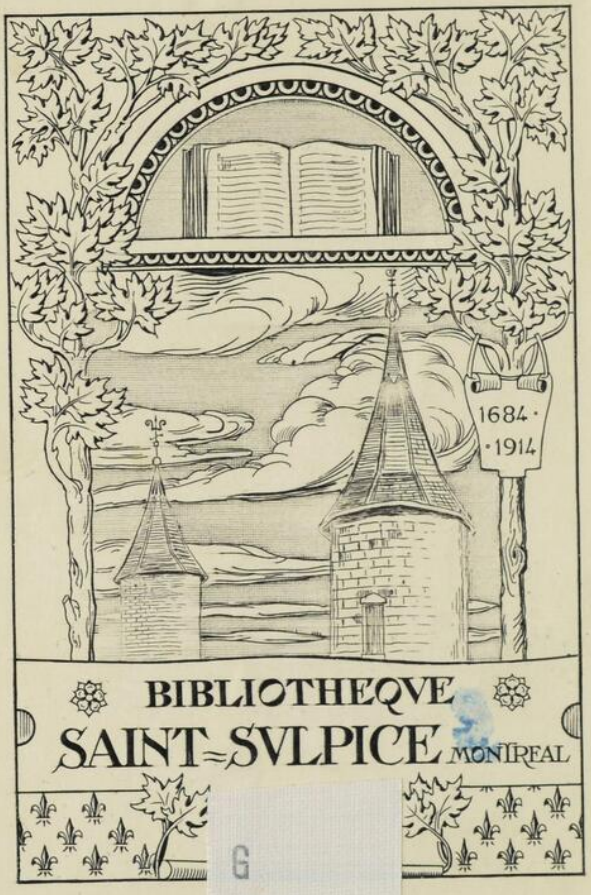

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STEFANSSON

AMBASSADOR OF THE NORTH

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Canada's Century

Nation of the North

Canada and the Atomic Revolution

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Etc.

D. M. LEBOURDAIS

STEFANSSON

AMBASSADOR OF THE NORTH

BIBLIOTHÈQUE
SAINT-SULPICE

AN EMULATION BOOK

HARVEST HOUSE
MONTREAL

The Stefansson head is by Emanuel Hahn, R.C.A., S.S.C.
The bronze is in the National Gallery at Ottawa.

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PREFACE

The future of Canada is bound up with the development of the North, and the outstanding exponent of that concept was Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Thirty years ago, I completed a full-length biography of Stefansson which I withdrew from publication for reasons which concern mainly Stefansson and myself. My long association with Stefansson and his works, however, put an obligation upon me to record the incidents and events described in the following pages.

In order that the reader may have some idea of the kind of person Stefansson was, and the importance of his contribution, I have found it necessary to give an outline of his career. But this book — which was already in press at the time of his death — is not offered as a biography. Shortly before he died, Stefansson completed the story of his own life, but no one book can adequately portray such a complex personality as was his, and he will doubtless be the subject of many books, as scholars come to assess the impact upon his time of his prophetic perception and wide-ranging mind.

D. M. LeBourdais

Toronto, September 21, 1962

CHAPTER I

THE FEUD THAT FROZE THE ARCTIC

In January 1921, an Order-in-Council was passed by the Government of Canada expressing its thanks to Vilhjalmur Stefansson for his services as Commander of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-1918, which, among other things, had extended the known area of Canada, and added immensely to the information available to Canadians concerning their own country. Six months later, the explorer was nominated for membership in the Rideau Club at Ottawa by Sir Robert Borden, until recently Prime Minister of Canada, and Hon. Edgar N. Rhodes, then Speaker of the House of Commons and later Premier of Nova Scotia. Despite his distinguished sponsorship, Stefansson was "blackballed".

These two incidents are highlights in a remarkable feud almost entirely one-sided, which for nearly forty years has tended to hold back the development of the Canadian North. Its seriousness, from a national standpoint, may be understood when it is realized that only by developing the North can this country aspire to the high place it could attain among the nations of the world.

Until the Industrial Revolution, at the end of the eighteenth century, each successive civilization had arisen out of agriculture; and only by such means as slavery and feudalism could those favoured few who rose above a very low level have existed at all. We are now on the verge of a new industrial revolution, of which metal and power will be the basic factors; and because our North is rich in minerals and water powers, Canada could play a leading role in the forthcoming era. Our efforts should therefore be directed towards the exploitation of our natural resources — oil, gas,

minerals, timber and power (hydro and atomic), and the great variety of possible activities associated with them. In other words, the job of Canadians is — and will be for some time to come — the conquest of the frontier, and the building of a modern industrial state in the northern half of this continent. Already, despite past neglect, the North supplies a large part of the wealth that sustains the rest of the country. Included in the North — for present purposes — is practically all of Canada north of the agricultural belt.

Actually, since the end of the Second World War, we have begun to turn our eyes northward, and recent developments in the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and the northern portions of provinces from Newfoundland to British Columbia suggest that something is being done to counteract the neglect of the past.

During the past forty-odd years, the leading exponent of the significance of the North has been Stefansson. As he saw it, fresh from a dozen years in the North, the Arctic Sea is not at the end of the earth, but must — by means of the aeroplane and the submarine — become in time a polar Mediterranean. He suggested that lands then considered next to worthless (because of their remoteness) would some day be of great value, and he warned the Canadian Government against the possibility that other countries might take advantage of our failure to confirm by actual occupation our claim to arctic islands. (Fortunately, our claims were not seriously disputed.)

An anthropologist, and therefore interested in people, Stefansson, on his first visit to the Arctic, became convinced that a land in which children are born and live happy lives could not be the terrible place of popular imagination. If others would not live there (he saw no reason why they should not), he was convinced that Eskimos could provide a permanent population. With assistance, they might be advanced from nomadic hunters to herders of reindeer and domesticated musk-oxen — an important stage in the scale of civilization. The reindeer (caribou) and musk-oxen, both excellent meat animals, are native to the North and require no one to cut feed for them or to provide them with shelter.

He urged the Government to adopt a policy which not only would tend to perpetuate such a fine people as the Eskimos, but would at the same time make use of the vast northern grasslands then — and since — going to waste.

Although he was born in Canada, and had spent many years exploring its northern territories, and has written two dozen books and hundreds of articles and has been a persistent lecturer, he has failed to persuade Canadians that their destiny lies in the North. This is due to a number of factors, but largely to the animosity of one man, now dead, whose influence was manifest in sections of the Ottawa civil service and beyond. These circles let no opportunity pass to contravert his views and frustrate his efforts.

In 1921, a Royal Commission — appointed on Stefansson's recommendation — endorsed his views as to the feasibility of introducing reindeer into an area along the arctic coast to provide a meat animal for Eskimos whose principal food source (the caribou) had been practically exterminated by the white man's rifle. It was not till 1935 that a herd of 2,370 deer were brought from Alaska; but chiefly because any project even remotely associated with Stefansson had been so violently (and sometimes subtly) opposed, the purpose for which they were imported has not even yet been attained.

If, during the twenties and thirties, Canadians had been aware of the value of their North, thousands of men who sat in idleness through the depression might have been engaged — for the good of their country and for their own good — in a far-reaching project of integrating it into the rest of Canada. If the hundreds of millions spent in next-to-worthless schemes had been devoted to this purpose, Canada today might have been at least a generation farther advanced; and, at any rate, much of the job that still remains to be done would have been begun. During the depression, a greater number of political parties than ever before made their appeals to the electorate, but such an obvious and overdue project seems never to have occurred to any of them.

When it is realized that since 1958 it has been known to geologists that arctic islands discovered by Stefansson in

1915-1916 (and ignored until recently) constitute a portion of what may some day be known as one of the chief oil-concentration areas of the world, some idea may be gained of the great cost to Canada of the wasted years.

I first met Stefansson at Ottawa in 1921. Then 42 years of age, tall and lean, he had been back from the Arctic three years and was living in New York — when he was not travelling about the country, lecturing. Business in connection with the Canadian Arctic Expedition still required fairly frequent trips to Ottawa, besides which he was at that time deeply absorbed in plans for another expedition which he expected to conduct for the Government. (After final plans had been adopted and the command formally tendered him and accepted, the project was abandoned.)

In November of the following year, I decided to move (temporarily) to New York to be nearer editors of magazines I was writing for, and I renewed my acquaintanceship with Stefansson. Early in each year, he left on a lecture tour which covered a large part of the United States; and shortly after my arrival he invited me to accompany him on the next one, salary and travelling expenses to be paid by the lecture bureau. I was glad of the chance to see something of the country, but I was interested mainly in the prospect of getting better acquainted with one whom I already recognized as an outstanding personality.

Stefansson proved to be a charming travelling-companion, with an active mind and a lively interest in a wide range of subjects. Since I was a student of Canadian history, his views about the role of the Arctic in world affairs opened new vistas for me. Many persons who accept these views today are not aware that forty years ago they were considered hopelessly unrealistic. When Stefansson asked me to go with him the following year, I gladly consented, and in the two seasons I saw most of the United States.

As a lecturer, he had few equals. He scorned the role of entertainer — although he had a lively sense of humour, and merriment rippled over his audiences. Neither was he entirely content merely to inform: his desire was to stimulate the

imagination. He sometimes thought that his subject was too comprehensive for a single lecture and he would have liked to deliver a series of four, a few days apart, to the same audience in the hope that he might be able to put his ideas across more effectively. He asked me to see what I could do to arrange such a series; but after looking into the matter, I tried to dissuade him, producing a pad and some figures to prove my point. "You talk just like a businessman!" he protested.

In the summer of 1924, I had a chance to see the Arctic myself. As special correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance of New York, I sailed from Nome, Alaska, in the motor schooner *Herman,* commanded by Captain Louis Lane, of San Francisco, in an attempt to reach Wrangel Island, off the northeastern coast of Siberia.[1]

In July 1926, I returned to Canada and made my home in Toronto because it is the principal publishing centre. In the meantime, the Macmillan Company of Canada had arranged with Professor Raymond. E. Priestley of Cambridge University to write a biography of Stefansson. A geologist, he had been in the Antarctic with both Scott's and Shackleton's expeditions. He had never been in the Arctic, nor in North America, and I was asked to assist him in the gathering of material. Eventually, he came to feel that his lack of arctic experience was too great a handicap, and he decided not to go ahead with the book.

Early in 1927, I was appointed to a position which allowed time for other writing with an opportunity to travel in Canada and the United States, and it occurred to me that I might write the book myself. My proposal met with the approval of Stefansson, who placed all his correspondence, records and diaries at my disposal, and in every way was most co-operative and helpful. Hugh Eayrs, President of the Macmillan Company, also agreed.

After the first draft, I sent a chapter or two at a time to Stefansson to check on facts, as well as upon matters of inter-

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(1) See D. M. LeBourdais, *Northward — On the New Frontier,* Graphic Publishers, Ottawa, 1931.

pretation. Generally, when we differed in connection with the latter, it was not hard to come to an agreement. I also sent parts of the manuscript to various persons familiar with some particular feature. The book was finished in the spring of 1930, and I sent a copy to Stefansson which contained final revisions.

Evidently perturbed, he wrote about some of these revisions and then wired me that he was coming to see me. We spent a whole day together without being able to resolve our differences. Strangely enough, the points to which he objected most strongly were not the ones I had expected he might wish me to change. What brought about the final deadlock was my reference to an idiosyncrasy which was as much a part of his personality as his inability to remember people's faces, which he apparently did not mind my having mentioned. In my opinion, the reference concerned a matter he need not have been sensitive about — and certainly was not to his discredit — but since the resulting situation had occurred at intervals over a period of three years, I felt it should have a place in the narrative for the effect it might, but did not, have on the outcome of the expedition.

During the day, as we argued, the difficulty of writing about a sensitive man while he is still alive was borne in upon me, and I began to consider the possibility of withdrawing the book from publication. After he had left for New York in the evening, I wrote him a note saying that if the Macmillan Company would release me from my contract the book would not be published.

Had the biography been published as planned, it would have provided an answer to Stefansson's critics, but I doubt if it could have changed their attitude, nor do I think it would have done much to overcome the apathy concerning the North which then afflicted most Canadians. The picture of a barren and inhospitable region of snow and ice and marrow-freezing cold had been too well implanted in the public mind. When Stefansson declared that such a picture was out of focus, he was accused of attempting to exalt himself at the expense of other explorers, and that his chief purpose was one of personal publicity. It was evident that a book could

not have brought about the necessary reversal of prejudiced thinking, particularly in the face of the subtle campaign still being waged by his implacable foes.

With the passing of time, however, the ranks of the Stefansson-haters have shrunk and the enlistment of recruits has been difficult against a background of changing conditions in the North. Largely because of modern communications, this region has steadily become more accessible and better understood. People are discovering for themselves that the old North of popular belief has never existed, and as the part which the North will play in the future of Canada becomes obvious to a greater number, Vilhjalmur Stefansson will assume his proper place in its history.

In the meantime, it is desirable that the efforts of his detractors to ignore the importance of his work — even to the length of perverting public records — should, as far as possible, be counteracted. That is one of the purposes of this book, and consequently, in the following pages, an account is given of his career as a Canadian explorer and of the part which he has since played in a wider field. It is essential, also, that the character of the vendetta that has been carried on against him, and the methods by which it was perpetuated, should be dealt with, in order to ensure that a similar subversion of the public interest may not be possible in the future.

CHAPTER II

FIRST ARCTIC IMPRESSIONS

When Manitoba became a province of Canada in 1870, it was largely a land without people. To provide suitable settlers, the Canadian Government brought in various groups of European immigrants, some of whom were Icelanders who received land along the shore of Lake Winnipeg. The Icelanders called their new home, "Gimli," which roughly translated means, "Promised Land," but, unfortunately, it was then a land of little promise. Although they were accustomed to a relatively cool climate, they were in no way prepared to face a Manitoba winter. Only the most rugged survived on the food supplied them; many — especially children — actually died of malnutrition. To this was added the horror of a smallpox epidemic. In such a setting Vilhjalmur Stefansson was born on November 3, 1879, four years after his parents had arrived in Manitoba. Although many families left for settlements in Dakota Territory, the Stefanssons were loath to abandon their hard-won homestead (with its two tiny graves). But while Vilhjalmur was in his third year their crops were destroyed by floods and they, too, gave up the struggle.

Thus the future explorer spent his boyhood in a frontier ranching community, on the western prairie. Two schools were near his home, and since they were not usually in session at the same time, he attended one while the other was closed. Because Icelanders are noted for their literacy, he was able to supplement his studies at school by home instruction in German, the Scandinavian languages and the Icelandic Sagas. The Sagas stimulated an innate love of poetry, and his first ambition (after an initial "Buffalo Bill" period) was to be a poet. This fired him with a desire to get a better

education, and in the fall of 1897 he entered the preparatory school of the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks. The trip to the University was his first experience of train travel. He wore a seven-dollar suit and had fifty-three dollars in his pocket. During the next five years he maintained himself by a variety of occupations, including some school-teaching.

To the prairie people whose taxes maintained the University, education was a serious matter, and this attitude was reflected in the academic atmosphere. Dancing was discouraged, and as for smoking and drinking...! Many of the students considered that they were being treated as children and showed their resentment in a variety of ways. Stefansson's fertility of imagination and his resourcefulness made him a natural leader in this revolt. His conflict with the regulations did not involve the usual prohibitions, but his reverence for authority, if not lacking, was singularly undeveloped. Although — thanks to his early grounding in languages — his class standing was high, his outside activities required an ever-increasing share of his time. He came and went without bothering to register or report, which could not indefinitely be overlooked. The Minutes of Faculty for March 5, 1902, contained the verdict of the exasperated Faculty: "Resolved that V. Stefansson be suspended from the privileges of the University during the remainder of the year for failure to attend to his duties."

Since much has been made of this incident by Stefansson's detractors, it must be mentioned here. But the day would come when the University would be among the first to award an honorary degree to Stefansson; despite the edict, he could probably even then have been received back into the fold if he had been willing to make suitable amends.

Instead, he chose to convert his suspension into the prelude to an unique achievement. Writing to a number of universities, he asked whether they could accept a student who lacked the requisite credits and allow him, from time to time, to take such special examinations as would qualify him for graduation within the current academic year. Most of the universities queried would have none of it, but the State University of Iowa was willing.

Accordingly, in the fall of 1902, Stefansson, with the aid of some credits allowed for work at North Dakota, entered that university as a freshman, became a sophomore at Christmas, a junior at Easter and graduated with the class of '03 in June, a few days earlier than his former classmates at North Dakota.

While attending the International Conference of Liberal Religions at Boston in 1900, Stefansson had met leaders of the Unitarian Church, who offered him a scholarship at the Harvard Divinity School. This he now accepted on the understanding that it would not commit him to enter the ministry. Therefore, soon after graduation, he went on to Harvard to begin a course in Comparative Religions, but shortly came to the conclusion that the religious life was not for him. Preferring the scientific outlook, he transferred, in the fall of 1904, to the Harvard Graduate School, holding in that term the Hemenway Fellowship of the Peabody Museum, which he held again in the following year as assistant in the Division of Anthropology.

From an early age, Stefansson had been interested in the history and culture of his ancestral homeland, and in 1904 visited Iceland. That visit resulted in his returning the following year with a group of students on an anthropological expedition, the effects of which were to have an important bearing upon his later dietetic theories. In a collection of more than eighty skulls, plus a small bag of loose teeth picked out of the sand, no tooth, either fast or loose, was found that showed any evidence of decay. These teeth were from the skulls of people who had lived at a time when sugar and starches were wholly absent from the diet of Icelanders, whose food consisted chiefly of meat, fish, milk, and other dairy produce. It was on this evidence that Stefansson first set forth his theory, later supported by researches in the Arctic, that caries and therefore ordinary toothache is not merely rare but absent where the diet is composed almost entirely of animal products.

Stefansson became an arctic explorer by accident. He had been preparing for work in Africa with a British expedition when the course of his life was changed by a telegram. The

sender was Ernest de Koven Leffingwell, an American geologist who with Einar Mikkelsen, a Danish explorer, was organizing an expedition (Anglo-American Arctic Expedition) on which he offered Stefansson the post of ethnologist. The expedition was designed to explore the country along the arctic coast of Canada and to study its people, especially beyond the Mackenzie delta to the east — a region then practically unknown to science. The expedition's ship, the *Duchess of Bedford,* was outfitting at Victoria, B.C., but Leffingwell suggested that Stefansson should proceed to the Arctic by way of the Mackenzie River to join the expedition at Herschel Island. Since the promoters were not overly well supplied with cash Stefansson was asked to pay his own expenses on the trip overland, which he did by arranging with Harvard University and the University of Toronto to advance money in return for collections and information which he hoped to secure beyond the requirements of his own expedition.

When Stefansson reached Herschel Island, on the shore of the Beaufort Sea a short distance east of the boundary between Canada and Alaska, he learned that the *Duchess of Bedford* had not yet arrived; in fact it was doubtful if she should ever arrive because she was beset in the ice at Flaxman Island two hundred miles to the westward. The settlement at Herschel Island consisted then of a North West Mounted Police post and an Anglican Mission, but for many years it had been a point of call for the whaling fleet and for trading vessels. A number of whalers caught by an early freeze-up the previous fall, were still at anchor in the harbour awaiting word that ice conditions to the westward would permit of their leaving for the outside. Also in the harbour was the little schooner *Gjoa* in which Roald Amundsen was about to complete the Northwest Passage, begun two years earlier.

Little did the people of Herschel Island realize that they then had among them the two who were destined in the years ahead to become the most famous explorers of their time. Stefansson was aware that the presence of Amundsen and his little ship was an event of prime historical importance,

yet he was much more interested in the arrival of Charlie Klinkenberg in command of the *Olga*, a trader and whaler which had wintered at Victoria Island, the region which the Leffingwell-Mikkelsen expedition had planned to explore. What especially interested Stefansson were statements made by members of the *Olga*'s crew that they had seen Eskimos who could be mistaken for people of European descent. He was familiar with the history of the Norse settlements in Iceland and Greenland and had often speculated upon the fate of the 'lost' Greenlanders. The possibility that these strange-looking Eskimos could have been the descendants of emigrants from Greenland filled him with eagerness to see them himself.

In order to do this he would need to return to the United States and secure support from some scientific organization. Although his academic accomplishments were an asset, and he possessed the resourcefulness and self-reliance resulting from a frontier upbringing, he was without arctic experience. This he could correct by embarking immediately upon the arctic way of life by spending the coming winter with Eskimos, living as they lived, and as nearly as possible, becoming one of them. Consequently, during the winter of 1906-7, he lived with two successive Eskimo families.

