THE POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY
OF THE
AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC

1901–1945

Marie Kawaja

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University

May 2010
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the work presented in this thesis is original except as acknowledged in the text. It contains no material which has been submitted for the award of any other higher degree in this or any other institution.

Signed: [Signature]

(Marie Kawaja)
May 2010
ABSTRACT

During the first half of the twentieth century, Antarctica evolved from a heroic destination for the adventurous scientist/explorer into an imperial ‘question’ and finally into an international ‘problem’. It is this period before the Cold War and the negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty that is the focus of this thesis. The study commences at Federation and concludes in 1945 and examines the political and diplomatic events that led to the creation of the Australian Antarctic Territory in 1933, and the consequences of Australia becoming Antarctica’s major claimant state.

In examining a question of Australian foreign policy in the early twentieth century, the thesis focuses on what Carl Bridge and Bernard Attard describe as that ‘older pre-1945’ Australia that ‘cries out to be studied and understood’. A study of Australia’s involvement with the Empire’s Antarctic policy offers a unique opportunity to assess the Anglo-Australian relationship on a matter relating to diplomacy rather than the much-examined relationship associated with war or peace processes. Accordingly, this thesis investigates the policy advisory role of the Department of External Affairs to determine to what extent the Department considered Australia’s national interests within the wider concerns of Empire. Since Stanley Melbourne Bruce was both Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister during the crucial years of policy determination (1926-29), the thesis considers how he balanced Australian goals and aspirations against those of the Empire, particularly if competing priorities were identified. Because Antarctic exploration has been closely associated with science, this study also assesses the influence of the Australian scientific community on the Australian government’s Antarctic policy, particularly of the Australian National Research Council (ANRC), which included Douglas Mawson. The thesis additionally explores the extent of Australian press scrutiny and considers its impact on Australian policy.

The changing balance of British imperial relations after the Great War was the crucial context within which Australian Antarctic policies evolved. Demands by the dominions for a voice in the making of the Empire’s foreign policies ultimately led to the enactment of the Statute of Westminster in 1931. Australia did not adopt the Statute until 1942, preferring instead to conduct its foreign policy within the established imperial framework. The annexation of what became the Australian Antarctic Territory, however, did not have its origins as an Australian foreign policy
matter. It was an imperial policy formulated at the 1926 Imperial Conference and affirmed at subsequent Imperial Conferences. Australia believed at the time that the policy would be implemented as an imperial venture, in collaboration with the relevant dominions. Notable studies of British Antarctic policy have not credited the dominions with any real contribution in the making of the Empire’s Antarctic policy, and have seen them as little more than appendages to the imperial power. However, historical documents in Canberra reveal Australia was significantly involved in shaping and implementing the Empire’s Antarctic policy. The view that Australia was a passive witness to imperial Antarctic events in the period before the Second World War cannot be sustained.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the time I worked on this thesis, many people generously supported and encouraged me. In particular, I thank Bill Bush for introducing me to Antarctica and for our many Antarctic conversations. I am indebted to Andrew Jackson of the Australian Antarctic Division for his support and advice. I thank Marcus Haward, Associate Professor and Dr Robert Hall, Senior Lecturer in the School of Government at the University of Tasmania. Both Marcus and Robert were co-supervisors of this thesis. Thank you both for your constant encouragement.

The Readers’ Advisers at the National Archives of Australia were always cheerful and helpful. In particular I thank David Bell for helping me track down the numerous Antarctic files in the repository. We discovered a gold mine and I happily excavated it. I thank Yvonne Wise for her courtesy and cheerfulness in the Reading Room. I also wish to thank the staff at the National Library of Australia, particularly those in the newspaper and manuscript rooms for their assistance. I am grateful to the staff at the School of Social Science at the Australian National University for being constantly supportive and understanding of the trials and tribulations of a Ph.D student. In particular, I thank Helen Felton, Tracy Deasey and especially Sonya Welykyj.

My supervisors at the Australian National University provided me with every conceivable support. I thank Dr John Hart for his support in the early stages. Professor Tom Griffiths gave me the benefit of his extensive knowledge. Tom never stinted in his encouragement. Dr Anthea Hyslop was, and continued to be, the chair of my supervisory panel despite retiring and moving to Melbourne. No Ph.D candidate could wish for a more considerate and thoughtful chair.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAAS</td>
<td>Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAE</td>
<td>Australasian Antarctic Expedition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANARE</td>
<td>Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANRC</td>
<td>Australian National Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIO</td>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATCM</td>
<td>Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANZARE</td>
<td>British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIB</td>
<td>Commonwealth Investigation Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIR</td>
<td>Council for Scientific and Industrial Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FID</td>
<td>Falkland Islands Dependencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAA</td>
<td>Institute of Public Administration Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAA</td>
<td>National Archives of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGSA</td>
<td>Royal Geographical Society of Australasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.................................................................i
Abstract.................................................................ii
Acknowledgments.......................................................iv
Abbreviations..........................................................v
Illustrations...........................................................vii

Introduction.....................................................................1

Chapter 1 Antarctica in the Australian Consciousness..................24
Chapter 2 1901-1909: The Spirit is Willing but the Purse is Weak........47
Chapter 3 1910-1918: ‘From Pole to Equator’............................64
Chapter 4 1919-1926: Making Antarctica British.........................97
Chapter 5 1927-1928: Asserting the National Interest..................138
Chapter 6 1929: ‘Our Great Frozen Neighbour’..........................171
Chapter 7 1930-1931: ‘Proud Record of National Achievement’........196
Chapter 8 1932-1936: The Birth Certificate..............................215
Chapter 9 1932-1939: A Time for Diplomacy............................236
Chapter 10 1933-1945: A Time for Consolidation.......................273
Conclusion....................................................................293

Bibliography..................................................................300
ILLUSTRATIONS

Probable topography of Antarctic Continent by D. Mawson, 1911  
46A

The Antarctic Quadrants 1899  
63A

South Magnetic Polar Party – British Antarctic Expedition, 1907  
63B

Proclamation at the South Magnetic Pole 1909  
63C

The Australian Station  
96A

Proposed ship's track of Mawson's 1911-1914 Expedition  
96B

Despatch L.S. Amery to Governor-General of Australia  
137A

Proposed Route for the 1929 BANZARE  
137B

Proclamation at MacRobertson Land 1930  
214A

Route taken by the BANZARE to and from MacRobertson Land  
214B

Antarctic Map 1933  
235B
Introduction

It was a cold and foggy winter morning in Canberra on 10 July 1961 when the Australian Prime Minister, R.G. Menzies, opened the First Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (First ATCM).¹ In his welcoming address, Menzies made a jovial but pointed remark that the delegates were being treated to ‘a proper Antarctic welcome’, and on a more serious note reminded the delegates that Antarctica was in Australia’s neighbourhood.² The delegates to the meeting represented the twelve nations that had negotiated and signed the 1959 Antarctic Treaty in Washington: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, the French Republic, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the Union of South Africa, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. According to the terms of the Treaty, the representatives of the contracting parties would meet in Canberra after the Treaty had entered into force and afterwards ‘at suitable intervals and places’.³ The original signatories had unanimously chosen Canberra as their first meeting place, and had taken the unusual step of inscribing their choice in the text of the Treaty.⁴

That Canberra was unanimously chosen by the original signatories probably reflects Australia’s constructive international diplomacy with respect to the Antarctic Treaty. Menzies reminded the delegates that Richard Casey, then External Affairs Minister and Australia’s delegation leader, had played ‘a most active part in the negotiations’.⁵ Casey had resigned from Parliament in February 1960 and the Antarctic Treaty Conference was his last act as External Affairs Minister. W.J. Hudson, Casey’s biographer, has shown that during the Washington conference

¹R.G. Menzies, Australian Prime Minister, assumed the External Affairs portfolio after Casey resigned from Parliament on 10 February 1960.
³The relevant section of Article IX of the Antarctic Treaty (1959) reads: Representatives of the Contracting Parties named in the preamble to the present Treaty shall meet at the City of Canberra within two months after the date of entry into force of the Treaty, and thereafter at suitable intervals and places ... See W.M. Bush, Antarctica and International Law: A Collection of Inter-State and National Documents, Oceana Publications, Inc. Volume. 1, New York, 1982, Doc. ATO1121959, pp. 48-49.
⁴W.M. Bush, Head of the Treaties Section and Antarctic Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for about twenty years, observed in a discussion with the author in 2003 that writing into an international treaty a venue for meetings of contracting parties was a unique practice in treaty making.
Casey conciliated differences: 'calling informal meetings of delegation heads to sort out difficulties, soothing Latin American sensitivities, courting the USSR'. 6 Hudson also revealed that 'when the French delegation was proving difficult, he appealed directly to the French foreign minister in Paris, Couve de Murville'. 7 Robert Hall has also shown that, with respect to Article IV, which F M Auburn has described as 'the cornerstone of the Treaty', 8 'Casey’s initiative was a significant act of entrepreneurial leadership', because he had persuaded Nicolai Firubin, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, to support the text. 9 In so doing, the Soviet Union had agreed to 're-examine its stance on the issue and change its position'. 10 Richard Woolcott, a former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who was an officer of the Department at the time, agrees with these observations and noted in his memoirs that Australia was being recognised for playing a 'significant role in the complex negotiations leading to the signature of the treaty'. 11 Tim Bowden in his jubilee history of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE) came to a similar conclusion, noting that the choice of Canberra was 'International recognition of Richard Casey's role in the successful resolution of the Antarctic Treaty'. 12

Australia has consistently played a central role in the evolving question of Antarctica: first within the imperial system and after the Second World War as a member of the Antarctic Treaty System. After the Australian Parliament passed the 1933 Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act, Australia became the major claimant state. Australia's sovereignty claim comprises 42 per cent of the Antarctic, from 60° South Latitude and between 160° and 45° East Longitude, interrupted only by French Adélie Land, a small sliver of territory within the Australian claim. 13 It is the time before the Antarctic Treaty, the imperial period, that is the focus of this

---

7 Hudson, *Casey*, p. 279.
10 Hall, p. 182.
13 The *Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act 1933* provides for the acceptance of 'all islands and territories, other than Adélie Land, situated south of the 60th degree south latitude and lying between the 160th degree east longitude and the 45th degree east longitude. Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU13061933, pp. 146-147.
thesis. My study will commence at Federation and conclude in 1945. My purpose will be to examine the political and diplomatic events that led to the creation of the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Australia’s formal association with Antarctic politics can be dated from February 1920 when the Acting Colonial Secretary, Leopold S. Amery, wrote to the dominions advising them of the British Government’s desire ultimately to extend British domination over the entire Antarctic. Although he did not articulate a plan by which the Antarctic would become part of the Empire, Amery advised that the Ross Sea region, which lay directly beneath New Zealand, should be annexed immediately and placed under New Zealand control. Amery did not mention that the region facing Australia, which had been the scene of exploration by Douglas Mawson’s Australasian Antarctic Expedition between 1911 and 1914, should be annexed and placed under Australian control.\textsuperscript{14}

From 1920 until the 1926 Imperial Conference, Australia sought the annexation of what it termed the Australian Quadrant, without success. However, at the 1926 Imperial Conference a specifically designated ‘Committee on British Policy in the Antarctic’ under the chairmanship of Amery, now the first appointed Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, considered the question. The Committee identified six parcels of land, from Enderby Land at approximately 45° East Longitude to Oates Land at 159° East, that the British Government believed had inchoate British title, to be brought within the Empire by a gradual process, and placed under Australian control. Amery observed that the gradual approach was favoured in order to prevent opposition from other Powers with Antarctic interests. The first step would be to publish a summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference, in order to advise the world about the British Empire’s Antarctic intentions. The second would be to send a commissioned officer to the region to raise the flag and take possession of the territory, and the final step would be to issue a legal instrument, such as an Order in Council or Letters Patent, to bring the territory under Australian control. The area proposed corresponded to today’s Australian Antarctic

\textsuperscript{14} Despatch L.S. Amery, for the Secretary of State, to the Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February, 1920, NAA: Series CP 46, Item 41, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1, and NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1.
Territory. Australia was not nominated to take charge of implementing the policy, although it would become its main beneficiary.\textsuperscript{15}

When Antarctic policies were being discussed within the Empire, it was within the context of the changing environment in inter-imperial relations after World War I. Demands by the dominions for a voice in the making of the Empire’s foreign policies ultimately led to the enactment of the Statute of Westminster in 1931. Australia did not adopt the Statute until 1942, preferring instead to conduct its foreign policy within the established imperial framework.\textsuperscript{16} The annexation of what became the Australian Antarctic Territory, however, did not have its origins as an Australian foreign policy matter; it was an imperial policy formulated at the 1926 Imperial Conference and affirmed at subsequent Imperial Conferences. As this thesis will demonstrate, Australia believed at the time that the policy would be implemented as an imperial venture, in collaboration with the relevant dominions.

An examination of Australia’s involvement with the Empire’s Antarctic policy offers a unique opportunity to assess the Anglo-Australian relationship on a matter relating to diplomacy, rather than the much examined relationship associated with war or the subsequent peace process. Accordingly, this thesis will examine the policy advisory role of the Department of External Affairs, in order to determine to what extent the Department identified and considered Australia’s national interests within the wider concerns of Empire, when formulating its advice to the Minister. Since Stanley Melbourne Bruce was both Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister during the crucial years of policy determination between 1926 and 1929, it is proposed to consider the approach he took in weighing up Australian goals and aspirations against those of the Empire, particularly if competing priorities were identified. Antarctic exploration has been closely associated with science. It is proposed, therefore, to assess the influence of the Australian scientific community on the Australian government’s Antarctic policy direction, particularly that of the Australian National Research Council (ANRC), which included Douglas Mawson.

\textsuperscript{15} Memorandum, Secret E.130 (Revise), Copy No. 35, Imperial Conference, 1926, ‘Committee on British Policy in the Antarctic’, p. 3. NAA: Series CP103/3/1, Item Volume 10, NAA: Series CP 290/10, Item, Bundle 3 E120 to E122 and E124 to E130, Secret E. 130 (Revise), Copy No. 67, Printed for the Imperial Conference, November 1926, NAA: Series A11583/1, Item 15, Secret E. 130 (Revise) Copy No. 167, Printed for the Imperial Conference, November 1926, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 4, part 3.

This thesis will also explore the extent of Australian press scrutiny and consider its impact on Australian policy.

Although historians have largely neglected the political and diplomatic history of the Australian Antarctic Territory, between 1983 and 1986 British historian Peter Beck published several papers and a book relating to the British Government’s imperial Antarctic policy.¹⁷ The British Antarctic policy, according to Beck, was an ‘initiative’ of the Colonial Office, formulated against the background of the lucrative whaling industry. It ‘inaugurated a new course in British imperial policy’ and built on ‘British control over the Falkland Islands Dependencies (FID), which included an Antarctic sector’.¹⁸ Having come to that decision, the British Government decided in January 1920 ‘in favour of a policy of gradually extending imperial control to the whole Antarctic continent’.¹⁹ Beck argues that the ‘clear and coherent policy towards the whole continent replaced the previous ad hoc and pragmatic attitude’.²⁰

Beck also maintains that Australia and New Zealand did not contribute to the formulation of the Antarctic policy, since both ‘were informed’ in February 1920 and ‘were not brought into the discussions until after the actual nature of British Antarctic policy was already a fait accompli’ ²¹. Having established that the Antarctic policy was totally in the hands of the British Government, particularly those of Amery, Beck stated that the dominions were ‘normally prepared to accept the subordinate consultative function assigned to them’.²² Within that context, Beck observes, ‘At times Britain was guilty of treating New Zealand and then Australia as


¹⁸ Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 454.

¹⁹ Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 457. The italics are those of Beck.


²² Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 459.
agents of British imperialism, whose views would be considered but would not prove decisive'.23

At the heart of Beck’s argument is the British Government’s surprising adoption of such a policy, at a time when it was seeking to scale down its overseas commitment, and when ‘neither the cabinet nor the Treasury was consulted’.24 Yet, at the 1926 Imperial Conference, ‘the policy was reiterated strongly’, due to Amery’s influence.25 This exceptional turn of events, Beck observes, ‘represented a personal triumph for Amery, who had chosen an appropriate moment to pursue his own views of Britain’s imperial role’.26 As Beck has rightly observed, to take control of the Antarctic, which remained at the time shrouded in mystery, was a major undertaking and certainly visionary. Ironically, while Beck champions Amery’s vision of Empire and Antarctica’s place in it, Amery himself gave Antarctica only a brief mention in a footnote in his memoirs.27

It is proposed in this thesis to counter Beck’s argument and to demonstrate that the British Government at no time formulated a ‘definite policy’ of complete British domination over the entire Antarctic. Rather, it will be shown that the so-called policy was in fact a proposal articulated in February 1920 to the dominions and represented only the aspirations of the Acting Colonial Secretary and sanctioned by the bureaucratic heads at the Colonial and Foreign Offices.28 It will be further argued that in February 1920 Amery advised the dominions of an Antarctic policy towards the Ross Sea coast only, and it was not until the 1926 Imperial Conference that a policy and process were recommended for what later became the Australian Antarctic Territory and for a minor extension to the boundaries of the Falkland Islands Dependencies.

Beck’s studies of the British Antarctic policy did not credit the dominions with any real contribution in the making of the Empire’s Antarctic policy, and saw them as little more than appendages to the imperial power. However, historical

23 Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”, p. 459.
24 Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”, p. 457.
28 Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”, p. 459.
documents in both London and Canberra should have revealed to Beck that Australia was significantly involved in shaping and implementing the Empire’s Antarctic policy.\textsuperscript{29} With the benefit of research in Australian official archives, this thesis will show that, as a result of Australia’s being overlooked in Amery’s 1920 proposal, the Australian Government mounted a concerted challenge over the implications of Amery’s proposal, which the Government hoped would be addressed at the 1926 Imperial Conference. As Bruce was to discover, however, once the Conference had agreed on a policy and recommended a process of achieving it, the British Government promptly abandoned both policy and process. The Bruce Government was then forced to spend some years in coaxing Britain to join Australia and New Zealand in a collaborative effort in order to fulfill the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference. As a consequence, the view that Australia was a passive witness to imperial Antarctic events in the period before the Second World War cannot be sustained.

In the early 1960s three historians explored Australia’s activities in Antarctica. R.A. Swan’s book, \textit{Australia in the Antarctic: Interest, Activity and Endeavour}, published in 1961, promised ‘an overall picture of how Australia obtained her remarkable accession of an area nearly as large as the Australian continent itself’.\textsuperscript{30} However, Swan concentrated on Australian exploration as the means by which the Australian Antarctic Territory was acquired, rather than the policy contribution of the Australian Government. He did, nonetheless, make the point that Bruce ‘had not the slightest intention of allowing the splendid exploration work carried on by Australians in the Antarctic to be overlooked’.\textsuperscript{31} This thesis will reveal how Bruce followed up on that intention.

Nor did Swan’s contemporary, A. Grenfell Price, reveal the extent of Australia’s policy contribution in his book, \textit{The Winning of Australian Antarctica}, published in 1962, a year after that of Swan. At the outset, however, Price explained that he embarked on this work at the request of Lady Mawson with the intention of

\textsuperscript{29} See Beck, ‘British Antarctic Policy in the Early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century’ p. 481. In this paper Beck acknowledges the Nuffield Foundation ‘which helped me to work in Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Norway’. Apart from these sources, Beck’s bibliographies indicate that his research was generally conducted at British archives.


\textsuperscript{31} Swan, p. 171.
writing a geographical report, the outline of which had been designed by Mawson before his death.\textsuperscript{32} Price’s work was based on Mawson’s papers, which included unpublished documents and notes of the two voyages of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE). The two cruises of the BANZARE, under the command of Douglas Mawson, were undertaken in the Antarctic Summers of 1929 to 1931 and designed to fulfill step two of the staged process agreed at the 1926 Imperial Conference. Mawson was formally commissioned to raise the imperial flag and take possession of land that later became the Australian Antarctic Territory. Price admitted that the study became essential in order to counter the Norwegian version of events and discoveries that had already been published by Norwegian historians.\textsuperscript{33} Because Casey wrote the Foreword to the book, it acquired the status of an official history of how the Australian Antarctic was acquired, although the policy and political aspects were not examined.

Both Swan and Price acknowledged the contribution made to their manuscripts by Dr John Cumpston, an officer of the Department of External Affairs.\textsuperscript{34} Both also wrote their books against the backdrop of Cold War tensions and the negotiations for the Antarctic Treaty. It is also likely that Cumpston, while advising them, did not give them access to External Affairs historical documents. At the time of their writing, questions about territorial sovereignty were paramount and a critical analysis of imperial politics and bases of claims would have been considered better left for future generations of historians to explore.

Dr Cumpston had been recruited into the Department of External Affairs in the mid-1930s when it was detached from the Prime Minister’s Department and became a separate Department with its own permanent head. As External Affairs files for the period show, Cumpston was significantly involved in advising his Minister on Antarctic matters. Together with E.P. Bayliss of the Department of the Interior, Cumpston compiled the first comprehensive map of Antarctica and an


\textsuperscript{33} Price, p. vii.

\textsuperscript{34} Swan, p. xiii and Price, viii.
accompanying Handbook. In the Handbook the authors provide a brief factual account of Antarctic exploration, but avoid a critical analysis of the politics and policies that characterised Antarctic affairs at the time. When they wrote the Handbook, Australia was involved with briefing the British Government on negotiations with France and Norway over territorial boundaries within the Australian Antarctic Territory. Since the Handbook was published on the eve of the Second World War, it may well have been imprudent at that time to have discussed international political disputes amongst allies over territory. Free of such constraints, this thesis proposes to explore the controversies with France and Norway about their Antarctic claims and disputes over territory and boundaries.

In 1963, C. Hartley Grattan published the third consecutive book that examined Australia’s Antarctic interests: The Southwest Pacific Since 1900: A Modern History – Australia, New Zealand, the Islands, Antarctica. Although, like Swan and Price, Grattan avoided a critical analysis of the politics of Antarctica, he included Antarctica with the Southwest Pacific as part of Australia’s sphere of interest. Having established that important criterion, he then explained that the Bruce Government was constitutionally constrained from fulfilling Australian national ambitions to secure the so-called Australian sector, lest it fall into foreign hands. Hence, it was Australian security concerns and Australia’s need to insulate itself from hostile powers that justified Australia’s campaign against allowing foreign powers to take possession of territory close to Australia, and in favour of British control over unclaimed territories. This thesis proposes to pursue this argument and examine in greater detail Australia’s attitude to its southern approaches, in order to determine to what extent Antarctica was considered a strategic part of Australia’s sphere of concern. In so doing, it will provide a counterbalance to the extensive literature relating to Australia’s interests and policies with respect to its northern borders.

Although the interest of historians in Antarctic political affairs has been patchy, each successive history provided insights into the events that took place

---

37 Grattan, pp. 614-615.
within the Empire during the inter-war years. Writing in 1992, Ann Savours, for example, identified the problem of financial responsibility with respect to the implementation of the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference, as being the result of tensions and disagreements between the Australian and British Governments.\(^{38}\) Price also alluded to the problem of shared financial responsibility, noting Britain’s aversion to ‘incurring expense’.\(^{39}\) In the end, according to Price, the British Government could not afford to refuse the Australian request for help to carry out a policy that had been agreed to by an Imperial Conference.\(^{40}\) On the other hand, Klaus J. Dodds has suggested that it was Australia that was reluctant to fund large-scale operations.\(^{41}\) In the most recent entry into the debate, Beau Riffenburgh observes in his book *Racing with Death*, published in 2008, that the British Government believed it had discharged its full responsibility once it provided the *Discovery* free of charge and that the Australian and New Zealand Governments, once away from the negotiating table with the British Government, ‘seemed to back off’ from accepting their responsibility for financing the expedition.\(^{42}\) Based on Australian official sources, this thesis will show that it was the British Government that ‘seemed to back off’ from accepting responsibility for implementing the second step of the process recommended at the 1926 Imperial Conference.

Australian historians have returned to Antarctic history recently, although the political and diplomatic history of Australian Antarctica continues to be passed over in preference for the continuing fascination with Antarctic exploration and Antarctic explorers. When David Branagan published *T.W. Edgeworth David: A Life* in 2005, he said that David’s achievements ‘tended to be submerged in the stories of his former student, Douglas Mawson’.\(^{43}\) However, Branagan was able to reveal that, before Mawson had become politically active on behalf of Antarctica, David was already advocating Australian Government financial support for Antarctic expeditions. An early example delivered £5,000 from the Australian Government after David gained the cooperation of the Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, to support

---


39 Price, p. 17.

40 Price, p. 17.


Ernest Shackleton’s *Nimrod* Expedition (1907-1909).  David, together with Mawson and a Scottish surgeon Alistair Mackay, raised the imperial flag at the South Magnetic Pole, or ‘thereabouts’ as Granville Allen Mawer has suggested, and took possession of it for the Empire. Arriving ‘home as a hero’ enhanced David’s prestige and facilitated fund raising for Mawson’s 1911-1914 expedition. Mawson’s successful exploration of the region directly beneath Australia fuelled his political activism and made him determined to ensure that the Australian and British Governments did not abandon it. Philip Ayres’s 1999 biography, *Mawson: A Life*, has described how Mawson ‘continued to hammer the point’.

These recent biographies of two of Australia’s eminent Antarctic explorers, together with other modern Antarctic histories, have provided a fresh view of Australia’s participation in aspiring for imperial expansion into Antarctica. However, Mawson, rather than the Australian Government, remains at the centre of their story. To Granville Allen Mawer a concentration on Mawson was understandable. After all, much of the territory Mawson sought for Australia was discovered by expeditions under his command. Importantly, however, these new works have shown the extent of the Australian commitment and the ambitions of the explorers to maintain the Australian Government’s focus on Antarctica.

Tom Griffiths’s award winning book, *Slicing the Silence: Voyaging to Antarctica*, which was published in 2007, has shown that viewing the Antarctic past, including its political past, can be done through a range of lenses. While previous works looked at how and why the political ownership of Antarctica came about, Griffiths reminded us that Antarctica has resisted human ownership, despite the efforts of men to bring it under their control, because it is a land ‘where nature is deadly and time is deformed’. Griffiths’s history does not delve into the reactions

---

44 Branagan, p. 144.
45 Granville Allen Mawer, *South by Northwest: The Magnetic Crusade and the Contest for Antarctica*, Wakefield Press, 2006, Chapter 12. Branagan also observed that T.W. Edgeworth David had doubts as to whether they had arrived at the specific location of the South Magnetic Pole. See Branagan, pp. 223-224.
48 Mawer, Chapters 14 and 15.
49 Tom Griffiths, *Slicing the Silence: Voyaging to Antarctica*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2007, p. 256. In 2009, Professor Griffiths of the Australian National University was joint winner of the Prime Minister’s prize for Australian history, winner of the Douglas Stewart Prize at
and views of the Australian Government about the imperial vision for Antarctica, since he concentrates on how the explorers who were sent out to implement that vision perceived it. In so doing, he accepted the challenge made by Stephen Murray-Smith who called for ‘not just one history. Preferably several, or at least a history that will provoke a debate’. This thesis also accepts the challenge of Stephen Murray-Smith, as well as that of Grenfell Price, who invited the ‘political historian of the future’ to take on the task of supplying the ‘details of an interesting story’, which fell outside the scope of his geographical report.

While the historical focus remained on the Australian explorers in winning the Australian Antarctic, the role of the Australian Government in this process has been ignored. As this thesis will demonstrate, the absence of the Australian Government’s voice has skewed conclusions that have been advanced about the roles and actions of both the Australian and British Governments with respect to Antarctic policy initiatives. It is also evident from the historical works thus far that the British historians have, in the main, indicated either that Australian views were not listened to or that Australia refused to make a financial contribution to implementing the policy and process recommended by the 1926 Imperial Conference. With the benefit of access to Australian government documents, this thesis will show that the implementation of the Imperial Conference’s policy recommendations was driven by a greater range of motivations not hitherto identified in the literature. To the extent that the historians relied on the papers of the explorers, particularly those of Douglas Mawson, for information about the implementation of the second step of the staged process, it is unlikely that a complete picture of events would have emerged. Despite being taken into the Government’s confidence, Mawson and the ANRC were not aware of the significant effort the Bruce Government was making, away from the public gaze, to convince the British Government to support the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference.

---

the 2008 New South Wales Premier’s Literary Awards, winner of the non-fiction prize at the 2007 Queensland Premier’s Literary Awards and Shortlisted for The Age Book of the Year Award 2007.


Price, p. 17.
Carl Bridge and Bernard Attard in *Between Empire and Nation: Australia’s External Relations from Federation to the Second World War*, published in 2000, called for research into Australia’s ‘older pre-1945’ past as a period that ‘cries out to be studied and understood’.52 They argued that ‘even while Australia’s international relations remained inseparable from those of the Empire, the nation’s politicians, public servants and soldiers sought to pursue Australian goals within a British world’.53 Bridge and Attard also observed that in the forty years after Federation ‘Australia’s external relations were many and diverse’ and pursued within the imperial framework.54 However, while their book demonstrated that diversity, Antarctica was not one of the issues it canvassed. It is my intention in this thesis to identify Antarctica as a question that Australia pursued within the imperial framework. Bridge and Attard also observed that their book is located within the ‘tradition’ begun by Neville Meaney, W.J. Hudson and Roger Thompson, wherein Australia’s external relations were not characterised by ‘apathetic dependence’, ‘nor nationalist self-assertion, but by the pursuit of Australia’s interests within the imperial system’.55 This thesis agrees that Australia was not a ‘limpet’ dominion,56 but it will also argue that while Australia pursued its Antarctic interests within the imperial system, emerging nationalism and Australian imperialism played an important part.

Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward’s book, *Australia’s Empire*, published in 2008, shares a similar view to that of Bridge and Attard. Schreuder and Ward go further, however, by describing Australia and Australians as ‘Empire-builders’, in that Australians promoted their own imperial programme in the Pacific.57 They also argue that, ‘Had it been left to the British alone, the entire Pacific basin (with the exception perhaps of Norfolk Island) and even large portions of Australia itself, may never have fallen under the Empire’s sway’.58 This thesis agrees with that line of argument and will show that, had Australia left Antarctic policies in the hands of the

---

53 Bridge and Attard, p. 1.
54 Bridge and Attard, pp. 1-2.
55 Bridge and Attard, p. 2.
56 Klaus Dodds used this expression when referring to the Falkland Islands as ‘one of Britain’s most persistent “limpet colonies”’. See Klaus Dodds, *Pink Ice: Britain and the South Atlantic Empire*, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., London, 2002, p. 1.
58 Schreuder and Ward, p. 12.
imperial authorities, Australia would have been faced with a similar dilemma resulting in the probable loss to foreign powers of what became the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Swan also discussed ‘The Empire Builders’ in one section of his book. However, Swan’s central player was the United Kingdom, and Australia and Australians were helping to build the British Empire. Thus, any specific Australian interest was conflated with the overall narrative, since all were working towards the same goal.\(^{59}\) This thesis does not support Swan’s version of events, which placed Antarctic affairs within what Schreuder and Ward describe as the ‘moth-eaten imperial vision’.\(^ {60}\) On the other hand, it will support Schreuder and Ward’s observation that ‘it would be absurd to dismiss the sheer weight of British and imperial agency in Australian history as a conservative fantasy’,\(^ {61}\) since with respect to Antarctic policies Australia believed its strength lay in collaborative rather than independent action.

In his review of *Australia’s Empire*, Geoffrey Blainey referred to Antarctica and the Pacific Islands in the same breath as Australia’s ‘sphere of influence’.\(^ {62}\) In *The Tyranny of Distance*, first published in 1966, Blainey had already drawn attention to Australia’s status as a colonial power and ‘one of the world’s great landowners’ after acquiring the Australian Antarctic Territory.\(^ {63}\) These assessments were not made about a nation that was incapable of asserting its national interests. Thus, to dismiss the complexities of the Anglo-Australian relationship and to assume that, as a mere offspring of Empire, Australia was following dictation from London is to misunderstand not only the intricacies of the relationship in the period after the Great War, but the subtleties and contradictions of Australia’s experience of Empire. These subtleties and contradictions were particularly highlighted during the course of formulating and implementing the policy relating to the Australian Antarctic.

---

60 Schreuder and Ward, p. 22.
61 Schreuder and Ward, p. 22.
Generalised perceptions about the extent of Australia's contribution to the Empire's Antarctic policies or, for that matter, any other question of foreign policy before the Second World War, were probably influenced by Australia's lack of an independent foreign service. A small Department of External Affairs existed as a Branch within the Prime Minister's Department, with the Prime Minister usually also the External Affairs Minister. When the Empire's Antarctic policy was in the process of being shaped, Bruce was both Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister. During the course of his Prime Ministership between 1923 and 1929, Bruce had selected two gifted External Affairs officials in Casey and Walter Henderson to assist him in the conduct of Australia's external interests. Throughout the 1920s, with Casey in London and Henderson in Canberra, Bruce provided the vision and led this talented team to mould successfully the Empire's Antarctic policy in order to ensure that Australia's national interests were taken into account. That one of Australia's most significant foreign policy achievements, leading to Australia becoming the major Antarctic claimant state, was realised by three individuals, all familiar with the world outside Australia, and each bringing their unique skills to bear on the issue, is a forgotten chapter in Australian foreign policy which this thesis will endeavour to retrieve.

Besides shedding light on Australian foreign policy from Federation to 1945, the question of Antarctica provides an opportunity to explore the effectiveness of the Department of External Affairs during the period. When it was detached from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in 1935, opinion about the role and competence of its first Secretary, Colonel W.R. Hodgson, was divided. Some saw him as 'shrewd and tough' but 'something of a rough diamond'. 64 Alfred Stirling regarded him as 'dynamic and imaginative'. 65 Peter Edwards has suggested that Hodgson was 'entirely unsuited' by his education and through lack of vision 'allowed the department to be treated as a post office'. 66 In the course of an examination of the External Affairs files on Antarctica for the period, it will be

65 Cited in Edwards, p. 107. Alfred Stirling was Australia's Liaison Officer in London in the 1930s, working under instruction from the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Colonel W.R. Hodgson on the question of Antarctica.
shown that Hodgson, aided particularly by research advice and policy assessment from Cumpston, shrewdly injected nationalistic aspirations into briefings for the Minister, especially for negotiations with the British Government.

However, as Joan Beaumont has rightly observed, the *modus operandi* of the Department of External Affairs could be 'scarcely recognisable as a modern foreign office'\(^67\) After all, it did not have diplomatic representations in foreign countries. It was, as its title suggests, an office that dealt with external matters, including imperial relations. It was not until Keith Officer’s posting to Washington in 1937, as Australian Counsellor attached to the British Embassy there, that Australia had a senior External Affairs official reporting from Australia’s perspective in a foreign country. This thesis does not set out to assess the workings of the Department of External Affairs. However, in examining Australian Antarctic policy formulation, it does throw some light on how that Department managed a major foreign policy question from Australia’s national perspective in its position as a member of the British Empire.

Peter Edwards has commented that the early documents relating to Australia’s foreign relations ‘are far from complete’\(^68\) It may be, however, that Edwards did not examine the files on Antarctica. These are both extensive and revealing and present a comprehensive record of the steps that the Australian Government pursued in developing its responses to the Dominions Office’s Antarctic proposals, particularly after Casey’s posting to London. Casey’s representational and negotiating duties in London, together with his detailed reports to both Bruce and the Department of External Affairs, provided the Australian government with insights on how the men who ruled the Empire conducted their affairs and the environment that influenced their policy decisions.

Apart from the published literature, this study is based chiefly on Australian Government documents relating to Antarctic politics and policies located at the National Archives of Australia. These documents contain a comprehensive exchange of communications between the Australian and British Governments, as well as reports from Casey and his successors in the position of Australian Liaison Officer.

---

\(^{67}\) Beaumont, Waters and Lowe with Woodard, p. 20.

\(^{68}\) Edwards, Chapter 1, p. 1.
in London. They also contain copies of formal diplomatic exchanges between the British Government and the Governments of France and Norway, as well as academic publications from Norwegian sources. The Department of External Affairs files methodically placed press cuttings relating to Antarctica on special files. These shed light on the wider public view of the Government’s involvement in Antarctic exploration and territorial acquisition. The records of the Royal Society of Tasmania, located in the Royal Society Library at the Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania, were also researched in order to examine the extent of colonial interest in the first wintering expedition to Antarctica, particularly since Tasmania was the launching and receiving point for the expedition.

Australian colonial newspapers were researched at the National Library of Australia in order to determine the influence of Antarctica in the Australian consciousness before Federation. In addition, the private diaries of R.G. Casey, located at the National Library of Australia, were also examined. These diaries were not mere scribbles at the end of a busy day, but were typed and indexed and reveal valuable information about the views of Casey, particularly when he was External Affairs Minister, on Antarctic policy issues. These diaries are also valuable in testing Casey’s reflections against the official documents. Another invaluable source is the published personal letters Casey wrote to the Prime Minister, S.M. Bruce, during the 1920s and 1930s. The letters usually commenced casually with ‘My Dear P.M.:’ they are gossipy in nature, and were meant to be a ‘behind the scenes’ commentary on people and personalities. Thus, they provided Bruce with unique insights into the background against which the Empire’s Antarctic policies were made.69

In examining views on sovereignty matters, I also make extensive use of the published documents compiled by W.M. Bush.70 These are a set of legal documents selected with the specific purpose of providing information and legal opinion about the status of Antarctic sovereignty claims. From the legal practitioner’s perspective, they are an invaluable source and provide a very comprehensive picture of international legal considerations with respect to bases of all Antarctic territorial claims. There is an inherent limitation in their use for historical assessments,

70 Bush, Volumes I, II, III.
however, because they are legal documents specifically relating to questions of sovereignty. Hence, Australia’s political role is unlikely to emerge, as the documents generally show the British Government as the author of the documents in the Australian section. A recently published paper by Noel D. Barrett entitled ‘Norway and the “winning” of Australian Antarctica, reflects that limitation.71 However, while a complete picture did not emerge about the Australian Government’s contribution to the diplomatic negotiations with Norway, Barrett’s paper at least focused attention on the need for additional research in the archives of other claimant states, particularly those which recognise Australia’s claims.

For the purposes of this study, Antarctica is defined as the Antarctic continent south of 60° South. The sub-Antarctic islands have been excluded from this definition because their status had already been defined. For example, Macquarie Island was discovered on 11 July 1810 by an expedition of colonial sealers from Sydney. After the assertion of British sovereignty in 1825, Macquarie Island was placed under the administration of the Governor of Van Diemen’s Land, present day Tasmania.72 Heard and McDonald Islands,73 while not formally annexed by either the British or the Australian governments, were placed under Australian control in 1947 after British letters of transfer of British rights to Australia.74 As Bush has observed, ‘there seems no universally accepted definition of “Antarctica” or “the Antarctic”’. 75 Not even the Antarctic Treaty agreed on a universal definition.76 Where a definition is provided, it has been the practice to define Antarctica according to the purpose and scope of the research.77

72 Bush, Volume II, p. 89.
74 Cabinet Submission, For Full Cabinet, Top Secret, Agendum No. 1275E, p. 2. See also Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU26121947, pp. 162-163.
75 Bush, Volume I, p. xx.
76 ‘Article VI, Treaty Area’ did not provide a definition of Antarctica. See Bush, Volume I, p. 64.
77 Bush’s definition of Antarctica relates to his study and includes ‘all those territories close enough to the Antarctic continent to have been closely associated with activities which also include the continent.’ See Bush, Volume I, Introduction, xix-xxii, p. x. Shirely V. Scott defined Antarctica as the continent. See Shirley V. Scott, ‘The Geopolitical Organization of Antarctica as an Issue in International Politics, 1900-1961: Developing a Theory of Cognitive Structures of Cooperation’, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Department of History, The University of Queensland, February 1993, pp. 78-79
The ten chapters that comprise this thesis follow a chronological order. This approach was chosen because, from Federation until the end of the Second World War, the question of Antarctica began to evolve and develop from a destination for the inquisitive scientist/explorer into an imperial question and finally into an international diplomatic problem. Chapter 1, however, falls outside the proposed time-frame and sets the scene for what was to follow. It will show that Antarctica became part of the Australian consciousness during the colonial period, and will demonstrate that Australia identified its Antarctic interests some decades before the articulation of a British imperial policy. Many of the issues that emerged in the inter-war years, such as Australia’s ambition to undertake Antarctic exploration and unveil the scientific secrets of the Antarctic regions, the quest for Australian territorial control, and the influence of the Australian scientific community on Australian official views, had their genesis during the late colonial period.

Chapter 2 from 1901 to 1909 reveals that the Antarctic region was on the agenda of all the early Federal Governments from Edmund Barton’s onward. This chapter will examine the extent of Australian Government enthusiasm for Antarctic exploration and its commitment to contribute to financially supporting Antarctic exploration. It will show that the basis for the Antarctic collaboration that developed between the Australian scientific community and the Australian Government was laid during this time, as was the beginning of the Australian Government’s financial contribution to Antarctic scientific exploration. As this chapter will demonstrate, it was during this time that T.W. Edgeworth David’s young doctoral student, Douglas Mawson, made his debut as an Antarctic explorer, when both became members of Ernest Shackleton’s Nimrod Expedition (1907-1909).

Chapter 3 discusses the origins and importance of Mawson’s Australasian Antarctic Expedition and the beginning of Mawson’s political activism on behalf of Australian and British imperial control of the Antarctic. From 1910 to 1918 Mawson organised and led his first Antarctic expedition, which discovered and explored most of the region that lay directly beneath Australia, from approximately 160° to 90° East. Throughout the war years Mawson sought to encourage both the Australian and British Governments to turn their attention, after the war, to Antarctica and to bring within the Empire territory discovered and explored by expeditions of the British Empire.
Chapter 4 shows that Mawson’s political activism bore fruit when the Acting Colonial Secretary, L.S. Amery, turned his attention to Antarctica and advised the dominions of the imminent annexation of the Ross Sea coast and the proposal to bring the entire Antarctic within the Empire. From 1919 to 1926 the Australian Government sought to have the Antarctic region facing Australia annexed, since most of it was discovered and mapped by Mawson during the course of his 1911-1914 expedition. The reluctance of the British Government to acquiesce, because French Adélie Land was also located within that region, showed the Australian Government willing to challenge the British Government’s view. This chapter traces the emergence of a policy and process at the 1926 Imperial Conference designed to bring within the Empire under Australian control what later was to become the Australian Antarctic Territory. It also shows the emergence of the ANRC as an effective lobbying group which sought to influence the Australian Government’s Antarctic policy directions while playing the role of Australian Government adviser on Antarctic matters.

Chapter 5 examines Bruce’s reaction to the British Government’s abandonment of the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference and his determination to pursue the British Government until it relented and agreed to reengage. During 1927 and 1928 Bruce argued the case for an imperial collaboration; otherwise the area between Enderby Land at 45° East and Oates Land at approximately 160° East would fall into foreign hands rather than within the Empire under Australian control. Bruce finally issued an ultimatum to the British Government: to collaborate, or Australia would act independently and annex the territory without fulfilling the recommendations of the Imperial Conference.

As Chapter 6 shows, Bruce’s ultimatum forced the British Government’s hand when it agreed to release the research vessel Discovery to Antarctica to carry the BANZARE in order to fulfill the requirements of the second, and most expensive, step of the three-stepped process recommended by the 1926 Imperial Conference. Chapter 6 will also detail the efforts of the Australian Government and the ANRC, particularly Mawson, throughout 1929 to raise funds to dispatch the BANZARE. Prime Minister Bruce lost office at the Federal election in 1929, but was still in power long enough to sign Mawson’s sailing orders.
As Chapter 7 will demonstrate, between 1930 and 1931 Douglas Mawson completed two cruises of the BANZARE and claimed for the Empire and Australia today's Australian Antarctic Territory. While Mawson was exploring in Antarctica, British diplomats were involved in international political negotiations with Norway, after a private Norwegian expedition sailed under the command of Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen in the Norwegia to forestall the Discovery. Competition for Antarctic territory demonstrated that the British Empire was required to engage with the international community in order to find some accord about bases of sovereignty claim, rather than gradually and quietly asserting control as Amery had aspired to do.

Chapter 8 investigates the period from 1932 to 1936 when the Australian and British governments were preoccupied with completing constitutional formalities to allow Australia to become the controlling power over the Australian Antarctic Territory. On 3 June 1933, the Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act was assented to and was proclaimed in 1936. This period marked a turning point in imperial Antarctic affairs as the passing of legislation in the Australian Parliament freed Australia from further British entanglements in the administration of its newly acquired Antarctic territory.

Diplomatic negotiations with France and Norway over territorial boundaries and recognition of the Australian Antarctic Territory, while being conducted by the British Foreign Office, involved Australia in providing background briefing. Chapter 9 will show that, between 1931 and 1939, the Australian Government provided fresh insights to the British Government about possible solutions, while outlining what negotiating points Australia would support. The Australian Government's suggestions took into account the new era of aviation, with provision for Australia to fly over French Adélie Land in order to access the Australian territory on either side of the French claim. At the same time, the Australian Government insisted that, before it could support Norway in extending a sovereignty claim over the unclaimed sector between the Australian Antarctic Territory and Coats Land, Norway should give unqualified recognition to the Australian Antarctic Territory within the boundaries stipulated in the 1933 Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act.
While international diplomatic negotiations with France and Norway were preoccupying the Australian Government, it wasted no time in moving to consolidate its control over the Australian Antarctic Territory. Chapter 10 explores the steps Australia took after the enactment of legislation in the Australian Parliament in 1933. These included the production of the first comprehensive map of Antarctica, and providing financial support for Hubert Wilkins, an Australian polar explorer, to accompany the American aviator and polar explorer Lincoln Ellsworth to the Australian Antarctic Territory. The attitude of the United States Government on sovereignty claims, as this chapter shows, was becoming less supportive of those nations that had made them.

This thesis is unashamedly detailed in its attention to the official documentary record. How Australia won the Australian Antarctic is a key question in this thesis. The role of Australian explorers, particularly Douglas Mawson, is closely examined since Australia's record in exploration was critical to its emerging Antarctic profile. But what role did the Australian Government itself play in winning the Australian Antarctic? This is a question that has been little studied. In order to understand Australia's involvement in the Antarctic politics of the post-World War II period, it is necessary to reconstruct the political and diplomatic events that led Australia to become the major claimant state, an influential nation amongst an exclusive group of twelve that negotiated the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, and the host of the First Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. The detailed reconstruction of the period before the Treaty is all the more important, because the dominant story, that Australia benefited from a British Government policy to bring the entire Antarctic within the Empire, has achieved the status of almost a sacred rubric. Such has been the strength of the prevailing view that Australian Government archives were overlooked. After all, if Antarctica was an imperial policy and Australia an imperial offspring, surely the files of the Department of External Affairs, before the Second World War, were unlikely to yield anything of significance to alter the historical orthodoxy. But the acquisition of the Australian Antarctic is a story of entanglements of international politics, diplomacy and law, of an energetic and powerful Australian scientific lobby, of a determined press and of emerging Australian nationalism. Although historians have made general references to these issues, they failed to see their consequences.
Australia was of course an offspring of empire, and unquestioningly loyal to a united British Empire. However, as the government documents on Antarctica have revealed, that loyalty should not be mistaken for a lack of ardour for pursuing the national interest. The historical documents show Australian governments participating in vigorous, and at times excruciatingly frustrating, exchanges with British Ministers of State and their bureaucracies. These negotiations should be revealed if the relationship between Australia and the British Government over the question of Antarctica is to be understood. As Antarctic events unfolded and evolved, Australia sought to balance its imperial loyalty with its own specific goals. By following the evolving events through the government historical documents, Australia’s dilemma is revealed. Yet in the 1930s, Australia could not have known that, immediately after the Second World War; not only would the British Empire lose its hegemonic status, but Antarctic politics would become part of a wider international agenda that would see Australia negotiating its interests within a group with which it had not traditionally been aligned. The days of working through Antarctic policies within the imperial system were gone – and they were replaced by a multilateral forum that required Australia to undertake deft diplomatic negotiations if it wanted to achieve its Antarctic goals within an international legal framework.
Chapter 1

Antarctica in the Australian Consciousness

Even before Federation, Antarctica was embedded in the Australian consciousness. Early settlers suffered from Antarctica’s hostility: they were the recipients of stories of wondrous adventures and bore witness to heartbreaking tragedies as the Roaring Forties exacted its levies on ships bound for the colonies. It was close enough for them to feel its breath. It was sensed before it was seen.\(^1\) Colonial Australia’s learned societies pondered its mysteries. They wished to be part of the global curiosity determined to discover it and, by the end of the nineteenth century, they were resolved to ensure their governments controlled it. For many Australians, control of the region beneath their southern borders was the necessary consequence of proximity and considered their natural inheritance. It was nearer to them than the homelands they left behind. For the people of Hobart Town it was closer to them than they were to Perth. The tentative but determined steps they took before Federation to assert an Australian presence in Antarctica were significant in laying the foundations for what was to follow. Before Douglas Mawson and his twentieth century band of brothers in science embarked on their Antarctic quest, colonial Australians had already broken the ice.

Australia and Antarctica have also been closely linked in the human imagination for millennia. Mediaeval geographers believed in the existence of a Terra Australis nondum cognita, a vast southern continent lying south of the equator and stretching as far as the South Pole.\(^2\) The voyages into the southern hemisphere by James Cook between 1769 and 1775 provided another connection between Australia and the Antarctic. The British Admiralty sent Cook on the dual mission of

---

\(^1\) These sentiments were taken from Tom Griffiths, ‘The breath of Antarctica’ in *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, Vol. 11, (4-14), Hobart, 2006, pp. 4-14.

finding new lands and conducting scientific exploration. On the first set of voyages he mapped the east coast of Australia. On his final set of voyages, between 1772 and 1775, Cook circumnavigated the Antarctic Circle, crossing it at 71° 10’ South, the closest he had got to the South Pole. In the Antarctic summer of 1775 Cook reached the conclusion that it was ‘probable’ that he had seen part of a ‘Continent or large tract of land near the Pole’. Then he added ominously that: ‘whoever has resolution and perseverance to clear up this point by proceeding farther than I have done, I shall not envy him the honour of the discovery but I will be bold to say that the world will not be benefited by it’.

If it has taken Australians and other nations interested in Antarctic exploration almost two centuries after Cook to settle the question of the existence and extent of the Antarctic continent, Antarctica’s own climate has been the major inhibitor. Cook described the southern ocean as almost an encounter with hell, as he experienced ‘Thick fog, Snow Storms, Intence Cold and every other thing that can render Navigation dangerous’. Cook went as far as to predict that ‘no Man will ever venture farther than I have done and that the lands which may lie to the South will never be explored.’ Cook underestimated human curiosity, as subsequent generations of explorers with motives that have varied from age to age continued to venture into the Antarctic to discover its secrets. A twentieth century Australian explorer, Mawson, referred to it as The Home of the Blizzard. In choosing this title for his book about his Antarctic exploration he invoked a land that buried one of his companions in a glacier ‘in a woeful instant’.

---

5 Extract from Cook’s Journal in Lovering and Prescott, p. 111.
8 Extract from Journal of Captain Cook’s Voyage in H.M.S. Resolution, cited in Clark, p. 54.
The north and south polar ice caps differ markedly. Whereas the north polar cap is merely a shallow ice covering of the Arctic Ocean, the south polar ice cap is a large continent comprising an area of approximately 12 million square kilometres. It is larger than Australia, which is approximately 8 million square kilometres. The winter pack ice from mid-March to late November acts as a barrier and isolates Antarctica from shipping. Timing, therefore, is critical to Antarctic voyaging.

Only a few decades after the settlement of Sydney and Hobart Town colonial Australians began to host European Antarctic explorers. These expeditions found refuge in Australian colonies after their buffeting in Antarctic waters. Captain Thaddeus Bellingshausen, of the Imperial Russian Navy, followed Cook in circumnavigating the Antarctic Circle. With two vessels, he was sent by his government on a voyage of discovery and scientific research in the southern hemisphere. In April 1820, the Sydney Gazette and the New South Wales Advertiser reported that the arrival of the Vostok and later the Mirnyi was greeted enthusiastically at Port Jackson. Moved by curiosity and perhaps suspicion, Governor Lachlan Macquarie paid a visit to Bellingshausen on the Vostok and ‘was complimented with the usual salutes on the occasion’. Bellingshausen subsequently recorded that the people of Sydney showed a significant interest in his southern voyages. The Sydney papers would also have been the first to report formally that the Mirnyi had been as far as 69° South. The arrival of the Bellingshausen expedition in early colonial Australia was to be the first of many, and all of them would provide their own flavour of Antarctic voyaging. The explorers would also use Australian colonial ports to refit their expedition and report their findings. The remote penal settlement was becoming connected to the world through an even more remote destination.

11 The information in this paragraph is taken from Chapter 1 of Lovering and Prescott.
14 Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 15 April 1820. Although carrying two different names the Gazette and the Advertiser are one and the same.
15 Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 15 April 1820.
17 Supplement to the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 2 July 1820.
The following decade, John Biscoe, a captain of the Enderby mercantile firm, arrived in Hobart Town with two vessels, the *Tula* and the *Lively*, having received a terrible buffeting in Antarctic waters wherein the crew suffered 'incredible hardships'. Biscoe was the third to circumnavigate the South Pole. A lengthy article in the *Hobart Town Courier* in September 1831 reported that the crew had been devastated by scurvy. Only three men had survived out of a crew of ten. From 24 February 1831 and for three weeks after that, Biscoe 'had intermittent views of the Antarctic continent'. On 25 February 1831, when he was 66° 29' South and at 45° 17' East, Biscoe believed he had sighted land. Biscoe's sighting was verified a century later in January 1930, when Douglas Mawson was leading the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE). Mawson caught sight of 'the snow-domed surface of land' when the *Discovery* was within almost identical geographic coordinates. Mawson credits Biscoe with the discovery of the Australian Antarctic Territory and describes him as 'the first ever to catch sight of any portion of the Antarctic continent'.

J.F. Lovering and J.R.V. Prescott have observed that the era of discovery by sailing ships ended with three national expeditions from France, the United States of America and Britain. For all of these expeditions, Australian ports served as a place to publicise their findings, refit and replenish, as well as to bury their dead. As Mawer has observed, there was a race to the Antarctic 70 years before the so-called Homeric age. The French scientific expedition commanded by Dumont d'Urville was undertaken by Royal command, having been instructed by King Louis Philippe. The *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée* left France in 1837 to be part of an international effort to locate the South Magnetic Pole and were the first to set off. After a tour of the Antarctic region below South America and the Pacific islands, the expedition arrived in Hobart Town with sick and dying crew in December 1839. According to a report in the *Hobart Town Advertiser* of 28 February 1840, after re-equipping, Dumont d'Urville continued on his quest for the South Magnetic Pole, sailing on 1 January 1840. It was during that cruise that Dumont d'Urville sighted and named Adélie

---

20 *Hobart Town Courier*, 17 September, 1831.
22 Price, p. 3.
23 Price, p. 5.
24 Lovering and Prescott, p. 117-112.
Land, a small section of the Antarctic coastline immediately south of Van Diemen’s Land, and took possession of it for France. When he returned to Hobart Town on 17 February, Dumont d’Urville formally announced his discovery in the *Hobart Town Advertiser*. He said that the ‘part traversed about 150 miles in extent, is comprised between 66° and 67° of South latitude, on one part, and between 136° and 142° degrees of East longitude on the other’. The French expedition did not effect a landing on the Antarctic mainland. In the belief that he had fixed the position of the South Magnetic Pole, Dumont d’Urville chose not to continue with his exploration, but hoped others would do so. As later chapters of this thesis will show, inaccuracies in the Tasmanian press reports led to drawn-out diplomatic negotiations between British and French diplomats on the question of the Adélie Land boundaries. These were not resolved until the eve of World War II.

Between 1838 and 1842, an American expedition, supported by the United States Congress and under the leadership of Charles Wilkes would also haunt Australia. Wilkes arrived in Sydney in 1839 with a sick and unruly crew after cruising the Pacific islands, as Dumont d’Urville had also done. He was still in Sydney while Dumont d’Urville was fitting out his expedition in Hobart Town. At Sydney some of Wilkes’s men deserted and another died of consumption. According to the diaries of some of the men, they were well received in Sydney. One, however, found that the behaviour at concerts of the blended society of convicts and ticket-of-leave men would make the New York ‘Bowery Boys’ blush. Another had thought he would find ‘a den of abominations’, but instead found ‘intelligent and gentlemanly men’. Possibly because they were Americans and explorers, they were welcomed with special privileges. They were given access to the Library and Museum and admitted to the Australian Club by Captain Philip Parker King, whose charts they had used during the course of their voyage.

---

26 ‘Adélie’ rarely, if ever, appears with the acute é in typed copies of correspondence in Australia of the period and in Australian newspapers. Direct quotations in this thesis will reflect that practice.
27 *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 28 February 1840. See Map at p. 46A for clarification of geographic coordinates.
28 *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 28 February 1840.
29 See Chapter 9 of this thesis.
31 Tyler, p. 121. The Bowery Boys were a feared and fearsome New York gang primarily stationed in the Bowery section of New York.
32 Quoted in Tyler, p. 123.
33 Tyler, p. 121.
After re-fitting in Sydney, Wilkes sailed from Sydney on 26 December 1839, also in search of the location of the South Magnetic Pole. Wilkes is reputed to have made several sightings of land and was certain that a continent existed beyond the thick ice. When he returned to Sydney on 11 March 1840, he was greeted with the disturbing news that Dumont d’Urville had made a claim over discovered land ‘on the afternoon of January 19’. Wilkes was uncertain about the extent of the French discoveries but believed his own expedition was the first to see the continent on the ‘morning of the nineteenth’. On that day they reported seeing the mountains of a continent. Wilkes subsequently reported that his discovery was made on the morning of 19 January 1840, and formally advised the Secretary of the Navy and published his discovery in the Sydney Herald. As a consequence, another Australian connection was made.

The final of the three national scientific expeditions was undertaken by Britain’s James Clark Ross, who arrived in Hobart Town on 16 August 1840, a year after the French and American expeditions. While Dumont d’Urville and Wilkes navigated their way in a westerly direction from Van Diemen’s Land, Ross turned east towards New Zealand. His direction was determined by news he received on his arrival in Hobart Town about the discoveries made by the French and American expeditions. By ploughing the seas in the opposite direction, the Erebus and Terror broke through the pack ice to gaze at what is now the Ross Dependency. Swan records that festivities greeted Ross’s return to Hobart Town on 7 April 1841, culminating in a locally written and performed play, The South Polar Expedition, probably the first stage-play produced about Antarctic voyaging.

Ross subsequently questioned the discoveries made by the American explorer. Wilkes had provided Ross with copies of his chart and a sketch of the coast backed with mountains extending from 97° to 107° East; but Ross could not locate the mountains. In 1886 Chas. P. Sprent, Tasmanian Deputy Surveyor-General and a member of the Geographical Society of Australasia, also disputed Wilkes and

---

34 Tyler, p. 121. Italics by Tyler.
35 From an entry in Wilkes’s Journal 2, cited in Tyler, p.144. Italics by Tyler.
36 Tyler, p. 149.
37 Swan, pp. 29-30.
suggested that Wilkes had discovered land on 20 January at approximately 140° East and 66° South.\textsuperscript{39} When Mawson cruised along the same coastline during his 1911-14 expedition, he too threw doubt on the extent of Wilkes’s discoveries.\textsuperscript{40}

The extent of the discoveries made by Wilkes was also questioned in the United States. David B. Tyler has observed that inaccuracies existed in Wilkes’ ‘labelling’ of discoveries. He also noted that when, in 1932, the American Geographical Society superimposed Wilkes’s chart on those of other explorers, especially those of Douglas Mawson, they showed that Wilkes had ‘misjudged’ the distance of land to the edge of the ice barrier when he made contact at 165° East to 148° East. After that and as far as the ‘Knox High land’ at about 105° East, ‘his chart is remarkably accurate’ and verified by aerial mapping undertaken during the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958) and since.\textsuperscript{41}

The early disputes about discoveries had also exposed colonial Australians to the competitive nature of Antarctic exploration. Equally, the colonial imagination was seized with Antarctic scientific research, evidenced by the lengthy articles about the science of magnetism and its study that occupied several pages of the colonial press in 1840-41.\textsuperscript{42} The enthusiasm for polar research was so strong in Sydney that local newspapers published exhaustively researched articles on the question of magnetic observations in both the North and the South Polar Regions.\textsuperscript{43} Van Diemen’s Land had the significant advantage of having as its Governor Sir John Franklin, then well-known for his polar exploration. Both he and the intelligent Lady Franklin were keen to advance knowledge within the colony. They believed that the pursuit of science encouraged men of commerce to elevate their minds, even for a short time, from their continual preoccupation with their various business ventures.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{39} Sprent, p. 144. Sprent’s specific figures were ‘longitude 140deg. 2 min. 31 sec. E. and lat. 66deg. 45 min. S.’ See Map at p. 46A for clarification geographic coordinates.
\textsuperscript{40} See Chapter 3 of this thesis.
\textsuperscript{41} Tyler, p. 153.
\textsuperscript{42} See the Hobart Town Advertiser, 28 February 1840, Sydney Herald with which is incorporated The Colonist, 20 August 1841 on the voyage of James Clark Ross and Sydney Herald, 10 August 1841 also referring to Ross’s voyage.
\textsuperscript{43} See for example Sydney Gazette, 24 April 1841, Sydney Herald 10 August 1841, Sydney Herald with which is incorporated The Colonist, 20 August 1841. The Sydney Herald of 24 April 1841 re-published an article it had copied from the Hobart Town Courier the previous day when the Sydney Herald discovered some discrepancies about the geographic co-ordinates of the American and the British Expeditions.
\textsuperscript{44} Lloyd Robson, A History of Tasmania, Van Diemen’s Land from the Earliest Times to 1855, Volume 1, Melbourne Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 357.
When Ross completed his expeditions to Antarctica in 1843, a significant era in Antarctic exploration had come to an end. As Prescott and Lovering have noted, the days of circumnavigation of the Antarctic continent were over, as was the age of the sailing ship.\textsuperscript{45} The period between Ross's Antarctic expeditions and the resumption of Antarctic scientific expeditions in the 1890s has been described by Antarctic scholars as 'the period of averted interest'.\textsuperscript{46} Grenfell Price notes that this expression was used by Mawson in 1935, although Hunter Christie accurately ascribes its origins to H.R. Mill.\textsuperscript{47} Its repeated usage by explorers and historians alike reflects the fact that after Ross there was indeed a lull in Antarctic exploration. However, the expression is misleading. It does not take into account the significant interest, within the international scientific community, in coordinating another international effort to map the Antarctic. Nor does it take into account the ambition of the Australian colonies to organise an Antarctic expedition to the area south of Australia.

An enthusiastic proponent of an expedition to sail from an Australian port was the Victorian resident Georg Balthasar von Neumayer, whose interest lay in terrestrial magnetism. Neumayer was convinced that this field of science would continue to be undeveloped while the Antarctic remained unexplored. He determined to establish a magnetic observatory in Melbourne and to send a purely scientific expedition to Antarctica.\textsuperscript{48} Although Neumayer was unsuccessful in attracting financial support in Melbourne, on his return to his native Germany he was given a grant of £2,000 from the King of Bavaria, Maximilian II. While this was not enough for an expedition, Neumayer was able to erect an observatory in Melbourne, which he achieved with the grudging support of the colonial government in 1857.\textsuperscript{49} Neumayer never fulfilled his ambition to send out an Antarctic expedition from Melbourne, and he returned to Germany in 1864. There he became the Director of the German Marine Observatory at Hamburg and worked closely with leading British scientists to gain support for the resumption of Antarctic exploration. Interestingly, H.R. Mill of the London Royal Geographical Society attributed

\textsuperscript{45} Lovering and Prescott, p. 122.  
\textsuperscript{46} cited in Price, p. 8.  
\textsuperscript{47} Christie, p. 143.  
\textsuperscript{48} Swan, p. 34.  
\textsuperscript{49} The Victorian Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Debates, Volume II, 1856-7, pp. 1033-5 cited in Swan, pp. 34-35.
Neumayer’s interest in resuming Antarctic exploration to his ‘long residence in Australia’.  

Neumayer was a visionary who saw a chance for colonial Australia to be at the forefront of Antarctic scientific exploration. But colonial Australia, during the time of Neumayer’s residence in Melbourne, was not yet ready for such visionaries. In his autobiography, Mill wrote that colonial Melbourne had surrendered a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of Antarctic research, and that Neumayer had tried and failed to ‘rouse the interest of Australians in the great unknown areas of Antarctica’.  

Mill’s harsh judgment takes little account of the realities of the time. Neumayer arrived in Melbourne in 1852, one year after the declaration of the colony of Victoria and the finding of gold. The colony was preoccupied with other weighty matters, such as coping with the thousands of immigrants, including Neumayer, who flocked to the Victorian goldfields. These developments would have put a strain on the most efficient administrative infrastructure, let alone that of a colony less than twenty years old.

The Australian colonies held the obvious attraction of proximity for those interested in conducting Antarctic scientific research. One such person was M.F. Maury, the Superintendent of the United States Hydrographic Office. Maury wrote to the British Admiralty in 1861, urging them to consider sending an Antarctic expedition from the colonies for the purpose of studying oceanographical and meteorological problems. He suggested that, as Australia was only one week’s distance by steamship from the Antarctic mainland, its ports could be used as bases for a reconnaissance trip to extend for one season. Following that, other expeditions, lasting two or three years, should set out from Melbourne for work at the Antarctic base. Maury believed that the project should be international in nature, comprising parties from the various maritime nations.  

Like the vision of Neumayer, that of Maury remained an idea for which colonial Australia was not yet ready.

---

52 Swan notes that Georg Balthasar von Neumayer arrived in Melbourne in 1852 and ‘roughed it’ for two years at the Bendigo goldfields and as a seaman on the Victorian coast. See Swan, p. 34.
53 In 1851 the Port Phillip District separated from the Colony of New South Wales to become the Colony of Victoria.
54 Swan, p. 33.
The nineteenth century, as Mill has observed, was a unique period in human history for the rapid advance of natural science. Such interest led to the formation of scientific societies. The three international expeditions which concluded with that of Ross were an example of that interest. Australia also formed its own colonial societies. In 1854 the Royal Society of Victoria was founded in Melbourne. Together with the Victorian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, which was established in 1883, it convened the first Australian Antarctic Exploration Committee in 1886. Despite the enthusiasm of its members for such exploration, neither the Victorian nor the older New South Wales Royal Society was able to interest colonial governments in committing resources to any Antarctic expedition. In the following century, these bodies would evolve and expand into an influential interest group that would successfully lobby the Federal Government to throw its support behind Antarctic scientific exploration. Before the close of the nineteenth century, however, Australia’s learned institutions became seized with the overwhelming ambition to send out a combined colonial research expedition.

After the forming of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia in the mid-1880s with branches in all of the colonies, its members, such as cartographer E.F. Du Faur and Baron F. von Mueller suggested the Society should look to the Antarctic region for the ‘grandest results’ in geographical science. Du Faur had been Chief Draftsman at the Crown Lands Office in Sydney and Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, was the Victorian Government botanist. Together they urged this prospect on the respective branches of the Society. Du Faur believed that Antarctic scientific research was necessary because the Australian climate was affected by Antarctic weather conditions.

Swan has indicated that when geographical societies were formed in the Australian colonies, they believed that one way to divert colonial enthusiasm from exploiting the resources of the land to Antarctic exploration was through a campaign

---

56 Swan, pp. 46-49.
57 See Swan, Chapters 3 and 4.
58 These words were spoken by Baron F. von Mueller in his address at the inaugural meeting of the Victorian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, Swan, p. 40.
of 'strong and sustained publicity'. The Melbourne press obliged. In an article in the Melbourne Leader, D. Harrison wrote that 'Australians must bestir themselves. It is part of their destiny to explore these southern solitudes'. Yet, in 1886 when the Hon J.G. Duffy, a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, moved that the colony of Victoria should fund an Antarctic expedition, he was ridiculed. The press, on the other hand, maintained its support for Antarctic exploration. The Age raised the question of Antarctic exploration and believed that Duffy's proposal should be supported.

T.H. Baughman has described the attitude of the Australian colonies to Antarctic exploration as shortsighted. Swan made a similar statement earlier and added that the scientific community's promotion of a scientific research expedition was unlikely to attract financial support from colonial governments, as most parliamentarians represented 'commercial and pastoral interests'. Since the establishment of the Victorian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia in 1884, von Mueller, its President at the time, referred to the need for an Antarctic research expedition. Within two years the Australian Antarctic Exploration Committee, comprising members of the Victorian branches of the Royal Society and Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, was established with goals to promote public awareness in Antarctic scientific research and investigation of commercial possibilities.

Addressing the Tasmanian Branch of the Royal Society, Sprunt suggested that if there were to be commercial gains from such an expedition, both the Victorian and Queensland Premiers would probably support it. He went further by suggesting that it was 'incumbent' on Australia to take part in exploring the region.

In his paper to the Royal Society of Tasmania he reminded his audience that

We aspire to be the leading power in these Southern Seas, we are gradually setting up a Monroe Doctrine of our own, and we are working ourselves into a perfectly hysterical condition at the bare

---

60 Swan, p. 46.
61 Leader, Melbourne, 10 January 1885 cited in Swan, p. 46.
62 The Age, Melbourne, 22 May 1886.
63 Baughman, Chapter 2.
64 Swan, p. 56.
65 The paragraphs relating to the establishment of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia and the first Antarctic Committee have been summarised from Swan, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 and Baughman, Chapter 2.
66 Sprunt, p. 154.
thought of Frenchmen or Germans poaching upon what we consider our preserves. 67

When Swan quoted Sprent’s reference to the Monroe Doctrine, he explained that it related to the growing Australian concerns about European activity in the Pacific region generally. Swan observed, also, that it was an interesting development in the idea of a Monroe Doctrine that, as early as the 1880s, leading voices like Sprent’s had already extended ‘Australia’s sphere of interest and activity to Antarctica’. 68 In fact, Sprent was conveying some confusing messages. While promoting the extension of an Australian Monroe Doctrine to Antarctica, he was also advocating courage rather than concern about the prospect of Australians joining with other ‘Geographical Societies of England, Germany, Italy and Denmark’ to undertake work in Antarctica. He personally believed that this was ‘very good policy’, although others might not be persuaded to see things in the same way.69

Sprent’s advocacy for a Monroe Doctrine may also indicate that, while leading Australian voices might be borrowing ideas from the United States of America, they did not fully understand the consequences of translating these ideas into policies in the Australian context. After all, Sprent was actually inviting several other European powers besides Britain to come to Antarctica. His likely intention was to encourage colonial initiative in Antarctic exploration, as he warned that Australia should not expect to be supported by the full force of the British Empire ‘unless we can prove that our aim is calculated to promote the welfare of the Empire as well as our own’.70 The Victorian Branch of the Royal Society believed Sprent

---

67 Sprent, p. 154, also quoted in Swan, pp. 57-58. As Swan has noted, reference to an Australian Monroe Doctrine related to the growing concern amongst the leadership of the Australian colonies with regard to the activities of some European powers in the Pacific. In particular, German interest in New Guinea led the Queensland colonial Government to attempt to annex that territory in 1883. That same year a convention of all Australian colonies met in Sydney to express their concern at French activity in New Caledonia and the New Hebrides and to protest against any foreign power being permitted to acquire fresh territory in the Pacific region south of the equator. These concerns were relayed to the British Government, which in 1887 signed a convention with the French Government placing the New Hebrides under a joint Anglo-French Condominium (Swan, p. 58). The Monroe Doctrine takes its name from President James Monroe, of the United States of America. In his seventh annual address to Congress on 2 December 1823, Monroe warned European powers not to interfere in the Western Hemisphere, stating “that the American continents...are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.” The Monroe Doctrine became a cornerstone of future U.S. foreign policy.’ Monroe Doctrine, Avalon Project at Yale Law School: Documents in Law, History and diplomacy. www.Avalon.law.yale.edu.

68 Swan, p. 58.

69 Sprent, p. 154.

70 Sprent, p. 154.
reflected the general views of the Branch, particularly those of the Antarctic Exploration Committee. In 1887, the Antarctic Exploration Committee began to lobby the Victorian government and to interest the local press, as well as scientific societies in the other colonies. Further afield, the Committee sought to interest the Antarctic Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science ‘and other influential persons’ in London.

The Antarctic Exploration Committee, with its base in Victoria, succeeded in changing the government’s mind to the extent that the Premier of Victoria instructed his Agent-General in London to discuss the possibility of an Antarctic expedition. News of the possibility of an Antarctic expedition being organised in the Australian colonies excited wide attention, including from continental Europe, particularly if such an expedition could be linked with a whaling enterprise. Offers of advice and information, service in the Antarctic, vessel charter and sale were received from London, Peterhead and Dundee in Scotland, as well as Sandefjord in Norway. None of these offers doubted that the expedition would be a combined science and commercial venture. Probably due to the international interest the expedition had engendered, most of the Australian colonial governments, as well as the scientific societies, now threw their support behind the venture.

However, the initiative of the colonial ‘upstarts’ was received with some disdain in London. Sir Erasmus Ommanney, the secretary to the Antarctic Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, while ‘sympathetic’, was ‘strongly of opinion that the mother country only can adequately equip and conduct a suitable scientific expedition, which must be naval’. Ommanney anticipated that two equipped steamers would be necessary, at the cost of approximately £200,000. Nonetheless, he regarded ‘with favour’ the suggestion

---

71 Letter Royal Society of Victoria to the Royal Society of Tasmania, 19 September 1886, Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania, Royal Society of Tasmania Library at the Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania. All Royal Society documents quoted in this Chapter are located at the Morris Miller Library.
76 Progress Report of the Antarctic Exploration Committee, 1887, p. 3.
78 Progress Report of the Antarctic Exploration Committee, 1887, p. 3. The view of Sir Erasmus Ommanney was also quoted in Swan, p. 55.
that an Australian reconnaissance expedition in a whaler might produce ‘extremely valuable’ results.\(^\text{79}\) The colonials were firmly put in their place by this patronising response. If the proposal for a joint Antarctic expedition coming from colonial Australia was deemed unpalatable by the British scientists, the Victorian Agent-General in London suggested the formation of a whaling company as a more widely attractive proposition. However, as the Antarctic Exploration Committee pointed out in its report, ‘the scientific objects would be secondary, if not neglected, unless strictly provided for in the conditions of agreement’.\(^\text{80}\) The matter went no further.

Within the colonies, the enthusiasm of the scientists was fired up rather than dimmed by the British response. On 8 April 1887, the Royal Society of Victoria wrote to its sister society in Tasmania, advising that the Victorian Government was prepared to commit funds in its budget estimates for a research expedition, provided other colonies also contributed. The Victorian Premier also undertook to write to the other Premiers about the proposition.\(^\text{81}\) In the belief that representations from members of the Tasmanian Branch of the Royal Society would add weight to the Victorian Government’s approach, the Victorian Royal Society asked its sister organisation in Hobart to represent the cause to the Tasmanian Premier.\(^\text{82}\) The tone of the letter was urgent as the Victorian Royal Society thought an Antarctic research expedition was an ‘appropriate method of signalising the centenary of the foundation of Australian settlement’.\(^\text{83}\) If the colonial governments agreed to the plan, an expedition should be ready to sail from Melbourne on 15 October 1887.\(^\text{84}\)

There was unanimous agreement at the April meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania that a research expedition should proceed with the support of the colonies.\(^\text{85}\) However, as the Premier of Tasmania, P.O. Fysh, warned, the scientific aspect of the proposal ‘would undoubtedly commend itself’ to most present at the meeting, ‘but to those who were utilitarian in their views they would have to speak

\(^{79}\) Progress Report of the Antarctic Exploration Committee, 1887, p. 3.

\(^{80}\) Progress Report of the Antarctic Exploration Committee, 1887, pp. 3-4.

\(^{81}\) Letter from the Royal Society of Victoria, 8 April 1887, in Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings for 1887 Printed at The Mercury Office, Hobart, 1888, p. vii.

