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THE MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION

AT the meeting of the Society on 10 January 1921, the President made the following announcement :

“At the meeting of November 8 I stated that there were then political obstacles in the way of our proceeding with preparations for the expedition to Mount Everest. Those obstacles, I am glad to say, have now been removed. Colonel Howard Bury, who went to India last summer on our behalf, was able to put our proposals before the Government of India with such persuasiveness that Mr. Bell, who is now in Lhasa, was instructed to ask from the Tibetan Government permission for us to send an expedition to explore Mount Everest. And we have just heard from the Secretary of State for India, who throughout has been most sympathetic to us, that the permission has been given.

“The political obstacles are therefore removed, and the Alpine Club and our Society will now organize an expedition which will have as its object the ascent of the highest mountain in the world—a mountain to which even the approaches are as yet unknown to Europeans. Such an expedition must be essentially a great adventure. High risks will have to be run and severe hardships endured—risks from icy slopes and rocky precipices and such avalanches as buried Mummery’s party on Nanga Parbat twenty-six years ago; and hardships from intense cold, terrific winds, and blinding snowstorms. In addition there will be the unknown factor of the capacity of a human being to stand great exertion at a height more than 4000 feet higher than man has as yet ascended any mountain.

“The expedition will therefore, as I said, be a great adventure. But for the consolation of those who are never happy unless they can dub an expedition ‘scientific,’ I may add that it will be in the highest degree scientific also. For we may take it as certain that the summit of Mount Everest will never be reached unless we have first explored with the greatest care all the approaches to it through country at present entirely unknown; and then examined, mapped, and photographed the mountain itself in fullest detail. We must know all we can about the country around Mount Everest, about Mount Everest itself, and about the climatic conditions which prevail in that region. Our geography of it must be complete,

"In the present year the Alpine Club and our Society propose to organize a reconnaissance party to acquire this geographical knowledge. Next year we will send to Tibet a climbing party to apply it in a great effort to reach the summit.

"We hope that the reconnaissance party may cross into Tibet when the passes open, about the end of May, so that all the best part of this year may be available for their preliminary work. The final plans will then be made for the full assault upon the mountain in 1922.

"We have been assured of the cordial co-operation of the Government of India and more particularly of the Surveyor-General, who by great good fortune happens to be Colonel Ryder, who was chief surveyor officer with the Tibet Mission in 1903-4 and has seen Mount Everest at a lesser distance than any other European. With this assistance and with the aid our two Societies can give we believe that this expedition will start under better auspices than have favoured any other attempt to scale a high Himalayan peak. We mean to secure the very best men to be had; give them every advantage we can; then trust them to pioneer the way to the loftiest summit of this planet. And when that has been reached man will have taken a further big step towards the mastery of his surroundings."

A joint committee of the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club has been formed to organize the expedition. Lieut.-Col. Sir Francis Younghusband (President), Mr. E. L. Somers Cocks (Treasurer), and Colonel E. M. Jack represent the R.G.S.; and Prof. J. Norman Collie (President), Captain J. P. Farrar (Past President), and Mr. C. F. Meade, the Alpine Club. The President R.G.S. will be President of the Committee for the work of the first year, and the President A.C. for the work of the second year. The Secretaries R.G.S. and A.C. will act as Secretaries to the Joint Committee.

At the meeting of the Society on January 24 the President announced that the Joint Committee had appointed Colonel C. Howard Bury to be Chief of the Expedition, and Mr. Harold Raeburn to lead the mountain reconnaissance this year.

The paper read to the Society by Brig.-General the Hon. C. G. Bruce, and published in the January number of the *Geographical Journal*, with the discussion following the paper, gives a full account of our present knowledge and lack of knowledge of the mountain, and indicates the lines upon which the reconnaissance will be made and ascent will be attempted. In the present number we publish some observations by Lieut.-Col. Howard Bury on the approaches to the mountain; and all further news of the organization and progress of the expedition which it is possible to give will be published from time to time in the *Geographical Journal* and the *Alpine Journal*. Brief announcements will also be made by the President

R.G.S. at meetings of the Society, and by the President A.C. at meetings of the Club. These will be communicated to the Press in advance, so that all newspapers may have an equal opportunity of publishing authentic information on the morning following any such announcement. No exclusive arrangements will be made with any newspaper or magazine, and no information will be given in any other way either by the Joint Committee or by individual members of the committee or of the expedition. The Committee will, in short, use their utmost endeavour to secure that the chronicle of the expedition shall be well considered and accurate; and no credence should be given to any statements other than those published by their authority.

A first estimate of the cost of the expedition shows that it will be necessary to raise a sum of not less than £10,000 to provide for the work of two years, and the President appeals to Fellows for subscriptions.

A VISIT TO BOKHARA IN 1919

Major F. M. Bailey

Read at the Meeting of the Society, 22 November 1920.

IN August 1918 a mission was sent by the Government of India to the Soviet Government of Turkistan, who were then suspected of coming under German influence. An account of this mission has been given elsewhere. We are now concerned with a visit to Bokhara which was the sequel to this mission.

The position of Bokhara was similar to that of an Indian Native State. The Russians had complete control of the railway lines. The main Transcaspien line passes through Bokhara territory from Charjui to Ziadin, and at each station was a small Russian colony. There was also a railway line from Kagan to Termez on the Oxus *viâ* Karshi, while there were some Russian garrisons at Termez and at other places along the Northern Afghan frontier. There were also a number of Russian business people in Bokhara city. The population of Bokhara consists of Mohammedans, with a few Jews in the cities. The population is entirely monarchist. When the Bolsheviks first came into power they imagined that they could revolutionize the whole of Turkistan. There was a small band of ruffianly Bokharan subjects, most of whom had been forced to leave the country, who styled themselves the "Young Bokhara Party." These people got into touch with the Bolsheviks and led them to believe that they had a large following in Bokhara. Flushed with their first success, the Bolsheviks imagined that their ideal of World Revolution was at hand and decided to lend a helping hand to their neighbours.

In February 1918 Kolisoff, a former oiler on the railway, and at that time Chief Kommissar, who has I believe since been shot for embezzling