

Royal Norwegian Embassy

London, 31. januar 1950.

1 vedlegg i 2 eks.

No.	118
Mottatt	3/2-50
Davy.	
Arkiv	102

Herr professor Sverdrup,
Direktør for Norsk Polarinstitutt,
Observatoriegate 1,
Oslo.

Jeg var den 20. ds. til stede som æresgjest ved "The Antarctic Club"s årsmiddag. Fra en av de tilstedeværende, Dr. Eric S. Marshall, C.B.E., M.C., som deltok i Shackletons ekspedisjon til Beardmore Glacier, har jeg deretter mottatt et brev av 26. ds., hvori Dr. Marshall gir visse opplysninger som han mener ikke tidligere er kjent.

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Jeg unnlater ikke å vedlegge gjenpart av dette brev for den interesse det måtte ha.

Jeg har takket Dr. Marshall for hans brev og for de opplysninger han gir.

Da begynnelsen av Dr. Marshall's brev kan tyde på at det i presidentens tale under middagen var en antydning av kritikk av Roald Amundsen, vil jeg gjerne nevne at jeg ikke oppfattet talen på denne måte, og at middagen var i enhver henseende vellykket.

Arbødigst



Norges Ambassadør.

AVSKRIFT.

EASTMORA
YARMOUTH
ISLE OF WIGHT

January 26th 1950

(Your Excellency)

At the Antarctic Club 'Coming of Age' Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on the 20th inst, when you were the Guest of the Club, reference was made in the President's speech to the two great Norwegian Explorers, Nansen and Amundsen.

Nansen, the greatest of all Polar Explorers, was succeeded by Amundsen who was second to him because he came after him, but the President's statement that the latter had an easier route to the South Pole than Scott was not warranted, and as the only person present who accompanied Shackleton on his pioneer journey up the Beardmore Glacier to 88 23' South, and responsible for the only existing map up to that point, I would like to dissociate myself from those remarks.

A gathering such as that was inopportune to raise such a contentious question or reply to it with facts which are within my personal experience, but repeated reference to the relationship between Scott and Amundsen, to the detriment of the reputation of the latter, and most recently in the film 'Scott of the Antarctic', prompts me at this late date to submit certain facts which have been withheld from the public and are not generally known.

On our return from the Antarctic in 1909 the

atmosphere, so far as the Royal Geographical Society was concerned, headed by the President, Sir Clement Markham, was antagonistic, and after completing the map I was on the Continent until I sailed on an expedition to Dutch New Guinea in October, from which I did not return until 1911.

In the autumn of that year Shackleton asked me to go up to the British Association Meeting at Dundee to defend the reputation and claims of our expedition against Sir Clements Markham who was speaking in the Geographical Section on Antarctic Exploration. He was accompanied by Mrs. Scott, then the wife of Captain R.F. Scott, who was in the Antarctic and about to start on his ill-fated journey to the South Pole.

In his survey of Antarctic Exploration, Markham made no reference to Shackleton or his expedition. He was followed by Dr. Rudmose Brown, scientist of the Bruce Expedition, (also present at the recent dinner), after which I was uninterrupted for 20 minutes, and with a map and the R.G.S. Geographer, Mr. Reeves, claimed every detail on the map from Scott's 'Farthest South' 82 17' S, to 88 23' S.

At a later date at an interview with Sir Scott Keltie, then then Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, the blame for the Scott disaster was attributed

to the competition with Amundsen.

Competition, whether by Shackleton or Amundsen, was outlawed by the Royal Geographical Society.

I later severed my connection with the Society.

The real cause of Scott's failure was Scurvy, and the realisation that Shackleton had accomplished all he had claimed, and that his own effort to travel the final 97 geographical miles of plateau waste had added nothing to the sum of human knowledge.

To pioneer a route which had been open to Scott, and accomplish it as Amundsen did, detracts nothing from the achievement and never warranted the observation made in reference to him.

We know that the Beardmore Glacier route was not the 'walk over' that Scott might have been led to expect, but no-one present at the dinner had experience of Amundsen's route.

My only desire is to place these facts on record, and the time is now opportune.

Scott was a great gentleman and, no doubt, an excellent naval officer.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Erich S. Marshall (sgd.)

To/ His Excellency M. Per Preben Prebensen, C.B.E.,
From/ Dr. Eric S. Marshall, C.B.E., M.C.