

Andree Balloon Elaborately Equipped

Exploration

Swedish Statement of Interest While Diary Is Awaited

IN the diary of S. A. Andrée, Swedish balloonist and explorer, which is being brought back to civilization by a Norwegian expedition together with his body and those of his two companions found on White Island, Fridtjof Nansen Land, there may be contained the finishing chapters of the story of that daring attempt to reach the North Pole by balloon that began three decades before modern airplanes and airships carried out Andrée's dream.

For several years before the start from Dane's Island in Spitzbergen on July 11, 1897, Andrée had been laying plans for his venture. He presented his project to the Swedish Academy of Sciences and the International Geographical Congress in 1895. Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite and the founder of the Nobel prizes, was one of the principal backers of the expedition which was estimated to cost \$36,000.

The balloon "Ornen" used in the ascension was built in Paris and cost over \$10,000. It held some 170,000 cubic feet of hydrogen gas and was made of three thicknesses of silk, varnished with a special preparation.

A heavy hemp netting encased the balloon and supported the car which was elaborately built of wicker and wood. Iron and steel were avoided in order not to affect the magnetic instruments carried. The car's interior was arranged so that one aeronaut could sleep at a time and around about in compartments were stored books, maps, instruments, toilet articles, kitchen utensils, arms, ammunition and other equipment. More freight was stowed in bags suspended from the balloon's bearing ring above the car and twelve bags contained sledges, boats, sails, etc., while in thirty-six were stored provisions.

An official Swedish statement issued after the party had failed to return after several months described the food supply as follows:

"The Andrée expedition has provisions for nine months. All the boxes in which the conserved food is kept were made of copper, as iron would have had a disastrous effect on the magnetic instruments carried by the expedition. To occupy as

little space as possible they were made square instead of round. The food consists of every kind of steaks, sausages, hams, fish, chickens, game, vegetables, and fruit. If these provisions have been saved, together with the food which the explorers can procure through fishing and hunting, they have sufficient provisions to last them two years.

"The expedition is also furnished with a new kind of lozenges of concentrated lemon juice. This is the first time these have been used by Polar expeditions, and it is expected they will absolutely prevent every attack of scurvy.

"Finally, the expedition is provided with 25 kilos (about 55 pounds) of thin chocolate cakes, mixed with pulverized pemmican. To preserve this food against dampness it is packed in parchment, covered with stannine, a brittle metal composed of tin, sulphur, and copper, and inclosed in air-tight boxes."

Science News-Letter, September 6, 1930

More Sun Spots

INCREASE in activity on the sun has been noted by Mt. Wilson astronomers at Pasadena, Calif., in recent days. On Thursday, August 21, there were three groups of spots visible through the telescope, with a total of five spots. The next day there were only two groups, but these contained 25 spots. On Saturday, there were three groups and 23 spots, Sunday, four groups and 18 spots and Monday the same number of groups with 16 spots. All of the groups, however, are too small to be seen with the naked eye through smoked glass.

Astronomy

Science News-Letter, September 6, 1930

The Answer Is In This Issue

Did *Alfred Nobel*, founder of the Nobel Prizes, give financial backing to the disastrous *Andrée North Polar Expedition?* p. 146—Where did astronomers see a *whole year* pass in *seven seconds* recently? p. 147—How may it be possible for *leprosy* to be fought and probably *cured with vitamins?* p. 148—Is your *mind* apt to become *diseased?* p. 149—*Who* was Alexander von Humboldt? p. 150—Why does Sir Hubert Wilkins think he can safely go to the *North Pole* in a *submarine?* p. 152—How does *freezing* change the *color* of canned fruits? p. 157.

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Flying Teachers

TEACHERS from New York University are to commute by airplane to other cities this winter in order to conduct extension courses. The experiment will be tried by the faculty of the School of Education at the University, officials of the school have announced. An airplane will be used for the teachers four days each week.

Four instructors will be carried by the plane each day to cities not readily reached from New York by railway or automobile. Leaving New York, the pilot will stop at each city where one of his passengers has a teaching engagement, and the next morning he will return to pick up the passengers and return them to the University in time for their day's work there.

Education—Aviation

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