\(^{82}\) Letter from the Royal Society of Victoria, 8 April 1887, p. vii.

\(^{83}\) Letter from the Royal Society of Victoria, 8 April 1887, p. vii.

\(^{84}\) Recommendations from the Antarctic Committee, appointed by the Royal Society of Victoria and the Royal Geographical Society of Australia (Victorian Branch) to the Hon The Premier, in Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings for 1887, Proceedings, April, Printed at The Mercury Office, Hobart, 1888, p. ix.

\(^{85}\) Royal Society of Tasmania, Proceedings, April, p. ix.
of the commercial value of enterprises of this kind'.86 Premier Fysh, who a few years later would become part of the movement for Federation, suggested that, as the colonies were developing a 'federal spirit', such a venture would help to
cultivate it.87

Sprent urged prompt action, as otherwise they would be forestalled by a
Swedish expedition being proposed by Baron Nordenskiöld under the patronage of
the King of Sweden. Sprent declared bluntly, after the 'encouraging' remarks made
by the Premier, that 'it was very desirable to strike while the iron was hot'.88 The
Royal Society of Tasmania advised the Premier that an amount of £10,000 was
necessary to fit out 'vessels' for the expedition and suggested that the Tasmanian
Government make a contribution of £500. The Premier suggested that for every £1
or £2 of public expenditure £1 in private subscription should be sought.89 He hoped
to see Tasmania 'carrying out the traditions of its fathers', observing that the
'Anglo-Saxon race were a discovering people'.90 Judging from the various
expressions by the members of the Royal Society in Tasmania, the quest for the
Antarctic region lying just beneath them had become a focus for emerging
Australian nationalism.

Undeterred by the initial reaction of the British Antarctic Committee, both
the Australian scientific bodies and colonial governments continued to press for a
joint expedition supported by Australian and British money. Having made
representations to the Colonial Office, the Agent-General for Tasmania forwarded a
cutting from The Times of 20 April 1888, announcing the British Government's
'unfavourable answer to the representations of the Colonial Office on behalf of the
Australian proposal for a joint Antarctic expedition.'91 According to The Times
article, the Australian request 'was strongly supported by the Colonial Office, as
well as by the Royal and the Royal Geographical Societies'.92 However, the British
'Treasury has returned an unfavourable answer' to the request to place £5,000 on its

86 Royal Society of Tasmania, Proceedings, April, p. ix.
87 Royal Society of Tasmania, Proceedings, p. ix.
88 Royal Society of Tasmania, Proceedings, April, p. ix.
89 Royal Society of Tasmania, Proceedings, May, p. xxvii.
90 Royal Society of Tasmania, Proceedings, May, p. xxvii.
91 Letter Acting Agent-General for Tasmania to the Hon The Premier of Tasmania 20 January 1888,
   Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania.
92 Copy of The Times 20 January 1888, Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania.
Estimates, while the Australian colonies contributed another £5,000.93 The Times article claimed that the grounds of the Treasury’s refusal ‘are reasonable’, because ‘the Australians themselves and their representatives here have not shown very great enthusiasm on behalf of the proposed expedition’.94 The article also observed that ‘the learned societies of Australia’ were enthusiastic about the need for such an expedition, but had been unable to communicate that enthusiasm to their various governments. The Times understood that the Government of Victoria had originally proposed to contribute £10,000, but that this amount was not forthcoming. The article went on to criticize the paltry amount proposed for such an expedition, as it would ‘only suffice for a run round the edge of the ice’, and would not be sufficient for exploration work. Had they been serious, the article continued, ‘the Imperial government would have had some difficulty in refusing their request, had an amount greater than £5,000 been offered by the Australians’.95 It is unclear whether The Times article was communicating the views of the British Government only or supporting a press statement made by the British Government about the Australian initiative.96

The colonial mood and determination can be gauged by the extraordinary events that took place once rejection from London was absorbed. In 1890 an invitation to link with another expedition came from the very source that the Royal Society in Tasmania was hoping the joint imperial effort would forestall. The Antarctic Committee in Victoria accepted an offer from Baron Oscar Dickson, a Swedish industrialist, to defray ‘one half’ of the costs of an expedition, ‘provided that the other half, not exceeding £5,000’ came from the colonies. The expedition would be under the command of Baron Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld, and the Geographical Society of Victoria hoped the branches in the other colonies would cooperate. Besides subscriptions from the members of the various scientific societies, it was proposed to commence a campaign of public fund-raising comprising public lectures and meetings.97 Tasmania greeted the news with

93 Copy of The Times 20 January 1888, Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania.
94 Copy of The Times 20 January 1888, Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania.
95 Copy of The Times 20 January 1888, Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania.
96 Swan must also have seen The Times article because he claims that it ‘supported the Australian plan’, although he does not say how he could have deduced that from the article. Swan, p. 57.
97 Letter from Hon Secretary (Mr. A.C. Macdonald), Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, Melbourne, 30 July 1890 printed in Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings for 1890, Proceedings, May, Printed at The Mercury Office, Hobart, 1891, p. xxi. Baron Adolf Erik
exuberance. The Anglican Bishop of Hobart, Bishop Montgomery, exclaimed that he had already mused in London that 'he might yet have the South Pole in his diocese'.

Although there was some popular enthusiasm for a combined scientific-commercial expedition, the Royal Geographical Society of Victoria believed 'the tide of public opinion' was turning. There was now apparent favour for the speedy resumption of exploration. The Victorian Branch attributed the change in the public mood to the recent efforts of *The Argus*, which had published some leading articles on the subject. *The Argus* believed that a 'state, like an individual, requires to make sacrifices occasionally in the cause of civilisation and without any prospect of immediate profit'. *The Argus* also opined that the 'whole world is bound to take notice' of the work Australia was soon to embark on.

The Australian colonial press had taken up the cause of the scientists and consistently applied pressure on political leaders to take a leading role and help the scientists to achieve their Antarctic goal. In Melbourne *The Argus* proclaimed:

> we have a historic connection with Antarctic research; and our proximity to those unknown regions has ever since indicated to scientific men that Australia should take a leading part in any such expedition of discovery.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* in various articles expressed emerging Australian nationalism when it noted that there was 'no reason why the flag of Australia should not float over this vast unclaimed and unnamed territory'.

In Sweden the expedition was being touted as the 'combined Swedish-Victorian Exploring Expedition to the Antarctic Seas'. The Swedish Foreign Minister, C. Lewenhaupt, suggested that the organising committee should appoint someone to be stationed in London in order to allow for faster communication. The

Nordenskiöld was the uncle of Dr Otto Nordenskjöld, who led a Swedish Antarctic expedition in 1901. Note the difference in the spelling of the names.

99 Copy of Progress Report of the Joint-Committee of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Victorian Branch) and the Royal Society of Victoria read on 22 August 1890, p. 3.
100 Quoted in the Copy of Progress Report of the Joint-Committee, p. 4.
101 Quoted in the Copy of Progress Report of the Joint-Committee, p. 4.
104 Quoted in the Copy of Progress Report of the Joint-Committee p. 5.
venture would now proceed and Barons Nordenskiöld and Dickson would defray half the cost of the expedition with ‘Australia’ contributing £5,000.105 Without hesitation, the Royal Society and the Royal Geographical Society of Victoria expressed satisfaction and delight in the prospect that the ‘red cross of Sweden and the starry cross of Australia planted side by side will at some future but not far distant day open their folds to the Antarctic breezes’.106 By mid-1891 the prospect of an Antarctic expedition had gained further momentum as various colonial governments pledged funds.107

That a joint expedition was being organised from the colony of Victoria with the diplomatic representative of Sweden and Norway was accepted without fuss or fanfare about Victoria’s international status.108 If such questions were raised, they were not recorded in the Progress Report of the Victorian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia and the Royal Society. Nor was it clear that the scientists understood the consequences of their action in establishing a precedent for foreign contact. It is intriguing to speculate that, had the joint expedition taken place, Australia’s external relations might well have been exercised more boldly at a future time. But the proposed expedition was abandoned. According to Swan, the Swedish side withdrew its proposal because they saw no evidence that the Australian side had collected sufficient funds.109 The Australian side did, in fact, collect funds. But, according to a delegation of scientists that met with the Federal Government in 1911 when seeking funds for Douglas Mawson’s first Antarctic Expedition, the funds that were collected twenty years earlier had been placed into a ‘boom bank and were lost’.110

105 Copy of Progress Report of the Joint-Committee, p. 7. The Report in this instance referred to the colonies by the collective name ‘Australia’. The same report also referred to the ‘Australian colonies’.
106 Quoted in the Copy of Progress Report of the Joint-Committee, p. 12.
107 Funds placed on the estimates of the colonial governments’ budgets were: New South Wales £2,000, Queensland £1,000 and Tasmania £300. Quoted in Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings for 1890, Proceedings, May and June, Printed at The Mercury Office, Hobart, 1891, pp. v-viii.
108 Norway and Sweden were in Union between 1814 and 1905.
109 Swan, pp. 75-77.
110 After a financial boom in the 1880s, the Australian colonies experienced a severe depression in the 1890s. Refer report of deputation which waited upon the Minister for External Affairs in Melbourne on 23 March 1911, with a ‘Request for Financial Assistance in Connection with the proposed Mawson Antarctic Expedition’, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1915/5159, pp. 5-6.
Yet, even during the ‘bust’ of the 1890s, Antarctic exploration continued to be kept alive amongst the scientific bodies within the colonies. In 1893, when H.J. Bull, a colonial settler from Norway, proposed to whale in Antarctic waters, he wrote to von Mueller and asked for scientists to join his whaling expedition. Bull stated that, while his interest was in Antarctic whaling, there was room for some scientific work. As Swan has observed, the Committee was disillusioned with these combined proposals, although they still maintained an interest in the possibility of mixed expeditions, but not in the middle of ‘the financial depression’. As it turned out, this particular whaling expedition made history. On 24 January 1895, a party that included Captain Leonard Kristensen, H. J. Bull and Carsten Egeberg Borchgrevink landed at Robertson Bay near Cape Adare in today’s Ross Dependency. Borchgrevink, another Melbourne settler, originally from Norway, was given a place on the expedition as a ‘generally useful hand’. Later that year, although not invited to do so, Borchgrevink delivered a paper at the Sixth International Congress. Mill noted that Borchgrevink insistently demanded a place in the programme, and this was readily granted when we learned that he had just returned from the Ross Sea, which had been visited for the first time since its discovery in 1841.

Within three years, the ‘energetic young Australian schoolmaster’, as Mill described him, had attracted sufficient funds to lead an expedition to the Ross Sea. Borchgrevink’s expedition was fully financed by Sir George Newnes, a successful London publisher. In the Antarctic summer of 1898-1899, Borchgrevink sailed to Cape Adare in the Southern Cross, under the blue ensign. The British Museum provided a naturalist, Lieutenant W. Colbeck, a former Royal Navy officer, as the first mate. Louis Bernacchi, a Tasmanian, was appointed

---

111 In 1893 von Mueller was President of the Victorian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, and a member of the Antarctic Exploration Committee.
112 Swan, p. 78. See also Baughman, p. 60.
114 Swan, p. 83.
117 Sir George Newnes was a wealthy London publisher having founded several magazines, and other commercial enterprises. He was the publisher of The Strand Magazine, the first to publish the Sherlock Holmes mysteries.
physicist. The expedition even received royal recognition when the Duke of York, later King George V, who was the Honorary President of the Royal Geographical Society, became patron of the expedition and presented it with ‘a large Union Jack’.\textsuperscript{121}

Clements Markham, President of the British Royal Geographical Society, was bitterly jealous of Borchgrevink for having been able to attract such significant financial support and thwarting his and the British Royal Geographical Society’s plan to send a national expedition to crown the twentieth century. Mill recorded in his autobiography that Markham had warned him
to have nothing to do with this expedition, as the leader was incompetent, the ship rotten, and the money Newnes had given would have sufficed to set the National Expedition on its legs.\textsuperscript{122}

However, Mill ignored Markham and attended a luncheon hosted by Newnes on board the *Southern Cross* ‘to bid God-speed to the British Antarctic Expedition.’\textsuperscript{123} Baughman has suggested that criticism of Borchgrevink was unfounded and his preparations ‘were remarkably thorough’.\textsuperscript{124} On the other hand, Swan identified sympathy in Melbourne for Markham’s observations.\textsuperscript{125} These early national rivalries and jealousies would continue to overshadow heroic exploits and embroil the heroes themselves. In time, they would translate into rivalries over territorial sovereignty claims that would sour relations between nations.

In Australia, particularly in Hobart, from where the expedition descended to the ice, the public mood, even the mood of the Royal Society, was one of excitement. Borchgrevink recorded the event, recalling that ‘we were met by small steamers and boats with display of bunting’, and were cheered by ‘thousands of people’ on Hobart’s main pier.\textsuperscript{126} Bernacchi recalled a ‘most hearty reception’.\textsuperscript{127} A

\textsuperscript{120} For a comprehensive study of the *Southern Cross* Expedition see Janet Crawford, *That First Antarctic Winter: The story of the Southern Cross Expedition of 1898-1900 as told in the diaries of Louis Charles Bernacchi*, South Latitude Research Limited, Christchurch, 1998. The author is the grand-daughter of Louis Charles Bernacchi. Another detailed study is Baughman, ‘British Contribution to Antarctic Exploration’.
\textsuperscript{121} Crawford, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{122} Mill, *An Autobiography*, p. 144
\textsuperscript{123} Crawford, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{124} Baughman, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{125} Swan, p. 94.
‘conversazione’, under the auspices of the Royal Society of Tasmania and chaired by the Governor, Viscount Gormanston, was given at the Hobart Town Hall on the eve of the expedition’s departure in December 1898. According to the records of the Royal Society of Tasmania, the ‘welcome given to the expeditionary party was brilliantly successful’. The Governor observed that it was the largest gathering he had presided over in Tasmania.

Telegrams extending congratulations and best wishes were received from the learned societies around the colonies. All of them spoke with one voice, wishing the expedition good achievements in scientific results and in extending geographic knowledge of the region. In anticipation of the success of the expedition, the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia lamented that the ‘expedition is neither officially aided, nor officially recognised by the Australian government’, but believed that this would not detract from its value. The Governor of Tasmania did not hesitate to point out Borchgrevink’s Scandinavian origins, noting that the same people had ‘laid the foundation of the Great British nation’. Amid cheers, the Governor quickly added that Borchgrevink was, however, ‘only partly a Scandinavian’ and was a ‘British citizen and loyal subject of Her Majesty Queen Victoria’. While Markham was complaining that the funds provided by Newnes could have established a national expedition, the colonies adopted the expedition and rationalised its ‘Britishness’.

When the expedition returned to Hobart, they were eagerly welcomed in the ‘form of a conversazione’. The enthusiasm was understandable. The expedition was the first to winter on the Antarctic continent. The ‘Order of Service of Thanksgiving’ was conducted on board the Southern Cross by the Very Rev. Dean

---

130 Royal Society of Tasmania, ‘The British Antarctic Expedition: Welcome to the Leader and Officers of the Southern Cross,’ pp. xvi-xxii.
132 Royal Society of Tasmania, ‘The British Antarctic Expedition: Welcome to the Leader and Officers of the Southern Cross,’ p. xvi-
133 Royal Society of Tasmania, ‘The British Antarctic Expedition: Welcome to the Leader and Officers of the Southern Cross,’ p. xviii.
of Hobart. Prayers were said and hymns sung. At the Hobart Town Hall, another glittering event took place and at the beginning of proceedings ‘the city organist played English and Norwegian national anthems’. Telegrams from Australia and around the world were read, including ‘Warmest Congratulations’ from Clements Markham, while from Norway, the University of Christiania ecstatically exclaimed ‘Your success creating sensation’. An additional source of pride for Tasmanians was in having one of their own as an Antarctic pioneer, Louis Bernacchi. Today, Bernacchi stands in bronze together with some huskies on the water front of the city of Hobart.

Scholars have described the period of Antarctic exploration in the first decades of the twentieth century as the ‘heroic age’. As Price had indicated, it was so named by the Antarctic scholar J. Gordon Hayes because the ‘heroic age’ produced outstanding explorers such as Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen and Mawson. According to Mawson, the ‘Heroic Era’ ended with Shackleton’s death on the sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia in 1922. These twentieth century heroes achieved considerable success in the fields of Antarctic discovery and science. Their achievements guaranteed each a place in history, brought honour and prestige to their countries and, through historical writings, each of them became a household name. With the advent of cinematography, the heroic status of these twentieth century Antarctic explorers gained even greater proportions. But these heroes stood on the shoulders of those who went before, ‘the forerunners of the later adventurers’. Here Baughman was referring to Clements Markham for his significant Arctic exploration, Carsten Borchgrevink, the Australian colonial who led the first wintering expedition to Antarctica, and William S. Bruce, a Scot who led a purely scientific expedition to the treacherous Weddell Sea and discovered

---

137 Christie, Chapters xi, xii, Swan, pp. 11-13, pp. 117, 121, Price, p. 8.
139 Price, p. 11.
140 Baughman, p. vii.
Coats Land, later part of the Falkland Islands Dependencies (FID), the first British sovereignty claim. All three Baughman described as 'preeminent' for their pioneering work.\footnote{Baughman, p. viii.}

Antarctica had been part of the Australian consciousness since the early colonial period. By the close of the nineteenth century, that consciousness had developed into a desire to control the area to Australia's south. The colonial ambition for Antarctic domination was neither an idea that had come formally from imperial policies, nor one for which imperial guidance was sought. Indeed, it was an ambition which the imperial government discouraged. After Federation, the next generation of scientists would continue the quest for Antarctic territory and would play a decisive role in winning the support of the Federal Government. The second phase of Australian Antarctic activity was about to begin.
Chapter 2

1901-1909: The Spirit is Willing but the Purse is Weak

The first decade of the twentieth century not only inaugurated the so-called heroic age of Antarctic exploration, but commenced the politicisation of Antarctica, when the British Government extended a sovereignty claim over the FID in 1908. That move, made without consultation of the other members of the Empire, extended the British Empire into a region that was virtually unknown and still the destination for international exploration. The intrusion of politics into Antarctica during this period began its transformation into a destination for national territorial claims and sovereign control over Antarctic resources. Although in the period before the Great War Australian governments were not involved in the foreign policy decisions of the Empire, the new Australian Federation quickly began to demonstrate that it was an empire builder as well as a nation builder when it called for the purchase of the Kerguelen Islands from France.¹ The first years of Federation also witnessed the establishment of a strong collaboration between the scientific community and the Australian Government in matters relating to Antarctica.

When the Australian public service marked its first century, Defence Secretary Allan Hawke recalled that ‘One of the first acts of the new Commonwealth Government was to send a secret agent to the New Hebrides to report on what the French were up to. Another was to write to London arguing that the French should be asked to hand over the Kerguelens to Australia.’² These two territories, each of which formed a foreign enclave within Australia’s sphere of interest, were considered as posing an unacceptable risk to Australian security.³

¹ The Kerguelen Islands are a sub-Antarctic Archipelago in the southern Indian Ocean – below Madagascar.
³ Memorandum prepared by the Pacific Branch, Prime Minister’s Department, ‘The Spheres of Interest of Australia and New Zealand’, 6 November 1920, NAA: Series A 4670, Item15. This memorandum summarised Australian external affairs concerns since the latter part of the nineteenth century and was designed to provide advice to the Government at the time. The New Hebrides, today known as Vanuatu, is an island group located in the South Pacific. The islands were colonised by both Britain and France. France had taken possession of Kerguelen Islands situated in the Southern
In 1901, a flurry of correspondence from Sir Henry Copeland, the Agent-General for New South Wales in London, relating to the purchase of the Kerguelen Islands from France, preoccupied Edmund Barton, Australia’s first Prime Minister. Copeland had been a politician in the New South Wales colonial legislature and was considered a mining expert. Copeland claimed to be concerned about the Empire’s shipping and trade routes and had produced a pamphlet entitled ‘Kerguelen Island and Australian Commerce’, in which he advanced his argument. He appealed to Barton to consider the strategic value to Australia’s trade routes and suggested that, in the event of a European war, the Suez Canal would be blocked to Australian shipping, requiring Australia to ‘fall back on the Cape route’. In addition, Copeland argued, the location of the Kerguelens between Australia and South Africa would afford France, or Russia, a stronghold and place Australian trade in a precarious position. Copeland urged Barton to raise with the Imperial Government the question of a ‘friendly exchange or purchase’.

At the time, no External Affairs officials had been posted to London to maintain liaison with the British Government on foreign policy matters, although the Department of External Affairs was one of the first Departments of State established in 1901. However, the former colonies had Agents-General in London to represent them, particularly on matters of trade and commerce. Copeland was one of these. Although not instructed to do so, Copeland had advanced the idea of the strategic importance of the Kerguelens to the Empire with both the Colonial Office and the Admiralty. The Colonial Secretary observed that he was unaware of the strategic importance of the Kerguelens, prior to French annexation. Admiral R.N. Custance, Director of Naval Intelligence, did not believe the Kerguelens posed a risk to the Empire’s shipping, adding that the enemy would not risk its ships in the turbulent

Ocean between South Africa and Australia, on three separate occasions: in 1774, 1776 and again in 1893. See Bush, Volume II, Doc. FR13021772, pp. 475-476.


Letter Henry Copeland to Edmund Barton, 1 February 1901.

Letter Henry Copeland to Edmund Barton, 1 February 1901.

Before 1901 each colony had appointed an Agent-General as its representative in London. This practice continued after Federation. The first Australian High Commissioner was Sir George Reid from 1910 to 1916. Reid was posted by Alfred Deakin after Deakin succeeded him as Prime Minister. See Russel Ward, *A Nation For A Continent: the history of Australia 1901-1975*, Heinemann, Victoria, 1977, p. 55.
sub-Antarctic waters. The Admiralty representative also pointed out that it was 'too late' to act, as the French flag had already been hoisted over the islands. The French Government had taken possession of the Kerguelen Islands on three separate occasions: in 1774, 1776 and again in 1893. The first occasion coincided with Cook's circumnavigation of the Antarctic Circle and the second was shortly after the completion of Cook's second set of voyages. Having taken the trouble to assert their claims to the archipelago, it was unlikely that the French would give them up easily.

Barton's Cabinet did not share the British Government's assessment. Instead, it accepted Copeland's view of the strategic value of the Kerguelens to Australia's shipping route. On 15 April 1901, Barton asked the Governor-General to inform the Secretary of State for the Colonies 'that Ministers have had under their consideration the subject of the acquisition by Great Britain of Kerguelen Island in the Southern Indian ocean'. Barton advised that he and his Ministers regretted that the matter had escaped the notice of 'His Majesty's Ministers', before the annexation of the Kerguelen Islands by France in 1893. He asked the Governor-General to impress upon the Colonial Office that 'Ministers are deeply impressed with the desirableness of taking measures for the greater security of one of the most important trade routes of the Empire.'

However, before the Colonial Office could respond, the British press was already carrying the story. According to Copeland, the press items appeared to be a Cabinet leak. Even the French press picked up the story and expressed its bemusement as to why Australia was interested in a group of islands that had 'no point of interest or value'. The French press also reported that a Quai d'Orsay official denied any knowledge of any Australian interest in the Kerguelens and

---

9 'Extract from Note by Admiral R.N. Custance, Director of Naval Intelligence,' 30 January 1901, attached to Letter Henry Copeland to Edmund Barton, 1 February 1901.
10 'Extract from Note by Admiral R.N. Custance'.
12 Minute Edmund Barton to His Excellency the Governor-General, 15 April 1901, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 191/14438.
13 Minute Edmund Barton to His Excellency the Governor-General, 15 April 1901.
14 Minute for His Excellency the Governor-General from Edmund Barton.
16 Extract from La Politique Coloniale, 17 April 1901, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 191/14438, also NAA: Series A 6, Item 1901/869
warned that if any Deputy of the French Parliament voted for the sale of a piece of French territory he would face ‘political extinction’. The flurry of press activity on both sides of the Channel forced Copeland to ask the Editor of the Daily Mail in London to suppress these speculations ‘in the interests of the Empire’.

The Australian Government’s desire to extend its control over its sphere of interest and remove foreign interests is understandable, if viewed within the context of Australia’s desire for an Australian Monroe Doctrine. From the British Government’s point of view, the prospect of war with either Russia or France was unlikely. Besides, the British Admiralty believed France did not pose a danger to British concerns, nor would France risk its ships in the bad weather experienced in those latitudes. The Colonial Secretary was clear in his response to Barton when he stated that it would be ‘useless to approach the French government’. The British Government’s decision held few surprises for Australia. Since the colonial period, Britain’s Eurocentric view had been consistently seen by Australia as British indifference to its specific concerns.

Apart from Australia's political advance on the Kerguelens in 1901, the Barton Government showed little enthusiasm to join in the international effort to explore and map Antarctica. Five European expeditions were preparing to set out, commanded by explorers whose names became synonymous with Antarctic voyaging and the heroic era. A British expedition, which was to be led by a British naval officer, Lieutenant Robert Falcon Scott, in a purpose built ship, the Discovery, planned to explore in the Ross Sea. A German national expedition sailed in the Gauss under the command of the respected Arctic veteran and professor of geology.

---

18 Letter Henry Copeland to Edmund Barton, 19 April 1901, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 191/14438. Also see External Affairs Correspondence Files 1901 ‘Suggested creation of official title “Prince of Australia” and purchase of Kerguelen Is.’ NAA:CRS A 6, Item 1/869.
20 Letter J. Chamberlain to Governor-General, the Earl of Hopetoun, 9 August 1901, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1911/14438
Dr Erich von Drygalski. The Swedish expedition was led by Dr Otto Nordenskjöld, a geologist, whose uncle had unsuccessfully tried to go to Antarctica in the 1880s on a joint Australian-Swedish expedition. The medical doctor and polar enthusiast, Jean-Baptiste Charcot, led the French expedition in the Français. Having abandoned his plans to be part of Scott’s expedition, another experienced polar scientist, Dr William S. Bruce, led his own expedition sailing in the Scotia under the lion standard of Scotland. Dr Bruce was a surgeon and a scientist and had previously explored in the Weddell Sea area.\(^2\) This international descent on Antarctica had been agreed upon at the Seventh International Geographical Congress in Berlin in 1899 as part of an international collaboration.\(^3\) Although sent under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society in London, the British expedition under Scott was the only expedition to be led by a naval officer, rather than a man of science. However, men of science accompanied Scott, including the Australian physicist, Louis Bernacchi.

The twentieth century phase of Antarctic exploration was unlike any other before it. The proposal was to carry out an international scientific advance on Antarctica from all sides.\(^4\) While a collaborative scheme, it was nonetheless fuelled by nationalism.\(^5\) Some national governments provided funds for their expeditions, including in particular those of Germany, England and France. On the whole, however, these expeditions were private ventures, like that of Bruce, whose expedition was financed by donations from the town of Paisley in Scotland. The principal amount was provided by the wealthy thread-making Coats family, whose name was given to the coastline Bruce discovered. In 1908, Coats Land would form part of Britain’s sovereignty claim over the FID.

Although scientific cooperation was meant to drive the expeditions, they engendered strong feelings of nationalism, as each expedition sought to fly its nation’s flag on a piece of the Antarctic continent. Although the Union flag would

---

\(^2\) Christie, pp. 153-154, 159.
\(^5\) See Lüdecke, who argued in her paper that despite the international collaborative effort to explore the Antarctica, the collaboration was fuelled by extreme nationalism.
be called upon in formal ceremonies, Clements Markham, the indefatigable President of the Royal Geographical Society, personally designed ‘The Sledge Flags’, in order to make a connection with the heroic exploits of Englishmen of past eras. He explained in his memoirs that

Knights of Chivalry used flags (called standards) with the Cross of St. George always at the hoist. This was to denote that, whatever family the bearer may belong to, he is first and foremost an Englishman.26

Although the sledge parties would be flying the Cross of St George, Markham saw the expedition as an Empire-wide undertaking. His appeals to the Barton Government for funds, however, fell on barren ground, as the Barton government could not be persuaded to make a contribution. However, an Australian presence was guaranteed in the nomination of Bernacchi as a physicist.

Markham had divided what was perceived as an Antarctic continent into quadrants. In order that a broad approach would be guaranteed, expeditions were invited to choose an area for their activities. These quadrants comprised Victoria (90° to 180° East), Ross (180° East to 90° West), Weddell (90° West to 0°) and Enderby quadrants (0° to 90° East).27 All bore British names, whether that of the monarch or those of British captains, reminding all the national expeditions participating in the collaboration of the origins of these discoveries. Scott would explore the Victoria and Ross quadrants, while Drygalski chose the Weddell and Enderby quadrants.28 As a mark of respect for Drygalski’s work, Mawson later chose not to venture into the area of his activities during his Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE) undertaken between 1911 and 1914. The Swedish expedition under Otto Nordenskjöld’s command explored in the Weddell Quadrant in January 1903, concentrating on the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, as did Charcot’s French expedition in the Antarctic summers of 1904 and 1905.29 No foreign expeditions worked in the area directly beneath Australia, nor did that of Scott, which concentrated its activities in the Ross Sea area. The nationalistic ambitions and international rivalries that travelled side by side to the Antarctic at the turn of

26 Markham with Holland, p. 65.
27 Markham with Holland, p. 11. See Clements Markham’s crude map titled ‘The Antarctic Quadrants’ at p. 63A. The Victoria and Ross Quadrants are shown directly below Australia and New Zealand, the Enderby Quadrant below Africa and the Weddell Quadrant below South America.
28 Markham with Holland, pp. 10-11 and Lüdecke p. 37.
29 Lovering and Prescott, p. 131.
the twentieth century did not necessarily reflect the official policies of any of the national governments. Beck has observed, however, that the politico-legal aspects should not be ignored, as national governments would later call on these expeditions as evidence to strengthen their positions in international law. 30

The Australian scientific community was keen to participate in Markham’s scheme, particularly after Markham had appealed directly to them to assist with funds. 31 On 12 November 1901 a deputation led by A.C. Macdonald, honorary secretary of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, Victorian Branch, and including Bernacchi, met with the Prime Minister to discuss Australian participation and appeal for funds. The deputation believed that Australian government support was appropriate. They pointed out that the Royal Geographical Society in London had secured a donation of £45,000 from the British Government in addition to the full cost of the ship. 32 It is probable that the Australians were unaware that Markham’s success in extracting the sum from the British Government was due to his persistence which, according to Mill, ‘weared the Government into promising to contribute an equal amount as soon as his Society had collected £45,000’. 33 However, the Australian scientists were not averse to employing similar tactics.

Barton was personally sympathetic, but told the deputation that at present the powers of the Constitution prevented the Commonwealth from making a contribution. He informed them that, under the terms of the new Federal Constitution, ‘the Commonwealth had not the same free hand in some respects that the States had.’ 34 Nonetheless, Barton was encouraging and thought that perhaps in a few years the constitutional restrictions on the Commonwealth’s ability to spend money on a ‘great scientific’ project might be eased. In the meantime, the Prime Minister believed ‘that if we granted it unconstitutionally it might have to be taken back again.’ 35 Presumably, Barton had in mind a challenge by the States whose main source of income, customs revenue, was now shared with the Federal Government. 36

30 Beck, The International Politics of Antarctica, p. 29.
34 The Age, 12 November 1901. See also Swan, pp. 104-105
35 The Age, 12 November 12 1901.
Like the medieval mendicant friars appealing for money to help their cause, the scientists similarly suggested that, in giving, the Commonwealth would also receive. The deputation encouraged the Government to grant £1,000. Such a contribution, they said, would benefit the Commonwealth because the *Morning*, the relief vessel for Scott’s research ship the *Discovery*, would be provisioned in Melbourne.\(^{37}\) However, none of the arguments put forward by the deputation caused Barton to change his mind. He advised the scientists that he had already raised the matter in Cabinet without success after receiving a telegram from Markham asking the Parliament ‘to unite with mother country’ by making a grant in order to ensure success.\(^{38}\) All he could now do was to promise ‘to bring the matter again before his colleagues’.\(^{39}\) Understandably, for the scientists who had been trying for the last two decades to participate in Antarctic exploration, Scott’s expedition presented the ideal opportunity. They had calculated that it would be prudent to work cooperatively with other expeditions, particularly those from within the Empire. The scientists were well aware that many an idea for an expedition had foundered as a result of being unable to attract wide financial support.

While personally attracted to the idea of Antarctic expeditions, Barton was not convinced that Australia was ready to support one financially. Tellingly, he had noted in his own handwriting on Markham’s telegram ‘not desirable at this stage to pledge the funds of the Commonwealth’.\(^{40}\) The Minister for Defence, Sir John Forrest, agreed when approached by Barton. In his response, he too indicated his sympathy for Antarctic exploration, but qualified it by saying that he believed that ‘nothing can be done in the direction desired without a vote of Parliament’.\(^{41}\) At the same time, he did not believe that to be a ‘reason why this important matter should be indefinitely postponed or ignored’.\(^{42}\) Forrest also confessed that he had always held the sentiment that the various colonial parliaments should have been more willing to grant even small amounts of money for exploration both in Australia and of the ‘Great Antarctic Ocean’. Consequently, ‘the work has been left, to a large

---

37 *The Age*, 12 November 1901.
38 Telegram Premier from William Huggins, (President, Royal Society) and Clements Markham (President, Royal Geographical Society), London 5 May 1901, NAA: Series A 6 (A 6/1), Item 1901/1585. Although addressed to the ‘Premier’, the telegram was intended for Barton.
39 *The Age*, 12 November 1901.
40 Telegram Premier from William Huggins and Clements Markham.
42 Forrest to Barton 28 January 1902.
extent, to private persons to carry out'.\footnote{Forrest to Barton 28th January 1902.} Forrest’s criticism of the lack of governmental support for exploration is understandable: in his youth he had been a famous explorer, leading three expeditions into the interior of Western Australia. His concern that exploring Australia and its surrounding seas should neither be put off indefinitely nor left in private hands anticipated a time when the Government and the scientists would develop an important partnership in the interests of Antarctic research.

Swan has indicated that the Australasian Antarctic Committee and the Queensland State government donated £250 and £1000 respectively.\footnote{Swan, p. 105.} However, Markham mentioned only that Queensland had subscribed £1000 in 1897, ‘thus distinguishing this colony above the others as regards generosity’.\footnote{Markham with Holland, p. 8.} The Queensland grant was in response to a direct appeal made by Markham in 1897 to all of the Australian premiers, who were in London that year attending Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee and the Colonial Premiers’ Conference. Markham invited them, together with their resident Agents-General, to a conference and luncheon at the Royal Geographical Society’s headquarters. According to Mill, Markham had conceived the idea that the Australians would support a purely scientific expedition to Antarctica because the ‘Australian colonies owed their origin to purely scientific expeditions of discovery’.\footnote{Mill, The Record of the Royal Geographical Society 1830-1930, p. 158.} Both Markham and Mill subsequently recorded their indignation at the behaviour of the colonials, because several who had accepted the invitation were ‘very rude and never came’.\footnote{Markham with Holland p. 8 and Mill, The Record of the Royal Geographical Society 1830-1930, p. 158.} It may be that the Premiers discovered that the invitation to the conference and luncheon from Markham was a fund-raising exercise and chose not to be placed in a situation where they might have to refuse.

Alfred Deakin was Prime Minister, and the Federation six years old, when Ernest Shackleton began organising his own Antarctic expedition. Shackleton was planning an expedition to the Ross Sea from 1907 to 1909 in the \textit{Nimrod} and hoped to raise funds in both Australia and New Zealand because ‘I was faced by financial
difficulties’. Shackleton also planned to invite one of Australia’s most well known geologists, T.W. Edgeworth David, Professor of Geology at Sydney University, to join the expedition. David had written to Shackleton in mid-1907, asking to make only the round trip on the Nimrod after the wintering party had settled. Shackleton agreed and was pleased to have ‘an authority on dynamical geology and glaciation’. David subsequently pleaded the case for his young protégé, Douglas Mawson, after Mawson had expressed interest in accompanying David on the expedition. Shackleton accepted David’s recommendation and nominated Mawson as physicist. He later recruited another of David’s students, Leo Cotton, to make the round trip. Australian professional scientists were therefore strongly represented on Shackleton’s Nimrod expedition. In addition, Shackleton appointed John King Davis to be the Chief Officer on the Nimrod. With a strong Australian contingent, Government support seemed to be assured.

Shackleton developed an excellent relationship with David and through him sought to acquire Australian Government financial support. Shackleton had already prepared the way for attracting official attention in both Australia and New Zealand by publicly promoting the scientific nature of his expedition, particularly in the field of meteorology, saying: ‘these countries are affected by weather conditions that have their origin in the Antarctic’. With that goal of the expedition being repeatedly stressed in Australia, and with the enthusiastic support of David, Shackleton was promised a good hearing. According to his biographer, ‘David had become a considerable local force’. He was an acknowledged leader of the scientific community and with contacts in Parliament and the bureaucracy. Shackleton could not have chosen a better ally.

On 10 December 1907, David wrote to Deakin requesting a government grant. According to David’s letter, Shackleton and his friends had subsidised the entire expedition. Unfortunately, however, he had left London slightly short of funds because a promised amount from a relative was not forthcoming. The shortfall was

---

49 Branagan, pp. 141.
50 Shackleton, Vol. 1 p. 31.
51 Ayres, pp. 97 and Swan, pp. 11-12.
52 Branagan, p. 141.
54 Branagan, p. 141
David outlined the scientific purpose of the expedition and the specific relation of Antarctic to Australia:

The great southern continent, known as Antarctica, should be of more interest and importance to Australia than to any other country on account of its being our nearest neighbour, and on account of its control of our Australian weather conditions, and of the magnetic conditions which govern navigation in our southern seas. Deakin needed little convincing. He threw his weight behind the expedition and communicated personally with Shackleton. Deakin was an intellectual who had eclectic tastes. He was as fascinated with Egyptian and Italian irrigation systems as he was with the museums of Florence, the architecture of Venice and the crater of Vesuvius. He spoke ardently in Parliament in support of the expedition and said that Shackleton had promised to provide the museums of Australia with scientific specimens from Antarctica. His speech was visionary and predicted that the expedition 'will be worthy of Australia, will do us credit abroad, and advance the cause of science – which is the cause of humanity …'.

The motion was fully supported in the House with eloquence from all sides of politics. Joseph Cook, leader of the Free Trade Party even suggested that support for the expedition was a bequest to posterity and recognition of an Australian duty to explore the Antarctic: 'from a scientific and indeed from every point of view, it is our obligation to do what we can to make known all that lies hidden in that mysterious land.' The Labor Party Leader Andrew Fisher said that this was not a proposal to assist an expedition which is bent upon money making. It is a scientific, exploratory, and dangerous enterprise … I think that it is the duty of this Parliament to provide the requisite funds, especially as it has been appealed to by Professor David …

The temper of the parliamentary debate suggested that the Australian leadership needed no convincing about the worthiness of the expedition and Australia's

---

56 CPP, 1907-8, in Greenwood and Grimshaw, pp. 549-551.
58 CPP,1907-8, pp. 1169-1170 in Greenwood and Grimshaw, p. 551
60 CPP,1907-8, pp. 1169-1170 in Greenwood and Grimshaw, pp. 551-552
involvement in it. As a consequence of the support the expedition received, Parliament authorised an advance of £5,000.\textsuperscript{61} The die was cast: an Australian policy to support Antarctic expeditions for the purpose of scientific research had received universal support in the Australian Parliament.

After Parliament had voted the £5,000, David praised the Government’s efforts for contributing funds in the cause of science. In a letter addressed to Sir William John Lyne, Minister for Trade and Customs, David again stressed the importance of the expedition in the fields of meteorology, geology and mineralogy as well as adding to the sum of knowledge of the geography of ‘at present the largest unknown area of the world’.\textsuperscript{62} He also suggested that there ‘is, too, a very fair chance in this case of the South Pole being actually reached’.\textsuperscript{63}

Although reaching the Geographic South Pole had not been an Australian ambition, if the Union Jack were to be the first flag to be hoisted there, none would complain. Together, the parliamentary speeches made by Australian political leaders in 1907 and David’s own words reflected the significance of Antarctic exploration at that time. Antarctic exploration in the early part of the twentieth century can be likened to space exploration in the latter part of that century. The international prestige that nations could acquire from exploring the blank that remained at the bottom of the world map and planting their national flag at the Pole would be akin to that earned by taking the first steps on the moon 50 years later. Queen Alexandra’s presentation of the flag to Shackleton was in anticipation that he would plant it at the South Pole. As Fiennes put it, Shackleton had but one single aim, ‘to bag the South Pole’.\textsuperscript{64} And Ayres suggested that Shackleton’s expedition had a publicly stated goal: to go 90° south.\textsuperscript{65} In the event, he fell short of his destination by only 97 miles, due to lack of food.\textsuperscript{66}

In Australia, it was anticipated that the twin goals of reaching the South Magnetic Pole and the Geographic South Pole would be achieved. During the course

\textsuperscript{61} CPD Vol. XLII, 1907, pp.7491, 7492, in Greenwood and Grimshaw, p. 551.
\textsuperscript{62} Letter T.W. Edgeworth David to Hon Sir William John Lyne, 16 December 1907, NAA: Series A 2 (A 2/1), Item 1909/2497. See also Swan, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{63} Letter David to Lyne.
\textsuperscript{65} Ayres, p. 97, see also Swan, p. 13.
of fund raising in Australia, the latter aim was usually discussed sotto voce by all concerned. In Parliament the Government emphasised the purely scientific aspect of the expedition, which had promised ‘a considerable share of the scientific specimens – the flora and fauna – which they may gather …’. 67 It is very unlikely that the Australian Government would have been able, politically, to provide financial assistance to Shackleton had he wished to go to the Geographic South Pole for its sake alone. Paquita Mawson, in her biography of Douglas Mawson, observed that the main objective of Shackleton was to reach the South Pole, although he gave equal ranking to scientific research. 68

Nonetheless, the attraction of being the first at the Pole should not be underestimated. It was not until the Nimrod had been towed away from Lyttelton, New Zealand that David wrote to his wife telling her of his intention not to return on it when it discharged the land party. 69 Paquita Mawson recalled that David did not have ‘the permission of his wife’ to winter in Antarctica. 70 It was in another letter to Cara that David broke the news of his ambition to go to the South Pole. He confessed that although Shackleton had ‘not definitely promised to take me with him all the way to the South Pole, he has promised, if I stay on to take me with him as far as he can, and to the Pole if possible’. 71

Shackleton did not take David on the southern journey, instead opting to have David lead his own party, that included Mawson, in search of the South Magnetic Pole. 72 Shackleton gave written instructions from the winter base to David about taking possession of the Magnetic Pole: ‘you will hoist the Union Jack on the spot, and take possession of it on behalf of the above expedition [British Antarctic Expedition] for the British nation’. 73 On the afternoon of 16 January 1909, the party reached what approximated to the South Magnetic Pole, given that that pole is not static, and hoisted the Union Jack. David officially read the proclamation taking

---

69 Branagan, p. 148.
70 Paquita Mawson, p. 33.
71 Branagan, p. 149.
72 Branagan, p. 157.
73 Shackleton, Vol.2, pp. 75-76.
possession ‘of this area now containing the Magnetic Pole for the British Empire’. 74
The third member of the party, a Scottish surgeon, A. Forbes Mackay, recorded that it was ‘only at my suggestion that the Prof called for three cheers for the King’. 75 Perhaps David considered that cheers for the King could hardly be recorded as evidence of taking possession, unlike the photograph taken by Mawson of the three haggard forms standing by an equally bedraggled Union Jack. 76 The flag the northern party took to the South Magnetic Pole had been made in the hut during the winter. 77

Shackleton had sold the idea of scientific benefit to the Australian Government. He had suggested that Australia would benefit by understanding and forecasting its climate through Antarctic meteorological research. Although David was not the meteorologist on the expedition, he compiled the report on meteorological results. 78 Douglas Mawson also contributed notes of meteorological observations. 79 The summary of results focused on the movement of the Antarctic blizzards. According to the report, ‘these blizzard winds occasionally blow right across the Antarctic Circle and reach the shores of Australasia’. 80

In 1908, while the Shackleton expedition was exploring in the Ross Sea, Britain issued Royal Letters Patent appointing the Governor of the Falkland Islands as Governor also over a sub-Antarctic archipelago in the South Atlantic. 81 The area also included Graham’s Land, part of the Antarctic peninsula and Bruce’s Coats Land, although Coats Land was not named in the Letters Patent. 82 Through this act, the British Empire became the first power not only to assert legal title to sub-Antarctic islands and the seas around them, but to extend British sovereignty to Antarctica itself. 83 The British sovereignty claim ended Antarctica’s political

---

74 Branagan, 2006, p. 193. See map of the trek to the South Magnetic Pole at p. 63B.
75 From the diary of A. Forbes Mackay, quoted in Branagan, p. 193.
76 Branagan, p. 194. See photograph at p. 63C. L to R Mackay, David and Mawson.
77 Branagan, p. 193.
81 The Sub-Antarctic archipelago comprises: South Georgia, the South Orkneys, the South Shetlands, the South Sandwich Island archipelago with the ‘territory known as Graham’s Land’ on the Antarctic peninsula. All these became dependencies of the Falkland Islands, later titled the Falkland Islands Dependencies (FID) or Las Islas Malvinas, as Argentina has titled them. Bush, Volume III, Doc. UK 21071908, p. 251.
83 Norwegian enquiries of the British Government about the sovereignty of territories between 35° and 80° West and 40° and 65° South prompted the British Government to annex what became the
innocence by politicising the continent and causing it to become the destination, not just for the scientist adventurer, but for national expeditions seeking title to Antarctic territory.

As the next chapter will show, the rush for land was immediate in the case of Australia. Such was not the case for the South American states. Indeed, neither Argentina nor Chile, the nations most affected by the British action, even disputed the sovereignty claims at the time. The islands were often assumed to be British by companies engaged in whaling and sealing in the area, as most of them usually applied to the British authorities in either Argentina or Chile for fishing rights. For its part, the British Government had always considered the sub-Antarctic islands around the Falkland Islands as British dependencies and issued sealing and whaling licences in accordance with that belief. However, both Argentina and Chile had wished to incorporate these islands into their own territories. The British move halted the South American ambitions, but only temporarily. ‘The Antarctic Problem’, the title of Hunter Christie’s book on this question, was re-kindled by Argentina during and after the Second World War.

Science, rather than commercial exploitation, drove Australia’s interest in Antarctica. There was no suggestion that support for the Shackleton expedition was given in order to discover the viability of a whaling industry, or to determine how Australia would benefit from any Antarctic resource. An editorial in the Sydney press summed up the prevailing view on the question of resources when it observed that it was

perhaps doubtful if Antarctica will prove a workable metalliferous area, but its geology can hardly fail to have special interest for us, and it is quite likely that its rocks may furnish some of the missing links in the history of life on earth.

---

Falkland Islands Dependencies (FID). The purpose of the British annexation was to secure British control over the lucrative whaling industry in the seas around the FID. See Bush, Volume III, pp.239-265.

84 For example see Bush, Vol. III, Doc. UK27121881, p. 226. For a more complete record of the various documents that constituted British Government actions in laying claim to various sub-Antarctic islands refer to the United Kingdom Section in Bush, Volume III, pp. 215-251.


86 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 December 1907, Editorial Comment.
On the other hand, when the British sovereignty claim was extended over the FID, it was done for purely economic reasons, especially with respect to controlling the whaling industry. In response to a query by the Norwegian Embassy in London about Britain’s right to assert its sovereignty over the FID, the British Foreign Secretary observed that its claims rested on British captains, in British ships, landing on the islands and taking possession of them in the name of the reigning monarch. In response to a further question about telling the world of its intentions, the Foreign Office said that ‘it is not the practice of H.M. Govt to notify to foreign Govts additions to British territory made by annexation, occupation or otherwise’.  

It was not long before the British act of annexation began to attract criticism from international lawyers. An article by Thomas Willing Balch, published in 1910 in the *American Journal of International Law*, was scathing.  

In Balch’s assessment:

> discovery alone is not sufficient to give a good title to a new unoccupied land. The custom among nations for centuries, that gradually crystallized into a part of the Law of Nations, is that in order to perfect the right given by discovery, it must be followed by occupation.  

Balch cited a number of experts in International Law at the time, who confirmed his view. In addition, a lengthy critical opinion was also quoted by Balch from the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, which disputed the British bases for claims. The article observed that some of the islands annexed by Britain had been either ‘nominally’ claimed by Argentina or were unexplored. It also specifically mentioned the South Orkneys which had a meteorological observatory that the Argentines ‘took over from the *Scotia* and still maintain.’ Hunter Christie’s account of the 1908 British act justified the British case by noting that non British explorers, such as Charcot, had made discoveries in western Graham Land, but did not make any formal territorial claims for France. Hence, discovery alone was insufficient. Whatever the legalities of the case, the power of the British Empire held sway. But, as these early legal arguments suggest, sovereignty claims that were

---

87 Bush, Volume III, Doc UK 30041907, p. 245.  
89 Balch, p. 266.  
90 Balch, p. 268.  
91 Christie, pp. 241, 289, Chapter XVI and XVII.
extended over an uninhabited and uninhabitable land that was barely known in 1908, would remain intractable, despite the political consensus reached by claimant states when they signed the 1959 Antarctic Treaty.\(^2\)

In Australia, the British Government’s activities on the other side of Antarctica were accepted as a matter of course. However, those alert concerning Antarctic matters, saw therein a precedent being set. When Mawson returned from the Shackleton expedition, he was convinced that the Australian Government should now take the lead in asserting control over Australia’s only southern neighbour. Together with other members of the scientific community, he began an extensive lobbying effort to convince the Australian government to finance an Australian expedition. Mawson and his fellow scientists shared the same vision as their colonial predecessors, that the region beneath Australia should be part of the Empire under Australian control, to be available for any future Australian endeavour. It was a goal, they would discover, that was widely shared in Australia.

...at the International Geographical Congress at Berlin on September 29th 1899, and on October 1st, in a conference with Erik von Drygalski, the Commander of the German Expedition, we agreed that the Germans should undertake the exploration of the Enderby Quadrant, and the English of the Victoria and Ross Quadrants. In October I wrote a more detailed paper on the routes which was published in the number of the Geographical Journal for July 1901, following my Anniversary Address.

Chapter 3
1910-1918: ‘From Pole to Equator’\(^1\)

In 1910 Douglas Mawson began making preparations for an Antarctic expedition that he would lead. He proposed to explore the sector due south of Australia, lying to the west of the Ross Sea. In so doing, he broke with the recent British tradition of concentrating on the Ross Sea region, beneath New Zealand, in order to concentrate on the area that had been long coveted by Australians. Mawson’s 1911-1914 Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE), which explored from approximately 160° to 90° East Latitude, laid the foundations for Australia’s eventual acquisition of the Australian Antarctic Territory. Mawson emerged from his triumphant achievement not only as an internationally recognised successful Antarctic explorer but also as a leading political activist for Australian domination of the region beneath its borders. Although the Australian political leadership supported Mawson and his expedition, during the course of the war the attention of the Australian Government was on more pressing problems.

The region Mawson planned to explore had never been visited since the great expeditions of the 1840s; it remained relatively unknown, but was referred to as the ‘Australian Quadrant, geographically’ and it ‘seems to belong to Australia’.\(^2\) Even at the height of the Great War in 1916, Mawson suggested to the Australian Prime Minister, W.M. Hughes, that the Australian Quadrant should be brought under Australian jurisdiction as had been the south-eastern part of New Guinea earlier. The Commonwealth, he said, ‘would then stretch from Pole to Equator, and supply every possible climate for the production of every possible material in the fullest sense, whether they be cotton, wool or furs. We want to be self-contained, and we can be to this extent.’\(^3\) The Australian Government at the time did not have a well-defined Antarctic policy, and Mawson and the Australian scientific community were keen to change that.

---


\(^3\) Correspondence from Sir Douglas Mawson, 25 May 1916 – 7 June 1917.
Mawson was intent on fulfilling his cherished dream of bringing the Australian Quadrant within the Empire under Australian jurisdiction. Upon his return from Shackleton’s Nimrod expedition in 1909, he began his preparations. He was not alone in wishing to pursue another Antarctic voyage. The international scientific commitment that had fostered the turn of the century collaboration was now replaced by an international race to the South Pole. Mawer has suggested that, before the First World War, the fund-raising propaganda had successfully fixed in the European public mind the achievement of proximity to the Pole of each expedition. Bernacchi had predicted that a ‘dash to the South Pole’ was inevitable. ‘Pole-hunting’ for its own sake, however, was not the ultimate desire of Australians.

Although whaling had been lucrative for a number of countries, including Britain, in the seas around the FID, the viability of a whaling industry around the Ross Sea area and that below Australia had yet to be determined. Bernacchi believed that the ‘right whales’ or ‘black whales’ that had been spotted by Sir James Clark Ross in the 1840s in high southern latitudes were in their summer haunts. However, in their winter breeding grounds on the Australian and New Zealand coasts, they had undergone massive slaughter due to an active coastal whaling industry. The interest of Mawson and his fellow scientists lay in Antarctic science, but they would later emphasise the attraction of possible commercial gain in order to win financial support from both Government and business interests. Nor were the Australian scientists planning a conquest of the South Pole. Mawson was conscious that both Scott and Shackleton had a driving ambition to unfurl the Union Jack at the South Pole. On the other hand, his plans would be made ‘with no idea of the attainment of the South Geographic Pole’, though without decrying that prospect in others.

---

4 Mawer, p. 168.
5 Bernacchi, p. 282.
7 Bernacchi, pp. 320-321.
In February 1910, Mawson was in London discussing with both Scott and Shackleton his idea to explore the unknown coastline of the Australian Quadrant. David had recommended Mawson to Scott, and in turn Scott had offered Mawson a place on his 1910 expedition and to be one of a three-man party to the Pole. Mawson declined, repeating that his interests lay in exploring the uncharted coastline beneath Australia. He reminded Scott that the area had not been visited since the days of Biscoe, Balleny, Dumont d'Urville and Wilkes. Since it was unlikely that he would be able to raise funds in a crowded field, Mawson agreed to travel with Scott on the condition that he be allowed to make a separate excursion west of Cape Adare. Mawson argued in favour of the immense geographic value that a western party would achieve. He suggested that the expedition could then fulfill dual goals if Scott could include the Australian Quadrant in the programme. Scott could not accommodate Mawson’s desires, observing that the region was ‘remote from his own objective’.

Shackleton, on the other hand, ‘was warmly enthusiastic’ when Mawson laid his plans before him, but declined to lead the expedition. Instead he encouraged Mawson and promised support. Mawson was in fact delighted with the outcome because, for ‘many reasons, besides the fact that it was the country of my home and Alma Mater, I was desirous that the Expedition should be maintained by Australia’. Mawson’s determination to have Australia be part of the era of the great Antarctic explorations, while exploring the area to Australia’s south, was soundly supported by the Melbourne press. The Argus, while supporting Mawson, was, however, generally opposed to a race to the South Pole, referring to it as an international ‘polar steeplechase’.

---

9 The term quadrant as explained by Mawson refers to the ‘four main divisions, corresponding with the quadrants of the hemispheres. Mawson’s choice of dividing the quadrants based on the meridian of Greenwich reflected Markham’s earlier plan agreed to at the 1899 International Geographical Congress in Berlin. Mawson linked the quadrants by name to an adjacent continent or ocean. Thus the American Quadrant lay below South America between 0° and 90° W, the African Quadrant between 0° and 90° E, and the Australian Quadrant, sometimes referred to by Mawson as the Australasian Quadrant, which also extended to below New Zealand lay between 90° and 180° E. Mawson titled the fourth section the Pacific Quadrant, since ocean alone lies to the north of it. While the measurements were identical, the difference between the two schemes was in name only. Markham’s choice of names reflected his nationalism and presumption of prior ownership by the British Empire since British explorers recorded coastlines they had sighted and named them after their patrons or the then Monarch. See Mawson, p. 3.

10 Mawson, p. 33

11 Ayres, pp. 34-42, Mawer, p. 188.

12 Mawson, p. xiv.

In England, nationalism had become the driving force for Scott’s quest for the South Pole. The English newspapers reminded their readers that England had been prevented from solving the mystery of the North Pole, but did not begrudge the Americans their achievements.\textsuperscript{14} The Standard explained that English explorers had done so much to reveal the mysteries of the southern region that ‘it would be a thousand pities’ if the additional work necessary to dispel further mysteries was left to others.\textsuperscript{15} The Times said that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘speaking as the mouthpiece of the man in the street … felt that there was one Pole left, and that that should be our Pole’.\textsuperscript{16} Besides arousing English nationalism, The Times also appealed to imperial solidarity and called on ‘the great continent of Australia and its neighbour New Zealand’ to secure donations for Scott.\textsuperscript{17} The newspaper praised the achievements of David in the recent Shackleton expedition, which had added to the reputation of ‘that section of the Empire’.\textsuperscript{18}

The Australian Government’s attitude to Scott’s proposed South Pole expedition was unchanged from that it had towards his earlier attempt in 1901. The Department of External Affairs instructed the Commonwealth Representative in London, Captain R.H. Muirhead Collins, not to attend in an ‘official’ capacity in London a meeting on behalf of the Scott expedition, as that could be interpreted as a commitment of funds.\textsuperscript{19} He could attend ‘unofficially’, and should keep the Department informed.\textsuperscript{20} Collins felt it appropriate to advise Scott that he was attending the meeting in a private capacity, so that Scott would not interpret his attendance as a proposal of Commonwealth Government financial support.\textsuperscript{21} Scott accepted the Australian Government’s position and even announced it to the meeting. Privately, he advised Collins that, despite the Australian Government’s

\textsuperscript{14} Commander Robert E. Peary, an Admiral in the United States Navy, was awarded the special Royal Geographical Society gold medal in 1909 for reaching the North Pole, despite controversy that surrounded the quality of the data he presented as evidence. See Mill, The Record of the Royal Geographical Society 1830-1930, pp. 174-175.


\textsuperscript{16} The Times 13 October 1909, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1911/177.

\textsuperscript{17} The Times 13 October 1909.

\textsuperscript{18} The Times 13 October 1909.

\textsuperscript{19} Captain R. H. Muirhead Collins was appointed Secretary of the department of Defence in 1901. In March 1906 he was posted to London as Australia's official representative.

\textsuperscript{20} Memorandum Captain Collins to Atlee Hunt, 13th October, 1909, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item: 1911/177. This memorandum from Captain Collins sought to confirm earlier advice from the Department of External Affairs.

\textsuperscript{21} Captain Collins to Atlee Hunt, 13 October, 1909.
directive, he proposed to approach them for funds so that he could stay longer than the proposed twelve months in order to extend his scientific observations.\textsuperscript{22}

In early January 1910 Scott approached the Premier of New South Wales, asking him to appeal to the Federal Government for funds. He estimated that it would require approximately £40,000, half of which had been subscribed by ‘H.M. Government in this Country’.\textsuperscript{23} As Shackleton had done earlier, Scott emphasised that the expedition proposed to conduct research in the field of meteorology because ‘it must be clear that the conditions of the Antarctic are more or less closely connected with those of Australia’.\textsuperscript{24} Scott advised that not only would Australia’s interests be a significant aim, but a number of Australians would be among the scientific staff.\textsuperscript{25} The new Labor Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, whose party had defeated the Deakin Government in the Federal election of April 1910, was not prepared to provide financial support and advised the New South Wales Premier accordingly.\textsuperscript{26}

In September the Opposition, now led by Deakin, took up the cause in the Federal Parliament, asking the Government to reconsider its decision. Fisher refused to reopen the subject, stating that ‘Ministers have considered the matter, and have made up their minds regarding it’.\textsuperscript{27} No explanation was given in Parliament for the Government’s refusal, but Scott’s ambition to conquer the South Pole had been well known. The mocking article in \textit{The Argus} three months earlier would not have helped Scott’s cause.

One month after Fisher’s announcement, a distinguished delegation, led by Deakin, called on the Prime Minister to plead Scott’s cause. The delegation also included two academics: Professor Baldwin Spencer\textsuperscript{28} and Dr Leeper\textsuperscript{29}, and the

\textsuperscript{22} Captain Collins to Atlee Hunt, 13 October, 1909.
\textsuperscript{23} Letter R. Scott to Hon the Premier of New South Wales, 28 January 1910, NAA: Series A 1, Item 1911/177.
\textsuperscript{24} R. Scott to Hon the Premier
\textsuperscript{25} R. Scott to Hon the Premier.
\textsuperscript{26} Letter Andrew Fisher to the Hon the Premier of New South Wales, 15 June 1910, NAA: Series A1, Item 1911/177.
\textsuperscript{27} House of Representatives Hansard, 2 September 1910, Question from Mr G. B. Edwards to Mr Fisher, NAA: Series A 1, Item 1911/177. G.B. Edwards was a member of the Liberal Opposition. The Liberal Party at the time was a fusion of all non-Labour parties, comprising mainly the Free Trade Party and the Protectionists.
\textsuperscript{28} Professor Walter Baldwin Spencer was a graduate of Oxford University who founded the Chair of Biology at the University of Melbourne in 1887 and occupied it until 1919. He was also a member of
formidable Mrs Scott. With Fisher in South Africa for the inauguration of the Union, the delegation was received by the Acting Prime Minister William Morris Hughes. Deakin, whose credentials for providing support for Antarctic research were well known, suggested that, as a member of the Empire, Australia was under some obligation to help fund the expedition.

Deakin was the spokesman for the delegation and he pointedly cast this particular expedition as one requiring Empire-wide support. He said that ‘the mother country was subscribing £20,000’ and the South African and New Zealand Governments were also proposing to make contributions, the latter promising £1,000 as well as providing stores and coal for three years. Deakin advised that a leading Canadian entrepreneur, Lord Strathcona, was making a personal contribution. In addition, he was using his influence with the Canadian Government, ‘although in the Northern Hemisphere, to make a grant’. Aware of the Government’s reluctance to support an expedition solely to conquer the South Pole, Deakin focused on its research aims. He said that Scott’s expedition was better equipped and larger than Shackleton’s and that its purpose was ‘similar’. In addition, it aimed ‘to do what Shackleton failed to do for want of equipment’.

Deakin made it clear, however, that the Australian contribution would not go into a large pot to be used as the expedition organisers saw fit. The Australian Government was, in fact, being asked to fund a third year in the Antarctic. Scott had funds to cover costs for equipment and maintenance for two years, ‘but for success a third year would be necessary’. The additional year would focus on scientific
research. ‘No one’, Deakin said, ‘had yet had the chance of doing anything but make a rush towards the South Pole.’ The request for Australia to fund a third year in Antarctica was novel, as the purpose was to undertake meteorological observations in a number of locations as well as at the South Pole itself. With Empire-wide support guaranteed, Deakin was undoubtedly concerned that Australia’s image could be tarnished within the imperial family, if it were the only dominion not to assist Scott. As Hughes could not overturn a previous Government decision, he promised to take the matter up again with Cabinet.

Australia’s image was also on the mind of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) when it approached Hughes. The scientists repeated previous requests for a sum of £5,000. Once again the scientific side of the expedition was emphasised, and made more attractive with an appeal to nationalism. They informed Hughes that two Australian scientists, Frank Debenham and Thomas Griffith Taylor, were among the scientific staff and that the expedition was the ‘best equipped that has ever sailed for Antarctica.’ They stressed that the participation of the young Australian scientists would enhance Australia’s international standing. In a subsequent letter the AAAS appealed on the grounds of commercial potential by noting that the geologists on Scott’s expedition would undertake a search for minerals.

Privately, the Australian scientific community was concerned that, if Scott did not get assistance from Australia, then Mawson was unlikely to receive financial support from England. Later, Mawson confessed publicly to the Adelaide Register

---

37 A record of the meeting held in Melbourne on 7 October, 1910.
38 A record of the meeting held in Melbourne on 7 October, 1910.
39 Telegram W.M. Hughes from J.H. Maiden Permanent Honorary Secretary Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, henceforth cited AAAS, 12 October 1910, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1911/177.
40 Telegram W. M. Hughes from J. H. Maiden, 12th October 1910.
41 The geologists referred to were recommended by David to Scott. They were T. Griffith Taylor, Frank Debenham and Raymond Priestley. These three explorers would later become known in international academic circles. Griffith Taylor occupied the Chair of Geography at the University of Chicago from 1929 until 1935. In 1935 he became Professor Geography at the University of Toronto, Canada and occupied it until his retirement in 1951. In 1925 Frank Debenham became the first Director of the Scott Polar Institute, Cambridge University, and the editor of Polar Record, the Institute’s journal. In 1930 he was appointed Professor of Geography at Cambridge University. In 1934 Raymond Priestley became Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University. The information on these three explorers was obtained from the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Online Edition. For a recent biography of T. Griffith Taylor see Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford, Griffith Taylor: visionary, environmental explorer, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2008.
42 Letter W. M. Hughes from J. H. Maiden, 12 October 1910.
that he was late in bringing his proposal forward, in order to allow Scott to secure
donations from Australia; 'as it is right that the man first in the field should be given
a fair chance.'

43 Until such time as an Empire-wide policy over Antarctica was
developed, Antarctic affairs were in the hands of the Empire's scientists. These
bodies sought the help of both public and private monies. One source alone was
never willing to equip an entire expedition.

On this occasion, the combined efforts of the Deakin delegation and the
representations by the AAAS proved partially successful. Hughes announced in
Parliament that Australia would donate £2,500.44 Deakin was predictably
disappointed that the Australian contribution was not twice that amount. He
continued to press the Government, insisting that 'climatology' was a particularly
significant aspect of the expedition and 'of the deepest interest to Australia'.

Even The Argus changed its mind about the race to the Pole, particularly when it learnt
that a Japanese expedition was also heading there. The Argus now called for Empire
loyalty by reminding its readers that Scott's expedition appealed 'to people of
British instincts and traditions resident in Australia'.

Despite the practical appeal
from Deakin and sentimental ones from the press, the Government was not stirred
into increasing its donation.

Scott had set Australia's contribution at £5,000 but had left Melbourne with
only half that amount. On his way to Lyttelton, New Zealand, from where he would
depart to the Ross Sea, he attended a mayoral function in Sydney with the 'leading
citizens'. The Federal Government was again unsuccessfully petitioned, despite the
'Imperial significance' of the expedition and Australia's obligation to bear 'a fair
proportion of the total cost' being emphasised.47 Instead, Samuel Hordern promised
to make up the difference by making a personal contribution of £2,500.48 In this
way, according to Scott, 'we shall have received £5,000 from Australia'.

43 Adelaide Register, 24 July 1911, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1911/177.
44 House of Representatives Hansard, 13 October 1910, NAA: Series, A 1, Item 1911/177.
45 House of Representatives Hansard, 13 October 1910.
46 The Argus, 15 October 1910, NAA: Series A 1, Item 1911/177.
47 Letter Lord Mayor to Acting Prime Minister W. M. Hughes, 19 October, 1910,
NAA: Series A 1, Item 1911/177.
48 Samuel Hordern belonged to a very wealthy mercantile Sydney family. Included in their portfolio
of commercial interests was Hordern's Palace Emporium, Australian Dictionary of Biography,
Online Edition.
The race to the South Pole was international. Besides Scott, there were a Norwegian, a German and a Japanese expedition. Of the three non-British contestants, *The Argus* effusively praised the German scientific party which was ‘fired with the noble ambition to plant the flag of the Fatherland on the South Pole’.\(^{50}\) It was very subdued about the Norwegians, noting only that ‘the Norwegian Government has also fitted out an expedition’.\(^{51}\) It was probable that the tone of *The Argus* reflected both Scott’s annoyance that he was being forced to race the Norwegian expedition and doubts already emerging that the Germans might not proceed with their expedition. For the Japanese expedition, however, the article spared no mercy. It focussed on race rather than qualifications. The article observed that ‘few people in Australia would regard with equanimity’ a Japanese victory. It also insisted that ‘Whatever the ties of friendship between Great Britain and Japan’,\(^{52}\) if the Japanese triumphed, Australians would have laid themselves open to criticism for their lack of generosity in helping what *The Argus* had now titled ‘a British-Australian expedition’.\(^{53}\) Scott was aware of Australia’s restrictive immigration policies. Earlier in the year he had asked Muirhead Collins whether the two Chinese and three Russian pony and dog handlers would experience difficulties during a stop at Sydney. The reply to Scott was that the Russians were acceptable, ‘being Europeans’, but not the Chinese, who might ‘abscond’ on arrival in Australia.\(^{54}\)

According to Branagan, the Sydney newspapers muttered darkly about the Japanese expedition. *The Bulletin* warned of Japanese expansionism when the luckless expedition, in the *Kainan Maru*, was stranded in Australia. Its leader, Lieutenant Nobu Shirase, had hoped to make a quick dash to the Pole after his ship reached the Ross Sea on 10 March 1911. However, it was far too late in the season and the ship ‘limped into Port Jackson’ on 1 May.\(^{55}\) Branagan has suggested that inexperience, a deficient ship and equally deficient equipment led to the expedition’s failure; but Shirase still held out hopes of reaching the South Pole.\(^{56}\)

---


51 *The Argus*, 15 October 1910, NAA, Series A 1, Item 1911/177.

52 *The Argus* could be referring to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Alliance signed in January 1902.


54 Collins to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 21 January, 1910.

55 Branagan, p. 231.

Without fanfare, David sought financial assistance for the Japanese expedition, after being convinced that its aims could not be met by its inadequate equipment. Eventually, he succeeded in obtaining government and public assistance in preparation for its Antarctic voyage. When the Kainan Maru left Sydney in November 1911, a flotilla of sailing boats massed on Sydney harbour and cheering crowds of well-wishers waved white handerchiefs and black hats in the air. Shirase was in no doubt that the intervention of David, who saw them as brother scientists rather than spies, had ensured that the momentous farewell swept away the hostile welcome. David, he believed, had ‘set the seal’ of his ‘magnificent reputation upon our bona fides …’.57

With Scott in Antarctica and the Japanese on their way, the Australian scientists could now devote their full attention to Mawson’s expedition. The press reported that Shackleton had thrown his support behind Mawson. The Argus hoped that financial support would be given to the expedition, which would be ‘scientific and economic’ and would ‘not make any dash for the Pole’58. The newspaper article suggested that the expedition, which proposed to explore 2,400 miles of Antarctic coastline, due south of Australia, from Cape Adare to Gaussberg, ‘must add considerably to Australia’s prestige among the nations of the world’.59 Mawson, it said, proposed to establish his main base at Adelie Land, as well as other bases along the coast and ‘a considerable distance inland’.60 The anticipated cost of the expedition was £40,000, and The Argus called on Australians to support it.

The precision of the article suggested heavy reliance on information given by Mawson or by the AAAS’s President, Professor Orme Masson, and that it was designed to attract funds. The Argus maintained a stream of reporting on the proposed expedition. It quoted Masson declaring that if the expedition were successfully organised, with Mawson in command, the results would be ‘something creditable to himself and Australia, or he would leave his bones at the South Pole’.61

As great care had been taken to distance Australian exploration from a dash to the Pole, it is likely that, in this instance, Professor Masson was using the term ‘South

57 Branagan, p. 234
58 The Argus, 6 January 1911.
59 The Argus, 6 January 1911.
60 The Argus, 6 January 1911.
61 The Argus, 12 January 1911.
Pole’ as a synonym for Antarctica. Professor Masson could not have known then how close to the truth his prophetic statement would come. Mawson almost left his bones in Antarctica, but managed to survive, although two of his companions perished.\(^2\)

At this critical stage in the fund-raising process the AAAS was leaving nothing to chance in its press statements. It connected Antarctic scientific research with economic return, and warned that, if Australia did not explore and control the region to its south, ‘foreign nations’ would step in and take the ‘most valuable portion of the Antarctic continent for themselves.’\(^3\) The Argus suggested that while the amount of £40,000 was significant, it was ‘no insuperable obstacle’, and believed that ‘many Australians’ would not feel its loss.\(^4\)

Orme Masson, in his capacity as the President of the AAAS’s Antarctic Committee, together with Douglas Mawson, called on Senator Pearce, the Minister for Defence, the only senior Minister available at the time. Orme Masson explained that Mawson was proposing to lead an Australian expedition to explore the Australian Quadrant, and that the Australian Science Congress, which had met recently, had placed its full support behind Mawson’s plan and the AAAS had pledged £1,000, being one-third of its income.\(^5\) The scientists wished to involve the Government in the expedition and ‘had made it clear that it was to be an Australian expedition’.\(^6\) The AAAS proposed to appoint a planning committee, but it ‘would be modified if the Commonwealth Government came in, otherwise the expedition would be free from any other control whatever’.\(^7\)

\(^2\) Two of Douglas Mawson’s companions perished on the way back to Main Base after discovering and taking possession of King George V land. Mawson had led a three-man sledge team that included Dr Xavier Mertz a Swiss ski-running champion and expert mountaineer and Lieutenant Belgrave E.S. Ninnis of the Royal Fusiliers. In 1912 the party set out on an overland journey from which only Mawson returned. Lieutenant Ninnis disappeared into a crevasse with all of the food supplies and Dr Mertz died of probable Vitamin A poisoning after consuming the liver of one of the sledge dogs. See Mawson The Home of the Blizzard, 1998 edition, pp. 159-162 and pp. 184-185.

\(^3\) The Argus, 12 January 1911.

\(^4\) The Argus, 12 January 1911.


\(^6\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.

\(^7\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
The meeting with Senator Pearce was meant to take soundings before a full plan was laid before the Government. In the meantime, Orme Masson and Mawson wished to emphasise the need for an expedition peculiarly Australian in its aims and its destination. In particular, they wanted to make it clear that their proposal was quite distinct from the Scott expedition, which intends to find the South Pole. This expedition would be for scientific and industrial exploration of all that part of the coast which is to the South of Australia.\(^68\)

Orme Masson explained that at this stage they were not asking for a ‘pledge’ from the Government but for its ‘sympathetic support’.\(^69\) The expedition was proposing to attract private funds, but, if necessary, they would like Government assistance at a later stage.\(^70\)

Mawson’s presentation went a step further by seeking to alert the Government to the economic possibilities of the Australian Quadrant, leading to its eventual colonisation. He suggested that it was ‘teeming with life’ that had never been tapped.\(^71\) He believed the area was easy to approach as it was ‘nearer the equator than Greenland’.\(^72\) Exploration of the region, Mawson surmised, would result in a ‘limited settlement’.\(^73\) It was even ‘quite possible’, he continued, to establish a permanent settlement, as the proposed destination was easier to reach than the Klondike.\(^74\) Mawson also anticipated that the sealing trade alone would result in a bustling shipping trade, while a sanatorium could be built for those wishing a healthy holiday where the climate was ‘bracing’ and the scenery ‘gorgeous’.\(^75\) He suggested that the Commonwealth should attach ‘a mining man’ to the expedition in order to carry out minerals testing, and added that he too was a mineralogist.\(^76\) And he was adamant that it was easier to develop mines along the Antarctic coast than in Australia’s interior.\(^77\)

---

\(^{68}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
\(^{69}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
\(^{70}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
\(^{71}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
\(^{72}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
\(^{73}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
\(^{74}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’. The Klondike gold diggings were in Alaska where gold was discovered in 1896.
\(^{75}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
\(^{76}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
\(^{77}\) ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
Mawson’s suggestions fell on fertile soil. The Minister discussed a permanent settlement and minerals exploration. ‘We desire’, Mawson said, ‘to make the South Pole and its surroundings Australian’. Mawson predicted that the success of the venture would ‘bring Australia before the world in a new light’. Senator Pearce expressed his enthusiasm for the expedition and believed the Government ought to consider supporting it. Mawson’s presentation was nothing short of astonishing. He had travelled to Antarctica during its summer, had over-wintered there and then returned the following summer. On the strength of that experience, Mawson felt able to make these extravagant predictions. He was not seeking to mislead the government, but believed passionately in the possibilities of the Antarctic. He believed these possibilities should be exploited for Australia’s benefit and, in the process, would enhance its position within the Empire.