In the spring he travelled along the coast by boat to Flaxman Island to meet his fellow expedition-members and learned that the ship was indeed a wreck and that the expedition was at an end. Neither Leffingwell nor Mikkelsen was in camp; some weeks before they, with Storker Storkerson, the Chief Mate, had set off on an exploratory foray northward over the ice. The time of their intended return had passed and those on shore were fearful for their safety. When, still later, they had not returned, the unfounded belief became general along the coast that they were dead, and word to this effect was soon on its way to the outside world. The carrier of the bad news was Alfred Harrison, a homeward-bound Englishman who had spent two years in the Mackenzie delta. After travelling on three successive Mackenzie River steamers he would send out the news from Athabasca Landing, the nearest telegraph office, about 100 miles north of Edmonton.

Fearing the effect of the mistaken news on his aged mother and on the relatives of his companions, Mikkelsen arranged with Stefansson (who had hoped to go out in the fall on a whaler) to make an attempt to forestall Harrison's arrival at Athabasca Landing by crossing the portage route between the Mackenzie and Yukon rivers and file an earlier telegram at Eagle, Alaska.

Stefansson left Herschel Island in a police whaleboat on August 9, and reached Fort Macpherson in three days. There he hired two Indians to help carry his effects across the 80-mile portage to Bell River. Building a raft, he floated down the twisting, sluggish stream to the much larger and swifter Porcupine, one of the chief tributaries of the Yukon. He was at Fort Yukon on September 3, where he had a day to wait for the next steamer, and reached Eagle on the 7th, two days after Harrison had released his news at Athabasca Landing. He lost the race; but that one, without experience in floating down strange rivers, should attempt such a feat, is, I suggest, an indication of what might have been expected of him in his future career.[1]

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(1) See Stefansson, *Hunters of the Great North,* Harcount, Brace, New York, 1922.

CHAPTER III

DISAPPOINTMENT AND DELAY

When Stefansson returned to the United States in the fall of 1907 the lines of his career were already set. He has admitted that he was a long time in overcoming his preconceived picture of the Arctic, but no one had ever turned to such good account the experiences of two summers and one winter in the North. After his return to England, Alfred Harrison wrote a book which contains this tribute to Stefansson:

"Let me pay a slight tribute to this gentleman.... He had, while the sun was below the horizon, travelled from Shingle Point to my camp — a distance of 200 miles. After staying with me for three weeks he had then returned to Herschel Island, when he had soon afterwards resumed his journey to Camden Bay; and here he had found the *Duchess of Bedford* wintering. From my camp to this bay the distance was 400 miles, and this distance was accomplished in mid-winter. His hardships must have been great, but his powers of endurance and of determination seem to me to be considerable; and I cannot speak too highly of the persistence with which he set himself to learn the Eskimo language of which he obtained proportionate mastery." [1]

While Stefansson is best known as an explorer, it is possible that his writings will earn more enduring fame. The first of these (aside from a contribution to a scientific journal) was a series of articles for *Harper's Magazine* on his recent experiences. He was chiefly occupied, however, with the promotion of an expedition that would enable him to

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(1) Harrison, Alfred H., *In Search of a Polar Continent,* Edward Arnold, London, 1908, p. 204.

visit the Eskimos of Victoria Island and possibly find an explanation for their supposed European-like characteristics.

Soon he had won the interest of the officers of the American Museum of Natural History, Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, the President, and Dr. H. C. Bumpus, the Director. Dr. Osborn has recorded his impressions of the young explorer in the "Foreword" to one of Stefansson's books: "In a late Autumn month of the year 1907 there came into my office at the American Museum, a young man of earnest and serious personality, who said he desired to explore in the arctic regions, not in search of the still undiscovered pole, but in a region still untouched by any competent explorer. He asked nothing for his own expenses and very little money for outfitting the expedition, something a little over two thousand dollars for the outfit and supplies. I was not very much impressed with this financial estimate; and I felt that it was far under the probable outlay. Nor did I carefully consider the scientific features of the plan, because I was deeply impressed with the personality and subdued enthusiasm of the young man himself — in short, it was the personality of Vilhjalmur Stefansson rather than his project which attracted me..."[1]

The arrangement eventually agreed upon provided for a one-man expedition to be supported in the field by the Museum for approximately two years at a cost of two thousand dollars. Stefansson was to serve without salary, but would preserve the right to lecture and write upon the expedition's experiences after his return. When word appeared in the press that such a project was afoot, Stefansson received a letter from a University of Iowa classmate, Rudolph M. Anderson, a naturalist about two years his senior, then teaching at a military academy. Anderson wrote that he would like to accompany Stefansson and suggested that two could secure much more information than one, without greatly increasing the cost. Stefansson felt that Anderson would be an ideal companion.

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(1) *My Life With the Eskimos* (abridged edition), Macmillan, New York, 1927, p. IX.

"His prominence there was not based upon the length of time but upon his outstanding qualities as they appeared in University days," Stefansson wrote in a letter to me when I was working on the biography. "He was a Spanish War veteran and that gave him standing. He was the highest officer in the local military organization, the only man at the University who had an All American rating in athletics (championship in high hurdles). All these things among others combined in making him far and away the outstanding man in the University from the student point of view, while his scholarship and character made him equally the favourite of the faculty. It cannot happen often in any university that a man is so outstanding from every angle as Anderson was from the time he returned to the University after the Spanish American War until he graduated."

Stefansson had no difficulty in getting the Museum's consent to the change in plan, and an additional three hundred dollars was provided for Anderson's preliminary expenses. Since the territory which the expedition planned to explore would be entirely in Canada, Stefansson went to Ottawa to discuss his plans with R. W. Brock, Director of the Geological Survey of Canada, and an arrangement was made by which the Survey joined the Museum as a sponsor. The Survey's financial contribution was only three hundred dollars; but later, at a time when the expedition, having spent a longer time in the field than was anticipated, and at several times the anticipated cost, the Museum ordered its recall, Brock persuaded the Museum to continue its support.

Stefansson and Anderson travelled by way of Edmonton and Athabasca Landing to Fort Macpherson, as Stefansson had done on his first expedition. There they rented a whaleboat, bought a number of dogs, and on July 16 set sail for Herschel Island accompanied by two Eskimo boys, temporarily engaged, and by Ilavinirk, with whom Stefansson had travelled during the winter of 1906-7 on his visit to Harrison at the Eskimo Lakes. Ilavinirk, his wife, and their young daughter were hired, it was hoped for the duration of the expedition.

They reached Herschel Island on July 28, to find that the

whalers had not yet arrived. Only one ship — the *Karluk* — had remained at Herschel Island during the previous winter. Everyone was impatiently awaiting the arrival of ships from outside, but by the middle of August it was feared that none would come. The Eskimos who in late years had become more and more dependent on outside supplies, had begun to dread a period of privation. Stefansson, having already spent a winter with Eskimos when outside food was almost entirely lacking was not worrying; he believed that his party could easily maintain themselves by fishing and hunting. He now discovered, however, a serious shortage of another sort — matches. Anderson used tobacco and the Eskimos were inveterate smokers. Captain Wing of the *Karluk,* offered them what he could spare — a box containing a thousand — which seemed sufficient to Anderson, but the Eskimos were unwilling to face the prospect of a winter with restrictions on their smoking.

Stefansson next tried to borrow a supply from Sergeant Fitzgerald, in command of the Mounted Police detachment, who flatly refused to sell or lend any. He did not believe in the ability of a white man to live in the Arctic on fish and game. In his opinion, Stefansson and Anderson without sufficient food from outside to do them a year, were destitute and in danger either of becoming a charge on the community or of starving to death.

Fitzgerald said that according to law he had power to deport them, but if they would discharge their Eskimos and agree to spend the winter in a small house near the barracks, they might have an ample supply of both matches and food. This offer, Stefansson was not prepared to accept. His only alternative was to go to Point Barrow, Alaska, 400 miles to the westward. But such a course would not admit of a return in time to reach his eastern destination before winter. However, plans were quickly readjusted and it was decided that they should spend the winter near the mouth of the Colville, in a district which, from the standpoint both of ethnology and zoology offered an attractive field of work. Accordingly, with six Eskimos they set off in two whaleboats for Point Barrow, but owing to adverse winds had gone only forty

miles when they were overtaken by the *Karluk*. It was then arranged that Anderson, with three Eskimos should continue along the coast in one of the whaleboats, while Stefansson with Ilavinirk and his family should take the other whaleboat on board the *Karluk*. Next day, off Flaxman Island, Leffingwell came aboard to take passage for San Francisco.[1] Stefansson had sent him a message from Herschel Island, proposing to purchase supplies, but this Leffingwell did not care to do; he had no more than enough, he said, to supply Eskimos dependent upon him. Thus passed Stefansson's last chance to avoid the unwelcome trip to Point Barrow with its threatened loss of a whole year's time. It was a much greater disappointment than he cared to admit; for, while his destination had ostensibly been Point Barrow, he had counted considerably on his chance of obtaining supplies at Flaxman Island, especially after he learned that Leffingwell was leaving the country and presumably would not be needing them himself. Since the water along that part of the Alaskan coast is shallow for a considerable distance from shore, heavy ice usually grounds some distance out, leaving a lane of open water of varying widths. In some places it is of sufficient depth for ships like the *Karluk* to pass, but in others only whaleboats or similar small craft can pass. When the *Karluk* was within twenty miles of Point Barrow the ice pressed too closely on the land for her to get by. Stefansson therefore launched his whaleboat and, accompanied by Leffingwell and the Ilavinirk family, set off once more for Point Barrow. They found no ships at the point, and continued on to the village of Cape Smythe, twelve miles farther.

The movement of ice along the Alaskan coast is governed by the direction of the wind. That season the prevailing wind was westerly and in consequence the ice had not left the beach. But shortly after Stefansson arrived at Cape Smythe, the wind shifted to the east, the floes moved away, and the ships came in. Matches had brought him to

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(1) Leffingwell had built a house of material from the wrecked *Duchess of Bedford* which he continued to use as an arctic headquarters for some years.

Cape Smythe, but now he found they were only a small part of his needs. Had he been able to winter east of the Mackenzie delta, as planned, he could have hoped to live by hunting and fishing; but now that it was evident they must winter somewhere along the north coast of Alaska, from which most of the game had long since been exterminated by hunters working for the whaling ships, it became imperative that he secure food enough to last till the following summer. This was an unpleasant as well as an unexpected turn of events. He was practically without money; but the whaling captains, appreciating his position, readily accepted his drafts and sold him whatever supplies he needed.

Except for three winter months spent at Cape Smythe, extending his knowledge of the Eskimo language and recording several thousand words of folklore, Stefansson spent the time from the first of September till the following August travelling with Eskimos up and down the Alaskan coast from Point Barrow to Flaxman Island. Anderson had established a camp in the mountains south of Barter Island, where game was plentiful and where valuable specimens of the scientifically unknown mountain sheep of that region were secured. During the winter he made a trip southward through the Endicott Mountains into the Yukon Valley and back. But from the standpoint of the main work of the expedition the year was largely wasted.

It was August (1909) once more when Stefansson returned to Herschel Island, this time definitely on his way to the country of the strange Eskimos. With him were the two Eskimos who were to be his companions for much of the time during the next three years. One of these, Natkusiak, was to become through Stefansson's writings, the best-known Eskimo in the annals of exploration. He possessed, in addition to those qualities that render the Eskimos a remarkable people, many traits which his compatriots do not usually possess, chief of which was his curiosity concerning new places and experiences. The other was an Eskimo woman named Pannigabluk. During his first winter in the Arctic, Stefansson had discovered the importance of clothing in that country and he soon realized that one of the secrets of Eskimo survival was

their solution of the clothing problem. It was really very simple; the clothing of both men and women was similarly designed and consisted (for winter wear) of a garment of some light fur worn fur-side-in, next the body, and an outer one, preferably of caribou hide, hair-side-out. These garments must be sewn with an air-tight seam, at which Eskimo women were adept. Arctic travel is hard on clothing and consequently Stefansson always included in his parties at least one woman whose duty it was to keep the clothing in good order, hence Pannigabluk.

Stefansson had intended to wait at Herschel Island for Anderson and the Ilavinirk family, following in the whaleboat; but the day after his arrival the *Karluk,* now in command of Capt. Cottle, came in, and the captain offered to carry him and his party eastward. It was too good a chance to be missed. Although Stefansson regretted that Anderson and his Eskimos were not along, he accepted the offer, leaving word for Anderson to follow and join them at Cape Parry, which they reached on August 29th.

CHAPTER IV

LIVING OFF THE COUNTRY

Cape Parry is a rocky peninsula, deeply indented by narrow fjords, terminating in a broad promontory which rises about 600 feet above the sea. It is the first prominent point east of Cape Bathurst, the two forming opposite sides of Franklin Bay, a large triangular body of water opening into a smaller body, similar in shape, at its southern apex, called Langton Bay. This was the nominal headquarters of the expedition for the next three years. A small house had been built there in times past, by whalers, and in it the supplies and equipment were stored when brought down from Cape Parry. In some respects, Langton Bay was not an ideal place for a camp; there was very little driftwood, it was too far inland for polar bears, and it was not a favourite feeding ground for caribou.

Supplies secured from the whalers would feed them for perhaps three months, but Stefansson hoped as much as possible to maintain the expedition by hunting. Therefore, leaving Pannigabluk to fix up the camp, he and Natkusiak set off to hunt, each going in a different direction. He saw a few tracks, all pointing eastward, but no caribou, and was just about to give up for the day when he came on an arctic grizzly, the first he had ever seen. This was a stroke of luck, for the bear not only provided a welcome supply of meat, but also became the nucleus of the scientific collections which eventually were to contribute so much to the success of the expedition. *Ursus arctos richardsoni,* as the arctic grizzly is known scientifically, is one of the rarest, in museums, of all large carnivora. Stefansson skinned the carcass leaving the head and paws intact for mounting; and, tired but satisfied, trudged back to camp under a staggering load, to learn that Natkusiak had succeeded in getting three fat caribou.

Since their most pressing needs were skins for clothing, meat for food and fat for light, their initial efforts were successful in contributing toward each. Hunting together the

following day, they came upon seven caribou and were fortunate in getting them all. But it soon became evident that the caribou were moving southward. They therefore cached the meat already secured and shifted camp fifteen miles farther inland where a thicket of spruces grew on the sheltered slope of a deep ravine. While there was plenty of fuel here, it was still not far enough south for caribou; but one day Stefansson got two grizzlies and another day he shot a fat white wolf, which contributed fifty pounds of excellent meat to the larder.

The first heavy snow fell on September 29 and was welcomed by all, for now supplies could be transported by sledge, instead of on the backs of men and dogs. Near the ravine camp, they made another cache of meat, and proceeded up the Horton River — a large stream flowing into Franklin Bay from the south. This river was not marked on the map, except by its mouth, but, during the next three years it was to be explored for a distance of five hundred miles. Four days' travel brought them to the rearguard of the caribou, and building there a permanent house of wood, sod and moss, they prepared to spend the winter.

Naturally, Stefansson was wondering if Anderson had succeeded in following him eastward. Natkusiak and Pannigabluk were convinced that he would have difficulty in persuading his Eskimos to continue beyond the Baillie Islands because of fear that food could not be found in a country unknown to them. So, he, with Natkusiak, set out to meet Anderson at a time when they could more profitably have been engaged in laying in a stock of meat against the period of darkness. Fears that Anderson was in difficulty proved to be unfounded for they met him at the mouth of the Horton River, where he and Stefansson discussed plans for the future. They found that they were short of ammunition, tea, and tobacco; and it was arranged that Anderson, Natkusiak, and Pikalu (a man who had added himself to Anderson's party) should make a quick trip to Cape Parry to get some of the provisions cached there while Stefansson with the other Eskimos should return to the Horton River camp.

When the two parties separated on November 23, each had

about two days' food; but on the beach near the mouth of Horton River lay the carcass of a bowhead whale that had been dead, so they later learned, for about four years; and from its huge tongue they chopped off about a hundred pounds for dog feed. Stefansson's party, which consisted of the Ilavinirk family and two other Eskimos were delayed two days at the outset by a blizzard and were therefore already on half-rations when they took to the trail. Next day some seal skins originally intended for boot-soles went into the pot and the third day they dined on a further mess of sealskin eked out by a little of the whale tongue. Four years of weathering on an Arctic beach had reduced the normally fat tongue to a stringy mass of connective tissue more nearly resembling felt. Furthermore, it had become so thoroughly impregnated with ocean salts that even after repeated boiling it was unpleasantly bitter.

They had obtained a bag of seal oil from Anderson's party; and so long as the tongue lasted the oil helped to make it more palatable and added necessary food-value to its bulk. But when the tongue was finished they found it almost impossible to make a satisfying meal on straight oil. Consequently, to supply the needed bulk they tried soaking up the oil in tea leaves, ptarmigan feathers and caribou hair. "Most commonly," Stefansson wrote, "we took long-haired caribou skin, cut it into small pieces, dipped the pieces in oil and ate them as a sort af salad." The dogs fared likewise.

A situation requiring such heroic measures, might strike the uninitiated as somewhat of a hardship, but we have Stefansson's assurance to the contrary: "I must not give the impression that we were really starving, or even suffering much from hunger," he is careful to state. This is not braggadocio. Certainly he would be the first to admit that travelling in a blizzard on a diet of seal oil and feathers, or caribou hair, could be much improved upon; but discomfort was involved in the nature of his undertaking; that had been understood and accepted in advance; and he was not inclined to argue the matter out afresh every time a new contingency arose. There were two methods of carrying on exploratory work in such a country. One was to have a large outfit and many

men to support it; the men would be tied to their food, which they would transport only at the price of incessant labour. With clear-minded logic, Stefansson had weighed this method in the beginning — and had found it wanting. The other, the one he had chosen, consisted of small parties living, as much as possible, off the country by hunting. It too, had its disadvantages and inconveniences, but he felt that the greater mobility, and in this case, lesser cost were its justification. He was right when he said they were not starving; they were indubitably hungry, but men can go for long periods without eating and not starve. A few days at most would bring them to their camp and food. If times came when food was scarce and of doubtful quality, there were others when stomachs that had known hunger and could appreciate good fare might be indulged without stint.

Ten days after separating from Anderson, they reached a spot where two grizzly bear skins had been cached a couple of months before. In this cache there had also been a caribou ham and five Canada jays, the latter preserved for scientific purposes. The ham soon disappeared, as did the paws and heads of the bears, and the five jays — the law of self-preservation having the right-of-way for the time being over zoological research. Next day, they ate the lashings out of their snowshoes and such other skin thongs as remained about their equipment. "Fresh raw hide is good eating," Stefansson testifies; "it reminds one of pigsfeet if well boiled. One of the advantages of skin clothing over woollens is that you can eat them in an emergency, or feed them to your dogs if your need is not quite so pressing. This puts actual starvation off a week or so."

Most explorers have at one time or another been compelled either to kill and feed some of their dogs to those remaining or to eat them themselves. This is an extremity to which Stefansson has never been reduced. Over and over he refers to the subject in his books and in discussing this very incident gives expression to his views in characteristic manner: "As for eating one's dogs, the very thought is an abomination. Not that I have any prejudice against dog meat as such, it is probably very much like wolf, and wolf I know to be excel-

lent, but on a long journey the dogs become your friends; they work for you single-mindedly and uncomplainingly; they revel with you in prosperity and good fortune; they take starvation and hard knocks with an equanimity that says to you: 'We have seen hard times together before; we shall see good times again, but if this be the last you may count on us to the end.' To me the death of a dog that has stood by me in failure and helped me to success is the death of a comrade-in-arms; to eat him would be cannibalism."

Two days more of deer skins and oil and the Eskimos had become so weak that it appeared almost impossible for them to travel the remaining eighteen miles to the winter quarters. Leaving the Eskimos in camp on the trail, Stefansson went on alone through a starlit night, arriving home in the early morning. He tumbled into bed and slept until nearly noon, and then having eaten his first square meal in many days, set off on the back trail carrying a pack of dried meat and met the others only five miles out. They made camp on the spot and the following day were all back in their comfortable house, making up for missed meals and feasting to their hearts' content on boiled caribou meat.

