

position, by our faithful allies, by our large majority, and by the confidence we believe the country reposes in us. We are ambitious that the present Parliament should continue to do such good work that men may say, "Elected to save Ireland for the nation, it has at the same time carried | beneficent legislation for England and Scotland as well." I have heard that our opponents have put about an idea that we were going to have a general election at once. Not yet! Not at all. We have yet to add further to that, which I hope I may call the claims of the Unionist party upon the gratitude of the country. I heard that the remark that an election was to take place had been traced to me, and that I had been one who had spoken of a dissolution as proper and right. I cannot understand why I should have been picked out as having held the language of a lunatic. Sometimes there is a shadow of a foundation |

(c.) At the rate of 150 words a minute. Takes 5 minutes.

Various statements have been appearing in the press with regard to a scheme for antarctic exploration to be undertaken by this country. They are mostly wide of the truth. There is no doubt, however, that the idea of a British antarctic expedition is in the air. The enthusiasm for polar exploration is always more or less latent in the British public; it has been easily fanned into a glowing heat by the thrilling story of the Norwegian arctic expedition as told by Dr. Nansen. It was by an adventure that our progenitors obtained possession of these islands, and the history of the growth of the British Empire is but the record of one adventure after another all over the face of the earth. Much of the accumulated glory which is the heritage of every Briton has been derived from the adventures of those of our countrymen who have pushed their | way with success into the unknown lands and seas of the globe. In popular estimation, it may safely be said, the many expeditions, national and private, that have pushed their way into the ice-bound ends of the earth hold the first place.

During the first fifty years of the century expedition after expedition was sent out by the Government to the region around the North Pole. The one serious attempt to explore the Antarctic under Ross, fifty years ago, was made under Government auspices. Although, after the Franklin search expeditions, exploring enterprises were not so frequent on the part of our Government, still it was considered necessary to maintain the old reputation of this country for enterprise of this kind by equipping at intervals exploring expeditions under Government auspices. Two of the most recent of these were the "Challenger" expedition, which devoted three years to the investigation | of the oceans, with results that have won the admiration of all civilised nations, and the arctic expedition under Sir George Nares, during which Commander (now Admiral) Markham beat all previous attempts to approach the Pole. It is twenty years since these two expeditions completed their work. Whatever may be the case with oceanic exploration, in which much yet remains to be done, it seems to be the general opinion that, so far as the Arctic is concerned, its further exploration may be left to private enterprise or to other nations. But it is different with the Antarctic. Since Ross's expedition, over half a century ago, practically nothing has been done for the exploration of the great blank which caps the southern end of the earth, happily now the greatest blank on its surface. One or two whaling trips that have been made into the region have only served | to show how little can be done at present by means so insignificant. The "Challenger" was not fitted for ice-work, and so only ventured to cross the antarctic circle and turn back. So far, then, this great national enterprise was incomplete. For over three years past the question has been asked among those interested in the completion of our knowledge of the globe and in the promotion of certain departments of science—Is our Government prepared to finish the work so well begun over twenty years ago?

Abroad and at home it seems to be taken for granted that antarctic exploration is peculiarly the work of England, both as the country of Ross and as the mother-country of Australia. Over two years ago the late Government was approached by an influential deputation, which was treated with discouraging levity by a prominent Minister, who was present with the First | Lord of the Admiralty. About eighteen months ago Mr. Goschen was approached, and it is not surprising that in view of the threatening prospects at the time he could not give a favourable answer. At the same time he was sympathetic. More recently, it is understood, he was again approached by the Royal Geographical Society, and although he was even more sympathetic, still it is believed that he hesitates to commit the Government to an expedition that might involve the employment of a few officers. It is not, it is believed, a question of money. Nor is it one of ships; for the vessels used have to be either whalers or wooden ships built for the purpose. So far as can be learned, the question of sending out a national antarctic expedition has not been seriously considered by those responsible for the credit and honour of the country. |

Shorthand.—For Junior Civil Service. Time allowed: 3 hours.

INSTRUCTIONS TO SUPERVISORS.

1. Inform candidates before the time for taking up this subject that they may use pen or pencil as they please for taking notes, which should be written on ruled paper, but that they must transcribe those notes into longhand with pen and ink.

2. Inform candidates that when once you have commenced to dictate you cannot stop until the passage is finished.

3. Dictate the passages at the following rates of speed:—

- (a.) 50 words a minute.
- (b.) 80 " "
- (c.) 100 " "