At a subsequent meeting with the Minister for External Affairs, a request for funds was made. The funding formula Orme Masson suggested would have the Commonwealth Government contribute to the cost of the expedition, estimated at £40,000, on a pound-for-pound basis, on the condition that the balance would be raised by private donations. If the Government did not give a solid commitment of funds, Masson stressed, the success of the expedition would be thrown into doubt. By securing substantial Government funding for the expedition, the scientists understood that the arrangements for the expedition would be ‘subject to the control and approval of Government’. The aims of the expedition were divided into an ‘A’ list, ‘Scientific Work’, and a ‘B’ list, ‘Possible Practical Results’. Five objectives comprised the ‘A’ list: ‘Geography,’ ‘Geology,’ ‘Physics,’ ‘Meteorology’ and ‘Biology’. The ‘B’ list related to the likely commercial value to be derived from the region to be explored. Leading the ‘B’ list was ‘Minerals’, followed by ‘Fisheries and Oil’, ‘Meteorology’ and ‘Health and Holiday’. Meteorology appeared under both the scientific and the commercial headings because it was of interest to

78 ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
79 ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
80 ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
81 ‘Proposed Antarctic Expedition’.
83 Orme Masson, ‘The Proposed Australian Antarctic Expedition’.
84 Orme Masson, ‘The Proposed Australian Antarctic Expedition’.
85 Orme Masson, ‘The Proposed Australian Antarctic Expedition’.
Although the estimated cost of the expedition was £40,000, if £50,000 were to be raised, the expedition could remain for another year.

The Masson paper gave notice to the Australian Government that the expedition was primarily a scientific expedition: a gamble, given that the Government would wish financial returns for the pound for pound asked for. Secondly, it linked science with commercial matters, a link that the previous generation of scientists had been reluctant to make. Thirdly, it stressed the strong geographical connection between Australia and Antarctica. As Masson emphasised in his meeting with E. L. Batchelor, Minister for External Affairs, the scientific community proposed that the Government should take responsibility for Antarctica and ‘to father it, and to feed it’, by undertaking to pay half the total cost of the expedition. Batchelor, like Pearce, was enthusiastic, but saw the expedition as a private venture, noting that it was ‘worthy of the support of the people of Australia who had money to spare ...’. While believing ‘that the Government would agree to support the project’, Batchelor cautioned Masson ‘not to ask that the general funds of the community should be the principal support of expeditions.’

Having extracted a commitment, but no firm amount, from the Government, the scientists set to work calling for private funds. On 22 April 1911, a letter signed by Professors Masson, from the University of Melbourne, David from the University of Sydney and George Henderson from the University of Adelaide appeared in the metropolitan newspapers of their respective States. They asked that ‘wealthy and public-spirited citizens’ contribute funds for what they now began to title the ‘Australasian Antarctic Expedition’ to the ‘Australasian Quadrant’. Rather than highlight the goals in their ‘A’ list, the scientists sought to assure their audience that the prospect for successful commercial exploitations was very real. The expedition

---

86 Orme Masson, ‘The Proposed Australian Antarctic Expedition’.
87 Orme Masson, ‘The Proposed Australian Antarctic Expedition’.
91 Letter signed by Orme Masson (University of Melbourne), T. W. Edgeworth David (University of Sydney) Geo. C. Henderson (University of Adelaide) on behalf of the Australasian Antarctic Committee and printed in newspapers in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney of 22 April 1911, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1915/5159.
would descend to latitudes from 70° to 65° South only, corresponding to those of Iceland and part of the Yukon valley in Alaska. Hence, despite the severity of its climate, the area ‘is quite compatible with permanent occupation’.  

The professors’ open letter appealed on the grounds of commercial gain, scientific research and nationalism in that order. In their advocacy for the benefits of scientific research, they said ‘the most probable source of profit to Australasia lies in the meteorological work…’. Anticipating that people would question why the Government was not funding a venture purporting to be of national significance, the scientists stated that the expedition was ‘emphatically not a case for Government action only …’. They stressed it was a national undertaking and highlighted the proximity of the Antarctic region to Australia by observing that, from its nearest point, its distance was almost equal to that between Melbourne and Perth.

The scientists were mounting an appeal for funds on a number of fronts. Time was of the essence if an expedition was to sail from Australia in the coming Antarctic Summer. In London, Mawson was sending frantic telegrams asking for money to commence equipping the expedition. On 2 May 1911, Masson again headed a delegation to the Government. This time the delegation also included the Commonwealth Meteorologist, H.A. Hunt, as well as the Lord Mayor of Melbourne. Andrew Fisher was in London for the 1911 Imperial Conference and W.M. Hughes was again Acting Prime Minister. The scientists sought an urgent Government response as funds were required to commence equipping the expedition, if it were to take place in 1911 as ‘a national scheme’. Masson believed that Government support was an essential precondition if the public were to be persuaded to ‘do their share’, and promptly asked for a contribution of £20,000. Hughes asked the scientists to clarify the need for this particular expedition and questioned why the results of other expeditions, including those of Shackleton and Scott, were not considered sufficient. Masson responded that Antarctic exploration

---

92 Letter signed by Orme Masson et al.
93 Letter signed by Orme Masson et al.
94 Letter signed by Orme Masson et al.
95 Record of conversation between a delegation led by Professor Masson and Acting Prime Minister W. M. Hughes, 2 May 1911, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1913/5159.
96 Record of conversation 2 May 1911.
was a ‘World’s undertaking’ and suggested Australia would gain in ‘national character and position’ if it made a contribution.\(^\text{97}\)

The Commonwealth Meteorologist, Hunt, saw an urgent need for research in the area of meteorology. He had earlier put forward a theory that the ‘severe drought’ Australia experienced in 1903 was linked to abnormal icy weather conditions in South America that had emanated from Antarctica.\(^\text{98}\) Hughes responded that he was ‘heartily in favour of the Commonwealth doing something’ and proposed to put it forward as an urgent matter at the forthcoming Cabinet meeting. He promised to do ‘what was humanly possible at once’.\(^\text{99}\)

The meeting with Hughes developed a somewhat curious after-life. The day after the meeting an opinion piece appeared in the Melbourne Age, which was scathing of the proposal put to the Acting Prime Minister. The Age, in stark contrast to The Argus, expressed a lack of sympathy for the expedition, whose proponents, it said, demanded an installment ‘on the spot’ from Government ranging from £10,000 to £20,000. The Age declared that many reasons were put forward by the scientists as benefiting the Commonwealth, ‘but not one can be considered satisfactory’.\(^\text{100}\) The only sympathy The Age showed was with respect to the collection of new meteorological data. Even on this question it was far from impressed, noting that, whoever collects the data, ‘no country would be so churlish as to refuse us an opportunity of enlarging our scientific knowledge.’\(^\text{101}\)

It is unclear how The Age had access to the details of the meeting. Whoever had made the leak to the journalist, it was meant to have the effect of casting doubt on the usefulness of the expedition. Even the commercial perspective of the expedition came in for severe criticism. In particular, the possibility of finding mineral resources, particularly gold, was singled out for severe criticism by The Age, which noted that the Australian continent had an abundance of minerals. The article suggested that Australia would be better off if gold mines remained undiscovered, rather than losing population by developing them. ‘Our most urgent

---

\(^{97}\) Record of conversation, 2 May 1911.

\(^{98}\) Record of conversation, 2 May 1911.

\(^{99}\) Record of conversation, 2 May 1911.

\(^{100}\) The Age 3 May 1911, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1915/5159.

\(^{101}\) The Age 3 May 1911.
national need', *The Age* declared, 'is to conserve our vital resources and to gain fresh population by every means at our command'. The article concluded by remarking that the expedition was not one for the Government to finance but for wealthy individuals to support if they wished 'to indulge their curiosity' by discovering what lay beneath the ice.

In London, Mawson was 'doing the rounds'. He had been promised £10,000 'in money and kind' and with donations being called from various Australian States he calculated a total amount of £15,000. Nonetheless, he was still well below his target. When Fisher arrived in London, he would find a letter from the office of the 'Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911' signed by Mawson. Its straightforward style was unashamedly nationalistic.

I cannot believe that Australia, which has helped all British Expeditions going our way, will refuse to help one of its own – especially as we are not Pole-hunting but out for national purposes ... Already in many quarters in Europe I have awakened a new interest in Australia and brought our country honourable mention in the daily press.

Despite appeals to the Prime Minister, little could be done without Cabinet and Parliamentary approval. At least Mawson was able to put his view direct to Fisher. It was the Coronation year of King George V and Queen Mary, with all the pomp and splendour attending the event. On 22 June the Australian Prime Minister would attend the Coronation and during the course of the month take part in the Imperial Conference.

The 1911 Imperial Conference was significant from the perspective of the dominions and would give some focus to Antarctica. Two major questions were discussed. The first related to the division of the world into a number of imperial naval 'Stations'. Each naval Station was to come under the control of Australia, Canada and Britain, respectively. The purpose was to give Australia and Canada greater responsibility for Imperial defence by placing each Dominion in control of

---

102 *The Age* 3 May 1911.
103 *The Age* 3 May 1911.
105 Letter Douglas Mawson to Andrew Fisher, 16 May 1911.
the Station in its geographic region. The 'Australian Station' included the south-eastern part of New Guinea, or the Territory of Papua, already under Australian administration since 1905. To the south, the 'Australian Station' extended 'By the Antarctic circle'. In this way Fisher would have had Antarctica brought before him, courtesy of the Imperial Conference's defence agenda, as well as by Mawson's letter.

The other important question that preoccupied the Prime Ministers related to the question of responsibility for the carriage of the Empire's foreign policy. As Casey later observed in a paper to the 1938 Summer School on Australian Foreign Policy, British Prime Minister H.H. Asquith stated unambiguously at the 1911 Imperial Conference that 'the authority of the Government of the United Kingdom in such grave matters as the conduct of foreign policy, the conclusion of treaties, the declaration or maintenance of peace, or the declaration of war cannot be shared'. When Fisher returned to Australia, he would carry that message with him, as well as the overall intent of the Imperial Conference to reaffirm Empire unity. Mawson could scarcely realise that 1911 was not the opportune time for Australia to make an independent stand on Antarctica, despite the Australian Station's area of responsibility extending to the Antarctic circle.

While the Prime Minister was preoccupied with matters of State, Mawson was taking the message to where all international explorers strove for recognition, the Royal Geographical Society in London. Ernest Shackleton and Sir George Reid, the Australian High Commissioner, also attended. In opening the meeting, the President announced that Scott was safely in Antarctica. The audience now turned their attention to this 'Englishman by birth, who left this country early in life for his new home in the Antipodes'. At the outset, Mawson suggested that Antarctic

---

106 Imperial Conference, 1911, Naval and Military Defence 'Memorandum of Conferences Between the British Admiralty and Representatives of the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia', Presented by Command; ordered to be printed, 15 September 1911, NAA: Series A 1108, Item Vol. 37.

107 See Map at p. 96A, NAA: Series A 1108, Item Vol.37

108 Quoted by R. G. Casey, 'Australia's Voice in Imperial Affairs', in W.G.K. Duncan, (ed.), Australia's Foreign Policy, Angus & Robertson Limited in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Political Science, Sydney, 1938, p. 37, also quoted in Greenwood and Grimshaw, 'Extract from a speech by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (Mr. H.H. Asquith), p. 93.

geographic quadrants belonged geologically to the land masses to their north. These were: 'Tasmania, South America, New Zealand, and South Africa.'

By making observations about geology and contiguity, Mawson was also putting the case for British imperial expansion into Antarctica, while giving each of the relevant members of the Empire a role in Antarctic affairs. It was unlikely, however, that Mawson's view would attract many followers, since the principle of contiguity would benefit the British Empire largely to the exclusion of other powers. Even the British authorities would baulk at adopting such a principle since it would mean giving up sovereignty over the FID. Mawson's speech, however, was directed at geographers and men of science, rather than international statesmen. Even so, he had inadvertently thrown doubt on the first British claim.

Mawson referred to his expedition as being 'peculiarly Australasian' and its quest, he said, was science: 'Ours is an Association for the Advancement of Science— in other words, the increase of knowledge ...'. At the same time, there were commercial possibilities as that area of the southern ocean abounded in whale and seal life. Mawson made it clear that he wished to claim territory and that he and his supporters 'desire to receive authority to raise the Union Jack and take possession of this land for the British Empire'. The British Royal Geographical Society was sufficiently persuaded to donate £500 to Mawson's venture. That was both a generous and a symbolic gesture because it was a visible sign of approval.

Recognition by the British Royal Geographical Society was the aim of most explorers during that period. Scott had also received a similar amount. Mawer suggested that Mawson was careful to avoid mentioning before a British audience that his objective was to take possession for Australia. That was possible. However, as Australia was within the Empire, bringing Antarctic territory within the Empire, Mawson hoped, would lead to Australia becoming the controlling authority.

1884. (The President of the Royal Geographic Society at the time was Lord Curzon, formerly Viceroy of India).


114 The Argus 14 September 1911, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1915/5159. See also Mawer, p. 188.
115 Mawer, p. 189.
On 13 September 1911, *The Argus*, undeterred by the negative publicity from *The Age*, made a rousing call when it referred to Mawson’s expedition as ‘a national undertaking’.116 *The Argus* reported on a public meeting scheduled for that evening at the Melbourne Town Hall, to be presided over by the Governor-General, Lord Denman. The Prime Minister would move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, that

this meeting hails with satisfaction the prospect of an Australasian expedition, under the leadership of Dr. Mawson, for the exploration of the Australasian quadrant of the Antarctic Continent; and recognising the importance of the undertaking, on scientific and national grounds, cordially commends it to the sympathetic consideration and practical support of the people of Australia.117

Andrew Fisher stood together with Alfred Deakin and the Governor-General in lauding the first Australian expedition. In his introduction Lord Denman said that the majority of the expedition’s personnel would be Australian and that it would be ‘the first of the kind which had ever sailed from Australian shores’.118 The Prime Minister reminded the meeting that, while other expeditions had visited the region, the ‘people living in this part of the world had done all too little to investigate it’.119

Fisher’s call to explore and investigate the Australian Quadrant was significant in every respect. While not formally commissioning Mawson to make an official national claim over the area, he had used the status of his office to persuade the meeting to join with the government to provide financial support for the expedition. At the same time, his call to support Mawson as a national duty was not only identifying Australia with Antarctica, but symbolically extending Australia’s border by drawing Antarctica within it. Perhaps Fisher had been influenced by the recent knowledge that Australia had responsibility over the Australian Station, which extended to the Antarctic Circle. The indications are, however, that Fisher believed in the aims of the expedition as a quest for knowledge and that Australia, as a ‘young nation’, could not afford not to become engaged in scientific research. He called on the meeting to support the expedition for that reason.120 His call for engagement in Antarctic research was also binding his government, and thereby

117 *The Argus* 13 September 1911.
119 *The Argus* 14 September 1911.
120 Swan, p. 135.
setting a precedent for future governments to continue with that support as a national obligation.

The bi-partisan nature of advocacy for Antarctica was evident when Deakin spoke. He required no convincing about the importance of an Australian presence in the southern region. In urging generosity on his audience, his speech was equally nationalistic. He also challenged the government to be generous in its donation. However, Australia was now acquiring a greater role in imperial affairs, with the addition of the Australian Station. Money would need to be found for training of naval cadets and associated expenses. The scientists were asking for at least £20,000, a daunting sum for any government.

Mawson later noted that the Australian Government had voted the sum of £5,000. It was a similar amount to that given to Shackleton four years earlier. Together with donations from some of the State governments, the expedition was expected to receive £23,500 in official funds. The only States that did not subscribe were Queensland and Western Australia. On the other hand, the New South Wales Government was generous, and caused questions to be asked in the New South Wales Parliament as to why that government had made a larger contribution than the Commonwealth. The Premier replied, to cheers in the Chamber, that the sole consideration of the government was that the expedition ‘was the first Australian expedition’.

Mawson had been careful to ensure the national character of the expedition, as well as the professional composition of his team. He later reflected that the majority of the men chosen as members of the land parties were young graduates of the Commonwealth and New Zealand Universities, and almost all were representative of Australasia.

121 *The Argus* 14 September 1911.
122 Imperial Conference, 1911, *Naval and Military Defence*.
124 The Government of New South Wales donated £7,000; the Victorian Government £6,000; the South Australian Government £5,000 and the Tasmanian Grant was £500, Mawson, *The Home of the Blizzard*, Vol. 1, Appendix VI, p. 311.
Having foreshadowed in his speech to the Royal Geographical Society that he wished to take possession of territory for the Empire, Mawson sought Colonial Office permission to raise the Union Jack along the Antarctic coastline.\textsuperscript{127} His letter rehearsed the potential of the region beneath Australia and attached a map of the area to be explored. He made it clear that he would not extend the expedition beyond Gaussberg, the scene of German activity. In anticipation of questions about the status of Dumont d’Urville’s claim, Mawson observed that the French explorer had visited the coastline briefly in 1840.\textsuperscript{128}

The Colonial Office did not give the expedition the official authority Mawson sought, nor did it discourage him from raising the flag. The response from Downing Street was ambiguous and noted that if the Expedition should raise the Union Jack and claim possession, it will be a matter for the consideration of His Majesty’s Government in due course and with all the facts before them, as to whether the action should or should not be adopted by His Majesty’s Government.\textsuperscript{129}

J.D.B. Miller has aptly described formal pronouncements from Downing Street to the dominions as coming in the form of a ‘delphic utterance’.\textsuperscript{130} The Colonial Office’s response to Mawson is a fine example.

Mawson was not deterred by the response. On 13 October 1911, a little under two months before his departure, he again pleaded to be allowed to raise the flag and formally make a territorial claim. This time he wrote to the Australian Minister for External Affairs. Without providing any precise geographic coordinates, Mawson said that he would be raising the Union Jack along 2,000 miles of coastline. He advised that Adélie Land had been visited, but only ‘at the extreme limits’.\textsuperscript{131} Mawson also made the point that a French expedition in the area had not

\textsuperscript{127} The copy of the letter at the National Archives of Australia is on ‘Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911’ letterhead with the London address ‘Crown Chambers, 9 Regent Street, London, S.W.’ It does not indicate to whom it was sent, but was probably from Mawson when he was in London to the Colonial Office. A copy of the response from the Colonial Office to Mawson dated 8 July 1911, is a clear indication that it was a reply to Mawson’s request, written on 26 June, to raise the flag. See copy of response in Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU08071911, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{128} Letter presumed written by Mawson to the Colonial Office headed ‘Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911’.

\textsuperscript{129} Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU08071911, p. 92.


landed on the mainland, but 'on a small rocky islet’. Thus, he believed any French claim was tenuous and that France had ‘forgone any colonial rights over Adelie Land by the fact of their not re-occupying the ground within a reasonable period’.\textsuperscript{132} The question of old claims would later come to haunt the British Government as it sought to prohibit Norway from extending its sovereignty over Bouvet Island in 1928, said to be British as a result of an old claim.\textsuperscript{133}

Mawson began canvassing the problem of Adélie Land with both the Colonial Office and the Australian Government. In so doing, he was aware that the question of the French claim had to be determined on a government to government basis and that the Australian Government could not act independently. The promise of claiming the entire Australian Quadrant could not be realised until the question of Adélie Land was resolved. In wishing to raise the flag and proclaim territory, Mawson was hinting that, based on lack of activity, France should be asked to give up any claim to the Antarctic coastline.

In his letter to the Australian Government, Mawson argued that at the conclusion of his expedition the current charts would reflect improved knowledge of the coast through coastal navigation and clarify commercial opportunities. Therefore, he urged that Australia should ‘take a firm and well defined stand in regard to her rights over it’.\textsuperscript{134} He pointed to the actions taken by the Canadian Government in refusing to allow ‘interlopers in the Arctic territory to the north of America’.\textsuperscript{135} Australia, Mawson said, should make it known to the world that the land between 90° and 180° East was ‘British and under the control of Australasia’.\textsuperscript{136}

In calling for an Australian Government commitment, Mawson claimed that some Australian commercial interests, which had supported the expedition, would exploit the coastline south of Australia, but only if the Commonwealth safeguarded their interests. He reminded the Australian Government that exploitable Antarctic resources were many: not least, the ‘exportation of ice’ would provide a source of wealth.\textsuperscript{137} His fear, Mawson said, was that Australia would ‘allow foreigners to hold

\textsuperscript{132} Letter Mawson to Minister for External Affairs, 13 October 1911.
\textsuperscript{133} See Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis.
\textsuperscript{134} Mawson to Minister for External Affairs, 13 October 1911.
\textsuperscript{135} Mawson to Minister for External Affairs, 13 October 1911.
\textsuperscript{136} Mawson to Minister for External Affairs, 13 October 1911.
\textsuperscript{137} Mawson to Minister for External Affairs, 13 October 1911.
the Antarctic lands and feed ice into our markets to their own individual and national advantage'. Mawson was warning the government not to be short-sighted. In *The Home of the Blizzard*, a narrative of the expedition, he recalled that, on Captain Cook's return to London from his southern voyages, he had lamented that he saw no future in those far south regions. Charles Darwin had forecast a similar future for New South Wales about 60 years later when he predicted that it had a very limited commercial future. Mawson felt deeply about Australia seizing the opportunity to expand its sphere of interest into the Antarctic as it had done successfully with the region to the north.

Although Australian governments had given their support to Antarctic voyaging, the time had not yet arrived for Australian policy intervention. Before the Great War, the Empire's foreign policy was determined in London and Australian views were neither sought nor given. Such was the case when the British Government issued instruments extending British sovereignty over the FID. The formal acknowledgment to Mawson's letter from the Department of External Affairs, that 'the matter will receive early consideration', indicated the extent of the government's preparedness in 1911 to enter into imperial discussions on behalf of Antarctica.

Whatever the official response, Mawson would go to Antarctica armed with flags. It was evident on the Shackleton expedition that insufficient flags were taken. That left David's party to the South Magnetic Pole without a flag, requiring them to sew up a Union Jack in their quarters. Before his departure, Mawson outlined in a paper presented to the Department of External Affairs that he intended to raise the Union Jack and the Commonwealth flag after completing the geographical mapping of the Australian Quadrant.

Having left Hobart for Antarctica on 2 December 1911, Mawson would not have known that the British Foreign Office had instructed the Ambassador in Paris to seek clarification from France about its Antarctic intentions. On 20 December, the British Ambassador inquired whether France had made a claim to 'that portion of

---

138 Douglas Mawson to Minister for External Affairs, 13 October 1911.
141 See Chapter 2.
142 Paper by Douglas Mawson 'The Australasian Antarctic Expedition'.
the Antarctic Continent known as "Wilkes Land". The Ambassador advised that Wilkes Land appeared to be the title given to an area of the Antarctic continent between Enderby Land at approximately 52° East and the western limits of South Victoria Land at approximately 160° East. The area, according to the letter, had been seen by Commander Wilkes of the United States Navy in 1839-40. The Ambassador's letter went on to state that, on 21 January 1840, Captain d'Urville had explored the eastern portion of that coastline, and 'a landing was effected in latitude 66 1/2°S., longitude 140°E., the French flag was hoisted and possession of "Adélie Land" was formally taken'. The British Ambassador did not mention that the AAE was, at the time of writing his letter, operating in the vicinity. Instead, he said his request had been prompted by a question that had arisen with respect to the issue of whaling licences.

According to both Bush and Beck, a Norwegian whaling company had been applying to the British authorities for licences in October and November 1911, to operate from the Enderby Land coast to South Victoria Land. Beck further claims that, during this period, the Southern Ocean began to attract whaling interests, resulting from perceptions of over-fishing in the south Atlantic, and reports by whalers that whales were moving further south towards Antarctica. Mawson was aware of Norwegian interests in the area at that time and had already advised the Australian Government. He claimed that the Norwegian Consul had been heard stating that some Norwegian companies were 'preparing to fish in Australasian and adjacent Antarctic waters'. Mawson was clearly concerned about Norwegian intentions. Applications for whaling licences would have been made by the Norwegians to the relevant British Government authorities. However, at the time, the Department of External Affairs was neither sufficiently equipped nor sufficiently alert to collect Antarctic intelligence, in order to discuss the problem with the Colonial Office or to warn it of Norwegian intentions. Nor had the Department of External Affairs become sufficiently alert to the problem that Adélie Land posed for

Australia’s and the Empire’s future Antarctic ambitions in the region south of Australia.

The British Ambassador’s diplomatic approach to the French Government to clarify the extent of the Adélie Land boundaries displayed a masterly stroke of obfuscation. The British Ambassador’s approach was designed to lull the French into accepting that Dumont d’Urville’s Adélie Land was not only a small portion of the Antarctic coastline, but was located within a greater area known as Wilkes Land, supposedly an American discovery and one made before Dumont d’Urville had cited Adélie Land. Hence, ownership or title to the entire region was unclear. The British Ambassador’s approach to the French Government would have been made under instructions from the Foreign Office, which would have been aware that, only five years earlier, a diplomatic blunder from Norway led to the first Antarctic territorial sovereignty claim being made, after Norway asked whether certain sub-Antarctic islands in the region around the Falkland Islands belonged to the British Empire. While the British Government wished to avoid giving any hint that it believed the Adélie Land area was French, its method was unlikely to clarify the situation.

Beck has suggested that Mawson’s requests to raise the flag and make claims for Britain, coming at the same time as the Norwegian application for whaling licences, highlighted the lack of a coherent British Antarctic policy. That was certainly evident from the British Ambassador’s letter. According to Beck, the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office assessments concluded that Britain could issue licences for both Enderby and Victoria Lands, but that the areas of American and French exploration were more complicated. Beck’s views are borne out by the Ambassador’s note to the French Government. Even taking into account a degree of feigned ignorance about the extent of the Adélie Land boundaries, in 1911 the British Government not only lacked a coherent policy, but also revealed that there was little coherence about the location and extent of the territory that had been visited by past foreign expeditions.

Another explanation for the British Government’s extraordinary approach to the French Government lies in Britain’s concern that its sovereignty claim over the

---

FID might have included territory discovered by French nationals. Bush has linked the formalisation of the British claim in that area to rivalry between Britain and Norway over whaling,\(^{151}\) while Beck has suggested that the reason for Britain’s actions in 1908 was to pre-empt possible moves by France to claim discoveries made by J.B. Charcot in the Weddell Sea region and Argentina’s intentions to establish a meteorological observatory on one of the islands.\(^{152}\) Both views are indicated by the action taken by the British Government. Bush and Beck have also highlighted the complexities that characterised Antarctic affairs once nations began to compete for territorial rights.

When the French Government responded four months later, they chose to correct the detail in the British note, rather than make a commitment over territorial claims within defined boundaries. The French Government asserted that land was claimed in the name of France on 2 January 1840, not 21 January as the British note had indicated. The French also advised that the area was known as both Adélie Land and Wilkes Land. Finally, the French Republic had no intention of renouncing its claims.\(^{153}\) Rather than clarifying the matter, the British Ambassador’s letter had confused and magnified it. If the intention, then, was to divert the French Government’s attention from the FID, the British Ambassador’s note probably succeeded in encouraging greater French focus on British Antarctic matters in general.

In 1913 the British Government once again approached the French about their intention over Adélie Land. This approach was prompted by Mawson’s request for permission to title one of his discoveries King George V Land.\(^{154}\) On this occasion, the British Ambassador advised the French Government that the territory in question was located north of Victoria Land, extending approximately from 65° to 75° South and about 150° to 160° East.\(^{155}\) The British Government indicated that the new territory would not encroach on the French claim because they understood it to

\(^{151}\) Bush, Volume. III, p.240


\(^{154}\) Telegram Mawson to His Excellency the Governor-General 25 February 1913, NAA: Series A 11804/1 Item 1913/298.

lie between 66° and 67° South and 136° and 147° East.\textsuperscript{156} These new coordinates were approximate figures and more generous than those given in the previous British note. If the second note was meant to clarify matters, it could hardly be assessed to have achieved its goal. Perhaps due to instability in Europe at the time and other priorities at the French Foreign Ministry, the French Government did not respond. The letter from the British Ambassador to the French Foreign Minister was dated 29 March 1913. On that day Mawson received a wireless message from the Secretary of State at his winter quarters in Commonwealth Bay, advising that the King had granted approval for naming King George V Land.\textsuperscript{157} The British Government had not waited for the French response. After all, the Scott, Shackleton and Mawson expeditions had made more discoveries and done more land slogging and flag raising than any other expeditions before them in the area. A French reply seemed hardly necessary. When a definite position was again sought from the French Government after the Great War, the lengthy correspondence and diplomatic negotiations that resulted forced Australia to step in, provide more accurate data, and suggest a way out of the imbroglio with France.\textsuperscript{158} Although the question of the French position over Adélie Land remained unclear, when a Norwegian company asked the British Government in 1915 to grant a whaling licence to operate in the Commonwealth Bay area, it was not approved because of lingering doubts about the extent of the French claim.\textsuperscript{159}

On the other hand, the other claims made by the expedition did not pose immediate diplomatic challenges. For example, Queen Mary Land lies east of Gaussberg and nearby Kaiser Wilhelm II Land, claimed by Germany.\textsuperscript{160} It was discovered and traversed on foot by Frank Wild’s Western Base Party in 1912.\textsuperscript{161} Mawson’s plan was for the expedition to journey as far as Kaiser Wilhelm II Land at 90° East but not go beyond it. Believing that the Western Party had achieved that, he

\textsuperscript{157} Cable Secretary of State to Douglas Mawson, Winter Quarters Australasian Antarctic Expedition, 29 March 1913, NAA: Series A 11804/1, Item 1913/298.
\textsuperscript{158} See Chapter 9 of this thesis.
\textsuperscript{160} Gaussberg and Kaiser Wilhelm II Land were discovered by the Gauss expedition of 1901-03 under the command of the German explorer Erich von Drygalski.
\textsuperscript{161} Frank Wild was also a veteran of Scott’s 1901-1904 expedition and in 1908 accompanied Shackleton on his journey to the South Pole. Wild was the leader of the Western Party which had set up its base on what became Queen Mary Land (Western Base) and Mawson was the leader of the base at Commonwealth Bay near Adélie Land (Main Base). See map showing location of the three land bases which had been determined by Mawson before he left for Antarctica at p. 96B.
sent a wireless message to David to check Wild’s data and to seek permission through the Governor-General to name the territory Queen Mary Land. After Royal approval was given, the Governor-General personally informed Mawson.

Mawson’s expedition had achieved its aim, which was to explore from 160° to 90° East, the area Mawson referred to as the Australian Quadrant. The AAE would be hailed in 1932 by J. Gordon Hayes, a foremost polar historian, as ‘the greatest and most consummate expedition that ever sailed for Antarctica.’ In 2003, a modern British Antarctic explorer, Ranulph Fiennes, would declare that Mawson’s expedition ‘was one of great success in terms of geographic and scientific discoveries.’ At the time, Mawson wrote to the Prime Minister advising that the scientific results of the expedition had been said by authorities in Europe to ‘exceed those of any previous Antarctic endeavour’. Mawson also observed that the Royal Geographical Society in London had acknowledged the achievements of the expedition, as noted by its President, Lord Curzon:

Australia has right good reason to be proud of this great geographical enterprise which she herself initiated and so generously supported to its successful conclusion …

On the other hand, H.R. Mill, the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, was not as impressed as others with Mawson’s results.

As Mawson and the Australian scientific community anticipated, the success of the AAE would give Australia prestige abroad. The use of wireless telegraphy alone across great distances between Antarctica, Australia and London was a new initiative that could not fail to show Australia in a favourable light, as Mawson had hoped. In addition, scientific specimens collected by the expedition would be displayed and discussed by the AAAS with the British Association for the

162 Letter T.W. Edgeworth David to His Excellency The Rt Hon Thomas Baron Denman, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia 11 April 1913, NAA: Series A 11804/1, Item 1913/298.
163 Wireless message Denman (Australian Governor-General) to Doctor Mawson, Winter Quarters Australasian Antarctic Expedition, 24 June, 1913, NAA: Series A11804/1, Item 1913/298.
165 Fiennes, p. 387.
166 Letter Douglas Mawson to the Hon Andrew Fisher, Prime Minister, 14 October 1914 NAA: Series A 461/10, Item Q413/6.
167 Words by Lord Curzon, President of the Royal Geographical Society, quoted in Letter Douglas Mawson to Andrew Fisher, 14 October 1914.
Advancement of Science at a conference which Australia was hosting in 1914. Douglas Mawson and his fellow scientists had already anticipated promising findings and planned to publish the results of the expedition ‘and show the World that Australia is not shirking scientific problems within her scope’. In one article Mawson wrote before the expedition, he confidently predicted that the results of the expedition would rival any British expedition of the past. Yet, despite his strenuous efforts in Antarctica, the lauding of the expedition’s scientific results and confidence that it was, to that date, a research expedition without equal, the British Government would challenge the status of Mawson’s discoveries a decade later. The attack on Mawson’s credibility would stir the Australian Government into mounting a defence and demand the recognition and formalisation of Mawson’s territorial claims and their placement under Australian control.

The Australian government had been well aware that the expedition had attracted international attention even before its results were known. Applicants from Europe had asked to be part of it, resulting in the appointment of Dr Xavier Mertz. Mertz’s participation became newsworthy in his native Switzerland, attracting favourable comment in the Swiss press about the expedition as well as about Australia. Another international element related to a presentation from the Prince of Monaco of assorted oceano graphical equipment, which Mawson received from the Institut Océanographique of Monaco. Through the Consul-General for the Netherlands resident in Melbourne, permission was sought for an eminent Dutch scientist, one J.M.N.T. van Waterschoot van der Gracht, to go to Antarctica on the Aurora when it returned on its relief expedition. Antarctica had not only given Australia a glamorous profile outside of the Empire, but the scientific work of the AAE had received wide acclaim.

Australian Antarctic expertise was also highly sought within the Empire. On 11 February 1913, two weeks before Mawson’s wireless message advising that his two companions Belgrave Ninnis and Xavier Mertz had perished on their return
from King George V Land to Main Base, The Age reported "Tragedy of South Pole". Out of the terrible tragedy of Scott’s death came an opportunity for T. Griffith Taylor, senior geologist with Scott’s 1910-1913 expedition, to examine that expedition’s scientific specimens in London. The call came from Commander Edward Evans of the Royal Navy, another member of Scott’s team and the Australian Government obliged by releasing Griffith Taylor from the Commonwealth public service on full pay.\(^{175}\)

The granting of Commander Evans’ request for the release of Griffith Taylor revealed in its wake that the British Government had given only a token donation to Mawson’s expedition, when compared to grants given by Australian Federal and State Governments. In London the Australian High Commissioner, Sir George Reid, sought to make that point through the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Viscount Harcourt.\(^{176}\) Reid advised the Colonial Secretary that Australia was seeking extra funds from the Imperial Government for the Mawson expedition in order ‘to save the lives of some of the members of the Expedition’.\(^{177}\) Although not specified in the communication to Viscount Harcourt, ‘the lives’ were those of Mawson and the men who remained at Main Base to search for Mawson and the other members of his party, after the Aurora had picked up some of the expeditioners in the Antarctic Summer of 1912. The British Government had donated a mere £2,000 towards Mawson’s AAE. But as Sir George Reid reminded the Colonial Secretary, the overall Australian contribution, from Federal and State Governments, to various British expeditions amounted to £13,000, including a subscription of £2,000 for the Scott Memorial Fund.\(^{178}\) Despite the deliberate reminder that Australia now anticipated a more generous effort from the British Government, the response was another token donation of £1,000 for the relief expedition.\(^{179}\)

The financial burden for the rescue effort fell chiefly on the Australian Government, which contributed £5,000. In a cable to Mawson, the Prime Minister,

\(^{175}\) Memorandum David Miller, Administrator, Capital Territory to the Secretary, Commonwealth Public Service Commissioner, 27 March 1913, NAA: Series A 202, Item 1913/1305.

\(^{176}\) Sir George Reid was appointed in 1909 as the first Australian High Commissioner in London. He remained in that post until he retired in 1916.

\(^{177}\) G. H. Reid to Rt. Hon Lewis Harcourt, M.P., Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 June 1913, NAA: Series A 1/15, Item 1915/5159. The Secretary for the Colonies was incorrectly addressed ‘Principal’.

\(^{178}\) G. H. Reid to Rt. Hon Lewis Harcourt, M.P., 13 June 1913.

Joseph Cook, said it ‘was our duty, as well as pleasure, to see you through. You have won our admiration by your heroic labours’.\(^\text{180}\) In adversity, the relationship between the Government and the Australian scientists had become more solid. The AAE had established Australia’s credentials and gave it confidence in Antarctic affairs. Mawson had laid the foundations for Australia to take its position in the front line of Antarctic activities and assert a greater role in determining future Antarctic outcomes. By now, however, the clouds of war had gathered and what awaited the fledgling Federation was unimaginable when Mawson returned from Antarctica in 1914. Yet, despite the Empire’s preoccupation with more weighty matters, Mawson immediately began lobbying both the Australian and British Governments to formalise the claims he had made for Australia and the British Empire.

In 1916, Douglas Mawson envisaged that the War would end in favour of the Empire, and he believed the victorious parties should settle the question of Antarctic ownership. He urged Hughes, now Prime Minister, to put Antarctica on the international agenda for post-war territorial settlement. He also advised the Prime Minister that he had written to the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Fergusson, suggesting that:

> when correcting the maps of the world at the final settlement of this war, all unclaimed territories of the world should be allocated, for better or for worse, to specific nations. The only land of this kind remaining is that of the Antarctic Regions – that great Antarctic Continent half as large again as Europe.\(^\text{181}\)

Mawson observed that, if the Antarctic continent were to be divided into geographical sectors, these could be allocated to the nations that had undertaken the most significant discovery and research.\(^\text{182}\) Hence, the Australian Quadrant between 90° and 180° East, lying to the south of Australia and New Zealand, should be claimed by the British Empire because almost all of the area had been mapped by British expeditions and ‘we have every claim to it’.\(^\text{183}\) Mawson’s suggestion for an Antarctic policy rested on the principle that Antarctic exploring nations had a right to claim the land they discovered. His view differed markedly from that he

\(^{180}\) *The Argus*, 4 October 1913, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item Q413/6.


\(^{182}\) Correspondence from Sir Douglas Mawson re Macquarie Island.

\(^{183}\) Correspondence from Sir Douglas Mawson re Macquarie Island.
expressed in a paper he delivered to the Royal Geographical Society in London before his expedition.

The period between 1910 and 1918 was significant in the history of Australian-Antarctic affairs. The Australian scientific community and the Australian Government had worked effectively together on a joint public-private expedition. Mawson and his fellow scientists had lobbied the government for financial support and, in turn, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition publicly promoted the expedition and appealed on its behalf for private funds. The AAE laid the foundations for the eventual acquisition of the Australian Antarctic Territory as well as for continuing joint action between the Australian scientific community and the Australian Government. Even without the BANZARE a decade later, Mawson believed his expedition had already fulfilled the requirements for a British sovereignty claim. Though not authorised to raise the Union Jack and take possession of territory for the Empire, Mawson had done precisely that. He also raised the Australian flag alongside as an added measure and to signify the provenance of his expedition.¹⁸⁴ For the first time, the Australian flag floated over Antarctica. It was only the third national flag to be raised over the Antarctic continent, after the Union Jack and the Norwegian flag that had given Scott such an awful welcome to the South Pole. Mawson had succeeded in strengthening links between Australia and Antarctica, and had taken significant strides in fulfilling his dream for Australia to stretch from pole to equator. It was now up to the British and Australian governments to take the next step.

¹⁸⁴ Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU031912, pp. 94-95.
Chapter 4
1919-1926: Making Antarctica British

Mawson’s political activism persuaded the Acting Colonial Secretary, Leopold S. Amery, to turn his attention to Antarctica. After discussions with the British Admiralty in early 1919, Amery sent a formal Despatch to the dominions, the following year, advising them of a proposal to bring the entire Antarctic within the Empire. He indicated that a gradual approach should be followed in order to secure the agreement of other powers. On the other hand, he wished to proceed immediately with the annexation of the Ross Sea coast and bring it under New Zealand administration, because like the FID, it contained lucrative whaling grounds. Amery made no reference to Australia as a possible controlling authority, nor did he mention the work done by Australia and its explorers to discover and map the region beneath Australia’s southern borders. Disappointed at being overlooked and perceiving Amery’s Despatch to be only a discussion paper, the Australian Government set out to press for control of the area that had been explored by Mawson’s Australasian Antarctic Expedition. Despite Amery’s lukewarm reception of Australia’s plans, the Government of Stanley Melbourne Bruce refused to be diverted from pursuing its goal, until the question of Antarctic control was placed on the agenda of the 1926 Imperial Conference. Throughout this period, the Australian National Research Council (ANRC) emerged as an effective lobbying group, which sought to influence the Australian Government’s Antarctic policy directions, while playing the role of Australian Government adviser on Antarctic matters. Likewise the Australian press urged the Government to ensure that Australia extended its control into the Antarctic and to thwart attempts by any foreign Power to establish an enclave beneath Australian southern borders.

When Mawson returned to Australia in 1919, after war duties in the British Ministry for Munitions, he again called for the settlement of Antarctic territory. He told the Melbourne Argus that he had hoped the Peace Conference ‘would find time to deal definitely with the allocation of the Antarctic lands’. These, he said, would prove to be of considerable economic value ‘in the near future’, and he advocated

1 *The Argus*, 30 April 1919.
for ‘the section of the Antarctic between 90° and 180° East’ to be controlled by Australia. Although these geographic coordinates included part of the Ross Sea sector, below New Zealand, Mawson may have decided that the region should be placed under Australian authority, because Australia was the larger of the dominions and because Australians had undertaken exploration in the area. However, neither the British nor the Australian Governments acted on Mawson’s suggestion to place the question of Antarctic territorial settlement on the agenda of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

Beck has observed that Mawson’s discussions with the British Admiralty about Antarctica in 1919, together with a further request from a Norwegian whaling enterprise for a licence to whale in waters thought to be British, drew the attention of the Colonial Office to the lack of any British Antarctic policy. According to Beck, a similar Norwegian application in 1911 to whale in the waters from Enderby Land to South Victoria Land (present day Ross Dependency) was not granted. Sovereignty questions in that region had not been determined, because the extent of Adélie Land remained uncertain, despite repeated requests by the British Government before the outbreak of the Great War to the French Government to delineate the boundaries of its claim.

In 1919, however, Amery determined that the whaling industry should be in the hands of a single controlling authority. He therefore proposed to Viscount Milner ‘that “we ought quietly to assert our claim to the whole continent”’. The Foreign Office did not object, and favoured a gradualist approach of building on British claims in order to lessen adverse reactions amongst foreign powers. The ‘key individuals’, who took the initiative to have the Colonial Office formulate what Beck argued was ‘a more positive policy towards the whole of Antarctica’, were Viscount Milner, the Colonial Secretary and Amery, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, ‘who was the prime mover during the decisive formative stage’.

---

2 The Argus, 30 April 1919.
3 Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, pp. 451-453.
4 Quoted in Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 457.
6 Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 454.
6 February 1920, while he was acting Secretary for the Colonies, Amery sent his famous Despatch to the Dominion Prime Ministers advising them of the proposal for the gradual British domination of the Antarctic. Amery’s 1920 Despatch has since been accepted by historians to be a British Government policy that was advised to the dominions and adopted by them without question. The oft-quoted section in Amery’s Despatch observed that, after considering the future control of the Antarctic regions, ‘His Majesty’s Government’ had concluded

that it is desirable that the whole of the Antarctic should ultimately be included within the British Empire, and that, while the time has not yet arrived that a claim to all the continental territories should be put forward publicly, a definite and consistent policy should be followed of extending and asserting British control with the object of ultimately making it complete.

A close reading of the Despatch, however, throws doubt on its status as a formal notification of a definite Antarctic policy.

Generally, the Despatch discussed the value of Antarctic whaling, but only in two areas of the Antarctic: the FID and the Ross Sea coast. Whale oil from the FID had proved to be economically important for its domestic uses within the Empire, and had become important during the war for strategic reasons ‘owing to the need for glycerine, in which whale oil is rich’. Hence, Amery’s foremost reason for wishing to subsume Antarctica within the Empire was that a single power was better equipped to introduce effective measures to control the exploitation of ‘valuable animals’. Amery also anticipated that Antarctica had potential not only for the exploitation of its surrounding seas, but also given the existence of minerals ‘in places’. Since the FID was already under British sovereignty, ‘it is highly desirable’, Amery advised, ‘that immediate steps should be taken to assert British sovereignty over the Ross Sea coasts and their hinterland, which might be defined as including all territories and islands, south of New Zealand between the meridians of 150° east and west, and some limit to be fixed to the north’. Although Amery invited discussions between the Australian and New Zealand Governments as to

---
7 L.S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920. See Copy at p. 137A.
8 L.S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920.
9 L.S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920. A derivative of glycerine is used in the making of explosives.
10 L.S. Amery to the Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920.
11 L.S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920.
12 L.S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920.
'which of the partners in the Empire should be entrusted with control of the new territory', he suggested New Zealand as being the closest.13

The most striking discrepancy in Amery's Despatch was his disregard of an Antarctic role for Australia, despite Australia's record in Antarctic discovery and exploration. Nonetheless, he observed that Antarctic science, particularly in the field of navigation, should be pursued in order to 'make safe the waters now avoided by commerce owing to danger of ice.'14 Amery had in mind the trade route between South America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. Amery also identified security threats to the nearby dominions as a result of an enhanced radius of action for submarines and aircraft in areas that allowed for the secret preparation of raiding operations.15

Since Amery had discussed Antarctica with the Admiralty, he was aware of their advice with regard to the status of British discoveries. The Admiralty had produced a lengthy document which showed that all of Mawson's claims in the region facing Australia were 'Disputable' because the same region contained Adélie Land, which had been discovered in 1840 by Dumont d'Urville. Mawson's survey of the coastline had shown that Adélie Land and the territory Mawson had claimed were part of the same continuous coastline. Thus, according to the Admiralty's criterion, prior discovery took precedent, making the French claim 'Indisputable'.16 Although the region beneath Australia was entangled with a foreign claim and should be treated with some caution, so too should the FID, where the Admiralty had shown that the islands of South Georgia and the South Shetlands, as well as the west coast of Graham Land on the Antarctic Peninsula, were 'Disputable' British claims. Yet Amery had identified the FID as the jewel in the crown of British

13 L.S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920.
14 L.S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920.
15 L.S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920. These 1920 predictions came true twenty years later during the Second World War when German raiders operating out of isolated sub-Antarctic islands caused the loss of thousands of tons of allied shipping on the high seas. In one instance, H.M.A.S. Australia was sent to seek them out. German raiders caused further losses after laying mines in the harbour entrances to Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and Adelaide. See Swan, p. 235.
NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1.
Antarctic claims, without mentioning that the British sovereignty could be challenged by another power.\textsuperscript{17}

The Admiralty’s Memorandum was not sent to the dominions until 1925. Consequently, when Amery’s Despatch was being examined by the Australian Government, it was not aware that an opinion had been given about every discovery made in the Antarctic and that Mawson’s claims were in doubt. Amery, on the other hand, had already identified that ‘France is the only Power’ that could challenge the scheme as it had reasonable grounds to put forward a claim. Germany no longer posed a threat, since it was forced to abandon any claims to external territories under Article 118 of the Treaty of Versailles.\textsuperscript{18} France was not a trifling power, and had emerged from the First World War as the only other Empire. These comments explain why Amery overlooked Australia and Mawson’s claims. Yet, despite identifying France as presenting a challenge to British Antarctic domination, Amery had, nonetheless, put his proposal of British imperial dominion of all of Antarctica to the dominions as a policy of the British Government.

The French Government had never perfected France’s title to Adélie Land; nor had it been visited by a French expedition since Dumont d’Urville claimed it for France in 1840. The French Government had not even replied to British attempts, before the outbreak of the war, to clarify French intentions in the region. Similarly, the Americans had not followed up on any of the discoveries, made in the same vicinity, by Charles Wilkes. Indeed, the land which Wilkes believed he had sighted had since been shown by Mawson not to exist.\textsuperscript{19} Mawson’s findings were well known through his publications. And, as the British Admiralty observed in 1919, the claims made by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, during his expedition of 1840 have given rise to endless controversy, to recriminations of the most painful kind between English and American Naval Officers, to a Court Martial, and to accusations of professional incompetence and scandalous conduct.\textsuperscript{20}

The Admiralty made it clear that it did not pretend to be an authority in matters respecting the weight to be given to conflicting factors. Nonetheless, it proposed that where a discovery was made without landing, or where one explorer had taken

\textsuperscript{17} Dominions No.99, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{18} L. S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920.
\textsuperscript{19} Dominions No.99, pp. 8, 9.
\textsuperscript{20} Dominions No.99, p. 8.
formal possession of land that had already been discovered by an explorer of another nation, the problem should be resolved by international law.  

Although based on information contained in the Admiralty’s Memorandum, Amery’s Despatch contained errors of fact, which quickly became a focus in Australia. For example, Anvers Island, that was part of the FID, was assessed as a ‘Disputable’ British claim based upon possible discovery by the American scaler Nathaniel Palmer. According to Amery’s Despatch, however, Dumont d’Urville made a ‘formal landing at Anvers Island near Adélie Land, in 1840, at which he took possession of the Island and adjacent coast in the name of France’. Bad drafting in the Colonial Office was the probable cause of the error. Nonetheless, it showed that the Acting Colonial Secretary had little knowledge of a region that was to be claimed in its entirety by the Empire.

Beck has argued that Amery’s 1920 Despatch was an articulation of ‘a clear and coherent policy towards the whole continent’. Yet Beck has revealed that ‘neither the Cabinet nor the Treasury was consulted.’ If Cabinet did not endorse a Minister’s proposal, it could hardly be called a policy of the Government. It is intriguing that Amery, or more properly, the Colonial Secretary never took the so-called Antarctic policy to Cabinet. The obvious reason is that Amery was not advising the dominions of a developed British Antarctic policy, but was merely expressing an aspiration that one should be developed. Indeed, had such a document been prepared for Cabinet by the Colonial Secretary, with contributions from other relevant Ministries, the problem of the various Antarctic claims and counter-claims would have required some explanation, if Cabinet were to agree to a definite Antarctic policy.

Another possible reason why Milner would not have taken a submission to Cabinet relates to known political animosities between him and the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. In a critical study of the Government of Lloyd George,

21 Dominions No.99, p. 3.
22 Dominions No.99, p. 10. Anvers Island was not named in the Letters Patent, but came within the geographic co-ordinates lying between 20° and 80° West. See Bush, Volume III, Doc. NZ15081923, pp. 251-253.
23 L. S. Amery to Governor-General R. Munro Ferguson, 6 February 1920.
24 Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 459.
Kenneth O. Morgan shows that some saw the Prime Minister as a dictator while others saw him as a democrat.\textsuperscript{26} Morgan’s study is based on significant British archival sources and on comments made by Lloyd George’s admirers as well as by his detractors. By 1918 he had fallen out with Milner, a former ally, over mishandling of demobilisation. ‘In full Cabinet’, Morgan notes, ‘the prime minister now subjected him to “vehement charges of dilatoriness and neglect”; poor Milner was forced to bewail in his diary that the proceedings were “rather indecent”’.\textsuperscript{27} Amery was a protégé of Milner’s and would describe himself as one of Milner’s ‘kindergarten’.\textsuperscript{28} The relationship between Amery and Milner was sufficiently strong to withstand an expansive policy proposal to the dominions, if it were also recommended by the bureaucratic head of the Colonial Office, Sir George Fiddes, the permanent Under-Secretary of State.\textsuperscript{29} Nonetheless, that would not make a proposal discussed amongst a small group of Ministers and officials a ‘settled’ policy of the British Government, as Beck has accepted.\textsuperscript{30}

It was not until October 1924 that a file search at the British Foreign Office revealed that in December 1919 the Colonial Office, and not the British Government, had considered the future control of the Antarctic and neighbouring waters. The Colonial Office then proposed that the ‘whole of the Antarctic should ultimately, and as a definite and consistent policy, be included within the British Empire,’ and identified France as the only other country to have a ‘reasonable ground for a share in those lands’.\textsuperscript{31} The Foreign Office research paper referred to the proposal as the ‘policy of the Colonial Office’ and noted that it was endorsed by the Foreign Office on 10 January 1920.\textsuperscript{32} When Amery sent his formal Despatch to the dominions the following month, he erroneously advised them that the policy had been under consideration of ‘His Majesty’s Government’. It is puzzling, then, that


\textsuperscript{27} Quoted in Morgan from the papers of Lloyd George and the diaries of Viscount Milner, p. 144.

\textsuperscript{28} Quoted in Morgan, p. 135.

\textsuperscript{29} Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 454.

\textsuperscript{30} In a Minute by R.H. Campbell, First Secretary, Foreign Office dated 23 August 1928, he observed that ‘it is a fact that we are trying to paint the whole Antarctic red as the result of a deliberate and settled policy’, cited in Peter J. Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 461. The rank of First Secretary is a junior middle-management position and the Minute referred to by Beck indicates it was the result of a search of the Foreign Office files, a task given to Mr Campbell to perform for his superiors.


\textsuperscript{32} Foreign Office Research Paper.
Beck should conclude that 'it was not until 1920 that a clear and coherent policy towards the whole continent replaced the previous ad hoc and pragmatic attitude.  

Amery's Despatch was not perceived in Australia as a settled policy of the British Government, but as a proposal for discussion with relevant parts of the Empire. Reading it as such, the Australian Prime Minister, W.M. Hughes, commenced discussions with W.F. Massey, his New Zealand counterpart, and immediately began suggesting amendments that would meet Australian concerns. Hughes advised Massey that, while Australia agreed in principle with Amery's proposal, Australia wished to control the sector below Hobart. Hughes then proposed dividing the 'sphere of British influence in the Antarctic between our respective Governments'. Hughes had made a specific policy change and hoped the New Zealand Government would consider it a fair compromise. Massey's response was to delay agreement to Australia's proposition until the New Zealand High Commissioner in London, Sir James Allen, had discussed the matter further with Amery.

In order to determine the views of the Antarctic experts, Hughes sent copies of Amery's Despatch to Mawson, Edgeworth David and Captain J.K. Davis for comment. As Amery had raised security concerns, Hughes also sought a security assessment of Australia's southern border from the Department of the Navy. The Antarctic veterans responded by canvassing Australia's ability to control the desired sector. They all agreed that the Antarctic region should be brought within the Empire. Captain Davis, at the time Director of Navigation, suggested that Australia's portion should be a separately delineated sector from 160° to 90° East. While he had no qualms about New Zealand being given control of an Antarctic sector, the boundary line, he said, should commence at 160° East, not 150° East as outlined in Amery's Despatch, so as not to include Australian territory, such as Lord Howe and Macquarie Islands. In fact, without a fixed northern limit, the territory

33 Beck, 'Securing the dominant "Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun", p. 459.
34 Letter W.M. Hughes to Rt Hon The Prime Minister of New Zealand, 17 May 1920, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
35 Letter W. F. Massey to Rt Hon the Prime Minister, Commonwealth of Australia, 2 June 1920, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
36 Letter John Davis to P. L. Piesse, Department of External Affairs, 5 July 1920, NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1 and Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
within the geographic limits proposed would have included Sydney and parts of the New South Wales coastline.

The information provided by Captain Davis should have been known to the Admiralty, had some connections been made with other policy areas relating to Australia's area of control. As mentioned in the previous chapter, at the 1911 Imperial Conference the Australian Naval Station was placed under the control of the Australian Government. The sphere of control to be exercised by the Australian Station included south-eastern New Guinea in the north and extended south to incorporate Lord Howe and Macquarie Islands and further south as far as 'The South Pole' between the Meridians of 160° to approximately 95° East Longitude. This decision was confirmed on 1 July 1913. These limits were an approximate calculation of Mawson's Australian Quadrant. It is curious, therefore, that Amery had chosen New Zealand to be the controlling authority over an area that was already under the control of the Australian Naval Station. Indeed, reference in Amery's Despatch to an undefined limit north even suggests that the official who drafted the Despatch was unsure which sphere of the world he was referring to, and was possibly thinking of the Arctic.

Davis also warned that both the French and American claims in the region would need to be considered, but thought the French claim 'might be disposed of' by granting them a zone in west Graham Land where most of their recent exploration had taken place. Davis believed there was an 'additional and urgent reason' for extending Australian control over what he termed the 'Antarctic hinterland', because the area is closer to Hobart than Melbourne is to Perth. He rejected the claim that the Australian Quadrant offered little economic value. Rather, he suggested that the 'strategic and economic possibilities of the Antarctic at present are about as obscure as those of Australia before 1772'.

In its initial response, the Australian Naval Board did not agree with Amery that the Antarctic region posed a security risk to Australia. On the other hand, it

37 See map of the Australian Station at Chapter 3, p. 96A.
39 Letter John Davis to P. L. Piesse, 5 July 1920.
40 Letter John Davis to P. L. Piesse, 5 July 1920.
41 Memorandum Secretary, Department of the Navy to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department 22 July 1920, NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1.
could not rule out what might happen in the future as a result of the probable rapid development of naval technology.\textsuperscript{42} The Navy made the unusual suggestion that if such a problem were to occur it would ‘probably be in the vicinity of the Ross Sea’.\textsuperscript{43} The Naval Board quickly saw the problem with Amery’s boundaries and, like Captain Davis, suggested these should be moved to 160\degree East. Nonetheless, they did not consider it worthwhile entering into a dispute with France, or any of the other powers, in order to obtain control of the coasts within these limits.\textsuperscript{44} The Department subsequently warned that, if the region were to be divided in order to allow Australia and New Zealand to have their separate spheres of control, Australia would incur ‘certain expense, such as occasional visits by Australian Warships, etc.’\textsuperscript{45} Thus, the Australian Navy was not happy with the idea that Australia should assume control, as that would place a burden on Australian naval resources.

Predictably, Mawson agreed that the entire Antarctic should be subsumed within the Empire, since mostly British explorers had been active in the region, ‘and it is hoped that other Governments will give way in this matter’.\textsuperscript{46} He believed that Antarctica’s value lay in the economic exploitation of marine and land resources, coal in particular, and that ‘the future is pregnant with possibilities’.\textsuperscript{47} Not only did Mawson support the Antarctic becoming part of the Empire, but he proposed that, for the purpose of achieving unified control, an office of High Commissioner should be created as the central controlling authority. The High Commissioner should be resident, probably in the Falkland Islands, with Deputy Commissioners elsewhere in areas that could be developed for commercial whaling and sealing. Mawson proposed that portions of the Antarctic should be allocated to the neighbouring ‘colonial units’. Thus, ‘New Zealand, Australia and South Africa would come in for the remainder of the Southern Seas’.\textsuperscript{48}

Though generally happy that matters were moving in the right direction, Mawson resented ‘the proposal to allocate the best of the Australasian Quadrant to

\textsuperscript{42} Memorandum Secretary, Department of the Navy to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department.
\textsuperscript{43} Memorandum Secretary, Department of the Navy to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department.
\textsuperscript{44} Memorandum Secretary, Department of the Navy to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department.
\textsuperscript{45} Minute Department of the Navy, 13 August 1920, NAA: Series MP 1185/9/0, Item 453/204/938 and NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1. Although External Affairs wished to have the views of T. Griffith Taylor, he was not in Australia at the time. See also Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford.
\textsuperscript{46} Letter Mawson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 22 November 1920, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
\textsuperscript{47} Letter Mawson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 22 November 1920.
\textsuperscript{48} Letter Mawson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 22 November 1920.
New Zealand'. It was 'not altogether fair to Australia', Mawson declared in his letter, and he suggested that the area should be divided between the two dominions. He also expressed irritation that New Zealand was given consideration, because compared to Australia its qualifications with respect to Antarctic exploration were weak. Like Captain Davis, Mawson dismissed the French claim to Adélie Land, noting that most French exploration was conducted 'south of Cape Horn' and suggested that, if France were to be allocated territory, 'it should be there'.

Beck’s assertion that Mawson had discussed Antarctica at the Colonial Office was borne out in Mawson’s response. He claimed that he had written to Hughes on several occasions, urging him to take action 'and proclaim Australian rights over the Australian Quadrant,' and had had several discussions at the Colonial Office with the officer in charge of the Antarctic Section. According to Mawson, he had asked the official to 'bring the Antarctic matter forward', but that in London it was assumed that Australia was not interested. It is likely that Mawson was given that response from the Colonial Office. On the other hand, it is unlikely that New Zealand had made representations to the Colonial Secretary to be given a controlling stake in Antarctica. Yet New Zealand had been favoured over Australia. Since the question of Adélie Land had not been resolved before the outbreak of the Great War, the comment from the Colonial Office was ill-informed.

Unlike Mawson, Edgeworth David avoided making any political points. He supported the general thrust of Amery's Despatch and outlined the economic potential that the Antarctic region beneath Australia and New Zealand offered. As a geologist, David concentrated on what he knew best. He believed that 'there can be no question that coal is by far the most important'. David enclosed a map marking Antarctic coal-fields 'in the Australasian sector'. A quantity of coal had been brought back by Shackleton for analysis and 'proved to be of workable quality'.

---

49 Letter Mawson to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 22 November 1920.
50 Letter Mawson to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 22 November 1920.
51 Letter Mawson to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 22 November 1920.
52 Letter Mawson to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 22 November 1920.
53 Letter Mawson to Secretary (Prime Minister's Department) 22 November 1920, NAA: Series A981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
54 Letter T. W. Edgeworth David to Shepherd 29 November 1920, NAA: Series MP 1185/9/0, Item 453/204/938.
55 Letter T. W. Edgeworth David to Shepherd.
Subsequent discoveries by Scott indicated that the coal-measures were of the same age as those found in Newcastle, New South Wales. Coal was also discovered by the AAE and David estimated that the area of the Antarctic coal-field was approximately 5,000 square miles. He also advised that other metals existed of economic value, including gold, but added that it would be difficult to prospect for alluvial deposits, these being frozen with the exception of five weeks from Christmas. Nonetheless, David believed work could be undertaken, noting that at 'Klondike the frozen alluvials are thawed by means of jets of steam.' The Antarctic veterans had each been sent a copy of Amery’s Despatch and, as their responses indicated, none assumed that it was a formal notification of a settled policy.

Amery had also sent a copy of his Despatch to the Admiralty. It, too, suggested a readjustment to the boundaries of the Ross Sea territory, not because the western boundary encroached onto Australian territory, but because it included King George V Land, situated between 143° – 153° East, which was a disputable British claim because it was ‘geographically, a continuation of Adélie Land.’ The Admiralty, however, overlooked the problem associated with an undefined northern limit within the geographical coordinates advised. Such an oversight could be dismissed as mere carelessness. It could even be that some sectors of the British bureaucracy perceived the overseas dominions as one amorphous mass, rather than sovereign entities with national interests to protect.

Probably through Mawson’s intervention or that of the ANRC, an article in the Melbourne Age sought to apply pressure on the Government by urging prompt action to be taken with respect to ‘the great sector of Antarctica facing the southern coasts of Australia’. The article appealed to commercial interests to take up the challenge of whaling in Antarctica, noting the large profits being made around the Falkland Islands, and called for a revival of what was ‘once Australia’s greatest industry’. The Age almost confirmed the ANRC’s hand in the article, when it noted that ‘Mawson and others have expressed the belief that this region will yet be

---

56 Letter T. W. Edgeworth David to Shepherd.
57 Letter T. W. Edgeworth David to Shepherd.
58 Dominions No.99, part 1, p. 8
60 The Age, 28 September 1920.
found of considerable economic value as a source of whale oil and similar products. The continuing press fascination with Mawson would ensure that Antarctic matters remained in the public mind. If the Australian public remained supportive, it would be very difficult for the Australian Government to ignore it. Importantly, public interest in Australian control of an Antarctic sector would lessen Government criticism if and when public moneys were to be used to achieve that end.

Despite the enthusiasm of The Age and the Antarctic veterans, the prospect of Australia having its own portion of Antarctic to control appeared remote in 1920. The New Zealand Prime Minister advised Hughes, after the New Zealand High Commissioner had discussed the Australian initiative with Amery, that the question of divided control met only a lukewarm reception. Amery, Massey said, promised only ‘to make enquiries’. Had New Zealand perceived Amery’s Despatch to be a settled policy, Massey would doubtless have written immediately to Hughes suggesting that it would be pointless to explore the Australian initiative with Amery. Instead, Massey had instructed the New Zealand High Commissioner to raise the question and report back.

Since Amery had not given a definite response, Hughes did not accept that the question of Australian Antarctic control was closed. He now determined to take up the matter of divided control with the Colonial Secretary through his own emissary, the Australian Minister for Repatriation, Senator Millen, who had gone to London on other business. While Senator Millen was still en route to London, Hughes instructed him to make it clear to Colonial Secretary Milner in person that the sphere of British influence in the region must be divided between Australia and New Zealand, ‘instead of whole control being exercised by one Dominion’. Senator Millen was to stress that the Australian Government supported the assertion of British sovereignty over Antarctica by reason of outstanding British exploration. On the other hand, Australia believed it was entitled to its own zone, identified from

---

61 The Age, 28 September 1920.
62 Letter W. F. Massey to The Rt Hon, the Prime Minister, Commonwealth of Australia, 5 October 1920, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
63 Cable Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor-General, 11 October 1920, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
64 Cable Prime Minister to Senator Millen, R.M.S. Orsova, Port Said, 21 October 1920, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
the Meridians 90° to 160° East Longitude. Senator Millen was to stress that
Australia had every right to the region since David and Mawson had taken formal
possession at various points of the Ross Sea region, including the area of the
Magnetic Pole up to 155° 16’ East and extending westward during the course of the
AAE to Queen Mary Land at approximately 98° 48’. Millen was to reject the notion
that only the Falklands and Ross Sea regions were of value. Nor should the French
claim be made an impediment to Australia taking control, but instead France should
be offered compensation with territory where most of its exploration had taken
place: south of Cape Horn.  
Hughes’ instructions to Millen were a synthesis of
directives given to him by the Antarctic explorers. That advice was now the Australian
Government’s position and ran counter to Amery’s view.

It was Amery, and not Viscount Milner, who convened a meeting with the
New Zealand and Australian representatives at the Colonial Office, a strong
indication that Antarctica was to be Amery’s project. It was Milner, however, who
reported later to Hughes that Amery appeared not to know about the formal taking
of possession by Mawson’s AAE, but was sympathetic to the view of separate
spheres of control. At the same time, Amery seemed to be unconvinced that
Mawson had done enough work in the Antarctic to justify British annexation and
pondered whether a specific expedition should be sent ‘to raise the flag, or whether
reliance could be placed on the raising of the flag heretofore.’ The Colonial
Secretary’s response contained no indication that the British Government’s policy
for Antarctica was already settled and could not be challenged. Indeed, his response
raised more questions that required further exploration.

The meeting with the representatives of the three governments took place on
2 February 1921, almost one year after Amery’s pronouncement on Antarctica.
Senator Millen was assisted at the meeting by George Knowles from the Attorney-
General’s Department and New Zealand was represented by its High Commissioner
Sir James Allen.  Henry Lambert and E.R. Darnley of the Colonial Office were also

65 Cable Prime Minister (Rt Hon W. M. Hughes) to Senator Millen, London, 29 January 1921, NAA:
Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
66 Letter E. D. Millen to Rt Hon W. M. Hughes, Prime Minister, 28 April 1921,
NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
67 Letter E. D. Millen to Rt Hon W. M. Hughes, Prime Minister, 28 April 1921.
68 George Knowles, a senior official of the Attorney-General’s Department had not been sent to
London to discuss Antarctica, but was probably in London as secretary for Australia in the British
present. According to a note taken by the Colonial Office representatives, Amery explained to the meeting that

the only motive underlying the proposals in the Secretary of State’s despatch was to secure that the Antarctic passed under British control, and it was merely a question of administrative convenience whether that control was exercised by New Zealand or by New Zealand and Australia, or by the two Dominions and His Majesty’s Government.69

The Colonial Office note confirmed three things: firstly, that the Despatch sent the previous year was indeed a proposal and not a settled policy; secondly, that Australia understood this and pursued Amery’s invitation to discuss the proposal with New Zealand; finally, and importantly, that Amery had not taken into account the emerging nationalist sensitivities of the two dominions. Beck certainly had determined that view when he concluded that the dominions were considered by the British Government as ‘agents of British imperialism’.70 Yet the Colonial Office note indicated that the meeting discussed Australia’s proposal of joint division, and Amery even suggested the possibility of the ‘Imperial Government’ being represented with Australia and New Zealand on the ‘joint authority’.71 The Colonial Office also advised the dominions that, while the proposed sector for New Zealand had been the scene of Norwegian activities, such as a landing at Cape Adare in 1895 and Amundsen’s 1911 expedition, it was discovered by Ross’s expedition and had more recently been explored by British expeditions. Nonetheless, the Colonial Office assessed that it was ‘highly unlikely’ that any power would object ‘to the definite appropriation of this, the most valuable part of the Antarctic outside the Falkland Islands Dependencies’.72

The Colonial Office was premature in its assessment. Besides, it was not the task of the Colonial Office to make such a prediction, unless of course it had received a thorough analysis from the Foreign Office. Since the Foreign Office had erred badly in its approach to the French Government with respect to Adélie Land before the war, the Foreign Office also appeared to be unqualified to make assessments about the views of foreign powers with respect to Antarctica.

---

69 Colonial Office note 3 February 1921, NAA: Series A 6661, Item 1370.
70 Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 459.
71 Colonial Office note 3 February 1921.
Chapter 9 of this thesis will demonstrate, the British Government had a tendency to act on the assumption that foreign powers would make way for the Empire to implement its policies, irrespective of any national interest another power might have. Such assumptions had characterised the diplomacy with France, but more particularly with Norway demonstrating that, in the inter-war years, foreign powers were beginning to assert their own interest against the advance of the British Empire. The change in the international mood after World War I was strongly indicated when in 1925 Norway protested to the British Government that the extension of British sovereignty over the Ross Dependency had jeopardised Norwegian ‘interests and rights’. In comparison, a more respectful Norway had asked the British Government in 1906 about the sovereignty of the sub-Antarctic islands beneath South America, in order to advise its Norwegian whaling interests to whom they should apply for whaling licences. That approach had precipitated the first sovereignty claim over Antarctic territory.

Despite clarifying Australia’s position, the meeting with Amery did not lead to any commitment that Australia should have control of the area it had requested. Instead, the Colonial Office confirmed that action might be taken ‘immediately’ with respect to the New Zealand sphere and that ‘it may be desirable to proceed more cautiously in the case of the Australian sphere’. The Colonial Office indicated, nonetheless, that the matter required further discussions at the level of Prime Minister at the Imperial Conference scheduled for June.

The 1921 Imperial Conference was the first gathering of the Empire’s Prime Ministers since the war. High on its agenda was the participation of the dominions in the making of the Empire’s foreign policy. Although Antarctica had an international political dimension, and this was a unique opportunity for the southern hemisphere dominions to determine Antarctic policies, it was not discussed at the Conference that year. Nor did Hughes mention Antarctica in his statement to Parliament before he left for London. Instead, Hughes concentrated on the participation of the dominions in making any policies that might lead the Empire to war. Hughes explained to the House that the attitude of the Australian people towards foreign

74 Bush, Volume III, Doc. UK23021906 p. 239.
75 Dominions No. 78.
76 Dominions No. 78.
policy before the war ‘was one of indifference’.\textsuperscript{77} Since the war it had become necessary to ‘take a keener interest’.\textsuperscript{78} The question of equal involvement of the dominions in foreign policy making was not resolved at the 1921 Imperial Conference. But a change in the mood of the dominions had become apparent, as Hughes told Parliament after his return. Before the war, he said, ‘Imperial Conferences were ceremonious and social functions rather than serious attempts to co-ordinate the activities of a far-flung Empire’.\textsuperscript{79}

That Antarctica was not discussed at the 1921 Conference is not surprising since it was not the subject of a British Government policy. Also, the main proponents of the British acquisition of Antarctica, Milner and Amery, had left or were preparing to depart the Colonial Office. Amery would take up the question of Antarctica when he had settled into his new position at the Admiralty. Milner’s replacement was Winston Churchill, who had taken up the duties of Colonial Secretary about four months before the 1921 Imperial Conference. If Churchill had been briefed by the Colonial Office about his predecessor’s policy for Antarctica, he did not pursue the matter. Besides, Churchill was unlikely to place before the Imperial Conference a policy that had not been sanctioned by Cabinet. Nor was the question of Antarctica placed on the agenda of the 1923 Imperial Conference. By then Amery had been promoted to the position of First Lord of the Admiralty and maintained his Antarctic interest from that portfolio. In July 1923, before the Imperial Conference in October, he moved to have an Order in Council prepared for the Ross Dependency to be placed under the control of New Zealand. The boundary line for the Ross Dependency was moved from 150° East to 160° East, as advised by the Australian government.

There were also changes in the Australian political sphere. On 9 February 1923, Stanley Melbourne Bruce of the Nationalist Party became Australian Prime Minister after forming a coalition with the Country Party. According to W.J. Hudson and M.P. Sharp, Bruce was in step with Hughes on issues relating to foreign policy.

\textsuperscript{77} Commonwealth of Australia, Imperial Conference, Copy of Speech by the Rt Hon W. M. Hughes, P.C., M.P. (Prime Minister), From the Parliamentary Debate, 7 April 1921, NAA: Series CP 103/3, Item Series 3 1921-1923: Vol. 1-Vol. 6.

\textsuperscript{78} Imperial Conference, Speech by the Rt Hon W. M. Hughes, 7 April 1921.

\textsuperscript{79} The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia ‘Imperial Conference, 1921’, Copy of Statement of the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon W. M. Hughes, P. C., made in the House of Representatives, 30 September 1921, NAA: Series CP 103/3/1, Item Vol. 1.
He also agreed with Hughes that Australia could not defend itself with its own resources and that Australia’s security interests rested on its membership of the Empire, ‘but not dominated by the United Kingdom’. 80 Although Bruce had received his higher education at Cambridge University, practised at the English bar and enlisted with a British regiment during the War, he was ‘a firm Australian nationalist’. 81 Both Bruce and Hughes shared the belief that the Empire did not belong to the United Kingdom Government. In the words of Schreuder and Ward, the Empire was also ‘Australia’s Empire’, 82 and Bruce and Hughes were determined to participate in making its foreign policy. The two leaders were ardent in their support of Empire unity and keen to maintain the current arrangements. Bruce would also state that he was ‘distrustful of constitutionalists who would sacrifice flexibility and informal politicking for legal precision’. 83

After attending the 1923 Imperial Conference, Bruce decided to spend Christmas and New Year in London, while remaining silent on Antarctic developments. A very worried Acting Prime Minister, Earle Page, cabled Bruce, urging him to discuss the question of Australian Antarctic control with the Colonial Office. 84 Earle Page reminded Bruce that New Zealand now had under its control the Ross Sea coast after the issue of the recent Order in Council. 85 He pleaded with Bruce to resolve the question of Australian control quickly, as an important Norwegian whaling enterprise had arrived in Hobart and its activities in Antarctic waters, he suggested, could threaten Australian territorial rights. 86 Page sent his urgent cable to Bruce on 10 December. Bruce, however, did not respond for another month, until he had discussed the matter with the Colonial Office. On 7 January 1924 he advised Page that the question was under control and he had been convinced by the Colonial Office that the matter, ‘for reasons communicated to me’,

---

80 Hudson and Sharp, pp. 71-72 and Imperial Conference, Speech by the Rt Hon W. M. Hughes, 7 April 1921.
81 Hudson and Sharp, pp. 71-72.
82 Schreuder and Ward, *Australia’s Empire*.
83 Hudson and Sharp, pp. 71-72.
84 Cable Dr Page, Acting Prime Minister, to Mr Bruce, 10 December 1923, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
86 Cable Page to Bruce, 10 December 1923.
did not require any urgent action by Australia.⁸⁷ That assumption was to prove premature.

