

FOREWORD

The year 1936 finds the polar regions more prominent than ever in the news of the world. Not only are there a great number of expeditions, both large and small, in the field, but the past is being recalled vividly in various ways. The recent death of Major-General Adolphus W. Greely at the age of 91 removes one of the veterans of Arctic exploration of last century. Only Brainard, now Brigadier-General, remains as a survivor of the tragic expedition led by Greely from 1881 to 1884, when only six men out of twenty-four returned to civilisation.

Tributes to the past are recorded in the form of a statue of Roald Amundsen which is to be erected at Tromsø in Norway, and in the setting up of Nansen's famous ship *Fram* permanently on land.

At the time of writing the most stirring news from the Antarctic is the feared loss of Lincoln Ellsworth and his companion during their flight across a large sector of the Antarctic, a reminder of the great risks attending long flights in the polar regions, risks which can be better appreciated after reading *Discovery*, the recently published narrative of the last Byrd expedition to the Ross Sea sector. The slender chance that the missing men have reached "Little America" but are unable to communicate by wireless, is being investigated by R.R.S. *Discovery II*, despatched to the Bay of Whales by His Majesty's Government and the Government of Australia.

For some years the pages of *The Polar Record* have shown the magnitude of the efforts of the Soviet Union to open up their Arctic lands, both for science and trade. The Polar Research Institute was recently able to get into still more direct touch with the work owing to the visit of Professor Schmidt to Cambridge. Professor Schmidt is the head of the department which initiates and controls all these Arctic investigations; but he also takes part in them himself and, it will be remembered, was in command of the expedition in the *Chelyuskin* which foundered in the ice last year, and whose rescue was accompanied by so many gallant efforts on the part of aeroplane pilots.

The frontispiece in this issue is a portrait of Captain Ejnar Mikkelsen, one of the veterans of Arctic exploration. Captain Mikkelsen began his

travels at the end of last century and there are few parts of the Arctic which he does not know. He is chiefly an authority on the east coast of Greenland, where he endured unparalleled hardships on his longer expeditions and now most worthily directs the Danish Government's plans for the care of the natives and the increase of settlements. Shrewd in his advice and keenly interested in the younger generation of explorers, he has been an invaluable guide and helper to recent Arctic expeditions both from this and other countries.

At the moment of going to press, the good news of R.R.S. *Discovery II* reaching the Bay of Whales and finding Lincoln Ellsworth and Hollick-Kenyon has come to hand. The hearty congratulations of all interested in the polar regions are due to the fliers for their feat and their safety; and to the captain and crew of *Discovery II* for once more aiding exploration in a crisis.