Most of the seal oil had been consumed on the southward trip and they now began to feel the effects of an excessive protein diet. Again, it was the Eskimos who first succumbed. "Of our entire seven I was now the only one not actually sick, and I felt by no means well," Stefansson wrote. "Doing hard work in cold weather on a nearly fatless diet is an interesting and uncommon experiment in dietetics, and may therefore be worth describing. The symptoms that result from an exclusive diet of lean meat are practically those of starvation. The marrow in the bones of the caribou on which we had to live had 'turned to blood', and in most of them no fat was discernible even behind the eyes or in the tongue. When we had been on a diet of oil 'straight' a few weeks before, we had found that with a teaspoonful of oil a day there were no symptoms of hunger. We grew each day sleepier and more slovenly and no doubt lost strength gradually; but at the end of our meals of long-haired caribou skin and oil we felt satisfied and at ease. Now with a diet of lean meat everything

was different. We had an abundance of it as yet and would boil up huge quantities and stuff ourselves with it. We ate so much that our stomachs were actually distended from it, so much so that it was distinctly noticeable even outside one's clothes. But with all this gorging we were continually hungry. We felt like bursting and also as if we had not had enough to eat."[1]

Stefansson was hunting as usual early in January when he saw against the skyline in the distance the figures of three men. At first he thought they must be Anderson, Natkusiak and Pikalu, whose long-continued delay was beginning to cause him anxiety, but they proved to be three Eskimos from the Baillie Islands who had come in the hope of getting caribou skins for clothing. They had no news of Anderson's party, but did have a small quantity of seal oil, which made them doubly welcome. That night there were lights again in camp, and mixed liberally with seal oil, the lean caribou meat now not only filled the void but satisfied the pangs of hunger.

The situation was saved, but only temporarily. A trip north to one of the caches near Langton Bay became daily more imperative. Added to the need for fat, was the question of what had happened to delay Anderson and his companions. As time passed without sign of them, Stefansson began to fear disaster of some sort. Taking Palaiyak and Tannaumirk, one of the newcomers, he set out for Langton Bay. The nearest cache was thirty miles down the Horton River, where the fat of three grizzly bears had been stored under a pile of stones. This they found thoroughly rifled by wolverines. The next was at the Langton Bay camp, and there, too, a wolverine had eaten all but fifteen or twenty pounds of blubber. Him, they shot, finding his meat fat and particularly good eating. Three days later the mystery was cleared up. In the cabin at Cape Parry, Anderson and Pikalu were both ill in bed, recovering from pneumonia. With two sick men on his hands, Natkusiak had done his best; but they had had a difficult

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(1) Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimos* (abridged edition), Macmillan, New York, 1927, pp. 138-139.

time, for pneumonia is serious even in the best of circumstances. Game was scarce, and up to that time, Natkusiak had secured only one caribou; but he had trapped industriously and had caught, on the average, about one fox a day. Since Anderson and Pikalu would not be able to travel for at least a month, and the party on Horton River were on short rations, Stefansson at once dispatched Natkusiak and Palaiyak with a supply of blubber, remaining himself with Tannaumirk to nurse the invalids.

The following summer, in writing to Dr. Bumpus, Anderson expressed his own view of the situation. One paragraph of this letter is significant in the light of later events. It shows that, while not particularly well satisfied with conditions, he was quite prepared to do his best to make the expedition a success; and it indicates, furthermore, that Stefansson and he had continued on the best of terms.

"From a personal standpoint, I must admit that the results of the past two years have been unsatisfactory to me," Anderson wrote. "My relations with Mr. Stefansson have been cordial at all times, and he has aided my work in every manner possible under the circumstances, but our method of exploration is, at the best, not favourable to systematic zoological work, although it may be fairly satisfactory for anthropology. Practically two years have been spent in getting ready — a great part of the time at hard labour — for a bare living. Two winters have been endured in the hope of making up for lost time during the short summer harvest season, and the precious months sacrificed in the continual rush of moving. Collecting work on the move is difficult and usually unfruitful and, at the best, only skims the ground superficially. While this method of exploration may demonstrate that a white man can live where an Eskimo or an Indian can, and perhaps endure as much, the corollary seems to be that the aborigines are not able to accomplish much more than a bare living and the white man cannot be expected to do much scientific work under similar conditions."[1]

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(1) Letter from R. M. Anderson to H. C. Bumpus, dated Fort Macpherson, N. W. T., June 30, 1910.

CHAPTER V

THE UNKNOWN PEOPLE

On April 21, 1910, Stefansson set off on the long-planned journey eastward in search of the unknown people. He was accompanied by Natkusiak, Tannaumirk and Pannigabluk, with a team of six dogs. Although the fate of the expedition was now being put to the test, he went forth in high anticipation, but his Eskimos were not so inclined. Coupled in their minds with the fear that the country ahead of them was without food, was the legendary belief that the people they should find there were a barbarous and bloodthirsty race.

Western Eskimos referred to these legendary people to the East as the Nagyuktogmiut, or "People-of-the-Caribou-Antler."

"These people bear the name of the Caribou Antler because of a peculiar custom," they told Stefansson. "When a woman becomes of marriageable age her coming-out is announced several days in advance. At the appointed time she is made to take her place in an open space out of doors, and all the men who want wives form a circle round her, each armed with the antler of a large bull caribou. The word is given and they all rush at her, each trying to hook her towards him with the antler. Often the woman is killed in the scrimmage, but if someone succeeds in getting her alive from the others he takes her for wife. As strength and the skill which experience gives are the main requirements for success, some of the Nagyuktogmiut have a great many wives, while most of them have none. Because so many women are killed in this way there are twice as many men as women among them. We know many stories, of which this is one, to show what queer people these Easterners are. They also kill all strangers."[1]

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(1) Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimos* (abridged edition), Macmillan, 1927, pp. 160-161.

This trip, in more ways than one, was being made in a manner quite different from what had been planned in New York. In the first place, it was at least a whole year later. Good dogs had been considered a first essential, yet the best dogs were dead. Stefansson had expected to have a light silk tent and the lightest and most powerful ammunition, but these had been abandoned the previous winter at points too far distant to be recovered. Instead, he had a 45-pound canvas tent and only 200 rounds of ammunition for his Mannlicher-Schoenauer 6.5 rifle; the other arms consisted of heavier rifles with bulky and less powerful ammunition. In all, there were four rifles of three different calibres, with a total of 960 rounds comprising three sizes of cartridges, in place of the single type of rifle and ammunition as originally intended. Furthermore, less than 1,000 cartridges was very slim provision for four persons living off the country for a year.

When they reached Cape Lyon on April 27 they were, in the opinion of some authorities, at the eastern limits of former occupation by people who build permanent earth-and-wood houses. Many ethnologists believed that there was a stretch of uninhabited country continuing for about two hundred miles east of Cape Parry, and that Eskimos on either side of that region rarely, if ever, came in contact with one another.

They followed the shore line on the sea ice, making an average of about fifteen miles a day. On leaving Langton Bay they had on their sledge about two weeks' provisions. Consequently it was necessary to find most of their food as they went along, and this task usually fell to Stefansson who would strike a course inland parallel to the coast. The Eskimos, one breaking trail ahead, and the other steadying or helping to haul the sledge took care of the team. If they saw a bear or seal, the sledge would wait while one of them tried his luck with the rifle. They were thus always able to secure more than enough meat.

One day they remained in camp to allow Pannigabluk to catch up with her sewing, since they had started inadequately supplied with boots. Stefansson took advantage of the opportunity to record certain observations concerning the influence of the teachings and example of missionaries and others upon

Eskimo customs and ways of thought. "Certain remarks and deeds of Pannigabluk's today prompt me to enter certain things about Eskimo cleanliness, etc.," he wrote in his diary. "Some light may be thrown thereby incidentally on our own. Pan. will clean dog excrement off a sole of a pair of boots with her *ulu* (half-round knife), wipe it casually with a rag that may have had as bad uses a dozen times before, and then proceed to eat with the ulu or cut up with it food for cooking. She will not use the same spoon twice in a half-hour to stir her own tea without wiping it between times — with the same rag, if it so falls, with which she has just wiped the ulu. Most of the Eskimos I know will pick up and eat without concern a piece of blubber, cooked meat, raw meat, fish, etc., that falls on the floor, no matter in what state the floor is, but most of them would throw away a piece of bread that had dropped in the same way. I noticed this especially in Roxy's [an Eskimo he had lived with on his first visit to the Arctic] house — he has been with the police a great deal, and seen them throw away such pieces; naturally they less often would drop meat, etc., than bread; besides, meats are native foods and the custom with regard to them is of long standing. In times of scarcity they will eat their own foods to the last scrap and take pride always in a clean-picked bone, but I never saw a bacon rind eaten, nor even shaved close in time of necessity (*e.g.* my bacon given Kunaluk's starving family last spring — he threw away nearly a fourth of the bacon with the rind). Most Eskimos (now) wash religiously every morning. Usually they use soap profusely and leave it unrinsed off the face; few of them seem to care if the water is dirty. In Ovayuak's house up to 20 would wash from the same water, or until the dish was empty. Then the towel passes round — the same for months, and occasionally a nose blown into it incidentally. On my telling Pan. one day that certain water was dirty she said that was no matter, she was just going to wash the teapot inside with it. I am considered a sort of renegade because I insist on the teapots and my own cup remaining unwashed. I have often heard natives tell strangers that, with many good qualities, I have the failing, differing thus from most white men, of caring little for clean-

liness in my food utensils. That I prefer manifestly dirty dishes to apparently clean ones in an Eskimo house, is considered a curious eccentricity: some seem to think it is 'put on'. Pan. will sometimes wash a pot thoroughly (with an ancient rag) and then use the water to make soup. She will hook with the dirtiest finger to the bottom of a cup of tea or water to get a deerhair, of which she conceives me (in common with 'all' white men) to be in horror, in spite of my protests that I rather am fond of hair in my food. I have known no Eskimos to contract the white man's horror of hairs in food. As with us, a white cloth garment must be washed, a dark one may be as dirty as it will." [1]

May 9 was the red-letter day: that day they saw the first sign of human beings. Crusoe on his desert island was not any more greatly agitated to find a footprint in the sand than were they to see the first evidence of humanity along that coast previously believed to be uninhabited. Stefansson's was the eager anticipation of the ethnologist, the student of mankind, fired by the possibility of discovering people never before seen by anyone from the outside world. Although the Eskimos were filled with apprehension concerning the dreaded unknown, they too, were seized with a growing curiosity.

The first human sign was an adze-mark in a piece of driftwood on the beach — as though someone had tested it for soundness. Farther along were other pieces of wood similarly scored. Next they came upon a heap of chips or shavings, where evidently a satisfactory stick had been hewn nearer to necessary dimensions. This was at Point Wise, where the open sea had already begun to narrow down to form the Dolphin and Union Strait that separates Victoria Island from the mainland.

In camp that night there was little sleep, but much excited conversation and speculation. The trail was taken early next morning. All day the signs continued but none were recent. The following morning, just east of Point

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(1) Editor's note: It is to be recalled that these events were recorded about a half century ago.

Young, they came at last upon human footprints and sledge tracks, probably about three months old. The same day at Cape Bexley, they discovered a deserted village of over fifty snow-houses. Its size amazed them. Natkusiak and Pannigabluk were from Alaska where snow houses are unknown. Tannaumirk — whose home was in the Mackenzie River district — had never seen a village among his people containing more than twelve or fifteen houses. That night simple minded Tannaumirk recited all the tales he remembered of the barbarous people he expected soon to meet.

A broad but not recently travelled trail led northward from the village across the sea ice towards Victoria Island. Stefansson's ultimate goal was Coronation Gulf, but he decided to delay long enough to find the people who had built this extensive village. It was arranged that Pannigabluk should remain on shore with most of the gear while Stefansson and the others should go forth to find the strangers. This was in accordance with Eskimo custom. On approach to the country of strange people, only the able-bodied men of the party advance to a cautious preliminary parley. Being left alone did not disconcert Pannigabluk whose equanimity was proof against any contingency, but Tannaumirk begged to be allowed to remain also; then, when his plea had been granted, he feared that the strangers might surprise the camp by night and murder him in his sleep, so he decided after all to accompany Stefansson and Natkusiak.

They left at dawn on May 13. Without a load, the dogs trotted along at about six miles an hour. Two hours of such travelling brought them to another deserted village, probably abandoned about a month later than the first one. These people were seal hunters. Seals can remain below the surface for only a limited period without coming up to breathe. In winter, each seal keeps several convenient breathing holes open by continual gnawing. The holes are hidden by a layer of snow, but the Eskimos are able to locate them by the use of dogs. When a hole is located the hunter shoves a small ivory rod into it through the snow until the lower end of the rod touches the top of the water. Sitting silently and watchfully beside the hole, the hunter waits until the seal makes

use of that particular breathing place; he knows when the seal is in the hole because of the movement of the rod, and he plunges his spear downward, transfixing the seal's head. The hole can now be chopped larger and the seal pulled out.

Surveying the horizon with glasses from the top of one of the largest houses, Stefansson finally sighted, a few miles to the westward, three men in the characteristic attitude of seal hunters. Headed in that direction the dogs soon got wind of the village and became as keenly interested as their masters. Stefansson called a halt some little distance short of the nearest hunter. This lone individual seemed so inoffensive that Tannaumirk's terrors evaporated and he eagerly volunteered to make the overtures, arguing that his accent would probably more closely resemble the unknown's than would Natkusiak's. Through his glasses, Stefansson watched the hunter as Tannaumirk drew near. He made no motion till Tannaumirk was within five paces or so, and then suddenly jumped to his feet, grasped the long copper-bladed knife that had lain in the snow nearby and poised himself as if ready for defence. This scared Tannaumirk who advanced no farther, attempting excitedly and volubly to reassure the stranger.

Eventually the man began to listen and then to answer and at length Tannaumirk succeeded in making him understand that he was not a spirit. After approaching cautiously and feeling Tannaumirk's clothing for concealed weapons and also to be further assured that he was indeed of flesh and blood, he offered to lead Tannaumirk to the village, stipulating that Stefansson and Natkusiak should follow at some distance.

"When we approached the village every man, woman, and child was outdoors waiting for us excitedly, for they could tell from afar that we were no ordinary visitors," Stefansson wrote. "The man whom we had first approached — who that day acquired a local prominence which still distinguishes him above his fellows — explained to an eagerly silent crowd that we were friends from a distance, who had come without evil intent, and immediately the whole crowd (about forty) came running toward us. As each came up he would say: 'I am so

so-and-so. I am well disposed. I have no knife. Who are you?' After being told our names in return, and being assured that we were friendly and that our knives were packed away in the sledge and not hidden under our clothing, each would express his satisfaction and stand aside for the next to present himself. Sometimes a man would present his wife, or a woman her husband, according to which came up first. The women were in more hurry to be presented than were the men, for they must, they said, go right back to their houses to cook us something to eat....

"These simple, well bred, and hospitable people were the savages whom we had come so far to seek. That evening they saw for the first time the lighting of a sulphur match and the next day I showed them the marvels of my rifle.

"Our first day among the Dolphin and Union Straits Eskimos was the day of all my life to which I had looked forward with the most vivid anticipation. I now look back to it with equally vivid memories, for it introduced me, a student of mankind and of primitive men especially, to a people of a bygone age. Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee went to sleep in the nineteenth century and woke up in King Arthur's time, among knights who rode in clinking mail to the rescue of fair ladies; we, without going to sleep at all, had walked out of the twentieth century into the country of the intellectual and cultural contemporaries of a far earlier age than King Arthur's. These were not such men as Caesar found in Gaul or Britain; they were more nearly like the still earlier hunting tribes of Britain and of Gaul living contemporaneously to, but oblivious of, the building of the first pyramid in Egypt. Their existence on the same continent with our populous cities was an anachronism of ten thousand years in material development. They gathered their food with the weapons of the stone age, they thought their simple primitive thoughts, and lived their insecure and tense lives, lives that were to me the mirrors of the lives of our far ancestors whose bones and crude handiwork we now and then discover in river gravels and prehistoric caves. Such archaeological remains, found in various parts of the world, tell a fascinating story to him whose scientific imagination

can piece it together and fill in the wide gaps; but far better than such dreaming was my present opportunity. I had nothing to imagine; I had merely to look and listen; for here were not remains of the Stone Age, but the Stone Age, itself, with its men and women, very human, entirely friendly, who welcomed us to their homes and talked with us."[1]

When he showed them his binoculars they asked to see the caribou that were coming the next day. When he confessed his inability, they gravely assured him that their medicine men possessed magic formulae by which such things could be done. Another time, when he was describing some of the marvels of modern surgery, he explained that the patient is put to sleep, and while asleep is opened up and part of his organs removed. But the Eskimos could cap this. They told of a medicine man who, while a person slept not only removed the entire spinal column, but replaced it with a new one, and so perfect was the operation that not a scratch showed on the patient's skin! They did not doubt what Stefansson told them; it was quite within their own experience of magic, but in the exchange of exploits Stefansson's medicine men suffered considerably by comparison with the local practitioners.

He was particularly interested to note that they seemed to see no difference between him and themselves; he asked if they did not consider his grey eyes and brown beard unusual. "We have no reason to believe you belong to a different people," they replied. "Your eyes and beard... are much like some of our neighbours to the north whom you must visit. They will never cease being sorry if you pass on to the east without seeing them."

These, he was eager to visit but scarcely dared hope that reports were not exaggerated. On May 15 he started north to visit the people of Victoria Island, whose resemblance to himself if true, might mean so much. Tannaumirk and Pannigabluk remained behind but he took Natkusiak and a man of the village, who had volunteered to act as guide.

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(1) Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimos*, (abridged edition), Macmillan, New York, 1927, pp. 178-181.

Following circuitous trails for a distance of about sixteen miles — but only about seven miles in a direct line — he came upon four houses built on the sea ice, a few yards from the Victoria Island shore. Everyone — even the dogs — was apparently asleep when they stopped about a half mile away to allow the guide to go ahead and prepare the people for visitors. He soon came running back to say they were welcome. The formula on being presented here differed slightly from that of the first village, but the hospitality was quite as warm and spontaneous. Stefansson and Natkusiak were both immediately struck by the remarkable appearance of these people, and when they discussed the matter later Natkusiak kept repeating: "These are not Eskimos; they merely dress and act and talk like Eskimos."

"It is hard, looking back over a gap of years, to call to memory, even the intense feelings with which we meet a crisis in life," Stefansson wrote. "That morning when the nine men and boys of the village stood before me in line on the ice in front of their huts of snow and skin, I knew I was standing face to face with an important scientific discovery. From childhood I had been familiar with the literature of the North; I knew that here a thousand and there a hundred men of Scandinavia and of England had disappeared into the northern mists, to be hid by them forever from the eyes of Europe, and when I saw before me these men who looked like Europeans in spite of their garb of furs, I knew that I had come upon either the last chapter and solution of one of the historical tragedies of the past or else that I had added a new mystery for the future to solve: the mystery of why these men are like Europeans if they be not of European descent. But although the situation appealed to whatever there was in me of the poet and theorist I had to remember that my supply of writing-paper was limited and that the definite recording of my first impressions of facts was more important than filling my notebook with speculations."[1]

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(1) Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimo*, Macmillan, New York, 1913, p. 192.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMER'S HEAT AND WINTER'S COLD

After spending a few days in the vicinity of Cape Bexley, Stefansson and his companions proceeded eastward along Dolphin and Union Strait towards Coronation Gulf. On the fourth of June they entered the mouth of the Coppermine River still ice-bound and covered with snow. Proceeding upstream they came, in eight or nine miles, to Bloody Fall. Its sanguinary name is derived from the story told by Samuel Hearne of the massacre there in 1771 by Chippewyan Indians accompanying him of a dozen or more Eskimos, peacefully sleeping in their tents. Some day, no doubt, the mighty power of this stream, rushing through its basaltic gorge, will be harnessed to help extract the riches from the rocks of this highly mineralized region, but for the travellers it was only an impediment to progress. Stefansson and his companions crawled along the narrow ledge of ice that still clung to the west bank of the precipice, saving themselves the labour of a portage, but in grave danger of a plunge into the rapids.

Since their immediate destination was Dismal Lake, they intended to follow the west bank of the river, in order that when the ice broke up, as they were momentarily expecting, they would be on the proper side. But a mile and a half above the fall the going became so difficult that they crossed to the other shore. Thus it was that they eventually were caught on the eastern bank in a district which, so far as they knew, was poorly supplied with game, and in which they had no interest. The summer hunting-ground of Eskimos they had recently left and whose acquaintance they hoped to renew, was on the opposite side of the tumultuous torrent, uncrossable at that time of the year. The sledge and every-

thing — including even the camera and Stefansson's larger diary — except the ammunition and cooking equipment, was cached in a small hollow a short distance from the sloping river bank.