On 29 March 1924 France published in its *Journal Officiel* a presidential decree declaring hunting and fishing rights over a group of sub-Antarctic islands and Adélie or Wilkes Land.⁸⁸ The decree also pronounced that the area would be reserved for French nationals. Three days earlier, the French Ministry of Marine also decreed that it had placed Adélie Land or Wilkes Land under the surveillance of war ships belonging to the French Naval Forces in the Pacific Ocean. The French Embassy in London advised the Foreign Office on 6 August 1924, five months after the decree was issued. The following month, the Colonial Office sent copies of the French correspondence together with translations into English to the Australian Government without comment.⁹⁰ The French claim comprised the sub-Antarctic islands of the Crozets, Kerguelens, Saint Paul and Amsterdam in the Southern Indian Ocean and Adelie Land on the Antarctic continent directly beneath Hobart.⁹⁰ France did not set any boundaries for Adélie Land and the formal French act meant that France was unlikely to be convinced to exchange the territory for one elsewhere. Amery’s proposal for a gradual and quiet approach, designed to attract as little international attention as possible, had failed.

In Australia, the French action stirred the ANRC. It immediately began a public campaign, through the press, in which it appealed to the Australian Government to challenge the French decrees, and to seek ‘international sanction’ to administer the area between 90⁰ and 160⁰ East.⁹¹ An article appeared in the Brisbane *Daily Mail* challenging the French claim over Adélie Land. The article warned that the Australian Government should not be ‘easy-going about Adélie Land,’ which lay within the region geographers had titled the Australian Quadrant, and that on the grounds of proximity Australia had a strong case to administer the area.⁹² Despite its anonymity, the information contained in the article indicated specific knowledge

---

⁸⁷ Cable Rt Hon S. M. Bruce to Dr Earle Page, 7 January 1924
NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 2.
⁸⁸ Adélie Land was frequently interposed with Wilkes Land and vice versa.
⁹⁰ Letter Henry Lambert for the Secretary of State to Governor General, Lord Forster, 9 September 1924, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1 and NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 4. The channel of communication between the Colonial Office and the Australian Government and vice versa was through the Governor-General.
⁹² Brisbane *Daily Mail*, 13 July 1924.
of the subject and it pressed views that Mawson had frequently advocated, suggesting that he might have been the author.

It was unlikely, however, that any member of the international community would have agreed with these views, since the European powers and the United States of America, would be disenfranchised if proximity were to be the only criterion for a basis of claim in Antarctica. Indeed, the United Kingdom’s prize possession, the FID, would not qualify. While having popular appeal and easily understood by the public, a case for Antarctic control based only on propinquity would hardly be sanctioned by the Foreign Office or foreign powers. Besides, Australia had excellent credentials as a result of Mawson’s AAE. His expedition remained the only one up to that time to have landed on the Australian Quadrant. It had sailed around the coastline and remained in the Antarctic from 1911 to 1914, an exceptional time for an expedition to maintain a presence in the region. There was no reason for Australia to shrink from asserting its rights in the region based on these achievements.

Although the formal channel of communication remained through the Governor-General to the Prime Minister, it was the British Admiralty that advised its Australian counterpart, the Australian Navy Board, on 10 October 1924 that it accepted the validity of the French claim over Adélie Land, because it had always maintained the view that it was a French possession.93 Although the boundaries of Adélie Land were not defined, the Admiralty stated that the coastline of Adélie Land was ‘contiguous with, and close to, the coastline of the Ross Sea Dependency.’94 For that reason, according to the Admiralty, the western limit of the Ross Sea Dependency was fixed at 160° East Longitude rather than 150°.95 Amery was the First Lord of the Admiralty (he would return to the Colonial Office the following month as Secretary of State), and had continued to administer Antarctic affairs from the Admiralty. His attitude to Australia remained cavalier by continuing to ignore Australia’s wishes and disregard its contribution in Antarctic matters. Amery’s attitude certainly confirms Beck’s assertion that Australian views were usually

93 Letter the Admiralty to Secretary, Navy Board 10 October 1924, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 2.
94 Letter the Admiralty to Secretary, Navy Board, 10 October 1924.
95 Letter the Admiralty to Secretary, Navy Board, 10 October 1924.
ignored. However, with respect to Antarctica, this was done not so much by the British Government, but by Amery personally, who had made Antarctica his personal cause.

Bruce must have felt betrayed and moved quickly to inform himself of the consequences of the French action and consider the next step he should take. In November, Dr Walter Henderson, Director of External Affairs, produced an advisory memorandum for Bruce in which he observed that, while France had not delineated its boundaries in its presidential decree, the British Order in Council over the Ross Sea Coast had given a precise delineation. Henderson warned Bruce that, without a defined boundary, the French could make the limits of Adélie Land "as elastic as possible". Bruce wasted no time in sending a cable to Amery, asking him about what action was being proposed by the Colonial Office to counter the French action and establish British sovereignty over the area from 160° to 90° East under Australian control. Bruce warned that, without a defined boundary, any fishing concessions given by France within undefined boundaries would create for Australia a "serious enclave". He stressed that the Government now felt that "indefinite postponement of the matter will cause future difficulties". Bruce made it clear "that unless there are insuperable obstacles in the way it would be advisable to assert rights over these regions at earliest opportunity". Two months later Bruce again sought a response and insisted that a British counter-claim should be made over Adélie Land, owing to the exploration work undertaken by Mawson's AAE. The Empire, he said, had definite rights over the territory.

Mawson, like Bruce, was frustrated by lack of action from the Colonial Office. However, since the Australian Government did not confide to either Mawson or the ANRC the detail of its approaches to the British Government, Mawson would not have known that Bruce was demanding action from Amery. When Mawson felt that events were moving slowly and the possibility of Australian control over the

96 Memorandum W. Henderson, Department of External Affairs to Secretary, Prime Minister, 26 November 1924, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1 and NAA: Series A 11804, Item 1926/179.
97 Cable sent via H.E. the Governor-General to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 December 1924, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 1.
98 Cable Governor-General to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 December 1924.
99 Cable Governor-General to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 December 1924.
100 Cable Governor-General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 December 1924.
101 Cable sent via Governor-General to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 14 February 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 4.
region he had claimed slipping away from Australia’s grasp, he sought support from the Australian press. On 16 February 1925, an article critical of the Australian Government’s handling of the situation appeared in the Melbourne *Argus*. On this occasion, the article proposed that Australia should follow the Canadian precedent in the Arctic and annex the region below Australia, not only on the grounds of proximity, but because the region had been the scene of Australian exploration.  

That evening the Melbourne *Herald* published an article from its London correspondent under the heading: ‘The United Kingdom’s Rights in Adélie Land “Fully Preserved” Says Colonial Office’. The correspondent claimed that Mawson’s comments were based on a French decree issued in December 1924, but that ‘apparently the Foreign Office has no official knowledge of this decree ...’. The *Herald* further claimed that a Foreign Office source had indicated that, while the British Government believed France had taken ‘drastic measures’ to assert its claim, the British Government would not ask France to repeal its published decrees, even if France did not know the extent of the Adélie Land boundaries, as nothing would be gained thereby. In addition, the Foreign Office source expressed surprise that Australia had not made any protests. The source suggested that ‘in certain quarters, the decrees might be deemed to be the thin end of the wedge, and the Commonwealth has every right to bring the matter under the notice of the British Government’. The Foreign Office source further stated that, despite the French action, the British Government was not ‘perturbed’ since Britain would not allow the annexation of the most important strategic point in the Antarctic’. This important announcement made by a ‘Foreign Office source’ to an Australian journalist in London was read by Bruce in a Melbourne evening newspaper. It would have come as a surprise to Bruce, since he was still awaiting a response from Amery to his two cables.

An angry Bruce prepared a further cable to Amery asking for a report about the *Herald* article. Before Bruce’s cable was sent, however, Amery had contradicted the Foreign Office source and advised that it was impossible to assert

---

104 *The Herald* 16 February 1925.
105 *The Herald* 16 February 1925.
106 Draft cable Bruce to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 18 February 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 2.
British sovereignty over the sector desired by Australia. On this occasion, Amery indicated that the French claim, ‘by which is meant coast line actually sighted and charted by D'Urville in 1840’, was indisputable. Amery no longer claimed a more elastic boundary which the Admiralty had stretched across the entire area beneath Australia, while taking care that it did not overlap into the Ross Dependency. Amery also undertook to have the question of a precise boundary raised with France. It is very likely that a Foreign Office source did speak to the Melbourne Herald journalist. It is also likely that the Foreign Office was completely unaware of Bruce’s communications to Amery, since the channel of communication with London was through the Governor-General to the Colonial Office. Amery, it would seem, had not briefed the Foreign Office on Australia’s protests over the French assertion of sovereignty. The press article also suggested that the Foreign Office held a different view from the Colonial Office over France’s rights in the Antarctic.

Amery’s response to Bruce’s cables, that the British Government would pursue the matter with France, was a welcome development. Another surprising consequence of Bruce’s persistence was its compelling Amery to reveal that a problem with France existed beyond Adélie Land. Amery confessed that the British Government was unable to restrict France from claiming more than the actual coastline sighted, without weakening ‘our claim to Graham’s Land where majority of coast line has been discovered by explorers of other nations’. Despite Amery’s admission, Bruce refused to abandon Australia’s hopes of acquiring a portion of Antarctica in order to consolidate British control over the FID. He responded to Amery by asking for further clarification and cautioning him against making further statements likely to embarrass the Australian Government, ‘should it be found necessary shortly to make some statement on the position’. In sending his sternly worded message to the Colonial Office, Bruce was intimating that Australian domestic concern was high, particularly after the French decrees. Bruce was determined, also, that the Foreign Office source should not have the last word on the matter.

---

107 Cable Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor-General, 18 February, 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 2.
108 Cable Secretary of State to Governor-General, 18 February 1925.
109 Cable Secretary of State to Governor-General, 18 February 1925.
110 Cable sent via His Excellency the Governor-General to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 26 February 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 2.
As he had foreshadowed in his latest cable to Amery, Bruce made a public statement about the French activities.\textsuperscript{111} It was a confident and determined statement, which declared that Australia was capable of speaking on its own behalf with foreign nations. Under the heading ‘Adélie Land: Mr Bruce Speaks to France’, the Melbourne \textit{Herald} on 3 March 1925 reported that the Prime Minister was in discussions with the French Government about the ‘delicate nature’ of their annexation of Adélie Land, which was close to continental Australia.\textsuperscript{112} However, there is no indication that Bruce had personally spoken to a representative of the French Government; he was presumably communicating through the Colonial Office. Later that evening, Bruce received advice from Amery that someone from the Foreign Office had confided in the \textit{Herald} correspondent after receiving an undertaking that the information would not be published as it would ‘render more difficult negotiations with the French Government’\textsuperscript{113}

The Foreign Office leak also spurred the ANRC to mount a further press campaign.\textsuperscript{114} They sought direct discussions with Bruce and alerted the press about their activities. Since the press generally supported Australian control of the region to the south, it provided wide coverage and quoted extensively from prepared statements given to the newspapers by Mawson and the ANRC. For example, the Melbourne \textit{Herald} of 5 March 1925 under a banner heading announced ‘Adélie Land – Sir Douglas Mawson in Melbourne: Conference tomorrow’. It quoted Mawson observing that the ‘French cannot uphold their claim’ and repeated that few people realise that Adélie Land was closer to Hobart than Hobart is to Perth. Mawson also emphasised that he had made new discoveries in the region, had remained there for two years and had ‘hoisted the Union flag and the Australian flag at several places’.\textsuperscript{115} Similarly, \textit{The Argus} called Adélie Land ‘Australia’s

\textsuperscript{111} Cable, 26 February 1925.
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{The Herald} 3 March 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 2.
\textsuperscript{113} Cable Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor-General, 3 March 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item Ant 4, part 2.
\textsuperscript{115} \textit{The Herald}, 5 March 1925, NAA: Series CP 103, Item Bundle 10.
Opportunity’. Like the Herald, the Melbourne Argus quoted Mawson’s view about the region’s economic prospects as well as the value of scientific research.\(^{116}\)

Mawson also sought to publicise the fact that Adélie Land was not only Australia’s closest southern neighbour, but that ‘it was explored and charted by Australians with Australian money; Australians first landed there; and Australians lie buried there. For these reasons, without counting material interests, our national pride demands that we should not remain indifferent’.\(^{117}\) In fact, Mawson’s two companions, who had lost their lives in Antarctica, were Lieutenant B.E.S. Ninnis, an officer of the Royal Fusiliers and Dr Xavier Mertz, a Swiss mountaineer. Neither was Australian. Nonetheless, the language of nationalism was deliberately employed by Mawson and the ANRC in order to gain popular support and ensure pressure was maintained on the Government. It is unclear how Mawson, the ANRC and the Australian press would have reacted, had they known that Bruce had adopted a no-nonsense attitude in his communications with Amery. Bruce’s forceful approach had the effect of restraining Amery from making ill-conceived statements about the status and extent of Antarctic claims. Bruce had shown that he was not prepared to be dismissed easily.

In early 1925, nothing short of an Antarctic media frenzy was evident, probably stimulated by the ANRC. The Melbourne Herald began to promote an important alliance that had been established between the Australian scientists and the Australian Government. One article observed that ‘the Government, scientific bodies and all those with any knowledge of the subject’ were concerned that Australia could lose this territory and that was sufficient proof that ‘we cannot remain indifferent’.\(^{118}\) As well as maintaining the subject before the public, another reason for the unabashed nationalistic approach was to encourage France to give up its claim. The Argus suggested that France would do so if it became aware that Australia was interested in the region.\(^{119}\) The Herald made a similar appeal and observed that ‘a nation renowned for its graceful courtesy’ could make a fine gesture

---

116 The Argus, 6 March 1925, NAA: Series CP 103, Item Bundle 10.
119 The Argus, 6 March 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 2.
of annulling the presidential decree over Adélie Land. The press campaign demonstrated a remarkable cooperative effort that the ANRC had forged with the Australian newspapers, not only to place pressure on the Australian Government, but also to work positively on a nation building venture.

Bruce was alert to the press campaign and responded immediately by issuing his own press statement advising that he was engaged in discussions with the Imperial Government over Adélie Land. The French, however, were unmoved. Approximately one month after the press campaign, the French Consul-General sent to the Prime Minister copies of the French decrees that had been promulgated on 30 December 1924 concerning the creation of a National Park in the Kerguelen and Crozet Archipelagoes as well as a number of other sub-Antarctic islands, and including Adélie Land. The purpose of the decrees was to warn would-be hunters that it was forbidden to take ‘marine mammals in general and, in particular, sealions, sea-bears, seals, sea-elephants, sea-leopards and penguins’.

The French reaction had made it clear to Bruce that the prospect of persuading France to exchange Adélie Land for territory elsewhere had faded. He was careful, however, not to admit defeat when he published France’s warning to Australian fishing concerns in the press. Instead, Bruce advised that, with respect to Adélie Land, discussions were proceeding between the British and French Governments on the question of sovereignty. Bruce’s press statement acknowledged French sovereignty over the sub-Antarctic islands but publicly warned that the question of Adélie Land remained unresolved. The direct French approach to the Australian Government and Bruce’s response to the French Consul is significant in that neither party went through British diplomatic channels. Certainly, the French approach was mainly of a commercial nature, rather than political, and therefore within the domain of the consular representative. Questions of national sovereignty, however, had both an international legal and a political dimension that required resolution on a Government to Government level. Yet, in issuing his public statement, Bruce did not seek the advice of Downing Street. The

---

120 The Herald, 5 March 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 2.
121 The Age, 7 March 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 16, part 2.
122 Letter Consulate General de France en Australie to Prime Minister, 1 April 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 16.
123 The Argus 9 May 1925, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 16.
exchange between the Australian Government and the French representative also served to draw Bruce’s attention to the complexities of international relations and the intransigence of any power when its national interests were at stake.

Despite the obviously intractable situation Australia found itself in with respect to the French claim, Bruce was determined to find a solution and again turned to Henderson to search for one. Dr Walter Henderson, the head of External Affairs, a highly qualified international lawyer, immediately discounted any analogy that could be drawn with Canadian experiences in the Arctic, as Mawson had been proposing. Instead, Henderson suggested that what was valid in the Arctic was not valid in the Antarctic. He believed, however, that the ‘strongest reason’ in support of an Australian claim rested in Australian research and discovery of the region. These factors, according to Henderson, ‘would enable us perhaps to restrict the French claim to the coast-line sighted by d’Urville in 1840’. Henderson was proposing that Australia should recognise the coast seen by Dumont d’Urville’s expedition, but not allow France to claim a sector that would include the hinterland. Both the FID and the Ross Dependency were sectors that met at the pole. It was unlikely therefore, that Australia’s suggestion would be adopted.

As a member of the British Empire, Australia would be obliged to adopt a common approach, unless it pursued an independent foreign policy and established its own foreign service to negotiate on its behalf. Henderson recalled Amery’s advice to Bruce about the consequences of laying down a criterion of validity that might affect the claims of the United Kingdom to Graham Land. In Australia’s favour, he thought, was the age of the French claim and its neglect since its discovery in 1840. Henderson believed, nonetheless, that the legal option was fraught and suggested instead a political settlement with France, such as compensation elsewhere. Henderson advised Bruce to reject any notion that had hitherto been put forward that the entire coastline was French. The French claim, he argued, was for ‘Adelie Land proper’, the actual coast discovered by Dumont

d'Urville.\(^{128}\) If France rejected the proposal of an amicable settlement, Henderson suggested that, based on the extent of Mawson’s discoveries, the matter should be referred to the League of Nations for enquiry.\(^{129}\) That Bruce asked Henderson to provide a clear and unambiguous report of the situation indicated Bruce’s determination to pursue Australian control for the area Mawson had explored, irrespective of the consequences.

When the ANRC deputation called on Bruce, he had the benefit of Henderson’s assessments. He also had a copy of the ANRC’s comprehensive memorandum, which had made the case for Australia’s superior claim to the contested region. The deputation quickly explained that the ANRC was acting in defence of the Australian position by providing a copy of the memorandum to the press for publication. The memorandum indicated that the ANRC was ‘surprised and alarmed’ at the French decree and called on the Government to challenge the French claim and to formally establish an Australian claim.\(^{130}\) The ANRC acknowledged that international law did not lay down general rules for deciding ownership of uninhabited lands, but that a claim could be recognised by continuous occupation or exploitation. Australians had conducted significant exploration in the region, but the French had not visited the area since the time of Dumont d’Urville. In addition, the Adélie Land coast had not been defined but was not more than 150 miles and was within the Australian Sector which comprised over 2000 miles of coastline.\(^{131}\)

Bruce assured the deputation that he and the British Government were working towards finding a way out of the dilemma. For example, the British Government was conducting research in order to establish whether a British Captain had preceded Dumont d’Urville. Bruce said he had considered an Order in Council for the area not claimed by France, but personally he ‘would prefer to claim the whole thing’.\(^{132}\) As the meeting between the ANRC and the Prime Minister had been widely anticipated by the press, Bruce immediately issued a statement giving his

\(^{128}\) Minute: Observations on the Memorandum of the ANRC.

\(^{129}\) Minute: Observations on the Memorandum of the ANRC.

\(^{130}\) ANRC ‘Memorandum in re the “Australian Sector” of the Antarctic and the recent French claim to Administer Adelie Land’, (undated, but prepared in the wake of the 1924 French Decree over Adélie Land), NAA: Series A 981/4 Item ANT 4, part 4.

\(^{131}\) ANRC Memorandum in re the “Australian Sector”.

\(^{132}\) ‘Record of meeting of deputation from the Australian National Research Council regarding the Australian sector of the Antarctic and the recent French claim to Administer Adelie Land’, held at the Prime Minister’s Office on Friday 3 July 1925, at 2.30 p.m.’ NAA: Series A981/4 Item ANT 4, part 4.
assurance that the matter was being discussed with the Colonial Office, but that, due to complicating factors, the question could not be settled immediately.\textsuperscript{133}

Two months after his meeting with the ANRC, Bruce sent to Amery, now Dominions Secretary in charge of a new Dominions Office, a formal Despatch which outlined Australia’s position with respect to securing Australian control over the Australian quadrant, identified as an area from 160\(^\circ\) to 90\(^\circ\) East.\textsuperscript{134} He also added a copy of the ANRC’s detailed memorandum, which had the benefit of being accurately researched.\textsuperscript{135} Bruce made a number of points that were contrary to the British Government’s views. In the first instance, Bruce stated that his Government was not persuaded by the argument of the superiority of the French claim over the Australian. In addition, his Government adhered to the principle that a claim ‘must primarily be based on exploration work done by the nationals of the country claiming control.’\textsuperscript{136} Despite French affirmations made before the First World War and the two recent French decrees, Bruce did not consider the French claim to be any stronger than it was in 1840 and believed that it should be ‘most strongly resisted’.\textsuperscript{137}

Although Henderson had warned Bruce against pursuing any legal avenues in favour of a political settlement, Bruce rejected that advice in favour of the recommendations made by the ANRC. Thus, he ‘urged as strongly as possible’ for the recognition of the principle that control and administration in both the Arctic and the Antarctic should be placed in the hands of ‘countries whose territories are situated nearest to them’.\textsuperscript{138} Bruce believed France might agree to this principle if it were to be persuaded to occupy a sector beyond that he was requesting for Australia, in the vicinity of the Kerguelen and Crozet Islands and Madagascar, in exchange for Adélie Land.\textsuperscript{139} Bruce’s support for basing a sovereignty claim over a sector solely on geographical proximity would be immediately dismissed, since otherwise the

\textsuperscript{133} The Argus, 4 July 1925, The Age, 4 July 1925, The Argus, 28 August 1925, NAA: Series CP 103/12, Item Bundle 10.

\textsuperscript{134} The Dominions Office was created on 11 June 1925. L. S. Amery was the first to occupy the position of Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

\textsuperscript{135} Despatch Prime Minister sent via Governor-General to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 10 September 1925, p. 1, NAA: Series A 981/4 Item ANT 4, part 4.

\textsuperscript{136} Despatch Prime Minister to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 10 September 1925.

\textsuperscript{137} Despatch Prime Minister to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 10 September 1925.

\textsuperscript{138} Despatch Prime Minister to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 10 September 1925.

\textsuperscript{139} Despatch Prime Minister to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 10 September 1925.
British Government would have to relinquish its sovereignty claim over the FID in favour of Argentina.

Bruce also rejected the British Government’s method of securing international recognition by granting concessions to foreign companies engaged in whaling and sealing. This practice was pursued with respect to the FID and in 1924 New Zealand had followed suit in the Ross Dependency.\(^{140}\) However, that policy was not favoured by the Commonwealth Government, which refused to confer on other nationals ‘equal economic and other rights to those enjoyed by British subjects’.\(^{141}\) In making its objections to the presence of France beneath Australia and its refusal to give concessions for foreign commercial enterprises wishing to operate in the region, Bruce advised that his Government was ‘actuated by the one desire of preventing any other country establishing a considerable enclave in the Australian quadrant.’\(^{142}\) Bruce’s latest Despatch was a further indication that the Australian Government continued to perceive that an Antarctic policy was far from being settled and it proposed to agitate until a considered policy was formulated.

Rather than respond to each point that Bruce had made, Amery sent documents from the Admiralty on the question of claims. The main document prepared in 1919 giving the Admiralty’s view on ‘Disputable’ and ‘Indisputable’ claims had informed Amery’s 1920 Despatch. He hoped all of them might interest and assist the Australian Government ‘in the further consideration and discussion of this matter’.\(^{143}\) Since Adélie Land was the problem that sat in the middle of the area being sought by Australia, the Admiralty had prepared a separate opinion on that.\(^{144}\) Firstly, the Admiralty admitted that little was known about the extent of the Antarctic. For example, questions remained about whether the various portions of discovered coastline were part of an unbroken land-mass, or whether Antarctica comprised two or more island-continents. However, as a ‘provisional hypothesis’, a single continent could be assumed.

\(^{140}\) For examples for the Falkland Islands Dependencies in Bush, Volume III, pp. 236-262, for New Zealand, pp. 35-36 and pp. 51-56.  
\(^{141}\) Despatch Prime Minister to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 10 September 1925.  
\(^{142}\) Despatch Prime Minister to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 10 September 1925.  
Having set out the context within which it was placing its opinion, the Admiralty surprisingly gave a political view of the Adélie Land problem. It began by observing that the actual stretch of coastline sighted by Dumont d’Urville was ‘about 120 miles in length, extending from latitude 66¾°S. longitude 137E. to latitude 67°S., longitude 142°E.’ and was an ‘indisputable’ claim.\textsuperscript{145} Although that was a miniscule part of a vast region, the Admiralty argued that it would be difficult to restrict a national claim to the actual portion sighted and mapped by the explorer, because it would weaken the British claim over the FID, more specifically Graham Land, ‘where the majority of the coast-line has been discovered by the explorers of other nations’.\textsuperscript{146} On the other hand, it would strengthen the British position over the Ross Dependency where the entire coastline was ‘undoubtedly British by discovery’.\textsuperscript{147}

The Admiralty had also examined the exchange of correspondence between the British and French Governments before the war, and believed it ‘not unlikely’ that France wished to assert its sovereignty over the territory lying between Enderby Land and Victoria Land, an extent of some 2,500 miles.\textsuperscript{148} If France were to make such a large claim, the Admiralty considered it ‘preposterous’ to assert ‘ownership to land yet to be discovered’.\textsuperscript{149} At the same time, the ‘most serious consequences to the Empire’ would result if France chose to stretch the boundaries of Adélie Land as far west as Enderby Land and to the east to include King Edward VII Land (Ross Dependency).\textsuperscript{150} On the other hand, if France wished to restrict its claim to the actual coastline sighted by Dumont d’Urville, it would be ‘impracticable, without risk of a diplomatic rupture, to assert British sovereignty over the section 90°E. – 160°E. as urged by the Australian Government’.\textsuperscript{151}

It is surprising that it was the Admiralty that had conducted an examination of the exchange of correspondence between the British Ambassador in Paris and the French foreign ministry. It is also unclear why the Admiralty’s opinion was made without first consulting with other relevant ministries, particularly the Foreign

\textsuperscript{145} Memorandum ‘On the Validity of the French Territorial Claims in the Antarctic’, October 1925.
\textsuperscript{146} Memorandum ‘On the Validity of the French Territorial Claims in the Antarctic’, October 1925.
\textsuperscript{147} Memorandum ‘On the Validity of the French Territorial Claims in the Antarctic’, October 1925.
\textsuperscript{148} Memorandum ‘On the Validity of the French Territorial Claims in the Antarctic’, October 1925.
\textsuperscript{149} Memorandum ‘On the Validity of the French Territorial Claims in the Antarctic’, October 1925.
\textsuperscript{150} Memorandum ‘On the Validity of the French Territorial Claims in the Antarctic’, October 1925.
\textsuperscript{151} Memorandum ‘On the Validity of the French Territorial Claims in the Antarctic’, October 1925.
Office and the Crown’s legal officers. If Amery believed that the British Admiralty’s opinion would carry significant weight in Australia and that its pronouncements would have a sobering effect on Australia, he had severely underestimated Australia’s national resolve. Besides, Bruce had already anticipated the problem of the French claim and had suggested that it should be challenged, not recognised. At least the Admiralty suggested that any further action to extend British sovereignty claims over the Antarctic Continent should be preceded by diplomatic ‘pourparlers’ or ‘negotiations’.

The transmission of key documents from the Colonial Office demonstrated also that the question of Antarctic territorial sovereignty was not only a continuing conversation rather than a settled policy, but one that was being had by the members of the British Empire amongst themselves. That other nations with definite Antarctic interests were excluded reflected Amery’s wish that the absorption of the Antarctic within the Empire should be done ‘quietly’. Amery’s quiet approach, however, had caught the attention of nations around the world, concerned about British imperial expansion into the Antarctic. For example, France had moved quickly to assert its Antarctic claims once the Order in Council over the Ross Dependency was published, and the United States Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, outlined the policy of the State Department regarding Antarctic sovereignty. Hughes indicated that the United States adhered to the principle that

"discovery of lands unknown to civilization, even when coupled with a formal taking of possession, does not support a valid claim of sovereignty unless the discovery is followed by an actual settlement of the discovered country."

Hughes also observed that, unless Congress passed domestic laws that provided for dominion over Wilkes Land, his Department would be reluctant to declare ‘that the United States possessed a right of sovereignty over that territory’. In 1925, Norway challenged British sovereignty over the Ross Dependency, when it advised

the British Government that its annexation ‘may have the effect of jeopardising present or future Norwegian interests and rights’.\textsuperscript{156}

Since Bruce had demonstrated that Australia was unlikely to abandon its position, the question was placed on the agenda of the Imperial Conference scheduled for 1926. In a ‘Memorandum prepared for the Imperial Conference’, the British Government finally admitted that its diplomatic correspondence with the French Government before the war had greatly exaggerated the extent of the coast line which France could claim.\textsuperscript{157} The conclusion now was that the French claim should not extend beyond the area actually sighted and charted by Dumont d’Urville in 1840; which was placed at between $136\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ and $142^\circ$ East. The Memorandum noted that, while ‘the French Government naturally did not correct the exaggeration’, it never admitted to such a far-reaching claim.\textsuperscript{158} As the Imperial Conference Memorandum demonstrated, the British Government was now prepared to move closer to the Australian position of restricting Adélie Land to the coastline sighted by the French explorer. The Memorandum had also clarified the British Government’s opposition to the principle of claiming a sector on the grounds of geographical contiguity, as advocated by Australia. Once again, its reason was the weakening of its own claim, because that proposal would prompt action from Argentina, which continued to harbour its own territorial ambitions over the FID.\textsuperscript{159}

While maintaining its insistence that Adélie Land would not be contested with the French Government, the Memorandum also contained a reassessment of British Government policy. It identified seven parcels of land which ‘could be reasonably annexed’.\textsuperscript{160} These comprised:

Coats Land, lying between $20^\circ$ and $16\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ West, at the eastern limit of the Falkland Islands Dependencies, Enderby Land between $45^\circ$ and $53^\circ$ East, Kemp Land between $58\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ and $60^\circ$ East, Queen Mary Land between $86^\circ$ and $101^\circ$ East, Wilkes

NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 4, part 3. See also, Secret E. 101, Copy No. 220,
NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 4, part 7, Copy No. 73, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 4, part 4 and Copy No. 137 NAA: Series CP 46/2, Item 41.

\textsuperscript{157} Secret, E. 101, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{158} Secret, E. 101, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{159} Secret, E. 101, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{160} Secret, E. 101, p. 3.
Land (discovered and titled by Mawson’s 1911-1914 expedition) between 131° and 135 ½° East, King George V Land between 142° and 153° East and Oates Land between 157° and 159° East.\textsuperscript{161}

According to the Memorandum, this list comprised lands that were ‘definitely known’ or the existence of which was ‘reasonably probable’.

The Memorandum observed that in 1920 the dominions were advised that a future policy of British control over the entire Antarctic should ultimately be followed. It was now considered imprudent formally to annex a ‘practically blank sector’, because any subsequent and substantial discovery within it by another power ‘might prove embarrassing’.\textsuperscript{162} However, by confining annexation to the lands and the extent mentioned, the French Government, at least, would be prevented from extending the limits of Adélie Land over King George V Land and Victoria Land.\textsuperscript{163} Had such assessments accompanied Amery’s 1920 Despatch, it may well have led to an informed discussion between the British Government and the dominions and a considered policy would have emerged. That such an assessment was absent suggests that Amery’s 1920 Despatch was not an advice of a settled policy on Antarctica, nor was it seen as such by the dominions.

The Memorandum, which was produced for discussion at the Imperial Conference, also confirmed that the British Government supported the principle of delimiting a sector that terminated at the pole. For example, the ‘limits of the Ross and Falkland Islands Dependencies are so defined as to extend to the South Pole’ and it proposed that the same arrangement should apply to the territories specified by the Admiralty. It also stated that Adélie Land would be similarly regarded as a sector extending to the pole. Extending Adélie Land to the South Pole, it was suggested, would not pose any problems, nor should it be regarded as an inconvenience since the value of the hinterland was ‘negligible’.\textsuperscript{164} However, as Chapter 9 of this thesis will show, the articulation of the hinterland principle to govern Antarctic sovereignty claims posed a serious dilemma for Australia. In an era of aviation, permission from French authorities would be necessary to fly over

\textsuperscript{161} Secret, E.101, p. 3. See map at p. 137B. The map shows the route that was subsequently followed by the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research expedition (BANZARE) in 1929 to formally proclaim these lands. See Chapters 6 and 7.
\textsuperscript{162} Secret, E.101, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{163} Secret, E.101, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{164} Secret, E.101, p. 3.
Adélie Land, since it lay within the sector Australia wished to control. Although Beck has argued that the ‘*ad hoc*’ and ‘pragmatic attitude’ that characterised the British Government’s approach to Antarctic affairs was replaced in 1920 by ‘a clear and coherent policy’, the events that followed Amery’s 1920 Despatch suggest the contrary was the case.

Before he left Australia for the 1926 Imperial Conference, Bruce described it as ‘probably one of the most important in the history of the British Empire,’ because ‘we have come to a turning point in the relations of the different self-governing parts of the Empire and Great Britain …’. Bruce admitted that, before the war, the dominions ‘allowed’ foreign policy to be ‘entirely formulated and controlled by British statesmen, acting on behalf of the Empire as a whole’. The war, he said, had introduced ‘a new realisation of the obligations of the dominions as part of the Empire, and of the necessity for the dominions to be consulted with regard to, and to have a voice in the framing of, the foreign policy of the Empire’. Like Hughes before him, Bruce would not support any moves that could lead to the disintegration of the Empire. Australia’s ‘safety’, he said, ‘is ensured by the fact that we are part of the British Empire, and that our surest line of defence is co-operation with Great Britain’. Acting in agreement with the British and New Zealand Governments, Bruce did not mention Antarctica in his statement to Parliament.

As Bruce had foreshadowed, the 1926 Imperial Conference was momentous. With respect to foreign policy, the Committee of Prime Ministers agreed that the dominions

are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

---

165 Beck ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’ p. 459.
166 Copy of House of Representatives Debates, 3 August 1926, p. 4772, NAA Series A 11804, Item 1926/149.
167 House of Representatives Debates, 3 August 1926, p. 4772.
168 House of Representatives Hansard, 3 August 1926, p. 4772.
169 House of Representatives Hansard, 3 August 1926, p. 4775.
170 Cable Governor-General to Secretary of State for Dominion Affair, 12 August 1926, NAA: Series A 6661, Item 1390.
The decision of the Prime Ministers in 1926, which was compiled in a report by Lord Balfour, paved the way for the passing in the British Parliament of the Statute of Westminster in 1931. Once enabling legislation was introduced in the parliaments of each of the dominions, the British Government would no longer interfere with the foreign policy formulated by any of the dominions. The Statute of Westminster was adopted by Australia in 1942. However, the Statute had little relevance for the development of an Antarctic policy, since a policy and process relating to what became the Australian Antarctic Territory was agreed upon at the 1926 Imperial Conference.

In fact, while the Empire’s Prime Ministers were engaged in discussions on the participation of the dominions in the making of imperial foreign policy, the 1926 Imperial Conference appointed a special Committee, to be chaired by Amery, to consider the Antarctic question. Thus, discussions on the role of the dominions in imperial affairs, and determining the shape of the Empire’s Antarctic policy were progressing side by side. Although Antarctica was not recruited as an example of how the Empire could work collaboratively on an issue of foreign policy, Bruce understandably perceived that that was the intention of the Conference, and subsequently worked towards that end. Bruce appointed Arthur Manning, a Member of the House of Representatives, to attend the meetings, to restate Australia’s position and report back to Bruce without making new commitments.\(^{172}\) In 1926 Manning was also a member of the Australian delegation to the League of Nations General Assembly, and therefore with some knowledge of conference work, as well as of issues of international moment. Manning, however, had no Antarctic knowledge and had not been a party to discussions on Antarctica in Australia. The British side was numerically strong. Amery had invited officials from the Foreign Office, a legal adviser and an official from the Admiralty. At different times, these officials were supplemented by others, probably to elaborate on points made in the discussion Memorandum. At times the British contingent numbered nine officials, and Manning might well have felt overwhelmed.

\(^{172}\) Secret E. (A./26) 1 Meeting Imperial Conference, 1926, ‘Committee on British Policy in the Antarctic’, Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the Committee held at the Dominions Office, S.W.1., on Wednesday, 10 November 1926, at 3.00 p.m. NAA: Series A 11804, Item 1926/149.
The British Admiralty, which had been the principal adviser on the bases of claims, suggested that ‘undiscovered land could not, as a general rule, be annexed at all’. The Admiralty representative went on to state, however, that a country ‘had a prima facie claim to newly-discovered land in close contiguity to land which it had already annexed.’ Therefore, the Admiralty concluded, ‘France might, as the first nation to set foot on the Antarctic Continent, claim the greater portion of the land now known to exist there’. The Admiralty already knew that Dumont d’Urville had never set foot on the Antarctic continent, but was probably seeking to dampen any Australian expectations that the British Government might be persuaded to support a challenge to France’s position or persuade France to exchange its continental claim for territory elsewhere.

There was another purpose to the direction the British Government representatives were pursuing. That was revealed when the New Zealand Government representative, Sir Francis Bell, Minister without Portfolio, made a puzzling intervention. Bell announced that, on the policy questions discussed in the Memorandum prepared for the Conference, his Government ‘would, generally, be content to be guided by the views of the British Government’. He then enquired ‘whether Australia would be willing to do the same’. Manning had not been instructed to make any commitments on behalf of the Australian Government, but to listen and report back to Bruce. Why New Zealand would take such a line is unclear, since the Imperial Conference documents did not have a contribution from New Zealand. It would seem that the New Zealand representative was saying that Australia should follow New Zealand’s lead and allow the British Government alone to make decisions with respect to Antarctica. Manning appropriately responded that he would wish to discuss the question first with the Prime Minister.

Nonetheless, Manning made an astute observation by seeing some parallels between Australia’s situation with respect to France and that of the United Kingdom and Argentina over the FID. Manning asked whether there was a danger of the Argentine Government asserting a claim to the Falkland Islands Dependencies, if the

173 Secret E. (A./26).
174 Secret E. (A./26). Underlining is within the quote.
175 Secret E. (A./26).
176 Secret E. (A./26).
177 Secret E. (A./26).
178 Secret E. (A./26).
United Kingdom expanded its claim to include Coats Land as outlined in the Memorandum.\textsuperscript{179} He was probably also making the point that the British Government seemed to have placed an excessive focus on perceived or real challenges that could be expected from foreign powers with respect to the Australian sector, but was ignoring similar problems occurring over the FID. In response, Amery said that he ‘did not think that the Argentine claim need seriously be regarded as a matter of practical politics’.\textsuperscript{180} Amery could not have foreseen then that, within two decades, Argentina would dispute the British sovereignty claims over the FID. The inability of both the British and the Argentine Governments to resolve their differences, would subsequently lead to negotiations for an Antarctic Treaty that would include Argentina.

In the meantime, the Antarctic Committee was seeking to resolve current problems. At its Second Meeting the following week, and with the benefit of discussions with Bruce, Manning was able to respond to the New Zealand representative’s question by noting that he had been authorised to say that Australia agreed with the policy outlined in the Memorandum.\textsuperscript{181} Like New Zealand, Manning said, Australia was ‘content to leave the prosecution of it to His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom.’\textsuperscript{182} Australia’s measured response had placed the onus of delivering the policy on the British Government, which would have included funding it.

With agreement of the Australian and New Zealand Governments secured, the process and the legal implications for acquiring British title in polar regions were canvassed. According to the British legal adviser, other than the Ross and Falkland Islands Dependencies ‘and presumably Adélie Land,’ the known areas in the Antarctic ‘must be regarded as “res nullius”’.\textsuperscript{183} As such, title to them could ‘only be acquired by occupation’.\textsuperscript{184} Occupation was described as comprising two elements: ‘intimation to foreign Powers of the intention to acquire title over the area, and the

\textsuperscript{179} Secret E. (A./26).
\textsuperscript{180} Secret E. (A./26).
\textsuperscript{181} Secret E.(A./26).
\textsuperscript{182} Secret E.(A./26).
\textsuperscript{183} Secret E. 130 (Revise), Imperial Conference, 1926, ‘Committee on British Policy in the Antarctic’, Copy No. 167, Printed for the Imperial Conference, November 1926, NAA: Series A.981/4, Item ANT 4, part 3. ‘(Revise)’ refers to a paper that has been revised. On revision the original may have been withdrawn from circulation.
\textsuperscript{184} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
establishment and exercise of control’ in order to exclude competing powers.\textsuperscript{185} The Committee was warned that, even allowing for flexibility in applying to uninhabitable regions around the poles the rule of international law that applies to habitable regions of the world, it should not be assumed that ‘a title founded merely on discovery or on annexation would be recognised by an international tribunal if objected to by some foreign power’.\textsuperscript{186} Although discovery and annexation assisted a claim, the ‘weight given to them diminishes with the lapse of time’ if steps were not taken to exercise authority over the area concerned.\textsuperscript{187} The exercise of control was considered the ‘important element in establishing a title by occupation’.\textsuperscript{188} Control need not be continuous, and in the polar regions, continuity was ‘impossible’. Hence, it would suffice for periodical expeditions to be sent to the territories.\textsuperscript{189}

Except for the small part of Coats Land, the Committee recommended that the remaining six parcels of territory, that had been identified in the discussion Memorandum, would be placed under the control of the Commonwealth of Australia, ‘if that Government is willing’.\textsuperscript{190} Again, Manning was unable to give a definitive response until he consulted with Bruce.\textsuperscript{191} With the exception of Enderby Land, which was moved to between $45^\circ$ and $52 \frac{1}{2}^\circ$ East, while earlier it had been located between $45^\circ$ and $53^\circ$ East, the other territories remained the same. The Admiralty did not appear perturbed at the elasticity of its figures, the view being that by sending ships occasionally to the Antarctic in order to consolidate control, ‘the task of discovery could be pursued’.\textsuperscript{192} As will be discussed in Chapter 6, when between 1929 and 1931 Mawson was commissioned to go to the territories listed by the Admiralty he followed Bruce’s sailing orders, which prescribed that Mawson could only extend the expeditions beyond $45^\circ$ East, if he considered it safe to do so.\textsuperscript{193} When Mawson led the first cruise of the British, Australian and New Zealand

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{185} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
\textsuperscript{186} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
\textsuperscript{187} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
\textsuperscript{188} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
\textsuperscript{189} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
\textsuperscript{190} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
\textsuperscript{191} Secret E. (A. /26).
\textsuperscript{192} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
\textsuperscript{193} Secret Sailing Orders to Sir Douglas Mawson, Commander of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Expedition, [sic] His Majesty’s Research Ship “Discovery”, 12 September 1929, signed S.M. Bruce, Prime Minister, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item. N413/1.
\end{footnotesize}
Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE) in the Antarctic summer of 1929-1930, hazardous conditions prevented him from sailing beyond 45° East.

In order to annex the areas identified as possessing inchoate British title, the Antarctic Committee recommended a three-step staged process should be followed. The first step should be to inform the international community of the ‘special British interest’ through the publication of the ‘Summary of Proceedings’ of the Imperial Conference. The second should be to formally take possession locally by an authorised officer, and the third step would be the issuing of Letters Patent to provide for its government. The legal official at the meeting observed that the staged process was preferable and less likely to provoke a challenge from foreign powers. Otherwise, faced with a situation that was perceived to exclude them from any share of Antarctic territory, they would ‘take the ground that international law afforded no justification for the annexation of all the undiscovered land’.

The legal official was speaking of future challenges, yet he must have been aware that challenges to British hegemony in the Antarctic were already mounting. The Norwegian Government was challenging British sovereignty over the Ross Dependency through diplomatic channels. The United States Secretary of State had indicated that his government would not recognise Antarctic sovereignty claims if they were not followed by permanent occupation. And France had ignored the British acts by issuing its presidential decrees over Adélie Land and a group of sub-Antarctic islands, while continuing to maintain its silence over the boundaries of its continental claim. When the report of the Committee recorded that ‘No protests were received against the assertion of British authority and sovereignty’ over the Falkland Islands and Ross Dependency, it ignored these realities.

It was probably the case that the specially designed process, which had never before been followed by the British Government when annexing the FID and the Ross Dependency, was a reflection of British Government concerns over international developments. Amery may have aspired for the entire Antarctic to be brought within the Empire at some future time. Unfortunately, he broadcast his

194 Secret E. 130 (Revise).
195 Secret E. 130 (Revise).
196 Secret E. 130 (Revise).
197 Secret E. 130 (Revise).
aspiration to the dominions, without obtaining Cabinet sanction. It is very likely that in 1920 Amery had not anticipated the Australian Government’s resolve to acquire the portion of the Antarctic beneath Australia’s southern border. After all, it was Mawson, and not the British Government, who had advocated for Australian control. The second step, that of sending an expedition or expeditions to take possession on the spot, would be an enormous undertaking, requiring significant expenditure. The question of how the second step would be funded was never discussed by the Antarctic Committee. Indeed, the Committee made no decision with respect to the time-line for the implementation of the three steps, except that it was a question ‘for future consideration and arrangement’.\textsuperscript{198}

What emerged at the 1926 Imperial Conference was not an imperial policy of British Antarctic dominion. Through Australia’s urging, however, a policy and a process of implementation were recommended, not only for the region directly beneath Australia, but for the acquisition of a vast area of Antarctic territory from Enderby Land at approximately 45\degree East Longitude to Oates Land at about 160\degree East. Such a vast territory was not one that Australia had asked for, but it agreed willingly when the Antarctic Committee suggested that this entire region should be placed under Australian control. Bruce embraced the newly formulated policy as an opportunity for Australia to participate in a great imperial venture for which it was well equipped. It was only after he returned to Australia that Bruce became aware that he had committed his country to an almost impossible task.

\textsuperscript{198} Secret E. 130 (Revise).
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Sir,

I have the honour to request Your Excellency to inform your Ministers that His Majesty's Government have had under their consideration the future policy of the Empire in the Antarctic regions, and in particular the question of the control of the main-land and of the neighbouring waters.

This area is of great size though as yet of little economic importance except in the case of the Dependencies of the Falkland Islands. I am informed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that if the theoretical boundary of the Antarctic regions is to be taken as the extreme limit of the packice, the area is approximately 18,700,000 square miles, of which 12,200,000 miles have been definitely ascertained to be sea, while some 500,000 miles are more or less definitely known to be land.

During the war certain of these waters assumed importance owing to the need for glycerine, in which whale oil is rich. Two-thirds of the world's supply of whale oil and the whole supply of elephant oil is obtained in the Dependencies of the Falkland Islands in Antarctic or Sub Antarctic seas. The evidence taken by the Departmental Committee, which has been investigating research and development in these Dependencies has drawn attention to the possibility that other industries may arise connected with the very abundant animal life of Antarctic regions and with the minerals known to be existing in places. I hope soon to be able to furnish your Ministers with copies of the Committee's report, which lays stress on the importance of preventing the partial destruction or extinction of valuable animals which has unfortunately characterised the exploitation of Arctic and Sub Arctic regions. It is obvious that a single power having control of the Antarctic generally would be in a position to take more effective measures than are now possible to conserve animal life.

Governor General
His Excellency
The Right honourable
Sir R. Munro Ferguson, G.C.M.G.
From the point of view of your Government, however, it is likely that more importance should be attached to the possibility that the progress of knowledge may in time make safe the waters now avoided by commerce owing to danger of ice. In such circumstances Antarctic seas might be expected to be traversed by trade routes of increasing importance between South America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, so that the control of the Islands in and land adjacent to these seas might become important to British interests in the southern hemisphere, and the establishment of harbours and stations might become economical.

The increasing radius of action of submarines and aircraft will tend to interest your Government in any territories where preparations might secretly be made for raiding operations.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the interest of the British Empire in these questions is, as compared with that of other nations, overwhelming. With the exception of portions of Chile and Argentina and a few barren islands belonging to France, every inhabited land in the direction of the Antarctic regions is already British. An enormous predominance of the vessels which enter the neighbouring seas is British.

His Majesty’s Government have, therefore, come to the conclusion that it is desirable that the whole of the Antarctic should ultimately be included within the British Empire, and that, while the time has not yet arrived that a claim to all the continental territories should be put forward publicly, a definite and consistent policy should be followed of extending and asserting British control with the object of ultimately making it complete.

With this end in view a careful examination has been made of the extent of possible foreign claims, the result of which is to show that British claims in the continental territories of the Antarctic, whether by discovery, formal landing or otherwise, greatly outweigh those of other countries, and that since the abandonment of all German claims under Article 118 of the Treaty of Peace, France is the only Power in a position to put forward any reasonable ground for a share in these lands. The Islands of Kerguelen and the Crozets have been effectively occupied by France and claims might be advanced based on the discoveries of D’Urville (sic) and Charcot. The former made a formal landing at Anvers Island near Adelie land (sic), in 1840, at which he took possession of the Island and adjacent coast in the name of France.

The only two parts of the continent which are readily accessible – and, it may be added, of any proved value – are Grahamland and the Ross Sea coast. The letters patent of 21st July, 1908 and 26th March 1917, of which copies are enclosed, established full British sovereignty for the former and overall the neighbouring Sub Antarctic islands; and the establishment of magistracies in South Georgia and the South Shetlands constitutes an effective control which will be reinforced by the operations of the research vessels to be provided, if the report of the Committee referred to in the 3rd paragraph is adopted. In the case of the Ross Sea there has been
no similar assertion of sovereignty, but the work of Ross, Scott, Shackleton, Mawson and their colleagues furnishes indisputable claims to the greater part of the lands in this area, which has always been associated with British and Australian enterprise. I suggest, therefore, that it is highly desirable that immediate steps should be taken to assert British sovereignty, over the Ross Sea Coasts and their hinterland which might be defined as including all territories and islands south of New Zealand between the meridians of 150° east and west and some limit to be fixed to the north. It is not considered that it would be necessary to set up any resident administration, at all events until projects for whaling, sealing, or mining have matured, as the British character of the ports from which expeditions to the Ross Sea would ordinarily obtain supplies would enable necessary regulations, such as, for example, limitations on the destructions of certain animals, to be communicated and in most cases enforced.

The question, however, which of the partners in the Empire should be entrusted with control of the new territory requires settlement. New Zealand as being the nearest and possessing the most convenient parts appears at first sight best situated for this purpose, but the matter is one which should in my opinion in the first place be discussed between the governments of the Commonwealth of Australia and Dominion of New Zealand.

I am writing similarly to the Governor-General of New Zealand and would invite the two Governments to exchange views with regard to the policy which I have outlined and in particular with regard to the control of the Ross Sea area. You will no doubt communicate to me in due course the result of these deliberations.

I am sending a copy of this despatch to the other self-governing Dominions.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servant,

(for the Secretary of State)
(Sgd.) L.S. Amery.
Map submitted by Captain Lewis
Chapter 5

1927-1928: Asserting the National Interest

When Bruce returned to Australia in early 1927 he expected that the British Government would take the lead in implementing the three step process to bring the sector between Enderby Land and the Ross Dependency within the Empire under Australian control. The ANRC, on the other hand, was disappointed that the Australian Quadrant, which had been discovered and explored by Mawson and his AAE, would not be annexed immediately and that Bruce had committed Australia to an ambitious venture. Mawson and Captain Davis both members of the ANRC, were concerned that sailing along this long stretch of coast was perilous and could not be achieved in one cruise. The ANRC was also concerned that the Imperial Conference had not pledged any funds for the implementation of the staged process. While the assumption was that Mawson would lead the expedition, who would pay for it? Bruce had taken it for granted that, since it was a policy and a process agreed to at the Imperial Conference, it would be funded on an Empire wide basis. After all, almost half of the Antarctic was to be brought within the Empire. As far as the British Government was concerned, however, if Australia wished to control a sector of the Antarctic, the Australians should pay for it. While Downing Street and Canberra quibbled over responsibility and costs, the Australian scientists saw Antarctic summers come and go and the possibility of acquiring an Australian sector slipping away.

Dr J.P. Thomson, the Honorary Secretary of the Queensland Branch of the Royal Geographical Society, expressed what many scientists, including Mawson, had probably been thinking for some time: that Australia should take the initiative and annex the Australian Quadrant. The scientists were not necessarily taking into account the intricacies of imperial relations or the consequences of Australia establishing an independent foreign service. These significant details were not on Thomson’s mind when, in exasperation state, he said to the Commonwealth Meteorologist: ‘Poor Australia is she always to be tied to the heels of foreign leadership. Has she no soul of her own? Does she in matters so vital to her
prosperity have no initiative, no enterprise?\textsuperscript{1} Thomson and his associates in Queensland had chosen to contribute to the Antarctic debate. Living on a continent plagued by drought and, in the first half of the twentieth century, still relying significantly on agricultural trade, Australian scientists were keen to see a series of meteorological stations operating in Antarctica, in the hope that Antarctic weather patterns could shed light on Australian weather conditions. It was research in the field of meteorology that had influenced Deakin’s decision to provide financial support for Shackleton, and both David and Mawson had compiled the report on meteorological results and observations.\textsuperscript{2} If the Australian Quadrant was lost to foreign powers, the hope of the scientists would not be realised. In the meantime, they would use the medium of the press to great effect and thus maintain pressure on the Government by stirring public sentiment.

Until the second step of the staged process was accomplished, Bruce would find himself wedged between a potent domestic constituency and a stubborn imperial government. Bruce did not expect that Australia would be taking the initiative to implement any of the steps agreed to at the Imperial Conference, and was waiting for some advice from Downing Street. Besides, sending an expedition to Antarctica with a commissioned official to take possession on the spot, the second step in the staged process, was costly and the financial burden of an Empire-wide project should not fall on the shoulders of a fledgling nation. In Australia, however, the clamour of the scientific community was putting pressure on Bruce to act independently of the Dominions Office. Moreover, Bruce had to tread carefully because taking on the entire expense of implementing the second step, which included obtaining a research vessel, was a cost that the Australian budget could not easily sustain. He could be widely criticised by the Australian public for spending public funds on Antarctic matters, even if they were keen to see Australia in Antarctica. At the same time, Bruce had agreed to a considerable imperial venture and he preferred to act collaboratively.

\textsuperscript{1} That observation was made by Dr J.P. Thomson, C.B.E., Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, (R.G.S.A.) Queensland Branch, when responding to a report prepared by Mr H.A. Hunt, Commonwealth Meteorologist, on a proposal for the establishment of observation stations in Antarctica. While Hunt agreed that meteorological observations conducted in Antarctica were essential, he believed Dr Thomson’s proposal was too expensive. See letter and attachment Chairman of the Council of the R.G.S.A., Brisbane, to Rt Hon the Prime Minister, 14 March, 1927, NAA: Series A 461, Item G372/1/2.
\textsuperscript{2} See Chapter I. See also Shackleton, Appendix V, Vol. 2, pp. 345, 376
Besides Mawson and the ANRC, the Queensland Branch of the Royal Geographical Society had begun making representations to the Prime Minister since early in 1927, urging Australia to establish stations in the Australian Quadrant in order to make observations on the movements of icebergs and ice-fields. The Queensland Branch believed that these activities ‘profoundly influence the climate of this country, particularly in regard to rainfall and recurring droughts’. Sir Littleton Groom, the Member for Toowoomba, was the Speaker of the House of Representatives and his help was sought to plead the case with Bruce. Although the southern States had been the main standard bearers in the Antarctic debate, interest was spreading north. H.A. Hunt, the Commonwealth Meteorologist, agreed that a series of stations in Antarctica ‘would be desirable’, but believed that Australia should not bear the entire cost burden.

When the record of proceedings of the 1926 Imperial Conference became available, the Government once again turned to the scientists for advice on the position Australia should take with respect to fulfilling the second step. Orme Masson’s initial reaction was one of disbelief. He quickly identified the enormity of the task for an expedition to sail from Oates Land, estimated by the Admiralty at between 157° and 159° East, to Enderby Land between 45° and 53° East. He immediately wrote to Bruce asking why the territory proposed for Australian control now included Kemp and Enderby Lands, which were within the African Quadrant. Masson reminded Bruce that what geographers referred to as the Australian Quadrant comprised the area from 160° to 90° East and included Oates Land, King George V Land, Wilkes Land and Queen Mary Land.

To illustrate the impossibility of fulfilling the second step by sending out one expedition, Masson explained that navigation would have to be undertaken in ice-bound waters and across vast distances, in the short summer season of only three months. Under such conditions he believed that the chance of success was unlikely.

---

4 Letter Littleton Groom to Prime Minister, 1 February, 1927, NAA: Series A 461, Item G372/1.2.
5 Memorandum H.A. Hunt, Commonwealth Meteorologist to Secretary, Home and Territories Department 15 December 1927, p. 1, NAA: Series A 461, Item G372/1.2.
6 Letter Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department to Sir David Orme Masson, 21 March 1927, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 4, part 4.
7 Letter D. Orme Masson, ANRC to the Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 1 April, 1927, NAA: Series A 981/4 Item ANT 4, part 4.
There was also the question of finding safe harbours as ‘landing places are few and
difficult to find, and to land a party is often risky, owing to the movements of coastal
pack-ice.’ ⁸ Not wishing to dismiss the undertaking completely, Masson suggested
that it might be possible for an expedition to fulfill the requirements of the Imperial
Conference, through masterly planning and a suitable vessel. He recommended the
*Discovery*, which was a wooden vessel and especially designed for Antarctic work.⁹

While acknowledging that the specific purpose of the expedition was ‘raising the
flag in these localities’, he expected that, in addition, the expedition would include
extra staff and equipment in order to undertake geographical exploration and
conduct scientific work. ¹⁰ If Masson had totally rejected the idea of sending an
expedition to Antarctica, the scientists would not be given the opportunity of
conducting science. How such a mission could be achieved with its two competing
tasks, in one expedition sailing in dangerous waters, was the dilemma.

Masson promised to maintain confidentiality and would provide a more
considered response, after forming a ‘small special committee’ to deal with the
matter ‘without publicity.’ ¹¹ The committee that emerged was concentrated in
Melbourne, and titled the Antarctic Committee of the Australian National Research
Council (the ANRC Committee). It included Mawson and Captain Davis with Orme
Masson as Convener. The other members were two of Australia’s leading scientists:
R.H. Cambage, a botanist and member of the Royal Society in Melbourne, and
A.C.D. Rivett, Professor of Chemistry and a member of the Executive Committee of
the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). ¹² The composition of the
ANRC Committee guaranteed its influence with Government and secured the link
between Antarctic science and the development of Australia’s Antarctic policies. Its
location facilitated access to the Prime Minister, whose Federal seat of Flinders was
located in Victoria, although Federal Parliament’s move to Canberra was
imminent. ¹³

---

⁸ Letter D. Orme Masson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 1 April 1927.
⁹ The *Discovery* was built to take Scott on his first expedition in 1901.
¹⁰ Letter D. Orme Masson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 1 April 1927.
¹¹ Letter D. Orme Masson to the Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 1 April 1927.
¹² In 1926 Professor A.C.D. Rivett was one of three members of an Executive Committee that led the
newly created CSIR, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, later to become CSIRO,
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. CSIR was created to be Australia’s
premier scientific organisation. *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Online.
¹³ Parliament House opened in Canberra on 9 May 1927.
Orme Masson’s initial reaction to the unexpected expansion of the Australian Quadrant was shared by the rest of the ANRC Committee. His considered response, therefore, was unchanged. When he formally responded on behalf of the ANRC Committee, its view was clear. The ‘Australian sector’, they said, stretched from between 160º to 85º East. It encompassed Oates Land, King George V Land, Wilkes Land and Queen Mary Land, all of them discoveries made by explorers of the Empire.¹⁴ Furthermore, King George V Land, Wilkes Land and Queen Mary Land had been ‘discovered and explored in detail’ by the AAE in 1912. The ‘national flag’ had been raised in King George V Land and Queen Mary Land and the taking of possession announced publicly by Mawson on his return. Re-visiting these lands and raising the flag again was unnecessary and Bruce was urged to persuade the British Government to give immediate official recognition to Mawson’s earlier claims.¹⁵

The view of the ANRC Committee with respect to Adélie Land was unchanged. It was also unconvinced by the British Government’s argument that French prestige would be at stake, if France was asked to exchange it for territory elsewhere. Only Oates Land and Wilkes Land required the taking of formal possession on the spot, and the Committee suggested that two expeditions should be sent to fulfill that requirement and should include scientific staff and equipment with a view to achieving ‘as much of scientific work as possible’.¹⁶ The ANRC Committee identified meteorological observations as one of the most urgent areas of study. Other areas of scientific research included hydrography, magnetism, geology, mineralogy and botany. The Discovery was reaffirmed as the preferred vessel and the Government was urged to negotiate with London its release for a period of two years. It should be prepared and ready to sail from Australia at the end of November 1928.¹⁷

The sense of urgency was provoked by the expansion of Norwegian whaling in the region and by more recent American interest. For that reason, the ANRC

¹⁴ Letter D. Orme Masson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 25 July 1927, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 4, part 4.
¹⁵ Letter D. Orme Masson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 25 July 1927.
¹⁶ Letter D. Orme Masson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 25 July 1927.
¹⁷ Letter D. Orme Masson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 25 July 1927.
Committee believed that the loan of the *Discovery* was essential because building a vessel would involve a significant loss of time. The ANRC Committee estimated the cost of a two-year expedition was £60,000, but only if the British Government agreed to provide the *Discovery* appropriately repaired and fitted out. The costs associated with the expedition, according to the ANRC Committee, could be recovered through royalties from the whaling industry. It recommended the Australian government as the controlling authority over the industry because that would ensure ‘whales and fur-bearing animals’ were not exterminated. If exploited in a ‘judicious’ way, ‘a perpetual industry’ could be maintained to advantage Hobart and Albany. Other economic gains could be derived from the possible discovery of mineral deposits or mineral oil.\(^\text{18}\) As they had done in the past, the scientists linked their own non-profit interests with the possible economic gains to be derived from exploiting Antarctic resources. Such a link would be publicly acceptable and Antarctic scientific research not perceived as making a drain on the public purse.

Perhaps the most significant recommendation the ANRC Committee made was for the Australian Government to assume the entire responsibility for the expeditions. That would include financing, controlling and equipping them as well as providing naval and civilian scientific staff. This surprising recommendation, designed to exclude the British Government, would see the Australian Government providing the estimated £60,000. Although visionary, in that the ANRC was asking the Bruce Government to act independently, it was anathema to Bruce who wanted Australia to be a partner in an imperial venture and take a prominent role. He did not wish Australia to bear the entire financial burden.

For that reason, R.G. Casey was liaising with the British Government in order to gain their commitment to contribute to the costly second step. In 1924 Richard Gardiner Casey, who had been recruited as an officer of the Department of External Affairs, was appointed as Australia’s Liaison Officer with the British Government. Casey’s appointment was the first of its kind and the result of the reorganisation of the External Affairs Branch of the Prime Minister’s Department in the mid-1920s.\(^\text{19}\) Although Australian High Commissioners had been appointed to

---

\(^{18}\) Letter D. Orme Masson to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 25 July 1927.

\(^{19}\) Hudson assessed Bruce as not wishing to create an independent foreign service. In 1924, however, he took steps to create a semblance of a foreign service. Hudson and North, Introduction, p. xii. See also Edwards, Chapter 3 and J.D.B. Miller, ‘An Over-View’ in W.J. Hudson *Towards a Foreign*
London since 1910, Casey’s work as Liaison Officer and that of the High Commissioner became ‘largely separate and parallel channels of communication’ between the Australian and British Governments.\(^{20}\)

Scholars are generally agreed that Australia lacked enthusiasm for an independent foreign service, but Casey’s appointment was unique.\(^{21}\) No other dominion had a similar appointment in London.\(^{22}\) Casey’s ‘primary function was to improve the flow of information on international affairs to Australia’.\(^{23}\) He was to be Bruce’s ‘eyes and ears’ at Whitehall and in London political society.\(^{24}\) Judging from the number and length of the letters he sent to Bruce and which at times relayed political and social gossip, Casey carried out his duties to Bruce’s satisfaction, Bruce frequently referring to him as ‘our Richard’.\(^{25}\)

Peter Edwards has observed that Amery was less than enthusiastic about Casey being given a room at the Foreign Office. Amery had hinted to Austen Chamberlain, the Foreign Secretary, that Casey’s presence ‘might mean “having him a little too constantly with you”’.\(^{26}\) Instead, Casey was accommodated at Whitehall Gardens in the offices of Sir Maurice Hankey, the Secretary to the Cabinet. Such a location was even more beneficial for Australia, as it gave Casey access ‘to nearly all Cabinet material’.\(^{27}\) As a result, Bruce’s future policy considerations would be made from a position of knowledge. Edwards has observed that it was only ‘seldom’ that Bruce would intervene in the making of imperial policy.\(^{28}\) However, as Bruce discovered, his intervention was necessary in order to salvage the Empire’s Antarctic policies and to fulfill the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference.


\(^{21}\) Edwards, Chapter 3, p. 75.

\(^{22}\) The role of the Australian High Commissioner in London was ceremonial and administrative in nature. Refer Hudson and North, Introduction, p. viii

\(^{23}\) Hudson and North, Introduction, p. x.

\(^{24}\) Hudson and North, Introduction, p. vii.

\(^{25}\) Hudson and North, Introduction, p. x.

\(^{26}\) Hudson and North introduction, p. viii and Edwards Chapter 3, p. 73.

\(^{27}\) Edwards, Chapter 3, p. 71.

\(^{28}\) Edwards, Chapter 3 p. 74.
It is not surprising that Casey found himself almost fully engaged in Antarctic matters from the London end. His initial task was to acquire the loan of the Discovery for an expedition that Mawson was nominated to lead if the vessel was made available. His main channel of contact was the Dominions Office, which promptly advised Casey that the Discovery ‘could not be spared at present and may be needed for whaling investigation during some years to come’. That response was the first indication that the British Government was not keen to take immediate action to implement the second step of the staged process. The British Government had called for a gradual approach. However, a gradual approach was not supported by the Australian Government, which was now being influenced by domestic imperatives.

Although Bruce was aware of the gradualism preferred by Amery, he was nonetheless expecting that the British Government would be the major supporter of a policy it had initially articulated. He was also aware that the reason for the negative response from the Dominions Office reflected the British Government’s concern over Adélie Land. Keith Officer, who had joined the Department of External Affairs in 1927 after serving in Nigeria with the British Colonial Service, began investigating an appropriate land exchange with France. He suggested the New Hebrides, ‘where Australian interests are now steadily diminishing’.

Walter Henderson and Keith Officer’s superior, was aware that the British Government would not consider the land exchange, and began canvassing the legal aspect of omitting the second step completely. Henderson was not persuaded by the view that in omitting step two ‘we would be greatly weakening our position’. Henderson had studied law at Paris and had graduated as Doctor of Laws, having topped the classes in diplomatic history and public law at the Ecole des Sciences Politiques. As Edwards has observed, Henderson ‘had excelled in a classical training of a European diplomat’. Henderson’s advice, therefore, would be soundly based and would take into account the broad international political perspective of

29 Hudson and North, p. 389, fn. 13
33 Edwards, p. 81.
34 Edwards, p. 81.
any Australian action. Importantly, he had first-hand knowledge of how the French perceived their colonial territories. Though admitting that there would be ‘definite value’ in sending an expedition, the costs and delays outweighed the advantages. His advice, therefore, was to proceed directly to the third stage, the issuing of Letters Patent and asserting control over the areas identified. Not only did Henderson advise proceeding directly to the final step: he also suggested that the policy of proceeding cautiously had its negative side. It was true that ‘the susceptibilities of other countries’ would not be aroused, but it was also possible that delays could invite other claimants, ‘if there be other claimants’, before the Australian position had been strengthened.35

On 5 December 1927, Cabinet decided that the British Government should be advised that the Australian Government sees ‘no objections and some advantages in proceeding immediately with step No. 3’.36 In the interest of avoiding delays, Bruce advised Amery that moving to the third step was necessary and it could be followed with an expedition, when a suitable opportunity presented itself.37 Since receiving the views of the ANRC, Bruce had become determined to decouple the Australian Quadrant, which had been visited by Mawson’s AAE, from the African Quadrant, which contained Enderby Land, an old British claim that had not been visited since Biscoe discovered that portion of continental Antarctica in 1831. Bruce emphasised this point by reminding Amery that Queen Mary Land, Wilkes Land, King George V Land and Oates Land were all within the Australian Sector, from longitude 160° to 85° East whereas Enderby Land and Kemp Land lay outside of it.38

The most significant reason for Bruce to no longer accept conflating the two Quadrants was that of perceived differences in their status. He reminded Amery that, on returning to Australia in 1914, Mawson had stated publicly that he had taken formal possession of King George V Land and Queen Mary Land. With respect to the other areas, the Imperial Conference had already determined that they were British by discovery and, as such, were regarded as having an inchoate British title.39

35 Department of External Affairs Minute, 30 November 1927.
36 Department of External Affairs Minute, 30 November 1927.
37 Despatch Governor-General to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 22 December 1927, NAA: Series A 11804, Item 1926/149, and NAA: Series A 981, Item. ANT 4, part 6.
38 Despatch 22 December 1927.
39 Despatch 22 December 1927.
After the lapse of a year since British interests in the region had been published, no Power had either protested against the assertion of rights or made counterclaims. In these circumstances, the Australian Government believed that there was nothing to be gained by not proceeding with the final step in order to secure a stronger title. Bruce warned that, if the third step were to be delayed any further, it could lead to an open invitation to others to assert their rights, even before the British position was strengthened. Bruce also advised that, following the French precedent of not defining the boundaries of Adélie Land, his Government was inclined to leave the boundaries of the proposed sector undefined in the Letters Patent.\(^\text{40}\) There was no response from the British Government to Bruce’s proposal, although it would be subsequently acted upon, as the 1933 Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act does not define the boundaries of the Australian territory.\(^\text{41}\)

With continuing silence from Downing Street, an Antarctic expedition in the Antarctic summer of 1927-1928 had become impossible. The problem facing Australia was the direct result of London’s linking questions relating to the Australian sector with other Antarctic activities. France could not be approached over Adélie Land as that would cause unwanted French attention to the British sovereignty claim over the FID. On another diplomatic front, the British Government was engaged in negotiations with Norway after that country had challenged the British sovereignty claim over the Ross Dependency.\(^\text{42}\) By acceding to Bruce’s demands, the British Government would be opening up a third front. What was Bruce, the staunch defender of Imperial Unity, thinking by making his proposal to the British Government? When Bruce wrote his letter to Amery, he was not proposing to make British diplomacy over the Antarctic more complex than it already was. His intention was to highlight the work done by Mawson in the Australian Quadrant, work that other nations would find difficult to contest.

Not being one to sit idly by, Mawson once again began to agitate publicly. In Hobart, on 18 January 1928, he made a scathing attack on Australian Government inaction over Antarctica in an address to a Rotary Club meeting. His denunciation of

\(^{40}\) Despatch 22 December 1927.

\(^{41}\) See Chapter 8 of this thesis.

\(^{42}\) Letter G.H. Villiers for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Monsieur Benjamin Vogt Norwegian Legation, 9 December 1927 NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1. For further correspondence copied to the Australian Government on the question of Norwegian challenges to Britain’s sovereignty claim over the Ross Dependency, see NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1.
the Government’s efforts, and of the imperial policy to control the Antarctic, was reported in *The Times* two days later. Ironically, that report was located beneath another announcing that Norway had made a sovereignty claim over Bouvet Island in the South Atlantic Ocean.43

The Australian Government viewed Mawson’s indiscretions with some disquiet. Bruce moved quickly to counter Mawson’s criticism by publicly denying that Australia was unconcerned about its Antarctic interests and stressing that he was taking ‘Every possible step’ to preserve Australia’s rights in the region.44 Mawson’s bluntness was also viewed unfavourably by Professor Rivett, a colleague of Mawson’s on the ANRC Committee. Rivett expressed his concerned to Bruce after reading the various newspaper reports.45 Rivett shared Mawson’s views and impatience, but did not endorse Mawson’s method of embarrassing the government publicly. Rivett reminded Bruce that the Committee had not yet received any comment from the Government about its recommendations, but was inclined to think that the fault was not that of the Australian Government.46

In January 1928, and still without a response from Amery, the Mackay *Daily Mercury*, rather than Amery, announced the British Government’s position. According to the newspaper report, a source in the Foreign and Dominions Offices had stated that the British Government ‘would willingly co-operate’ with both Australia and New Zealand in advancing their Antarctic interests, but that these dominions ‘are responsible for the initiative’.47 Bruce might not have known about the British Government’s views, had the article not been brought to his attention by Senator J.E. Ogden of Tasmania. Obviously taking the article at face value, Senator Ogden urged Bruce to act quickly to achieve control over the Australian Quadrant, in particular to curtail further French activities in the region.48 A few days after the Mackay *Daily Mercury* report, the Brisbane *Courier* devoted a lengthy article to support of Mawson’s call for Australian Government action and expressed grave concerns about foreign activities, particularly those of Norway, in the region.

45 Letter A.C.D. Rivett to Percy Deane, Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 24 January 1928, NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 4, part 7.
The Brisbane *Courier* also revealed that the content of Mawson’s Rotary Club speech had been cabled to England and brought to the attention of the Dominions and Foreign Offices. The *Courier* did not say who had passed on the information, but it suggested that the ‘position has been greatly assisted by the remarks that Sir Douglas made in Hobart recently’. ⁴⁹ That the Queensland Branch of the Royal Geographical Society had a hand in this episode is indicated by the comment in the *Courier* criticising the Australian Government for allowing ‘pecuniary reasons’ to be used as a reason not to establish meteorological stations in Antarctica.⁵⁰ Meteorological research in Antarctica was a priority interest of the Queensland Branch at the time.

Convinced that forcing the hand of the Government was best achieved through public clamour, the Queensland Branch decided to call an immediate meeting in order to discuss what action should be taken ‘to render support to Sir Douglas Mawson’s claim that Australia should be given control of her quadrant of the Antarctic.’⁵¹ The Queensland Branch even called on every State in the Commonwealth to join in supporting Mawson. Dr Thomson also foreshadowed the possibility of the Council holding a public meeting in order to demonstrate the widespread community feeling. None doubted the Prime Minister’s commitment to the question of Australian Antarctic control, but they believed he was not being active in the matter, leaving it to ‘Sir Douglas to fight a lone battle.’⁵²

The Queensland Branch had taken a step too far and its activities began to worry Keith Officer, who believed the publicity was counterproductive.⁵³ He had predicted that Mawson’s Hobart speech would trigger ‘an undesirable press campaign’, and suggested that Mawson be ‘restrained’ by giving him a private briefing.⁵⁴ Officer’s warnings came too late. The press campaign, spearheaded by the Brisbane *Courier*, was proceeding at a vigorous pace. Its overtones were unashamedly nationalistic as it lauded the Queensland Branch for showing ‘a

---

⁵⁰ *Courier* 28 January 1928.
⁵¹ *Courier* 28 January 1928.
⁵² *Courier* 28 January 1928.
⁵³ Keith Officer was a member of the small Department of External Affairs during this time. Its Head was Dr Walter Henderson. The Department, frequently referred to as the External Affairs Branch, was located within the Prime Minister’s Department.
thoroughly Australian spirit'.\(^{55}\) The significance of local action was amplified even further by the Melbourne *Herald*, when it suggested that 'Australia Should Wake Up'.\(^{56}\) Even though the clarion calls expressed nationalistic loyalties, they blamed the Australian Government for not accepting the 'Imperial Government's invitation to control the Australian quadrant of the Antarctic'.\(^{57}\)

The public agitation, directed squarely at the Government, began to worry one Government backbencher from Queensland, J.G. Bayley, M.P., who sought advice from Canberra to counteract it.\(^{58}\) In External Affairs, Walter Henderson expressed concern that such public exposure of a potentially embarrassing diplomatic problem would adversely affect relations between the British Empire and other powers with Antarctic interests. Henderson sought Bruce's approval to ask the Inspector of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch to monitor the activities of the Queensland Branch of the Royal Geographical Society.\(^{59}\) The Investigation Branch, at the time, was responsible for internal security, in a similar way to today's Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).

Why would Henderson call on the Commonwealth Investigation Branch, which investigated acts of sedition, to investigate the respected members of the Royal Geographical Society in Brisbane?\(^{60}\) Henderson's move was somewhat extreme, considering the membership of the Royal Geographic Society. It was a learned and respected body that attracted distinguished citizens interested in the advancement of science, as well as senior academic scientists. The membership of the Queensland Branch was no less distinguished. The Chairman of the Council was the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, Dr James Duhig and the President was the Governor of Queensland, Sir John Goodwin. Technically, the Queensland Branch,

\(^{55}\) *Courier*, 30 January 1928, NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 4, part 5.


