agreement relating specifically to aviation in the Antarctic is that reached in 1938 when the French Government recognised the free right of passage of "British Commonwealth aircraft over Adélie Land" in return for similar rights accorded to French aircraft over "British Commonwealth territories in the Antarctic" (paragraph 370). The exchange of notes placing this understanding on record makes no reference to Article 2 of the Air Navigation Convention of 1919, which applies only to free right of passage for individual flights and does not extend to regular services. The arrangement of 1938 can be read as applying to regular services as well as to individual flights. His Majesty's Governments desired to reach this agreement in a separate instrument in case the Convention of 1919, to which the United States Government was not a party, should be denounced.

59. On January 9th 1939 the United States Chargé d'Affaires left a note at the Foreign Office in which he referred to the above published exchange of notes and stated that his Government had instructed him to say that they reserved all rights in respect of aerial navigation in the Antarctic and of those questions of territorial sovereignty implicit therein. He further requested, in a second note, that this information should be conveyed to His Majesty's Governments in Australia and New Zealand. After consultation with representatives of these two Governments, it was decided to make no reply other than a formal acknowledgement stating that His Majesty's Government had noted the contents of these communications.

60. Whilst air route operations within the Arctic Circle have already advanced well beyond the experimental stage, it seems highly improbable that similar routes in the Antarctic will be operated in

Treaty Series  
No. 73 (1938);  
Cmd. 5900.

W 431/431/50  
of 1939.

W 564/431/50  
of 1939.

W 7607/431/50  
of 1939.

## CHAPTER III

## STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

52. Discussions of the strategic importance of the Antarctic in connection with naval operations have turned mainly on the value of the Falkland Islands Dependencies and the Kerguelen Islands.\*

A 11130/12/2  
of 1942.

53. When in 1926 the value of the South Orkney Islands was being considered, the Admiralty were of opinion that the islands, "although admittedly of very slight naval value", were of considerable national importance, for if the title of His Majesty's Government were not maintained, "a serious blow would be struck at the whole system of Antarctic Dependencies." In November 1942 the Foreign Office was informed that the Admiralty saw no reason to modify this view. Experience gained during the present war had confirmed that the islands comprising the Falkland Dependencies have little positive strategic value, so long as the Falkland Islands remain in British hands, but that, in view of their isolation and their proximity to the route round Cape Horn, their denial to the enemy as a refuelling base for raiders or blockade runners is a matter of considerable importance. The Admiralty had previously reported that "while it cannot be stated in what circumstances these islands may in the future be required in connection with naval use, Their Lordships are firmly of the opinion that we should continue to retain our title to them . . . in accordance with our general approved policy in the Antarctic, to prevent the establishment of foreign interests in these southerly waters as far as possible."

Admiralty R.O.  
Case 6037,  
M 09551/42.

Admiralty R.O.  
Case 5051,  
Vol. 2.

Christian  
Science Monitor,  
April 16th 1941.

54. In this connection it may be mentioned that in 1941 Admiral Byrd was reported in the press to have stressed the advantages of establishing a United States Naval base in north Graham Land, and he has several times pointedly drawn attention to the advantages which Great Britain derives from her South Atlantic base in the Falkland Islands.

55. In March 1941, H.M.S. *Queen of Bermuda* was sent to the South Shetland Islands to deny the stocks of oil and coal to the enemy (paragraph 176). A similar problem arose in South Georgia, where the whaling stations maintained considerable stocks of fuel oil, coal, and other useful commodities. In September 1941 the small Norwegian Defence Force was placed under the direct administration of the Officer Commanding the Falkland Islands Defence Force. At that time the Cia. Argentina de Pesca was the only whaling company still operating, but the Norwegian companies continued to employ small maintenance staffs. In view of the difficulty of providing adequate defence, the Admiralty decided early in 1942 that, as far as possible, stocks and equipment not required on the island should be removed, and that a "scorched earth" policy should be applied to any remaining facilities in the event of an enemy attack. Instructions to this effect were accordingly sent to the Governor of the Falkland Islands, and plans were drawn up to apply this policy at Grytviken and Leith Harbour, the only remaining stations which possessed equipment and stocks likely to be of value to the enemy. It was realised that if this policy had to be implemented by the destruction of the equipment of the Cia. Argentina de Pesca at Grytviken, there might be difficulties with the Argentine Government, and that suitable compensation would be a matter for consideration.

