

## FOREWORD

It is with great satisfaction that we record the rapid progress which is being made with the new building of the Polar Research Institute. The main structure is now complete, but owing to the necessity of thorough drying of the plastering before the mural painting can be done, it is probable that the formal opening will not take place until October.

We have great pleasure in adding that Lady Hilton Young (formerly Lady Scott) has executed a special bust of Captain Scott for the niche over the front door, and is also presenting a bronze statue in memory of the Pole Party, which will be placed in the grounds near the building.

The collections of books, original journals, pictures and samples of polar equipment have steadily increased of late years, but now that these can be worthily displayed, the Director of the Institute begs to remind well-wishers that the collections are still far from complete. In particular the library is still far from adequate to meet the many demands made upon it.

It may perhaps be generally assumed that an institute about to move into a handsome new building must already be well endowed, and it is therefore a fitting moment to point out that the maintenance of all its activities is still carried out on an annual income of less than £400 a year. This would be quite impossible were it not that hitherto a great deal of voluntary help has been available. The Committee of Management earnestly hope that in the near future people with the means to mark their appreciation and interest may help to endow the Institute, and relieve the Director and staff of their constant anxiety over making ends meet. The amount required to place the Maintenance Fund at a figure which will give this security is £5000.

Hitherto funds have not permitted the inclusion of book reviews in *The Polar Record*, but in view of its interest to the Institute it is felt that some notice should be taken of the recent appearance of the life of Dr E. A. Wilson, by Mr George Seaver. Dr Wilson's achievements as right-hand man to Captain Scott are known to many, his ability as an artist is also familiar to a fairly wide public, but it is safe to say that until this book appeared his extraordinary character as a man was known to very

few. Not the least service Mr Seaver has rendered with the book is the clear proof it contains that polar work is not mere adventuring, and that the noblest of characters may find attraction therein.

As proof of the general revival of interest in the polar regions, already shown by the many expeditions in the field, we are able to record the fact that two polar exhibitions, one in Leningrad and the other in London, have taken place during the last 12 months.

The exhibition in Leningrad, the first of its kind to be organised by the Arctic Institute of the U.S.S.R., took place from February 18 to May 24, 1933, at the Russian Museum. The exhibits were selected in order to show the progress made in the practical development of the Russian Arctic regions, and included geological, biological and hydrological sections, and a collection of maps. The journals and other relics of various expeditions were also on show, as well as a collection of pictures painted in the Arctic. A collection of articles of polar equipment provided by firms who are in the habit of supplying expeditions was a most important feature of the exhibition.

The Polar Exhibition at the Royal United Service Institution, London, is smaller in scope than the one at Leningrad, and of much more specialised appeal. Attached as it is to an Institution dealing exclusively with naval and military history, its exhibits chiefly recall the naval polar expeditions of the past, and are almost exclusively British. The Royal Geographical Society and the Scott Polar Research Institute have lent numerous articles, and many relatives of past explorers have been equally helpful.

## FOREWORD

As this issue clearly shows, the past year has seen the inauguration of a very remarkable effort in international co-operation in the polar regions. The Polar Year for the investigation of meteorology and allied sciences has run half its course; and in spite of the universal financial stringency, and the consequent slenderness of official resources, an imposing number of Polar Year expeditions is now at work in the Arctic regions. The descriptions of their work may sound tedious or abstruse to the layman, but he may rest assured that when all the results are collected, co-ordinated and analysed, they may yet affect him very closely in matters of his daily life. Their effect upon wireless transmission and air transport will possibly carry a more direct appeal to him than the origin of "depressions over Iceland," but other, and possibly more useful, repercussions may arise from this concerted attack upon the air and its ways.

All these expeditions, whether public or private, official or unofficial, will have the good wishes of those interested in polar affairs.

We have pleasure in drawing the attention of readers to the announcement in the *London Gazette* of November 4, that H.M. The King had graciously approved the award of the Polar Medal to the members of the British Arctic Air Route Expedition. As explained in an article in these pages, this is the first time that a medal for Arctic service has been awarded for nearly sixty years.

We tender our congratulations not only to the recipients of the Medal, but also to all the expeditions, forerunners to this one, which have, since the War, marked the revival of British interest in the Arctic, and have, in a sense, led up to the greater effort under the leadership of Mr Watkins. There have been nearly twenty expeditions, largely of University men, to the Arctic in the last ten years, and the hundred or so members of these parties form a fine nucleus of experience for the future. We are pleased to record the recent formation by these men of an Arctic Club, the main object of which will be to give members an opportunity of meeting once a year, either in Oxford or Cambridge, to renew friendship, and meet newcomers. We hope to give full details in our next issue.

The difficulties which expeditions have had in raising the comparatively small funds required have been kept in mind by those who are raising a memorial to Mr Watkins, as the Appeal printed in this issue shows. It

is a satisfaction to be able to report that the subscriptions to the Fund have now reached the sum of £1300.

As forecast in a former issue of *The Polar Record*, plans for the new building of the Scott Polar Research Institute have been prepared by Sir Herbert Baker, F.R.I.B.A., and laid before a Syndicate of the University. They are completely successful in solving the problem of adequate space, together with dignity of appearance, but unfortunately the Building Fund is not sufficient to erect all three storeys of the approved plan. Appeals in the press, and elsewhere, for an extra £2000 to enable the plans to be executed in full, have been made. If unsuccessful, it is feared that the Syndicate will be compelled to erect two storeys only of the building. Such a compromise would be exceedingly unfortunate, since it would not only affect the efficiency of the Institute, but would do less than justice to the architect's original dignified plan.

It is a pleasure to record that H.M. the King of Norway has conferred the Order of St Olaf on Dr Hugh Robert Mill in recognition of the help he has given to Norwegian polar explorers.