Each day Stefansson and Natkusiak hunted for caribou, but tracks indicated that the deer were heading westward, evidently having crossed the river on the ice the previous week. Nevertheless, Stefansson, after a 24-hour search, succeeded in bagging two bulls and Natkusiak, the following day, secured three more. Each kill was further south than the preceding one, and to save packing, it was easier to move camp to the meat. Thus they got ever farther from the cached camera which they had hoped in a few days to retrieve. Its lack during the months following was a serious inconvenience.

The weather grew intolerably hot. They had no thermometer, but Stefansson estimated that it must have been over 90° in the shade. The sun beat down on them incessantly; for weeks on end there was not a cloud in the sky. At midnight, the sun hung, a ball of fire, about an hour above the northern horizon. The coolest part of the twenty-four hours was around four or five o'clock in the morning, and the most oppressive, the corresponding period in the afternoon. The mosquitoes harassed them continually. The dogs were so tormented that several of the poor creatures were temporarily blinded. They were also footsore from travelling over the hard ground, and through being bitten by flies and mosquitoes along the line of the foot where the hair meets the pad.

"On our entire expedition we had no experience that more nearly deserved the name of suffering than the combined heat, humidity and mosquitoes of the Coppermine summer," wrote Stefansson — and he was not forgetting the slack belts of the previous winter and the fare of snowshoe lashings and caribou hair! On July 7, he wrote in his diary: "Sleepy today but can't sleep for heat in tent and mosquitoes outside. Never suffered so much from heat and flies — we rush out on account of heat to be devoured by mosquitoes and then flee from them to be nauseated by heat. Wanting a flynet here is serious."

By the last week in July they had advanced upstream to a point opposite the mouth of the Kendall River which flows out of Dismal Lake. Selecting a half-mile strip of quiet water between two rapids, they built a raft of dry spruce logs and succeeded in crossing safely with all their outfit. Reaching the shore of Dismal Lake in two days, they for the first time since leaving Langton Bay ran completely out of food, and, the following day, Stefansson was forced to spend a precious Mannlicher-Schoenauer cartridge on a ptarmigan, which made but a bite each for breakfast. That afternoon, however, he shot two caribou.

They had been told of the existence of a ford by which the Eskimos were wont to cross the narrow lake, but it took several hours of wading about in the ice-cold water to discover it. Next day (August 1) they came upon a camp of Eskimos, and with them travelled south to the headwaters of Dease River where they found encampments of natives who hailed from as far east as Cape Bexley and as far west as Bathurst Inlet. This region, from Dease River to Great Bear Lake, had been the summer caribou hunting-ground of Eskimos for as long as the people could remember.

Stefansson had planned to spend the winter at the headwaters of the Dease, and to return to Coronation Gulf when the days were beginning to lengthen, but, after they had built a house, he decided to make an immediate trip to Langton Bay to inform Anderson of his whereabouts. He knew that the Horton River, the lower reaches of which he had already traversed, must head somewhere to the northward, and he hoped, in addition, to complete its exploration. Accordingly, leaving Tannaumirk and Pannigabluk in camp he and Natkusiak departed for Langton Bay, accompanied by Johnny Sanderson, a Slavey Indian, who claimed an intimate knowledge of the country north of Great Bear Lake. It was November 8 when they started from the mouth of Dease River, on their three-hundred-mile journey to the coast. They took only about six days' provisions on Johnny's assurance that they should find plenty of caribou. This was true so long as they remained in the timbered country which extends some forty miles from the lake, where Johnny assured

them they need not bother to hunt because caribou would be much more plentiful farther north. But after they had left the trees behind they saw neither caribou nor tracks for the next two hundred miles.

On the sixth day they struck the headwaters of Horton River. By this time they were on short rations; the going was extremely rough; and altogether the trip was one of the most difficult made during the whole time of the expedition. But after following the river for another week, caribou were found, and the hardships of the previous fortnight were soon forgotten in the enjoyment of heaped trenchers of caribou meat and a roaring fire in the shelter of a spruce forest. Sufficient meat was dried to last the rest of the journey, and to stock a cache for use on the return trip.

They reached Langton Bay on the 26th day and found Anderson and his party well and comfortable, but wondering about their long absence. The Langton Bay party had been getting most of their food from the carcass of a whale, freshly killed, that had drifted ashore just before the freeze-up. They had the mail, which provided Stefansson with a few hours' vicarious contact with the outside world. His most recent letter was dated the previous thirteenth of May, although none the less welcome on that account, but there was one written on May 12, 1910 — from Dr. Bumpus which was not so pleasant. The Museum authorities were not satisfied and ordered the expedition to return.

"In regard to the further support of your work," the letter read, "our original agreement... involved a total expenditure on the part of the Museum of two thousand dollars and was to terminate in one year. Following your several reports the period has been continued until the present time, which has involved an additional expenditure of $1989.09....

"While we fully appreciate the difficulties which you and your party have experienced, and while we feel that both you and Dr. Anderson have devoted yourselves to the work conscientiously and energetically, the obstacles to your work are so great, and the results obtained are such that we regret to conclude that further expenditures in the locality you have chosen are less urgent than elsewhere and we are

obliged to withdraw our support, but we wish to do this with as little embarrassment to you as possible.

"We trust therefore, that you will make every effort to send out at the earliest opportunity the material which you have secured for us under our agreement of April 13, 1908, and terminate your field work so far as the Museum is concerned.

"In the event of your terminating your work and returning to New York before you receive the supplies which were sent in 1909 please make such arrangements for their disposition after your departure as would seem to you for the best interest of the Museum.

"The Museum is ready to pay the transportation and travelling expenses of both yourself and Dr. Anderson to New York, as well as the transportation charges on the collection for the Museum.... In this event, we expect both you and Dr. Anderson to come out as soon as possible.

"If, however, you and Dr. Anderson desire to continue longer in the Arctic at your own expense and quite independent of the Museum, I see no reason why you should not do so. I am of the opinion, however, that Dr. Anderson desires to return to the Museum."

This letter had been opened by Anderson upon receipt at the Baillie Islands during the summer, in accordance with Stefansson's instructions. His spirited reply leaves no doubt of his loyalty to his friend and companion.

"I note what you have to say in regard to termination of field work in this region and my return at the earliest opportunity. In view of the fact that my colleague Mr. Stefansson, is still 'at large' in the wilderness and I have no means of knowing his circumstances, I do not feel justified in coming out without getting in touch with him, or at least making an effort to find him....

"Under any circumstances I would not care to remain longer in the Arctic either at my own expense or at the expense of the Museum. But as I feel bound to stay I shall endeavour to regulate matters so that no additional expense shall accrue to the Museum. I am buying a few provisions,

(flour, cornmeal, molasses, etc.) from Capt. Bodfish on my own account.

"Your letters to myself and to Capt. Bodfish give me to understand that the Museum will not allow transportation expenses to New York for Mr. Stefansson and myself, unless we come out this year. I fail to see how the postponement of our return for another year will make this expense any greater. As I am devoting three years of my time to the Museum enterprise, I feel that I should be allowed transportation expenses home, whenever I come. However, if any ships come in, I do not anticipate much trouble in getting to Frisco . . . ."

Stefansson fully approved of this answer and was grateful for the loyalty it indicated. Before leaving the Dease River camp, he had written a long report which he now supplemented by a letter giving information concerning the recent journey and discussing the points referred to by Dr. Bumpus. In conclusion, he wrote:

"You intimate that your reason for asking me to come out is that while we try hard enough, we are still unable to secure results commensurate with the expenditures. Until I received this letter I had been feeling rather cheerful, for I had — so it seemed to me — succeeded in doing everything that I had led anyone to believe that I might be able to do; had found what I had set out to find — an opportunity (of which I had used five months already) to study people who had never seen a white man . . . .

"It seems possible that on receipt of my last report you may have changed your mind as to whether we are getting results. . . . If you are still of opinion that we have not made good, I can see but one hope of saving our credit here — to ask the Geological Survey of Canada if they care to step into the breach. I am accordingly writing to Mr. Brock, asking him to confer with you . . . ."

It is part of the Geological Survey's proud record that Brock informed the American Museum of Natural History that the Survey would meet the entire cost of the expedition if the Museum wished to withdraw, and doubtless this stand

on the part of the Survey had much to do with the decision of the Museum to see the project through.

In justice to the Museum it must be noted that at the time Dr. Bumpus's letter was written there was nothing in reports received to show that either Stefansson or Anderson would ever get east of the mouth of the Mackenzie. The expedition which was organized on a one-year basis had been in the field more than sixteen months, had not been able to make its eastern objectives, and had barely eked out an existence from the country. This had necessitated the use for food even of the specimens collected, while the Museum had already been involved in an additional expenditure of approximately two thousand dollars more than the maximum estimated cost. When Dr. Bumpus wrote, he had no way of knowing that Stefansson would be in an unknown part of the country, perhaps dependent for his safety upon Anderson's remaining. It is hardly necessary to state that in no circumstances would the Museum have expected one member of the expedition to abandon the other, and when the true situation was learned did extend its appropriations to almost four times the original guarantee. On the other hand, the Museum gained collections of more than twenty thousand specimens, which were later estimated to have a current market value of over forty thousand dollars. This makes no mention at all of the inestimable scientific value of the information brought back.

CHAPTER VII

"BLOND ESKIMOS" HIT THE HEADLINES

After resting two weeks, Stefansson started back to Dease River in company with Anderson, Natkusiak and Johnny Sanderson, leaving Anderson's Eskimos to look after the camp and scientific specimens at Langton Bay. They took about twenty-five days' supplies but since it was during the most unfavourable time of the year, even poorer progress was made than on the northward journey. Before they reached the point where they were to leave the river valley for the open prairie, they were on short rations, and they saw no signs of caribou till they again reached the timbered region surrounding the lake. The weather was the coldest that Stefansson had ever experienced.

Thirty-three days after leaving Langton Bay they were at Great Bear Lake and soon were at their camp on Dease River. Stefansson, Anderson and one of the Eskimos immediately began a systematic caribou hunt, and within three weeks had secured sixty-eight, which they estimated would provide meat enough for the rest of the winter.

When Stefansson was not hunting he was busy recording folk tales told by Pannigabluk or Tannaumirk and he made extensive notes concerning the habits of caribou. In February, a favourite dog died, and this event was responsible for a characteristic diary entry, which however, betrays also an unusual note of pessimism:

"Dekoraluk died this morning," he wrote. "He was the best dog I have ever known. It would do him little good to write him a memorial here; neither can I word my feelings any more than one can do so after the loss of his best friend. He had been long in our service, always friendly, always

faithful. We have often worked hard together, he harder than I and often more cheerfully; we have often been hungry together, he oftener than I. But though hungry and tired he never shirked, and at special strain he always had a little extra reserve to put forward — when most men or dogs in his position would have given up. He was almost beyond nature honourable and magnanimous for a dog. When skin and bones from long hunger and hard work, he has refused to steal from a meat-cache, which other dogs broke open before his eyes, leaving half-eaten pieces of meat scattered over the snow when they had had their fill; he was easily the best fighter of all the dogs we ever had; but never started a fight and never pounced on a dog which another dog had down; he was the only dog I ever knew who would help a dog who was down, though he did that only for his brother Kanivorok, who survives him.

"It is the hardest thing about our life here to watch the death of dog after dog who has served you well and been a faultless friend through hardships and thankless toil. I am glad Dekoraluk did not die of hunger or cold; we kept him warm in the house till warm and cold became one to him. His death has taken my courage away for the time being. I feel tonight like throwing work, responsibility and hope of success all to the wind and quitting this wretched, rewardless, bitter country."

On March 22, 1911, Stefansson and Anderson left for Coronation Gulf. They were accompanied by Natkusiak and Tannaumirk, Pannigabluk having remained to look after the camp. They had two toboggans — more useful inland in the deeper snow than the high sledges used along the coast — and nine dogs. Reaching the Coppermine on March 30, they followed it northward to within two miles of Bloody Fall, picking up there the articles cached the previous summer. That same evening they left the river channel, and struck due north to Coronation Gulf.

Their quest was people. Travelling in a northeasterly direction across the gulf, they arrived on April 10 at a village of fifteen persons, with whom they spent several days, trading for ethnological specimens and securing information. From

these people they learned of a local tradition which fitted the known facts concerning Franklin's fate; and they met an old man who had seen Hanbury and whose father had probably seen members of Dease's and Simpson's party. What interested them more than anything else — and somewhat disturbed Stefansson — for he shrank from the thought of these people becoming contaminated by civilization — was the news that a ship was wintering in Coronation Gulf.

They decided to visit the ship, which they gathered was about sixty miles southwest of where they then were; and in the mouth of a small river, about half a day's journey east of the Coppermine, they found the gasoline schooner *Teddy Bear,* of Nome. On board were the owner, Captain Joseph Bernard, and an Eskimo crew who had come in the previous autumn.

The presence of the *Teddy Bear* caused Stefansson and Anderson to change their plans. Captain Bernard agreed to transport their heavy ethnological specimens, such as stone lamps and cooking-pots. The rest of the collection would be taken by Anderson and Tannaumirk back up the Coppermine to the Dease River Camp, and with the other articles already there packed for shipment to New York by way of Fort Norman and the Mackenzie River. The camp would then be abandoned, Anderson and the natives returning to Coronation Gulf, where the former would continue his zoological work. Stefansson accompanied only by Natkusiak would cross Coronation Gulf to Prince Albert Sound and then to Banks Island to spend the summer among the natives — if Banks Island should be inhabited.

It was April 30 when Stefansson and Natkusiak left for Victoria Island. In his account of this trip Stefansson gives interesting expression to his views concerning arctic travel:

"Our travels, whether they were five miles or fifty a day always meant so many miles of walking," he wrote. "In more than 10,000 miles of arctic travel I have never sat on the sledge except when it was going down a steep hill, with the exception of one or two occasions, when suffering with feet chafed by improper foot gear. It is unfair to the dogs and unwise as a policy to ride. If the dogs can haul you on top of

the rest of the load, twenty-five miles a day, they could haul the load without you thirty or thirty-five, and the same principle applies whether you make fifteen or fifty miles a day. The object is seldom to see how many weeks or months you can stay away from home, but rather to see how many miles you can cover while you are away. Consequently you must do nothing to retard your progress unnecessarily. No man should engage in arctic exploration who is unable to walk as many miles a day as his dogs are able to haul his sledge and camp gear." [1]

Several villages were encountered on the ice. The people were living on seals, which they found easier to kill and preferable — on account of the blubber — to the caribou, then continually passing on the way to Victoria Island. On May 7 was begun the first crossing of any part of Victoria Island by a white man. Five days later they reached Prince Albert Sound where they found a considerable village on the ice. It was here that Stefansson encountered people with the most pronounced "European" characteristics.

Another change of plan now became necessary, for they learned that in summer no people were on Banks Island. Consequently, after remaining a few days with the hospitable natives, they left for the mainland. The crossing took four days. As they travelled southward, they noted a most pronounced change in the character of the climate. At Victoria Island it was to all appearances still winter. But when they neared the mainland, leads opened in the ice, obliging them to convert their sledge into a raft, which they buoyed with a kerosene tin, a brass water bottle, and a small tank that had once contained alcohol. Even so, the raft sank waist-deep with Stefansson's weight while he paddled from one floe to another.

Landing near the mouth of Crocker River, they turned westward to Langton Bay. By this time all the rivers had melted extensive areas off their mouths; and as they came to each estuary they were compelled to make a wide detour

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(1) Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimos*, (abridged edition), Macmillan, New York, 1927, p. 289.

to avoid open water, frequently having trouble because of leads running far out to sea. After a month's travel under most difficult conditions, due to open water, heat, mosquitoes, and a variety of other discomforts, they arrived at the camp they had learned to call home. It is hard to say who were more greatly pleased, Stefansson and Natkusiak travel stained, hungry, wet and cold from much wading, or Ilavanirk and his companions who had been worrying over their prolonged absence.

After the travellers had rested, some archaeological work was undertaken about ten miles northeast of Langton Bay, one of the results of which was the discovery that the prehistoric Eskimos (contrary to previous scientific opinion) had made and used pottery. But by the end of July, the caribou skins were considered in best condition for clothing, and Stefansson, ever happy when ranging the countryside, left with the Eskimos to kill caribou in the Horton River valley.

The *Teddy Bear* arrived at Langton Bay on August 9, bringing Anderson and the two Eskimos. Anderson continued westward with the ship, for he was anxious to send mail by whalers from the Baillie Islands.

Stefansson decided to winter at a spot not far from the mouth of a well-timbered tributary of Horton River, which he had named "Coal Creek", where, as might be gathered from the name, there was outcrop of coal. Moving there on September 16 to begin work on the house, they were joined the following day by Anderson, returned from the Baillie Islands. He brought no mail, but had picked up some news that had filtered through from the outside world. The most important, of course, being that from nearest at hand. In view of their experience in 1908 with Inspector Fitzgerald, when he thought they were destitute and unable to support themselves in the country, the news of his tragic death with three companions on the patrol between Macpherson and Dawson, the previous winter, was easily of most interest. Stefansson devoted several pages of his diary to speculation concerning the probable cause of the disaster.

"There is no particular lesson for us in this tragedy," he wrote in conclusion, "for our methods of travel are not those

which an abundance of resources make feasible for the police. We start a journey and continue it to its end under the ever-present consciousness of the danger of running out of food. For that reason we are comparatively safe, though we start with a week's provision on a trip that should not take over six weeks, but which may take more. When we travel in a country of scarcity there is hardly an animal for a stretch of several miles on either side of our trail that escapes furnishing its quota to our support. They (the police) would not shoot a caribou except to form one course of a varied menu, or for dog feed, and would eat only when starving the things that form our daily food."

The winter of 1911-12 was Stefansson's fifth in the Arctic, and the fourth of the expedition. For the first time he undertook no long trips and did very little of the hunting; game was plentiful, and he left the securing of it to the Eskimos. It was, furthermore, the only time during the whole four years that Anderson and he were together for more than short periods. He devoted himself during this winter to perfecting his knowledge of the Eskimo language, and in recording — mostly in Eskimo — all the folklore and other ethnological information he could gain from his Eskimo companions. Even when travelling the hardest, he always found time to record bits of folklore or observations regarding the customs and habits of those he met or with whom he travelled. It is impossible to overestimate the value of the material which he gathered and preserved in his diaries on this and his later expedition. The Eskimos as a race of people with a Stone Age culture, have already practically passed away. Stefansson with his thorough knowledge of their language and their mental mechanisms was uniquely equipped to secure this precious material and the student of mankind in the days so soon to come when the Eskimo will have been vanquished by civilization will have increasing cause to bless his name. His explorations could have waited; the North might some day have found another, if perhaps less gifted champion — but none could have taken his place in this most important field of endeavour.

Thus comfortably housed, and with plenty of food, the

last winter of the expedition was pleasantly passed not far from where they had gone hungry during their first winter in that region. The objects of the expedition had been attained: the people who had never before been visited by white men had been studied; valuable ethnological specimens had been acquired; and Anderson had made a comprehensive zoological collection comprising many species new to science and others extremely rare. Furthermore, a large river had been explored and its course charted on the maps, in addition to the securing of much other important geographical data.

Stefansson still hoped to continue the archaeological work begun at Point Barrow in 1909 and accordingly he and Natkusiak took the trail on March 20 with one sledge and six dogs. It had been agreed that Anderson "as self-sacrificing and generous as he had been throughout the expedition," as Stefansson has testified, should see to the transportation of the collection from Langton Bay to the Baillie Islands, a most tedious piece of work.

It was the middle of June when Stefansson and Natkusiak reached Cape Smythe. During the next two months, with the assistance of most of the village, Stefansson excavated ancient village sites and burial grounds, adding thus to the interest and extent of his collections. On August 12 he boarded the US Revenue Cutter *Bear*, landing six days later at Nome, whence he sailed by passenger steamer for Seattle. When the ship drew up at the Seattle wharf on September 10, Stefansson had his first taste of that reception which the press reserves only for celebrities, for word had already gone out concerning the success of the expedition.

