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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE BIGGEST "ICEBERG"

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Impressive figures are published from time to time concerning the sizes of the great tabular icebergs, or "ice islands," occasionally sighted by ships on the verge of the Antarctic. If, however, we are justified in calling any continuous mass of floating ice an "iceberg," then by far the biggest one known up to date is that on which Admiral Byrd's expedition will have its headquarters. It is called the Ross Barrier. Though the extension of a sheet of ice lying over land, it is partly and probably mainly afloat. The area of this flat mass of "shelf-ice" is estimated at about 170,000 square miles. It is possible that even larger formations of a similar character exist elsewhere along the Antarctic coast. Scott estimated that the thickness of the Barrier averages 400 feet, varying all the way from 70 to 700 feet, and that about four-fifths of the total mass is submerged.

The Barrier is a glacier and is in constant slow movement toward the Ross Sea. Portions of it, however, often break off along the edge, and thus it happens that the front is 15 or 20 miles farther south than it was when Sir James Ross discovered it in 1840. Its seaward movement is due partly to the thrust of some big land glaciers in its rear, and partly to the fact that the floating mass of ice tends to expand outward under its own weight, just as a piece of tar lying on a flat surface tends to flatten and thin itself.

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