A 12/12/G of  
1942.

A 2574/12/G;  
A3146/12/G  
of 1942.

A 2924/12/G  
of 1942.

C.-in-C., East  
Indies' War  
Diary for  
October 1940.  
Admiralty  
T.S.D. 5457/41.

56. The only Antarctic island definitely known to have been used by enemy raiders during the present war is Kerguelen. In October 1940 H.M.S. *Neptune* carried out a search of Southern Ocean Islands and reported that Marion and Prince Edward Islands were deserted with no signs of boats or stores. The Crozet Islands were densely fogbound and were not examined, but this group was not considered to be a likely base for raiders. At Kerguelen, all bays and

\* On the question of strategic air routes and meteorological stations, see Chapters IV and V and Appendix XVI.



Limonite (bog iron ore) is widespread, but of no economic importance in view of the high phosphorous content and distance from civilisation.

48. Coal was noticed by Ross in 1840; other outcrops have since been found and still more are likely according to de la Rüe. The coal is classified as a lignite with a low percentage of fixed carbon and high percentage of volatile matter. Lignite has been reported at Port Christmas, Baie Cumberland (Port Perner), Anse du Charbon, Anse du Jardin, Mont Lignite, Mont des Névés, inland from Baie Cumberland, Baie du Brise-Lames and Baie du Centre. All these localities are in the north-west peninsula, Péninsule Loranchet, but outcrops are also known from the centre of the island at Anse Sablonneuse in the Bassin de la Gazelle (Baie du Hillsborough) and in the south of the island at Port Jeanne d'Arc on Péninsule Joffre. It is suggested that the outcrops in Péninsule Loranchet are all portions of the same bed, and that further investigations would confirm this. At Mont Lignite the coal seam is 30 cm. thick with accompanying clay and black shale, and is sandwiched between two basalt lava flows. The lignite is described as compact with shiny surface when broken; it does not soil the hands and has exactly the appearance of anthracite. Two analyses are given by de la Rüe:—

	Anse du Jardin.	Port Jeanne D'Arc.
Moisture .. .. .	9.88 per cent.	12.64 per cent.
Volatile matter .. .. .	38.47 per cent.	46.31 per cent.
Fixed carbon .. .. .	46.65 per cent.	36.75 per cent.
Ash .. .. .	5.00 per cent.	4.30 per cent.
Calorific value (net) ..	5,561 cal.	4,888 cal.
Calorific value (gross) ..	6,081 cal.	5,595 cal.

For the most part the lignite is found at low levels. The thickness is seldom very great and does not appear to exceed 50 cm. An American captain is stated to have found a seam 2 m. thick in 1880 in Baie Cumberland. Captain J. K. Davis describes the Port Perner bed as 6 ft. thick by report.

loc. cit., p. 141.

J. K. Davis:  
Walkabout,  
April 1st 1943,  
p. 9.

49. The Kerguelen Island coal burns fairly well. It has occasionally been dug near the surface in the north-west and used by hunters for boiling down seal oil. In 1877 an English company began mining at Baie du Brise-Lames. The coal was of poor quality and did not pay, and the enterprise was abandoned. Owing to the distance of Kerguelen from possible markets the lignites are of slight commercial value. They might, however, satisfy local needs, should the island at any time be inhabited.

50. There are also reports of other minerals; in most cases doubtful. A diamond was reported in 1922 from Baie du Sprightly, but it is more likely to have been a fragment of clear quartz or analcime. Gold has been rumoured at many localities, but they are more likely to be cases of iron pyrites or mica. In 1914 M. Loranchet reported both cobalt and nickel on the south side of L'anse de l'Excursion but precise details are lacking. This report should possibly be discounted. Buchanan and Moseley of the *Challenger* expedition stated that oil had been found by hunters along the west coast. Most likely this report refers to iridescence produced from bog iron ore. Fragments of bitumen found on the beach at Port-Fuller (Ile Howe) have probably come from ships.

51. The above notes are summarized from de la Rüe's account both of the minerals seen by him and of doubtful occurrences. All other reports of coal and minerals in Kerguelen, apart from the records dealt with by de la Rüe, should be treated with caution. Foundry Branch is said to take its name from the quantity of iron ore and limestone found there. This statement may be erroneous.

Antarctic Pilot,  
1930, p. 116.