\(^{58}\) Record of a conversation between W. Henderson, External Affairs and Mr Bruce about a telegraphed request for information from J.G. Bayley, M.P., 1 February, 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.

\(^{59}\) A note on file in Walter Henderson's handwriting observed that he had telephoned the Inspector of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch (CIB) on the morning of 2 February, 1928 to find out the date of the meeting of the Brisbane Branch of the R.G.S.A., NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.

or more probably the outspoken Dr Thomson, its Honorary Secretary, had sought to involve Downing Street in subverting the Australian Government’s efforts, which Thomson perceived to be too slow. Against that background, Henderson’s action was understandable in order to maintain the Australian Government’s negotiating advantage and to obviate unwarranted international attention.

After the intervention of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch, Thomson’s outspoken approach was turned in favour of the Australian Government’s efforts to secure the Australian Quadrant. When subsequently interviewed by the Brisbane Courier, Thomson praised the Australian Government for its support of scientific research. In this interview, he levelled his criticism at English statesmen for their ‘lack of geographical knowledge’. 61 Through their incompetence, he said, they had caused significant loss of valuable territory by allowing The Philippines, Java, Hawaii, Tahiti and Samoa to slip through the grasp of the Empire. Thomson did not wish the same mistake to be repeated in the case of Antarctica. 62 He later asked the Inspector of the Investigation Branch to convey to the Prime Minister that his intention in speaking out was to strengthen, not weaken, the Government’s hand. 63

That incident persuaded Bruce to confide more frequently in the scientists, particularly Mawson. To Mawson, Bruce wrote a ‘Strictly Confidential’ letter explaining that the Discovery would not be available in the foreseeable future and the costs associated with building a new vessel were ‘formidable’. 64 He also wrote to Thomson, advising him of the ineffectiveness of a public controversy over a delicate and complex issue. 65 However, the Government was exploring possible alternative policies. 66 That Bruce had not confided earlier in the ANRC was understandable. While he did not question their loyalty and their advice was critical to his negotiations with the Dominions Office, the ANRC was not an arm of Government, but rather an elite group interested in Antarctic exploration they could not afford to

61 Courier, 8 February 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
62 Courier, 8 February 1928.
63 Handwritten note on file by Walter Henderson, 2 February 1928.
64 Letter Douglas Mawson from Prime Minister, 2 February 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5. A copy of the letter was sent to David Orme Masson.
65 Letter Prime Minister to Dr James Park Thomson, C.B.E., 3 February 1928. Bruce had also sent a telegram on 2 February 1928 to J.G. Bayley, M.P. advising him of the action he was proposing to take in order to curtail the press campaign. The Governor of Queensland also advised Bruce that he had discussed the problem with Archbishop Duhig, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
66 Letter Prime Minister to Douglas Mawson 2 February 1928.
undertake without their Government’s financial assistance. Aware of their total absorption in an expedition, Bruce did not reveal that his Government could not afford to organise an expedition on its own, after the British Government’s refusal to cooperate. When Bruce wrote to Orme Masson and Dr Rivett to reassure them that the situation was progressing, he did not mention that he had already written to Downing Street urging them to proceed directly to stage three.

Mawson later confessed his frustration at continuing delays. He told Bruce that he had been pleading with Hughes since 1916 for the acquisition of the Australian Quadrant. Mawson was also keen to move the policy implementation away from London to Canberra. He reminded Bruce that there was ‘nobody else available in British circles with the experience we have of Antarctic conditions and exploration, or with such a successful record in those matters’. He suggested that he might go to London in order to secure the release of the Discovery and gave his word that he would make no more public comments.

Without waiting for Bruce’s blessing, or any other advice, Mawson made a public announcement that he would travel to London to secure the Discovery. As Henderson noted, if Mawson were to mobilise the British scientific bodies to take up the matter with the British Government, the Australian Government’s strategy to proceed directly to the third step would be jeopardised. Henderson believed that by not explaining to Mawson and the rest of the ANRC that the reason for delay was ‘financial stringency’, the Government would be faced with ‘an unpleasant situation’ if Mawson went to London in the belief that the only impediment was securing the Discovery.

Apart from financial considerations, the Australian Government was not keen to combine the political aspects of an expedition with scientific work. The Government had already decided that they were two distinct matters. On the

---

67 Letter Prime Minister to Sir David Orme Masson, K.B.E., 3 February 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
68 Letter Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department to Dr A.C.D. Rivett, Commonwealth Council for Scientific & Industrial Research, 10 February 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
69 Letter Douglas Mawson to Bruce, 7 February 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
70 Letter Douglas Mawson to Bruce, 7 February 1928.
71 Letter Douglas Mawson to Bruce, 7 February 1928.
72 Position Paper by Walter Henderson, Department of External Affairs, 18 February 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
73 Paper by Walter Henderson, 18 February 1928.
political side, the Government wished to pursue a course that would strengthen, in the shortest time possible, Australia’s claim to that part of the Australian Quadrant already known. That course of action, according to Henderson, was independent of the scientific work of mapping the coastline and conducting scientific research, which included a survey of fisheries in the adjoining waters.  

Since the British Government refused to supply the *Discovery* and participate in the staged process, Bruce was seeking to resolve the problem of acquiring the Australian Quadrant without having to equip an expedition to Antarctica. As Henderson suggested to Bruce, he could not avoid giving a frank explanation to Mawson.

Mawson was probably not surprised to learn from Bruce that the Government could not approve the expenditure for an expedition at this stage, but would review the situation at a future date. Bruce’s letter placated Mawson. He now understood that ‘something will be done’ and that it was an ‘unpropitious time’ from an economic perspective ‘to push forward active measures’. He confirmed to Bruce that he proposed travelling to London in order to discuss the question of an Antarctic expedition amongst scientific circles and British officials with Antarctic interests, ‘with a view to paving the way for a final Australian effort in 2 or 3 years’ time’.

As the Government and interest groups were realising, there was a chasm between the idea of extending British control over Antarctica and its implementation. It was almost a decade since Amery had announced his bold idea for British control of the entire continent of Antarctica. Seven years later, only the Ross Dependency had been annexed. The so-called gradualist approach had worked against Amery’s goal of control. Since the end of the Great War, France, Norway and the United States had developed and extended their Antarctic interests. All of them had ignored British assertions of sovereignty and Norway was actively challenging them.

---

74 Paper by Walter Henderson, 18 February 1928.
75 Position Paper by Walter Henderson, 18 February 1928.
76 Letter S.M. Bruce to Sir Douglas Mawson, March 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5. (date not shown on copy).
77 Letter Douglas Mawson to S. M. Bruce, 16 March 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
78 Letter Douglas Mawson to S. M. Bruce, 16 March 1928.
Norway was the most aggressive. No longer prepared to allow the British Empire to dominate Antarctic whaling through its various levies and taxes, a Norwegian whaling fleet began sailing around the continent during the 1927-1928 season for the purpose of claiming unclaimed territory to use as bases for Norwegian whaling operations. The ambition of the Norwegian expedition was to sail from Cape Town to Bouvet Island, then to West Antarctica until it reached South Georgia. Although the Norwegian expedition was privately financed, the captain of the Norvegia had been authorised by the Norwegian Government to hoist the Norwegian flag and take possession of unclaimed territory. The expedition proposed to commence its cruise around the Antarctic coastline from Enderby Land and sail to 120° West Longitude, following the route of the Bellingshausen Expedition of the 1820s. If the expedition proposed to sail eastward from Enderby Land, it would threaten Australian interests. If it sailed in the opposite direction, it would be sailing in uncharted waters and around unclaimed territory. If the British Government continued to hold ambitions to bring all of Antarctica within the Empire, the Norwegians would very likely upset these plans. On this cruise the Norvegia was sailing away from the Australian Quadrant.

In order to avoid 'complications arising', the British Minister in Oslo reminded the Norwegian Foreign Minister that a British title existed for the areas outlined in the published summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference. The Norwegian Foreign Minister’s response was immediate: ‘I shall not fail to have the expedition made acquainted therewith.’ There was no doubt that Norwegian whaling firms were keen to make territorial claims over a portion of the Antarctic coastline in order to free their whalers from the obligation of obtaining licences from the United Kingdom or the dominions. The added benefit of having their own Antarctic claim would give Norway leverage in subsequent negotiations over territory. It was open to the Norwegian Government to refuse to perfect any claim made by the Norwegian

---

79 Letter F.O. Lindley, British Legation, Oslo to Sir Austen Chamberlain, Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 7 December 1927, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1.
81 Extract from the Liverpool Post & Mercury 9 November 1927, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1 and Letter F.O. Lindley, British Legation Oslo, to Sir Austen Chamberlain, Principal Secretary of State, 7 December 1927, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1.
expedition, in the same way that the British Government had refused to recognise any of Mawson’s acts of proclamation.

In fact, the Admiralty was panicking unnecessarily, after learning of the sailing schedule of the Norvegia from an article that appeared in the Liverpool Post and Mercury.\textsuperscript{85} Casey subsequently advised External Affairs that the Admiralty was ‘under the misapprehension’ that the Norvegia was intending to travel in an easterly direction, or ‘clockwise’ right around the Pole.\textsuperscript{86} However, subsequent information from Oslo confirmed that the Norvegia intended to travel in a westerly direction or ‘in a counter-clockwise direction’ to South Georgia and the South Shetlands and try to reach Peter I Island at about 90° West.\textsuperscript{87}

Whichever route the Norvegia adopted, the concern remained that the Norwegian expedition would encounter some piece of territory that might have been claimed unofficially by a British captain and the claim never perfected by the Government. In recent times, the Foreign Office could no longer accept the Admiralty’s rulings on disputable and indisputable lands and was ‘inclined to think that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty overestimate the permanence of a title to land based on discovery alone ...’.\textsuperscript{88} G.H. Villiers, the head of the British Foreign Office, observed that the discovery of land which had not been visited for over a century was insufficient reason for preventing another State from laying claim to the land and acquiring a good title to it, if this title is subsequently supported by such measures of occupation as the climatic conditions will permit.\textsuperscript{89}

As the opinion from the Foreign Office suggests, indication of British intentions could take the form of periodical visits by vessels whose officers were authorised to exercise jurisdiction. The 1926 Imperial Conference had already concluded that ‘Discovery and annexation are both of them circumstances which assist a claim, but the weight given to them diminishes with the lapse of time if no

\textsuperscript{85} At times both in official correspondence and in the press the Norwegian research vessel was referred to as the Norvegia or Norvegia.
\textsuperscript{86} Letter probably Casey to External Affairs is neither signed nor dated. However, judging from its reference to another letter dated 2 February 1928, it was written by Casey in London and sent shortly afterwards. NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 51, part 1.
\textsuperscript{87} Letter Casey to External Affairs (undated) NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 51, part 1.
\textsuperscript{88} Letter G.H. Villiers to the Under Secretary of State, Dominions Office, 11 January 1928, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1
\textsuperscript{89} Letter G.H. Villiers to the Under Secretary of State, Dominions Office, 11 January 1928.
steps are taken to exercise authority in the area.90 Yet, when Amery advised the Australian Government that Norway had been given a list of these lands, he continued to ignore the Australian Government’s request that an assertion of British sovereignty should be made over the territory claimed by Mawson.91

The British Foreign Office had made a stand on the question of old claims and had advised the British senior diplomat in Oslo about the position of Bouvet Island.92 Although the Norwegian Government did not respond to the published list of British claims, it agreed with the Foreign Office interpretation over old claims. The senior Norwegian diplomat in London, Benjamin Vogt, put the case for Norway in support of its claim to Bouvet Island.93 According to Vogt, as far as Norway was concerned, even if an inchoate British title existed over Bouvet Island, it had become invalid after the lapse of one hundred years, due to British neglect or failing any acknowledgment that a British title existed.94 Bruce had put that point to the British Government in favour of issuing Letters Patent over the entire Australian Quadrant, including Adélie Land. The British Government, on the other hand, had based its policy decision, not so much on any legal principle, but rather on the desire to avoid a diplomatic quarrel with France.

By its political reaction on Adélie Land, the British Government’s stance on Antarctica had become inconsistent and, for Australia, lacked coherence. As Casey admitted in a confidential letter to Bruce in mid-1928, the ‘Antarctic business is causing a certain amount of stir’ in London.95 Norway was pursuing the British Government over Bouvet Island and the British Government was maintaining its refusal both to perfect the claims made by Mawson and to release the Discovery.96

90 E.130 (Revise).
91 Despatch Dominions No. 114 L.S. Amery, to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, 7 March 1928, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1.
92 The British Government believed British title existed over Bouvet Island after Captain George Norris had taken possession of the Island in 1825 in the name of King George IV. Letter Sir Austen Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary to Sir F. Lindley, British Legation, Oslo, 28 February 1928, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1.
95 Comment by R. G. Casey in a ‘Personal and Confidential’ letter to Bruce, 9 August 1928 in Hudson and North, p. 387.
96 Cable Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister, 20 June 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
Mawson’s discussions in London did little to illuminate the situation. The
Admiralty repeated the information that had been leaked anonymously from the
Dominions and Foreign Offices: that the decision to pursue the second step rested
with the Australian Government.\textsuperscript{97} Mawson poured out his frustration and
disappointment in a letter to Bruce and urged him to ‘move swiftly in this matter’.\textsuperscript{98}
He claimed that the Admiralty considered ‘favourably the proposal to lend the
\textit{Discovery}’ and were prepared to help ‘any Australian project’ because of their
concern over Norwegian encroachment onto territory considered British.\textsuperscript{99}

The view of the British Government now indicated that it would be involved
in the first and third step only. The first step, providing international advice of the
lands in Antarctica that had an inchoate title, had been completed and Bruce advised
accordingly.\textsuperscript{100} The third step, the issuing of appropriate instruments to provide for
the Government of the territories, could only be undertaken by the British
Government after step two was completed. Responsibility for the second step, the
only one that required a financial outlay, was delegated to Australia without any
discussions with the Australian Government.

In Australia Mawson was told one thing and in London something else. Now
enraged, he exploded in his letter to Bruce that if Australia could not make up its
mind ‘then I can get America to take up the work, but Australia must give up all idea
of being further interested.’\textsuperscript{101} For Mawson to be led to make such a brutal statement
indicated that he no longer had patience with either of the governments, particularly
his own. His letter bore the marks of hurt and disappointment and he held nothing
back. Despite the wide acclaim for the ‘Australian effort of 1911-14’, he was left
with an outstanding debt that he personally paid.\textsuperscript{102} His letter was a tragic account of
national allegiance and the personal sacrifice made in the cause of Antarctic
exploration, which had guided ‘the whole tenor of my life’.\textsuperscript{103} Mawson had written
to Casey along similar lines.\textsuperscript{104} These letters showed Mawson’s deep anguish at the

\textsuperscript{97} Letter Mawson to Bruce, 31 May 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
\textsuperscript{98} Letter Mawson to Bruce, 31 May 1928.
\textsuperscript{99} Letter Mawson to Bruce, 31 May 1928.
\textsuperscript{100} Letter L.S. Amery to Lord Stonehaven, Governor-General, 5 January 1927,
NAA: Series A 6661, Item 458.
\textsuperscript{101} Letter Mawson to Bruce, 31 May 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
\textsuperscript{102} Letter Mawson to Bruce, 31 May 1928.
\textsuperscript{103} Letter Mawson to Bruce, 31 May 1928.
\textsuperscript{104} Letter Mawson to Casey, 30 May 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
prospect of the Australian Quadrant being lost to Australia. He had a very special relationship with Antarctica; it took the lives of those who discovered King George V Land with him and it almost took his own. All that work seemed to amount to nothing as the Empire had turned its back on that achievement, and now he was threatening to turn his own back by proposing to approach America.

Despite his ultimatum, Mawson remained in London for a final appeal for the loan of the *Discovery*. After all, he had put the idea to Amery in 1919 that as members of the British Empire had undertaken most of the significant exploration, that work should be rewarded with territory. As Amery’s plan began to unravel, Amery found himself being bombarded with letters from the Australian Government and hounded in London by Mawson and Casey. It was from a report in the Melbourne *Herald*, rather than any formal account from either Mawson or Amery, that Bruce found out that a meeting between Amery and Mawson had been partly successful.\(^{105}\) The *Herald* correspondent reported that the *Discovery* would be released to Australia, not on loan, but on charter, at a cost of £100,000 for two expeditions.\(^{106}\) When Amery later advised Bruce of this decision, he did not mention costs.\(^{107}\) Being informed of British Government thinking through the press had driven a wedge between the Australian and British Governments. Neither Bruce nor Amery were now listening to each other and Bruce was beyond pleading. When Bruce responded to Amery, it was to advise him that the Australian Government wished to proceed to step three and was not prepared to negotiate an actual charter of the ship at this stage.\(^{108}\) Not surprisingly, Amery rejected Bruce’s proposal, but left it to Casey to tell the Prime Minister of his decision.\(^{109}\)

Mawson later confessed to Casey that neither he nor his colleagues on the ANRC Committee were aware of the ownership of the *Discovery*.\(^{110}\) They believed that the *Discovery* belonged to the Dominions Office, rather than some complicated bureaucratic arrangement that involved the Admiralty. Thus, he took it for granted that the *Discovery* would be simply made available as a matter of course in order to

---


\(^{106}\) *The Herald*, 9 June 1928.

\(^{107}\) Cable Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister, 20 June 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.

\(^{108}\) Cable Prime Minister to Secretary to State for Dominion Affairs, 2 July 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.


implement the Empire’s Antarctic policy. Mawson quietly explained to Casey that his frenetic activity was the result of his awareness that the Antarctic veterans were ageing and soon there would be no people left in Australia with Antarctic experience to accomplish the task.

Nor was Mawson inclined to leave London without obtaining the loan of the *Discovery*. Together, he and Casey determined that an expedition could be achieved at a lower cost than first thought and probably within the vicinity of £25,000 a year. As none of the Governments concerned was prepared to offer this amount, Casey suggested that the Empire Marketing Board might make a contribution for the development of a whaling and sealing industry. If funds could be raised quickly, the *Discovery* could leave London on 1 October 1928 for Cape Town. After coaling, it could then proceed to Enderby Land in January and continue on to Australia, reaching there in March 1929. The second expedition could then be undertaken between November 1929 and March 1930 for the purpose of planting the flag in selected spots in the Australian Quadrant, from 160° to 90° East. An alternative course would be to omit Enderby Land and equip an expedition leaving London in July 1929 to proceed to Australia. After supplying the *Discovery*, the expedition would depart for Antarctica in November and return by the middle of March. 'In this time', Casey wrote, 'Mawson thinks that all necessary work from political Flag-planting point of view and fisheries could be done'.

Mawson preferred the second alternative as being by far the more economical: 'Enderby Land after all is South African sector and not Australian'. After sending emphatic advice that conveyed Mawson's views of what could be achieved within a certain budget and time-frame, Casey had a change of mind approximately two weeks later when he noted that Enderby Land 'should come under control of Australia'. Although Casey did not say why he sent this correction, it is likely that his change of mind was the result of discussions in London, probably with Amery.

111 Copy Letter Mawson to Casey, 5 July 1928.
112 Copy Letter Mawson to Casey, 5 July 1928.
113 Cable Major Casey to External Affairs, 26 July 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
114 Cable Major Casey to External Affairs, 26 July 1928.
115 Cable from Major Casey, London to External Affairs, 26 July 1928.
116 Cable Major Casey to External Affairs, 2 August 1927(sic), NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6. Judging from the date '3.viii 28' as noted and initialled 'W.H.' -- Walter Henderson, '1927' was a typographical error.
The drawn out process and Australia’s determination to move directly to the third stage, or omit Enderby Land altogether, were beginning to have their effect on Amery. On 27 July 1928, Casey informed Bruce that, while Amery continued to insist on the need for an expedition, he was now becoming more conciliatory about making the Discovery available, probably free of charge.\textsuperscript{117} The following day Bruce cabled Amery and the New Zealand Prime Minister, enthusiastically lauding the importance of Antarctica to the British Empire. It was important, Bruce observed, that British rights should be asserted to Antarctic territory within the Australian and New Zealand sphere.\textsuperscript{118} From another perspective, the region was important for the purpose of scientific investigation into the whaling and sealing industries as a precondition to an international agreement for their protection and preservation.\textsuperscript{119}

Bruce’s successful manoeuvring had ensured that the expedition would be an imperial venture, not just an Australian project. He proposed that Australia and the United Kingdom contribute £7,500 each and New Zealand £2,500, with the balance to be raised by public appeal on an Empire-wide basis.\textsuperscript{120} Amery did not immediately agree.\textsuperscript{121} New Zealand, on the other hand, wasted no time in registering its intention to contribute the amount of £2,500 as Bruce had requested.\textsuperscript{122}

Throughout his negotiations with the Dominions Office, Bruce thought broadly in terms of a collaborative imperial venture. The message from London, however, was less favourable to imperial collaboration. Perhaps the mood in Downing Street reflected the agreement at the 1926 Imperial Conference for greater dominion independence in foreign policy. That was borne out when Casey advised Bruce that the British Treasury would not sanction public contributions towards an expedition that had as its objective the ‘acquiring of sovereignty over Antarctic territory for Australia,’ and the collection of scientific data of ‘indirect benefit’ to

\textsuperscript{117} Cable Major Casey to External Affairs, 27 July 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
\textsuperscript{118} Cable Prime Minister to Secretary for Dominion Affairs and the Prime Minister of New Zealand, 28 July 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6. See also Savours, p. 222.
\textsuperscript{119} Cable Prime Minister 28 July 1928.
\textsuperscript{120} Cable Prime Minister 28 July 1928.
\textsuperscript{121} Cable Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Prime Minister, 4 August 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
\textsuperscript{122} Cable Rt Hon the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Wellington to the Rt Hon the Prime Minister, 6 August, 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{123} The only promise from Treasury officials was the possibility of an indirect contribution in the shape of a loan of the vessel and possibly of scientific personnel.\textsuperscript{124}

With the two governments moving closer to an agreement, Casey, perhaps on the advice of Amery, continued to argue for for the African Sector. Casey reminded Bruce that, despite that sector being closer to South Africa, the South African Government had raised no objections to the Imperial Conference’s proposal that it should be placed under Australian control.\textsuperscript{125} He stressed the vulnerable British title to Enderby Land, which had not been visited by a British expedition for approximately a hundred years. If Enderby Land were not linked to the Australian Quadrant, Casey warned, it could be lost if Norway chose to make a counter-claim to it.\textsuperscript{126} If that were to occur, the British Foreign Office believed that the position could not be recovered either diplomatically or through arbitration, ‘owing to our weak position in the matter of international law’.\textsuperscript{127} As Bruce had made a similar argument in favour of a British counter-claim to Adélie Land, it demonstrated that the Australian Government understood the international legal implications, such as they were at the time in relation to Antarctica. The various ponderings that were taking place in London attested to the necessity of sending an expedition quickly in order to forestall rivals.

On the other hand, the British Government might well feel assured that, whatever territory a private Norwegian whaling expedition might claim, the Norwegian Government would not perfect it. Casey understood that the Norwegian Government had instructed the captain of the Norwegia to claim only unclaimed territory and had undertaken to exclude the areas published in the summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference. Nonetheless, there was fear in Norwegian circles that the Captain might be over zealous and public pressure might force the Norwegian Government to honour certain actions.\textsuperscript{128} Casey also discovered that the United Kingdom Government believed it could not sustain its claim to Bouvet Island and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{123} Cable Casey to External Affairs, 8 August 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6 and Letter Casey to Bruce 24 January 1929, in Hudson and North, p. 445.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Cable Casey 8 August 1928.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Cable Casey to External Affairs, 27 January 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Cable Casey to External Affairs, 10 August 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 4.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Cable Casey 10 August 1928.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Cable Casey to External Affairs, 29 August 1928, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
was preparing to negotiate that might result in Norway not making a territorial claim on the mainland.\textsuperscript{129} In Casey’s view, the British Government had not done enough to provide sufficient information about the nature of the British claims in the region.\textsuperscript{130} The ambiguities that swirled around unresolved questions worried Casey. He advised Bruce that, as Mawson could produce both photographic proof and contemporary notes of taking possession in the Australian Quadrant, Australia should take immediate steps to seek ratification of the claims, otherwise risk losing them.\textsuperscript{131}

With the passing of time, it was becoming apparent that Amery’s scheme for British Antarctic domination was ill-conceived and unplanned. It was not until mid-1928, after numerous discussions about the release of the \textit{Discovery}, that Casey learnt that, if the vessel was required for political purposes, Amery was the only Minister who could authorise its release.\textsuperscript{132} If Amery agreed, the \textit{Discovery} committee would make the vessel available for the 1928/29 season, but it was required by the Admiralty for the Antarctic summer of 1929/30.\textsuperscript{133} Yet, when he responded to Bruce’s invitation for the United Kingdom to join with Australia and New Zealand in dispatching an Antarctic expedition, Amery declined and further advised that the \textit{Discovery} could not be spared for the 1928-1929 season.\textsuperscript{134} He suggested, instead, that Australia could utilize the assistance of ‘private individuals who are planning an expedition to the area concerned.’\textsuperscript{135} Amery was proposing that the Australian Government, rather than the British Government, issue a preferential whaling licence to the firm Irvin and Johnson and seek their assistance to plant the flag at Enderby Land.\textsuperscript{136} Messrs Irvin and Johnson, a South African whaling and shipping company, were planning to whale off Enderby Land during the forthcoming Antarctic season. Amery’s suggestion that they be asked to raise the flag at Enderby Land and take possession of the area on behalf of the Empire was certainly a cheaper alternative to a government sponsored expedition. Such an

\textsuperscript{129} Cable Casey 29 August 1928.
\textsuperscript{130} Letter Casey to Bruce, 23 August 1928, NAA: Series A 981/4 Item ANT 51, part 1.
\textsuperscript{131} Letter Casey to Bruce, 30 August 1928, NAA: Series A981, Item ANT 4, part 9 and NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 51, part 1.
\textsuperscript{132} Record of Interdepartmental meeting held in the Dominions Office on 16 August 1928, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 1.
\textsuperscript{133} Record of Interdepartmental meeting held in the Dominions Office on 16 August 1928.
\textsuperscript{134} Cable Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Prime Minister, 31 August 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.
\textsuperscript{135} Cable 31 August 1928.
\textsuperscript{136} Cable 31 August 1928.
expedition would forestall the Norwegian advance until an official expedition could be organised. Casey was asked to put to the Australian Government whether they would consider a subsidy to Messrs Irvin and Johnson, ‘if recommended by the Dominions Office’, to establish land bases on Enderby Land.\footnote{Cable from Casey to External Affairs 8 August 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6 and Savours, p. 222.}

The Attorney-General, John Latham, advised Bruce to reject this proposal on constitutional grounds. Before such action was possible, under the terms of the Australian Constitution, control of the lands must be formally vested in the Commonwealth.\footnote{Note of discussion between Prime Minister and Attorney General initiated ‘WH’ (Walter Henderson), 5 September 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.} Latham advised that a Bill would need to be introduced into Parliament accepting control of the territories listed by the Imperial Conference.\footnote{Note of discussion between Prime Minister and Attorney General.} This suggestion meant that the British Government would need to issue Letters Patent or an Order in Council to allow the Australian Parliament to accept the territory. In other words, step three would need to be undertaken in order to allow step two to proceed. Bruce left it to Casey to inform the Dominions Office in person and suggested that the plan would work if the British Government issued the whaling licence.\footnote{Cable Bruce to Casey, 6 September 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 6.} Casey later confessed to Bruce that, while he believed that Australia could not absolve itself from any responsibility over the Australian Quadrant, he also believed that ‘H.M.G.’ would bear a certain amount of the blame over its refusal to release the \textit{Discovery}.\footnote{Letter Casey to Bruce, 13 September 1928, NAA: Series A981, Item ANT 4, part 5.}

Casey’s fear that the Australian Quadrant might be lost was intensified when he learned, in early October, that another Norwegian expedition was being planned for the 1929-1930 Antarctic summer. The expedition was scheduled to sail for Antarctica from Cape Town, proceeding first to Bouvet Island and then around the Antarctic continent in a ‘clockwise direction (west to east)’.\footnote{Letter Casey to Bruce, 11 October 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.} That route would challenge the listed lands as published in the Summary of Proceedings of the 1926 Imperial Conference, and the Norwegian Government was warned accordingly.\footnote{Letter Casey to Bruce, 11 October 1928.} The imperial vision was in disarray and, despite his best efforts, Mawson returned to
Australia without a commitment that the *Discovery* would be made available for the purpose of completing step two of the process.

In Australia the Government’s efforts were being encouraged by the scientists, and the scientists ensured that the public maintained its enthusiasm for Government action. On 11 and 12 October 1928, Henderson met with Mawson for a confidential conversation on the political, economic and scientific aspects of the region. Henderson intended to place ‘the cards fairly well before him’ and expected Mawson to do likewise.\(^{144}\) Henderson revealed that the Australian Government had decided to use the opportunity presented by a whaling expedition, to be sent out by Irvin and Johnson to Enderby Land that year, to plant the flag wherever possible along the coast between 45° and 90° East. That proposal, Henderson said, would give Australia a political advantage, without incurring any expense, but would not achieve all that was hoped for. Mawson agreed, but suggested to Henderson that Enderby Land was a continuation of the Australian Quadrant, a point that must not be overlooked when the future administration of the region was being determined. Mawson was determined to stress that important point as he believed that it would allow the British Empire to claim the entire sector from Enderby Land to the Ross Dependency, including Adélie Land, because Biscoe had discovered Enderby Land in 1831, nine years before Dumont d’Urville had sighted Adélie Land. Mawson, however, was thinking scientifically rather than politically, since the British Government had already determined that French prestige would prevent France from abandoning its continental claim.

A flag-planting expedition could not be avoided and it might be possible that, after the Irvin and Johnson exercise, another expedition could be sent. Henderson asked Mawson to be frank about costs and timing. The expedition would be required to plant the flag along the coastline, conduct a coastal survey, including economic and scientific observations, and make an aerial reconnaissance. Mawson’s only interest was in the Australian Quadrant. One expedition was sufficient to carry out that work, as well as carefully map the entire coastline and carry out scientific research, including meteorological and economic observations. Mawson believed most personnel would volunteer and scientific personnel would be recruited at little

\(^{144}\) Record of conversation between Dr Walter Henderson and Sir Douglas Mawson held on 12 October 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
cost. He anticipated that some of the personnel of the AAE would wish to volunteer, but that like him they were ageing, hence the need for speed and the acquisition of the *Discovery*.\(^{145}\)

Though Australian governments had been involved in Antarctic exploration, Henderson openly criticised a uniquely Australian practice of appealing to the government to send out a government-equipped expedition. In other countries, he suggested to Mawson, expeditions were financed privately, such as the American expedition to be led by Commander Richard E. Byrd in the 1928-29 season. Equally, the Australian Government was prepared to use a private expedition such as that of Irvin and Johnson to carry out ‘flag-planting work for the Government’.\(^{146}\) Mawson understood that governments could not be relied on to fund expeditions without private money and suggested to Henderson that even a purely scientific expedition would attract private support, although he had not thought solely of this aspect.\(^{147}\) Mawson’s frank remarks to Henderson were a clear indication that Mawson and his fellow scientists may have considered that the Australian Quadrant held economic potential, but that their real motive was to see an expedition sail to the Antarctic for the dual purpose of planting flags and conducting science. Mawson reminded Henderson that the American Geographical Society had approached him about an expedition to the Australian sector and he was sure that necessary funds could be raised in the United States of America. However, he had since decided not to proceed with the proposal. The conversation between Henderson and Mawson was constructive. As Henderson observed, the cards had been ‘fairly well’ laid on the table.\(^{148}\)

While Henderson and Mawson were focused on the acquisition of the Australian Quadrant, British diplomats were formulating their position with respect to Norway.\(^{149}\) The Foreign Office’s approach was to warn off the Norwegians and to make it clear that, with much of Antarctica located across the southern flank of the British Dominions of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, geography alone

---

\(^{145}\) Record of conversation between Dr Walter Henderson and Sir Douglas Mawson.
\(^{146}\) Record of conversation between Dr Walter Henderson and Sir Douglas Mawson.
\(^{147}\) Record of conversation between Dr Walter Henderson and Sir Douglas Mawson.
\(^{148}\) Record of conversation between Dr Walter Henderson and Sir Douglas Mawson.
\(^{149}\) Letter Foreign Office to A.D.F. Gascoigne, British Legation Oslo, 18 October 1928, NAA: A 981, Series ANT 4, part 5.
gave the British Empire a ‘very special’ political interest in that region. In these circumstances, the United Kingdom Government, and particularly those of the dominions, believed ‘that the Empire should have no neighbours at all in the Antarctic or in its adjacent islands’. This heavy-handed statement actually ran counter to the views of the British Government. After all, if acted upon, it would jeopardise their prized possession, the FID. Besides, none of the British sovereignty claims to date were based on geographic contiguity with British nations. The British Government, in discussions with the dominions, usually stressed discovery and the taking of formal possession as essential prerequisites to a sovereignty claim. As subsequent events would show, the aggressive diplomatic style adopted by the British Government in 1928 would prove to be counter-productive. As Chapter 9 of this thesis will show, Norway continued to challenge British Antarctic claims for another decade, until both sides were exhausted and agreed to recognise the sovereignty of each other’s territory just before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

In the meantime, the British Foreign Office was beginning to learn how astute and well informed Norwegian diplomats could be. In London, the Minister at the Norwegian Legation, Benjamin Vogt, proved to be a formidable negotiator and not easily diverted from his mission. He ignored the British Government’s warning and categorically affirmed that no Norwegian government would abandon Norway’s claim to Bouvet Island, because of the extensive public enthusiasm that had been generated when Norway raised the flag there. If a suitable arrangement could not be reached between the British and Norwegian Governments, Norway was prepared to settle the matter through arbitration. Nor could Vogt accept that the British Empire was not prepared to have foreign neighbours in the Antarctic, on the grounds that the French already had a stake in the region. Rather than capitulate, he suggested that, as a first step, the British Government could recognise Norway’s claim to Bouvet Island.

Casey was astounded at the clumsiness of the Foreign Office. He expressed his frustration to Bruce, noting that the treatment of Antarctic matters in London was

---

150 Letter Foreign Office to A. D. F. Gascoigne.
151 Letter Foreign Office to A. D. F. Gascoigne.
152 Letter Foreign Office to A. D. F. Gascoigne.
153 Letter Foreign Office to A. D. F. Gascoigne.
in disarray. There was a lack of a coordinated response between the Admiralty, the Foreign and Dominion Offices and the Discovery Committee. Questions such as Bouvet Island, the Norwegia expedition, Norwegian pelagic whaling, threats to Dougherty and Peter I Islands, the Byrd and Wilkins expeditions and the need for international regulation of whaling were not being linked in the minds of some within the various departments. There was now a developing awareness amongst the relevant departments that knowledge and information were fragmented and that a policy response for concerted action was necessary.

Casey's assessment that the 'formulation of an Imperial Antarctic policy is overdue' was not only timely but obvious. Despite its small size, Norway was challenging British sovereignty over Antarctic territory and in the forthcoming Antarctic season Byrd proposed to fly to the South Pole from the Ross Dependency and ignore British sovereignty over the area. Byrd even proposed to 'flutter from the aeroplane' a pennant that Roald Amundsen had carried to the South Pole in 1911. In an article published in the London Times, the Australian geographer Thomas Griffith Taylor, who had accompanied Scott on his last expedition, observed that Byrd was seeking to place his main base in the Ross Sea area, near either Scott's or Amundsen's headquarters. Byrd also intended to fly over King Edward VII Land and chart unknown areas within flying distance of his base. Although Byrd was not intending to claim territory already under claim, his Antarctic programme rebuffed the Empire's claim to pre-eminence in Antarctica.

Casey's first-hand assessments, and increasing foreign interest in Antarctica, satisfied Bruce that he could no longer rely on Amery's support, and he decided to act independently in order to fulfill the terms of the Imperial Conference. On the afternoon of 6 December 1928, Bruce called to his house a meeting of the Attorney-General, John Latham, Senator George Pearce, at the time Vice-President of the Executive Council and responsible for the CSIR, and Douglas Mawson. The meeting also included Henderson. They were to discuss the desirability of sending

---

155 The American polar explorer Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd, together with George Herbert Wilkins, an Australian polar explorer, were planning an Antarctic expedition using aircraft to fly from Graham Land, in the Falkland Islands Dependencies to King Edward VII Land in the Ross Dependency (1928-1930).
156 Letter Casey to Bruce, 25 October 1928.
an expedition and its cost. The discussion also canvassed the possibility of presenting a Bill to Parliament in 1929 to claim from Enderby Land to Oates Land, prior to sending a flag-planting and exploring expedition.\textsuperscript{159}

Henderson and Mawson came prepared. They had already estimated that one expedition, if the \textit{Discovery} were to be provided on loan, would cost in the vicinity of £15,000. That was a modest cost as it took into account a crew of 23 to be supplied by the Australian Navy, with the Air Force supplying two pilots and two mechanics. If the Defence Department provided on loan two Moth planes and spare parts, the costs would be reduced by a further £2,500.\textsuperscript{160} That budget was based solely on all expenses associated with the expedition being borne by the Australian Government. Henderson reminded the meeting that the United Kingdom Government would not entertain any notion that omitted the second step in the process. Bruce, however, suggested that 'in the existing circumstances' the United Kingdom Government might take a different view.\textsuperscript{161}

Two days after the meeting, Bruce advised Amery that the Australian Government interpreted the Antarctic report of the last Imperial Conference as 'recommendations'. Since then the Government had given 'serious consideration' to them, including the sending 'in the near future' of an expedition for the purpose of strengthening title to the territories specified. The Government was now prepared to recommend its decision to the Australian Parliament.\textsuperscript{162} Bruce reminded Amery that acceptance of new territories had been usually by way of a formal Act of Parliament and it was proposed next year to follow past precedent. Bruce said that his Government was prepared to send an expedition in the 1929-1930 season for the purpose of 'exploration and scientific work, together with flag-planting between Oates Land and Enderby Land', on the condition that the \textit{Discovery} was provided without charge to the Commonwealth Government.\textsuperscript{163} He said the Australian Government would meet all insurance charges and reconditioning costs at the end of

\textsuperscript{159} Secret papers prepared by Department of External Affairs: ‘Antarctica’, 4 December 1928 and ‘Present Expeditions to the Antarctic’ 5th December 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
\textsuperscript{160} External Affairs Minute initialled ‘WH’ 5 December 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
\textsuperscript{161} Record of Meeting held at the Prime Ministers’ House, 6 December 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
\textsuperscript{162} Cable Prime Minister to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 8 December 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
\textsuperscript{163} Cable 8 December 1928.
the expedition. Alternatively, the Government would consider buying the *Discovery* for no more than £10,000.\(^{164}\)

When Bruce made his approach to Amery in early December, he was not aware that Amery had already signed a Despatch to him on 21 November, which Bruce did not receive until January 1929, advising that the Norwegian Government were prepared to express their willingness to refrain from occupying any land within the territories referred to in the *Summary of Proceedings of the Imperial Conference, 1926*.\(^{165}\)

Amery had known that information when he had warned Bruce on 24 November not to proceed to the third stage. Bruce, however, had become satisfied from various pieces of information received from Casey of the Norwegian Government assurances, but had decided to proceed directly to step three (annexation) in the likely belief that Amery was disinclined to move quickly to implement step two of the Imperial Conference recommendations because it was too costly.

Bruce had ignored Adélie Land, probably wishing to treat it in the same manner as the Norwegians were treating Bouvet Island. Besides, the Foreign Office had already concluded that a counter-claim could be made over an old claim that had been ignored and had since decided to ‘make a present’ of Bouvet Island to the Norwegians.\(^{166}\) The British Government, on the other hand, refused to make a British counter-claim over Adélie Land and had decided to respect the limits set at the 1926 Imperial Conference from 136 °1/2 to 142° East. If the French claim did not exceed these limits the Admiralty regarded it as indisputable.\(^{167}\)

Bruce had taken the decisions made at the 1926 Imperial Conference at face value. The imperial quest for Antarctica was a vision that would allow Australia to play an important role in its achievement. The mood of the nation supported Australian control over the Antarctic sector facing Australia and Australians were keen to see the Government move quickly to achieve this goal and thwart any foreign ambition. Bruce, however, was now keen that Australia should control the

---

\(^{164}\) Cable 8 December 1928.
\(^{165}\) Despatch Downing Street to Prime Minister, 21 November 1928, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 1.
\(^{166}\) Minutes of Interdepartment Conference to discuss the situation in the Antarctic, held at the Dominions Office on 1 November 1928 NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 5.
\(^{167}\) Letter Casey to Bruce, 22 November 1928, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
sector alongside. After all, the Imperial Conference had recommended it and he was keen to fulfill its recommendations. Beyond the public gaze, however, the Australian Government was watching the imperial policy unravelling. The British Government had abandoned the Antarctic policy and by default had bequeathed it to Australia, if the Australians wished to implement it. Bruce decided to take the lead from the British Government by re-interpreting the terms of the Imperial Conference as recommendations rather than an agreed imperial policy. Like Amery, he no longer felt bound by the three-step process, particularly the financially costly second step that required the organising of an expedition to take possession on the spot. By the end of 1928, Bruce gave the British Government an ultimatum: join Australia and New Zealand in sending out an expedition, or Australia would move directly to step three.
Chapter 6
1929: ‘Our Great Frozen Neighbour’

Bruce’s ultimatum to annex Mawson’s Australian Quadrant, if the British Government refused to associate itself with the process recommended by the 1926 Imperial Conference, and to bring the larger sector from Enderby Land to the Ross Dependency under Australian control, caused ructions within key British Government ministries. On 8 January 1929, an inter-departmental meeting met to discuss Antarctica and invited Casey to attend. The Treasury representative (Cuthbertson) made it clear that the Treasury was not prepared to allocate funds for any Antarctic expedition. If Australia were determined to send an expedition to Antarctica, Australia would have to pay for it. ‘Great Britain’, Cuthbertson said, ‘did not call upon the Commonwealth of Australia to contribute towards the maintenance of British prestige or the perfection of British claims, say, in the Arctic, and there appeared to be no sufficient reason why the British taxpayer should contribute to similar objects in the Antarctic.’ Although Bruce was prepared to act independently and annex the area explored by Mawson in 1911-1914, his preference was to see Australia as a partner in a great imperial collaboration to win the larger sector. As the events of 1929 unfolded, it became evident to Bruce, Mawson and the ANRC that the so-called settled policy of British domination of Antarctica was wishful thinking on the part of Leopold S. Amery. While Australia was not prepared to play a role in bringing the entire Antarctic within the Empire, it was determined to salvage the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference and looked to the British Government to cooperate.

Casey’s brief was to secure financial assistance for the purpose of implementing step two of the staged process, and he advised the meeting that ‘Mr Bruce was not asking for charity; his object was that the Expedition should be an Imperial one’. If the British Government maintained its refusal to become

---

1 Heading of a lengthy article about the proposed expedition for the forthcoming Antarctic season in the Adelaide Advertiser, 26 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H413/2.
2 Minutes, ‘Interdepartmental Committee on the Antarctic’ held at the Colonial Office, 8th January 1929, attached to Letter Casey to Bruce, 10 January 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item J413/1.
3 Minutes 8 January 1929.
financially involved, Casey observed, it appeared unlikely that an expedition would be sent. E.R. Darnley of the Colonial Office saw the impasse that had developed between the two governments as ‘most awkward’:\(^4\): a sentiment shared by Campbell of the Foreign Office. Yet, rather than negotiate an agreed position, Campbell blamed the ‘two sides’ that had developed with respect to the expedition – ‘scientific and political’:\(^5\) Although the Foreign Office attached value to the former, Campbell said, it was ‘chiefly concerned with the latter’. It was desirable, Campbell added, that on ‘Imperial grounds’, title should be perfected to those areas that were British by discovery.\(^6\) He then reminded the meeting that the 1926 Imperial Conference accepted that ‘discovery alone did not confer a valid title’, and must be ‘followed by occupation’.\(^7\) Because permanent occupation in Antarctica was impossible, an expedition should visit the areas where British title might be disputed, otherwise they ‘might be lost to the Empire’.\(^8\) On the other hand, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill, had already advised Amery that he would not accept any liability for what he described as the ‘Australian Expedition’.\(^9\)

The Treasury representative, Cuthbertson, obviously defended the views of his Minister. He refused to accept what the rest of the meeting believed to be ‘a very liberal’ proposal, made by Bruce, that Australia would contribute approximately three-quarters of the funds for the expedition if the British Government provided the *Discovery* free of charge.\(^10\) Cuthbertson could not argue against that. Instead, he based his opposition on the future likelihood of the dominions assuming full responsibility for making and implementing their own foreign policies. Since the 1926 Imperial Conference, constitutional issues, according to Cuthbertson, had become more prominent. That argument was not supported by either Campbell of the Foreign Office or the Colonial Office representative, Darnley, both of whom warned against pushing the constitutional argument ‘too far’.\(^11\) Cuthbertson persisted, nonetheless, indicating that it was desirable that the expedition should be seen by the outside world as a British Imperial venture, but that the decision on which part of the Empire should bear financial responsibility should be made within

---

\(^4\) Minutes 8 January 1929.
\(^5\) Minutes 8 January 1929.
\(^6\) Minutes 8 January 1929.
\(^7\) Minutes 8 January 1929.
\(^8\) Minutes 8 January 1929.
\(^9\) Minutes 8 January 1929.
\(^10\) Minutes 8 January 1929.
\(^11\) Minutes 8 January 1929.
the Empire. Because the territories in question were to be placed under Australian or New Zealand administration, these two dominions should bear the cost, rather than British taxpayers.\footnote{Minutes 8 January 1929.}

Despite the Australian Government’s undertaking to finance most of the costs of the expedition, now estimated at £20,000 each year for two years, provided the *Discovery* was loaned free of charge, the loan of the vessel would involve the British Government in insurance liability of £8,000 per annum.\footnote{‘Proposed “Discovery” Expedition to Antarctic’. Memorandum by Treasury, attached to Letter Casey to Bruce, 10 January 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item 1413/1.} However, because of current financial constraints, Treasury would not support a scientific expedition.\footnote{‘Proposed “Discovery” Expedition to the Antarctic.’}

As regards ‘planting the British flag’, Cuthbertson said, the recommendation of the Imperial Conference did not involve an obligation ‘on the British taxpayer’.\footnote{The word ‘British’ was underlined in the Memorandum by Treasury: ‘Proposed “Discovery” Expedition to Antarctic’.} In fact, while the Imperial Conference had endorsed a staged process to bring certain areas of Antarctica within the Empire, it did not specify who would be financially responsible. Hence, each government involved could interpret the Imperial Conference’s wishes as it chose. Since the recommendations were made at the Imperial Conference, Bruce believed the venture was a shared responsibility. The inter-departmental committee believed that a British Government contribution to the expedition appeared unavoidable, since there was wide public interest in Antarctic affairs; but Cabinet approval was necessary.\footnote{Minutes 8 January 1929.}

The question of Adélie Land remained a problem and a point of difference between the Australian and British Governments. It was possible, Admiral Douglas said, that since the British Government had conceded Bouvet Island to Norway, the proposed expedition might occupy Adélie Land, thereby inducing the French Government ‘to give it up to us’.\footnote{Minutes 8 January 1929.} While that action had been recommended by the Australian Government, Sir Harry Batterbee of the Dominions Office said that, if it could be demonstrated to the rest of the world that sufficient scientific work had been undertaken in Adélie Land, that course of action might be possible. Since the main objective of the expedition was ‘really territorial’, Batterbee warned, suspicion
should not be aroused. Campbell of the Foreign Office refused to countenance this plan because, he said, the British Government had already acknowledged the French claim through various communications. Campbell reminded the meeting that a suggestion had been made at the 1926 Imperial Conference that 'if and when all the areas earmarked for British occupation had been brought under British control, it might be possible to do a deal with the French over Adelie Land.'

Campbell even acknowledged the Australian Government's view that, because the French had taken little interest in their claim, they might be willing to exchange it for another area 'more to their taste.' From that point of view, the argument of an expedition conducting scientific work at Adélie Land might strengthen the negotiations. If that course of action were to be pursued, a second cruise to visit Adélie Land would be necessary.

The direction of the discussions at the meeting indicated that, on the surface at least, the British Government had come to accept the views of the Australian Government. In fact, their stipulation that the expedition should make a specific stop at Adélie Land to undertake scientific research implied a wintering expedition and the setting up of a year-long base. The Norwegians paid much less for Bouvet Island. Casey recommended against the British proposal to Bruce, repeating the views of the Foreign Office representatives that the territory had already been acknowledged as French and adding that an Australian expedition would not have the time for such a visit. The important question of funding, however, had not been resolved and Casey advised Bruce that he proposed to persuade Amery to raise the matter in Cabinet.

Nonetheless, Casey warned that he was not certain of success as Amery 'has had to struggle' with Treasury in order to secure the Discovery, and Casey blamed Winston Churchill for impeding progress over its loan.

Australia was becoming the unintended casualty of whatever power struggles were taking place within the British Government between Amery and Churchill. That Amery had never gained Cabinet approval for his Antarctic vision was now

---

18 Minutes 8 January 1929.
19 Minutes 8 January 1929.
20 Minutes 8 January 1929.
21 Minutes 8 January 1929.
22 Letter Casey to Bruce, 10 January 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item J413/1.
23 Letter Casey to Bruce, 17 January 1929, in Hudson and North, p. 444.
24 Letter Casey to Bruce, 17 January 1929.
25 Letter Casey to Bruce, 24 January 1929, in Hudson and North, p. 448.
recoiling on him and on Australia. He suggested to Casey that Australia might assist the British Government’s decision by establishing an organisation to publicise the marketing of Empire goods in Australia, similar to the campaign undertaken by the Empire Marketing Board in London. Failing that, the Australian Government might contribute towards the expedition pound for pound with the Australian commercial community. Having passed on Amery’s suggestions to Bruce, Casey observed that Amery was ‘in no way’ seeking a ‘quid pro quo’ for the loan of the Discovery. Bruce read Amery’s suggestions as precisely that, since both placed the onus on Australia to bear the financial burden, and he refused to bend. By Bruce standing his ground, the British Government relented and provided the free loan of the Discovery for two years.

In early 1929 Mawson arrived in London with the expectation of ‘claiming’ the Discovery and looking forward to substantial donations from ‘several gentlemen’ who had promised to subscribe £10,000 to the expedition. In London, Mawson, together with Casey, attended further inter-departmental meetings and discovered that the British Government was keen that the expedition should sail from Cape Town and proceed to Enderby Land, working east, in order to forestall Norwegian ambitions in the region and provide the Empire with enhanced ‘political advantage’. From a navigational point of view, it was also the most desirable direction. The Admiralty’s admission was also a tacit acknowledgment that the area between 160° and 90° East was not under any immediate challenge. An important contribution that Mawson made was to convince the British Government officials that, in order to save money and time, no wintering party should be left on the mainland, thus quashing any further talk of conducting scientific research in Adélie Land.

What transpired next took Mawson by surprise. In addition to sailing around the coastline of both the African and Australian Quadrants over two expeditions, Mawson was asked whether he would be prepared to extend his work by sailing to

26 Cable Major Casey to External Affairs, 21 January 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item K413/1.
27 Cable Casey to External Affairs, 21 January 1929.
28 Cable Casey to External Affairs, 21 January 1929.
30 Minutes Interdepartmental Committee on the Antarctic, held at the Colonial Office, 18 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item I413/1.
31 Minutes 18 February 1929.
32 Minutes 18 February 1929.
the Ross Dependency and beyond King Edward VII Land in order to chart the unexplored sector up to Charcot Land.33 Mawson demurred, although he undertook to examine whether it would be possible to undertake further exploration under the terms suggested.34 He then added bluntly that in any case, New Zealand had already ‘gained from Australian enterprise and would further gain from the activities of the expedition’.35 Casey immediately wrote to Bruce complaining that Mawson’s fixation on a scientific research programme could jeopardise the essential political objective of the expedition, which was to chart the coast and plant flags in order to confirm British sovereignty.36

Casey’s criticism of Mawson was not only unfair, since Casey had not considered the vast distances to be covered in treacherous Antarctic waters, but was not in line with sentiments in Australia.37 The mood in Australia was for control over the Antarctic sector facing the Australian mainland, although now Bruce was committed to extending Australian control over the wider Australian and African sectors. Darnley sympathised with Mawson and stressed the need to make a ‘thorough survey’ of the proposed Australian sector, where he said ‘British claims were at present most open to question by foreign powers’.38 Darnley observed, however, that every opportunity should be taken to confirm British title ‘to the areas which it was proposed should ultimately be taken over by New Zealand’.39 Casey was unintentionally jeopardising a thorough investigation of the Australian sector, in favour of extending the expedition to the uncharted sector beyond the Ross Dependency. He would have noticed that the British Government representatives made no commitment to provide extra financial support for the expedition. Darnley was not even sure that New Zealand would commit funds: only that, if Mawson agreed to sail beyond King Edward VII Land, it ‘would provide New Zealand with a stronger incentive’ to make a contribution.40

---

33 Minutes, 18 February 1929.
34 Minutes 18 February 1929.
35 Minutes 18 February 1929.
36 Letter Casey to Bruce, 21 February, 1929, in Hudson and North, pp. 457-458.
37 The British Government’s request to have the proposed expedition sail beyond King Edward VII Land was probably made in reaction to Byrd expedition, which was operating in that region. Byrd had already located Little America, his Antarctic base, at the Ross Ice Shelf, without asking permission of the British authorities.
38 Minutes 18 February 1929.
39 Minutes 18 February 1929.
40 Minutes 18 February 1929.
The British Government’s suggestion at almost the eleventh hour to add the sector between the Ross Dependency and the FID indicated a total absence of planning. It also demonstrated ignorance of what could be achieved by one old wooden vessel in two expeditions sailing in Antarctic waters. This latest proposal had not been discussed at the Imperial Conference level and it would have been more appropriate for Casey, rather than Mawson, to dismiss it out of hand. Even the Admiralty representative at the meeting declined to discuss the problem of navigation in Antarctic waters. Yet Mawson was being asked to agree at the meeting to cover a distance from Enderby Land at about 40° or 45° East and continue sailing in an easterly direction until he reached the FID at 80° West. Not only would that distance have to be covered in two cruises in dangerous uncharted waters, but the expedition would be required to stop to erect flags and make formal proclamations.

Mawson understandably baulked at such an impossible suggestion, particularly as it did not advantage Australia. After all, it was Australian goals that the Australian Government and the ANRC were seeking to advance in the Antarctic. Whether because of his obvious reluctance to accept the British Government’s request, or whether through British stubbornness, Mawson’s credibility was being impugned. He was interrogated about the number of times he had raised the flag during his last expedition and asked to provide photographic evidence, in addition to making ‘a sworn statement relative to the various occasions on which both flags were raised and the purpose intended.’ It was unclear why Mawson was being put through this process, particularly as his book *Home of the Blizzard* would have provided sufficient information. Yet on less evidence, the British Government was prepared to accept that Adélie Land was an indisputable French claim.

Since lack of planning was becoming the hallmark of the British Government’s approach to the proposed expedition, Bruce became determined that the expedition would be organised in Australia to Australian specifications, and seen as an Australian expedition that had been given support by other parts of the Empire. When he informed the House, on 21 February 1929, that an expedition under the command of Mawson was being proposed, Bruce referred to it as an ‘Australian

---

41 Letter Mawson to Henderson, 1 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item S413/1.
Expedition to the Antarctic’. He also advised that the expedition had been under consideration ‘for several years past’ and was a continuation of Mawson’s 1911-1914 expedition. Hence, it would ‘crown this previous Australian effort’ while furthering ‘Australian interests in a region that is so close to our shores,’ from the Ross Sea in the east to Enderby Land in the west, ‘which is generally known as the Australian sector’. The expedition, Bruce said, had a ‘variety of objects, mostly of a scientific nature’. It would explore and map part of the coastline which Mawson had been unable to complete previously and would undertake meteorological work and investigate the economic resources of the region, notably whales and seals, in order to provide valuable information to ‘Australian enterprise’. It would assist the Government to introduce measures for conserving this source of wealth by investigating the location of the food supply. While contributing to the ‘world’s store of scientific knowledge’, the expedition would also train Australian scientists in order to improve the quality of Australian science. Bruce warned that if the expedition were to be postponed, Mawson and the personnel of the 1911 expedition would no longer be available. Although the expedition would be ‘predominantly an Australian expedition’, it would be actively supported by ‘other parts of the British Empire’. Bruce’s statement was clear: Australia was not joining other parts of the Empire in sending an expedition; rather, the other parts of the Empire were supporting the Australian effort.

Bruce’s statement was confident and displayed Australia’s leadership role in the Empire’s Antarctic policies. It was also deliberately crafted to gain parliamentary acceptance of Government expenditure. Bruce recalled that the Commonwealth Government had contributed £10,000 towards Mawson’s 1911-1914 expedition and the State Governments had also made substantial contributions. A research vessel had been assured, as ‘the British Government has placed Discovery at the disposal of the expedition without charge’. The Australian

---

43 Statement by the Prime Minister.
44 Statement by the Prime Minister.
45 Statement by the Prime Minister.
46 Statement by the Prime Minister.
47 Statement by the Prime Minister.
48 Statement by the Prime Minister.
49 Statement by the Prime Minister.
50 Statement by the Prime Minister.
contribution would be mainly for equipment and would amount to £16,000 for the period from the middle of November to the middle of March. Bruce thought that a number of Australian citizens and institutions might wish to be associated with the expedition either by providing financial support or by supplying scientific equipment, as was the case in 1911. Bruce did not mention a second cruise, perhaps fearing some criticism from the Opposition that not one but two expeditions were being planned. The words of the Leader of the Opposition, James Scullin, demonstrated that in Australia at the time the political leadership was concerned about nation building. Scullin pledged the Opposition’s support for ‘one of the matters that should be handled by us as a nation’.  

In its usual manner, the Australian press championed the venture and led and probably reflected the public mood. The Melbourne Argus reminded its readers of the need for the expedition to collect meteorological data, which is ‘of first importance to people of the Southern Hemisphere’ and also to the Empire and the world at large. It reminded its readers that, by sending a scientific research expedition to Antarctica, Australia would be making a contribution to the sum of human knowledge. The Sydney Morning Herald followed the Government’s script. It observed that the Australian Government had for some years been considering following up the work undertaken by Mawson in 1911. It believed an expedition should be sent now while Australia had the services of so many proven veterans. Under the heading ‘Our Great Frozen Neighbour’, the Adelaide Advertiser discussed soberly the prudence of sending out an expedition in a time not favourable to public expenditure on anything except pressing matters. The Advertiser nonetheless believed that the exploratory work commenced by Mawson in 1911 was too important for an expedition to be postponed indefinitely. The Brisbane Daily Mail announced that the renewal of Australian interest in Antarctic exploration ‘is an excellent thing’. Indeed, so complete was the press support that the Melbourne Herald summed up the mood with a sketch of Burke and Wills as ‘The Old Spirit’.

52 The Argus, 22 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H.413/2.
53 The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H.413/2.
54 The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H413/2.
55 Adelaide Advertiser, 26 February 1929 NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H413/2.
56 Advertiser 26 February 1929.
57 Brisbane Daily Mail, 25 February 1929 NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H413/2.
with the caption ‘See comrade, they are carrying on’. Bruce had read the public mood correctly and emphasised the ‘Australianness’ of the expedition. The press coverage was wide and enthusiastic about the prospect of investigating Australia’s ‘icy neighbour’, which allowed Australia to be perceived by the world at large ‘as a young and virile nation’ eager to take up the challenge of exploration and of solving ‘geographical and scientific problems for the benefit of humanity.”

Now that both the domestic and imperial settings were in place, organising the expedition and securing funds became the priority. From the London end, Casey suggested planning for a two-year programme, which Mawson estimated to cost an additional £10,000 or £12,000, an extra expense but ‘small’. There was general agreement that two expeditions over two Antarctic seasons were necessary. The first would cover the Enderby-Queen Mary Land area, before returning to Melbourne. The second season’s operations would commence at the Ross Sea and terminate at Queen Mary Land. Mawson was happy to have additional time to equip the scientific side of the expedition, as well as to secure Enderby Land. As far as Casey was concerned, only a ‘certain amount of flag planting’ or ‘consolidating British sovereignty’ could be achieved in one season, together with carrying out a survey of the whale, seal and penguin life in the sector. As Mawson had explained to Henderson, the only reason he had originally suggested a single summer season was in the best interests of the Government and its financial situation.

Mawson envisaged a public appeal in order to obtain the extra £10,000 or £12,000 for the second cruise. However, neither Mawson nor Casey believed it would assist the public appeal if the expedition were to be advertised as a governmental exercise, because Mawson would not be able to sell the press rights or obtain free goods from the various manufacturers he wished to approach. Mawson proposed that, for publicity purposes, the expedition should be advertised as one sailing under the auspices of the Australian National Research Council. Its purpose

---

58 The Herald 23 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H413/2.
59 Melbourne Sun Pictorial, 28 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H413/2.
60 Sun Pictorial, 28 February 1929.
61 Letter Casey to Bruce, 28 February 1929 in Hudson and North, p. 466.
62 Cable Casey to External Affairs, 20 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item I413/2.
63 Letter Mawson to Henderson 21 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item S413/1.
64 Letter Casey to Bruce, 21 March 1929, in Hudson and North, pp. 484-485.
65 Letter Mawson to Henderson 1 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item S413/1.
66 Letter Mawson to Henderson 1 March 1929.
would be identified as scientific research, including in oceanography: a mission in which the governments of 'Great Britain and New Zealand are being asked to participate'. The advice from London arrived on the same day that Bruce had made his statement to the Parliament placing the Australian Government at the forefront. Mawson later told Henderson that he was disappointed that the Australian Government had stated that the expedition was a government enterprise, because it would discourage private financial support. He urged the Australian Government, however, to make an additional contribution of about £10,000, which he believed could be recouped from the exploitation of 'whales, hair seals and even penguin eggs'.

Mawson and his supporters in the scientific community had consistently sought to excite both government and commercial interests in the economic potential of the Antarctic regions. While such potential was generally discussed in the context of extracting financial support for scientific exploration, the indications are that Mawson was keen to see some commercial activity in Antarctica. Since his previous expedition, he had reported an abundance of the so-called hair seal in the Australian sector. Casey, for his part, had become aware that the Hudson's Bay Company was developing a 'secret' method for treating the skin of these animals and had advised Mawson. Casey repeated his enthusiasm for this new industry to Bruce in a personal and confidential letter, suggesting that this new development 'points to the advisability of some sort of census of the fauna in the areas to be visited by Mawson, in order to support the optimism of the future economic possibilities of the region'. Although Mawson and Casey had dreamt of establishing an Australian company that could be titled the 'Company of Australian Adventurers Trading into the Antarctic', to reflect this great adventure, none of these schemes were translated into going concerns. Nonetheless, that the characteristics of these speculations were being considered at the level of significant people such as Mawson and Casey suggests an important departure from the narrow traditional emphasis on taxing the Norwegian whaling industry, as the main source of income

---

67 Cablegram Casey to External Affairs, 20 February 1929. See also Letter Mawson to Henderson, 1 March 1929.
68 Letter Mawson to Henderson, 1 March, 1929.
69 Letter Mawson to Henderson 1 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item S413/1.
70 Cablegram Casey to External Affairs, 28 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item H413/2.
71 Letter Casey to Bruce, 28 March 1929, in Hudson and North, p. 484.
72 Letter Casey to Bruce, 4 April 1929, in Hudson and North, p. 488.
from the Antarctic, which had been the underpinning of the British Government’s Antarctic policy. There was no evident enthusiasm in Australia for foreign exploitation of the Australian sector.

The case against foreign whaling activities along Australia’s southern borders was made by Commander M. H. Moyes, a veteran of the AAE, in a speech to the Royal Society of Tasmania, four days before Bruce’s statement to Parliament. Norwegian whaling expeditions, as well as other foreign activity, he said, were ‘steadily’ pushing Australia out of the Antarctic continent ‘in which, geographically and scientifically, it should have a great interest’. Moyes accused New Zealand of allowing its sovereignty over the Ross Dependency to be eroded by Norwegian whaling activities, because ‘only Norwegians used it and drew a profit from it’. That Moyes specifically criticised Norwegian whaling operations in the Ross Dependency as an erosion of New Zealand sovereignty was in direct contradiction of the British view. The British Government had always been keen on issuing whaling licences to foreign enterprises, which, as Beck has observed, was a ‘less aggressive’ method of acquiring sovereignty. Moyes, on the other hand, reflected the general Australian view that foreign enclaves should not be permitted to form along Australian southern borders, including foreign whaling operations.

The lack of interest in the commercial exploitation of Antarctica was shown in the composition of the Australian Antarctic Committee. Besides Mawson, the Committee comprised leading members of the scientific committee, such as Sir David Orme Masson, the first Professor of Chemistry at Melbourne University (representing the ANRC) and Dr A.C.D. Rivett (representing CSIR). It was chaired by a Government Minister, Sir George Pearce, Vice-President of the Executive Council. The Prime Minister subsequently invited the now elderly Edgeworth David to become a member because of his special scientific knowledge and Antarctic experience.

73 The Herald 16 February 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H413/2.
74 The Herald 16 February 1929.
75 Beck, ‘Securing the dominant “Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun”’, p. 452. Bush has compiled a collection of applications for whaling licences as evidence of British sovereignty over the FID. See for example, Bush, Volume II, pp. 291-299 and Volume III, 230-262
76 Letter Bruce to David, 18 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item H413/1. In 1929 David was 71 years of age (he died five years later). As the meetings were to be held in Melbourne, owing to the presence there of most of the membership, David was advised that, in order to obviate the need to travel, consultations between him and the Committee would be by correspondence.
At its first meeting the Australian Antarctic Committee (the Australian Committee) identified five 'objects' of the expedition. The first was the accurate location of the coastline from Enderby Land at 45° East to King George V Land at 160° East, making landings, planting the 'British Flag' and carrying out inland surveys by aeroplane. The second object was a hydrographic survey in order to render the area safer for whaling and other expeditions. The third and fourth objects were the study of meteorological conditions and geological formation. The final object of the Australian Committee was the survey of the 'fauna' with special reference to estimating the approximate number and location of whales. In contrast, this last object was placed by the Discovery Committee as the second most important object after geographical location. The Australian Committee had been assured by the Discovery Committee that investigating the abundance of whales, their growth and reproduction habits, their migration and a number of other matters associated with the whale, would not disadvantage the prime purpose of the expedition. Perhaps they were right, but the Australian Committee took no chances and placed it last in its order of priority. The Australian Committee called on Captain Davis to advise on navigational conditions before confirming that the expedition should commence at Enderby Land.

In the meantime, Casey had been instructed to continue pressing the question of perfecting the title for the region where Mawson's AAE had been active and to obviate the need for the expedition to revisit the area. In that event, the expedition would commence at Enderby Land at about 45° East and sail in an easterly direction to Queen Mary Land at about 98° to 100° East. It would be less hurried and spend more time fulfilling its objects. Unfortunately, at an inter-departmental meeting in London, convened to discuss Antarctica, the Dominions Office representative, Batterbee, was not receptive to the idea when Casey once again raised the question of perfecting Mawson's claims. Batterbee 'personally felt' that it might be difficult to claim title to the Australian Quadrant after the lapse of years. He added, however,

---

77 Antarctic Committee, First Meeting, held Tuesday 12 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item H413/1.
78 Antarctic Committee, First Meeting.
79 Antarctic Committee, First Meeting.
80 Memorandum Director, External Affairs to Captain J.K. Davis, Marine Branch, Trade and Customs Department, 20 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item A413/1.
81 Minutes, Meeting of Interdepartmental Committee on the Antarctic, held at the Colonial Office, 5 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461, Item F413/1.
that Mawson’s activities during the course of his 1911-1914 expedition ‘would be of great value to us in asserting British title’, but only after Mawson revisited the area as proposed by the forthcoming expedition.\textsuperscript{82} Batterbee observed that it was unfortunate that ‘the question was never taken up by the Commonwealth Government’ after the war.\textsuperscript{83} He added that the landscape had changed since the British Government had given up its claim over Bouvet Island, which dated from 1825. The legal adviser at the Foreign Office agreed, maintaining that ratifying ‘these pre-war acts at this late stage was a novel one’.\textsuperscript{84} These astonishing remarks were not only inaccurate but neglected to mention that when the Ross Dependency was annexed in 1923 it had not been visited for fourteen years, since Shackleton’s 1907-1909 expedition. As Chapter 4 has demonstrated, Amery’s 1920 Despatch ignored Australian activities in Antarctica. It was the Australia Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes, who began taking steps to bring the area surveyed by Mawson under Australian control. In 1920, Mawson’s claims were hardly old since they were made during his 1911-1914 expedition. British Government officials were either badly briefed about Australian Antarctic explorations, or they were being deliberately evasive because the problem of Adélie Land had not been settled.

The status of the Australian Quadrant was discussed at a subsequent interdepartmental committee meeting in London, when Mawson attended and was asked to provide precise details of flag raising. Mawson explained that his practice had been to ‘hoist the flag wherever his Expedition landed and to take possession in the name of His Majesty’.\textsuperscript{85} Such an act, he said, was carried out ‘with due ceremony’ and a speech made which indicated that the act would be subsequently ratified.\textsuperscript{86} Mawson explained that it was his custom to take possession not only where landing was made but also at the extreme limits of the sledge journey inland. He said that some photographs were taken and he traced on the map the places where possession was taken. Mawson cautioned, however, against ratifying specific pieces of land, such as those listed at the 1926 Imperial Conference, because that would only strengthen the French claim to Adélie Land. Instead, he advised that the entire Australian sector be declared British and that France should be encouraged to

\textsuperscript{82} Minutes, 5 March 1929.
\textsuperscript{83} Minutes, 5 March 1929.
\textsuperscript{84} Letter Casey to Bruce, 28 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461, Item F413/1.
\textsuperscript{85} Minutes, Meeting of Interdepartmental Committee on the Antarctic held at the Colonial Office 26 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10 Item F413/1.
\textsuperscript{86} Minutes, 26 March 1929.
exchange Adélie Land for territory elsewhere. That suggestion, Batterbee observed, had already been rejected by the Imperial Conference. It had also rejected annexing the areas Mawson had visited before sending out a new expedition. Nor, he said, was it in the British Government’s interests to set a precedent that would be ‘imitated’ by foreign powers. Although neither Casey nor Mawson said so at the meeting, foreign powers had already ‘imitated’ British precedent: France with respect to Adélie Land and Norway with respect to Bouvet Island, while the United States ignored British acts of sovereignty completely as evidenced by Byrd locating Little America at the Bay of Whales and as Chapter 10 will show Lincoln Ellsworth, the American polar explorer made a formal counter claim over part of the hinterland of the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Unfortunately, when Mawson left for England to take possession of the *Discovery* a financial shortfall remained, despite appeals in the Australian newspapers for private contributions. After inspecting the *Discovery* with the Duke and Duchess of York, and also in the company of Amery, Mawson was handed a cable from Macpherson Robertson, known generally as MacRobertson, the Melbourne chocolate ‘king’, advising that he proposed to make a contribution of £10,000 towards the expedition. The gift from MacRobertson prompted Bruce to convey publicly the Government’s appreciation ‘for this munificent gift’, which would ensure that the forthcoming expedition would be no less prepared than the previous expedition that Sir Douglas Mawson had led. Macpherson Robertson’s donation took the expedition to another level. It had become solidly a public-private undertaking, rather than an imperial enterprise supported solely by the Empire’s governments.

The agreed name for the expedition, however, suggested otherwise. Orme Masson had announced in the same newspaper on the same day that the expedition would be officially titled ‘British – Australian – New Zealand Antarctic Expedition’. Fortunately for Orme Masson, that title eventually received the approval of all the governments concerned, after the *Discovery* Committee objected.

---

87 Minutes, 26 March 1929.
88 Minutes, 26 March 1929.
89 Minutes, 26 March 1929.
90 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 May 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item H413/2.
91 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 May 1929.
92 *The Herald*, 3 May 1929, NAA: A 461/10, Item F413/1
to the use of the name 'Discovery' in the title\textsuperscript{93} and New Zealand 'strongly resented' the term 'Australasian'.\textsuperscript{94} Mawson was forced to resign himself to the title British-Australian-New Zealand Antarctic Expedition', although he was not happy with it.\textsuperscript{95} Subsequently, the British and New Zealand Governments agreed to the name with the word 'Research' to be added before the word 'Expedition'.\textsuperscript{96} But Mawson, still in London, changed his mind, even after the three governments had reached agreement. He objected to 'New Zealand' appearing in the title, asking that it be changed to 'Australasian', though he was aware of New Zealand resentment of that title. He even hinted at taking an 'extreme step if retained'.\textsuperscript{97}

In Australia, options such as 'Imperial' or 'British-Australian' were introduced in order to mollify Mawson.\textsuperscript{98} Bemused by the pettiness of the issue, the British Government advised that it was happy to have the word 'British' eliminated from the title and that the expedition should be titled the 'Australian Antarctic Research Expedition'.\textsuperscript{99} The Australian Committee had stipulated that 'Australia' should appear in the title.\textsuperscript{100} Although the word 'Imperial' had been introduced as an all encompassing designation in order to overcome clumsy titles and national sensitivities, it was rejected by Senator George Pearce, the Chairman of the Australian Committee, on the grounds that it was 'unsatisfactory'.\textsuperscript{101} Pearce finally convinced Mawson that there were political advantages now and possibly later in 'associating New Zealand specifically with the Expedition'.\textsuperscript{102}

When Bruce wrote to his New Zealand counterpart, he said that the Australian Antarctic Committee had settled on the 'British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition' as 'the most appropriate title'.\textsuperscript{103} It 'sufficiently indicates the co-operation of the three parts of the Empire which are

\textsuperscript{93} Extract from Minutes of Antarctic Committee Meeting held in Melbourne, 15 June 1929, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9
\textsuperscript{94} Cable Casey to External Affairs, 28 June 1929, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
\textsuperscript{95} Extract from Minutes, 15 June 1929.
\textsuperscript{96} Extract from Minutes of Scientific Personnel Sub-Committee of the Antarctic Expedition Committee held in Melbourne, 7 July 1929, NAA: A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
\textsuperscript{97} Cable External Affairs to Casey, 12 July 1929, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
\textsuperscript{98} Cable to Casey 12 July 1929.
\textsuperscript{99} Cable Casey to External Affairs, 12 July 1929, NAA: Series A 461, Item 1413/1.
\textsuperscript{100} Cable to Casey, 12 July 1929.
\textsuperscript{101} Extract from Minutes of Antarctic Committee held in Melbourne on 22\textsuperscript{nd} July 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item K413/1
\textsuperscript{102} Extract from Minutes 22 July 1929.
\textsuperscript{103} Letter Bruce to Prime Minister of New Zealand, 21 August 1929 NAA: Series A 461/8, Item T413/1
supporting the Expedition’, he said. Later this awkward title which received the approval of the three governments concerned was known by the unattractive acronym BANZARE. The Australian Government did not invite South Africa to join the expedition, but South Africa was asked by the United Kingdom Government to provide port facilities, and it offered to overhaul the vessel, seemingly without prompting.