Fame is well on its way when one's doings become what is called "news". Stefansson was now for the first time "front page stuff". And naturally the story which most interested the newspapers was that concerning the strange people living on and about Victoria Island whose appearance seemed to suggest an admixture of European blood. To the newswriters of Seattle he first told the story; and for them it was wonderful copy, not exactly as he told it, perhaps, but transmuted by their preconceptions, or by their own desire not to spoil a good story in the telling. Some person, in a flash of

inspiration, coined the term, "Blond Eskimos". The name immediately caught on and has since been universally adopted. Stefansson himself has been forced to use it when speaking or writing of these people first brought by him to the attention of the world. While he always qualifies the term by the use of quotation marks, and well-informed persons understand that it is not meant literally, the great majority of newspaper readers made no such distinction. Nothing that he has been able to say or write to the contrary is of any avail against that conviction.

When he reached New York all the newspapers carried interviews and special articles, most of which were strongly influenced by earlier press reports or by the imagination of the writers; but all were agreed that he had (and often was so "quoted") discovered a race of white Eskimos numbering from 1000 to 2000 who were undoubtedly descended from the lost Greenland colonists. That these "blond" individuals do exist among the Eskimos of Victoria Island has been attested to by others. Stefansson merely advanced the view that their appearance might be due to an admixture of Scandinavian blood as the least unlikely hypothesis. This is what he wrote soon after his return:

"There is no reason for insisting now or ever that the 'blond Eskimo(s)' of Victoria Island are descended from the Scandinavian colonists of Greenland, but looking at it historically or geographically, there is no reason why they might not be. We have seen that the Scandinavians flourished for centuries on the west coast of Greenland. We know that at the time when communications between Europe and Greenland were cut off there were still large numbers of them living in Greenland in close proximity to the Eskimos. We know that the habits of the Eskimos are such, as exemplified in their relations with the American Indian and the white man in recent times, that they are inclined to mix with any race with which they come in contact. Greenland is not far from Victoria Island. If there were any reason for doing so, I could go by sled in less than twenty-four months from the southwest corner of Victoria Island, where the "blond Eskimos" now live, by way of Smith Sound, to the district

in Greenland which the Scandinavians inhabited, or by crossing from Greenland in a boat in summer I could go in one year thence by sled west to Victoria Island. As a matter of fact, the Eskimos who now winter on the ice west of Victoria Island start thence in March, and by August meet for trading purposes the Eskimos of the Hudson Bay, just about Chesterfield Inlet. There is then, no more reason geographically than there is historically to suppose any barrier that would have kept the Scandinavians from moving west had they wanted to. If the reason that the Victoria Island Eskimos are European-like is that they are of European blood, then the Scandinavian colony in Greenland furnishes not only an explanation, but the only explanation . . . ."

On his arrival in New York Stefansson took a room at the Hotel Endicott, just across from the Museum. His friends Mr. and Mrs. Carl Akeley, famous African explorers, were staying at the same place. Anderson landed at San Francisco from the *SS Belvedere* in November, bringing with him the bulk of the scientific collection. It is common knowledge that there is no more severe test of friendship than for two men to be thrown together for a long period in some out-of-the-way place; and it is significant that upon Anderson's arrival in New York he and Stefansson planned to share an apartment. But although Stefansson regularly paid his share of the rent till after Anderson's marriage, a few months later, and intended each week to move into the apartment, he never did; he was always too busy. He had begun writing the popular account, and also the scientific report of the expedition; and he was writing as well a series of articles for *Harper's*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT EXPEDITION

In addition to all this he was planning a new expedition; and it was to be on a much more extensive scale than the previous one. The many voyages of the Franklin Search during the middle years of the nineteenth century had resulted in the almost complete exploration of the archipelago which lies north of Canada and west of Greenland. Franklin and McClure between them had demonstrated the possibility of taking a ship through the long-sought northwest passage, a feat actually achieved by Amundsen in 1906. Finally, in 1909, Peary had attained the North Pole. These efforts had claimed from the unknown a large sector of the arctic regions. But there still was a considerable area entirely unknown. It lay north of western Canada, Alaska, and Siberia on the opposite side of the globe from that traversed by Peary and others in their search for the Pole. Because of warm ocean currents flowing northward from the Atlantic, which melt away the ice, (and for other reasons) ships may sail, in the vicinity of Spitzbergen and Greenland, within five hundred miles of the North Pole. But on the opposite side, due to the absence of such warm currents, ships are stopped by the ice twelve hundred miles away. For this reason Stefansson believed that the most difficult point to reach in the Arctic, was not the North Pole, but a point about four hundred miles in the direction of Bering Strait.

Sir Clements Markham, a former President of the Royal Geographical Society of London, himself an explorer and an eminent authority on polar exploration, had said: "There is a vast area between Banks and Prince Patrick Islands on the one side, and Siberia on the other, which has been named

Beaufort Sea. Its examination is the great desideratum in Arctic geography. There are reasons for thinking that there may be islands in the Beaufort Sea owing to a great extension of the continental shelf, and there are reasons against this hypothesis. Knowledge of the Arctic regions will remain very incomplete until this area has been discovered and explored." [1] To this task Stefansson had set himself. Consequently, in the sense that ethnology had been the main objective of the previous expedition, geographic exploration would be the chief end of the new one. But he hoped, in addition, to make possible scientific research in many other fields.

In view of the satisfaction expressed by the heads of the American Museum of Natural History, concerning the recent expedition, Stefansson approached them first in connection with the new one. The Museum, however, was already committed to Donald B. MacMillan, who was expecting shortly to sail for the North in search of Peary's "Crocker Land", and on that account Dr. Osborn felt it inadvisable to support at the same time a second Arctic expedition. He suggested that the matter be allowed to rest for a year or two.

Such a delay, however, ill suited the impetuous Stefansson; he rushed off to Washington and laid his plans before Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, Director of the National Geographic Society. Grosvenor was so impressed that he asked him to present his proposal to the Board of Trustees, who very quickly subscribed $22,500. Armed with this promise, Stefansson returned to the Museum and succeeded in persuading the officers to equal the contribution of the National Geographic Society. With such support the expedition was assured.

These negotiations required a great deal of time and attention. Every moment that could be spared from them was devoted to writing and all sorts of clubs and societies wanted to be told about the "Blond Eskimos". Stefansson, however, had time for only a limited number of addresses, chiefly

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(1) Markham, *Life of Sir Leopold McClintock,* John Murray, London, 1909, p. 173.

before scientific bodies. One speech in which he deprecated the efforts of missionaries to Christianize the Eskimos, got him into hot water. He gave full credit to those zealous souls who were spending their lives in an attempt to repair the damage that "civilization" was doing. But he also pointed out the danger of trying to graft suddenly upon a primitive, superstitious people a philosophy developed by others whose experiences and outlook on life were as different from those of the Eskimos as the polar regions are different from the Holy Land.

Meanwhile members of the Faculty of the State University of Iowa had arranged an alumni reunion in honour of the two explorers. They were glad to honour Stefansson as a distinguished alumnus but they were especially proud of Anderson, who was much better known to them. Special invitations were issued by President Bowman, fixing the date for January 10. The affair lasted three days, terminating in a public lecture for which a charge was made. It had been arranged that each should deliver an address, but in view of Anderson's diffidence about public-speaking, and Stefanssons's proficiency, it was finally agreed that Anderson should introduce Stefansson, who would deliver the address. It had been intended that the proceeds should be divided equally between them, but since Stefansson, by means of his magazine articles, was doing very well, he turned the money over to Anderson less only his actual expenses.

The reunion had one result that had not been on the agenda. Anderson renewed acquaintance with a young woman, a former classmate, and they were married shortly afterwards. Anderson took his bride to New York to live in the apartment which he and Stefansson had intended to occupy, but into which Stefansson had never moved. By this time Stefansson had many friends in the city among scientists and explorers to whom he introduced the Andersons. He was especially interested in having them meet his friends Carl Akeley and his wife. Akeley, at that time probably the best known African explorer in addition to being a sculptor and writer, was famous as the taxidermist who had created the remarkable elephant exhibit at the Museum of Natural

History. Mrs. Akeley accompanied him on his African journeys and was an explorer in her own right.

From the beginning, Stefansson had counted on having Anderson as his associate on the new expedition. Stefansson of course, was to be the leader, Anderson, second-in-command. The main purpose was stated to be "the thorough scientific exploration of the unknown Polar region to the north and west of Banks and Prince Patrick Islands, the carrying on of geologic and ethnographic work, and the taking of tidal and other observations on the polar sea outside of Prince Patrick Island." In addition, it was suggested that determination of the coast lines of Prince Patrick and Victoria Islands should be completed; that off-shore journeys should be undertaken northwestward from Banks or Prince Patrick Islands to search for new land, and to carry out tidal and meteorological observations; and that a further study should be made of the people of Victoria Island and the Canadian mainland, visited on the recent expedition.

While this expedition differed from the one just concluded, in that it would be elaborately equipped and would depend almost entirely on supplies carried in from outside, one of its principal objects, in Stefansson's view, was to prove the existence of mammalian life, practically everywhere beneath the floes. If this were so it would make possible the maintenance of exploratory parties on the floating sea ice, much as his parties of the past four years had made their living on land largely by hunting. According to all Eskimos, whalers and explorers this could not be done. Sir Clements Markham, referring to the Beaufort Sea, over which Stefansson proposed to travel on the ice, described it as "the polar ocean without life". But, contrary to these opinions, Stefansson believed that seals could be obtained anywhere under the ice by men who understood the technique of seal hunting; and that by this means both food and fuel might be provided in sufficient quantities to make unnecessary the hauling of additional supplies.

Next to second-in-command the most important officer was a sea-captain, familiar with navigational conditions along the Alaskan and north Canadian coasts. Stefansson knew

most of these, and in his opinion, Captain Theodore Pedersen, was the most suitable in every way. Pedersen was then wintering in San Francisco, and when the position was offered him, readily accepted. Naturally he was the man to select the expedition's main ship; the choice lay between two or three with each of which he was thoroughly familiar; and he finally decided on the *Karluk*.

Stefansson's plans soon became so extensive that the money already subscribed was insufficient to meet the requirements of a four years' stay on such a scale. He therefore again thought of Canada, and early in February went to Toronto to discuss the matter with friends, among whom were Professor James Mavor, Professor of Economics at the University of Toronto, and Dr. C. T. Currelly, Director of the Royal Ontario Museum. Dr. Currelly would have liked his own institution to be associated with the expedition, but funds were not available. He, however, called in Sir Edmund Walker, President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, then chairman of the Museum's board of directors, who had helped with Stefansson's first expedition. Sir Edmund thought that the Canadian Government might be interested, and introduced Stefansson to Sir Edmund Osler, a Toronto MP, influential in the affairs of the political party then in office. Osler accompanied Stefansson to Ottawa, and took him to Mr. R. L. (later Sir Robert) Borden, the Prime Minister, who thought well of the idea, and asked for a written memorandum for presentation to his colleagues in Council.

Some time later Stefansson was notified that the Government would prefer the expedition to sail under its exclusive auspices and was prepared to assume the entire cost if the original sponsors would transfer their interest. This they were glad to do; and on February 22, 1913, an Order-in-Council authorized the expedition as a Canadian Government enterprise. The objects set forth were those already formulated by Stefansson, and it was expressly stated that he should have "full responsibility and have the choice of the men going on the expedition and of the ship, provisions and outfit needed for the trip." While other departments such as Customs, Mines, Fisheries, etc., would be interested in the results, and

were expected to cooperate, general direction was placed in the Department of the Naval Service. The Minister of the Naval Service, was then J. D. Hazen, but the active direction was in the hands of G. J. Desbarats, Deputy Minister, whose conduct of the affairs of the expedition, complicated and involved as they were later to become, cannot be praised too highly.

In 1908 it had been understood that upon Anderson's return from the Arctic he was to join the staff of the American Museum of Natural History. This arrangement had been made on the assumption that the expedition would remain away two years at most. In the interval another man had been taken on the staff, who had so brilliantly made a name for himself, that the position offered Anderson, was no longer available. Realizing this situation, Stefansson went to Ottawa, and discussed with Mr. Brock the possibility of Anderson's appointment to the Geological Survey, which in view of the transfer of the expedition to Canadian control, was easily arranged.

While it was in many respects, a great advantage to have the immense resources of a government behind the expedition, from another point of view it was a disadvantage. It will be remembered that in 1908 Mr. Brock had made a small contribution to the expenses of Stefansson's expedition. This he had done as the thin edge of the wedge, because he had found it easier to get money from the government to *continue* a project already started, than for the initiation of a new one. By letting Stefansson have a few hundred dollars, he had hoped to pave the way for the eventual establishment, as a branch of the Geological Survey, of a Department of Anthropology. This ambition had since been achieved, but there still remained many objectives for which he hardly hoped ever to get money enough. The chance to send a large party into the field under the auspices of the Stefansson expedition seemed too good to be overlooked. Mr. Brock's plans coincided with those already made by Stefansson, who proposed to divide the expedition into two sections, one under his own command, to promote its main purposes — geographical exploration; the other, under Anderson, to carry on scientific work along the north coast of Canada. Stefansson had planned

to include in the personnel a topographer, a geologist, an oceanographer, an ethnologist, and a zoologist; and these would now be supplied by the Geological Survey. But where Stefansson assumed that they would become members of the expedition in the full sense of the term, Mr. Brock and his departmental officers drew their plans as though these men were to constitute an independent party within the larger party. Each man was given specific, personal instructions, and was authorized to report only to his own department head at Ottawa. Anderson, who by now was also a member of the Survey, and, in nominal charge of this section — as second-in-command of the expedition — was in a sense, the servant of those presumably under him. He was charged with the duty of providing them with proper facilities for carrying on their work, but he had no authority to vary or alter the specific instructions which each man had received. Otherwise, his instructions, like those of the other members of his section, related only to his own duties as a zoologist.

This arrangement was unfortunate. The difficulty of serving two masters is proverbial. Yet here was a group of people, members of an Arctic expedition planned and promoted by Stefansson and under his command, but who were at the same time given explicit individual instructions by the superior officers from whom they were accustomed to receive orders. If the members of the Survey were not actually given to understand that their participation in the expedition was merely as passengers, they could scarcely have avoided making such inferences.

Accordingly, by the time all arrangements had been made and final formal instructions delivered to Stefansson, there had come to be *two principal objects*, the first "to explore the Beaufort Sea and other unknown waters in that part of the globe," the second, "to busy itself with scientific work in the extreme northern land of Canada." The *Karluk* would be used to convey the members of both to their respective scenes of operation, and would be chiefly attached to the Northern Section. To serve the Southern Section, arrangements were made to buy the schooner *Alaska*, then at Nome.

Notwithstanding the division of the expedition, it was,

as a whole, expressly declared to be under Stefansson's "personal direction and control"; and he was authorized to "give general directions to the various leaders of parties, as may be required". These instructions seemed to Stefansson to vest him with sufficient authority to carry out the plans agreed upon. But, as was later all too evident, he did not fully appreciate the possibilities inherent in a situation in which the members of an important section of his expedition were to act also upon instructions that did not pass through him.

While these portents were enough to disturb anyone without Stefansson's optimism and inability to anticipate misunderstanding, an even more serious situation was developing in New York. Anderson was becoming disaffected. It is true there had been signs, as far back as 1910, in Anderson's correspondence with the Museum, which might have suggested that he was not entirely satisfied; and in spite of his friendliness after their return, it is evident that he felt he had not been fairly treated. Anderson's marriage had helped to widen the rift. It soon became obvious to some of the friends to whom Stefansson had introduced the Andersons that Mrs Anderson considered Stefansson to be a slick opportunist who was climbing to fame over her husband's shoulders. As evidence of this, Stefansson's lack — in comparison with Anderson — of university degrees was made much of. Stefansson's having given Anderson the proceeds of the Iowa lecture was produced as evidence of his guile; for years Anderson had been considered an outstanding man at the University, where he had spent all his college life, while Stefansson had been there for only a few months. Now by a single stroke Stefansson had brought about a reversal of their positions in the one stronghold of Anderson's reputation. It might be said that this is a far-fetched cause of grievance but when jealousy creeps in reason and judgment usually depart.

Stefansson was busy with the many details of organization and failed to realize the seriousness of Anderson's disaffection, although he had been warned. Recollection of the details of this disaffection would seem petty now. It prompted Stefansson's friends, the Akeleys, to drop the An-

dersons, however, which did not improve matters. Then, toward the end of March Stefansson found it necessary to go to Europe to buy certain equipment and to consult authorities concerning some of the scientific work of the expedition.

By this time the *Karluk* had been brought by Captain Pedersen from San Francisco to the Canadian dockyards at Esquimalt, B. C., where the outfitting was being carried out. In the meantime Anderson had gone to Ottawa in connection with organization plans and from there to Victoria to oversee the outfitting at the Esquimalt Naval Station. While Anderson was in Ottawa his attitude toward expedition matters caused Mr. Desbarats to doubt his fitness for the position as second-in-command, and, fearing future trouble, Desbarats cabled Stefansson questioning the wisdom of continuing him in that post. But Stefansson replied that he had faith in his former companion.

A cable that caused him much more discomfiture at the time contained the news that Pedersen had resigned. This was a serious blow. The chief reason for this action was that Pedersen had been told by some unreliable person that he would have to become a British subject if he continued with the expedition. Peary, whose advice Stefansson now asked, unqualifiedly recommended Captain Robert A. Bartlett, his sailingmaster on three expeditions, who was reputed to be the foremost living ice-navigator. Stefansson had met him in New York and liked him, and therefore had no hesitation in offering him the command of the *Karluk*.

Returning to America late in May, Stefansson proceeded immediately to Ottawa for final conference with the authorities. Mr. Desbarats again brought up the question of Anderson's disaffection, but Stefansson once more assured the Deputy Minister that Anderson was well suited for the position. He pointed out that, besides Bartlett and himself, the only member of the expedition with arctic experience would probably be Anderson; and that on the previous expedition Anderson had demonstrated his capacity to carry out orders in spite of his disbelief in them.

Stefansson left for Victoria about the first of June, where the various members of the expedition, engaged from time

to time by letter or cable, were already gathered. On the train he wrote a long letter to the Minister of the Naval Service, giving at the Minister's request, the expected itinerary of the expedition, and discussing some of the dangers that might be encountered. Refering to the difficulties likely to be met with in getting past Point Barrow, he explained that the presence of ice was governed entirely by the direction of the prevailing wind. Assuming, however, that the *Karluk* should succeed in rounding the point, he said she would "then be compelled to follow the mainland shore closely eastward to Herschel Island". The possibility of the *Karluk's* becoming beset in the ice (after leaving Herschel Island, not before) was mentioned. In such event he thought she would either drift for years across the Arctic or be crushed. If the ship were crushed the party could probably make their way over the ice to Banks Island or Prince Patrick Island, where they would maintain themselves with their rifles. "In the event of nothing being heard from us for a year or more, I want to urge that no great fears for our safety need be entertained," he wrote. "We may, of course, all be gone, but the chances are that we shall all or most of us be safe. I do not therefore see any need for a relief expedition."

CHAPTER IX

LOSS OF THE *KARLUK*

At Victoria, he met for the first time many of the members of the expedition. The party consisted, in addition to Bartlett and Anderson, of Dr. A. Forbes Mackay, surgeon, James Murray, oceanographer, and William Laird McKinlay, magnetician, all of Scotland; Henri Beuchat, anthropologist, France; Diamond Jenness, anthropologist, New Zealand; Frits Johansen, marine biologist, Denmark; Bjarne Mamen, geologist, Norway; Burt McConnell, secretary to Stefansson, United States; George H. Wilkins, photographer, Australia; Kenneth G. Chipman and John R. Cox, topographers, J. J. O'Neill and George Malloch, geologists, all members of the Geological Survey of Canada. Jenness and Beuchat were also attached to the Geological Survey. Murray and Mackay had previously been in the Antarctic with Shackleton.

Stefansson found a certain amount of confusion at Victoria, concerned chiefly with the division of outfit and equipment as between the two sections. Anderson, with fresh memories of the acute food shortages on the previous expedition and the resultant disorganization of his own work owing to the need for frequent long trips in search of supplies, objected that the Southern Section was being unfairly discriminated against in the way of supplies. Stefansson's answer was that the Northern Section would be out of touch with the source of supplies for long periods, while Anderson's section would be working along the mainland, where supplies could be more readily obtained. Nevertheless, he arranged for the purchase of an additional twenty tons of provisions.

