

The United States, more happily situated, has sent off its Antarctic expedition, the third to be commanded by Admiral Byrd. Nevertheless, there will continue a certain amount of work by neutral nations, and the function of the Scott Polar Research Institute in filing and recording such work must be carried on.

It has been found necessary to close the Museum to the public, since much of the valuable material in the show cases has had to be removed. In other respects the usual activities of the Institute will be carried on as well as circumstances and funds permit. The Assistant to the Director, Mrs J. W. Wright, formerly Miss Fetherstonhaugh, is fortunately able to continue at her post, but the greater part of the voluntary help on which the Institute has flourished is being dispersed to national service.

In September there arrived at the Institute a gift notable both for its size and interest, when Mrs Jackson, widow of Major F. G. Jackson, gave practically the whole of her husband's collections from Waigatz Island in 1893-94 and from the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition to Franz Josef Land in 1894-97. Owing to the circumstance of the war these have had to be stored for the time being, but in due course the greater part will be exhibited. The thanks of all students of polar work are due to Mrs Jackson for her generosity.

### OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death of Commander Frank Wild, C.B.E., R.N.V.R. (rtd.), on August 20, 1939. An appreciation will be found on pp. 282-83.

By the death of Major Gunnar Isachsen at the age of seventy-one, at Oslo, Norway has lost one of her leading polar figures. He was a man of wide experience and interests and always ready to help those from other countries who shared his love for the polar regions. His best-known work was as cartographer on the *Second Fram Expedition*, 1898-1902, but his share in the exploration of Spitsbergen in the years before the war of 1914-18 was an equally notable achievement (*Expédition Isachsen au Spitsberg*, 1909-10. *Résultats Scientifiques*, 3 vols, Oslo, 1916-27). In 1923 he was in charge of the Norwegian expedition in the *Conrad Holmboe* to East Greenland, when the ship was beset and drifted down the east coast. Finally in 1930-31 he was in command of the *Norvegia* Expedition to the Antarctic. This last he has described in his book, *Norvegia Rundt Sydpollendet*, published in 1934. Throughout most of his life he was a

leading figure in Norwegian shipping circles, and in that capacity gave helpful advice to both Scott and Shackleton in their search for suitable expedition ships. In recent years Gunnar Isachsen was director of, and devoted much of his energies to, the development of the Norwegian ship museum (Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum) on Bygdö at Oslo. Here he gathered together an extraordinarily fine collection of polar equipment and maritime relics of historic interest, and he played a leading part in adding to the museum its crowning exhibit, Nansen's *Fram*, hauled ashore and preserved for all time.

W. G. Burn Murdoch died on July 19, 1939. It will be remembered that he accompanied W. S. Bruce as artist on the Dundee Whaling Expedition to the Antarctic in 1892-98, and his book *From Edinburgh to the Antarctic* is one of the most racy and original in polar literature. So also is his *Modern Whaling and Bear Hunting*, in which he describes life in the East Greenland pack-ice.

Engineer Lieut.-Comdr. W. A. Horton died in Durban in November 1939. He was a member of Scott's last expedition in 1910-12, and in 1925 became chief engineer on R.R.S. *Discovery*, and on R.R.S. *Discovery II* from 1929 to 1937.

On June 10, 1939, Karl Bengtsen, the Norwegian trapper, died at the age of fifty-three. He was one of the best known of the Spitsbergen trappers, and was the first to winter successfully in North East Land. He subsequently accompanied the Oxford University Arctic Expedition, 1935-36, and though most of his time was occupied in trapping, his general handiness and long experience with boats were of great value to the expedition.

On September 7, 1939, George A. Thorne, Jr., of Chicago, a member of Admiral Byrd's first expedition to the Antarctic, was killed in an aeroplane crash. He went with Byrd as surveyor and dog driver, and made a sledge journey of 1500 miles to establish an emergency base for Admiral Byrd's flight over the Pole.

Captain Felix Riesenbergs died on November 19, 1939. From 1901 to 1902 he was an officer of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. In 1906-7 he was a member of the Wellman Polar Expedition, which wintered at Dane's Island, Spitsbergen, and he was the navigator of the dirigible airship *America* in the attempt to reach the North Pole in September 1907.