Mawson was responsible for choosing the staff. Thirteen scientific and technical personnel comprised the expedition. Two of them were from New Zealand, a taxidermist and a meteorologist, and two were British, a plankton expert and an echo-sounding and wireless expert. Although a de Havilland Moth aeroplane was to be carried on the expedition, the work to be carried out by it would be at the discretion of Mawson. The photographer on the expedition, Frank Hurley, another veteran of the AAE and of Shackleton’s British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, was being supplied with cameras adapted for aerial photography. With a continuing eye on defraying expenses and from the point of view of evidence of flag raising ceremonies, Mawson stressed the importance of both a photographic and a ‘cinematographic record’. Mawson did not choose the Discovery’s crew, but indicated that the ‘majority’ would be Australian, with the possibility ‘that some Englishmen will also be chosen’. Australian newspaper editors asked for one of their correspondents to accompany the expedition. While

---

104 Letter Bruce to Prime Minister of New Zealand, 21 August 1929.
105 Cable Casey to External Affairs, 9 September 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item O413/1
106 Extract from Minutes of Antarctic Committee held in Melbourne, 13 May 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item T413/1.
107 External Affairs Report, ‘British Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition 1929-30’, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item J413/6. The personnel had proven expertise in their respective fields. In particular, the plankton expert T. Marr was sent specifically to assist Mawson to investigate the ‘whaling, sealing and other resources’, of specific interest to the Hudson’s Bay Company in London, which was cooperating in this area of the research work. The Company was also training the Australian Chemist on the expedition, Alf. Howard, in the technique for treating hair seal skins.
110 Extract from cable Casey to External Affairs, 28 March 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.
112 Letter Managing Editor, The Daily Guardian, Sydney, Smith’s Newspapers Ltd., to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 22 February 1929, Letter Managing Editor, Australian United Press Ltd to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department 26 February 1929, Letter George Taylor, News Editor, The Herald to Senator Sir George Pearce, Australian Antarctic Expedition Committee
Senator Pearce saw the value of an official correspondent, who could be paid either by the Australian Government, or by the different newspaper interests, it was eventually decided against sending one. Instead, Senator Pearce suggested that the best course would be to distribute news messages received from Mawson from Antarctica free of charge to all the Australian press.\footnote{113}

The Government nonetheless agreed to Mawson’s selling the press rights to the Hearst press in the United States for the 1929-30 season only, for the sum of $US40,000. The news articles would be in the form of wireless messages and articles prepared by Mawson, as well as a selection of photographs. While the Australian Government was prepared to grant exclusive press rights to Hearst for North America, it also ensured that the contract was scrutinised before signature.\footnote{114} Bruce had already sent Casey the opinion of the Solicitor-General, which included some alterations to the Hearst contract. The Government’s intervention would ensure no liability on Mawson and would prevent Mawson from communicating information ‘it is undesirable to publish’.\footnote{115} Bruce thought it ‘desirable’ that the transaction should be purely commercial and that ‘in no way a contribution by Hearst towards Expedition funds should be included in the contract.’\footnote{116} To place distance between itself and the Hearst contract, Casey was instructed not to sign it on Mawson’s behalf or to allow any other person connected with the Government to sign it.\footnote{117} Although not a direct contributor to the BANZARE, the Hearst contract was crucial to defraying costs.

With cap in hand seeking donations for the BANZARE, Mawson must have been bitterly disappointed that he had to make a personal effort to ensure its financial viability. Despite the massive injection of money to the expedition by the Hearst contract, Mawson continued to raise money in London. Smaller funds were collected by giving The Times exclusive press rights in the United Kingdom, for

\footnote{113} External Affairs Minutes ‘Antarctic Expedition: News distributed to Press in Australia’.
NAA: Series A 461/10, Item M413/2
\footnote{114} Cable Bruce to Casey, 8 May 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item A413/2.
\footnote{115} Cable Bruce to Casey, 21 May 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item M413/2.
\footnote{116} Cable Bruce to Casey 21 May, 1929.
\footnote{117} Cable Henderson to Casey, 6 July 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item M413/2. Dr A.O. Mill signed the contract on Mawson’s behalf, as Mawson was in Australia at the time. See Letter Mawson to Henderson, 4 July 1929, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item S413/1}
£1,000 for the first season and £500 for the second season.\textsuperscript{118} The Times contract was given at a low cost, not wholly out of loyalty to a press of the Empire, but after The Times had undertaken to sell press articles on behalf of the expedition in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.\textsuperscript{119} Collecting money was undertaken almost exclusively by Mawson. He had become impatient with the efforts of governments and was ‘extraordinarily disappointed that The Times or some English organization have not offered more than £1000 for the news’.\textsuperscript{120} In his first article from the Discovery, Mawson indicated that the cost of the expedition was ‘being defrayed largely from private sources’, mentioning in particular the £10,000 donation from Macpherson Robertson.\textsuperscript{121}

By 1929 Amery’s vision of a British Empire takeover of the Antarctic, articulated nine years earlier, had come down to two cruises in an old wooden boat reluctantly loaned by the British Government. Indeed, had Bruce not pursued the implementation of the 1926 Imperial Conference recommendations with some vigour, the entire project would not have come about, since the British Government had initially refused to participate. The Australian Government had contributed what funds it could, but most had come from Australian private money, and a significant amount of private American money. Overshadowing the entire expedition, however, was the fear that the Norwegians would arrive at Enderby Land ahead of the BANZARE. Initially, the British Government refused to publicise Mawson’s programme, but later changed its mind in the interest of ‘a more straightforward policy’.\textsuperscript{122} Bruce understood that to be an approach characterised by frankness and openness. However, Australia’s preference for a public announcement of Mawson’s itinerary was rejected on the grounds that ‘no advantage’ would be gained at present.\textsuperscript{123} As well, the Foreign Office rejected open and frank discussions with Norway about British interest.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{119} External Affairs Report, ‘British Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition 1929-30’.
\textsuperscript{120} Letter Mawson to Henderson, 9 August 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item M413/2.
\textsuperscript{121} Organization, Object and Plans’ Copyright article by Douglas Mawson, NAA: Series A461/8, Item S413/1.
\textsuperscript{122} Letter Casey to Bruce, 25 July 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item K413/1.
\textsuperscript{123} Cable Casey to External Affairs, 3 August 1929, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 2.
\textsuperscript{124} Minutes, Interdepartmental Committee on the Antarctic held at the Colonial Office, 2 August 1929, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item K413/1.
The Australian Government was unhappy with the British Government’s approach and intransigence. However, without the benefits of Australian diplomatic representation in foreign capitals, Australia had no alternative but to accept the decision of the Foreign Office. Nonetheless, Bruce chose to allow the commander of the expedition flexibility in determining what he could achieve during the course of the cruise. When he signed Mawson’s secret sailing instructions, these allowed enough scope for the commander to use his initiative. After coaling at the Kerguelens, Mawson was to proceed to the western extremity of Queen Mary Land and from there continue westward to Enderby Land to longitude 45° East ‘and, at your discretion, if conditions are favourable, to 40° East’. If he were to discover ‘islands, rocks and shoals’ within the area being visited, he was to plant the flag, read a proclamation and place a copy of the proclamation in a tin at the foot of the flag staff. The sailing orders also instructed Mawson to investigate the areas being visited from both the scientific and economic perspective. For example, the expedition was to undertake scientific research and make observations concerning the fauna, notably whales and seals ‘and all matters connected therewith which may assist in the future economic exploitation of such fauna’. However, taking into account France’s sovereignty claim over the Kerguelen Islands, the expedition was prevented from undertaking scientific work in that vicinity. The British Ambassador in Paris advised the French Government that the British Government recognised the Kerguelen Islands as French and that the expedition’s only purpose in visiting them was for the purpose of coaling.

Although the British Government ensured that diplomatic loose ends were being tidied up with France, British diplomacy with Norway was not straightforward and each side distrusted the other. If Mawson thought all the effort he had put into the organizational aspects would lead to a smooth expedition, his hopes were dashed when he arrived at Cape Town to meet the Discovery. He found the local press gripped with excitement over a race to Enderby Land between the Discovery and a Norwegian expedition. Mawson thought this ‘unfortunate’ publicity was

125 Secret Sailing Orders to Sir Douglas Mawson, Commander of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Expedition (sic) His Majesty’s Research Ship “Discovery”, 12 September 1929, signed S. M. Bruce, Prime Minister, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item N413/1.
126 Secret Sailing Orders.
127 Secret Sailing Orders.
unwarranted, and confided to Casey that the *Discovery* ‘cannot race anything’. Mawson also warned that the Norwegians ‘are away well ahead of us’, having departed for Enderby Land four to six weeks earlier. In addition, the Norwegians were combining their large whaling fleet ‘in their exploring adventure with the ‘Norvegia’’, the research vessel, and were in a better position to discover new territory. Mawson asked Casey to urge the British Government to clarify his programme with the Norwegian Government and explain that his sailing orders prevented him from going beyond 40° East, so ‘let them operate undisturbed’ west of that. ‘This I think is a statesman like move under the present circumstances’, Mawson wrote. He told Casey that he strongly believed in being allied with Norway because of their whaling and sealing interests, and thought they should have in Antarctica ‘‘a place in the sun’’. He was sceptical about gaining the agreement of the British Government because

the Falkland Islands will be our stumbling block again, for they will sacrifice Australian interests again as in the past, if it helps them at all to maintain sovereignty over their sector or will assist them to enlarge their sector.

Although neither Bruce nor Pearce would commit such sentiments to paper, Bruce’s signed sailing instructions, which prevented Mawson from sailing beyond 40° East, indicated that he might have shared Mawson’s sentiments.

Casey acted on Mawson’s letter and gained the agreement of the Foreign Office, after confirming with the Australian Government that government to government negotiations with the Norwegians could now take place. Casey reported later that the discussions between the British Minister in Oslo and the Norwegian Foreign Minister produced a ‘positive verbal assurance that Norwegian expedition was solely and absolutely scientific’. The British Minister, however, believed that these verbal assurances were ‘of doubtful value’.

---

129 Letter Mawson to Casey, 9 October 1929, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9 and Cable Mawson to Casey, 11 October 1929, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 2.
130 Letter Mawson to Casey, 9 October 1929 and Cable 11 October 1929.
131 Letter Mawson to Casey, 9 October 1929 and Cable 11 October 1929.
132 Letter Mawson to Casey, 9 October 1929 and Cable 11 October 1929.
133 Letter Mawson to Casey, 9 October 1929 and Cable 11 October 1929.
134 Letter Mawson to Casey, 9 October 1929 and Cable 11 October 1929.
135 Cable Casey to External Affairs, 12 October 1929, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 2.
136 Cable Major Casey to External Affairs, 14 October 1929, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 2.
137 Cable Casey to External Affairs, 14 October 1929.
Keith Officer was more optimistic about the value of Norwegian assurances. He acknowledged that, while the *Norvegia* was operating around Bouvet Island where it ‘is a more direct threat to the Australian sector’, the Norwegian Government had given an undertaking not to occupy lands detailed in the summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference.\(^{138}\) Keith Officer had a copy of the Norwegian Government’s undertaking that had been provided in a formal letter to the Foreign Office by the Norwegian Minister in London, B. Vogt.\(^{139}\) Yet, Batterbee and Admiral Douglas suggested that the wording of Vogt’s letter was vague and that the Norwegians could cause trouble by pressing claims to undiscovered lands.\(^{140}\) Interestingly, not only was that view not shared in Canberra, but it was also not shared by a new Foreign Office representative on the inter-departmental committee, the Melbourne-born Allen Leeper. In Leeper’s opinion, the Norwegians might try for the unexplored area between Coats Land and Enderby Land, which was below Bouvet Island as well as South Africa.\(^{141}\) In that case, Batterbee said, the British Government would not raise objections to Norwegian attempts to occupy that sector.\(^{142}\) That British Government diplomacy was evasive was probably due to the desire of Downing Street to keep its options open. On the other hand, judging by the errors that crept into British Government correspondence about Antarctica, it was also likely that the British Government’s knowledge of the region was inadequate.

In 1929 the Bruce Government lost office and Bruce lost his parliamentary seat. James Scullin, who was leader of the Labor Opposition during the debate over the Antarctic expedition, was sworn in as Prime Minister on 22 October 1929, two days before ‘Black Thursday’, when the Wall Street stock market crashed. Despite the looming financial crisis, Scullin quickly adopted a bipartisan stance over Antarctica and appointed the Vice-President of the Executive Council, Senator Daly, to replace Senator Pearce as Chairman of the Australian Antarctic Committee. In a statement to the press, prepared by Walter Henderson and unchanged by Scullin, the


\(^{139}\) B. Vogt, Royal Norwegian Legation to the Rt Hon Arthur Henderson, 4th November 1929, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 2.

\(^{140}\) Minutes, Meeting of Inter-departmental Committee on the Antarctic, held at the Colonial Office, 18 November 1929, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 51, part 2.

\(^{141}\) Minutes, 18 November 1929.

\(^{142}\) Minutes, 18 November 1929.
Prime Minister explained that the Committee would function until the completion of the expedition.¹⁴³

With the new Australian Government’s desire to maintain business as usual with respect to Antarctic matters, it did not interfere in British diplomacy with Norway. The British Minister in Oslo, Charles Wingfield, had now taken the matter a step further. He sought to impress upon Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, the Norwegian Prime Minister, that the British Empire had ‘unimpeachable rights’ not only over the lands detailed in the published summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference, but also ‘down to the South Pole’ because the hinterland of the coastal territory was ‘inseparable’.¹⁴⁴ Mowinckel explained that Norway could not recognise claims to ‘sectors’ of the polar regions and, on principle, could not accept the doctrine of sectors.¹⁴⁵ Wingfield was not happy with his discussions with the Norwegian Prime Minister and remained concerned about the activities of Lars Christensen. Christensen was a whaling magnate who owned the Norvegia and had invited Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen to command the expedition. Wingfield cast doubt on the integrity of Christensen, noting that he had heard ‘on good authority’ that Lars Christensen was ‘not at all well-disposed towards Great Britain’.¹⁴⁶ This hostility might take the form of publishing in the press details about hoisting the Norwegian flag over Antarctic territory, thereby rousing nationalistic feelings which the Norwegian Government could find it difficult to resist.¹⁴⁷

Wingfield’s assessment was borne out when, on 28 December 1929, he advised the Foreign Office that the Tidens Tegn reported that Riiser-Larsen and his companion Captain Lützow-Holm had found ‘new land between Coats Land and Enderby Land in King Haakon VII Sea’, and had taken possession of it for Norway ‘in the general internationally recognised legal form.’¹⁴⁸ The two captains had left the Norvegia ‘on a flying machine and had landed on an open lane near land’.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Copy of Despatch Charles Wingfield, British Legation, Oslo to Arthur Henderson, Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 23 December 1929, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
¹⁴⁵ Copy of Despatch 23 December 1929.
¹⁴⁶ Copy of Despatch 23 December 1929.
¹⁴⁷ Copy of Despatch 23 December 1929.
¹⁴⁹ Copy of Despatch 28 December 1929.
They subsequently ventured inland on skis and hoisted the Norwegian flag.\textsuperscript{150} After completing the task they flew back to the ship, which was waiting at '100 nautical miles from land'.\textsuperscript{151} If the description is correct, that area was in the unclaimed and uncharted sector beyond 40° or 45° East and would not be disputed by either the Australian or British Governments. Three days later Wingfield reported on another press statement about land discovery that stretched for 100 kilometres between Enderby Land and Kemp Land.\textsuperscript{152} The press article gave no other information and once again provided no geographic coordinates. It did not say when the land was discovered, nor when the Norwegian flag was hoisted. Nor did it say whether it was surveyed by ship or by plane. The second press report of a telegram bore a striking resemblance to the first, in that the stretch of land was 100 kilometres long. In this instance, however, the area was the focus of Mawson's destination. Wingfield was assured by the Norwegian Prime Minister that the expedition was 'a private undertaking' and authorised to 'occupy land which it discovers', whereas 'annexation' required Norwegian Government action, once the full facts were known.\textsuperscript{153}

Had action been taken to equip an expedition immediately after the 1926 Imperial Conference, Mawson would not have been concerned whether the Norwegians raced the Discovery or stalked it. Just as the old wooden boat was slowly heaving its way through Antarctic waters, so was the slow progress of British diplomacy in Oslo shared a striking resemblance with it. The initial delays from the British Government side probably related to its disinclination to become entangled with France over Adélie Land, a problem it had handled badly before the First World War. Now the question of British domination was becoming less likely since Norwegian expeditions began deliberately sailing to Enderby Land to make discoveries along that coastline and plant the Norwegian flag. Judging from discussions at the inter-departmental meetings, however, British Government officials continued to have a desire for British Antarctic domination, but not at the expense of the British taxpayer and only if an opportunity presented itself. Against that background, pronouncements of British Antarctic domination remained

\textsuperscript{150} Copy of Despatch 28 December 1929.
\textsuperscript{151} Copy of Despatch 28 December 1929.
\textsuperscript{152} Copy of Cable from Charles Wingfield to Foreign Office, 31 December 1929, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
\textsuperscript{153} Copy of Cable 31 December 1929.
aspirations at best, or discussions conducted with some bravado at inter-departmental meetings in the tranquil environment of a Government conference room. Unfortunately for Bruce and Australia, the 1926 Imperial Conference did not articulate which part of the Empire would bear the financial burden, nor did it set a date for the execution of the three-step process. Having decided that Australia should control the enlarged Australian Quadrant from 160° to between 45° and 40° East, Bruce was determined that the sailing orders for the BANZARE would prevent the expedition from being commandeered by the British Government to sail beyond these limits, if Britain was not prepared to fund major Antarctic expeditions. When the BANZARE sailed out of Cape Town, only a few reflected that an Australian chocolate manufacturer and an American newspaper magnate had ensured that the imperial venture became a reality. Although in 1929 Mawson was heading for Enderby Land, the Australian Antarctic was still a few years away from being won.
Chapter 7

1930-1931: ‘Proud Record of National Achievement’¹

Before he left for Antarctica at the end of 1929, Mawson did not expect that, apart from exploring the coastline and conducting scientific research, he would be forced into the position of being the Empire’s Ambassador-at-large in Antarctica. When the Discovery met the Norvægia in the vicinity of Enderby Land in January 1930, Mawson decided to explain unambiguously to Riiser-Larsen that he had no intention of sailing westward beyond 40° East and urged the Norwegian commander to head in that direction and take possession of the unclaimed territory between Enderby Land and Coats Land for Norway. When the two men set sail again after their meeting, Mawson believed that he had reached an understanding with Riisser-Larsen and had successfully negotiated an agreement. In London and Oslo, however, British diplomats continued to prevaricate.

As Price has observed, the Norwegians were ‘incensed’ at the extension of British jurisdiction over territory and whaling grounds, first over the FID, and later over the Ross Dependency. The Norwegians also held the view that Britain ‘was unfair’ in including in its territories Norwegian discoveries. An added insult was the payment of heavy fees for whaling licences to Britain and New Zealand.² Nonetheless, Price did not believe that the Norwegian expedition that raced to Enderby Land aimed to settle scores. Rather, ‘through a misunderstanding’ amongst the Norwegian whalers themselves, they were expanding into Enderby Land, having annexed Bouvet Island, a French discovery, and Peter I Island, which had been discovered by the Russian Admiral Bellingshausen.³ There is no doubt that the Norwegians felt they were being unjustly treated at the hands of the British authorities, but they were probably not setting out to settle scores. Instead, they probably wished to be noticed by a British Government that was intent on ignoring Norwegian Antarctic interests. Certainly racing the Discovery to Enderby Land was an act of provocation, since the published Summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference showed Enderby Land as having an inchoate British title. On the other hand, the British Government seemed incapable, or

¹ Sydney Daily Guardian, 1 August 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.
² Price, p. 15.
³ Price, p. 15.
unwilling, to explain itself to the international community, and assumed that other nations would simply accept Antarctic expansion. Neither the Australian Government nor Mawson underestimated the will of France and Norway to assert their Antarctic interests. Both had insisted that, with Norway, an open and frank dialogue should be commenced and maintained. Yet the British diplomatic approach was characterised by obfuscation and ambiguities, thereby adding to, rather than minimizing, difficulties between Norway and the British Empire.

Indeed, the Summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference, rather than clarifying the situation, cast doubts on the real intentions of the British Empire, as the areas listed as lands of British interest did not include their boundaries. Without such information, the Norwegian Government and whaling concerns had little choice but to make educated guesses based on available sources. The Norwegia expedition might not have set out to be deliberately vindictive, but the publication of the Summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference alerted the Norwegians that the British Empire was preparing to take over Antarctica. If discovery and taking possession remained essential prerequisites for an Antarctic claim, the Norwegians were determined that they would perform these acts, even within the British Empire’s sphere of interest. Thus, when Wingfield protested to the Norwegian Prime Minister on New Year’s Day 1930 about the Norwegia’s flag raising over territory between Enderby and Kemp Lands, the only assurance that Mowinckel could give was that the Norwegia was acting without authorisation and that Norway had no intention of annexing territory that was not useful to it. Mowinckel explained that Norway had so far refrained from annexing Peter I Island for the same reason. Bouvet Island, on the other hand, was useful as a base for whaling operations. Wingfield believed that the Norwegian Government considered the British claim to the entire sector to be ‘unimpeachable’, and that Mowinckel would have preferred that the Norwegia had confined its activities to the area between Enderby Land and Coats Land, as Norway had no desire to cause a diplomatic entanglement.

As diplomacy with Norway was only in its very early stages, it is unclear how Wingfield could have come to such a conclusion, particularly as neither side was frank with the other about their real intentions. Indeed, the only moment of candour in

---

4 Copy of Despatch British Legation, Oslo to Rt Hon Arthur Henderson, Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1 January 1930, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
5 Norway subsequently annexed Peter I Island in 1931.
6 Copy of Despatch, 1 January 1930.
the conversation was Mowinckel’s expression of disappointment that Lars Christensen had been lured by notorietey to break his silence and communicate the Norvegia’s discoveries to the press. The Norwegian Government now found itself in the awkward situation of alleging that the territory discovered by the Norvegia had no value, rather than recognising ‘officially and unambiguously’ the validity of British claims to whole sectors. Wingfield’s assessment of the situation on the ground was premature, since there was a hint in Mowinkle’s explanation that Christensen might have been acting without government authorisation, but not entirely without government knowledge.

While diplomatic bickering continued in prime ministerial offices and foreign ministries about who discovered what and when in Antarctic waters, it was the Antarctic climate that determined outcomes. Mawson recorded in his diary that on Christmas Day 1929 the aeroplane was readied on the Discovery for flight, but ‘as cloudy dull weather and wind blowing, we cannot contemplate ascent’. The conditions the following day were even worse for approaching land and no flight was contemplated. Because of heavy ice and considerable wind from the south-east, the ship was ‘travelling slowly up and down’. Later that day, the weather remained dangerous for flying because of bad visibility. In addition, to the west and south-west there was ‘heavy fixed ice – peaked and hummocky ice of a striking appearance, cruel and heavy … It reminds me of a miniature model of, say, New York City,’ Mawson wrote in his diary. The weather cleared on the morning of New Year’s Eve 1929 and the improved weather conditions allowed aerial reconnaissance by the two flying officers, Douglas and Campbell. Both later reported seeing what appeared to be land to the South. The noon location of the Discovery was 65° 10’ East. In the ward room that evening the company ‘drank the health of Mr MacRobertson’. That was Mawson’s first reported land sighting on the voyage, although there was some discussion as to whether sightings from the air were reliable. If Riiser-Larsen had encountered similar conditions, his discoveries were likely to have been equally limited and vague.

---

7 Copy of Despatch, 1 January 1930.
8 Copy of Despatch, 1 January 1930.
10 Jacka & Jacka, pp. 292.
11 Jacka & Jacka, pp. 293.
12 Jacka & Jacka, p. 293.
13 Jacka & Jacka, p. 298.
14 Excerpts from Mawson’s Diary in Price, pp. 57-58.
‘Near midnight’ on 2 January 1930, Mawson found out from a radiogram sent by Casey about the *Norvegia*’s discoveries. The Norwegians, according to Casey, had ‘located and claimed Antarctic Land between Enderby Land and Coats Land’. That information, however, was corrected in a telegram sent by Henderson on 9 January 1930, saying that the Norwegian discoveries were not as previously advised, but rather applied to 100 kilometres of coast between Kemp and Enderby Lands: ‘just where we are now’, Mawson grumbled into his diary that it was the very day ‘I had intended making a proclamation regarding the British territories here’. Mawson recorded his noon position that day at 58° 41’ East. He believed that the Norwegians had planned to make a direct voyage to Enderby Land for the sole purpose of raising their flag.

In Australia, Henderson calculated that the limits of Enderby Land, to which a British inchoate title existed, were between 45° and 52½° East and that the limits of Kemp Land, to which similar title existed, were between 58½° and 60° East. The area reported to be discovered and claimed by the *Norvegia* ‘lies apparently at about longitude 55°E., thus forming an enclave between Enderby Land and Kemp Land’. The Australian Government decided to instruct Mawson to ignore the *Norvegia*’s activities and fulfill his instructions as planned. Although approval of the Foreign Office was not sought, Casey later reported that the Foreign Office shared Australia’s view.

Mawson had initially hoped to make his proclamation on 8 January when the *Discovery* was almost stationary between Kemp and Enderby Lands at 58° 13’ East, but was prevented from doing so because of a blizzard. Instead he had Hurley ‘penning’ a proclamation to read the next day, weather conditions permitting. It was not until 13 January, when a group of them had landed on what Mawson named Proclamation Island, that he claimed ‘full sovereignty of the territory

---

15 Jacka & Jacka, p. 303.
16 Jacka & Jacka, p. 310.
17 Jacka & Jacka, p. 310.
18 Jacka & Jacka, p. 310.
20 Position paper by Walter Henderson, 13 January 1930.
21 Cable Casey to External Affairs, 14 January 1930, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
22 Jacka & Jacka, p. 310.
23 Jacka & Jacka, p. 310.
of Enderby Land, Kemp Land, Mac-Robertson Land, together with off-lying islands as located on our charts constituting a Sector of the Antarctic Continent etc.'. On that day Mawson had annexed territory from 73º East, the point where they had ‘first vaguely come in touch with the land’, to 47º East, the ‘Westerly limit of the land figured by Biscoe on his chart’. The members of the expedition had travelled by launch to the south-west end of Proclamation Island, which Mawson described as being of large extent. He had noted that to the ‘east the rock area seen from ship earlier is noted to be attached to mainland’. On the summit those members of the expedition present erected a flagpole and secured it by stacking rocks around its foot. They attached a tablet to the pole, facing south. Mawson read the proclamation at noon, after which three cheers were given for the King and ‘God Save the King’ was sung. All posed as Frank Hurley took a photograph. Rather than make a proclamation of bits of territory and affirm those on the list, Mawson had sensibly made a decision on the spot to take possession of the full sweep of territory they had encountered, in the knowledge that the entire coastline was one and the same. By facing the tablet south, Mawson was probably making a symbolic gesture that he was claiming a sector that terminated at the South Pole.

If the discoveries of Mawson and Riiser-Larsen overlapped, diplomacy would have to be recruited to resolve the problem. Wingfield had already warned the Foreign Office that continuing protests to Norway about the activities of private expeditions were likely to prove counterproductive. Without diplomatic representations in Oslo, the Australian Government was unable to put its case personally. Mawson, on the other hand, was provided with his own opportunity to do so when he met with Riiser-Larsen on 14 January 1930, the day following his proclamation of a new Antarctic sector for the British Empire. The Discovery and the Norwegia met when the Discovery was at 66º 12’ South and 49º 21’ East and sailing west-south-west along the edge of the pack ice. The Norwegia was sighted at 8.30 pm steaming ahead of them and had to turn around to come towards them. That location suggests that the Norwegia had already visited Enderby Land. This realisation probably encouraged Mawson to

---

24 Jacka & Jacka, p. 310. See copy of Proclamation at p. 214A.
26 Jacka & Jacka, p. 314.
29 Jacka & Jacka, pp. 316-318.
advise Riiser-Larsen that they had already mapped the coast from 73° East to their present position. Although Mawson was sufficiently aware to choose his words carefully and to emphasise the scientific work of the BANZARE rather than its political intentions, he invited Riiser-Larsen to operate westward beyond 40° East undisturbed. Mawson told Riiser-Larsen that he believed the Norwegian Government had been advised that he had no intention of operating beyond that point. In his report of the 1929-30 cruise, Mawson confirmed that the coastline had been ‘definitely sighted’ and traced up to 48° East before meeting with the Norvegia on 14 January, which was steaming westwards.

Mawson’s reports of his work were necessary for determining the superior claim of a discovery. The British Government had consistently stressed the importance of discovery followed by flag raising and reading a proclamation as symbols of taking possession of newly discovered territory. The discoveries of the explorer were fundamental to any diplomatic negotiations. Mawson was, naturally, aware of that, as was Riiser-Larsen: their reports would be called upon by their respective governments in determining who had the superior claim. Since the war, however, the activities of the British Government in Antarctica had come increasingly under international scrutiny and British diplomacy had become less persuasive. France and Norway had questioned the integrity of the British sovereignty claims over the FID and the Ross Dependency respectively, because they both believed the British Empire had included within these claims discoveries made by either French or Norwegian nationals. Norwegians had been so much aggrieved at being ignored that they deliberately sent a whaling fleet to support their research vessel and assert their significant skills in polar regions, while ignoring official British protestations.

According to a report of his 1929-1930 expedition, Riiser-Larsen noted that on 15 January, the day after his meeting with Mawson, the Norvegia was stopped by ice. That provided the opportunity to get closer to land. It was then, he said, that they had sighted parts of Enderby Land when he found that the great ice barrier that had blocked Biscoe’s view a century earlier no longer existed. Mawson must have

---

30 Excerpts of Mawson’s Diary in Price, p. 76.
31 Excerpts of Mawson’s Diary in Price, p. 76.
experienced a similar phenomenon as he recorded on 14 January a disagreement with Captain Davis, who could not find Biscoe’s ice cliffs.\textsuperscript{34} On 15 January Riiser-Larsen conducted more flights southwards and then westward, ‘mapping a considerable stretch of new land’, which he named Queen Maud Land.\textsuperscript{35} On returning, the ship was brought to 44° East. From there they made another flight, but a shorter one, due to bad weather. They mapped the coastline westward to 43° East from where they had suspended their work earlier.\textsuperscript{36} The Admiralty had located Enderby Land at somewhere between 50° and 52° East and it is very likely that Riiser-Larsen worked in that area, but had sighted land beyond Enderby and Kemp Lands. On 15 January Mawson was working at 45° 22’ East and turned back at 44° 45’ East. He noted in his diary that night that he thought it better to turn back as they had achieved their programme, particularly as his sailing orders instructed him to go beyond 45° East only if conditions were favourable.\textsuperscript{37} Mawson also considered that by continuing westward to 40° East they would be sailing away from Enderby Land, thus leaving it to the Norwegians to explore.\textsuperscript{38}

Despite the friendly meeting between Mawson and Riiser-Larsen, including Mawson’s magnanimous gesture, genuinely made to Riiser-Larsen, allowing him to work freely without any British protests west of 40° East, Norwegian sensibilities were not appeased. Either Riiser-Larsen or Christensen chose to make political mischief out of the encounter. In a report supposedly telegraphed from Antarctic waters by Riiser-Larsen and published in Aftenpost, a mischievous claim that Mawson personally had no difficulty with Norway raising its flag in the Enderby-Kemp Land region. The report observed that

Sir Douglas Mawson has now quite unexpectedly given up his original plan of an exploration of the waters east of Kemp Land and Enderby Land, and instead will therefore at the same time as the Norwegia seek for new land to the west of these lands. In this manner there will be two expeditions this year between Enderby Land and Coats Land none between Kemp Land and King George V Land.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{34} Jacka & Jacka, p. 315.
\textsuperscript{35} Riiser-Larsen, pp. 555-573, 566.
\textsuperscript{36} Riiser-Larsen, pp. 555-573, 566.
\textsuperscript{37} Jacka & Jacka, p. 318.
\textsuperscript{38} Jacka & Jacka, p. 318.
\textsuperscript{39} Despatch Charles Wingfield to Rt Hon Arthur Henderson, 17 January 1930, with Translation of Aftenpost article: ‘Norway’s latest occupation in the Antarctic’, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 5, part 2
Although this absurd report would hardly be thought credible in Australia, the Norwegian public might well have found it believable. The article had reported the exact opposite to the agreement Mawson believed he had struck with Riiser-Larsen. Mawson even noted in his diary that he had suggested to Riiser-Larsen ‘that there was lots of room for several expeditions but that overlap was to be deprecated on every ground.’ In fact Mawson had deliberately turned east to cruise down the Enderby-Kemp Land coast rather than continue sailing westward. Mawson had never been happy with the Norwegian propensity to view Antarctic exploration as a race, and, as Tom Griffiths has pointed out, Mawson now, like Scott, was ‘haunted by Norwegians’. The Morgenblad, another Norwegian paper, reported an interview with Christensen, which noted that, while Mawson was unable to speak for the British Government, his standing in society and in the world of science could not be underestimated. Since Riiser-Larsen was still exploring in Antarctica, and Christensen, the benefactor of the Norvegia expedition, was the person speaking to the press, it is likely that Christensen was being deliberately misleading in order to exert maximum pressure on the Government, through his nationalistic politics.

In London as in Canberra, skepticism was high about Norway’s official position, despite the Norwegian Prime Minister’s assurances, published in the London Times, that the Norvegia was restricting its operations to the Enderby Land-Coats Land area. Scullin chose to ignore the Norwegian political machinations. He instructed Mawson to ‘take no cognizance’ of the Norvegia’s activities and to proceed with his original instructions. Scullin’s telegram also confirmed that the Norvegia was no longer posing a danger as it was now restricting its activities to the unclaimed sector between Enderby Land and Coats Land. It was clear now that skilful diplomacy would be required to resolve any problems after the explorers had returned home and presented their reports.

Although no agreement within the international community had been determined about bases for claims over Antarctic lands, discovery of land and raising

40 Jacka & Jacka, p. 317.
41 Griffiths, Slicing the Silence, p.114.
43 Cable Casey to External Affairs, 16 January 1930, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
44 Telegram J. Scullin to Mawson on board Discovery, 17 January 1930, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2. The region between Enderby Land and Coats Land is now formally claimed by Norway.
the flag continued to be essential pre-requisites in diplomatic negotiations. For that reason, Mawson was alert about ensuring that, whenever conditions allowed, he would raise the flag over territory and claim it for the Empire. By 18 January, the *Discovery* had raised the flag once. Mawson explained to Captain Davis that a wireless message from Walter Henderson had reminded him to hoist the flag on land as often as possible. Mawson had written a note to Captain Davis explaining that they had only achieved the minimum of their programme, in other words the one proclamation. He now wished to conduct aerial investigation of Enderby Land and to conduct more science along the way. He also wished to take several seals for their skins and oil for the Hudson’s Bay representative, as well as for ‘parasites’ and the ‘Canberra museum’. As Griffiths has pointed out, there is no doubt that Mawson believed in the strategic and commercial objectives of the Expedition and had personally campaigned for them. On the other hand, the treacherous conditions that Mawson encountered during the Antarctic summer of 1929-1930 prevented the *Discovery* from sighting new lands and planting many flags. When land was seen, the appropriate rituals were observed, such as when he and Lt Campbell of the Royal Australian Air Force flew over the Enderby Land ice cap on 25 January and dropped a flag attached to a short mast a few miles inland, reading a proclamation at the same time. ‘After the ceremony’, Mawson later explained to Frank Strahan, Henderson’s successor in External Affairs, ‘we could see the flag lying extended on the ice slopes below’.

Mawson even exceeded the limits of today’s Australian Antarctic Territory at 45° East since the *Discovery* reached beyond 43° 05’ on 20 January 1930. After an assessment of his report, the Foreign Office subsequently circulated a note stating that Mawson had established on the map a new coastline eastwards of Enderby Land between latitudes 45° and 73° east of Greenwich. Importantly, the survey indicated that Enderby and Kemp Lands were linked as part of one land mass. Together with the work of Mawson’s AAE, these details provided the British diplomats with sufficient evidence to exert British rights over the sector from the Ross Dependency to

---

48 Copy of Letter Mawson to F. Strahan, Secretary Antarctic Committee, Prime Minister’s Department, 22nd November 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item C413/6. See also Griffiths, pp. 109-132, p. 116.
49 Jacka & Jacka, p. 322. See copy of Sketch Map showing track of *Discovery* 1929-1930, p. 214B.
50 Despatch Casey to J.G. McLaren, Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department (External Affairs), 31 July 1930, NAA: Series A 5954, Item 1191/5.
51 Despatch Casey to J.G. McLaren, 31 July 1930.
the western extremity of Enderby Land. British negotiators could also claim that, rather than merely cruising along the edge of the ice and planting flags, the *Discovery* with its British Empire crew had consolidated its land discoveries by maintaining a presence and working in the region. Not only had the first cruise of the BANZARE determined that Enderby and Kemp Lands were part of the same unbroken coastline, but Mawson had consistently argued that from King George V Land to Enderby Land was a continuous coastline. Since Biscoe was the ‘first ever to catch sight of any portion of the Antarctic continent’, Mawson genuinely believed that Antarctica rightly belonged to the Empire.52

Peter Beck and Klaus Dodds have both argued that the territorial ambitions and opposition of the French, Norwegian and American governments in the inter-war years combined to thwart the hopes of Amery, and the British Government generally, in pursuing its policy of Antarctic domination.53 There is no doubt that the interested members of the international community were beginning to challenge the British aims in Antarctica. However, Amery’s own Antarctic ambitions were hardly British Government policies, since the question of an Antarctic policy for full Antarctic domination never reached Cabinet. Besides, the policy recommendations at the 1926 Imperial Conference were recommendations: they were not a settled policy. The three-step process was recommended in order to bring within the Empire seven specifically listed territories with inchoate British title, six of them under Australian control. The much debated second step of the process was the most expensive since it required an expedition or expeditions to travel to Antarctica to proclaim these parcels of land on the spot. As soon as an expedition was finally organised to sail to Antarctica, Mawson was asked to take advantage of being in the Antarctic to sail beyond King Edward VII Land and claim the unclaimed sector that lay between the Ross Dependency and the FID.

However, claiming a major sector that had never been visited previously by a British explorer was not discussed at the 1926 Imperial Conference, nor was it discussed formally with the Australian Government. The next Imperial Conference was scheduled for 1930, an appropriate time to discuss an imperial policy that was likely to involve the dominions in some financial outlay. In the meantime, it was Mawson’s reluctance to extend the BANZARE, rather than challenges from other powers, that

52 Quoted in Price, p. 5.
thwarted an impromptu request at a meeting of British Government officials in 1929, to which Mawson had been invited. In fact, Admiral Byrd, the American explorer was already in Antarctica, and it was the British Government officials who were planning to challenge the ambitions of another power, the United States of America. By mid-1929 Amery no longer held the position of Dominions Secretary and was no longer in government to see the first BANZARE make its cruise to the Enderby Land coast. It seems, however, that he had bequeathed, to some government officials at least, the ambition that, one day, the entire Antarctic should become British if an opportunity presented itself to claim an unclaimed piece of territory.

The Australian Government, on the other hand, independently chose to determine what was reasonable with respect to territorial acquisition. Bruce, for example, had permitted Mawson to sail to 40° East, but only if conditions allowed him to reach that distance. Even on the second cruise, Mawson’s sailing instructions were to consolidate territory west of 160° East, particularly the area between Adélie Land and Queen Mary Land. If the British Government remained interested in equipping expeditions of discovery, they could not look to the BANZARE for help. Besides, the unclaimed sector between the east coast of the Ross Dependency and the west coast of Graham Land was rapidly becoming the scene of American activity. The other, between Enderby Land and Coats Land, had already been suggested to Riiser-Larsen by Mawson as an area where Norway could concentrate its activities without being disturbed by British expeditions. Even while the *Discovery* was steaming back to Australia, the *Norvegia* was working in that so-called free area and sending reports to Oslo of discoveries in the vicinity of Coats Land.54

At the conclusion of the first BANZARE, Scullin stated that Australia was glad to have been involved, as the expedition had ‘done so much to add to the world’s knowledge of those remote regions.55 Generally, however, Scullin left Antarctic matters to Senator J.J. Daly, who had replaced Senator Pearce as Chairman of the Australian Antarctic Committee. In his welcome address at the civic reception at the Melbourne Town Hall, Senator Daly continued the tradition of Bruce in emphasising the ‘Australianness’ of the expedition. He congratulated the proud and valuable

---

55 Statement by the Prime Minister, J. Scullin, Canberra, 27 March 1930, NAA: Series A981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
achievement of 'our countrymen' in science and in tapping the 'teeming wealth of the southern seas'. Senator Daly predicted the expedition to be 'the forerunner of many more destined to promote scientific progress and to establish Australian industry'.

The doom and gloom of the Great Depression was the backdrop for the second cruise, unlike the 'loud cheers and sirens' that had farewelled the Discovery from Cape Town on 19 October 1929. Despite the gloomy financial situation, 2,000 people had gathered on the pier in Melbourne 'in brilliant sunshine' to meet the Discovery six months later. However, as the Depression deepened and the excitement of Antarctic exploration had died down, the Australian press began to speculate about whether the Scullin Labor Government would support another expedition in the present economic climate. The Melbourne Herald even reported some unease amongst the members of the Australian Antarctic Committee about supporting another expedition, because of economic constraints.

The BANZARE, however, was not only a collaborative effort between three governments, it was also an alliance between government and private enterprise. MacRobertson's contribution of £10,000 was significant in ensuring the BANZARE became a reality. If the second cruise were to be organised amidst the economic gloom, then his generosity would again be needed. In recognition of his efforts and in order to ensure his continuing commitment, MacRobertson was invited to attend the Australian Antarctic Committee's meetings. It was naturally hoped by both the scientists and the Government that MacRobertson's generosity would continue, despite the evidently straitened times. He did not disappoint. On this occasion, however, MacRobertson volunteered an additional sum of £6,000 if the Government could match it. The press announced that the 'second part of the programme of the expedition' would now be carried out, thanks to the 'further generosity of Mr MacRobertson'.

---

56 Address by Senator J.J. Daly at Melbourne Town Hall, 8 April 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item Q413/1.
57 That observation was a diary entry made by Morton H. Moyes, a member of the 1929 British Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE), 19 October 1929, in Ayres, p. 172.
58 *The Herald*, 8 April 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.
59 *The Herald* 28 April 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.
60 *The Herald* 28 April 1930.
61 *The Herald* 28 April 1930.
62 Extract from Minutes of Meeting of the Antarctic Committee held in Melbourne, 13th April 1930, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8.
Herald helped to take the focus off Government spending by noting that the Australian Government was determined to equip another cruise and had confirmed private donations from manufacturing, while its own contribution was small.\textsuperscript{64}

Although the press emphasised the commercial aspects of the BANZARE, this time The Sydney Morning Herald added water, which ‘is always there’, according to Mawson.\textsuperscript{65} While there was no elaboration of how water could be piped to Australia, it can only be assumed from talk of the pristine environment of Antarctica that it meant ice or icebergs were to be harvested for clean water. An abundant supply of water would certainly be welcomed by farmers. There is no indication, despite all the talk in the press about research in meteorology and water, of any donations from Australian farmers for Antarctic exploration. Nonetheless, the generosity of the city-based chocolate king, and contributions from manufacturing, freed Senator Daly from having to recite again the usual list of commercial possibilities. Instead, he described the BANZARE as a scientific expedition and noted that ‘the interest of those scientific geniuses, Sir Edgeworth David and Sir Orme Masson, in Antarctica, has not yet been wasted as it would have been had the second year’s programme not been proceeded with.’\textsuperscript{66} The expedition, Daly said, should complete Australia’s claims to an area, ‘whether regarded from a scientific or from merely a financial aspect’, as Australia’s heritage and a bequest for future generations.\textsuperscript{67}

Henderson wrote a draft statement designed to ensure that Senator Daly followed the practised line. However, Daly rejected it forcing Henderson to mutter darkly that the Senator’s statement, which did not stress the commercial aspects of the BANZARE, had been made ‘without reference to this office’.\textsuperscript{68} Nor does Daly’s statement provide evidence for the assessments made by Swan and to a lesser extent Price, that the three governments were interested primarily in ‘the exploitation and conservation of whales’.\textsuperscript{69} Besides, Commander Moyes, a veteran of the AAE, threw doubt on the viability of an Australian Antarctic whaling industry when he calculated

\textsuperscript{64} The Herald, 29 April 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.
\textsuperscript{65} The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 April 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.
\textsuperscript{66} The Canberra Times, 2 May 1930, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8.
\textsuperscript{67} The Canberra Times, 2 May 1930.
\textsuperscript{68} Comment on the The Canberra Times article of 2 May 1930, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8.
\textsuperscript{69} Swan, p. 199. Price has observed that Mawson and later Swan laid greater significance on the growth of the whaling industry than on scientific research, although advancement in science was considered important, p. 13.
that the Australian pay rate for an Australian whaler per month during a season was £16, while that paid in Norway for a Norwegian whaler was the equivalent of £5.\textsuperscript{70} As the Australian Government refused to entertain the prospect of foreign enclaves forming around Australia’s southern borders, it would not be able to profit from any Norwegian taxes, even if the Norwegians chose to whale in the seas below Australia. Besides, the conduct of pelagic whaling, and Norway’s quest for its own shore bases, were making the profitability of Norwegian whaling less attractive for the dominions.

Because the scientific lobby in Australia had taken the initiative in Antarctic exploration, they sought to promote the possibilities of commercial gain in order to attract private donations. Hence, their list of exploitable Antarctic resources was limited only by the extent of their imagination. Mawson had added water to the list since returning from the first cruise of the BANZARE and now others on the expedition contributed their own interests. For example, Frank Hurley, the young photographer and cinematographer, described Antarctica as ‘Nature’s fairyland’ and a ‘glorious playground for venturesome youth; a haven of rest for the sick’ as well as a ‘land with wonderful commercial possibilities’.\textsuperscript{71} Dr Ingram, who accompanied the expedition as its physician, said that the Antarctic could become a summer health resort due to its ‘microbe-free atmosphere,’ and would be ‘excellent for lung cases’.\textsuperscript{72} Privately, even Mawson must have reflected that Antarctica had expertly protected its treasures from human exploitation for millennia and was likely to continue doing do. If they could not go there, at least it could be pointed out to Australians that some of their own had accomplished heroic deeds there. Frank Hurley’s film, ‘Southward Ho! with Mawson’, was enlisted as an antidote to the financial gloom of Australia in the early 1930s. The film was promoted as a ‘Proud Record of National Achievement’\textsuperscript{73} by a ‘virile nation’ that was continuing to keep alive the pioneering spirit.\textsuperscript{74} Thus Antarctica, for Australia, was called upon to play a number of roles, a destination for whaling not necessarily being one of them.

\textsuperscript{70} These figures were annotated alongside the newspaper cutting reporting Commander Moyes’ lecture to the Royal Society in Hobart: Department of Defence Minute paper ‘Cutting from The Herald,’ 16 February 1929, NAA: Series MP 1185/9/0, Item 453/204/938.

\textsuperscript{71} The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 April 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.

\textsuperscript{72} The Herald, 3 April 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.

\textsuperscript{73} Sydney Daily Guardian, 1 August 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8 Item A413/2.

\textsuperscript{74} Letter Stuart P. Doyle, Managing Director Union Theatres Limited to Senator J.J. Daly, 17 July 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item A413/2.
Apart from funds provided by MacRobertson and by manufacturing, the other substantial funding came from press rights. As Senator Daly said, selling press rights was necessary to raise sufficient funds for the second cruise. Press rights outside of Australia, he said, would continue to attract funds, as they had for the first BANZARE. The principal area of operation of the second BANZARE was to map and investigate the area between Adélie Land and Queen Mary Land from a scientific perspective, and to conduct science, including an investigation of the fauna, notably whales and seals. In advising the Dominions Secretary of the proposed sailing schedule, it was emphasised that coal supplies would determine the extent of the expedition’s work.

The British Government’s sensitivity to appease France in Antarctica extended beyond France’s interests in Adélie Land to include the FID. At the 1930 Imperial Conference, it was revealed that in 1928 the French Government had asked the British Government to explain why certain French discoveries had been included within the FID boundaries. The British Government considered it ‘undesirable’ to go into detail, except to note that the islands concerned were defined by Letters Patent of 28 March 1917, and subsequently published in the Falkland Islands Gazette in order to advise the international community of British intentions. Even the British Government was forced to concede that the Falkland Islands Gazette ‘was probably not widely read in France particularly during the war, and so it was that the issue of the letters patent in 1917, with all its implications, must have wholly escaped the notice of the French Government’. France did not demand the return of its discoveries in the FID, but its silence did not augur well for Australia with respect to Adélie Land. The British Government had already included French discoveries in the FID as early as 1908. British activities against France in West Antarctica help to explain the British Government’s determination to ensure that Adélie Land in East Antarctica remained French, even if that decision were to be unpopular with Australia. The virtual

75 Letter Senator the Hon J.J. Daly, Chairman BANZARE Committee to A.C.C. Holtz, Chairman, Australian Newspapers Conference, 20 November 1930, NAA: Series A 461/10 Item L413/2.
76 Secret sailing orders addressed to Sir Douglas Mawson, Commander of the British Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Expedition, His Majesty’s Research Ship “Discovery”, sgd. John J. Daly, for Acting Prime Minister, 30 October 1930, NAA: Series A 461/8 Item N413/1.
77 Cable Prime Minister’s Department (External Affairs), to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 6 November 1930, NAA: A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8.
invitation, in the British Ambassador’s letters to the French Foreign Ministry before the war, to define the boundaries of Adélie Land, while proposing some generous coordinates, suggests that such generosity from one Empire to another had an ulterior motive.

On the other hand, the British Government’s diplomacy with Norway was more chauvinistic. The Norwegians continued to nurse their grievances by continuing to shadow the second BANZARE, which departed for the region beneath Tasmania towards the end of 1930. The Sydney Morning Herald reported on 17 February 1931 that the Norwegian whaler Torlyn, which was attached to a Norwegian private expedition, had reported a new land discovery at approximately 68° South and 65° to 71° East. According to the report, the new land was a continuation of MacRobertson Land previously discovered by Douglas Mawson.\textsuperscript{80} Mawson was right to claim the entire coastline from 73° East to 47° East, but that was unlikely to stop the Norwegians. However, as Wingfield advised the Foreign Office, no attempt was made by the Torlyn to lay claim to any land. A protest to the Norwegian Government, therefore, would be counterproductive.\textsuperscript{81}

Whether ‘haunted by Norwegians’ or not, smooth sailing in the Antarctic could never be guaranteed, no matter how well planned the itinerary might be. If not the coal supply, it was the climate that had prevented Mawson from landing on King George V Land on 19 December 1930, as planned, due to ‘Unusually heavy pack-ice’.\textsuperscript{82} Mawson was not particularly concerned and advised the Admiralty directly, rather than via the Australian Government, that the pack ice would make it ‘impossible to hoist flag’ on land already defined by him in the 1911 expedition, but that he was able to land easily at Commonwealth Bay. Unless directed otherwise and in order to obviate difficulties, he proposed ‘incorporating Commonwealth Bay in King George V Land which will include all territory immediate east of French Adelie Land\textsuperscript{83} from 142° to 160° East. The Admiralty, in this instance, did not obfuscate and agreed that King George V Land extended up to Commonwealth Bay and was outside the limits of

\textsuperscript{80} The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 February 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
\textsuperscript{81} Copy of Despatch Wingfield presumably to Arthur Henderson, although there is no address on the copy, 11 March 1931. NAA: Series. A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
\textsuperscript{83} Letter Casey to Secretary Prime Minister’s Department (External Affairs), 8 January 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8.
Adélie Land. On 4 January Mawson was able to land at Cape Denison, the site of his old Main Base, at Commonwealth Bay, and on the morning of 5 January he took formal possession of the entire territory. A copy of the proclamation was sealed in a metal container and deposited at the foot of the iron flag pole.

Mawson was not happy that the formal proclamations and flag raising that were undertaken by the AAE had been questioned. Nor was he prepared to take risks associated with landing in perilous conditions for the purpose of reading another proclamation and raising another flag. On the other hand, the Admiralty wished Mawson to make as many landings as he could. At times, the Admiralty’s inflexibility, probably through lack of knowledge of what could or could not be achieved in Antarctic waters, raises serious doubts about their judgment. Casey was obviously acting on advice from the Admiralty when he suggested that Mawson could plant the flag on the ice boundary, if land could not be approached. On 6 February 1931, after receiving direct information from Mawson, Casey advised Canberra that heavy pack ice off Queen Mary Land made it difficult and dangerous to approach land. Mawson was also concerned that coal was running low and the Discovery might become ice-bound. Since the AAE had raised the flag in Queen Mary Land in 1912, he now wished to explore further west, coal permitting, where it might be possible to plant the flag on land. He also proposed to direct his attention to the ‘unknown region between Queen Mary Land and the MacRobertson Land’. Senator Daly was ‘quite prepared to leave matter in Mawson’s hands’ and Mawson was sent instructions from Canberra to take decisions on the spot. On days of favourable weather conditions, mapping and observations were done from the air. Mawson advised London from Antarctica that, after completing detailed mapping, he believed the continuity of the continental coastline between Adélie Land and Enderby Land to be indisputable.

---

84 Letter Casey to Secretary Prime Minister’s Department (External Affairs), 8 January 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8.
86 Cable from Casey, presumably to External Affairs, although address not shown, 6 February 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8.
87 Cable from Casey, 6 February 1931. See also Jacka & Jacka, p. 374.
89 Telegram Daly to Strahan, 7 February 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8.
91 Cable from V.C. Duffy Australian High Commissioner’s office, 16 February 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 8. While there is no address on this Cable, Cables from the Australian High Commission in London would normally be addressed to the Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department.
Mawson's published diary entries reveal the terrible conditions under which the BANZAREs achieved an astonishing feat of geography. Mawson and his fellow expeditioners could feel well satisfied with their achievements, but on their return to Melbourne in early 1931, the cheery crowds that had met them a year earlier were absent: the Great Depression had taken its toll on the mood of the people. The Melbourne Herald reported that the Discovery flew an 'Australian ensign at the ship's masthead' when it arrived at Williamstown docks.92 Flying the Australian ensign was probably meant to lift the public spirit, but only 'a handful of dockmen' met the Discovery on this occasion.93

More disappointment was to follow. Mawson was now being accused by the British Government of causing a diplomatic incident by visiting his 'old winter quarters in Adelie Land'.94 This surprising accusation, conveyed by Casey, meant very little as the British Government had not raised the question of Adélie Land boundaries since before the war and negotiations had to be re-commenced in order to resolve the problem. Besides, not only had the British Government decided arbitrarily on the location of Adélie Land; it was also insisting that Mawson comply with that decision. It was of course open to the British Government not to perfect Mawson's claim, in the same way as it expected the Norwegian Government to behave with respect to the claims and counter-claims made for Norway by Riiser-Larsen. Keith Officer was well aware of the course open to the British Government and recorded it in an advisory note to the Government.95 As Keith Officer also reflected in that note, empathising with any perceived French grievances might work against tactics to negotiate the Adélie Land boundaries or to exchange Adélie Land for British territory in the New Hebrides.96

Continual posturing by the British Government did not assist in complying with the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference; nor were the practical achievements of the BANZARE matched by British diplomacy. The style that the Foreign Office asked its senior diplomats to pursue was aggressive and designed to warn off competitors. This tactic was not only ignored by the Americans and the

94 Paper by Keith Officer, Department of External Affairs: 'Relations of Mawson Expedition with Adelie Land (French Territory)', 2 February 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
95 'Relations of Mawson Expedition with Adelie Land (French Territory)'.
96 'Relations of Mawson Expedition with Adelie Land (French Territory)'.

Norwegians, but encouraged the Norwegian whaling armada to race the old *Discovery* on both cruises of the BANZARE. Despite the gradual approach that Amery had initially advocated, the British Government must have realised that no nation with Antarctic interests would tolerate British hegemony in Antarctica. Australia was keen for more open diplomacy and, until the British Government began to be less chauvinistic in its diplomatic approach, any recognition of the territorial claims made by Mawson’s AAE and the BANZARE was unlikely. Yet there was no international clamour from any of the world powers for an international meeting on Antarctica. Nor was the League of Nations petitioned to convene such a conference. Indeed, the only call to involve the world leaders had come from Mawson in 1916 and again in 1919 when he urged the Australian and British Governments to discuss Antarctic territorial settlement in conjunction with territory settlements in the wake of the Great War. Within the Empire, the question now moved to the third step of the staged process.
Proclamation

In the name of His Majesty King George the Fifth, King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India.

Whereas I have it in command from His Majesty King George the Fifth to assert the sovereign rights of His Majesty over British land discoveries met with in Antarctica.

Now, therefore, Sir Douglas Mawson do hereby proclaim and declare to all men that, from and after the date of these presents, the full sovereignty of the territory of Enderby Land, Kemp Land, MacRobertson Land together with all lying islands as located in our charts constituting a sector of the Antarctic Regions lying between Longitudes 47 degrees East and 75 degrees East of Greenwich and South of Latitude 65 degrees South, vest in His Majesty King George V, His Heirs and Successors for ever.

Given under my Hand, as aforesaid, the thirteenth day of January, nineteen hundred and thirty.
Chapter 8: 1932-1936 – The Birth Certificate

The second step of the staged process, commenced under Bruce’s conservative Nationalist Government, was seamlessly concluded under Scullin’s Labor Government. The final step, which would take the form of either Letters Patent or an Order-in-Council, was one for the British Government to perform. Whatever instrument was decided upon, it would need to meet the terms of the Australian Constitution in order to allow the Australian Parliament to accept the proposed Antarctic territory. It would fall to John Latham, in the new United Australia Party Government, who was at the time both Minister for External Affairs and Attorney-General, and with previous Antarctic policy experience in the Bruce Government, to consult in person with the British Solicitor-General as to the best legal form for the proclamation of sovereignty. When he arrived in London, Latham was armed with a comprehensive Australian legal brief from his Department.\(^1\) The passing of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, which Australia did not adopt for another decade, was unlikely to have any bearing on negotiations over the final step.\(^2\) However, as Latham was to discover, negotiations with the British Government, like those for the second step, would not be straightforward.

The Antarctic question had provided Australia with the opportunity to work within the imperial process to acquire a major sector of Antarctic territory. Australia had fought for control over the region that lay beneath its southern borders, but had done so as a loyal member of the Empire. That was demonstrated when Bruce agreed to extend the Australian Quadrant to include the African Quadrant. Throughout the process of bringing under Australian control what was referred to as the Commonwealth Quadrant, successive Australian Governments had rejected Amery’s gradualist approach in favour of immediate action, in the belief that the Quadrant would otherwise be lost to Australia.

---

\(^1\) Memorandum Keith Officer, External Affairs Department to The Secretary, Attorney-General’s Department, 28 January 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1. (The 1931 date on the memorandum is incorrectly given, as the memorandum quotes two paragraphs from a Despatch sent from the Prime Minister to the Secretary of State for the Dominions on 13 July 1931.)

\(^2\) Australia adopted the Statute of Westminster during World War II with the passing of the Statute of Westminster Adoption Act 1942.
After sending Mawson’s report to London, the Australian Government felt confident that the requirements of the second step of the process had been fulfilled. It expected that the third step, the issuing of Letters Patent or an Order-in-Council, would be implemented quickly. Such was not the view of the Dominions Office, which continued to question whether the British Government could legally proceed to the final step. It therefore sought further legal advice from the British Law Officers’ Department about the question of conferring ‘an absolute title upon the state by whom the discovery was made’. Seeking a further legal opinion seemed odd since the three step process was meant to cover all the issues associated with finalising sovereignty of the proposed Australian territory. The Dominions Office was also aware that there was no agreement amongst the international community about the bases of sovereignty claims. So far, none of the other powers had recognised British sovereignty over either the FID or the Ross Dependency. As the Australian and the British Governments were to discover in the succeeding years, recognition would be forthcoming from two nations only, France and Norway, and only for the Ross Dependency and the Australian Antarctic Territory. That recognition would not be immediate, but would come about through protracted diplomatic negotiations rather than through any international legal principle.

Whether by means of international politics or international law, boundaries of the territory proposed for Australia had to be delineated. Even a year after Mawson had concluded the work of the BANZARE, the boundary lines remained vague as the question of Adélie Land was still unsettled. The Dominions Office referred the legal officials to a copy of Mawson’s reports of the two cruises of the BANZARE and sought an opinion as to whether sufficient action had been taken to allow the assertion of British sovereignty. The Dominions Office also asked the legal officers to consider, when assessing the appropriateness of defining the territory by meridians meeting at the Pole, whether the bases of the claims should be referred to in the instrument to be issued.

These were all legitimate questions. However, precedent had already been set through the annexation of the FID and the Ross Dependency. The Letters Patent issued over the FID in 1908 and corrected in 1917 did not have the degree of detail

---

now being requested by the Dominions Office for the Commonwealth Quadrant. The Order-in-Council issued with respect to the Ross Dependency was equally general. While in both instances geographic coordinates were provided, neither instrument mentioned the bases of claims, nor that in each instance sovereignty was claimed over sectors meeting at the Pole. Indeed, the British Government had made two sovereignty claims in Antarctica in the knowledge that international agreement had not been reached on the bases of claims. Nothing had changed in the intervening years.

Legal questions were again discussed at the 1930 Imperial Conference. In a memorandum prepared for the Conference, it was recommended that British claims ‘should be defined so 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.’ That the British Government was beginning to feel the criticism of those nations with a significant stake in Antarctica was demonstrated in the discussions on the ‘Sector Principle’. Under this principle a nation could argue that it was entitled to a sector directly opposite its mainland within boundaries meeting at the Pole. According to the Report of the Imperial Conference of 1930, it was agreed by the Empire’s Prime Ministers that, while the ‘sector principle’ was ‘in a fair way to securing general acceptance’, that acceptance related to the Arctic rather than the Antarctic. The Conference agreed, therefore, that

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. If, for instance, the “sector principle”, as applied in the Arctic, were to be applied to the Antarctic, a large portion of the Antarctic continent, including the greater part of the Falkland Islands Dependencies, would fall within the sphere of sovereignty of Chile and the Argentine.

---

5 In the 1908 Letters Patent the southern parts of Chile and Argentina were included within the boundaries of the Falkland Islands Dependencies and in 1917 some French discoveries were included within the boundaries but were not detailed. See Bush, Volume III, Doc. UK21071908 and UK28021917, pp. 251-252, pp. 264-265.
6 Bush, Volume III Doc. NZ30071923, p. 44.
7 Secret E. (30) ‘Memorandum Respecting Territorial Claims in the Antarctic From 1908 to 1930’.
9 Secret E.(30) ‘Committee on Polar Questions’.
F.M. Auburn has colourfully described the ‘sector theory as ‘an Aunt Sally of international law, more of a political than a legal principle’. The 1930 Imperial Conference agreement bears out Auburn’s assessment.

Although the Antarctic Committee of the 1926 Imperial Conference had discussed bases of claims when deciding on the three-step process, its conclusions had not been adopted by the full conference. Thus, at the 1930 Imperial Conference, the Prime Ministers ‘decided to associate themselves’ with the views of the Committee with respect to annexation of Antarctic territory. They formally adopted the policy that:

Discovery and formal acts of annexation did not by themselves constitute a valid title and must be followed by occupation; that the important element in considering whether a title by occupation has been established is the degree of control which can, in the circumstances, be exercised in the area; that such control in the case of the South Polar regions need not be continuous (since this would be impossible), but may be intermittent or periodical, provided, however, that it attains such effectiveness as is reasonably possible along the coasts of the areas which are the subject of claim, whether those coasts consist of land or of frozen sea.

Since these views had been adopted at the 1926 Imperial Conference and confirmed at the 1930 Imperial Conference, it was inconsistent, if not unreasonable, of the Dominions Office to continue calling for legal opinions in 1931. After all, it was widely accepted that permanent settlement was impossible in Antarctica at that time, and effective settlement meant exercising some means of control over a sovereign claim. If, on the other hand, the legal opinion related to constitutional arrangements with respect to the third step of the process, then such discussions should have been appropriately undertaken with the Australian Government.

The Australian Government had understood that the international legal aspects associated with Antarctic territorial acquisition were not settled legal principles widely accepted by the international community. Also, Australia refused to adopt the British Government’s system to issue fisheries licences to enterprises of foreign powers as a means of consolidating British sovereignty. The British

---

11 Amongst the Australian Government, Mawson and the ANRC, the word ‘sector’ was frequently interchanged with the word ‘Quadrant’. It was not meant to refer to the ‘Sector Principle’.
12 Secret E (30) Committee on Polar Questions.
Government's stance at the time accords with Shirley V. Scott's description of the 'international law-international politics relationship', or the realist school of international relations. 13 Scott accepts the view that those 'states with power (i.e. those with the ability to control outcomes contested by others) will have disproportionate and often decisive influence in determining the content of rules and their application in practice ...'. 14 Unfortunately for the British Empire, the question of Antarctica in the inter-war years had hardened views amongst some members of the international community against what they perceived to be British attempts to become the hegemonic power in the Antarctic. Thus the British Government had failed completely to set the standard for others to follow. Instead, nations interested in Antarctica were either challenging British rights or ignoring them. 15

Antarctica had become an international political issue, which, since the Great War, was testing the resolve of empires as well as major and minor powers alike. Antarctic politics after the war were already demonstrating that the British Empire could no longer annex unclaimed territory with the same confidence it had been able to summon in 1908. In London, that realisation was beginning to take shape in the minds of the British Foreign Office. When the Dominions Office suggested to the Law Officers that, in any instrument decided upon for the Commonwealth Sector, no reference should be made to the bases of claims, it did not wish to provoke criticism from powers 'which would not otherwise be forthcoming'. 15

Whatever decision was made on the form of the legal instrument, Australia had stipulated that its sector (a word that could be interchanged with quadrant) should stretch to the South Pole. That was not an unreasonable request because it complied with precedent already set with respect to the FID and the Ross Dependency. The Dominions Office expected that the same situation would apply to the Commonwealth Sector. 16 Nonetheless, it added the proviso that, in the case of the Ross Dependency, before the Order-in-Council was issued the 'interior had been penetrated, and the Pole itself reached, by British and other explorers; whereas the hinterland of the proposed Commonwealth Sector remains wholly unexplored'. 17

13 Shirley V. Scott, p. 53.
14 Oscar Schachter, 'International Law in Theory and Practice, General Course in Public International Law', Recueil des Cours, 178, 1982/4, p. 28, quoted by Scott, p. 53.
The British Government’s statement about the lack of penetration of the hinterland is absurd. As Bush has pointed out, the hinterland had already been penetrated. On the first occasion in 1909, during the Shackleton expedition, the group led by Edgeworth David, including Mawson, reached the vicinity of the South Magnetic Pole at 72° 25’ South. The area was within the boundary proposed for Australian control located at 155° 16’ East.\textsuperscript{18} On the second occasion in 1912, Mawson reached 68° 41’ South.\textsuperscript{19} He had been careful to send out expeditions to the hinterland. The southern party that Mawson had sent to explore the hinterland reached as far south as 70° 36 ½’.\textsuperscript{20} While the southern party fell short of the South Pole by 20 degrees, its intention was not to reach the Pole, but to explore inland from the coast as far as it reasonably could. On the other hand, when the British Government in 1908 annexed the FID, which included a sector of the Antarctic continent reaching to the Pole, it did so without a British expedition having set foot on that part of the continent.

A further claim made by the Dominions Office was that no specific reference appeared in the published summaries that had associated the territories with the South Pole.\textsuperscript{21} In fact, the Letters Patent providing for the government of the FID omitted to mention a sector meeting at the South Pole.\textsuperscript{22} A similar omission was evident in the Order-in-Council issued for the Ross Dependency.\textsuperscript{23} The Dominions Office admitted, however, that it was the intention of both the published report of the Imperial Conference and the King’s Commission to cover the entire sector. The Dominions Office hoped that ‘it may be permissible to proceed on the basis that each of the mentioned territories included the hinterland behind it up to the Pole’.\textsuperscript{24} It further noted that the French claim to Adélie Land would be accepted on that basis.\textsuperscript{25} The Dominions Office admitted that there was no doubt that those involved in producing the 1926 Imperial Conference Report and the King’s Commission to Mawson had intended to cover the whole sector, even if Mawson had not been

\textsuperscript{18} Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU 16011909, pp. 91-92.
\textsuperscript{19} Jacka & Jacka, p.143.
\textsuperscript{20} Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU21121912, pp. 95-96.
\textsuperscript{22} Bush, Volume III, Doc. UK21071908, p. 251.
\textsuperscript{23} Bush, Volume III, Doc. NZ30071923, p. 44
\textsuperscript{24} Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU31121931, pp. 132-141, p. 135.
authorised to take possession of anything beyond the main territories. Yet the Dominions Office pondered whether his actions required further ratification.

Caution about drawing protests from the international community may have been advisable. However, the ad hoc nature of the British Government’s approach to Antarctic affairs suggested that, at times, the British Government acted first and then waited for repercussions. At other times, it sought to act aggressively: for example, seeking to block Byrd from making claims by commissioning Wilkins to forestall his effort, or blocking the Norwegians by consistently obstructing their ability to annex Antarctic territory.

After the Scullin Labor Government was defeated at the Federal Elections in December 1931, the United Australia Party under the leadership of Joseph Aloysius Lyons formed government. Lyons’s first Ministry was sworn in on 6 January 1932 and, fortunately for the smooth continuation of Australian Antarctic involvement, J.G. Latham, the former Attorney-General in the Bruce Government, who had had significant dealings with Antarctic matters, was appointed both Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs. One of Latham’s first tasks was to formalise, under Australian control, the ‘Commonwealth Sector’. On 14 January 1932, within days of taking office, V.C. Duffy, the Secretary at the Australian High Commission in London, asked Latham whether he would be prepared to consult with the British Solicitor-General in person in London as to the best legal form to effect legal sovereignty. Duffy noted that the Dominions Office would prefer to consult before taking any action.

Latham accepted the invitation and asked for a comprehensive briefing from his two portfolio departments in order to determine Australia’s status with respect to assuming control of the Commonwealth sector. In the Department of External Affairs brief, Keith Officer advised that the French Government had not defined the east and west boundaries of Adélie Land, ‘but we have recognised them as being at

---

28 The British Government tried to recruit Hubert Wilkins, an Australian aviator and polar explorer, to drop British flags over the unexplored area between Graham Land and King Edward VII Land while a member of Admiral Byrd’s expedition before Byrd flew over the same area. See Letter Casey to Bruce 11 April 1929, in Hudson and North, p. 492.
29 Cable from V.C. Duffy, Australian High Commission, London, (probably to the Prime Minister’s Department), 14 January 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
least 142°E and 136½°E. Officer also advised that the only other likely claim within the sector would be Norwegian, for territory discovered by the Norwegia in 1930 and situated between Enderby Land and Kemp Land. Officer explained, however, that Mawson had struck an agreement with Riiser-Larsen that the Discovery would operate up to 40° East and leave Riiser-Larsen to operate west of that point. Officer did not indicate any concerns about formal Norwegian claims, since the Norwegian Government was unlikely to formalise them.

In providing its constitutional advice, the Attorney-General’s Department cautioned the Minister not to follow the precedent set for the Ross Dependency, when an Order-in-Council was issued under the British Settlement Act 1887. The Attorney-General’s Department believed that that Act appeared to apply ‘only to territories acquired by settlement’ and that the issue of an Order-in-Council under it was ‘not quite appropriate where the claim to sovereignty is not based on settlement’. As the Attorney-General’s Department understood the situation, the requirement was for ‘some formal notification of the claim to sovereignty … rather than an instrument providing for the government of the territories’. If that were correct, the Attorney-General’s Department recommended that the most appropriate instrument would be an ‘Order-in-Council declaring the territories to be part of the British Dominions’.

The advisory memorandum was signed by the Secretary of the Attorney-General’s Department, the highly respected Sir George Knowles, a confidant of Sir Robert Garran. Therefore, his advice was likely to be considered seriously and presumed appropriate to be acted upon. He had included a draft Order-in-Council that stated that the territories concerned had been discovered, as well as visited and

---

30 Copy of briefing paper with Annexes entitled ‘Antarctica’, presumably prepared by Keith Officer, Department of External Affairs as it was initialled ‘KO’, 26 February 1932, NAA: Series A981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
31 Copy of briefing paper entitled ‘Antarctica’.
32 Copy of briefing paper entitled ‘Antarctica’.
33 Memorandum Attorney-General’s Department to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 2 March 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
34 Memorandum 2 March 1932.
35 Copy of briefing paper entitled ‘Antarctica’.
36 Memorandum 2 March 1932.
37 Sir Robert Garran was the founding Secretary of the Attorney-General’s Department in 1901 and together with Sir John Quick produced the Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth (1901). Sir Robert Garran was part of the Federation movement. Australian Dictionary of Biography Online Edition.
re-visited 'from time to time, by British subjects'. 38 Knowles doubted, however, 'whether such grounds are sufficient to confer the right to annexation'. 39 Knowles's opinion was contrary to the agreed policy and, in fact, reflected the view of M.F. Lindley, an eminent American international legal expert, who had published on questions of annexation of Antarctic Regions in the American Journal of International Law. 40 Knowles was not suggesting to Latham that the matter of an Australian claim should be abandoned; rather he was warning him about a respected legal opinion outside of the Empire and sounding a note of caution.

Besides suggesting that an Order-in-Council was the most appropriate instrument in Australia's case, Knowles also provided wording which he believed appropriately identified the territories in question. These were:

all the islands and territories in the Antarctic Seas which are situated south of the 60th degree of South Latitude and which lie between the 160th degree of East Longitude and the 142nd degree of East Longitude and between the 138th degree of East Longitude and the 45th degree of East Longitude. 41

Although Knowles had not mentioned Adélie Land, he had in fact delineated its boundaries at between 142° and 138°. Since no agreement had been reached with France with respect to the Adélie Land boundaries, the British government removed any reference to them. The rest of Knowles's suggested words remained, however, and were reflected in the 1933 Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act. 42

With discussions now focused on the third step, the role of the scientific lobby was now concluded and press scrutiny would be counterproductive, particularly as international sensitivities were being considered. While the press and the scientists could be managed easily enough, managing Mawson, as the Australia Government had experienced over time, was not always straightforward. Mawson was obviously aware that the staged process had not been completed and was not keen to retire from the scene. He had written to Frank Strahan, Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department and External Affairs, suggesting that he should go to

38 Memorandum 2 March 1932.
39 Memorandum 2 March 1932.
40 Memorandum 2 March 1932.
41 Memorandum 2 March 1932.
42 See copy of Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act 1933 at p. 235A
London with a view to ‘obtaining proper recognition of our discoveries’. Officer acted quickly to counter Mawson’s move with advice that the final stage in the process should be carried out ‘without arousing public indignation in Norway’. Officer believed that, given Mawson’s past tactless intervention, ‘if he intervenes in this matter at all, damage may result’. With diplomacy replacing journeys of discovery, Australian bureaucrats saw Mawson’s role as having come to an end. Thus, Keith Officer sent a polite and respectful letter assuring Mawson that the matter would be handled by Latham personally in London. Mawson was obviously placated, as his short response to External Affairs expressed ‘pleasure that suitable action is being taken’. If Mawson were to play any part during this last stage of the process, it would be to clarify a point, rather than to take an active role.

The final step should have been a mere formality, once the two governments had agreed on the form of instrument. However, as Latham was to discover, negotiations for the final step were shaping up to be as protracted as those relating to the BANZARE. The conundrum of reconciling Australia’s Antarctic goals with wider imperial goals had plagued the Empire’s Antarctic policy since Amery outlined his desire for British Antarctic domination in 1920. After his discussions with the current Dominions Secretary, J.H. Thomas, Latham made a record of them and sent it to Thomas in order to ensure that no future misunderstanding would arise. The letter noted that Thomas wished the manner of securing international recognition for ‘territorial claims of the Empire in the Antarctic regions’, and the specific question relating to the method of bringing the Commonwealth Sector under Australian control, to be resolved together. In order to achieve what he must have known to be an impossible task, since international recognition was a major question on its own, Thomas questioned whether any additional steps were ‘necessary or desirable’ to establish the bases of claims.