Anderson's disaffection had by now developed to the point where he was more or less openly antagonistic. He suspected Stefansson's every move, and seemed incapable of believing that his former comrade was sincere in any plan that did not lead to his own self-glorification. Naturally, the question of their respective jurisdictions came up. All of those who were assigned to the Southern Section were either members of the Geological Survey of some years' standing, or like Anderson had been recently attached to it. To most of them both Stefansson and Anderson were strangers; they were not particularly interested in their quarrel, in which they had no part, but they were concerned, in view of Anderson's allegations, with whether they would be free to carry out the orders they had received from their recognized superiors at Ottawa. On the other hand, they had seen more of Anderson than they had of Stefansson, and as fellow-members of the Survey they were inclined to make common cause with him. They therefore supported Anderson in his demand for a definition of jurisdiction. Stefansson, realizing that the two sections would be separate once the Arctic was reached, assured the members of the Southern Section that they would be under Anderson's sole direction after the two branches had divided at Herschel Island.

The *Karluk* sailed for Nome on June 17, 1913, and that northern mining town was the scene of much excitement and activity when it arrived. There were dogs, Eskimo clothing, sledges and an assortment of stores and equipment to be bought and stowed aboard. Stefansson and Anderson had both joined the *Karluk* at Nome, having come from Seattle by passenger steamer. Stefansson himself attended to the purchase of clothing, and also supervised the selection of dogs and sledging outfits.

With the increased stores and equipment it became impossible to get all on board the two ships. Stefansson accordingly bought the 30-ton, twin-screw, gasoline schooner *Mary Sachs*, and continued her former owner, Captain Peter Bernard, in command. He intended that this boat, after transporting a cargo of supplies to the base of the Southern Section (wherever it should be set up), should be placed at the dis-

posal of James Murray for use in connection with oceanographic and marine geological work, presumably in the region west and south of Banks Island.

It was an imposing flotilla that set sail from Nome. Since Nome has only an open roadstead, the ships put in at Teller, ninety miles farther north, where extensive repairs were made to the *Alaska's* engines; the *Karluk's* boilers were blown down; fresh water was taken aboard, and stores were rearranged. Two weeks were consumed in this, and it was therefore July 27 when the *Karluk* continued northward. The *Alaska's* engines were still giving trouble, and she remained behind a few days longer. Leffingwell, who had taken passage on the *Mary Sachs* at Nome on his way back to Flaxman Island, had offered to share with Bartlett his undoubted navigational knowledge of the Alaskan coast, and had tendered him a map, based on his own surveys, the only accurate one extant, but Bartlett had gruffly declined both offers.

At Point Hope on July 30 the *Karluk* took on some Eskimos and continued up the coast. So far no ice had been seen; but it was with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret that Stefansson caught sight, when Wainwright Lagoon was abeam, of the first white glint — pleasure in the realization that he was once more in the Arctic, and regret that the ice had not held off till the ship was past Point Barrow. For ice means delay and sometimes, in the Arctic, the loss of a few days or a few weeks may easily cost a whole season. That in this case the presence of ice meant delay was soon evident; for within thirty miles of Point Barrow it became so heavy that progress was entirely checked.

Although stationary with respect to the surrounding ice field, ship and floes drifted with the strong current. When about twenty-five miles from Cape Smythe village, Stefansson went ashore over the ice and walked along the beach to the village. As has already been observed, he was more than a little concerned because all the men destined to go north in the *Karluk*, except Bartlett were strangers to the Arctic, and Bartlett was new to the Pacific side, where conditions are different from those in Greenland and Atlantic waters. He

felt that the experience of a man like John Hadley, then at Cape Smythe, who had spent twenty years along the north coast of Alaska, would be extremely valuable, and he engaged Hadley as a member of the expedition. Along with other needed equipment Stefansson bought two umiaks (walrus-skin boats) for use in case the *Karluk* should get crushed. Because they are light and can be carried across the floes from one stretch of open water to another, they are invaluable when travel among the floes is necessary. These purchases loaded on sledges, Stefansson, with a number of newly-hired Eskimos, made his way back across the moving pack to the ship, still drifting towards Point Barrow.

The ice-pressure slackened when the ship was off the point, and once more she was able to proceed under her own power, but the floes again became heavier east of the Colville delta and at Cross Island further progress was entirely blocked. Now was made a most fateful decision, one which was to alter the whole course of the expedition and to bring in its train, disaster, heart burning, and recrimination.

Stefansson had found Bartlett personally congenial; but disinclined to accept advice. The Captain would not believe, for example, that the pack behaves differently along the Alaskan coast from the way it does on the Greenland side of the Arctic. On the north coast of Alaska, east of Barrow, the two prevailing winds are southwest and northeast. The former blows off and the latter on the land, yet it is the southwest wind which, after driving the ice from shore for perhaps ten or twelve hours, eventually brings it back and crushes it against the land; while the northeast wind will open a lane along which ships can proceed between shore and the pack. These things were common knowledge along the coast, all of which Stefansson carefully explained; but Bartlett considered it contrary to reason, and was far from convinced, arguing that a similar superstition, now thoroughly exploded, had formerly kept the Greenland whalers near the land.

Cross Island provides safe shelter for all craft that navigate these waters, and any experienced skipper would have waited for an east wind to open a lane along shore; or

else as is sometimes done might have sounded a course between the grounded ice and the mainland. Stefansson suggested these alternatives to Bartlett and warned him that to go out into the pack would be unsafe, for if a northeast wind should come up it would carry the pack off in a solid body and probably the ship with it. After discussing matters thus with Bartlett, Stefansson went below to sleep, and when he awoke the ship was far out among the floes. It was then that he made his fatal mistake; he should have ordered the ship inshore at once; but he thought there was a possible chance that he and the other men might be wrong and waited to see what would happen. Next morning it was forever too late; the ice had quietly closed in and the ship was caught fast. A few days later a northeast wind carried pack and ship several miles off shore; on August 17, she froze in solidly and never again moved under her own power.

For a month winds and currents carried ship and ice back and forth, till finally she drifted within the line of Harrison Bay, where there seemed a chance she might remain for the winter, with the possibility of release in the spring. There was a need for fresh meat and skins on board, and since the *Karluk* was apparently stationary, Stefansson decided to go ashore to hunt caribou. Bartlett offered to go instead, but Stefansson decided against this because he was familiar with the region adjacent to that coast and Bartlett was not. He took with him, Jenness, who might thus early begin his ethnological studies, and Wilkins, because he seemed to be the most likely of those on board to prove adaptable to Arctic life. The subsequent career, both in the Arctic and Antarctic, of Sir Hubert Wilkins, as he later became, eloquently attests the soundness of Stefansson's judgment.

The second day after leaving the *Karluk,* they landed on an island about half way to the mainland. The following day a violent storm came up and from an observation-tower they had constructed of driftwood, they caught between snow squalls occasional glimpses of the ship and were amazed to observe that she was moving eastward, apparently against the wind. Next day, when the weather cleared, she was no longer in sight, and they never saw her again.

Stefansson has been criticized by those either ignorant of the facts or blindly prejudiced for having left the ship at this time. Certainly, in the light of his subsequent exploits, no one can fairly impugn his courage. Even were it not for the fact that all his personal effects remained behind in the ship there is no reason to doubt that he expected to return in due course. Fully equipped as she was, the *Karluk* would have provided a much more satisfactory base for the exploratory party that he was later to organize. It is more than likely that had he remained on board there might have been little or no tragedy in connection with the ship's eventual sinking, but he can scarcely be expected to have foreseen what the future had in store.

The storm had smashed the young ice that covered the lane between the island and the shore; but after several days new ice had formed strong enough to bear them, and on this they crossed to the mainland. Hunting caribou was of little value now that the *Karluk* had gone, and they set out for Point Barrow, making inquiries of natives along the way; but except for one or two doubtful rumours that a ship had been sighted far out among the floes, no news of the *Karluk* was reported. At Cape Smythe they learned that word had come from the east that the *Alaska* and the *Mary Sachs,* thanks to their having followed a more cautious course, were both safe at Collinson Point, about two hundred miles east of Point Barrow.

The loss of the *Karluk* and her staff and equipment — so far at least as her present usefulness was concerned — was a severe blow to Stefansson; with her went all the plans he had so enthusiastically made and so perseveringly promoted. For a time he was depressed, although by no means defeated, but before long he had determined to make the most of things as they were and to plan accordingly. The men on the *Karluk,* he reasoned, were safe; they had skin boats, they had the best sledges and the best dogs, they had plenty of provisions; and whether drifting in the ship frozen fast in the ice, on the ice after its sinking, or forced by open water to take to the boats — not likely till spring — they were with reasonably efficient management and, with luck, quite as safe as any-

where else in the Arctic. In spite of the *Karluk's* misadventure, he believed it would be possible to carry out the main purpose of the expedition, in so far as exploration of the ocean north of Alaska and west of the already known Canadian islands was concerned. Soundings could be made and other geographic and oceanographic work undertaken by parties sledging over the ice. One of his principal objectives, since the expedition was first proposed, was to demonstrate that life exists practically everywhere under the ice, and that men who know how to kill seals can travel at will over the floes, independent of outside sources of food. His plans now centred about such a program for early in the coming spring.

Although he felt sure that the Southern Section would eventually add to his laurels, it had always occupied a secondary place in his mind, particularly since it had become dominated to so great an extent by the Geological Survey. His heart had really been with the Northern Section, but now that it might largely fail of its purpose, and, in addition entail a considerable financial loss upon the Government, he felt that it behooved him to see that the Southern Section should accomplish even more than had previously been planned. The original program had been drawn with Coronation Gulf and Victoria Island in view; but now that an unforeseen winter must be spent on the Alaskan coast, Stefansson formulated a plan which contemplated a topographical survey of the coast from the International Boundary eastward, and a sounding of the Mackenzie delta channels. Collinson Point is two hundred miles west of the Mackenzie, but to Stefansson this was no distance at all.

He is temperamentally opposed to seeing men sit around a camp in idleness waiting for spring, when, in his opinion, they can do better work while everything is frozen tight. Activity also means better health and less likelihood of bickerings and misunderstanding. Previously, when the question of jurisdiction had come up at Victoria and at Nome, he had been willing to appear to concede the point that his control over the movements of members of the Southern Section should cease when the division of the parties was

made; but now that this section might comprise all that was left of his expedition he was not so disposed to be complaisant.

Therefore, in a long report to the Government, he outlined these supplementary plans as well as those he had formulated for himself. The report went out by dog-team in November, and reached Ottawa in February, but Mr. Desbarats's reply did not arrive till long after he had proceeded to put his plans into effect. The Minister approved of the proposed northern exploration program, but said that after consultation with Mr. Brock it had been decided that the Southern Section must not be broken up to constitute a new northern party. He suggested that local men, supplies, and equipment might be secured. Disposition of ships was left to Stefansson's discretion, except for the stipulation that the work of the Southern Section should not thereby be hampered or jeopardized.

CHAPTER X

FRIENDS FALL OUT

Leaving Jenness to study the Eskimos, Stefansson accompanied by Wilkins and McConnell, travelled eastward towards Collinson Point. At Flaxman Island, Leffingwell gave him a preliminary report on conditions at the base camp. What was of much greater value and importance, Leffingwell contributed the sounding machine and a supply of wire which he and Mikkelsen had used on their ice journey in 1907. Arriving at Collinson Point on December 14, Stefansson found the party living in a large log cabin built some time before by a trader; Kenneth Chipman, one of the topographers was in charge. Anderson had gone to Herschel Island to get letters and dispatches into the hands of the Mounted Police to go out with the Macpherson-Dawson patrol in January.

Stefansson soon became aware that he was not entirely welcome; and when he asked a member of the staff for the reason was told that he was not unwelcome so far as he himself was concerned, but it was feared that now the *Karluk* was gone, he would attempt to interfere with the work they had planned, and in which they were most interested. When he suggested that he would require scientific equipment, he was reminded that they were members of the Geological Survey of Canada; that their equipment had been supplied to enable them to perform definitely specified work; and that they therefore could not, even if they wished, divert it from its original purposes. He was, however, promised a sextant and a watch-chronometer, which they could spare.

Realizing that an understanding must be reached with Anderson, Stefansson continued eastward; but on meeting him at the trapping camp of J. R. Crawford, engineer of the

Mary Sachs, about twenty miles east of Collinson Point, he found Anderson even harder to deal with than the members of his staff. When Stefansson announced the plans which he proposed for the winter's work, Anderson declared himself absolutely opposed. He protested that the Mackenzie delta was too far away from their base to permit of effective work; that their equipment was not adequate; and that the proposed program was contrary to their instructions. Vainly did Stefansson argue that the program covered by their instructions had been drafted in consultation with him, and as leader he could, if he saw fit, amend or alter it.

Anderson insisted that to incur additional expenses for this work, the value of which he was unwilling to admit, would be a waste of government money; and finally tendered his resignation as second-in-command, offering, however, to continue as a scientist on the staff. Stefansson declined to accept Anderson's resignation, pointing out to him that if he were to be placed under Chipman, a younger and much less experienced man, an untenable situation would result. Anderson then suggested that Stefansson himself stay and take local command, but this Stefansson would not consider. He was determined to go north over the ice in an attempt to fulfil the geographic purposes of the expedition. Exploration of the Beaufort Sea, he reiterated, had always been the main objective and the chief reason that there was an expedition at all. This had applied from the earliest stage when it was under American auspices, and was so when he had discussed plans with Sir Robert Borden. He felt that his would be the blame if the expedition failed; and that he was therefore justified in his insistence on the adoption of whatever plan he thought most likely to bring success. Anderson said he did not believe it possible to explore the Beaufort Sea with any resources that could be obtained in Alaska, and that such an attempt must inevitably fail, resulting only in the expenditure of money, the waste of supplies, and probably the loss of lives, without any adequate results. This brought up the already disputed question whether an exploring party can live by forage on the ice of the polar sea; Stefansson had full faith in that method and Anderson had none.

Trusting that, on thinking matters over, Anderson would come round to a different point of view, Stefansson continued towards Herschel Island. On the way he stopped to visit a party of hunters wintering in the schooner, *Polar Bear*. Captain Louis Lane, owner of the ship, had gone out after the freeze-up by way of the Yukon. Stefansson spent Christmas with his friends Captain and Mrs. Cottle, wintering in the steam whaler *Belvedere*. The Captain promised to sell him supplies and to give whatever other assistance was possible. Farther eastward Stefansson came to the trading station of "Duffy" O'Connor, whose entire outfit he bought. A few miles beyond, was Martin Andreasen's trading station, and his outfit, also, Stefansson bought. Andreasen owned a small gasoline schooner the *North Star*, built purposely to navigate the narrow channels between the ice pack and the shore. Drawing only four feet, two inches, she was equipped with a centre board that could be drawn up into a slot; her bottom was almost flat — and her bow was so constructed that, if surrounded by heavy ice, she could be run half-way out of the water onto a sloping edge of the floe and then, with tackle, hauled right out. He bought the *North Star*, too, and with the supplies already secured, felt that the expedition was now fully equipped to carry out not only his new northern plans, but the enlarged program that he envisaged for the Southern Section.

He reached Herschel Island just before the New Year. The police detachment was in charge of Inspector J. W. Phillips, who was about to leave in a day or two for Fort Macpherson. Phillips invited Stefansson to accompany him. The second day out they overtook Storkerson, whom Stefansson was overjoyed to meet again. One object of his trip had been, if possible, to engage Storkerson for the proposed ice journey. A good-natured Norwegian with a liking for adventure, and possessed of more than the average sailor's imagination, Storkerson was, so Stefansson felt, an ideal man for his purpose. Since he had first come to the Arctic in 1906 as Mate of the *Duchess of Bedford*, he had been living at various points along the Alaskan coast, engaged mainly in whaling and trapping. Trapping had not been very profitable

that winter, and he readily accepted Stefansson's offer, making immediate preparations to proceed to Collinson Point to begin arrangements for the ice journey.

Stefansson's plans, as finally drafted in consultation with Storkerson, were set forth in a letter to Anderson: The base was to be at Martin Point, about forty miles east of Collinson Point. Anderson was asked to follow, in general, Storkerson's advice about the outfitting; but, in order not to interfere with the existing routine, it was suggested that Chipman or someone else might be put in direct charge of the work. Certain details of the preparations were specified; tents to be of silk or burberry, the sounding machine to be overhauled by the marine biologist, Johansen; watches bought for use as pocket chronometers, and any others which the topographers could spare from their outfit, to be carefully rated. Storkerson was to be given the use of several dog teams and the men to handle them; supplies were to be hauled from Collinson Point to Martin Point and from the *Belvedere* and the *Polar Bear*. Everything was to be ready for a start from Martin Point by the first of March.

Stefansson spent a short time at Fort Macpherson, writing reports and attending to personal correspondence; and on the return journey had travelled about fifteen miles west of Herschel Island when he met several sledges going eastward. As soon as he saw them, he realized that his orders were not being obeyed; Captain Bernard, who drove one of them, should have been employed at Martin Point, getting things ready for the ice trip. J. J. O'Neill, geologist, who was in charge, carried a letter from Anderson, which Stefansson read as he walked back with O'Neill to Herschel Island. It bore unmistakable evidences of having been composed in the heat of passion. Anderson had decided not to carry out instructions which he considered contrary to those received by him from his department chiefs at Ottawa. He said that taking supplies intended for the use of the Southern Section would interfere with the work it was organized to do and was in effect a criminal misappropriation of government property. He considered himself, on that account, justified in preventing Stefansson from using any supplies at Collinson

Point or in transit on the *Belvedere;* and asked him to proceed as soon as possible to Collinson Point for a conference. Stefansson discovered that O'Neill was no more in agreement with him than any of the others, but O'Neill did let him have a 24-hour Waltham chronometer which was of crucial importance, for Stefansson was short of reliable chronometers.

Meanwhile word of the dispute had sped up and down the coast; it was the topic of conversation in every trader's, trapper's and Eskimo's hut; and all sorts of rumours were about. On the way to Collinson Point, Stefansson learned from Martin Andreasen that someone had told him of the disagreement, and had warned him that the Government would repudiate his undertakings; if he sold the *North Star* he would have to "whistle for his money". Andreasen said, however, that he would take the chance. For one thing, he believed the draft to be good, and for another he could see that Stefansson's plans would be seriously handicapped without the *North Star,* and he was sufficiently interested in the project to take some risk to see it successful. Stefansson received there a letter from Captain Cottle, informing him that he, also, had been warned that the Government would not honour Stefansson's drafts, and that attempts had been made to dissuade his men from joining the expedition. The Captain had assured his men, he wrote, that should Stefansson require their services he himself would pay any bills that Stefansson might not be able to pay. He wrote further that he had urged O'Connor to stick to his bargain but, next day, when Stefansson arrived at O'Connor's he found him so influenced by rumours and by representations made by various persons, that he demanded an increased price as compensation for the extra risk. To this Stefansson was forced to agree. Feeling ran high at the *Polar Bear,* where four members volunteered to go over the ice if Stefansson should need them.

At Crawford's camp he met Storkerson who confirmed much of what he had already learned. Although several dog teams had been standing idle, he had been refused them for use in getting ready for the ice work. Natives who were willing to help had been discouraged from doing so. No

preparations for the trip had been made at Collinson Point, except that Chipman was rating some watches purchased from Andreasen, and Johansen had overhauled the sounding machine secured from Leffingwell. Storkerson, with some men from the *Belvedere* and Eskimos he had hired, harnessed themselves to the sledges. That they were compelled to do this while several teams of dogs were idle had its effect on the Eskimos in undermining Stefansson's credit, for from this they assumed that he was no longer in control of the equipment or supplies of the expedition.

Stefansson reached Collinson Point on March 8, and that evening the two former comrades fought out their wordy battle. For two hours ground was gone over that had been covered time and time again, Stefansson insisting that the principal purposes of the expedition could still be achieved, Anderson contending that the program of the Southern Section must go forward as planned at Ottawa, and that he was the proper one to decide how this should be done.

An understanding was finally reached by which Anderson agreed not to place further obstacles in the way of the projected northern exploration, if Stefansson would sign a statement guaranteeing, in effect, that the Southern Section should be allowed to proceed in accordance with the original plans — including the enlarged program formulated by Stefansson after the loss of the *Karluk* — and that none of its personnel or equipment should be diverted for other purposes.

