

CAPTAIN AMUNDSEN INACCESSIBLE.

Captain Amundsen was sought out at the Orient Hotel, where he is staying, last night, upon receipt of the cablegram from London stating that the "Daily Chronicle" announced that he had reached the South Pole. On inquiry being made for the explorer, it was stated that he had retired to his room, and had left orders that he was on no account to be disturbed whatever by newspaper people. In the face of these instructions, the management were naturally unwilling to disturb the guest, pointing out that the captain's orders were peremptory, and that he had particularly specified newspaper people as those by whom he was not to be disturbed.

Strong representations were made to Mr. Hadley that the complexion of affairs had been altered by the receipt of this startling news from London. It was pointed out that Captain Amundsen had emphasised the fact that he was bound by engagements made for him to allow the papers to which he was under contract to have the story first, that he had said that he very much regretted that he could not give any information yet, and would be most willing to do so as soon as he could. Finally, Mr. Hadley consented to go up and ascertain if Captain Amundsen were still up, and, if he were, give him a message. He returned, and stated that the door was locked and the room in darkness, and that he could do nothing. To a suggestion made that he should allow the "newspaper man" to do the knocking and arouse the captain, and to a remark that sailors always slept with one ear open, and that, therefore, it would only take a tap to arouse the captain, Mr. Hadley turned a deaf ear.

Still more urgent representations were then made to Mr. Hadley on the matter. It was pointed out that, in view of the special circumstances which had arisen, and of the fact that even a few words from Captain Amundsen, if he could be prevailed upon to say them, would be of extreme interest at this juncture, even if he felt, at that hour of the evening, which, after all, was not very advanced, since it had just gone 10.30, disinclined to enter into any lengthy account of the matter. It was very hard if nothing at all could be done. Eventually, Mr. Hadley was moved by these considerations and the urgency with which they were put, to make another attempt. He aroused Captain Amundsen this time, gave him the message, and returned to say that Captain Amundsen had read the message, and had given the following answer:—"I cannot confirm anything." Captain Amundsen said that he declined to be interviewed in any shape or form that evening, and could add nothing to the four words given above.

It did seem very hard that Hebart should be the Fram's first port of call on her return from the Antarctic, that the news that Captain Amundsen had reached the Pole should be cabled home to Europe and cabled back again to Hebart, and that then all that could be obtained from the man who, with his comrades, has, we are told, reached the South Pole, was the non-committal answer given above. As things stood, however, there was nothing to do but to be content with this non-committal remark, neither an affirmation nor a negation.