43 Letter Mawson to Frank Strahan, Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 11 April 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
44 Memorandum Keith Officer to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 9 May 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
45 Memorandum Keith Officer to The Secretary, External Affairs, 9 May 1932.
46 Copy of letter John McLaren, Secretary Prime Minister’s Department (External Affairs) to Douglas Mawson, 23 May 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
47 Letter Douglas Mawson to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 26 May 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
49 Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
Latham, on the other hand, had not gone to London to discuss international recognition and was unprepared for the cocktail that Thomas presented. These matters ‘might, I suggest, be left to future discussion which could be conducted in a reasonably leisurely manner,’ Latham suggested. Latham also quickly dismissed further exploration in the ‘immediate future’ if it required government expenditure; nor ‘indeed’, he added, ‘does it appear to be necessary.’ The continuing interrogation of all the issues associated with Antarctic control, rather than the specific focus on step three, exasperated Latham. As his letter notes, he had curtly reminded Thomas that the recent expeditions led by Mawson were sufficient to ‘afford a better basis of claim than any other country appears to possess in the unappropriated regions of either the Arctic or the Antarctic areas’. Latham was surprised that the question of ‘occupation’ had again been raised. He understood that ‘occupation’ did not mean physical occupation and cautioned that occupation would necessarily be so limited in character that it might have the unfortunate effect of prejudicing, rather than assisting, the claims which may now be made upon the basis of exploration and discovery in regions where effective occupation is not possible.

Unfortunately, when Latham arrived in London in mid-1932, Thomas had yet to receive legal advice. Nor did Thomas appear to have been sufficiently briefed to be decisive. Latham sensed the problem and ventured some personal observations. Above all, he said, it would be ‘injudicious’ to refer to the bases of claims in any formal instrument because such references would provoke controversy. In order to avoid problems, particularly with Norway, Latham suggested to Thomas that no reference should be made to the ‘sector principle’. Nonetheless, he indicated that the area to be claimed ‘should be described by meridians of longitude meeting at the South Pole’. Latham’s long involvement with the Antarctic policy and what the domestic constituency had come to expect informed his advice. Thomas, on the other hand, bereft of a full brief, was thinking aloud.

50 Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
51 Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
52 Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
53 Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
54 Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
55 Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
Latham made it clear to Thomas that his preoccupation in these discussions was about ‘whether any and what steps should be taken under our municipal law to exercise control over these regions’.\textsuperscript{56} Initially, Latham thought using the \textit{British Settlements Act 1887} was appropriate, to be followed by action under Section 122 of the Commonwealth Constitution.\textsuperscript{57} That method had already been discussed between Bruce and Amery.\textsuperscript{58} If the British Settlements Act were called upon, the approval of both Houses of the Australian Parliament would not be necessary. Latham suggested to Lyons from London that, ‘as a matter of politics, obtaining approval of both Houses’ was appropriate.\textsuperscript{59} That process would also be appropriate when making laws, as required for the area, under Section 122 of the Constitution.\textsuperscript{60} Cabinet adopted Latham’s second option on 14 June 1932 when it formally gave its approval for the Commonwealth Government to assume control over the ‘Commonwealth Sector of the Antarctic Continent after action under S.122 of the Constitution’.\textsuperscript{61} In giving its approval, Cabinet understood that, while control of the territory would need to be ‘effective, it would not need to be continuous’.\textsuperscript{62} Rather than canvass the question any further with the British Government, Lyons asked Latham to ‘inform His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom’ of Australia’s decision.\textsuperscript{63} The British legal officers subsequently agreed with Australia’s decision, noting that action taken to assert British title was ‘ample sufficient’.\textsuperscript{64} The legal officers also confirmed that the territory proposed for Australian control should follow the precedents already set by the process adopted for the Falkland Islands and the Ross Sea Dependencies, that the relevant meridians of longitude should be defined as meeting at the South Pole.\textsuperscript{65} Until the final step was completed, the Australian Government continued to take the initiative and to lead the British Government to give its support.

\textsuperscript{56} Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
\textsuperscript{57} Latham to Thomas 30 May 1932.
\textsuperscript{58} See Chapter 4 of this thesis.
\textsuperscript{60} Latham to Lyons 31 May 1932.
\textsuperscript{61} Cabinet Decision on Antarctica, 14 June 1932, NAA: Series A 1838/283, Item 1495/3/2/1/1, part 1. Section 122 of the Australian Constitution reads: ‘The Parliament may make laws for the government of any territory surrendered by any State to and accepted by the Commonwealth, or of any territory placed by the Queen under the authority of and accepted by the Commonwealth, or otherwise acquired by the Commonwealth, and may allow the representation of such territory in either House of the Parliament to the extent and on the terms which it thinks fit.’
\textsuperscript{62} Copy of Submission For Cabinet: Antarctic, Commonwealth Sector, Agenda Copy No. 21, 2 June 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
\textsuperscript{63} Cable initialed ‘JL’ (Lyons) to J.G. Latham 15 June 1932, NAA: Series A.981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
\textsuperscript{64} Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU29071932, pp. 141-142.
\textsuperscript{65} Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU29071932, pp. 137, 141-142.
On 5 October 1932 the Dominions Secretary sent draft wording of the Order-in-Council to the Australian Prime Minister. The instrument provided for territory in the Antarctic seas, comprising all islands and territories other than Adélie Land situated south of 60° South latitude and lying between 160° East and 45° East longitude, as territory 'over which His Majesty has sovereign rights'. The draft had adopted the words Knowles had provided, except for the delimitation of the Adélie Land boundaries. As diplomatic negotiations between the British and French Governments over the boundaries of Adélie Land had stalled before the war, this unresolved question was reflected in the wording of both the Order-in-Council and the subsequent Australian legislation to approve the acceptance of control of Antarctic territory.

On 7 December 1932 the Lyons Cabinet formally approved the proposal for the issue of the Order-in-Council 'to place the Australian Sector under the authority of the Commonwealth' after necessary action had been taken under Section 122 of the Constitution. Cabinet also decided that, 'unless there was some special reason' for its immediate issue, it should not be issued until some time in 1933, so that the Australian Government 'had an opportunity to consider whether any and what legislation was desirable'. Without giving any special reason for the delay, the Australian Government advised the Dominions Office that legislation would not be introduced immediately because Parliament had adjourned 'until some time next year'.

Australian concern related to discussions with the State Governments about a Federal assumption of fisheries powers, at that time in the hands of the states. The Dominions Office was advised that, while the Bill for an Act to accept the territory would go before Parliament in 1933, proclamation would be fixed for 24 August 1936. The Order-in-Council could only come into operation on the day

---

66 Cable Secretary of State for Dominion Affair to Prime Minister, 4 October 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1 and NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
67 For a copy of the Order-in-Council see Bush, Volume II, Doc. AU07021933, pp. 142-143.
68 Cabinet Decision on Antarctica, Agenda No. 404, 7 December 1932, NAA: Series A 1838/283, Item 1495/3/2/1/1, part 1.
69 Minute Keith Officer to the Minister, 10 January 1933, NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1.
70 Cable to the Dominions Office, initialled J.G.L (Latham), 8 December 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item No. ANT 2, part 1.
the legislation was proclaimed. From the international political perspective, the delay was unwise. However, the timeline was necessary to allow for the Commonwealth Whaling Act to come into force and regulations under that Act to be issued.\(^{71}\) Whaling and other fisheries laws had been hitherto administered by the various State Governments.

The Dominions Office was unhappy with the delays, suddenly realising that these could cause some uncomfortable international political consequences. Australia had always been concerned that speed was of the essence and now it was concerned that full consultations with the States must be undertaken. However, the urgent tone adopted by the Dominions Secretary did not consider Australia’s Federal system of government. Instead, the Dominions Secretary was concerned about the consequences of a forthcoming Norwegian expedition, noting that ‘it would seem unwise to delay’ issuing the Order-in-Council beyond the end of January 1933, on the grounds that the Norwegian expedition proposed to ‘go ashore at Enderby Land before proceeding westwards to the Weddell Sea’\(^{72}\). The Dominions Office had made a serious argument that could not be ignored. By issuing the Order-in-Council, the Empire’s claims would be consolidated.

Thomas was also concerned that it was essential to issue the Order-in-Council in advance of the East Greenland judgment.\(^{73}\) That judgment was imminent and it was likely that it would ‘lay down general principles regarding the acquisition of sovereignty in polar regions which might be embarrassing’.\(^{74}\) After Norway had declared its intentions to occupy territory in Eastern Greenland in July 1931, the Danish Government that same year instituted proceedings against the Norwegian Government at the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague. Denmark claimed sovereignty over all of Greenland.\(^{75}\) The case concerned the value of old territorial claims which had remained without effective occupation and which had

\(^{71}\) Draft cablegram for Dominions Office, London, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1. While there was no date or number on this cable to indicate that it has been sent, subsequent events suggest that such as cable was sent to the Dominions Office as they questioned the length of time it would take from the passing of the Act to its Proclamation.

\(^{72}\) Cable Secretary of State for dominion Affairs to Department of External Affairs, 9 January 1933, NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1.

\(^{73}\) Cable 9 January 1933.

\(^{74}\) Cable 9 January 1933.

been abandoned by the claimant where no administrative control had been instituted.76 The Dominions Secretary stressed that, from the ‘international standpoint’, therefore, it would be unwise to delay the issue of the Order-in-Council.77 That frank admission by Thomas was the clearest indication yet that the British Empire could no longer assert its dominance over the Antarctic because it was the pre-eminent world power, but would need to abide by legal principles that became established over polar regions.

Thomas believed, nonetheless, that in issuing the Order-in-Council sufficient publicity had been given to the desire of establishing British sovereignty over the territory and that this information should be received favourably in foreign countries.78 The only country in recent years to wish to acquire Antarctic territory, he said, was Norway ‘and in the case of that country special considerations apply’.79 While he did not indicate what these special considerations might be, Thomas believed that Norway would be unlikely to commit itself to recognition, ‘whether express or implied’.80 Yet he was adamant that the Order-in-Council should be issued ‘without further regard to possible reactions in foreign countries’ and ‘as a matter of courtesy’, copies would be given to both the French and the Norwegian Governments.81 Because Parliament had risen for the summer break, the Australian Government did not respond until early January, three months after Thomas’s cabled advice, thus maintaining its position not to take action until 1933.82

The Order-in-Council was issued on 7 February 1933. The following month *The Sydney Morning Herald* published a commentary on its significance, and hailed the possibility of ‘commercial riches’ in the Australian sector, whaling being one of them. However, the writer went on to suggest that of ‘even greater importance than the whaling industry to Australia is the key which meteorologists believe lies in the

76 See full text Hyde, pp. 732-738. Norway lost the East Greenland case against Denmark after the judgment was announced on 5 April 1933, which had declared Norway’s annexation of East Greenland invalid. The judgment found in favour of Denmark by 12 votes to 2. Extract from Foreign Office Print No.N.1428/1428/30,
77 Cable 9 January 1933.
78 Cable Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Prime Minister, 4 October 1932,
NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1 and Series A 981, Item No. ANT 2, part 2.
79 Cable 4 October 1932.
80 Cable 4 October 1932.
81 Cable 4 October 1932.
82 Cable Secretary External Affairs to The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs,
Antarctic to the vagaries of the weather’. The writer of the article went under the name ‘Explorer’ and the article was meticulous in its historical research. The *nom de plume* and reference to the importance of meteorology together suggest that the article was probably written by Mawson.

The Government anticipated smooth passage of legislation through Parliament. Keith Officer advised Latham that as the Australian National Research Council had made several representations in favour of the action taken to date, he believed it would be advisable to invite Sir David Orme Masson to make a statement, since the ANRC had played a significant role throughout. Such a step would have publicly and formally acknowledged the significant role played by the organised scientific lobby in contributing successfully to a matter of Australian foreign policy. However, such a statement was never made. Instead, Latham made no mention of the role of science as a factor in raising Antarctic awareness. The statement given to the press indicated that the sole reason for Australia wishing to control Antarctica was in order to protect the whaling industry from over-exploitation. It also stated that, once the Australian Government accepted responsibility for the proposed Antarctic sector, it would make laws and regulations for regulating the whaling industry. And so it was that a somewhat one-dimensional reason was put forward publicly, at the final juncture, as Australia’s official reason for wishing to have control over a portion of Antarctica. The Lyons Government had, in fact, departed from previous public statements that provided a range of reasons for Australian Antarctic exploration, science being prominent amongst them. The fact that Latham’s statement was made against the background of the Great Depression doubtless shaped its content. His Tabling Speech, however, would give a rather fuller justification.

On 17 February 1933, Latham instructed the Solicitor-General, in conjunction with the Attorney-General’s Department, to prepare ‘a Bill to accept the Territory, to name it and give the Governor-General in Council power to make

---

84 Memorandum Keith Officer to The Minister, 26 January 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
ordinances with regard to its peace, order and good government’. Keith Officer later advised the Attorney-General’s Department that, with respect to ordinances, the situation for what he termed the Australian Antarctic Dependency was ‘more analogous’ to the Ross Dependency than to the Falkland Islands Dependencies. The draft Bill for an Act, submitted by Knowles, provided for ‘the acceptance of certain territory in the Antarctic Seas as a Territory under the authority of the Commonwealth and for the Government thereof’. Rather than naming the territory a ‘dependency’ in line with the two other British territories, Knowles proposed instead that in his opinion ‘it is necessary for the Commonwealth to enact legislation accepting the Sector as a Territory of the Commonwealth’. It should be titled, he said, ‘the Australian Antarctic Territory’. The ‘Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act 1933’ would cover

That part of the territory in the Antarctic seas which comprises all the islands and territories, other than Adelie Land, situated south of the 60th degree south latitude and lying between the 160th degree east longitude and the 45th degree east longitude.

Knowles advised that it was ‘expedient to provide for the Governor-General to make Ordinances having the force of law in the Sector’. Upon accepting Knowles’s advice, Australia had broken with tradition. Its name alone signalled to the world Australia’s close association with its new territorial acquisition. Thus, Australia became the first nation to associate its name with a piece of Antarctic territory.

The Tabling Speech anticipated that, when the Bill passed through the Parliament, the Government would be able to make ordinances for the Territory’s good government and, ‘in particular, for the regulation of whaling in accordance with the International Convention of 1931, and for the protection of other animals

---

86 Handwritten minute initialled J.G.L. (Latham) dated 17 February 1933 and copy of undated Memorandum, probably of same date, to the Commonwealth Solicitor-General from Keith Officer Acting Secretary, Department of External Affairs, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
87 Memorandum Keith Officer to the Secretary, Attorney-General’s Department, 16 May 1933, NAA: Series A 432, Item 1953/3228, part 1.
88 Memorandum Geo S. Knowles to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, 3 March 1933 and attachment, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
89 Memorandum 3 March 1933.
90 Memorandum 3 March 1933.
91 Copy of ‘A Bill for An Act to provide for the acceptance of certain territory in the Antarctic Seas as a Territory under the authority of the Commonwealth and for the Government thereof,’ NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
92 Memorandum 3 March 1933.
and birds'. The lengthy parliamentary speech provided the opportunity to canvass all the other economic possibilities that had been part of the advocacy during the entire course of the process.

The role of the British Government was also slowly coming to an end with respect to imperial processes, although British diplomats would need to play a major role in negotiations with France and Norway over recognition of the Australian Antarctic Territory within the borders proclaimed. But now the Australian government’s role was evolving. In one instance, the Norwegian Consul-General, Mr Fay, rather than making a formal request through the Foreign Office, asked Latham to retain the names given by Norwegian explorers within what he termed the Australian dependency. Fay claimed that he had instigated the discussions and was not acting upon advice from his Government. Fay did not mention any particular Antarctic names, but Latham indicated that he would give this request ‘sympathetic consideration’. Latham’s response suggested that he had made up his mind; but he asked Orme Masson’s view, noting that the request seemed to be quite ‘reasonable’ and would assist in confirming Australia’s title.

Orme Masson, on the other hand, did not agree that Norwegian names should be given to territory in the Australian sector. He reminded Latham that the Norwegian request to have Norwegian names in the Australian sector could cause some ‘difficulty’, because they had ‘overlapped’ territory already named by Mawson. Rather than adopt Masson’s advice, Latham informed him that he had arranged for a map to be prepared which would include all the names conferred by the BANZARE and all those conferred by the Norwegians. ‘It will thus be possible to see what names, if any, overlap, and to make up our minds regarding these’.

Keith Officer asked Orme Masson and Captain Davis to advise as to any names

93 Tabling Speech for the Minister entitled ‘Australian Antarctic Territory’, initialled ‘KO’ (Keith Officer, 7 March 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
94 Tabling Speech.
95 Note for file initialled ‘KO’, 17 March 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1,
‘which should be omitted or which have been omitted and should be inserted’. The British Government was not consulted about names for this map, which was designed to accompany the Australian legislation. In the tabling speech, Latham chose to acknowledge the Norwegian names, such as ‘the eastern part of Queen Maud Land’ and Lars Christensen Land, but emphasised that these areas would be part of the Australian Antarctic Territory. Latham’s speech diplomatically placated Norwegian sensitivities, and made it clear to Norway and the rest of the world that, despite their Norwegian names, these lands were part of the Australian sovereign claim.

There is no doubt that the Tabling Speech was cleverly crafted, and it was designed to ensure that Australia’s role in winning the Australian Antarctic was central. The discovery of the Australian Antarctic Territory, Latham announced, had been due to ‘Australian enterprise’. Latham recited the ‘considerable, actual and potential economic importance’ of the region. It was important, not only with respect to a regulated whaling industry, but for the economic development of fur-bearing animals and bird life. He drew parallels with Alaska, noting that it had been thought valueless, but contained great gold fields, ‘one of the later Eldorados of the world’. These sentiments drew heavily on previous discussions and submissions made by Mawson and the ANRC.

Apart from the commercial possibilities designed to record that Australia had acquired a valuable portion of a valuable continent, Latham reminded the House that the territory was of strategic significance to Australia because of its proximity. He observed that ‘it is quite possible that embarrassing circumstances would arise if any other power assumed the control and administration of the area’. Science was

101 On the mainland the Australian Antarctic Territory comprised: ‘the eastern part of Queen Maud Land, Enderby Land, Kemp Land, MacRobertson Land, Lars Christensen Land, Princess Elizabeth Land, Queen Mary Land, Knox Land, Banzare Land, Wilkes Land, King George V. Land and Oates Land’, see CPD, Session 1932, p. 1949.
102 CPD, Session 1932, p. 1952.
103 CPD, Session 1932, p. 1953.
104 CPD, Session 1932, p. 1952.
discussed within the framework of weather forecasting. Latham’s tabling speech had balanced the commercial potential of the Australian Antarctic Territory with scientific activity and strategic concerns. He concluded his statement by urging that the matter should be treated in a ‘non-party way’. The statement to Parliament encapsulated the position of Australian Governments since Amery had produced his 1920 letter with its Antarctic proposal. Bi-partisan support was assured as Member after Member of the Labor Opposition spoke in favour of the Bill.

While Antarctica allowed Australia another opportunity to shed elements of its colonial reliance on the metropolitan power, it also highlighted the remaining gaps in Commonwealth-State relations. Under the new Federal Ordinance, the states would be requested to refer to the Commonwealth Government under Section 51 (xxxvii) of the Australian Constitution the matter of regulating whaling ‘within’ Australia’s territorial waters. The Solicitor-General had already advised that the Commonwealth Government in pursuance of Section 51 (x) of the Constitution has power to enact laws relating to fisheries in Australian waters ‘beyond Territorial waters’. The view in Canberra was that these constitutional questions between the Federal and State Governments, which would require extensive consultations, would take ‘some time’, thus delaying the Act’s proclamation.

As Marcus Haward has noted, fishing had been an ‘important activity’ of the colonies. From the time of responsible government in the 1850s, each colonial legislature enacted various measures to regulate and control the industry in its adjacent waters. Haward further observes that these colonial laws ‘contained

---

105 CPD, Session 1932, p. 1953.
106 CPD, Session 1932, p. 1953.
108 The emphasis was in the advisory Department of External Affairs File Note, 24 August 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
110 The underlined words in this summary were underlined in the File note on External Affairs file dated 24 August 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2. Section 51 (x) relates to 'Fisheries in Australian waters beyond territorial limits'.
111 Department of External Affairs File Note, 24 August 1933.
some degree of "extra-territorial competence", although the reach of this legislation was rarely tested". Haward has demonstrated the reluctance of the Federal Government to become involved in the fisheries industry, although there was no outright opposition to a federal role, particularly in times of disputes between States. The Antarctic legislation highlighted the need for overall federal control of fisheries.

The passage of the legislation through Parliament, accepting the Australian Antarctic Territory, fulfilled Australian aspirations, articulated and made prominent by the Australian scientific community and the learned societies since the final decades of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the most significant achievement of the Australian scientific community was their success in collaborating with the Australian Government. The Australian Government had never been embarrassed about seeking the advice of the ANRC, because its bureaucracy did not have the level of expertise that existed amongst the ranks of the scientific community. It was this collaboration that ensured that the Australian Government had access to knowledge superior to that which appeared to be coming out of Downing Street. Had the Australian Government relied solely on information from the British Government, it is very likely that the Australian Antarctic Territory would never have been born, because of British Government equivocation and opinions that were designed to protect their other holdings in other parts of Antarctica. For Australia, its experience with the British Government over Antarctica showed that it was possible to work within the established imperial framework to achieve national goals. At times, however, the Australian Government felt that Downing Street had insufficient local knowledge on which Australia could rely. For its part, Australia had to learn to consider wider international sensitivities and consequences, as it began to realise that, in the wake of the Great War, British imperial activities were being placed increasingly under international scrutiny. In particular, Norway and France had yet to give their recognition to the Australian Antarctic Territory. It took another three years before the drawn-out diplomacy with these two countries was concluded, with Australia playing a significant role in briefing British diplomats until recognition was achieved.

113 Haward, p. 70
114 Haward, pp. 78-81.
Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act 1933

Assented to 13th June, 1933

An Act to provide for the acceptance of certain territory in the Antarctic seas as a territory under the authority of the Commonwealth and for the Government thereof.

Be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, the Senate, and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, as follows:-

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act 1933.

Acceptance of Territory

2. That part of the territory in the Antarctic seas which comprises all the islands and territories, other than Adelie Land, situated south of the 60th degree south latitude and lying between the 160th degree east longitude and the 45th degree east longitude, is hereby declared to be accepted by the Commonwealth as a territory under the authority of the Commonwealth, by the name of the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Ordinances

3. — (1.) The Governor-General may make Ordinances having the force of law in and in relation to the Territory.

(2.) every such Ordinance shall –

(a) be notified in the Gazette;

(b) take effect from the date of notification, or from such date, whether before or after such date of notification, as is specified in the Ordinance; and

(c) be laid before both Houses of the Parliament within thirty days of the making thereof, or, if the Parliament is not then sitting, within thirty days after the next meeting of the Parliament.

(3) If either House of the Parliament passes a resolution, of which notice has been given at any time within fifteen sitting days after such Ordinance has been laid before the House, disallowing the Ordinance, the Ordinance shall thereupon cease to have effect.
Chapter 9: 1932-1939 – A Time for Diplomacy

While domestic constitutional matters were being finalised, the Australian Government turned its attention to international political issues that continued to cast a shadow over Australia’s control of what had become known as the Commonwealth sector. On the one hand, diplomatic approaches to France over the boundaries of Adélie Land had stalled since before the Great War and had never been reactivated. On the other hand, recent incursions by the Norwegia, a privately funded Norwegian expedition, into territory identified in the published summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference as territory that possessed an inchoate British title, were mired in controversy. Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen, the Norwegian commander, claimed to have raised the Norwegian flag and taken possession of newly discovered territory between Enderby and Kemp Lands. Rather than one foreign enclave, at which Bruce had earlier baulked, Australia was facing the possibility of two. These two unresolved international political problems clouded what should have been a time of gratification: the eventual acquisition of a portion of Antarctica, which Australians had craved for almost half a century. Although British imperial diplomacy remained in the hands of the Foreign Office, the Australian Government was determined that diplomatic negotiations with France and Norway would require Australian endorsement. These two prolonged negotiations – one a comedy of errors and the other a tense game – are presented here in careful detail because they have not previously been reconstructed from the official documents of diplomacy.

The Question of Adélie Land

The enduring problem at the centre of Antarctic discussions between the Australian and British Governments related to Adélie Land. British ‘fishing expeditions’ before the Great War were counterproductive and had aggravated the problem. Whenever the British Government sought to impose boundaries for Adélie Land, it had carelessly changed those boundaries with each approach to France. Australia had hoped that France might agree to exchange Adélie Land for territory elsewhere, but the British Government believed France would not countenance the idea. By February 1933, France had not come to the negotiating table, and with
British concern to finalise the third step of the staged process that had been recommended at the 1926 Imperial Conference, the British Government had no choice but to issue an Order-in-Council. The instrument mentioned Adélie Land but did not identify its boundaries.\(^1\) Since the Australian Antarctic Territory would be a sector with boundaries meeting at the South Pole, so too would the French claim. The Dominions Secretary informed the Australian Government that, although the French Government had not assigned any limits of depth to Adélie Land ... it would be impossible to resist a claim by the French Government that Adélie Land should be regarded as extending to the South Pole if such a claim were to be put forward.\(^2\)

The Foreign Office instructed Lord Tyrrell, the British Ambassador in Paris, to advise the French Government on the morning of 14 February 1933 of the contents of the Order-in-Council, noting that it would be published in the *London Gazette* on that day.\(^3\) The formal notification of British Antarctic intentions brought no immediate response from France. However, seven months later, the French Embassy informed the British Foreign Ministry that France defined Adélie Land at 60° South and between 136° and 147° East and asked the British Government for their views.\(^4\) The boundary provided by France was, in fact, the same boundary contained in the British Ambassador's correspondence of 1913 to the French Foreign Ministry.\(^5\) Australia did not accept that these coordinates represented the extent of Adélie Land’s coastline as sighted by Dumont d’Urville, and held that the British Government had made a mistake that should be corrected.

In 1933, after an investigation of British government documents on External Affairs files, it was discovered not only that the British Ambassador’s advice in 1913 about the location of Adélie Land was incorrect, but that its extent was ‘unknown in England at the time’.\(^6\) The External Affairs investigation also revealed that it was not until the Admiralty had prepared information for the delegates to the

---

1 Cable 4 October 1932.
2 Cable 4 October 1932.
3 Letter A. W. A. Leeper to The Right Honourable Lord Tyrrell, 7 February 1933, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2
6 Department of External Affairs Brief ‘Boundaries of Adelie Land’ undated but seen by the Minister on 21 December 1933, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
1926 Imperial Conference from Dumont d’Urville’s own chart, as published by the French Government in 1840 and reproduced in atlas form in 1847, that the Admiralty restricted the limits of Adélie Land to between 136 ½° and 142° East.⁷

France never sought to correct the various claims made by the British Government on the location of Adélie Land, and its 1924 published decrees assuming control of its Antarctic territories did not delimit the coastline of its continental claim. At the time, the French decree respecting Adélie Land had aroused the interest of the Australian National Research Council, which believed that a formal case should be made for Australia to administer the region. A brief prepared by the ANRC along these lines was discussed at the 1926 Imperial Conference. However, it was rejected on the grounds that the validity of the French claim could only be contested on grounds that would not impair the validity of some of the British claims.⁸

Although by 1933 Australia had reluctantly accepted that a foreign enclave would be located beneath its southern borders, it was only prepared to agree to its limits as seen by the French explorer. But why would Australia object to such a minor adjustment to the boundaries, particularly when the proposed Australian sector would comprise almost half of Antarctica? External Affairs was concerned that the current French suggestion that Adélie Land should extend in an easterly direction to 147° East would allow the French claim to extend into new territory that Mawson had discovered and claimed.⁹ Mawson, as External Affairs observed, had deliberately located the AAE Main Base during his 1911-1914 expedition at Cape Denison, at Commonwealth Bay at 142° East, in the belief that Dumont d’Urville’s Adélie Land did not extend beyond that point. In addition, Mawson’s formal proclamation on 5 January 1931 claimed territory lying between 142° and 160° East.¹⁰ Australia, therefore, did not wish to be put in the position of defending what could be perceived as a counter claim, if Adélie Land’s eastern boundary was located at 147° East. The Australian Government had admitted the boundary of Adélie Land to be as indicated on the map accompanying the Antarctic Territory

---

⁷ Brief ‘Boundaries of Adelie Land’ (undated). See also Chapter 4 of this thesis.
⁸ Brief ‘Boundaries of Adelie Land’ (undated).
⁹ Brief ‘Boundaries of Adelie Land’ (undated).
¹⁰ Brief ‘Boundaries of Adelie Land’ (undated).
Acceptance Act and inserted in the official Hansard record. The sketch map shows the boundary of the French claim delineated at 142° East.\(^{11}\)

In support of its case that the limits of Adélie Land should be as seen by Dumont d’Urville, the Australian Government turned to Orme Masson and Mawson for advice.\(^{12}\) Orme Masson was puzzled by the British Government’s continued questioning of the geographical limits of Adélie Land, since that question ‘was answered once for all by the actual definition of Adelie Land embodied by the discoverer himself in his chart and official reports.’\(^{13}\) The explorer’s definition, Orme Masson said, was accepted at the time and ‘later reproduced by the French Government, as well as by the British Admiralty’: it extended from 136 ½° to 142° East Longitude, and ‘No other criterion is logically admissible’.\(^{14}\)

The source of the British Government’s conundrum appears to have been a sequence of events, whereby an error in transcription in a non-existent Australian newspaper referred to as the *Hobart Town Review* had been accepted by the British Government as an authentic report of Dumont d’Urville’s discovery. It was Orme Masson who discovered that an article headed ‘Review’ and published in the *Sydney Herald* on 20 March 1840 was in fact a summary of all the Hobart Town newspapers.\(^{15}\) This ‘Review’ noted that the extent of Dumont d’Urville’s Adélie Land ‘as seen, was about 150 miles between 66° and 67° lat. 136 and 147 long.’\(^{16}\) It was the longitudinal figure of ‘147’ that became the point of contention.

The Hobart Town newspapers had been the first to record the details of the French expedition when it returned there from Antarctica on 17 February 1840. The *Sydney Herald* reporter probably picked up the geographic coordinates for Adélie Land from the English translation of a French report that appeared in the *Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen’s Land Gazette* on 28 February 1840. In the French version the newspaper situated Adélie Land between ‘136° and 142° East

\(^{11}\) See Map at p. 235B.

\(^{12}\) Brief ‘Boundaries of Adelie Land’.

\(^{13}\) Letter D. Orme Masson to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 8 January 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2. Orme Masson’s letter acknowledged one sent to him on 3 January 1934 which enclosed the brief on ‘Boundaries of Adelie Land’. His response was also entitled ‘Boundaries of Adelie Land’ which he attached to his letter.

\(^{14}\) Letter 8 January 1934.

\(^{15}\) Letter 8 January 1934.

\(^{16}\) Letter 8 January 1934.
Longitude’. In its English translation, that newspaper placed the location of Adélie Land from ‘136° W. to 147° of longitude on the other.’ The English translation was incorrect in every respect and showed Dumont d’Urville sailing from East to West Antarctica as the figures show and claiming a vast extent of territory. On the other hand, the *Hobart Town Advertiser* of 28 February 1840, recorded that the part traversed about 150 miles in extent, is comprised between 66° and 67° South Latitude, on one part, and between 136° and 142° degrees of East Longitude on the other. The mean height is 1300 feet above the horizon.

In order to prove that the *Sydney Herald* article was incorrect, Orme Masson calculated that at

latitude 66° to 67°, one degree of longitude measures about 24 nautical miles. From 136° to 147° is 11° and therefore measures about 264 miles – not 150 miles, as stated. On the other hand, d’Urville’s own limits (136 1/2° to 142°) give a stretch just half as long, i.e. 5 1/2° or about 132 miles; and this, if allowance be made for the deviations of the actual coast line, is compatible with an approximate guess of “as seen, about 150 miles”.

Orme Masson had referred to the French explorer’s own charts and then confirmed their accuracy by means of a mathematical formula. He suggested that these calculations proved that either the reporter of the Hobart newspaper or its printer had made an error which was ‘copied without question’ by the Sydney newspaper. He urged a ‘definite solution’ to the problem because Mawson’s 1911-14 expedition had ‘discovered and partly explored’ King George V Land which lies to the east of 142° East.

Douglas Mawson was equally adamant that the contested area required a resolution in Australia’s favour. He emphasised that, due to its accessibility, ‘the most valuable stretch of coastline’ for economic development in eastern Antarctica lay between 138° and 146° East. Mawson also called for every effort to be made ‘to combat foreign claims’ to this area and was critical of the British Embassy in

---

19 *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 28 February 1840.
20 Letter 8 January 1934.
21 Letter 8 January 1934.
22 Letter 8 January 1934.
23 Letter Douglas Mawson to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs 6 February 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item. ANT 48, part 2.
Paris for raising the status and extent of Adélie Land in 1911 and again in 1913. Prior to that time, he said, the French claim had been ‘a very weak one’. Mawson also called on mathematics to resolve the problem. He reduced the amount of coastline even further by suggesting it was ‘about 120 miles’, as seen, but never landed on, by Dumont d’Urville. Mawson pointed out that none of the charts extended Adélie Land between 136° and 147° East, but located it between 136½° and 142° East. Mawson believed that the British note to the French Foreign Ministry in 1913 probably referred to geographical miles, thereby generously crediting the French explorer with ‘150 miles of arc’. Therefore, the French claim reported as lying between 66° and 67° South and 136° and 147° East and ‘as seen to have been about 150 miles’ was erroneous.

Until the calculations were made by Orme Masson and Douglas Mawson, the British bureaucracy had accepted at face value Dumont d’Urville’s report as transcribed in the Hobart Town newspapers, without questioning the discrepancies that might have crept into the transcription. The British Admiralty’s 1919 memorandum referred to in previous chapters was surprisingly careless, particularly as the Adélie Land question remained an unresolved diplomatic problem between two Empires. Had the British Admiralty checked its sources and confirmed Dumont d’Urville’s reports, as Orme Masson and Douglas Mawson did by using a mathematical formula, the sequence of early printers’ errors that had been repeated back and forth from Australia to London and back again via Paris, in diplomatic correspondence and Admiralty memoranda, would have been avoided.

Mawson had little sympathy for appeasing French sensibilities. Even if it ‘provokes controversy’, he believed that the Australian claim was valid and should be upheld. Mawson was convinced that the reason for the British Government wishing to appease France was because ‘Britain laid a sweeping claim’ to Antarctic territory now a Dependency of the Falkland Islands, which contained discoveries

24 Letter 6 February 1934. 
25 Letter 6 February 1934. 
26 Letter 6 February 1934. Mawson explained in his letter that the ‘length of a degree of longitude at latitude 66° is 24.471 geographical (or nautical) miles. To convert this to statute (ordinary land measure) miles the figure for geographical miles must be multiplied by 1.15.
27 Bush, Volume II, Doc. FR16041912, pp. 481-482. In this letter from the French Foreign Ministry which responds to a letter from the British Ambassador in Paris, the French Government quotes the Sydney Herald of 13 March 1840 as one of the sources which provided a report of the discovery of Adélie Land, but did not give geographic coordinates.
28 Letter 6 February 1934.
made by French nationals. Because of the war, Mawson observed, ‘France appears to have been too much occupied to raise objections.’ Mawson continued bluntly:

Britain did lay claim in that area to some land which might have been claimed by France and H.M. Govt. probably now feel inclined to pacify France by viewing with some leniency French claim in the Australian sector.

External Affairs was left in no doubt that both Mawson and Orme Masson believed that the French sector ‘should not be admitted to extend beyond the sector lying between 136½ and 142 degrees of east longitude’. Despite approaching the problem in a scientific way, and discovering that a printer’s error had been the source of confusion, External Affairs admitted that ‘we do not know’ that the French Government had relied on the British Ambassador’s note.

Irrespective of who knew what when, Australia was definite that Adélie Land should comprise an area between 136½° and 142° East: the limits settled by the discoverer. Keith Officer, now in London, was instructed to convey the Australian Government’s wishes to the British Government. If the French Government raised objections and referred to the British note of 1913, they should be informed that it was meant to convey that Adélie Land lay ‘somewhere between’ 136° and 147° East and that its coastline as seen was about 150 miles long. Keith Officer was provided with the mathematical formulae used by both Mawson and Orme Masson and was asked to suggest to the British Admiralty that they too make ‘precise calculation’ in order to consider whether mileage as stated in the British note of 1913 was meant to be statute or nautical miles. In the meantime, the Foreign Office had also made similar mathematical calculations and these mirrored those made in Australia.

---

29 Letter 6 February 1934.
30 Letter 6 February 1934.
31 Department of External Affairs File Note ‘Boundaries of Adélie Land, 15 February 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2. This File Note was meant for the Minister, J.G. Latham, as he initialled it on 24 February 1934.
32 File Note ‘Boundaries of Adélie Land, 15 February 1934. All underlinings in the letters by Mawson and Orme Masson as well as the Ministerial briefs were in the originals.
33 Cable Department of External Affairs to Keith Officer, 27 February 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
34 Cable 27 February 1934.
35 Cable Keith Officer to Department of External Affairs, 28 February 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
Australia approached the problem in pragmatic terms, once its research had produced a solution. On the other hand, the Foreign Officer was less sanguine. In his advice to the Dominions Office, G.G. Fitzmaurice, the Foreign Office Legal Adviser, observed that, while he had gone into the position 'fairly thoroughly', he was not prepared to express a final opinion at this stage 'as the matter is such a difficult one'. Fitzmaurice believed 'our case is good enough to allow us to contest the French claim', but advised caution in any dealing with the French Government.

Nor was Fitzmaurice particularly concerned with the contents of the British Ambassador's note of 1913, which he thought 'superficially looked awkward'. According to Fitzmaurice, an atlas issued by the French Ministry of Marine as late as 1922 showed the limits of Adélie Land from 136½° to 142° East. As Fitzmaurice pointed out, that source was 'far better evidence' than a newspaper report that could contain errors. Fitzmaurice observed, however, that where the French relied on contemporary reports, such as that in the so-called *Hobart Town Review*, the onus would be on them to explain the contradictions.

Fitzmaurice was more preoccupied with the question of whether or not the French Government would make a sector claim from 60° South extending to the Pole. He warned that France had a good case to make that claim and pointed out that:

we ourselves everywhere claim sectors in the Antarctic, and I understand that the Committee of the Imperial Conference which dealt with this matter decided that the French should have a sector.

Fitzmaurice was aware that Australia was opposed to a French sector claim. He advised, however, that the British Government was 'not in a position to deny the applicability of the sector principle to Adélie Land', unless the hinterland comprised territory that had been explored by a member of the British Empire, which he did not believe to be the case.

---

37 Copy of Letter 22 January 1934.
38 Copy of Letter 22 January 1934.
39 Copy of Letter 22 January 1934.
40 Copy of Letter 22 January 1934.
41 Copy of Letter 22 January 1934.
In order to strengthen Australia’s case about the extent of Adélie Land, Keith Officer believed it would be ‘of considerable assistance’ to trace contemporary records for transmission to the Foreign Office. The Department of External Affairs subsequently discovered that the Hobart Town Courier of 28 February 1840 was the source for Dumont d’Urville’s reports. External Affairs now directed its attention to finding the much quoted Hobart Town Review, since there was no record of the mysterious newspaper in the bound volumes located in the Parliamentary Library. The Prime Minister personally wrote to the Premier of Tasmania asking for a confidential search to be made of contemporary reports relating to the discovery of Adélie Land. He advised that his request related to sensitive negotiations between the British and French Governments on the question of boundaries of the French claim, which lay within the Australian Antarctic Territory.

On 5 May 1934 copies of a number of extracts from various contemporary publications were sent to Lyons. The accounts varied and did little to resolve the mystery of whether 147 or 142 degrees of longitude on its eastern boundary was the extent of the French discovery. For example, an extract from The Austral-Asiatic Review of 3 March 1840 reported on a newly discovered land by a French expedition that was named by the Commodore ‘Terre Adelie’. Its extent ‘as seen, was about 150 miles between 66° and 67° lat., 136 and 147 long.’ An extract from the Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen’s Land Gazette of 8 January 1841 noted that in February 1840 Sir John Franklin had forwarded to the Royal Geographical Society in London ‘an account of the labours of the French expedition under Captain Dumont D’Urville’, which had traced land for 150 miles between 66° and 67° south and 136° and 142° east and named ‘Terre Adèle’. The Sydney Herald might well have obtained its information from The Austral-Asiatic Review. However, what is evident from the various reports is that 136° to 142° East seemed to be the most constantly reported figure. After much searching, John S. Cumpston, a young recruit

---

42 Memorandum Keith Officer to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 8 February 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
43 Memorandum Secretary, Department External Affairs to The Secretary Department of the Interior, 3rd March 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
45 Letter Premier’s Office, Hobart to the Right Honourable, the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, 5 May 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
47 Extract from Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen’s Land Gazette 8 January 1841 NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
in the expanded Department of External Affairs, declared that the so-called *Hobart Town Review* 'has no existence'.

Australia’s determination to make a stand about the limits of Adélie Land swayed the British Government’s mind. On 13 April 1934 the Foreign Office wrote to Monsieur André Charles Corbin, the French Ambassador in London, advising that ‘His Majesty’s Governments in the United Kingdom and in the Commonwealth of Australia’ could not accept the definition of Adélie Land at 60° South and between 136° and 147° East. Adélie Land, the letter observed, ‘consists of the islands and territories lying in the sector between 136½° and 142° of longitude East of Greenwich’. These limits, the Foreign Office emphasised, are those ‘given on Commandant d’Urville’s own chart as published by your Government, and dated 1840, and subsequently reproduced in atlas form in 1847’.

Referring the French Government to French contemporary sources should have been the end of the matter. However, the French Government sought to prolong the British Empire’s agony a little longer. Throughout the 1930s, French diplomats in London continued to contest the limits of Adélie Land. The French grievance was directed at what it perceived to be British chauvinism and disregard for the needs of other nations with respect to Antarctica. As a note from the French Embassy to the Foreign Ministry observed:

it had appeared natural that when the British Empire was annexing with a stroke of the pen an expanse of territory in the midst of which Adélie Land, even with its furthest boundaries constituted only a small portion, the Government in London would have been careful to give the widest definition of the sector over which the French Government had rights to make good.

Not only was the French note pointing out that the British Empire had been mean-spirited, but it was evident that, by prolonging the excruciating diplomacy, the

---

48 Note on the accounts of d’Urville’s voyage which appeared in the *Sydney Herald* attached to a paper entitled ‘Adélie Land’ produced by John S. Cumpston, Department of External Affairs, 15th January 1937 NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 3.
49 Letter Foreign Office to Monsieur André Corbin, 13 April 1934 NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
50 Letter 13 April 1934.
51 Letter 13 April 1934.
52 Memorandum Keith Officer to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs 28 June 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 2.
French were entertaining themselves at the expense of the British. The French note even pointed out that the British Admiralty’s own charts were confusing.

The French Government’s diplomatically skilful response was accompanied by a call for an expeditious agreement between the two governments as to whether the western limit of Adélie Land should be at 142° or 147° and expected that it would be a sector that extended to the Pole.54 The External Affairs Secretary, Colonel W.R. Hodgson, advised Senator Pearce, now the External Affairs Minister, to accept only the boundaries from 136½° to 142° East.55 Keith Officer was subsequently instructed in a draft note, which was to form the basis of a response to the French Government, to ensure that the British Government received French Government recognition of the ‘tremendous amount of work and expenditure’ undertaken by ‘His Majesty’s Governments’ in exploring the entire coastline and portions of the interior of the Australian Antarctic.56 The Australian note also made an emotional appeal for the maintenance of the integrity of Cape Denison at Commonwealth Bay, at ‘16 miles to the East of the 142nd meridian’, because it had ‘become indelibly associated with Australian tradition and history’.57 On Cape Denison was erected a memorial cross to the members of that expedition who had lost their lives ‘in the exploration of the icy wastes of this region’.58

Hodgson’s less than subtle message that France had done very little exploration and mapping in the region also foreshadowed Australian reluctance to support a French sector claim. As the 1937 Imperial Conference was reminded by an Australian Memorandum, in an era of aviation the likelihood of using aircraft for future exploration was strong, and having a French enclave extending southward would hamper that work.59 Because Adélie Land represented a wedge that sat between two portions of the Australian Antarctic, any flights from one portion to the other would require application to a foreign power for leave to fly over their

54 Translation of Letter, 5 October 1936.
57 Memorandum 12 January 1937.
58 Memorandum 12 January 1937.
territory. Australia’s point with respect to the use of air transport in future travel within the Antarctic was insightful and a practical argument that could not be discounted.

Indeed, External Affairs were coming round to the view that the Foreign Office, rather than the French Government, was placing obstacles in Australia’s way. That included adherence to the so-called hinterland theory, where a sector’s boundaries met at the Pole. Even in 1934, when the French Government discussed a sector, it could still have been pointed out to the French Government that the South Polar plateau had already been claimed by the British Empire. Cumpston advised the Minister to contest the French claim to a sector with a hinterland, otherwise Australia’s other claims would be endangered as a result of Norwegian activities. John Cumpston, as an official of the Australian Department of External Affairs, was discovering the problems Australia faced in seeking to secure its goals within the imperial structure. However, the 1937 Imperial Conference made it clear that continuing Australian resistance to France claiming a sector could jeopardise the interests of the rest of the Empire.

Against that background, the British Government proposed to instruct the British Ambassador in Paris that it was not proposed to challenge the French Government’s claim to a Sector extending southwards to the Pole on grounds of policy because there are other areas in the Antarctic where His Majesty’s Government might wish to rely on the sector principle and it is considered to be in the general interest to allow the sector principle to become established as a rule of law applying to the Arctic and Antarctic territory.

The British Government was seeking to establish an international legal principle because it met the needs of the Empire’s claims, but it remained to be seen how many members of the international community agreed with it. In the meantime,

---

60 Brief prepared by J.S. Cumpston to The Acting Minister, 10 May 1937, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 3. Note that the ‘Sector Principle’ was defined as a sector facing the nation making the claim. The hinterland theory meant any sector that extended to the Pole.

61 Brief 10 May 1937.


the British Government was negotiating on a bilateral basis and wished to reach a settlement with France. The Foreign Office also took up Australia’s concerns on the question of over-flying foreign territory. The draft instructions to the Ambassador, which were shown to Alfred Stirling, who had replaced Keith Officer in London, indicated that the Ambassador should seek an arrangement ‘whereby a free right of passage by air across the French Sector between the Australian territories on either side should be recognised by the French Government’. The Foreign Office hoped that in conceding a sector claim to France, it might be possible to use it as a lever when seeking recognition of British sovereignty.

Another point to be called upon in the negotiations with France related to the fixing of the western boundary of Adélie Land. The Ambassador would be advised that the Commonwealth Government, while wishing to fix that boundary at 136½° East, would agree ‘if necessary’, to the French suggestion of 136°. That concession would be made ‘in the last resort to secure the right of passage by air’. The draft Despatch to the British Ambassador was in fact based on a lengthy Note drafted in the Department of External Affairs. The Note outlined Australia’s views and would have been attached to the Despatch for transmission to the French Government. As matters would have it, a mistake was made in the draft Australian note. On the first page the western boundary of Adélie Land was shown as 136° rather than 136½°. (Throughout, the rest of the Note showed the boundary as 136½°.) Such a mistake could have weakened the argument, as Australia was insisting that the boundary should be at 136½°. A cable was approved by Hodgson on 25 February 1937 for transmission to Stirling, advising him of the error. Whether Stirling received the cable is unclear, as the mistake remained. The significance of this error is that it appeared on the first page of the draft Australian Note. The incorrect coordinates were juxtaposed with Australia’s strong declaration that ‘His Majesty’s Governments feel that the widest limits that the French Government can possibly claim are from 136° longitude to 142° longitude east of

64 Draft Despatch, July 1937.
65 Draft Despatch, July 1937.
66 Draft Despatch, July 1937.
67 Draft Despatch, July 1937.
Greenwich,' when of course it meant 136½ East longitude.\textsuperscript{70} Indeed, the error reflected Australia’s fall-back position, had France rejected the proposed coordinates.

On 20 April 1938 Stirling cabled External Affairs noting that he had received advice from the Dominions Office that on 5 March the French Government had addressed a note to the British Ambassador in Paris, setting the limits to Adélie Land between 136° to 142° East Longitude and stating that it should be a sector meeting at the Pole. Stirling noted he was sending this information by cable as press reports could be telegraphed to Australia based on British press reports that had appeared that day.\textsuperscript{71} In addition, a reciprocal arrangement had been struck with the French Government on the question of free right of air passage over Adélie Land and any British territories in the Antarctic.\textsuperscript{72} The entire process was unnecessarily drawn out and had descended into farce.

Although Australia was never happy with the British Government’s fumbling diplomacy with France, it reluctantly came to the understanding that a foreign enclave below its borders was inevitable. However, Australia’s agreement to settle the problem was not predicated on any belief that the Anglo-French relationship would be put in jeopardy because the United Kingdom had included French discoveries within the FID. Australia agreed to the settlement because it could take the matter no further. At least the limits of Adélie Land were those Australia had suggested if the French did not agree to its initial proposal. As Australia was discovering, international diplomacy was about finding an accommodation with the other side. Norway, however, represented another problem. Unlike the history of the French in Adélie Land, Norwegian exploration was recent and aimed at thwarting British imperial expansion rather than a straightforward question relating to a formal Norwegian claim.

\textsuperscript{70} Memorandum 12 January 1937.
\textsuperscript{71} Cable Stirling to Department of External Affairs, 20 April 1938 NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 3. See also Bush Volume II, Doc. FR05031938, pp. 504-505 and Doc. FR01041938, pp. 505-506.
\textsuperscript{72} Letter C.W. Dixon, Dominions Office, to Alfred Stirling 19 April 1938, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 48, part 3.
The Case of Norway

Private Norwegian expeditions had deliberately targeted the Enderby Land coastline, to make the point that they would not sit idly by and allow the British Empire to sail into Antarctica without challenge. Yet, while Norwegians held a proud record of Antarctic voyaging and discovery, they had never put forward any formal territorial claim. Challenging the might of the British Empire, which had increasingly become the controlling power over the Antarctic seas and therefore over the whaling industry, would not be easy for Norway. However, during the 1930s that is precisely what Norway attempted to do.

The British Government had become aware that Norway could not be easily dismissed, particularly after the Norvegia had raced the Discovery to Enderby Land. Lars Christensen and Riiser-Larsen had adopted the successful tactic used by the Australian scientific community, of garnering public support by skilfully using the Norwegian press to appeal to Norwegian nationalism. The British Government was prepared to negotiate an agreement with the Norwegian Government in exchange for the same ‘friendly attitude’. 73 There was suspicion, however, on both sides because initial diplomatic approaches from the British Minister in Oslo, Charles Wingfield, had been neither frank nor transparent, as Australians had urged they should be. The result was protracted negotiations that would not be concluded until the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War.

When Mawson’s report of the two cruises of the BANZARE was dispatched to Downing Street in July 1931, Scullin emphasised that there had been ‘complete British exploration of the greater part of the coastline of the Sector’ proposed for Australian control. 74 He admitted, however, that the Norwegians might be able to ‘support a counter claim’ as a result of their activities, but doubted that they would after the agreement reached between Mawson and the Captain of the Norvegia. 75 Scullin was speaking prematurely, since no formal diplomatic agreement had been reached with the Norwegian Government about territory alleged to have been

73 Cable Duffy (no address), but probably to Prime Minister’s Department, 7 June 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
74 Despatch J. H. Scullin to The Right Honourable the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 13 July 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
75 Despatch 13 July 1931.
claimed by the *Norwegia*. Nonetheless, the newspapers in Oslo were reporting that Norwegian expeditions had occupied territory in the name of the King and had titled it Princess Ragnhild's Land.\textsuperscript{76}

What the Norwegians termed the 'occupation of the territory' was actually achieved from the air when Captain Riiser-Larsen reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo that he had flown inland and dropped the Norwegian flag together with a document making the announcement.\textsuperscript{77} According to Wingfield, the territory mentioned did not lie within the British sphere, even if reports in the *Tidens Tegn* were claiming that it did. The Norwegian press consistently reported discoveries made by the *Norwegia* without identifying their precise location. Since Wingfield was relying on these reports, it made negotiations with the Norwegian Government almost impossible, since he could not be certain about what concessions, if any, needed to be made in order to reach a friendly outcome.

On the other hand, a fiercely nationalistic press was less interested in accuracy than in placing pressure on its Government to acknowledge the discoveries. When Wingfield met with the Norwegian Prime Minister in February 1931 to determine what steps Norway proposed to take, Mowinckel stressed that the *Norwegia* did not have authority to claim territory declared British by the last Imperial Conference.\textsuperscript{78} The undertaking given by Mowinckel should have put the matter to rest. Wingfield, however, was unconvinced and proposed to send to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry a detailed memorandum that recorded the stretches of coastline visited by the BANZARE and explored by air, as well as the spots where landings were made and formal acts of annexation performed. Such a memorandum, Wingfield believed, would remind Norway and other powers that this sector was not open to annexation. If Norway accepted the information without any further comment, it would be tantamount to 'tacitly agreeing to our contention'.\textsuperscript{79} Importantly, what Wingfield was proposing was to put an end to further Norwegian suspicion of a complete British takeover of Antarctica by confirming that the two

\textsuperscript{76} Copy of Despatch Charles Wingfield to the Right Honourable Arthur Henderson, 21 February 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.

\textsuperscript{77} Copy of Despatch 21 February 1931.

\textsuperscript{78} Copy of Despatch 21 February 1931.

\textsuperscript{79} Copy of Despatch Charles Wingfield to the British Foreign Office, (address not shown but the Despatch is clearly advice to the Foreign Office from Wingfield) 11 March 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
BANZARE cruises and the main acts of annexation constituted ‘the climax of the whole of the exploration’ along the Antarctic coast.\(^\text{80}\)

Wingfield’s practical suggestion, which also reflected Mawson’s actions in Antarctica, was viewed with caution by the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office instructed Wingfield to ‘refrain’ from providing information along the lines he had suggested, on the grounds that the information received from Mawson had come by means of cables and was ‘incomplete’. Such information, according to the Foreign Office, would lead the Norwegian Government to scrutinise Mawson’s actions closely and ‘would almost inevitably focus their attention on the fact that only three landings were made’.\(^\text{81}\) Although MacRobertson Land had been proclaimed by Mawson during the first cruise, Mawson had taken possession of King George V Land during the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-1914. It was felt, therefore, that a report of this nature would be criticised and open to the charge that the landings were insufficient justification for taking possession of the entire stretch of coast line from Enderby Land to Adélie Land.\(^\text{82}\)

It is unclear why there was wringing of hands in the Foreign Office, particularly over King George V Land which had been explored on foot. It was hardly an ancient claim when compared to Bouvet Island and Adélie Land. Besides, the BANZARE had proven that the entire coastline was connected. The Foreign Office actually believed that the Norwegian focus was not on the Enderby Land region, but on the area from Enderby Land to Coats Land, the so-called free sector. It was in that area, they deduced, that the Norwegians had taken formal possession of territory. Hence, the Foreign Office was not prepared, at this stage, to be completely forthcoming, because Norway had refrained from ‘giving any official countenance to the discoveries made’ in the ‘Commonwealth Sector’.\(^\text{83}\)

Mowinckel decided to play the same political game by not divulging his Government’s thinking. However, he would eventually have to negotiate a suitable position for Norway, since Lars Christensen and Riiser-Larsen were actively

\(^{80}\) Copy of Despatch 11 March 1931.
\(^{81}\) Copy of Despatch Foreign Office to Wingfield, (the copy is not addressed, it must be presumed to have been sent to Wingfield since it provided instructions regarding negotiations with Norway) 20 May 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 2.
\(^{82}\) Copy of Despatch 20 May 1931.
\(^{83}\) Copy of Despatch 20 May 1931.
influencing public opinion and pressure was mounting on the Norwegian Government to support a Norwegian Antarctic sovereignty claim. The zeal with which the whaling magnate and the explorer were seeking to ensure Norway had a piece of the Antarctic was understandable, as Grenfell Price noted, if Norway was to continue pursuing its lucrative whaling industry without paying taxes and levies to the British Empire.\(^{84}\) That was certainly the message that Riiser-Larsen was taking to the Norwegian press. He observed that his discoveries had altered Norway’s Antarctic status. For many years, he said, Norway had been ‘paying England millions of kroner for whaling licences in the Falkland Islands sector and the Ross Sea’.\(^{85}\) Since discovering new land where there was an abundance of whales, Norway would no longer have to pay any dues, but would exact dues from foreign whalers for the right to fish in the waters around Princess Ragnhild’s Land.\(^{86}\) Riiser-Larsen had articulated one of the unexpected outcomes of the BANZAREs. A Norwegian sovereignty claim would put an end to the FID and the Ross Dependency gaining any economic benefit from Norwegian whaling, although it would not affect Australia, since the Australian Government did not issue licences to foreign enterprises.

By mid-1931 the Foreign Office had not decided on its bargaining position. The British Government’s approach, to wait and see what the other side was proposing to do and then respond, had led to the long saga over Adélie Land. Reacting to a situation had now come to characterise the British Government’s Antarctic approach. It had followed that pattern when it annexed the FID and the Ross Dependency, and the Foreign Office was pursuing a similar approach with respect to its Antarctic diplomacy. Such a style, particularly when it was being pursued with a fledgling nation, such as Norway, was contributing to significant misunderstanding and a lack of trust, hardly the basis for friendly negotiations.

British Government procrastination was also encouraging Norway to seek to influence other nations interested in Antarctica, in particular the United States of America, on the question of sector claims. Norway was opposed to sector claims in the Antarctic and in 1931 the Norwegian Minister in Washington, H. H. Bachke,

\(^{84}\) Price, p. 15.

\(^{85}\) Copy of Despatch Charles Wingfield to the Right Honourable Arthur Henderson, Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, London, 18 March 1931, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT S1, part 2.

\(^{86}\) Copy of Despatch 18 March 1931.
began to broadcast Norway’s opposition to the ‘sector principle’ in the *The New York Times*. The sector principle, according to Bachke, was a system designed for ‘politically dividing up Arctica and Antarctica in sectors or quadrants’. Bachke said that Norway had not yet claimed sovereignty over territories discovered by Amundsen, or those most recently discovered by Riiser-Larsen and his flying companion Finn Lützow-Holm.

After paying tribute to the work of Norwegian explorers in Antarctica, *The New York Times* echoed the view of the United States Government that, ‘unless discovery is followed by some kind of permanent settlement, it is not binding in law’. The newspaper then took the opportunity to criticise Great Britain for making ‘extravagant claims in the Antarctic, perhaps to one-half of the Continent’. The newspaper also reported on an address by Professor Reeves of the University of Michigan, who maintained that none of the claims was supportable. *The New York Times* suggested that discoveries and annexations made by Great Britain, the United States, Norway, France, Argentina and Russia constituted a valid base for a claim of priority in acquiring such territories, pending the fulfilment of effective occupation.

Although both Norway and the United States held similar views that effective occupation must follow discovery, the question of who was the initial discoverer haunted all discussions. For example, *The New York Times* observed that the Norwegian Minister had spoken of a Norwegian claim to both sides of Amundsen’s route to the South Pole, which also included Queen Maud Range as well as the area covered by Prestrud’s sledge expedition east of King Edward VII Land in 1911. Admiral Byrd, the newspaper observed, had flown beyond the Norwegian discovery during his 1928-1930 expedition after discovering Marie Byrd Land, in addition to surveying a long stretch of coast. ‘It is American territory by right of discovery’, *The New York Times* declared. These comments demonstrated

---

87 The title ‘Minister’ in a Legation refers to the senior diplomat. After the Second World War Legations were gradually upgraded to Embassies.
the degree of national competitiveness that pervaded any discussion on Antarctica. Any government ignoring national feelings would do so at its peril. While Bachke was seeking to put forward a rational legalistic argument, it was clear from the response from The New York Times that the international community was far from reaching any settled agreement about bases of sovereignty claims in the Antarctic.

Bachke’s commentary was probably influenced by Gustav Smedal, a lawyer and the leading personality in Norway’s Eastern Greenland dispute. Australia was aware of Smedal’s work, The Acquisition of Sovereignty over Polar Regions, as a paper synthesising his views had been scrutinised by Keith Officer. The paper related specifically to the question of territorial claims made under the sector principle, particularly in Antarctica. Smedal was of the opinion that the measures taken by both the British and the French Governments with respect to their Antarctic territory did not constitute sufficient control. Smedal argued that if effective possession of Antarctic territory could not be maintained there was no reason why the region should be under the sovereignty of any state.\(^{95}\) Bachke’s public statements demonstrated the wide chasm between Norwegian and British views on the basis of claims and in 1931 an agreement with Norway on Antarctic sovereignty seemed very distant.

The Norwegian campaign to develop an alliance with the United States against British Antarctic claims could well have been avoided had the British Government moved quickly to initiate diplomatic negotiations while the BANZARE was in Antarctica on its 1929-1930 cruise. Now the British Government faced the dilemma of whether to wait for the outcome of the East Greenland case, or to pursue recognition of the Commonwealth sector in return for British recognition of Norwegian sovereignty over the adjoining sector to the west.\(^{96}\) As mentioned in the previous chapter, after Norway declared its intentions to occupy ‘certain territories in Eastern Greenland’, the Danish government, in 1931, had instituted proceedings against the Norwegian Government, claiming the area to be under Danish

\(^{95}\) This information comes from a summary of a brochure by Gustav Smedal. According to a footnote on the document, the brochure was published at Oslo in 1931. It notes that Smedal was a lawyer and a former officer of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry between 1920 and 1923. From 1927 he was Chairman of the Norwegian Greenland League. The summary appears to have been an attachment to the Tabling Speech prepared by Keith Officer, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 2, part 2.

\(^{96}\) Despatch Wingfield to Sir John Simon (British Foreign Secretary), 1 June 1932, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 9.
sovereignty. The case concerned the value of old territorial claims which had remained without effective occupation and which had been abandoned by the claimant without instituting administrative control. The Norwegian case argued that prior discovery gave an inchoate title to the land discovered, but security of title must be followed by ‘effective occupation,’ otherwise other States should be free to occupy the territory in question. According to Wingsfield, Smedal drew parallels with the territories outlined in the published summary of the 1926 Imperial Conference, which he argued were old discoveries that had never had ‘effective occupation’.

Importantly, Smedal had declared that the ‘sector principle’ had no foundation in international law. If Norway followed Smedal’s advice with respect to Antarctica, that would make Norwegian recognition of any British claims impossible. Mowinckel confessed to Wingfield that the Norwegian Government ‘could not possibly recognise the sector doctrine, since it might prejudice their claims in Arctic regions’. Mowinckel had made it clear to Wingfield that their Arctic interests influenced what course they took. Nonetheless, Wingfield sought to persuade Mowinckel that Norway should direct its activities into the sector between 45° East and 20° West in order to avoid the ‘awkward consequences’ of Norway occupying territories in the Commonwealth sector. Wingfield reminded Mowinckel that the Commonwealth sector had been systematically explored by British expeditions and that the Notregia had turned its attention to the unclaimed sector in order to avoid conflicting claims. Having received a negative reaction from Mowinckel, Wingsfield advised the Foreign Office that the Norwegian government was domestically weak and would risk public ire if it took any action in Antarctica that would weaken its case at The Hague.

Rather than continuing to press the matter at this stage, Wingsfield suggested that it would be more prudent to await the Permanent Court’s decision before taking up the matter of recognition of the Commonwealth sector. If the decision were to be in favour of Norway, ‘there might be a good opportunity for His Majesty’s

---

97 Hyde, 732-738.
98 Despatch 1 June 1932.
99 Despatch 1 June 1932.
100 Despatch 1 June 1932.
101 Despatch 1 June 1932.
Government in Australia to annex the sector between 45° and 160° East (excluding Adélie Land). In the event of a contrary judgment against Norway, it was possible, according to Wingfield, that it would make recognition of the proposed Commonwealth sector easier, while at the same time allowing Norway to extend its sovereignty over the sector beyond Enderby Land. After the Mowinckel Government had lost office in mid-1931, however, the new Norwegian Government, according to Wingfield, displayed an attitude that was unfavourable to British interests in the Antarctic. Wingfield warned that the present Government tended to support those who hoisted the Norwegian flag in polar regions, as shown by the Greenland case.

When Mawson was in London in early 1933, he put together some notes about his own, as well as what he believed to be Norwegian, discoveries in the belief that the British bureaucracy neglected to gather sufficient intelligence to inform its policy responses and diplomatic negotiations. Mawson's brief drew on information which was already on the public record from statements made by various Norwegian explorers. Mawson noted that 'several weeks' before the Discovery arrived at Proclamation Island on 13 January 1930, Riiser-Larsen on the Norvegia had attempted to reach Enderby Land. However, they were thwarted by heavy pack-ice that extended far to the north of Enderby Land. As a result, Riiser-Larsen and his companion Lützow-Holm took to the air and 'flew within sight of Biscoe's Enderby Land'. They descended in a pool of open water some nine miles or so from shore and intended skiing inland in order to raise the Norwegian flag. However, after an hour they remained 'a considerable way from the land'. With a blizzard looming, 'they retraced their steps and after raising the Norwegian Flag on what was, from the description, apparently hummocky sea-ice', flew back to the Norvegia. According

---

102 Despatch 1 June 1932.
103 Despatch Charles Wingfield to Sir John Simon, 13 January 1933, NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1. During the 1927-1931 voyages of the Norvegia Johan Ludvig Mowinckel was the Norwegian Prime Minister to whom Wingfield made his representations. Between 1931 and 1932 Pedar Kolstad of the more nationalistic Agrarian Party was Prime Minister. After dying in office during 1932 he was replaced by Jens Hundeisd as Prime Minister from the same party. Hundseid was Prime Minister for a year between 1932-1933. From 1933 to 1935 Mowinckel was again Prime Minister.
104 Despatch 13 January 1933.
to Mawson, Norwegian activities in the Enderby Land area continued during the 1930-31 season when a Norwegian whale-chaser made some observations of the MacRobertson Land coastline, 'which we had already charted'. These observations, according to Mawson, were subsequently published by Bjarne Aagaard, while 'entirely ignoring' the 'discovery and mapping' undertaken by the BANZARE. Instead, the Norwegian map showed as Lars Christensen Land what 'we had already charted as parts of MacRobertson Land and of Princess Elizabeth Land,' lying between 65° and 75° East and claimed in the proclamation of 13 January 1930.

Mawson then noted that more favourable weather conditions during the following season had allowed further charting in detail of the coast of MacRobertson Land and the western end of Princess Elizabeth Land. After breaking through the pack-ice and finding open water, Mawson had sent out a wireless message as press news. That message, he claimed, 'was picked up' by Thorshammer which was whaling about 150 miles to the north-east of their position. Thorshammer had then sent a whale-chaser to investigate the report. A few days after completing the charting of the coast, Mawson claimed, the whale-chaser arrived in the same locality and made 'a rough map of the coast thereabouts'. That was the basis for the Norwegians' 'distorted map' of the coastline of Lars Christensen Land. Mawson observed: 'We had discovered and claimed it 1 year earlier and had mapped it in detail three days earlier than the Norwegians'.

Mawson's notes were taken partly from work published by Riiser-Larsen and by Professor Olaf Holtedahl, a veteran of the first Norvegia expedition during the 1927-1928 season. Mawson had surmised that his wireless message was picked up by Thorshammer which was whaling nearby; but that did seem a reasonable explanation for the arrival of the whale-chaser in the area. As the Adélie Land question had shown, competition was fierce, not only amongst the various national

---

106 Mawson Notes.
107 Mawson Notes. Bjarne Aagaard was a Norwegian historian.
108 Mawson Notes.
109 Mawson Notes.
110 Mawson Notes.
111 Mawson Notes.
explorers, but amongst governments which used prior discovery as the pre-eminent factor on which to base a claim. Nor did nations have qualms in making counter claims, when given the opportunity of doing so. Mawson was right to provide this sketch of events. It was separate from his strictly formal report to the Government and it compared his version of events with those of the Norwegians. From past experience Mawson could be forgiven for thinking that such research would not be made within the British bureaucracy. Indeed, the Foreign Office must have seen its value, because they sent it to Wingfield for his ‘confidential’ background information and possible use in future negotiations.

The stalemate in the negotiations, which had been characterised by obfuscation from both sides, persuaded Wingfield to compile a comprehensive assessment of his approach to the Norwegian Government during the course of the two cruises of the BANZARE. In so doing, he found that the Norwegian statements made at the highest level of Government were consistently assurances that Norway attached no importance to the territory discovered by the Norvegia. The British Government, however, had never been formally advised which way Norway would decide.

The publication of the Order-in-Council in early 1933 coincided with Norway’s continuing preoccupation with the Arctic. The British Legation advised that, until the outcome of the East Greenland case was known, ‘any recognition of British rights over this region may be postponed indefinitely’. Nor did the British Legation consider it opportune to raise the question of reciprocal recognition for the proposed Norwegian sector between Enderby Land and Coats Land. If the East Greenland judgment was unfavourable, Norway might consider it prestigious to recognise two large British sectors, the Australian sector and the ‘Falkland Islands sector’, while having a large sector recognised as Norwegian.

---

113 See Chapter 10 which discusses the Hubert Wilkins/Lincoln Ellsworth 1938-1939 expedition when Ellsworth sought to make a counter-claim over an area within the Australian Antarctic Territory.
117 Copy of Despatch 20 February 1933.
118 Copy of Despatch 20 February 1933.
Without an official approach from the Norwegians, the British Legation in Oslo began gauging the domestic mood in Norway through press reports, in order to determine how the Norwegian Government might act. The influential views of the Norwegian historian, Bjarne Aagaard, were reported in detail after the publication of the Order-in-Council. According to Aagaard, ‘Australia had already made formal claims’ over which British sovereignty would be extended, but ‘territories where Norway had recently taken possession of land were not affected.’\footnote{Copy of Despatch 20 February 1933.} The British Legation in Oslo had little time for Aagaard, whom the Legation described as a person who devoted his life to ‘stirring up public opinion about Norwegian interests’ in the Polar regions.\footnote{Copy of Despatch 20 February 1933.} Aagaard and Mawson had been corresponding on the question of disputed discoveries and Aagaard had even sent Mawson proofs of one of his earlier chapters that covered the 1929-1930 expedition. But Aagaard was no longer prepared to send the proof of the 1930-1931 chapter after the publication of the Order-in-Council, and believed he should bring the matter to the attention of the Norwegian public.\footnote{Price, p. 164.} Aagaard’s decision to send to Mawson proofs of his chapters is intriguing. Surely Aagaard was not expecting Mawson to confirm Riiser-Larsen’s view of events and throw doubts upon his own?

Although Aagaard claimed that the Australian territory did not extend over Norwegian discoveries, he nonetheless began a press campaign in Oslo against the anticipated Australian annexation. Not surprisingly, Aagaard’s major concern related to the effect on Norwegian whaling of Australia choosing to levy taxes on Norwegian whaling interests. Aagaard had warned in his writings that Norwegians had ‘to pay millions’ for whaling licences in the Falklands sector and that this situation must not be repeated in East Antarctica.\footnote{Copy of Despatch 20 February 1933.} According to the British Legation, Aagaard was also adamant that the Norwegian Government must insist on the retention of Queen Maud Land and Lars Christensen Land on Antarctic maps as an acknowledgment that they had been discovered by Norwegians, even if they were to be included in the British Empire. Yet he predicted that Norway would recognise the Australian claim, ‘subject to certain reservations’.\footnote{Copy of Despatch 20 February 1933.}
Another Norwegian newspaper, the *Dagblad*, described by the British Legation as ‘the organ of the Left’, provided the substance of the Order-in-Council and noted that the ‘occupation is founded upon the discovery of the land by Australians’.\textsuperscript{124} Aagaard’s statement also appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which had the benefit of informing Australians that, despite his criticism of Mawson’s reports of prior discoveries of Queen Maud Land and Lars Christensen Land, Aagaard believed that his Government would ‘acquiesce, with reservations’ to ‘Australia’s Antarctic claim’, but that Norwegian names should be retained, even if they were part of British sovereignty claims.\textsuperscript{125} Aagaard did not indicate where Queen Maud Land was located, but this had been done in a paper delivered by Professor Holtedahl which had located it as an area ‘lying south-west of Enderby Land’.\textsuperscript{126} Such a location could well fall outside the Australian sector, as west of Enderby Land was probably west of 45° East. Although Aagaard was critical of the British Empire’s Antarctic domination, Professor Holtedahl, on the other hand, in his paper delivered at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in London in 1931, was more even-handed.

Keith Officer, who in early 1933 was still in Canberra, believed that Aagaard’s statements were in fact a signal for reciprocal recognition. He advised the Minister that, while Aagaard was making a private statement and not speaking on behalf of the Norwegian government, his views could also be a reflection of the attitude of the Norwegian Government. Officer believed that Aagaard was suggesting that Norway would recognise the Australian claim on the condition that Norwegian names remained in the Australian sector. Similar opinions, Officer explained, had been expressed from time to time by members of the Norwegian Government to the British Minister in Oslo.\textsuperscript{127} Officer suggested that it ‘would appear possible’ to retain the names Queen Maud Land and Lars Christensen Land, without interfering with the names given by Mawson and other explorers to Enderby Land, MacRobertson Land and Princess Elizabeth Land.\textsuperscript{128} As Officer was quick to point out, the actual question of discovery dates of an isolated area ‘is not relevant’

\textsuperscript{124} Copy of Despatch 20 February 1933.
\textsuperscript{125} *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 February 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
\textsuperscript{126} Olaf Holtedahl
\textsuperscript{127} Note Keith Officer to Minister (Latham) 22 February 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 1.
\textsuperscript{128} Note 22 February 1933.
as British title was based on previous British discoveries of ‘the major portion of the area’, and Mawson had ‘reasserted’ British sovereignty over its entirety.\(^\text{129}\)

Norwegians were also beginning to re-think their position with respect to the basis of claims. The British Legation in Oslo reported that the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Constitutional Committee, Herr Hambro, had stated that countries wishing to extend their sovereign interests in Antarctica should show some presence in the region. That could be by such means as sending a vessel at intervals to emphasise their sovereign claims. He claimed that Norway had neglected in the past to display its flag and exercise supervision and could therefore not be expected to be taken seriously if it complained about expansion in the region by other countries.\(^\text{130}\)

On 9 March 1933, Bruce, who was the Australian High Commissioner in London at the time, wrote to Lyons advising that Norway had not yet made an official comment about the Order-in-Council. Wingfield had even handed a copy to the Norwegian Foreign Minister in person as an act of courtesy, and it was hoped to maintain friendly collaboration in the future.\(^\text{131}\) According to Bruce, Wingfield had interpreted the lack of response as a probable unwillingness to raise objections to the action being taken. Nonetheless, in view of Norwegian sensitivities, Wingfield did not believe ‘it would do much good’ for Mawson to embark on a proposed lecture tour of Norway.\(^\text{132}\)

After the aborted Riiser-Larsen expedition to the Weddell Sea in the 1932-1933 season, Norway’s loss of the East Greenland case in April 1933,\(^\text{133}\) and the assent to the Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act on 13 June 1933, the British Government felt confident about negotiating reciprocal recognition with Norway. Britain would recognise a Norwegian claim to ‘territories between Enderby Land and Coats Land in return for Norwegian recognition of British sovereignty over the Commonwealth Sector and the Falkland Islands

---

\(^\text{129}\) Note 22 February 1933.
\(^\text{131}\) Letter S.M. Bruce to Prime Minister, 9 March 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
\(^\text{132}\) Letter 9 March 1933.
\(^\text{133}\) See Chapter 8 which noted the judgment found in favour of Denmark by 12 votes to 2.
Yet, even before any steps were decided upon, the British Government changed its mind, deciding not to pursue the question of reciprocal recognition, and informed Australia accordingly. From London, Bruce warned Lyons that the British Government believed that, in reality, ‘the most that can be hoped for’ was the absence of any Norwegian protest against the Order-in-Council. External Affairs was not entirely convinced by the British Government’s proposal. The Department admitted that the possibility of recognition seemed ‘remote’, because ‘feeling in Norway is running high’ as a result of the recent judgment over East Greenland. However, it suggested to its Minister that recognition of the territory as described in the Order-in-Council ‘would be better than the present silence’.