Stefansson had been placed in an anomalous position from the moment the Geological Survey had become associated with the expedition. Sir Robert Borden and other heads of the Government and Mr. Desbarats undoubtedly recognized him as the commander-in-chief; and his instructions — contained, furthermore, in an Order-in-Council — were worded accordingly; but the Southern Section members had from the first considered themselves an autonomous unit, working under special orders from Ottawa. As it so happened, they were correct in their assertion that none of the personnel or essential equipment must be diverted from the purposes of the Survey program, as was later shown by Mr. Desbarats' letter (drafted in collaboration with Mr. Brock). They knew,

even better than Stefansson, what was in the minds of their immediate superiors. Nevertheless, even in spite of these inherent sources of trouble, matters might have been settled more easily if the personal element had not bulked so largely.

Stefansson was, without question, the organizer and commander of the expedition. If the things that Anderson said of him at Collinson Point, and, for that matter, almost from the inception of the expedition, were even approximately true, he should never have accepted the position of second-in-command; but having done so, even though in the meantime he had become a member of the Canadian Civil Service, he did owe loyalty and respect to his commander.

CHAPTER XI

NORTHWARD OVER THE ICE

Stefansson's plans, as finally drafted, provided for two men, besides himself, with one team of six dogs, to travel northward over the ice from Martin Point, roughly following the 143rd meridian, to about 76°, N. latitude. In the event of a considerable westerly drift, a return to Alaska would be made along a course farther west — which would probably mean a landing somewhere between the original point of departure and Point Barrow. If land were discovered, it would be mapped and explored and, if extensive, occupied for possibly a year. But if no appreciable westerly drift were encountered and no land was found, they would, after advancing as far north as practicable in the face of approaching summer, turn eastward and attempt to go ashore upon Prince Patrick Island, or perhaps Banks Island.

When summer arrived, Wilkins, in the *North Star,* would proceed eastward to the vicinity of Cape Bathurst and then north to Cape Kellett, at the southwestern angle of Banks Island. That far the Beaufort Sea might be free of ice; but beyond that only a vessel of such light draft as the *North Star* with her ability to worm a way along the narrow lane of open water between floe and shore, could normally hope to advance. From Kellett, Wilkins would continue northward to Norway Island, near the northwestern corner of Banks Island, and if no evidence of Stefansson's landing were found there, would go on to Prince Patrick Island. Although both Bernard and Wilkins had signified their willingness to go with him, and he knew that McConnell could also be counted upon, Stefansson finally decided that the ice party should consist, in addition to himself, of

Storkerson and Aarnout Castel, a young sailor from the *Belvedere,* whom he had known for some years to be a capable and reliable man. As a member of the expedition, but only with the immediate view of his serving on the support party, Stefansson engaged Ole Andreasen — a brother of Martin Andreasen.

The start from Martin Point was made on March 22, 1914. The tag-end of a three-day gale still raged, but the weather was mild — too mild to suit Stefansson, for he feared it would result in more than the usual amount of open water. Friends from the *Belvedere* and the *Polar Bear* were on hand to wish him success; but, with the exception of those constituting the support party, no one was present from Collinson Point.

They had four dog teams, Bernard driving seven dogs with a load of 1,020 pounds; Wilkins, seven dogs and 789 pounds; Castel five dogs and 644 pounds; and Storkerson, six dogs and 960 pounds. Stefansson, in advance, picked out the course, while Andreasen, and Johansen held themselves in readiness to assist any sledge that might get stuck or overturned. It was intended that Wilkins, Bernard, Andreasen, and Johansen, acting as a support party, should return at the end of the first fifty miles.

Ocean ice does not freeze to a greater thickness than about seven or eight feet, but the pressure exerted by wind, current and tides forces it into huge jagged heaps sometimes thirty or forty feet above the water line. The surface is therefore rarely smooth or level, but consists of these pressure-ridges interspersed with immense hummocks composed of large blocks or slabs of ice that have been thrust one on top of the other. Leads of open water or of newly formed ice, of varying widths, caused by the action of currents or tides, break the larger masses into smaller. Travelling, therefore, over such a surface is a difficult matter, usually much more so in the vicinity of land. Sometimes hours must be spent with pick-axes hewing a path for dogs and sledges; other times, the men must themselves get into harness to help pull the loads over steep pressure-ridges. Then perhaps a lane of open water will be encountered, blocking the path. Hours or days, depending upon the coldness of the weather, are thus lost

while new ice is forming of sufficient strength to bear the loads, or for the leads to close by the drifting together of floes.

For the first few miles the course was over land-fast ice, but after travelling about six miles, they came to a zone of "mush-ice" caused by the grinding of the moving sea pack against the shore ice. Here, the following morning, McConnell, hurrying from Collinson Point, overtook them in camp. He gives a good description of the impact of the sea against the land-fast floe:

"It was a magnificent and awe-inspiring sight that met our eyes. The whole field on the other side was in motion to the eastward and often would come in contact with the floe on which we stood. Then the rending and tearing and crushing of the floe was almost deafening and pieces of ice larger than an ordinary house would be tumbled about like corks in the water. The opposite floe would come tearing along at a speed of over a mile an hour and when it encountered the land-fast ice something was sure to happen. Bridges thirty feet high and more would be formed one moment and tumble back into the sea the next as the pressure from the moving field was abated."

Stefansson hoped the temperature would drop enough during the night to solidify the mush-ice, but the weather remained comparatively mild. In spite, therefore, of the manifest danger, they ventured out upon this broken and moving field, zigzagging from cake to cake wherever one happened to touch another. They had gone only about a mile and a half when Captain Bernard's sledge, in the lead, suddenly dropped forward over an irregularity in the ice. Holding onto the handlebars, the Captain was pulled over headlong with the sledge, striking his forehead with such force that the skin was cut clear to the bone from temple to temple, a flap of it hanging down over his eyes. A tent was hastily put up and immediate attention given to the injury. As Bernard obviously could not continue in the circumstances, the sledge was unloaded, and on it he was hauled ashore, where McConnell stitched the wound. Bernard's place was taken by Crawford, who had arrived that morning with McConnell.

When, after this accident, Stefansson got back to where the other sledges had been left, he decided to defer the advance till the frost should have had a chance to weld the badly broken ice. And now, waiting day after day, while the weather continued exasperatingly mild, he realized to the full the folly of the weeks that were lost. For ten days, still in sight of land, they waited impatiently for colder weather. Meanwhile, one of the two kerosene tanks had sprung a leak, and Stefansson sent Wilkins and Castel ashore for a further supply of kerosene and to take back certain unneeded equipment, as well as some meat of seals that had been killed. That night a terrific gale sprang up. All night it raged; and next day Stefansson discovered that the ice upon which they were camped, land-fast all winter, was adrift. When, later on, the haze cleared it was seen, by the peaks of the Endicott mountains, that they were not only twenty miles from shore but forty miles farther east than before the storm. Their floe was now attached to the heavy pack; and consequently, two days later, they were able to make a new start. The going was extremely rough and travel was slow and laborious, but on April 6 they arrived at the edge of the continental shelf. During all this numerous seals were seen, some of which were killed, and also a polar bear.

At this point Stefansson decided to send back the support party. And it was here, fifty miles from land, that the historic ice-journey really began. On April 7, at 70° 13′, N., latitude, and 140° 30′, W. longitude, Crawford, Johansen and McConnell, with two dog teams and full rations for thirty-one days, turned back. They took with them a letter for Anderson, containing final instructions which were largely a repetition of those issued before leaving: the *North Star,* under command of Wilkins, was to proceed as early as possible to Cape Alfred, or farther north to Prince Patrick Island; and the *Mary Sachs,* after having landed equipment for the Southern Section somewhere in the vicinity of Dolphin and Union Strait, was to bring a cargo of supplies from Herschel Island to Cape Kellett — or, if conditions were favourable, to Cape Alfred or Norway Island, and establish there a permanent base.

Castel's unavoidable separation from the party, was a serious disappointment to Stefansson, and he chose Ole Andreasen in his place. Experience in the Arctic was a factor in the selection, but also there was the question of temperament. The following anecdote which Stefansson relates concerning his first meeting with Ole gives a good picture of him:

"I found him in a trapping camp alone, where he told me he had been alone all winter. I remember asking him then whether he did not find it lonesome. He replied that there was no reason why he should. There was always something happening; sometimes the weather would be so bad that he could not go outdoors, and being housebound constituted a sort of adventure; another day the weather was exceptionally good and then he could go out and visit his traps, sometimes finding them full and other times empty. There must be something wrong, he thought, with anyone who hankered for more variety than that. But even to this was added a monthly visit from his brother who came with a fast dog team from the winter base of the *Star* twenty or thirty miles away, and who usually stayed two or three hours, returning home at night. 'And then,' Ole said, 'there is scarcely a month some Eskimo does not come and sometimes they stay overnight'."[1]

As Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Storker Storkerson, and Ole Andreasen, all of the Viking strain, set off on that 7th of April, of the fateful year 1914, into the unknown on a journey which, in the opinion of all explorers, whalers and Eskimos, was suicidal, they had a team of six of the best dogs that Stefansson could secure and a 208 pound sledge carrying food and equipment weighing 1,236 pounds. The food consisted mainly of pemmican, bacon, sugar, rice, peameal, malted milk and chocolate — full rations for thirty days. Dog feed for forty days, consisted of dried fish and oatmeal and lard. More important, as Stefansson viewed it, were the two rifles and ammunition for both: — Stefansson's Gibbs-Mannlicher-Schoenauer 6.5 millimetre rifle with 170 rounds of ammunition, and a Winchester 30.30 carbine with 160 rounds. The

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(1) Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic*, Macmillan, New York, 1921, p. 250.

scientific equipment consisted of two sextants and the necessary tables for computing latitude and longitude, two thermometers, an aneroid barometer, several prismatic compasses, and the sounding machine, including several leads and about 4,000 metres of line, which had been obtained from Leffingwell. The time was kept by an ordinary watch and by a Waltham astronomical chronometer. The dial of the latter was numbered to twenty-four hours instead of twelve, a great convenience when there is thick, foggy weather for days on end, and it is difficult to tell whether the time is twelve o'clock noon or midnight. In addition, the outfit consisted of a primus stove and six gallons of kerosene, a camera, photographic supplies, diaries, and a considerable amount of spare clothing.

During the first few days after departure of the support party, progress was slow because of open water and mild weather. On the 9th there was a terrific gale, which crushed the ice into pressure-ridges on all sides. A snow wall was built on the windward side of the tent, and they crawled into their sleeping bags, trusting to luck that an up-ended ice cake would not topple down upon them or a crack open beneath their camp.

"As we had chosen the best available spot and one could not see ten yards anyhow we lay quietly in the tent, but with our clothes partly on," he wrote in his diary next day. "Stork. kept his all on and A. and I took off our boots and coasts only. At about 4 a.m. I heard the ice move nearer than usual and as St. was dressed I asked him to go out. Just then the dogs started howling and when he got out it proved that a crack had formed twelve feet from the back side of our tent and the far end of the dogs' tie-line was fast on the other side of the crack. The dog that would have fallen into the water had managed to break his chain and another was about to fall in. A new pressure ridge had also formed 25 feet from the back of our tent, about 15 ft. high, some of the blocks huge. To within 4 ft. of the tent the ice had tilted down and water had flowed into it. The other side of us there had been movement too. Our trail of last night is broken by pressure-ridges every few yards, and the lane we crossed last . . . which was half a

mile away is now represented by a pressure-ridge less than 300 yds. away — which shows to what extent the ice had buckled. It was scarce more than luck that nothing happened to us, although we did choose the best place near. It would have been unpleasant to be tumbled out among toppling ice blocks and water in a dark night with the howling blizzard — a howling one, if ever the word fitted." Most people will agree with Stefansson that such a situation would indeed have been "unpleasant".

Two days later the temperature had dropped and the ice motion had so subsided that they were able to make thirteen miles in a day's travel. Each day thereafter, as their distance from land increased and the ice became less rough, they lengthened their mileage till eventually they were making from twenty to twenty-five miles a day. Every ten or fifteen miles they encountered leads, generally running east and west but by following them for a mile or so, they were usually able to find places where floes came together, thus allowing them to cross from one to the other. In many of these leads they took soundings. Their sounding machine was originally equipped with 911 metres of braided wire and something over 3000 metres of piano wire, but the latter broke off so fast that they were soon unable to take deeper soundings than 1,386 metres.

Storkerson and Ole, at the outset, had required very little persuasion to undertake the ice-trip, but they had really never been quite convinced that it would be much more than a foray out among the floes and a return to Alaska. Now when they came to realize that Stefansson was fully determined to continue as far north as possible they began to feel that the risks of such travel, particularly when undertaken in the service of a Government well able to pay, should not be run for merely nominal wages. They accordingly complained to Stefansson who finally promised to reward them each at the rate of twenty-five cents for every mile, dead-reckoning, which they should make up to 71°, between 71° and 72° they were to get fifty cents; and between 72° and 73° seventy-five cents, a mile.

While the weather remained mild they slept in a tent; but

on April 15 conditions became favourable for the building of a snow house; and there on the floating arctic ice, a hundred miles from shore, Stefansson for the first time, built a snow house unaided by Eskimos. The next day they did not travel; Stefansson was troubled with partial snow blindness in one eye. Since there was still a supply of food on the sledge; it was not necessary to delay the journey to hunt seals; but naturally the question whether there was indeed life in the ocean popularly supposed to be without life, was uppermost in Stefansson's mind; and the time when that momentous question must be answered drew daily nearer. By April 20, it was abundantly clear that they were in a region of game scarcity. Polar bear tracks had become increasingly rare; and the characteristic scars in the ice caused by seals coming to the surface before the ice is firm were seen much less frequently. Was this just a local condition or would it continue indefinitely? A theory may appear very plausible before it is put to the test, particularly if the consequences of its failure are not serious; but out here where they would soon be foodless and beyond the possibility of returning to shore, Stefansson found more than one traitorous doubt stealing unbidden into his mind.

On April 25, because of the water on top of the ice, they changed from day to night travelling. On that date, also, they came to an important decision: instead of continuing due northward, they would head eastward toward Cape Alfred. Had the season been two weeks earlier, they might easily have gone two degrees farther north and then turned eastward to Prince Patrick Island, in accordance with the original plan. But the approach of summer made it imperative that they get ashore as soon as possible. At this time, rations for fifteen days, and dog feed and fuel for ten days still remained on the sledges. Storkerson and Ole now became dissatisfied with the reward basis agreed upon and Stefansson was forced to promise them a flat twenty-five dollars a day till they should connect with a ship. "These terms seemed — and are — exorbitant," he wrote in his diary, "but I think I shall be wise to accept them because we are doing the soundings which no ship of ours may be able to do for ice and are really

accomplishing, the three of us, a share of the main purpose of an expensive expedition."

Their course was now roughly northeast. The fish for dog feed gave out on May 1. From then on while it lasted or until a bear or seal were killed the dogs would share the fast-diminishing pemmican of their masters. "Our dogs have probably done better work than any dogs used in polar exploration, especially in view of the little feed they get," Stefansson wrote. The night of May 2 the sun did not set, nor thereafter while they remained on the ice. "Our grub is naturally giving out," he wrote on May 4. "We had at the start 18 pounds of peameal and ate the last meal of it yesterday. In our opinion 1 pound of peameal goes farther than two pounds of pemmican, besides being more agreeable to eat. After a breakfast of pea soup we are never thirsty; but after tea and pemmican we are usually very thirsty before night." On May 7 they saw the first seal since leaving the vicinity of the Alaskan coast. Stefansson sighted it through his binoculars, but it was in mush ice and could not be secured. Actual sight of it, however, gave him a thrill of triumph. He had never really doubted that seals would be obtainable practically everywhere, but proof is a great aid to conviction. A sounding gave 1386 metres and no bottom, which disproved the theory generally held that seals were not to be found in water deeper than 200 fathoms. On the 13th they killed two seals, both of which sank.

By May 15 they were on short rations, with travel becoming much more difficult owing to frequent leads and much soft ice. Stefansson now decided that even though time was precious they must, no matter how long it might take, devote all their energies to getting a seal. A seal safely landed on the ice had become the symbol of success. During the first three or four hours two seals came up within two hundred yards and Stefansson shot them — but both sank. An hour or two later he shot another, — and it floated! Full rations were available again that night and — further encouragement — they saw the first bear tracks in two weeks.

The question of food having become of secondary importance, their next endeavour was to reach land before the

leads became too many and too wide. On May 20 they tried out the sledge-boat plan devised years before by Leffingwell and Mikkelsen. The lead was about half a mile across. Spreading the tarpaulin on the ice, they unloaded the sledge and placed it in the middle of the tarpaulin; then two six-foot sticks, carried for the purpose, were tied crosswise of the sledge, one near the front the other near the back. Between the extremities of these crosspieces a ski was fastened on each side. This made a frame fourteen feet long with a six foot beam. When the tarpaulin was securely lashed to the frame the result was a boat capable of carrying a thousand pounds. Two hours were usually required to construct the boat, paddle across a lead of average width and get started again on the other side. Since the tarpaulin had been originally well soaked in lard, the water did not penetrate into the mesh of the canvas, and any ice that had formed on its surface was readily removed by beating with a stick. Of course this method was not used in extremely cold weather; then they would wait for the lead to freeze over.

May 24 found them marooned on an island of ice with apparently many miles of open water ahead, and with wide leads on all other sides. Their floe was about four or five miles square and consisted of heavy old ice; even though unable to travel much except at the whim of wind and current, they were perfectly safe. During the next few days five polar bears, one after another, walked into camp, each to add its quota to the more than abundant stores of food. It was either the bears' lives or the dogs', and for this reason they were killed.

Now the soundings began to find bottom. On May 27 the depth was 962 metres, and the following day 1,142 because the drift was westerly. The chances seemed, however, more than even that they might be compelled to spend the summer on their floating island; but on June 5 heavy floes came bearing down from the eastward, eventually reducing the area of open water ahead to a lead not more than half a mile in width. By the time they had rigged up the sledge-boat, and had ferried their outfit (become bulky with polar-bear meat) across, the lead had widened to a mile or more and a breeze

had sprung up which added a decided note of peril to their crossing.

When uniformly clouded over the sky reflects everything below it, becoming what Stefansson calls a "cloud map". Open water, shown by a black reflection in the sky, is referred to as "water sky", while the presence of ice is indicated by a shimmering whiteness, known to arctic travellers as "ice blink". Good use was now made of these phenomena in setting the course, but there was much more water sky than ice blink.

Frequent soundings were taken; and their position was defined every clear day, as had been the custom from the first, by careful astronomical observations. But it became evident that although the course was about northeast and they were travelling about ten miles a day, the current was actually carrying them much faster southeastward. By June 15 the depth had decreased to 350 metres and land birds — snow buntings and jaegers — were sighted. A week later the soundings had come down to about 50 metres. That day — June 22 — just three months from the day they had set off from Martin Point, Stefansson noticed ahead a uniform dark line, which he took to be snow-free land, and the following morning undoubted land in the form of three hills was in plain sight. Although this was to the eastward, Stefansson's diary records it as lying "north, 17° west", which gives some indication of the variation from true north of the magnetic compass at that particular point.

They landed at 8:10 in the evening of June 25, ninety-six days out from the Alaskan coast. "Our success, although less than half it would have been with a start two weeks earlier (so it looks now) has been greater than we had any reason to hope for on March 22 when we left Martin Point," Stefansson wrote in his diary. "We have carried a line of soundings of over 4,500 feet through four degrees of latitude and nineteen degrees of longitude, most of it unexplored and all of it unsounded. We have determined the continental shelf off Alaska and off Banks Island, and have learned something of the currents of the Beaufort Sea — most of this contrary to what men 'knew' before. This summer we may be able to do some

further useful work in geography, geology, and archaeology. Next winter (if the *Star* and *Sachs* are able to follow my instructions) we can, with our greater experience and better base, hope for a more successful year. Counting on them, I now plan two trips; one northwest from Cape Alfred, and then north and then east to the north end of Prince Patrick Island or Melville Island. The most promising and interesting ice trip that I can see, however, would be to go north from, say, Cape Halkett in Alaska in February to 77 or 78 and then east to Prince Patrick Island. That is a trip I hope sometime to make."

Bearded, grimy with soot, and bedraggled from much wading when they reached land after their three months on the sea ice, they would not have been recognized by their closest friends. Although three blond Scandinavians, they could easily have passed for African aborigines. Their cooking, since seals had become plentiful, had been done over a blubber fire kindled in an improvised stove. Burnt in a properly-tended Eskimo lamp, seal blubber gives off no smoke, but in the way they were burning it, a dense smoke was produced which coated everything with lampblack.

