

to some figure approaching 40° without increasing the average error. The errors of all polyconics increase with the square of the longitude from the central meridian. By securing approximate orthomorphism, however, we get nearly rid of the error of bearing round a point, and we obtain the further advantage of being able to employ a scale factor, thus reducing scale error. Since the errors in the common rectangular polyconic are both positive and negative, the application of a scale factor would introduce no improvement.

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid I cannot pretend to have understood every single word uttered this evening. There have been some very ugly words uttered by Mr. Hinks; but I dare say he viewed them with repugnance. We all of us grasped Sir Charles Close's idea, and also have realized the practical value of it if it could be translated into effect, and we all wish to thank these gentlemen for having brought forward this subject of projections.

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION

WHEN the President announced on January 10 that permission had been received for the Expedition to enter Tibet this year, he said further that the passes would be open about the end of May; and it was afterwards planned that the Expedition should assemble at Darjeeling towards the middle of May with the intention of moving on the 14th, or some day closely following, according as the news might be good or bad of the condition of the Jelep La, the pass leading into the Chumbi Valley. There had been some fear that delay in the passage of the ships carrying one or two members of the Expedition might interfere with the punctual start. It is, however, satisfactory to learn from a Reuter's telegram that the main expedition was to leave Darjeeling on May 18 and 19, within four days of the earliest possible. The surveyors had left a few days before with the intention of proceeding by the Tista Valley, and were to join the main party at Kampa Dzong.

The Surveyor-General of India is very anxious to make a strong connection between the triangulation of India and the surveys to be executed north of the range on the upper waters of the Arun and on Tingri Maidan. It would seem that the Tista Valley provides a straighter connection for this triangulation, as indeed it would have provided a shorter route for the whole expedition. But the road in the Tista Valley is so bad that it was judged preferable to take the main party a longer as well as a much healthier way round.

The Expedition this year has always been spoken of as a reconnaissance, and it is important to make clear at the start that it is hardly expected that the climbers will reach the summit, or any extreme height on the mountain in the present season. The instructions to the Chief of the Expedition, after laying down that the aim of the expedition is the attainment of the summit of Mount Everest, and that all activities should be made subordinate to that supreme object, proceed as follows: "For the

present year the main object is reconnaissance. This does not debar the mountain party from climbing as high as possible on a favourable route, but attempts on a particular route must not be prolonged to hinder the completion of the reconnaissance." In other words the climbers will go as high as they can provided that they are thoroughly satisfied they are on the best route to the summit, but it is essential that by the end of the present season there should be no doubt which is the best route. When one considers that the surroundings of the mountain are completely unknown, it is pretty clear that the complete reconnaissance is likely to occupy very fully the whole of the present season, and that only exceptional good fortune, and rather easier conditions than are probable, can allow the leader of the mountain party to rest satisfied that of any possible routes he had chosen best, and still to allow time for a serious attempt to reach the summit this year.

There is, however, excellent ground for hoping that at least two new records may be established. The highest camp yet made is Mr. Meade's on the saddle of Kamet, about 23,500. The highest point reached by any climber is about 24,600 by the Duke of Abruzzi and his guides on Bride Peak. It would not be over-sanguine to think that in the course of this year the Mount Everest Expedition will have a camp higher than Mr. Meade's, and have reached a point higher than 24,600. For no expedition has ever before worked in conditions that promise so well, or with a party so thoroughly organized.

In view of the desire of all members of the Society and of the Alpine Club to receive the earliest possible and fullest information during the recess, when there will be no meeting at which announcements can be made, the Committee have arranged that long cablegrams and news letters shall be dispatched as occasion allows every week or ten days for publication in the *Times*. These cablegrams are the copyright of the Mount Everest Committee, but may be copied twenty-four hours after publication with the usual acknowledgments. It is hoped also that a considerable number of photographs will be received by mail from the expedition, and a selection of these will be made available for the illustrated papers. All the photographs as they arrive will be shown in the photograph room of the Society; and in the map room a map will be displayed showing as far as possible the progress of the expedition. The topography of the whole region being almost unknown, there is likely to be considerable doubt at first in the interpretation of cablegrams, but it is hoped that in the course of the summer preliminary copies of the maps of the survey party will be received, and these will be shown as they arrive.