However, after Norway’s recent set-backs, the British Government began to harden its position towards Norway and Wingfield was instructed not to pursue representations designed to achieve reciprocal recognition. The Despatch explained that, when the decision was made to negotiate reciprocal recognition with Norway in October 1932, Norway was not only opposed to the application of the ‘Sector Principle’ in polar regions but also contended in its case against Denmark that discovered territories, irrespective of the discoverer, should remain ‘terrae nullius’ unless they were subject to ‘effective occupation’. Hence, ‘express Norwegian recognition is neither expected nor requested’. The Foreign Office stressed that a British sovereignty claim is and must be based on the contention that a British title to the territory in question exists on various grounds, and that the title is good whether it is expressely recognised by foreign countries or not. In so far as no protests are made against the Order-in-Council, this case will be thereby strengthened.

Latham was aware that the British Government was sensitive about any reference to the sector principle and that it would also arouse Norwegian opposition.

135 Cable Bruce to Prime Minister, 30 June 1933, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
136 Cable 30 June 1933.
137 Brief to ‘The Minister’, unsigned but probably from the Department of External Affairs, 4 July 1933 NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
138 Brief 4 July 1933.
139 Copy of Despatch John Simon to Charles Wingfield, 3 August 1933, NAA: Series MP 1185/9, Item 453/204/938.
140 Copy of Despatch 3 August 1933.
141 Copy of Despatch 3 August 1933.
142 Copy of Despatch 3 August 1933.
Keith Officer had advised him that ‘it would strengthen the Australian claims to that part at least of the Antarctic Territory which lies immediately to the South.’ He warned, however, that the British Government had also acknowledged that using the sector principle to justify Australia’s claim would jeopardise British claims over the Falkland Islands Dependency. Arguments about the sector principle were becoming hardly relevant in the case of any British claims, since all of them were the scene of significant British activity. Yet the British Government was timid about using the expression in public, probably because most of Antarctica lay south of nations that were part of the Empire and Britain did not wish to arouse international perceptions that it was relying on the sector principle as the only basis for annexing Antarctic territory. On the other hand, using silence as acquiescence seemed an almost furtive position to adopt for the world’s hegemonic power. Perhaps it was the Empire’s large extent that had become its handicap in Antarctica.

On 26 January 1934, Norway formally broke its silence over the Order-in-Council. The long-serving Norwegian Minister in London, Benjamin Vogt, wrote to the Foreign Office stating Norway’s concern over perceived inclusion of Norwegian discoveries within the Australian Antarctic Territory and began canvassing the idea of a separate Antarctic sector for Norway. Vogt said that Norway viewed with concern the placing under British authority of ‘a new vast territory’ by the issue of an Order-in-Council on 7 February 1933. The placing of two-thirds of the Antarctic Continent, including adjacent islands, under ‘foreign sovereignty’, he said, would result in restricting Norwegian activities, especially with regard to its whaling industry. Norway had made a frank admission of annoyance with the British expansion into Antarctica, but now wished to move to another level and discuss the possibility of Norwegian acquisition of the territory between Enderby Land and Coats Land. The Norwegian Minister claimed the area had been mapped in part by Norwegian nationals. Vogt remained nonetheless concerned about the location of the western boundary of the Australian claim, because it contained Lars Christensen Land within it. Norway, Vogt observed, had considered the desirability of holding an international conference on Antarctica that would include all of the interested

144 Paper by Keith Officer 17 May 1933.
145 Copy of Memorandum Norwegian Minister to Foreign Office, 26 January 1934
NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3.
146 Memorandum 26 January 1934.
countries. On reflection, however, a more practical solution would be for discussions between experts from the two countries to take place over factual details.\textsuperscript{147}

In the meantime, the question of foreign place names for territory within the Empire found little support in London, as did the immediate resumption of formal negotiations about a Norwegian sector. The Polar Committee, which was attended by Keith Officer, discussed the ongoing ‘grievance’ nursed by the Norwegians and ‘generally agreed’ not to enter into discussions with the Norwegian Government.\textsuperscript{148} The Polar Committee decided instead to inform the British Minister in Oslo that an informal agreement existed with the Norwegians to allow them a ‘free hand’ in the sector between the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Falkland Islands Dependency.\textsuperscript{149} The Polar Committee also believed that the Norwegian push with respect to names of Antarctic features ‘might spring from a desire to get more Norwegian names on the maps’.\textsuperscript{150} It was anticipated, nonetheless, that the Norwegian Government would likely press for a response on the question of names, and the Polar Committee recommended that Vogt be advised that his memorandum had been referred to the Australian Government.\textsuperscript{151}

Lars Christensen was probably unaware that his government was making tentative steps to reach an agreement about territory and names when he decided to travel to the Enderby Land region on one of his whaling factory ships. In mid-December 1933 Lars Christensen sailed from Cape Town on the Thorshavn, proposing to conduct ‘scientific and practical observations and investigations’.\textsuperscript{152} By mid-January 1934, he had reported the discovery of new land between Lars Christensen Land and Kaiser Wilhelm II Land for which he sought permission from King Haakon to name it after Princess Astrid.\textsuperscript{153} Wingfield, who had advised the Foreign Office of this discovery, did not indicate where exactly it was located, but

\textsuperscript{147} Memorandum 26 January.
\textsuperscript{148} Memorandum Keith Officer to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1 February 1934, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3.
\textsuperscript{149} Memorandum 1 February 1934.
\textsuperscript{150} Memorandum 1 February 1934.
\textsuperscript{151} Memorandum Keith Officer to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 8 February 1934, NAA: Series A 98, Item ANT 51, part 3
\textsuperscript{152} Minute External Affairs to The Minister, 23 January 1934, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3. The minute was initialled by the Minister without comment.
\textsuperscript{153} Copy of Report C. Wingfield to Sir John Simon 7 April 1934, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3.
the view in London was that Lars Christensen had intruded into the Australian Antarctic Territory, without first obtaining permission.

Whether or not Lars Christensen was aware that Norway was negotiating with the British Government to control the free sector, his persistent intrusion into the Australian Antarctic Territory would wear down British negotiators. Keith Officer reported to External Affairs that attitudes were beginning to shift in London and a view was developing that it was ‘far preferable’ to maintain discussions between British and Norwegian representatives, because the ‘last thing we should want is any general international conference to discuss the Antarctic’. 154 Bilateral discussions would probably lead to an agreement about exact lines of delimitation of the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Falkland Islands Dependency sector, since the sector the Norwegian proposed to annex fell between the two. 155

The British Government guessed that the reason for Norway’s probable desire to annex the so-called free sector was its evident fear that some other power might do so: in particular, it feared that the United Kingdom might do so. 156 At the very least, the British Government believed that leaving the free sector to the Norwegians ‘might allay their discontent and reconcile them to British claims in other parts of the Antarctic’. 157 According to Keith Officer, perhaps the most perceptive point made by the British Government was that a Norwegian claim would end the present situation in which the only sovereignty claims in the Antarctic were British.

As it had done in the past, External Affairs asked Mawson and Orme Masson for comments before stating its position. 158 Both supported encouraging the Norwegians to claim the area between 45° East and 20° West. 159 Orme Masson suggested that the Norwegians ‘have done, and are doing, good work in that region

154 Letter Keith Officer to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 26 April 1934, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3, and NAA: Series MP 1185/9, Item 453/204/933.
155 Letter Keith Officer 26 April 1934.
156 Letter Keith Officer 26 April 1934.
157 Letter Keith Officer 26 April 1934.
158 Separate Letters Secretary, Department of External Affairs to Mawson and Orme Masson, 31 May 1934, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3.
159 Letter D. Orme Masson to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 16 June 1934, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3.
and have certainly stronger claims to it than any other people'.\textsuperscript{160} He also believed that support for a Norwegian claim, would stop their attempts to intrude within the Australian boundary as Lars Christensen had done recently.\textsuperscript{161}

The changes of attitude by the Norwegian and British Governments could have been the result of discussions Mawson had had with Riiser-Larsen and Lars Christensen when he met them in London the previous year. Riiser-Larsen had made it clear to Mawson that he thought it ‘unfair’ that Britain had claimed everything in the Antarctic.\textsuperscript{162} In response Mawson urged the Norwegians to make a claim to the area between the Australian Antarctic and the Falkland Islands.\textsuperscript{163} Mawson and Orme Masson shared the belief that Norway should have its own sector of Antarctica. Mawson put his view more bluntly when he advised the Australian Government to make a final commitment to Norway, in the hope that individuals would cease their ‘petty tactics’ aimed at ‘harrassing’ the Australian claim.\textsuperscript{164}

From the outset Mawson and the Australian Government had believed in the adoption of frank negotiations with the Norwegians with respect to the sector beyond 40° East. On the other hand, the British Government believed that if Norway were given ‘renewed and more explicit assurances that there is no such intention’ of British annexation of that sector, they might even abandon the project.\textsuperscript{165} If Norway changed its mind about acquiring Antarctic territory, and after a time lapse of some fifteen or twenty years without annexation, the area would be open for Britain to take action.\textsuperscript{166} These were not necessarily the views of the British Government, but rather the views of the bureaucrats mainly within the Dominions Office, with whom Keith Officer discussed Antarctic matters.

From Oslo, Wingfield warned that actual denial of British rights was to be feared, particularly since Norway was the only foreign nation that had ‘formally

\textsuperscript{160} Letter 16 June 1934.  
\textsuperscript{161} Letter 16 June 1934.  
\textsuperscript{162} Letter Douglas Mawson to The Department of External Affairs, 18 June 1934  
NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3.  
\textsuperscript{163} Letter 18 June 1934.  
\textsuperscript{164} Letter 18 June 1934.  
\textsuperscript{165} Letter Keith Officer to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 26 April 1934.  
\textsuperscript{166} Letter 26 April 1934.
challenged* British claims.\textsuperscript{167} In the absence of an agreement, Wingfield suggested the Norwegian Government might challenge all British claims.\textsuperscript{168} He was against the concept of an international conference, seeing it as problematic for British interests. But, if such a conference were to take place, both Norway and the United States 'would feel bound' to make claims whether they were 'good, bad or indifferent', and the British Government would 'probably be compelled to offer concessions' in order to obtain recognition for British claims.\textsuperscript{169} He suggested that 'arriving at a diplomatic arrangement' with Norway was 'our best hope'.\textsuperscript{170}

Wingfield believed that Christensen was aggravating rather than assisting Norway's position. He said that Christensen had deliberately claimed territory already within the Australian Antarctic Territory. However, he could have done so without knowing that Norway 'had consented by secret agreement' to debar its nationals from occupying any of the lands published in the proceedings of the 1926 Imperial Conference after agreement was reached with the British Government not to protest against Norwegian annexation of Bouvet Island.\textsuperscript{171} As Wingfield advised the Foreign Office, Christensen 'did not know that Norwegian rights there had already been sacrificed'.\textsuperscript{172} He warned against complacency, however, when he reminded the Foreign Office that neither Norway nor any other country was prepared to recognise the three British claims that 'have been put forward officially'.\textsuperscript{173}

After the British and Norwegian Governments agreed that an international conference over Antarctica 'would not be desirable', the Foreign Office made a firm commitment to Norway that 'there is no intention of claiming British sovereignty over the region lying between the western boundary of the Australian Antarctic Territory as defined in the Order-in-Council of the 7\textsuperscript{th} February, 1933, and the eastern boundary of Coats Land as mentioned in the summary of proceedings of the

\textsuperscript{167} Copy of Despatch C. Wingfield to John Simon, 24 May 1934 NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3. This seven-page Despatch from Wingfield summarised Norwegian exploration and interests in the Antarctic. It also provided a brief history of negotiations with Norway over British Antarctic annexation.

\textsuperscript{168} Copy of Despatch 24 May 1934.

\textsuperscript{169} Copy of Despatch 24 May 1934.

\textsuperscript{170} Copy of Despatch 24 May 1934.

\textsuperscript{171} Copy of Despatch 24 May 1934.

\textsuperscript{172} Copy of Despatch 24 May 1934.

\textsuperscript{173} Copy of Despatch 24 May 1934.
Imperial Conference of 1926.\textsuperscript{174} Domestic political upheavals in Norway, however, kept Antarctica off the Government’s agenda for some years after Mowinckel departed office for the last time in 1935.

On 2 July 1938, the Norwegian Minister in London reopened discussions on Antarctica with the Foreign Office and sought further assurances about the sector beyond the Australian Antarctic Territory.\textsuperscript{175} Alfred Stirling advised External Affairs that, provided the Australian Government had no objections, the British Government proposed to confirm the assurance made to Norway four years earlier. The British Government also wished to advise the Norwegian Government that agreement had been reached with the French Government over definite boundaries for Adélie Land and that to date no other government had disputed this claim.\textsuperscript{176}

The Australian Government was not prepared to give any assurance to Norway that would give the impression that a Norwegian claim to the sector beyond the Australian Antarctic Territory would be recognised. External Affairs had advised its Minister at the time, W.M. Hughes, that there had been persistent incursions into the Australian Antarctic Territory over the last four years by Norwegian expeditions, an indication of disregard of Australia’s boundaries.\textsuperscript{177} External Affairs also suggested that current Norwegian Antarctic interest was probably aimed at forestalling Lincoln Ellsworth, the American aviator/explorer, rather than reflecting any willingness to recognise Australia’s Antarctic borders.\textsuperscript{178} Lincoln Ellsworth was ‘closely associated with Wilkins’, Hughes was advised, and intended to explore the western side of the Australian Antarctic Territory, which could provide useful information. External Affairs also pointed out to the Minister that the Australian Government had taken a neutral stance with respect to any further Antarctic annexation and had advised the British Government accordingly in June 1934.\textsuperscript{179}

\textsuperscript{174} Copy of letter Foreign Office to Monsieur Erik Colban (Norwegian Legation, London) 23 October 1934, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3 and NAA: Series A 2910 Item 404/16/1, part 1.
\textsuperscript{175} Cable Alfred Stirling to External Affairs, 2 July 1938, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 48, part 3.
\textsuperscript{176} Cable Alfred Stirling 2 July 1938.
\textsuperscript{177} Brief Department of External Affairs to The Minister ‘Antarctic – Norwegian Claims’, 4 July 1938, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 48 part 3.
\textsuperscript{178} Brief 4 July 1938.
\textsuperscript{179} Brief 4 July 1938.
On 15 July 1938, Stirling was instructed to reinforce Australia’s neutrality and its opposition to giving Norway any assurances that would be interpreted as an invitation to annex the sector beyond the Australian Antarctic Territory. Australia believed that such assurances could be viewed unfavourably by the United States. Stirling was to stress that

while the Commonwealth Government has no intention of extending her claims beyond the western boundary, it does not desire to be associated with the United Kingdom in repeating to Norway the assurance of 1934.\textsuperscript{180}

Not surprisingly, the British Government was displeased with Australia’s stance. It believed that the ‘renewal of assurance would be valueless without inclusion of Commonwealth Government’.\textsuperscript{181} The British Government also believed that, if a renewal of assurance was not given to Norway, this would likely bring about the very action that Australia wished to avoid.\textsuperscript{182} Stirling advised Hodgson that the British Government believed that Norway had no ‘ulterior motive’.\textsuperscript{183} Although Stirling put Australia’s concerns about Norwegian incursions into the Australian Antarctic Territory forcefully to the Dominions Office, the latter shrugged these concerns aside.\textsuperscript{184} Nor was the Dominions Office impressed by Australia’s protestations that ‘British Commonwealth and Norway might be suspected of acting in collusion against any interests which other countries might have,’ particularly the United States.\textsuperscript{185}

The Dominions Office was in fact seeking to make any United States ambitions in the proposed Norwegian sector Norway’s problem. It stated that it was not clear from an interview given by Ellsworth to the press that he intended to claim territory. Even if he did, the United States would need to enter into discussions with Norway. Therefore any assurances given to Norway would relate only to the territory between the western boundary of the Australian Antarctic Territory and the eastern boundary of Coats Land. The Dominions Office also believed that the

\textsuperscript{180} Cable Hodgson to External Affairs Officer, London 15 July 1938, NAA: Series A981, Item ANT 48, part 3.
\textsuperscript{181} Cable External Affairs Officer, London to Department of External Affairs, 18 August 1938, NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 48, part 3.
\textsuperscript{182} Cablegram External Affairs Officer, London to Department of External Affairs, 18 August 1938 NAA Series No. A981 Item ANT 48 Part 3.
\textsuperscript{183} Memorandum External Affairs Officer to The Secretary Department of External Affairs, 19 August 1938, NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 48, part 3.
\textsuperscript{184} Aide Memoire attached to Memorandum External Affairs Office to The Secretary Department of External Affairs, 19 August 1938, NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 48, part 3.
\textsuperscript{185} Aide Memoire, 19 August 1938.
Norwegians were unlikely to broadcast any agreement reached with the British Empire, thus ruling out any accusation of collusion. Now that the British Government had clarified its intentions, the Australian Government was urged to reconsider its position.\(^{186}\)

Australia was finally persuaded by these arguments. Hodgson instructed Stirling to advise the British Government that Australia was prepared to be associated with the British Government in assuring Norway that the Australian Antarctic Territory would not be extended beyond 45° East. That commitment was made on the condition that Norwegian explorers refrained from raising flags and from flying over the territory without the Australian Government’s permission.\(^{187}\) In addition, the Australian Government asked that the British Government ‘should seek in return a specific recognition by Norway of the Commonwealth boundary’.\(^{188}\)

On 11 November 1938 Sir George Mounsey of the British Foreign Office wrote to Erik Colban at the Norwegian Legation, giving the assurances of the British and Australian Governments that the borders of the Australian Antarctic Territory would remain as published in the Order-in-Council. Mounsey also observed that, while Australia had associated itself with the assurance, the Australian Government now desire in view of these repeated events to receive, in return, from the Norwegian Government a specific assurance of their recognition of the Commonwealth boundaries in the Antarctic as defined in the Order-in-Council of the 7th February, 1933.\(^{189}\)

On 14 January 1939, Norway issued a decree placing under Norwegian sovereignty an area on the Antarctic continent extending from Coats Land to 45° East. According to the British Minister at Oslo, Norway was prompted to make a sovereignty claim in order to protect its whaling interests, and fearing the activities of Lincoln Ellsworth in the same region.\(^{190}\) On the same day the Norwegian Minister in London, Erik Colban, sent a letter to Viscount Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, in which he advised that ‘the Norwegian Government recognise the boundaries of the

\(^{186}\) *Aide Memoire*, 19 August 1938.

\(^{187}\) Cable W. R. Hodgson to External Affairs Officer, 2 September 1938, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 48, part 3.

\(^{188}\) Cable 2 September 1938.

\(^{189}\) Letter Sir G. Mounsey to M. Colban, 11 November 1938, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 48, part 3.

\(^{190}\) Memorandum Alfred Stirling to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 27 January 1939 NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 48, part 3.
Australian Commonwealth Dependency in the Antarctic, as defined in the Order-in-Council of the 7th February, 1933.\textsuperscript{191} Thus, the Norwegian recognition of the Australian Antarctic Territory became the only formal and specific recognition of sovereignty rights in Antarctica. On 21 April 1939 the Australian Government reciprocated by advising the British Government that it had ‘no conflict’ with the proposal as put by Norway and had ‘no objection to formal recognition of the claim’.\textsuperscript{192}

As the Antarctic question demonstrates, Australia was no longer prepared to leave decisions that affected its national interests to the Dominion Office or the Foreign Office, without an Australian contribution. With regard to the problem of Adélie Land, it was evident that the British Government was seeking to appease French sensitivities after it had included French discoveries within the FID. With respect to Norway, the lack of frank and open diplomacy resulted in long and unnecessary delays because some British bureaucrats hoped for the day when unclaimed sections of Antarctica would become British. This delusional aspiration disregarded the fact that nations with Antarctic aspirations would challenge British hegemony in the Antarctic. The lesson that Australia learned from its involvement in diplomatic politics with France and Norway was to be aware of the difficulty of reconciling Australian interests with the wider concerns of the British Government’s policy makers. In the end, Australia exceeded its Antarctic ambitions by becoming the controlling power over the largest Antarctic claim. It would now consolidate its control in ways that would be determined in Australia, without the need for any further appeals for collaboration with the British Government.

\textsuperscript{191} Letter Erik Colban to Viscount Halifax, 14 January 1939, NAA: Series A 2910 Item 404/16/1 and NAA Series No. A981, Item ANT 48, part 3.
\textsuperscript{192} Telegram From the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia to Dominions Secretary, 21 April 1939, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 48, part 3.
Chapter 10: 1933-1945 – A Time for Consolidation

The passing of the Australian Antarctic Territory Act in 1933 began the era of Australian consolidation and control over its territory. While a permanent settlement in Antarctica continued to be out of the question, Australia was aware that it had to perform other acts in order to demonstrate to the world that it had the capacity to exercise control. Four possible demonstrations of control identified by the Australian Government were the sending of an expedition to find Lincoln Ellsworth, the American explorer reported lost in Antarctica; the publication of the scientific data collected by Mawson on his 1911-1914 expedition and those from the BANZARE; organising another expedition for 1939; and compiling a comprehensive map of Antarctica.

Australia was presented with an early opportunity to exercise its Antarctic credentials when it launched a search for the American aviator/explorer Lincoln Ellsworth and his Canadian companion, Herbert Hollick-Kenyon. Both men had embarked on an Antarctic expedition in the Antarctic summer of 1935-1936 and had reportedly disappeared somewhere near Byrd’s old base of Little America, some distance from the Bay of Whales in the Ross Dependency. On 2 December 1935 the Department of External Affairs proposed to the Dominions Secretary that a joint British-Australian Government effort be made to find Ellsworth and Hollick-Kenyon. It suggested that the Discovery II, which had been conducting investigations around Queen Mary Land and was due shortly at Fremantle, should be sent, together with a suitable aeroplane on board, to search for the lost explorer.1

Keith Officer, at the time the External Affairs Officer in London, urged ‘that such action would be [a] useful demonstration of authority in both the Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Territories’.2 The British Government, seeing merit in the Australian initiative, quickly adopted the suggestion. Strategies were put in place in Australia once the Foreign Office had advised the United States Embassy in London that the British and Australian Governments ‘are examining what might be

1 Cable External Affairs to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 2 December 1935, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 10.
2 Cable External Affairs Officer, London to Prime Minister's Department, 3 December 1935, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 4, part 10.
done to assist in finding Ellsworth'. *Discovery II* was then ordered to sail immediately to Melbourne.³ Mawson and Flight-Lieutenant Douglas would be in charge of flying operations and Captain Davis would be appointed adviser.⁴ With Australia in charge of the search and rescue expedition, the British Government inquired what role Australia had in mind for the British Government to play before it made a final decision as to whether or not it would participate.⁵ Keith Officer understood that the United States Government was proposing to mount a search from the South American end of the Antarctic continent and had sent an aeroplane to Punta Arenas in Chile.⁶ The London *Times* provided publicity for the search and rescue operation when it published a ‘long message reporting in detail steps being taken by [the] Australian Government’ to find the two aviators.⁷

Acting on the assumption that the British Government would cooperate with the mission by providing some financial support, Prime Minister Lyons also asked his New Zealand counterpart, Michael Joseph Savage, to assist in the search by sharing the costs.⁸ Lyons emphasised that such participation would demonstrate their respective ‘authority in both Australian and New Zealand Antarctic territories’.⁹ Savage agreed to participate and proposed that the cost of the mission should be shared on an equal basis between the three governments provided the cost did not exceed £6,000. Any excess over that amount, he said, should be shared equally by ‘British and Australian Governments'.¹⁰ On 13 December 1935 Lyons asked Keith Officer to ascertain whether the Discovery Committee would be prepared to ‘temporarily abandon’ their scientific mission and place the *Discovery II* under the direction of the Commonwealth Government for the rescue mission.¹¹ While having a ‘strong desire’ to cooperate with the Commonwealth Government, the Discovery Committee believed the vessel should remain under their management.

---

³ Cable External Affairs Officer, London to Department of External Affairs 3 December 1935, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6.
⁴ Cable Lyons to High Commissioner, 9 December 1935, NAA: Series A 461/8 Item P413/6.
⁵ Cable External Affairs Officer, London to Department of External Affairs, 9 December 1935, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6.
⁶ Cable External Affairs Officer, 9 December 1935. Punta Arenas is the most southerly Chilean city and overlooks the Strait of Magellan.
⁷ Cable External Affairs Officer, 9 December 1935.
⁸ Cable Lyons to Prime Minister of New Zealand, 15 December 1935, NAA: Series A461/8, Item P413/6.
⁹ Cable Lyons to M.J. Savage, Prime Minister of New Zealand 15 December 1935.
¹⁰ Cable Savage, to Lyons 18 December 1935 NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6.
¹¹ Cable Lyons to The High Commissioner, 13 December 1935, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6.
owing to ‘technical difficulties’. Discovery II sailed to the Ross Dependency in order to commence its search in the Bay of Whales area, the location of Little America, Byrd’s old base. A search party was organised with sledges to look for the marooned explorers and in mid-January 1936 they were located at Little America.  

Australia’s purpose in searching for Ellsworth and Hollick-Kenyon was not only to consolidate and promote the Empire’s control over its Antarctic possessions. During the inter-war years, a strong belief developed in Australia that Australian Antarctic veterans had a special talent for Antarctic exploration and Australia generally for successfully organising Antarctic expeditions. The two BANZAREs were a testimony to Australian success. Hence, Australians felt competent to be put themselves forward as the leaders of Antarctic expeditions. G. E. Fogg, in A History of Antarctic Science, published in 1992, observed that, while Discovery II was sent on Australia’s initiative, the rescue effort ‘was first and foremost a gesture of goodwill but it also served to reinforce Empire claims to the Ross Dependency.’ To the world outside the British Empire, the perception would probably have been that the British Empire was the preeminent Antarctic power, with the skills to demonstrate that dominance.

Both explorers were aware that Australia had initiated the rescue effort. Although Hollick-Kenyon wished to return to Canada, Ellsworth accepted an invitation from the Australian Government to be welcomed in Melbourne at a grand reception, and to acknowledge personally the Australian effort. The scheme to rescue the explorers created such an international sensation that the British Government entered into a contract with Paramount to make a newsreel of the rescue, for release to international audiences. Lyons, on the other hand, had accepted an offer from Fox Movietone to make a film of the Melbourne reception for release in the United States. However, after the British Government advised Lyons that its own contract with Paramount should prevail, Lyons was forced to reject Fox Movietone’s offer, acknowledging that the Discovery Committee did not wish its

---

12 Cable from the Liaison Officer, London to Strahan, Prime Minister’s Department, 13 December 1935, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6.
13 Herbert Hollick-Kenyon left immediately on Lincoln Ellsworth’s research vessel the Wyatt Earp to Valparaiso, Chile and from there went to New York, Letter Malcolm MacDonald, Dominions Office, to the Australian Prime Minister, 31 January 1936, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6.
15 Radio message to ‘Commander Discovery Second’ from J.A. Lyons, Prime Minister, 30 January 1936, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6.
arrangements to be ‘interfered with’.\textsuperscript{16} Lyons’ virtue was left intact by his refusal to allow Fox Movietone to take a newsreel of the Melbourne crowds greeting Ellsworth, but Australia missed a unique opportunity as a result of the British Government claiming the publicity over the entire rescue.

The year following the rescue of Ellsworth and Hollick-Kenyon, Professor Frank Debenham, founding Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge, visited Canberra in August 1937 for talks with External Affairs. Debenham was highly qualified to discuss Antarctic matters, not only because of his status at the Scott Polar Institute, but also as a veteran explorer. He had been a member of the scientific team on Scott’s 1910-1913 expedition. As an Australian, he was keen to advise Australia on its exercise of control over the Australian Antarctic Territory. At the outset, Debenham suggested that he was ‘centrally placed as regards the polar regions and current thought about them’.\textsuperscript{17} ‘I am not sure even now’, he said, ‘that our Sector is worth having, but as we have got it I feel we should at least explore its possibilities, and stall other claimants by confirming our rights’.\textsuperscript{18} Debenham stressed that acts of asserting title in the Antarctic were necessary. Because there was

no such thing as a formal code of International Law with respect to countries which are uninhabitable, claims to polar lands rest upon a variety of evidence, every one of which is open to debate and may be upset on other grounds.\textsuperscript{19}

Debenham observed that ‘priority of discovery’ on its own did not constitute a valid title, but was the most difficult to ignore.\textsuperscript{20} If accompanied by ‘temporary occupation’, it provided sufficient grounds to establish sovereignty rights ‘if it be followed up by successive visits or other indication of responsibility’.\textsuperscript{21} Debenham believed the most secure of British claims to be the Ross Dependency, because the area had been discovered by a British explorer and visited by many later expeditions. In addition, it had been extensively mapped.\textsuperscript{22} He believed Australian

\textsuperscript{16} Cable Lyons to High Commissioner, London, 21 February 1936, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6.
\textsuperscript{17} Memorandum attached to Letter F. Debenham to Colonel Hodgson, 21 August 1937, NAA: Series A 981 Item ANT 2, Part 2.
\textsuperscript{18} Memorandum 21 August 1937.
\textsuperscript{19} Memorandum 21 August 1937.
\textsuperscript{20} Memorandum 21 August 1937.
\textsuperscript{21} Memorandum 21 August 1937.
\textsuperscript{22} Memorandum 21 August 1937.
claims, by comparison, ‘are far less assured’.  Debenham also made the point that, although revenue from the whaling industry had influenced the British Government to extend a sovereignty claim over the Falkland Islands and Ross Dependencies, he doubted the value of whaling in the Australian Antarctic. In any case, he said, ‘at present pelagic whaling is almost entirely outside territorial waters and no land bases are required’. Moreover, ‘the prospects of economic resources are very slender indeed’ and the value of weather forecasting would require several years of investigation to realise. Nonetheless, he urged that Australia should not surrender its possession.

Although Debenham was skeptical about the value of the area, he suggested a number of measures to ensure the consolidation of Australian claims. Foremost amongst these were ‘Australian or British-Australia expeditions’ to make further geographical investigations of the MacRobertson Land area and the establishment of winter quarters. He also advised the setting up of an organisation similar to the British Polar Committee. He said such a body should be advisory only and have the ability to co-opt members ‘outside official circles, whose knowledge would be invaluable but whose enthusiasm might be embarrassing if it had executive power’.

Debenham believed it was necessary to inform both the Australian public and other nations about Australia’s Antarctic interests. The most important way of doing this, according to Debenham, was the production of a map, ‘accompanied if possible by text,’ and he was pleased to see that a map was being prepared. ‘Sooner or later’, he said, there should be an ‘official account of the Sector’. Before Debenham concluded his advice, he had one more explosive comment to offer:

I speak with feeling on the matter from having to talk to representatives of the Colonial Office in London who had not the remotest knowledge of Antarctic matters and who were therefore obstructive as the simplest way of covering up ignorance.

---

23 Memorandum 21 August 1937.
24 Memorandum 21 August 1937.
25 Memorandum 21 August 1937.
26 Memorandum 21 August 1937.
27 Memorandum 21 August 1937.
28 Memorandum 21 August 1937.
29 Memorandum 21 August 1937.
Debenham stressed that, although the Scott Polar Research Institute was established to supply information on polar matters, 'the bulk of the material relating to the Australian Sector is already in Australia'.

Debenham's startling revelations were significant in confirming in the mind of External Affairs what it had suspected. Since Amery's 1920 letter to the dominions, there had been a succession of errors that could have been ignored had they not involved other nations in lengthy diplomatic negotiations. It was clear from the approaches to France and Norway that the British Government was speaking not from a position of knowledge but from a position of imperial strength, or even creative diplomacy. While the imperial bureaucrats might be in a position to warn off opponents, or might speak in Delphic utterances, an emerging nation like Australia was better placed to maintain and develop its Antarctic expertise. It was this direction that Debenham was proposing Australia should take.

The Australian Government decided to finalise the publication of Mawson's scientific data as one of the acts of asserting control. To date, the New South Wales Government had contributed most of the funds for the publication of the data from Mawson's 1911-1914 Expedition. The New South Wales Government had reached an agreement with Mawson to publish the scientific data in exchange for all of the specimens, together with his manuscripts, to be handed over to it as a national collection for the Public Library and Museum. The New South Wales Government established a Committee to arrange for the printing of the records, after observing that their publication was important from the scientific perspective and also that 'the completed work will very greatly strengthen the position of the Commonwealth government in its international discussions regarding territory claimed by Australia'. The New South Wales Government had financed the publication of Mawson's scientific data after the Federal Government expressed its inability to allocate additional funds. But since the BANZAREs, matters had changed and the two governments now undertook joint financing in order to publish the collection quickly.

30 Memorandum 21 August 1937.
31 Secret E (37) 22 Imperial Conference, 1937.
32 Letter Acting Under Secretary Premier's Department to The Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 12 February 1940 NAA: Series A 461/10 Item Q413/6.
33 Secret Memorandum E (37) 22 Imperial Conference, 1937.
While expeditions to Antarctica were high in the category of significant acts of asserting control, funding and organising them required substantial financial outlays. Australia was given an opportunity to make a visit to the western portion of the Australian Antarctic Territory and show the flag when George Hubert Wilkins, an Australian polar explorer, advised the Australian Government that he had been invited by Ellsworth to join him in the Antarctic summer of 1935-1936. The portion that Ellsworth chose to visit was from 0° to 90° East. That area was problematic for Australia since it included the western part of the Australian Antarctic Territory, or the entire African Quadrant, the destination of the first BANZARE. Ellsworth had not applied to the Australian Government for permission to enter Australian territory. Cabinet understood, however, that Ellsworth had already ‘announced’ that a portion of the area he wished to cover was already under Australian claim and that he would be ‘unable to claim any new territory for the United States’. An added assurance was the presence of Wilkins, who would be given an opportunity to visit this western portion of the Australian Antarctic and show the Australian flag. According to advice from Keith Officer in March 1935, the area continued to be a destination of Lars Christensen. While on the face of it an attractive proposition, the expedition turned out to be a mistake for Australia.

It was imprudent, if not naïve, of Australia to associate itself with Ellsworth, since he was proposing to visit territory which Mawson had urged Riiser-Larsen to explore and proclaim for Norway. Both the Australian and the British Governments were also prepared to support Norway and hoped that in turn Norway would recognise the Australian Antarctic Territory. Cabinet did not believe that Ellsworth would jeopardise Australian sovereignty by entering the Australian Antarctic Territory, since he was proposing to make only short aerial reconnaissance visits. His main purpose was to ‘cover the eastern portion of the unclaimed sector between the British and Australian sectors’, in other words, the area proposed for Norway. Australia had previously supported possible Norwegian annexation of the so-called unclaimed sector. However, now that Ellsworth was planning to explore in the area, Australia had changed its mind. As a matter of courtesy, Lyons advised the

34 Department of External Affairs Cabinet Submission 4 July 1938,
NAA: Series A 1838 Item 1495/3/2/11, part 1 and NAA: Series A 461/10 ItemT413/6
35 Letter Keith Officer to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 22 March 1935,
NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51 part 3.
36 Cabinet Submission 4 July 1938.
Dominions Secretary of the Australian Cabinet decision. He noted that the proposed survey would increase existing knowledge of the western portion of the Australian territory as well as ‘act as a deterrent to possible Norwegian claims in this area, especially as Ellsworth has announced his intention to respect Australian sovereignty’.\textsuperscript{37}

The script being developed in Australia, however, was not being followed in the United States. On 30 August 1938 the American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, wrote to the American Consul in Cape Town, instructing him to request Ellsworth ‘in strict confidence’ to assert claims as an American citizen in the name of the United States to ‘all territory he may explore, photograph, or map which has hitherto been undiscovered and unexplored, regardless of whether or not it lies within a sector or sphere of influence already claimed by any other country’.\textsuperscript{38} It was preferable, however, for Ellsworth to claim unclaimed territory.\textsuperscript{39} Cordell Hull suggested that Ellsworth could drop notes ‘or personal proclamations, attached to parachutes, containing assertions of claims’.\textsuperscript{40} Upon completion of these acts, Ellsworth could then publish the text of these claims, together with locations. The Consul was also instructed to make it clear to Ellsworth that ‘he should not indicate or imply advance knowledge or approval of the Government of the United States but that he should leave it for this Government to adopt its own course of action’.\textsuperscript{41}

During the same period the Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, wrote to President Franklin Roosevelt, questioning the United States policy on Antarctica as articulated by Secretary of State Hughes in 1924. Sumner Welles observed that, while Hughes had been adamant that even in the Antarctic only ‘actual settlement’ constituted a valid claim of sovereignty, that policy failed to take into account the prohibitive climatic conditions of polar regions by ‘over-emphasising’ the necessity of ‘effective occupation’ as a pre-requisite for acquiring sovereignty.\textsuperscript{42} Welles pointed out that views were changing about the polar regions, with some believing in the possible existence of valuable minerals and other resources in these regions.

\textsuperscript{37} Letter J. A. Lyons to The Secretary of State for Dominions Affairs, 8 July 1938, NAA: Series A 461/10 Item T413/6
\textsuperscript{40} Bush, Volume III, Doc. US30081938, p. 438.
\textsuperscript{42} Bush, Volume III, Doc. US06011939, pp. 440-441
Welles believed that the position of the United States in continuing to reserve its rights would not be sufficient to influence any ultimate settlement of territorial questions, particularly when balanced against activities being pursued vigorously by other nations. He was keen for the United States to modify its stance on ‘effective occupation’ in polar regions to ‘constructive occupation’ and the issuing of Executive Orders over polar territories as an act of exercising sovereignty over claimed territory. He was not willing, however, to recommend the adoption of the ‘so-called “Sector Principle”’, because it was not an established principle of international law, and he believed that ‘sovereignty cannot be acknowledged in advance of the discovery of territory’. The instructions to Ellsworth to claim territory in the hinterland of the Australian Antarctic were in keeping with the American policy of rejecting the so-called sector principle. Hence, the instructions would not be viewed by the United States Government as tantamount to making a counter-claim.

On 7 January 1939, four days before he claimed territory for the United States of America, Ellsworth showed Wilkins a copper cylinder which he had prepared in Cape Town, together with the memorandum of instructions. Ellsworth indicated that he proposed to claim from the ship’s position from 69° South and at 77° East 150 miles each side of his line of flight and to the South Pole. After Wilkins had protested that the area in question was under Australian control and had been formally proclaimed, Ellsworth agreed to Wilkins’ suggestion to limit his claim to an area that had been actually seen and explored during his flight. Ellsworth subsequently claimed territory on 11 January 1939 at 68°30′ South from 79° East and at 72° South also from 79° East. On dropping the American flag, he claimed for the United States the area south of 70° to a distance of 150 miles east and west of that point and a distance of 150 miles south into the hinterland.

Despite Ellsworth encroaching upon the Australian Antarctic Territory, Wilkins saw a positive side to this act. He observed in his report to the Minister that, had Ellsworth claimed his sector to the Pole, ‘his act would, if taken notice of in official circles, do little more than bring about a definite decision as to the legality of

---

45 Hubert Wilkins 6 February 1939.
claims based on the “Sector” principle.\textsuperscript{46} However, Ellsworth did not claim a sector to the Pole, only a triangle of 150 miles. For his part, Wilkins indicated in his report to the Department of External Affairs that he flew ‘the Commonwealth of Australia’ flag and then deposited the flag and a record of his visit at several places on 8, 9 and 11 January 1939.\textsuperscript{47} Wilkins explained Ellsworth’s acts in his report to External affairs as those of one fulfilling a patriotic duty, not of one trying deliberately to deceive him.

Press reports regarding Ellsworth’s activities prompted External Affairs to express its disappointment in a cable to Keith Officer, who was now in Washington.\textsuperscript{48} External Affairs restated its understanding that Ellsworth had ‘publicly announced’ in the \textit{New York Times} on 6 May 1938 that he did not intend claiming any territory for the United States in the Australian sector. In addition to that, Wilkins had given assurances in Australia that Ellsworth ‘would officially communicate his intentions to [the] Commonwealth government and request permission for flights before he left Cape Town’.\textsuperscript{49} It was only as a result of these undertakings that Wilkins was provided with information as to the areas where exploration could be undertaken that would enhance knowledge of the Australian sector. Without any additional clarification from the State Department, the Australian Government decided not to pursue the matter any further but to wait until such time as the United States Government supported Ellsworth’s claims.\textsuperscript{50}

Although the Australian Government considered the idea of another Antarctic expedition with its BANZARE partners, it subsequently abandoned the venture because the ‘present defence policy and campaign’ called for ‘onerous financial commitments and national effort’.\textsuperscript{51} Thinking ahead, however, and acting

\textsuperscript{46} Hubert Wilkins 6 February 1939.
\textsuperscript{47} Hubert Wilkins 6 February 1939.
\textsuperscript{48} Cable Department of External Affairs to Australian Counsellor at Embassy, Washington, 16 January 1939, NAA: Series A 461/8, Item P413/6. Keith Officer had been posted to the British Embassy, Washington as Counsellor. A copy of this telegram was sent to Alfred Stirling, the External Affairs Officer in London.
\textsuperscript{49} Cable 16 January 1939. See also Bush, Volume III, Doc. US11011939, p. 443.
\textsuperscript{50} Cable W.R. Hodgson to Keith Officer (undated but probably sent on 29 January 1939), NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3.
\textsuperscript{51} Draft Cable to External Affairs Officer, London, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item T413/6. Although the copy on file is marked ‘Draft’ the indications are that the cable was sent on 24 November as Alfred Stirling responded to it on 2 December 1938 in a letter to External Affairs. See Letter Alfred Stirling to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 2 December 1938, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item T413/6.
on advice from Mawson, Cabinet decided to purchase Ellsworth’s vessel, the *Wyatt Earp*, when he offered it up for sale. Cabinet noted that while *Discovery I*, Scott’s old ship, was of similar proportions, it was significantly older, having being built in 1901 and yet had been offered by the British Government for £66,000. On 8 February 1939 the Melbourne *Argus* carried a statement from the Prime Minister that the *Wyatt Earp* had been purchased for approximately £4,400. The purchase also included two aeroplanes, stores and all equipment. The excessive price that had been placed on the sale of *Discovery I* suggested either that the British Government was opportunistic or that it thought the Australian Government was gullible.

Debenham had already commented favourably on Australia’s pursuing the production of a comprehensive map of Antarctica as another measure for consolidating its Antarctic control. The question of producing an up-to-date map of Antarctica was also a preoccupation of the British Admiralty. On 14 June 1932, the ‘Sub-Committee on Names in the Antarctic’ met at the British Admiralty to discuss the need to prepare a map of Antarctica in order to incorporate the recent discoveries made by Mawson and Byrd and to address the question of duplication. The Chairman of the Sub-Committee, Vice Admiral H.P. Douglas, was concerned that the ‘British sectors’ had been given ‘foreign names by foreigners’.

In order to resolve the problem of duplication of names, Douglas suggested to the meeting that a need existed to adopt some guiding principles ‘in selecting from the multitude of names which had been showered in the Antarctic’. He observed that it had been the practice of the Admiralty not to accept names ‘off-hand’ for insertion on an Admiralty map. For place names under the authority of a dominion, reference was made to the government of the dominion concerned.

---

52 Department of External Affairs For Cabinet Agenda No. 537 ‘Offer by Ellsworth to Sell His Vessel “Wyatt Earp” to the Commonwealth Government’, 7 February 1939, NAA: Series A 1838/283, Item 1945/3/2/1/1.
53 The *Argus* 8 February 1939, NAA: Series A 461/10, Item T413/6. According to The *Argus*, the *Wyatt Earp* was purchased by Lincoln Ellsworth about three or four years’ earlier. It was built in Norway for Antarctic exploration.
54 Copy of Minutes of Polar Committee, Sub-Committee on Names in the Antarctic, held at the British Admiralty on 14 June 1932, NAA: A 5954, Item 453/204/933.
55 Copy of Minutes of Polar Committee, 14 June 1932.
56 Copy of Minutes of Polar Committee, 14 June 1932.
57 Copy of Minutes of Polar Committee, 14 June 1932.
recommendations respecting the Australian sector ‘should be submitted to Commonwealth Government’ before final approval was given.\textsuperscript{58}

In an exercise of unabashed imperialism in Antarctica, Douglas dismissed ‘foreign names’ from the map. He stated his view clearly when he noted that, with respect to the discoveries of Admiral Byrd, only the date of the discovery and the name of the discoverer should be placed on the map and ‘to leave it nameless.’ Douglas admitted in the same breath, however, that ‘it would be ungracious, as well as difficult’ not to recognise Marie Byrd Land, given its large extent.\textsuperscript{59} He added, that in future, if such names proved to be superfluous they could be dropped.\textsuperscript{60} The Committee recognised that replacing foreign names with British names even in British territory was fraught with difficulties. Nonetheless, Douglas stated that foreign names should not be inserted within British sectors of the Antarctic map without prior discussions with the Polar Committee. At the same time, ‘the ultimate decision’ rested with the Government of the territory in question ‘and this principle was unlikely to be challenged.’\textsuperscript{61}

External Affairs was well aware that complications existed with respect to foreign names within the Australian sector. It had allowed the Norwegian name Lars Christensen Land to remain alongside that of MacRobertson Land on the 1933 map which had been prepared to accompany the Bill for an Act to accept the Australian Antarctic Territory.\textsuperscript{62} Orme Masson, whose advice had been sought by Keith Officer, was also concerned that Norwegians had given names to features already named by Mawson and had omitted from their maps names given by him. Latham did not share concerns about the retention of Norwegian names on Australian maps. In response to concerns from the scientists and his own Department, Latham noted that the ‘appropriation of names’ would not affect the

\textsuperscript{58} Cable Department of External Affairs to Duffy, 7 July 1932, NAA: Series 1838, Item1495/1/8, part 1.
\textsuperscript{59} Marie Byrd Land is located between the east coast of the Ross Dependency and the west coast of the Falkland Islands Dependency.
\textsuperscript{60} Copy of Minutes of Polar 14 June 1932.
\textsuperscript{61} Copy of Minutes of Polar Committee 14 June 1932.
\textsuperscript{62} See 1933 map that accompanied the Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Bill at p. 235B . (The 1933 map was a sketch map and showed a variation in spelling of ‘MacRobertson’ Land from that of the comprehensive 1939 map, which settled for ‘Mac-Robertson’ Land as the formal spelling). The very large 1939 map can be accessed through the Australian Antarctic Division home page at www.aad.gov.au.
'Australian claim or the title based on the claim'. According to Latham, by requesting the retention of Lars Christensen Land, Norway had 'implicitly admitted to the Australian title'. Foreign names within the Empire's Antarctic territory were anathema to British political leaders and Latham was well aware of that. Nonetheless, he was determined to show that the Australian map of Antarctica would recognise the work of the explorers, rather than be based solely on political decisions.

Assuming that the map would be prepared under the authority of the Commonwealth Government, the Minister for the Interior indicated that 'it is essential that - so far as nomenclature is concerned - it should be as correct as possible and thus avoid criticism'. The Minister suggested that the scientists and others most closely associated with Antarctic exploration should be called together to decide upon names, because 'there seem to be doubts as to whether a so called "Land" is an original discovery'. Keith Officer had taken a copy of the 1933 Antarctic Map with him to London and was asked to report on the British Government's reaction. When Keith Officer posted the map back to External Affairs on 22 February 1934, he said that the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty had gone to 'very considerable trouble' to produce a map that differed slightly from the one he had taken with him. As External Affairs discovered, while 'Lars Christensen Land' had been retained, the area denoted 'Wilkes Land' was located between 130° and 136° East. This very tiny piece of coastline contrasted to the generous proportions from 105° and 136° East applied by Latham. The British authorities, according to Keith Officer, were opposed to a large Wilkes Land as it was 'just possible extensive Wilkes Land might be undesirable from the point of view of the United States claim'. Latham had never subscribed to such apprehensions, hence his designation of Wilkes Land remained.

---

64 Handwritten Note by J.G. Latham dated 16 June 1933 on a briefing paper prepared by Keith Officer entitled 'Antarctic Map' dated 15 June 1933, NAA: Series 1838, Item 1495/1/8, part 1.
66 Letter J.A. Perkins (Minister for the Interior) to J.G. Latham, 22 November 1933.
67 Memorandum Keith Officer to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 22nd February 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 9, part 1.
68 External Affairs Minute to the Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 4 April 1934, NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 9 Part 1.
69 Cable Keith Officer to Department of External Affairs 4 April 1934 NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 9, part 1.
In mid-1934 ‘Notes for the Guidance of Explorers and Cartographers’ had been produced within the British bureaucracy and copies sent out to the dominions. These, according to the Dominions Office, were ‘approved by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom and accepted by the Royal Geographical Society’ and were for the ‘information of His Majesty’s Government in the Commonwealth of Australia’. The British Government hoped that the Notes would ‘commend’ themselves to the dominions concerned and be communicated to explorers. The Australian Government had not given Mawson any specific instructions on naming features and had been happy with Mawson’s choice of names. Mawson had adopted the practice of naming territory and features after the ruling Monarch or members of the Royal Family, as well as the Australian Prime Minister at the time of the expedition: for example, King George V Land, Princess Elizabeth Land, Scullin Monolith. Mawson also gave names for those who had supported his expeditions, particularly the BANZAREs: for example, MacRobertson Land. Mawson’s choice of names for Antarctic features had never been questioned by the Australian Government.

At the same time, the Australian Government had never sought the guidance or approval of the British authorities. Nonetheless, resolving differences between maps was a singular challenge as the Australian Government embarked on making the most comprehensive and up-to-date map of Antarctica ever produced. The acting Secretary of the Department of the Interior was concerned that maps published by the British Admiralty, the National Geographical Society of the United States of America, the Royal Geographical Society in London and the New York Times ‘were in very serious disagreement, and that it would be quite impossible to draw a reliable map without further authentic information’. The extensive nature of the project required research in original sources and dedicated officials to work on the production of the map. Two were chosen: John Cumpston of the Department of External Affairs would undertake the research, while the map would be constructed by the Chief Draughtsman, E.P. Bayliss of the Department of the Interior. External

---

70 Letter J.H. Thomas (Dominions Secretary) to Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia 9th August 1934 NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 2, part 2.
72 Report by J.S. Cumpston (undated) regarding the preparation of a comprehensive Map of Antarctica in 1939, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 9, part 2.
Affairs was preparing to consult widely, particularly with countries that had undertaken Antarctic exploration. In Australia, Mawson would be the main authority.

In 1936 Hodgson wrote to Mawson to raise the delicate matter of the accuracy of his charts. He asked Mawson for information additional to that already lodged with the Government, as the Chief Draughtsman could not reconcile differences between the surveys made by the Norwegians in the Australian Antarctic Territory and those available in the Navy Office. Hodgson believed that the difficulties might be resolved if Bayliss could see the original survey material of the two BANZAREs. He advised Mawson that Lars Christensen had published a map of the Enderby region, and that information received in External Affairs had shown that ‘the British Admiralty and the Foreign Office fail to appreciate fully the extent of the discoveries made by you in the Antarctic’.

The lack of confidence that now existed between the Australian and British Governments on the question of the map had forced the Department of External Affairs to seek original sources through its own channels. External Affairs wrote to its representatives abroad, Alfred Stirling in London and Keith Officer in Washington, for information from British and American sources respectively. Stirling indicated that research among Admiralty sources indicated that information on recent work undertaken by Norwegian explorers was already available in Canberra. Both Bayliss and Cumpston also undertook independent research in relevant journals. Cumpston and Bayliss had in mind the words of Debenham, who believed that it was ‘really important’ to complete a map of Antarctica, particularly of the Australian sector. The Australian Government, however, had decided on a

---

74 Letter W. R. Hodgson 12 August 1936.
76 Letter Hodgson to Officer, 14 January 1937, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 9, part 2.
77 Memorandum Alfred Stirling to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 5 March 1938, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 9, part 2.
78 For example, E.P. Bayliss sought the translation of articles published by Lars Christensen in the Norwegian Geographical Journal, Vol. VI No. 3, 1937, which included information about various Norwegian discoveries and flag-raising acts during Lars Christensen’s 1936-1937 Expedition, attached to memorandum to Mr Cumpston, 20 May 1938, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 51, part 3.
project of a much grander scale: to produce 'a reliable map of the Antarctic' as a measure of consolidating Australia's claims.  

When the 1939 map of Antarctica was completed, Cumpston noted in a report detailing how the map was produced that, in an endeavour to obtain original survey material, 'leading authorities all over the world' had been approached. Mawson and Captain Davis provided all of their original material. In addition, the official records of the leading expeditions were searched for reliable material. The charts of the British Admiralty and charts issued by the Norwegian Whalers' Assurance Association were also examined. Other authorities, such as Hubert Wilkins, Lincoln Ellsworth and John Rymill, supplied sketches and maps. The American Geographical Society and the Royal Geographical Society also supplied their latest maps. Professor Debenham of the Scott Polar Research Institute also assisted. Cumpston noted that 'every effort' had been made to obtain the 'most authentic material relating to the Antarctic'.

After examining the available maps, the cartographer decided to adopt the Azimuthal Equidistant Projection in order to minimize errors due to plotting on the flat surface. Cumpston indicated that the map 'is far in advance of any map of the Antarctic hitherto published.' He believed that Australia would gain considerable publicity if it were to distribute the map widely and 'gratis' to leading geographical societies of the world, universities, libraries, foreign governments and publishers of maps. It was also decided that the value of the map would be 'greatly enhanced’ if an explanatory booklet were to be printed for distribution with copies of the map. Cumpston hoped that its contents would 'put an end to the dispute which has now existed for some years as to priority of discovery of portions of the Australian Antarctic Territory.' With war as the backdrop, The Canberra Times reflected that while Europe's leading powers were 'engaged in a death struggle to determine a new map of Europe,' Australia 'applied the arts of peace to give the world the most reliable map possible of a new continent'.

---

80 Secret Memorandum E (37) 22 Imperial Conference, 1937.
81 Report (undated) by J. S. Cumpston regarding the preparation of the 1939 map of Antarctica, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 9, part 2.
82 Cumpston Report regarding the 1939 map of Antarctica.
83 Cumpston Report regarding the 1939 map of Antarctica.
84 The Canberra Times, 1 March 1940, NAA: Series A 876, Item GL191, part 1.
While congratulations came from around the world, in Tokyo the mood was sombre. The Trans-Pacific published in Tokyo claimed that members of the Antarctic Exploration Society were ‘highly incensed’ over the map because it had ignored Japanese work. According to the article, the map had represented exploration work done by a Japanese expedition in 1912 as belonging to Great Britain. Members of Japan’s Antarctic Exploration Society were proposing to call on the Japanese Foreign Minister Hachiro Arita to urge him to lodge a protest with the Australian Government and make clear the Japanese claims. It indicated that Lieutenant Choku Shirase had discovered bays and mountains on 28 November 1910: the Japanese flag was raised and a charm was buried. The Japanese Antarctic veterans claimed that for some time they had urged their Foreign Office to lay claim to the area in question, but without success. The Japanese expedition had operated within the boundaries of what became the Ross Dependency. It was therefore unlikely that any discoveries made by the Japanese expedition would have been taken into account by the British Government, particularly if the Japanese expedition did not publish reports that were accessible to the British Government.

Hodgson was also asked to explain to the American Legation how longitudinal limits of certain so-called ‘Lands’ within the Australian Antarctic Territory were determined. Hodgson was able to confirm that the authority for names and boundaries of the lands mentioned was the Department of External Affairs, which determined limits in pursuance of the authority to administer the Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act 1933 vested in it by the Order in Council. The American request is interesting and appeared to relate to Australia’s constitutional ability to take control of such a major tract of Antarctic territory.

86 For example, an article in the San Francisco News of 29 March 1940 observed that the Australian map of Antarctica was notable for its completeness. From the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Professor William H. Hobbs congratulated the Australian Government on the excellence of the production. However, he was critical of the overly political stance taken in the naming of features and territory, and largely ignoring the exploration of Nathaniel Palmer, the American explorer who made discoveries in 1820. Letter Wm. H. Hobbs to J.S. Cumpston 2 April 1940, NAA: Series A 876, Item GL191, part 1.
87 Extract from The Trans-Pacific, Tokyo, 28 March 1940, NAA: Series A 876, Item GL191 part 1.
88 Extract from The Trans-Pacific.
89 Copy of Letter Department of State Washington to American Consular Officer in Charge, Sydney, 30 April 1940. The ‘Lands’ listed in the letter were: Enderby Land, Kemp Land, MacRobertson Land, Princess Elizabeth Land, Kaiser Wilhelm II Land, Queen Mary Land, and Wilkes Land, NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 9, part 2.
90 Letter W.R. Hodgson to J.R. Minter, American Legation, Canberra, 18 September 1940 NAA: Series A 981, Item ANT 9, part 2.
Having put significant effort into producing as comprehensive a map of Antarctica as possible, External Affairs was determined that the map would be extensively promoted. 91 Copies of the map and accompanying Handbook were sent to Australia House in London for wide distribution. Copies were sent also to specific organisations and individuals, such as the Dominions Office, the Foreign Office, the Discovery Committee, the Hydrographer’s Branch, the Royal Geographical Society, the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge and the Central Bureau for the International Map of the World. According to Hodgson’s calculations, these British Ministries and organisations would have for the first time a copy of the most up-to-date map of Antarctica. The London Times and the Editor of Nature were also sent copies. Hodgson asked the Official Secretary at the Australian High Commission to advertise the Map by bringing it to the attention of the press ‘and the English teaching profession.’ 92

In the two years following the publication of the map and Handbook, institutions around the world began seeking copies. An order was placed on behalf of Princeton University Library, in the United States. 93 Yale University requested a copy for its Geological Sciences Department. 94 A copy was sent, on request, to the Geographical Economical Institute in Leningrad through the International Book Exchange Department. 95

The popularity that greeted the launch of the map and Handbook resulted from the judicious reports to the press in England, Canada and the United States. 96 In 1941 the Intelligence Branch advised that, for security reasons, the sale of all maps of the Commonwealth and Territories would cease during the course of the war, except those of Antarctica. 97 Probably the reason for the decision to distribute

91 Memorandum W.R. Hodgson to Official Secretary, Australia House, 16 May 1940, NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1.
92 Memorandum 16 May 1940.
93 Letter G.E. Strechert & Co., to Department of External Affairs, 18th February 1941, Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1.
94 Letter Secretary Department of External Affairs to Secretary Department of Geological Sciences, Yale University, Connecticut, U.S.A., 20 March 1941 NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 10, part 1.
96 Copy of article San Francisco News, 29 March 1940.
97 Note for file from Accountant, Intelligence Branch, 21 November 1941, NAA: Series A 2910, Item 404/16/1, part 1.
the map widely during the war was to ensure that world communities were made aware of Australian sovereignty claims in the south.

The 1939 map played an important role in consolidating Australia’s Antarctic status both within and outside the Empire.\(^{98}\) Within the Empire, the highly sought-after map confirmed Australia’s position as a repository of significant, if not superior, knowledge of the geography of the Antarctic region. That requests were received from a range of distinguished organisations around the world for a copy of the map gave Australia a distinct profile in a new field of geography, even if disagreements based on nationalism would continue about its contents. Whether the map consolidated Australia’s legal rights within the international community, as Australia would have hoped, is questionable. For example, there was no indication that the production of the map swayed the view of the United States Government. Norway had already given specific recognition to the Australian Antarctic Territory and France had given its tacit recognition. Nonetheless, the map would have been welcomed as providing additional information on Antarctic geography. And there was no doubt that the map had enhanced Australia’s international standing in matters Antarctic.

In 1940 A.B. Hinks of the Royal Geographical Society reviewed the map and booklet in *The Geographical Journal*. He hailed the layout of the map as ‘excellently printed’, including the use of eight colours. The booklet, according to Hinks, provided ‘a most valuable critical apparatus for studying the map’, and the authorities and ‘their Chiefs’ were to be congratulated for compressing a significant amount of material in a ‘slight book’.\(^ {99}\) In 1957 Dr Brian Roberts, both Head of the Polar Regions Section of the Foreign Office and part-time at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, praised the 1939 map, noting that it was ‘for many years the best general map of the continent’.\(^ {100}\) When John Cumpston died in

---

\(^ {98}\) Requests for the Antarctic Map came from distinguished organisations, such as Foreign Ministries, Universities, National Library and Learned Societies from every continent. For Letters requesting copies see NAA: Series A 981/4, Item ANT 10, part 1.


Canberra on 6 August 1986, obituaries in *The Geographical Journal*, organ of the British Royal Geographical Society and *Polar Record*, the journal of the Scott Polar Institute at Cambridge University, recalled the work Cumpston had done with E.P. Bayliss, 'in the compilation of the world’s first reliable map of Antarctica, published in 1939'. The ambitious goal set by the bureaucrats in two Departments had been achieved and was remembered decades later.

From 1933 Australia quickly introduced measures to ensure its control of the Australian Antarctic Territory. Together with the production of a comprehensive map of Antarctica and accompanying Handbook, the government financed the publication of scientific data from Mawson’s various expeditions. Unfortunately for Australia, two important efforts to consolidate its control turned out to be counterproductive – first, when the British Government overshadowed Australia’s initiative to rescue Ellsworth and Hollick-Kenyon, and secondly, when Ellsworth claimed territory within the Australian Antarctic for the United States of America. Since nations and their explorers naturally act in their own interests, collaboration with other nations in those early days of territorial competition was fraught with international political problems. Australia did display naivety by trusting Ellsworth. Yet, he had explicitly stated that he would not claim territory that had been claimed by Australia. The Australian Government was well aware that, once it had acquired the Australian Antarctic, it was responsible for maintaining and consolidating its control over the territory. The various acts it performed, all of which represented a financial burden on the Australian budget, demonstrated that intention to control to the world.

---

82-83, Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), www.jstor.org/stable/1790727.

Conclusion

Deryck Schreuder and Stuart Ward have observed that 'Nothing reveals more clearly the scope and complexity of Australia’s Empire than the nature of its demise.'\(^1\) It can also be said that nothing reveals more clearly the complexity of inter-imperial relations than the interrogation of a specific issue of imperial foreign policy that involved Australia in its development and implementation. The politics and diplomacy of the Australian Antarctic offers an illuminating case study of this kind.

When Leopold S. Amery, the acting Colonial Secretary, advised the dominions in February 1920 of the desirability of bringing the entire Antarctic and its surrounding waters within the Empire, the proposal was greeted enthusiastically in Australia. To the British Government, Antarctica was a source of financial gain. Maintaining control of the lucrative Antarctic whaling was behind the British Government’s first sovereignty claim over the Falkland Islands Dependencies in 1908 and the annexation of the Ross Dependency in 1923.

To Australia, on the other hand, Antarctica was part of its sphere of strategic concern. Antarctica was Australia’s only southern neighbour. It was closer to Hobart than Hobart is to Perth, as Douglas Mawson continually advocated. Antarctica’s proximity and its meteorological presence were sufficient to ensure that it was firmly embedded in the Australian consciousness and a magnet to the adventurous Australian scientist/explorer. Even before Federation, Australian explorers were internationally recognised amongst elite scientific circles for the quality and significance of their work. While science lured Australian explorers south, it was politics that preoccupied Australian governments. The Antarctic region first appeared as a political question on the Australian Government’s agenda when Edmund Barton’s first Cabinet discussed the acquisition of the Kerguelen Islands from France. In so doing, the Federation’s first government signalled its interest in foreign policy and

\(^1\) Schreuder and Ward, Epilogue, p. 389
Antarctic affairs, and extended Australia's sphere of influence to its southerly neighbour.

Due to Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-1914, Australia had established a basis for claiming Antarctic territory. Amery's 1920 Despatch was therefore welcomed in Australia. After all, Australians had long held concerns about security along their continent's southern approaches. Before responding to the Despatch, the Australian Prime Minister, W.M. Hughes, sought the advice of Antarctic veterans, particularly T.W. Edgeworth David, Douglas Mawson and Captain J.K. Davis. By going directly to these men of Antarctic experience, Hughes acknowledged their expertise and laid the foundations for an effective collaboration between science and government that would continue until the Australian Antarctic was won. When the Antarctic veterans and some of Australia's elite academic scientists formed the Australian National Research Council, the ANRC continued to play the role of de facto advisers on Australian Antarctic policies by working together with the Department of External Affairs.

Yet, despite the degree of trust that had been built between the Government and the ANRC, the Australian Government did not always take the scientists into its confidence. The ANRC and the wider Australian public would not have known, therefore, that their government was assiduously challenging any British view or action that was assessed to be contrary to the national interest. As Australian archival sources revealed, from the time of Amery's Despatch until the 1933 Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act, the Anglo-Australian relationship came under strain. When the British Government abandoned the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference, Bruce felt betrayed. He had agreed in good faith, with the rest of the Prime Ministers, to adopt the recommendations. Bruce was aware of the responsibility and expense involved in assuming control of such a vast territory, but he believed it would be a shared burden. Besides, Australia was part of a grand imperial venture and was granted the honour of being the controlling power - not only of the Australian Quadrant, which it had sought, but of a wider Commonwealth sector.
From 1927 until he signed Mawson’s sailing orders for the first cruise of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition in 1929, Bruce found himself consistently at loggerheads with the British authorities. At any time during that period Bruce could have ignored the recommendations. After all, he was no more bound to them than was the British Government. Antarctica, however, had become part of the Australian consciousness and Australians were keen to make a portion of Antarctica their own. Even if Bruce had wished to walk away from committing Australia to such an expensive undertaking, public clamour would have made it almost impossible. The realisation that the British Government was not prepared to confront France over Adélie Land, even to the point of sacrificing ‘the Australian Quadrant’, upset Bruce and the ANRC, particularly Mawson.

On the other hand, Antarctica was introducing Australia to the wider world of international diplomacy. For diplomacy to be successful, concessions had to be made – and accepting Adélie Land within the area Australia desired to control was one such necessary dispensation. Yet Bruce showed considerable astuteness when he decided to take independent action and annex Mawson’s Australian Quadrant, which included Adélie Land. It was probable that neither Amery nor other members of the British Government expected a challenge from Australia, particularly from the conservative Cambridge-educated Stanley Melbourne Bruce. But that was exactly what happened when Bruce advised Downing Street that he was prepared to annex Mawson’s Australian Quadrant if they did not cooperate in implementing the recommendations of the 1926 Imperial Conference.

There is no doubt that Australia’s determination to acquire its own Antarctic territory posed a dilemma for the British Government in its relationship with France. Yet the British Government’s own diplomacy aggravated the Adélie Land question. Even if clerical errors were to blame for the British Government suggesting different limits for Adélie Land in its various communications with France, that level of carelessness demonstrated a lack of interest in that part of Antarctica. Thus, when Amery advised the dominions in 1920 that all of the Antarctic should be British, it was wishful
thinking on his part rather than a settled British policy. If there was genuine enthusiasm within the British Government 'to paint the whole Antarctic red as the result of a deliberate and settled policy',\(^2\) as one junior Foreign Office official cleverly wrote in a Minute, no such plan was developed to support the proposal. Although only a handful of people in the Colonial and Foreign Offices were aware of Amery's extraordinary ambition, it never came to Cabinet, or formally adopted as British Government policy.

If the British imperial domination of Antarctica was the dream of one person, in Australia it was a national ambition. The Australian press, which was unabashedly nationalistic, was also unequivocal in its support for the Australian acquisition of a portion of Antarctic territory. The press rarely questioned the expense of Australia's Antarctic involvement; indeed it would have placed the Australian Government under severe pressure had it been seen to be inactive in its pursuit of territory. The support of the press ensured that Australian governments of any political persuasion did not have to advocate publicly the rationale for acquiring land that had little or no proven value in the commercial sense. The press, which frequently acted as the mouthpiece for the ANRC, therefore played an important role in the acquisition of the Australian Antarctic.

The question of Antarctica illuminated the professional role played by the Department of External Affairs in providing well researched briefs to the Minister, who was frequently the Prime Minister. Since External Affairs had no Antarctic expertise, it was not shy about seeking the assistance of the ANRC. The advice provided by the ANRC revealed the gaps and inaccuracies in the knowledge of the British Government on the Antarctic region. With the help of ANRC data, External Affairs could concentrate on providing the Minister with policy advice that deliberately focused on Australian interests. Any information that was constantly received by External Affairs about British Antarctic interests outside the Australian or the larger Commonwealth Quadrant was usually filed without any comment. These actions showed that Australia did not

---

\(^2\) Minute by R.H. Campbell, First Secretary, Foreign Office, 23 August 1928, cited in Beck, 'Securing the dominant "Place in the Wan Antarctic Sun"', p. 461. The rank of First Secretary is a relatively junior middle-management ranking and the Minute referred to by Beck indicates it was the result of a search of the Foreign Office files, a task given to Mr Campbell to perform for his superiors.
wish to involve itself with other imperial Antarctic interests, probably because any involvement meant some form of expenditure of either money or men. At the same time, Australia never wished to work outside the imperial context, as the politics and diplomacy of the Australian Antarctic showed, because it believed the Empire worked successfully when the relevant parts collaborated to fulfill a major undertaking. On the other hand, Australia also learnt a valuable lesson in self reliance, because the help of others was not always willingly given, as Australia painfully discovered. Yet, working on its own without the established institutions of Empire, Australia would have found it even more difficult to achieve its goals.

Australia’s Antarctic experience allowed it to see at close quarters the ‘men who ruled the Empire’, and the way they operated on a question of diplomacy rather than war. In this respect the reports Casey provided to Bruce from London were invaluable. Combining these with his own knowledge of the British political elite, Bruce was able to determine how far he could drive an issue with Downing Street. Australian governments may have struggled with rebuffs from the British Government and the British bureaucracy before the Antarctic policy could be implemented successfully, but such disagreements would occur within any international community, whether that was the British Empire or the League of Nations. Australia’s relationship with Britain was very complex, and the question of Antarctica demonstrated that complexity but did not provide the impetus for change. Indeed, as a member of the Empire, Australia was able, at all times, to inject its national goals into policy matters and secure their achievement. In international elite circles, such as within the scientific community of geographers, cartographers and polar explorers, Antarctica provided Australia with a prestigious international profile through the work of its successful Antarctic pioneers. Australia’s international stature was further enhanced after the production of the first comprehensive and reliable map of Antarctica, a long-held ambition of geographers. It may not have consolidated Australian sovereignty, but it confirmed Australian control. The production of the map demonstrated that Australia possessed a sophisticated view of Antarctica as more than a destination for whaling fleets and miners’ drills.
Australia proved to be an empire builder in the sense suggested by Schreuder and Ward, in that it promoted its own imperial goal of expansion into Antarctica, thereby acquiring almost half the continent for Australia and the Empire. Had Bruce not taken decisive action, the Australian Antarctic Territory would never have been born. There is no doubt that Amery had a personal ambition to acquire the entire Antarctic for the British Empire, but he did not have a plan of acquisition. He never anticipated that Australian tenacity, which included private Australian money, would help fulfill much of his ambition. As Grenfell Price predicted in 1962, historical documents do indeed exist to enable the writing of the political history that he himself was constrained from researching. As these sources reveal, the role of the Australian Government was fundamental to the acquisition of the Australian Antarctic.

The Department of External Affairs in the period before the Second World has rarely been envisaged as a professional foreign service. Rather, it was often perceived as little more than a postal service, relaying messages between the Australian and British Governments. But in the case of Antarctic policy, officials in External Affairs emerge as highly skilled professionals. They displayed a sophisticated understanding of how the Australian Government could successfully navigate its way within the British bureaucracy and thereby achieve successful outcomes for Australia. Despite the limitations of not having direct information from Australian diplomats in Paris and Oslo, officials in the Department of External Affairs such as Walter Henderson, Keith Officer, Colonel Hodgson and John Cumpston provided their Minister with insightful briefs. At the same time, the Department’s officials were never shy to seek the advice of the ANRC on Antarctic history and exploration. This successful collaboration on a question of Australian foreign policy was probably the first of its kind in the period from Federation to 1945.

The acquisition of the Australian Antarctic was therefore due to a progressive and visionary government recruiting expertise outside the government bureaucracy to give it policy advice. Thus, the officials worked closely with the Antarctic veterans and the scientists associated with them, in
order to formulate considered responses to London. After the formation of the Australian National Research Council, the Australian scientists emerged not only as advisers to government on Antarctic policies, but also as an effective lobby group that had the foresight to recruit the Australian press. By that means, public support, as well as that of all political parties, was effectively guaranteed.

Another half century would pass before sectional interests would again lobby and work closely with the Australian government to influence Australia’s Antarctic policy. In the late 1980s, the green and conservation movement would also recruit the press to its cause and force the Labor Government of R.J.L. Hawke to change direction on Antarctic policy by declaring a ban on mining and devoting Antarctica to peace and science. Considerable scholarly attention has been paid to that more recent assertion of Australian influence on Antarctic policy, but there has been little recognition of Australia’s earlier independent political thinking about the southern continent. Australia was no timid adherent to imperial decrees and it did not need an independent foreign service to promote effectively its own national interests in Antarctica. By drawing on neglected official archives and by reconstructing the day-to-day detail of diplomatic engagement within and sometimes beyond the British Empire, this thesis provides a deeper historical context for assessing Australia’s record of independent political endeavour in Antarctica.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Australian National Archives
Royal Society of Tasmania Archives
General Reference Publications
Newspapers
Published Documents
Books
Journal Articles
Theses
Published Research Papers and Speeches
Book Reviews
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Series relating to Antarctic

Series A 1838/278; Series A 1681; Series A 981; Series A 2910; Series A 1108;
Series A 19518; Series A 1838/269; Series CRS A6; Series A 432;
Series A 11804; Series A 11804/1; Series A 981/4; Series 1838; Series A 461/8;
Series A 461/10; Series A 661; Series A 5954; Series A 11583/1;
Series A 1068/7; Series A 6 (A 6/1); Series A 1; Series A 202; Series A 1838/1;
Series A 1/15; Series A 4670; Series A 2/1; Series A 6 (A 6/3); Series A 6661;
Series A 11583; Series A 461; Series CP103; Series CP103/3;
Series CP103/3/1; Series CP 359/2; Series CP 290/10; Series CP 290;
Series CP 103/12; Series CP 46; Series CP 46/2; Series MP 1185/9/10.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA ARCHIVES

Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania, Morris Miller Library, University of
Tasmania.

GENERAL REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

Australian National University, www.adb.online.anu.edu.au.

Avalon Project at Yale Law School: Documents in Law, History and

Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, 1929, Vol. 120,
Government Printer, Canberra.
Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 139, Senate and House of Representatives, 27 April to 31 May 1933, Government Printer, Canberra.


NEWSPAPERS

Sources other than at National Archives of Australia

Hobart Town Courier, 17 September 1831.

Hobart Town Advertiser, 28 February 1840.

Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 15 April 1820.

Supplement to the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 2 July 1820.

Sydney Gazette, 24 April 1841.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 December 1907.

The Age, 22 May 1886.

The Age, 12 November 1901.


The Argus, 30 April 1919.

Sydney Herald, 10 August 1841.

Sydney Herald, 20 August 1841.
PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS


Greenwood, Gordon and Grimshaw, Charles (eds), Documents on Australian International Affairs 1901-1918, Nelson in association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Thomas Nelson (Australia), Melbourne, 1977.


BOOKS


Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.), *Australia's Foreign Policy*, Angus & Robertson Limited in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Political Science, Sydney, 1938.


Eggleston, F.W., *Reflections on Australian Foreign Policy*, Published for the Australian Institute of International Affairs, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1957.


Harris, Stuart (ed.) *Australia’s Antarctic Policy Options*, CRES Monograph 11, Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, Australian National University, 1984.


**JOURNAL ARTICLES**


Jain, Subash C., 'Antarctica: Geopolitics and International Law', The Indian Year Book of International Affairs, 1974, published under the auspices of the
Indian Study Group of International Law and Affairs, University of Madras, Madras, 1974, pp. 249-278.


McConville, Andrew, 'Henrik Bull, the Antarctic Exploration Committee and the first confirmed landing on the Antarctic continent', Polar Record, Volume 43, Issue 02, Published Online by Cambridge University Press, 28 March 2007, pp. 143-153. doi:10.1017/S0032247407006109.


**THESES**


**PUBLISHED RESEARCH PAPERS AND SPEECHES**


**BOOK REVIEWS**