

FOREWORD

As this number goes to press, news has been received from Professor Frank Debenham, at present in East Africa, that he is resigning from the post of Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute on 1 October 1946. The Polar Institute and *The Polar Record* both owe their existence very largely to his initiative and imagination, and it is difficult to express the indebtedness which is owed to him by a generation of polar explorers. Although he wishes to be relieved of administrative responsibilities we may look forward to Professor Debenham's active connection with the Polar Institute for many years to come, and those whose interests lie in the polar regions will still be able to turn to him for inspiration and advice. We hope to publish an appreciation of his work in a future number.

Many of those who are interested in the polar regions have from time to time expressed a wish to be more closely associated with the work of the Polar Institute and to be given an opportunity to help in its activities. With this in mind, the Committee of Management have recently established an association known as the "Friends of the Polar Institute". The object is to bring the members into closer touch with the Institute and to provide a means of giving financial assistance. Donations and subscriptions will be used to make accessions to the Museum, the Library and the Picture Gallery, to finance special publications and to meet any unforeseen expenditure, but not normally for maintenance. This new association has come into being at a particularly opportune time when the Institute aims not only to renew but extend its pre-war activities. A larger *Polar Record*, the appointment of Research Fellows, an improved library and translation service, and a programme of lectures on polar exploration are some of the projects which the Committee of Management have in mind. A form for membership of the "Friends of the Polar Institute" accompanies this number of *The Polar Record*. It is hoped that readers will themselves join and also help to obtain the support of others.

We record with regret the death on 4 February 1946 of Sir Herbert Baker, the architect who designed the memorial building in Lensfield Road, Cambridge, in which the Scott Polar Research Institute has been housed since 1934.

Among the more noteworthy activities in the polar regions during the past few months have been several large-scale naval, military and air exercises in the Arctic. It is not to be expected that detailed reports of these will be made available for general publication, but the result of these trials can scarcely fail to prove of eventual advantage to explorers and scientists. Apart from the military aspects of these expeditions, they will have a far-reaching effect on the development of polar travel. But even with the aid of the most recent technical equipment, success must still depend in the last resort on the human element. Initiative, endurance and adaptability, which were required for the methods of an earlier age, have not been outmoded by the tractor or the aeroplane.

The Arctic Institute of North America, formed in May 1944, has made rapid progress in developing its programme of polar research. The first number of the Institute's *Bulletin* sets out a varied and suggestive list of desirable scientific investigations in Arctic North America. Further, the Institute is already in a position to offer Research Fellowships to qualified workers. It seems clear that under the direction of Dr Lincoln Washburn and supported by a representative and distinguished Board of Governors, the Arctic Institute of North America will do much to extend and co-ordinate our knowledge of the American Arctic.

Owing to the circumstances of the present times we have not been able to mark the centenary of Sir John Franklin's last expedition by an appropriate function at the Institute. However, the frontispiece and Commander Ryder's article in this issue recall the main features of this great enterprise and the subsequent searches for the lost expedition.

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