

P E R T H,

Western Australia.

23rd September, 1929.

Mr. A. J. Kent,
Chairman, Committee on Printing of Records of
Australasian Antarctic Expedition,
Government Printing Office, SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Kent:

I greatly regret delay in replying to your communications relating to the completion of the agreement between the New South Wales Government and myself on the matter of the publication of the scientific results of my former expedition. There would have been no delay, but for the fact that I have been hopelessly over-busy since my return to Australia. It has been a superhuman effort for me to get matters as far forward as they have been in the short time since my return from England. In addition to preparing for this coming venture, I have had to carry on work as usual at the University, Adelaide, and settle up all my private affairs.

I trust therefore that you will forgive me, especially as our mutual concern cannot have suffered in any way from such delay.

I know that yourself and the Committee are anxious to carry out the publication of the reports in the best possible way, and have at heart the publication of matter which will add to the scientific knowledge of the world, not merely the collecting of assets to be shelved in museums. The value of the manuscripts and the trophies of the late expedition is mainly in the knowledge that will come out of their examination and description. This is the work I have set myself to do for years past. I have made no charge for this, I am only too glad for the New South Wales Government to properly house the trophies. It would be the height of folly if the New South Wales Government

were at this stage to take out of my hands these collections and manuscripts. If they are taken from me, their value will forever be heavily discounted, for nobody can tell the story as I can.

I can well understand the anxiety of the Government if I had not made proper provision for their preservation, or if I was about to pass out. The position is that I am actively engaged in the preparation of manuscripts, and am merely to be absent from Australia for seven months improving my knowledge of the Antarctic regions, and therefore in future even better able to write up the volumes yet unpublished relating to the last expedition.

I shall be back in Australia early in April next. Should anything untoward happen to me, you will know where all the items relating to the last expedition are stored. A statement to this effect is enclosed with this letter. The whole of these materials can be handed over to you at any time by my wife and Acting Professor Madigan. My wife has power of attorney for me, and can carry out any of my obligations.

My entering up this new expedition is actually an extraordinarily good thing for the New South Wales Government in relation to the contract which I made with them. This work which we are now engaged upon is merely the completion of the great work started on the last expedition. It will serve to greatly advertise and enhance the work of the last expedition. It will help to sell the volumes of scientific results. I am hoping that the information relating to birds and mammals from the present expedition will be combined with that recorded from the last, with the result that the volumes on Birds and Mammals will become world famous, and that these will be the Vols. I and II of your present series.

My absence will not in any delay the publication you have in hand, for it is now, and I believe has always been the case, that there has been more manuscript awaiting printing

than has been found possible to conveniently put through the Government Printing Office as slack-time work.

I am most anxious that the printing be continued, and at all times promise -- though at considerable expense and trouble to myself -- to prepare such manuscripts as are down against my name, and to further help on in every way the completion of the work. You further have my full and reiterated promise that all the assets as listed heretofore will in due course reach you.

Should you wish to further consult any outside individual upon the position that has arisen, I suggest that you explain the whole matter to Sir Edgeworth David, showing him a copy of this communication. He is so well versed in Antarctic matters generally, and in the affairs of the last expedition, that he might be of great help to us mutually.

Trusting that you will see that all is in order, as far as can be reasonably expected,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd). DOUGLAS MAWSON.