In a diary entry Stefansson pays tribute to his companions: "Storkerson and Andreasen are as well suited for this work as it is easy to imagine — Andreasen especially. Neither of them worries or whines and both are optimistic about the prospects. This last is important. Travelling with an empty sled and living off the country is no work for a pessimist." And writing later he amplifies this tribute: "The longer the time that intervenes the more my feeling of gratitude to these men and my appreciation of them has grown. Those who have gone through a difficult experience anywhere will know that nothing more could be said, after all than this: that if I had a similar trip to make over again, I could not imagine any companions I should prefer to Storkerson and Ole."

They landed on Norway Island, which was not where it was marked nor as large as the chart led them to expect. Owing to their desire to get ashore quickly, they had not stopped to kill seals, and consequently had only food enough

left when they landed to do for a partial meal. But the island was thronged with wild fowl, and on the beach they saw tracks of caribou. Leaving Storkerson and Ole to erect the first land-camp, Stefansson set forth to hunt. On reaching the crest of the hills a mile from the beach, he found that the eastern shore was only about three miles distant, separated from what he took to be the mainland by an ice-covered strait. With his glasses he carefully searched the island but found no caribou. Then, in the same systematic manner, he began to inspect the sloping hills of the land beyond the strait. This methodical search for game was typical of him, and was largely responsible for his great success as a hunter and consequently as an arctic traveller. He discovered at length, six light-coloured specks on a hillside about a mile from the beach of what he still supposed was the mainland. They might be stones, or they might be caribou or even geese. After studying them for half an hour, however, during which time they had not moved, he came to the conclusion that they probably were not geese. Finally, when one did move (with respect to the others, for in the shimmering haze that overhung the three miles of ice between his island and the other land they all appeared to be continually moving, but not in relation to each other) he assumed that they were indeed caribou, lying down till one had got up to graze; and he decided to go after them. Three hours later he was within half a mile of the band, only to find them grazing near the centre of a huge saucer-shaped bowl of grassland towards which it was impossible to approach from any side without being seen. His custom in such circumstances, was always to wait, no matter how long the delay might be. It was half-past eleven when he began his vigil. The caribou grazed quietly till about three o'clock in the morning, lying down then for an hour, after which they again began to graze, travelling meanwhile slowly but directly away from him. Circling so that he was again in front of them, but too far away to be seen, he lay for another hour. By this time they had come within range and he killed all six with eight shots.

When he had walked the eight miles back to camp, Storkerson and Ole were up after a comfortable night's rest, wait-

ing for him to bring the wherewithal for breakfast. They had, the previous evening, eaten everything that remained, tacitly assuming that he would return with food. "To have saved a third of it might have been courteous and even kind," he writes, "but they ate it all on the assumption that I would secure my own supper before I came back, which was a vote of confidence I valued far beyond kindness or courtesy." He had brought the six caribou tongues and on these they breakfasted. On one of the highest hills of the island, they erected a tall beacon containing a short record of their trip and an outline of their plans for the future. They then moved camp to the next island, where Stefansson and Storkerson feasted on boiled caribou heads; Ole, however, preferred brains fried in marrow.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE
SAINT-SULPICE

CHAPTER XII

HUNTER'S PARADISE

Next day they discovered they were on a second island, unmarked on the chart, about eight miles in its longest diameter, lying, at its nearest point, about a mile off the mainland. Stefansson named it after Captain Peter Bernard. They erected a beacon here also, and the following day crossed to the mainland, where they made camp on a sandspit near a good harbour.

The summer was passed in hunting and exploring. "To spend a summer in Banks Island as we did that one was a delight," wrote Stefansson. "Storkerson and I knew well the tricks and methods of living in an Arctic land and Ole proved an apt pupil. The caribou grew fatter and their skins more sleek and better for clothing. We killed altogether about forty fat bulls and dried over half a ton of back fat, the equivalent of that much bacon. We lived on the most palatable parts, the heads and back bones, and the dogs lived mostly on the internal organs, while we sliced thin, spread out on stones and dried in the sun for future use, the hams, shoulders, and other fleshy parts. Being sailors, Storkerson and Ole were both good at sewing and they talked much about the fine clothes they were going to make from the skins for themselves and me if the ships should fail to bring Eskimo families with their incomparable seamstresses from the mainland . . . .

"Mosquitoes, the one serious drawback of the North — far more serious in the minds of all who know than winter darkness, extreme cold or violent winds — were not very serious in Banks Island. For one thing the drainage is fairly good; for another, the winds blow often enough from the ocean to keep the temperature lower than mosquitoes like. Perhaps the richest hunting country known to me is the

region between Great Bear Lake and Coronation Gulf but it has the disadvantage of a plague of mosquitoes and flies. And so, on the whole, these months of tenting and wandering in Banks Island are the most delightful of my summer recollections from the North, though they did not come quite up to autumn and early winter just north of the arctic circle on Horton River or on the Coppermine.

"I feel like mentioning here that I cannot understand the psychology of northern travellers who employ Eskimos and Indians to do their hunting for them. I would as soon think of engaging a valet to play my golf or of going to the theatre by proxy. Not that I enjoy the killing of animals as such, but I should dislike extremely the feeling of dependence in work or play, of knowing that it hinged on the skill and goodwill of anyone, no matter how competent, whether I should have something to eat tomorrow or whether my plans were to fail for lack of food. I do not see how anyone could get much enjoyment out of living in a camp supported by hired hunters. Neither have I at the time nor in retrospect any hesitancy of mind when I compare the pleasures and ease of the city or the summer resort with the northern caribou hunt, whether it be in the soft air and sunshine of summer or in December's keenest wind and snow. The one sort of pleasure is passive, receptive, enervating — you are jaded by it and the keen edge of your enjoyment turns dull. But the open life of him who lives by the hunt keeps indefinitely the thrill of endeavour and achievement, a thing never to be bought or secured by having others carry out for you the most elaborate or ingenious of programmes. And all of this becomes even more worthwhile when the food and clothing of your companions depend upon the hunt, and most when your very lives hang on success."[1]

The early part of July was spent in hunting, chiefly in the vicinity of their first mainland camp, but in the latter half of the month Stefansson and Storkerson made a trip inland, leaving Ole to guard the stores of meat in camp. Stefansson gives a charming picture of this trip:

(1) Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic*, Macmillan, New York, 1921, pp. 242-245.

"The hunting and exploring trip into the interior of Banks Island was an interesting and delightful one for Storkerson and me. Here was a beautiful country of valleys everywhere golden white with flowers or green with grass or mingled green and brown with grass and lichens, except some of the hilltops which were rocky and barren. These hills differed in colouring, especially as seen from a distance, not so much because of the colours of the rock as because different vegetation prevails in different kinds of soil and different lichens on different rocks. There were sparkling brooks that united into rivers of crystal clearness, floating over gravelled bottoms and when we came to a stream we usually followed along, whether for a few hundred yards or several miles, until we came to a place where the river either split into branches or widened out. Here we took the packs off our dogs, for their short legs unfitted them for keeping a pack dry while fording, and with our good Eskimo boots keeping our feet dry we would wade across, the dogs swimming behind us. Heather was most abundant, and so were bull caribou, so that the meat we lived on and the fuel for cooking it were of the best.[1] "

With the coming of August they began to look for a ship from the south. In his diary, Stefansson wrote:

"This is probably the month of keenest anticipations of all I have spent in the North. It is the season of navigation when our three small ships should be, with luck, as far east now as Cape Bathurst. The *Star* coming direct may arrive here any day the ice leaves the beach. She should reach Kellett soon and wait her chance there to proceed north. The *Sachs* should complete her errand to Liston Island and be at Kellett, too, before August 10. The *Alaska* almost certainly will have little trouble in reaching Cape Bexley if once she gets to Herschel. Even the *Karluk* may be heard from. There is nothing in the present or future I would not give to be aboard of her, and few things I would not give for news of her — nothing I would not pay for her safety, or that of her

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(1) Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic*, Macmillan, New York, 1921, pp. 247-248.

men, rather. The vessel herself would not so much matter if nothing but hopes, plans and equipment went down with her."

Day by day as the lane of water along the shore grew wider, they looked more anxiously for the *North Star*. When she had not come by the end of August, although conditions for navigation seemed most favourable, Stefansson concluded that the best course was to travel south to see if she had been wrecked somewhere along the coast. The meat which they had accumulated was buried in a huge pit, and on September 1 they started. Stefansson travelled ahead, from hilltop to hilltop, picking the course and watching the sea through his glasses for now hardly any ice was in sight. Storkerson and Ole followed generally along the coast with the dogs. Packed dogs travel slowly, and Stefansson was therefore able to do considerable ranging while still keeping ahead of his companions. Towards evening on September 10 he, from the crest of a commanding hill, recognized, a few miles to the south, the unmistakable sandspit of Cape Kellett. He spent a quarter of an hour searching through his glasses, first for the presence of a ship and then for a beacon or some other sign that one had been there; he saw nothing.

He was greatly disappointed and so were Storkerson and Ole when they came up. Nevertheless, with his customary resiliency, his depression quickly wore off as he planned a possible winter's work. To his mind there was something attractive in the thought of carrying on till spring dependent entirely upon their own resources. But Storkerson had a family on the mainland; Ole had plans for a certain trading venture in Siberia; and they both had hoped to get back to Alaska that season. It was decided the following morning that they should go down to the Cape itself; and, as usual, Stefansson went on ahead. He had gone only about a mile and a half when he was startled to find in the mud on the bank of a little stream a nearly fresh human footprint. It was the imprint of a rubber boot, which, to him, indicated the presence of a white man; half a mile farther on he discovered a second track, this one showing the impression of cross-hatchings on the sole, of a pattern which left little doubt in

his mind that the wearer was someone connected with the expedition.

Where the sandspit joins the shore there was still no sign of human visitors. "But a mile or more east along the coast," Stefansson wrote in his diary, "I got to the top of the hill from which I saw the tips of two masts. I could hardly believe my eyes — somehow it seemed unnatural to find a ship in Banks Island where it ought to be." He started forward on the run, thinking that the ship was at anchor and fearing that she might sail away before he could reach her. But when he got closer he recognized the *Mary Sachs,* not at anchor, but partly drawn up on the beach, her cargo unloaded and a number of men nearby building a sod house. Presently he was near enough to recognize Crawford and Bernard without either seeming to realize that he did not belong to their own party. Then, when he was almost among them, Crawford shouted: "Stefansson is alive! He's here!"

"The rest of the party were around me in a moment," Stefansson wrote: "I had expected them to be more pleased than surprised when they recognized me, and certainly I had not expected the kind of surprise I found. It was easily understandable when I realized that they had come here with no idea of my being alive at all but merely governed by a blind devotion to the orders of a man now dead."[1]

He learned that the party consisted of: George Wilkins, in command, Peter Bernard, James R. Crawford, P. J. (Levi) Bauer, Charles Thomsen, his wife and three-year-old daughter, and Storkerson's wife and five-year-old daughter. But what pleased him as much as anything was to find that his faithful travelling companion of former years, Natkusiak, had come to search for him, but at the time was away with Wilkins, hunting.

One of his first questions was naturally about the *Karluk.* Captain Bernard was able to repeat the meagre details of the story brought by the whalers that summer to Herschel Island: That the *Karluk* was crushed by the ice sixty miles north-

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(1) Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic,* Macmillan, New York, 1921, pp. 267-268.

east of Wrangel Island in January (1914); that all of her men had made their way safely to the island; that Captain Bartlett had left them there and with one Eskimo had crossed the 100 miles of ice to the Siberian mainland, travelling thence along the coast to Emma Harbour, where he had been picked up by the schooner *Herman* and taken to St. Michael, Alaska. From there word had been sent by wireless to the Government and to the press.

"So end all our hopes and dreams that centre around the *Karluk*," wrote Stefansson, "and all through my lack of moral courage in not ordering Bartlett back behind Cross Island when I awoke and found him steaming out into the pack." But, while the news was not correct so far as the safety of all the men was concerned, and Stefansson was not to learn the full story of the disaster till some months later, his mind, in the meantime, in that regard at least, was at rest.

He then asked why Wilkins had not brought the *North Star* to Banks Island, in accordance with instructions. The reasons given are recorded in his diary as follow: "Wilkins had the *North Star* ready for sea at Herschel but Anderson and the scientific staff lacked confidence in the crew of the *Sachs*. So Wilkins was transferred to take charge of the *Sachs* and the *North Star* was diverted to Coronation Gulf — Cox, Jenness, and Castel on board. This is against my orders but is measurably justified by the fact that one of my main reasons for wanting two ships on Banks Island was to have plenty of stores in case men of *Karluk* arrived there, and now we know they will not come here. One of the central features of the plans of this expedition was oceanography, and if I were now south I should give the ship (*North Star*) to Johansen for his work — I hope they do that, for this is a general scientific expedition, but I fear they will run it as if it were an appendage of the Geological Survey." The Southern Section had established headquarters at a point on the south shore of Union and Dolphin Strait which was named Bernard Harbour, in honour of Captain Joseph Bernard, who, it will be remembered, had wintered there a few years previously.

When Stefansson and his companions had failed to return to Alaska, it was generally believed that they had perished

and it was with faint hope of meeting him that the *Sachs* had gone to Banks Island. This was one reason why equipment badly needed had not been brought. A tarpaulin for use in converting a sledge into a boat had gone to Coronation Gulf to cover stores, and its lack was seriously felt during the whole of the next season's exploration trips. Another unfortunate miscarriage was the sending to Coronation Gulf of thousands of feet of sounding wire — of practically no use there — while the scientific value of Stefansson's work was considerably lessened through his inability to make soundings in oceanic depths.

Wilkins brought some mail, amongst which was a letter from the American Museum of Natural History, dated the previous February, informing Stefansson that "in recognition of his contributions to the science of geography and ethnology" he had been elected an Honorary Fellow. It is a very high honour, granted to a select few of exceptional achievement; and he was particularly pleased to receive such a decisive refutation of Anderson's oft-repeated charge that he had no standing in scientific circles.

The *Mary Sachs* had brought a cargo of provisions; but not enough to feed so large a company of people and dogs as that now on Banks Island. Besides, for health's sake, fresh meat was desirable. While scurvy has stalked through the annals of exploration, its grim spectre had not hitherto shown its head on any of Stefansson's expeditions, and this he ascribed to the fact that his parties had always lived largely on fresh meat. The vitamin theory had not yet been formulated, but already Stefansson had begun to make deductions from observations that were later to result in important contributions to the world's knowledge of dietetics. Therefore, before the daylight shortened so much as to make caribou hunting practically impossible, Stefansson, Wilkins and Natkusiak went forth to hunt. It was like old times having agreeable, easy-going Natkusiak again for a hunting companion; and Wilkins was fast justifying Stefansson's early estimate of him.

During the winter Stefansson and Natkusiak made an unsuccessful trip to Victoria Island in search of people.

Wilkins conducted a series of tidal observations, and in addition performed a great deal of useful work, preparing and labeling a collection of the fauna of the island. "I have never known anyone who worked harder than Wilkins," Stefansson wrote: "He would be cleaning the scraps of meat off the leg bones of a wolf before breakfast and scraping the fat from a bearskin up to bedtime at night. His diaries were filled with information about the specimens he gathered, his fingers were stained with the photographic chemicals used in the development of his innumerable plates and films, his mind was always alert and his response always cheerful when a new task was proposed. A half-dozen such men would make an invincible polar expedition."[1]

(1) Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic*, Macmillan, New York, 1921, p. 291.

CHAPTER XIII

NEW LAND!

For the spring of 1915 Stefansson had planned a trip over the ocean ice northwestward from Prince Patrick Island into the unknown. Preparations were begun early, and on February 9 the advance party consisting of Wilkins, Natkusiak and Thomsen got away from Kellett. Stefansson, with Storkerson, Crawford, and Ole Andreasen followed a few days later. Travel was exceptionally difficult because of shell-ice beneath the snow, and before the situation was realized nearly all the dogs had sore feet. Since it was about 42° below zero — an advantage so far as sledge travel was ordinarily concerned — the dogs could not be fitted with boots. In such cold weather the circulation must not be interfered with or the dogs' feet will freeze. Owing, therefore, to time lost while waiting for the dogs to recover, and other delays, it became necessary eventually to start the ice trip from Cape Alfred instead of Prince Patrick Island. Accordingly, Wilkins, Crawford and Natkusiak were sent back. Wilkins was instructed to go to Coronation Gulf and bring the *North Star* as far north as possible during the summer. Stefansson had thought of going himself for the *North Star,* leaving the command of the exploratory party to Storkerson, but varied considerations, the principal of which was his own better fitness for ice travel and Wilkins's greater experience with gas-engines, finally led him to change his mind. Consequently, the ice party consisted of Stefansson, Storkerson, Thomsen and Ole.

It was the first week in April when the start was finally made from Cape Alfred. Much trouble was caused by thin ice — and several times accidents were narrowly averted. On April 25, while crossing a freshly frozen lead about ten

yards wide, which Stefansson had previously tested and found apparently safe, the second sledge broke through just as it was about to reach the farther edge. Storkerson and Thomsen who were driving it, saved themselves by dropping the handlebars and scampering back to the firmer ice behind them. Stefansson and Ole grasped the bow and, aided by the dogs, pulled the sledge and its load out of the water. The ammunition and rifles had been divided between the two sledges, and, as an additional precaution, Stefansson usually carried his own slung across his back; therefore, even if they had lost one sledge the result need not necessarily have been tragic, but it would probably have meant the end of exploration for that season.

Comparison of astronomical observations with the dead-reckoning indicated a strong southwesterly drift — in fact, the drift quite often nullified the results of many hours' arduous toil. So little headway was made that by the middle of May it became unpleasantly evident that a noteworthy ice journey was out of the question. Stefansson therefore decided to go ashore on Prince Patrick Island and continue northward from there; but, even so, it was with considerable difficulty that on June 4 they landed on the extreme southwestern corner of the island. Two months had been spent on the ice without their being able to get more than a hundred miles from shore.

Following the coast, on the land-fast ice, they reached Cape McClintock on June 15, the most northerly point of the island, where they found a cairn containing a record left by McClintock, while searching for Franklin, sixty-two years before.

Two days later, the journey was continued northward. Storkerson, Thomsen and Ole went ahead with the dog teams, while Stefansson remained at Cape McClintock long enough to erect a cairn and deposit a record of his own. He was following, and was within five miles of overtaking them when, through his glasses, he saw from the top of a pressure-ridge that they had stopped to make camp. His glasses were still trained on them when he saw Storkerson climb an ice hummock and begin to examine the northern horizon. At

first it was evident that he saw nothing unusual, but as his search swept farther to the eastward, he apparently found something exciting, for soon Ole and Thomsen were seen running towards him. Hoping it was the sight of land that caused their excitement, Stefansson went on as fast as the unevenness of the floes would permit; and climbing beside the others to the top of the hummock, he saw the dark line of new land lying along the horizon to the northeast. For him, it was one of those moments which made the difficulties and disappointments of exploration worthwhile. After compass bearings had been taken and a sketch made of the skyline, they went to the tent to celebrate the occasion by drinking malted milk!

The land proved to be about fourteen miles distant. Since Storkerson had had the honour of discovery, Ole was given the privilege of putting first foot on it. Stefansson then climbed a hill a short distance back from the beach, and attempted to get some idea of the land's extent, but his view was obscured by fog. Visibility next day was not much better and, although he had hoped to get a latitude sight before leaving, he felt that owing to the lateness of the season further delay was unwise. But before leaving, the Union Jack was hoisted; formal possession was taken in the name of King George V on behalf of the Dominion of Canada; and a gravel mound was raised to a height of three or four feet in which was placed a record setting forth the circumstances of discovery. For two days they followed the coast of the new land southeasterly. Stefansson was impressed by the large number of caribou tracks seen all the way along, but only two caribou were seen. Seals, however, were abundant, and there was no need to spend valuable time hunting caribou. The land continued its southeasterly trend beyond what seemed to be a deep bay, about fifteen miles across.

On June 21, this "bay" (it was later proved to be a strait) was crossed and on the farther side, some distance inland, what Stefansson took to be a mountain peak was seen. Since that day was the longest in the year, Stefansson decided to walk to the top of the peak, which appeared to be not more than six or eight miles distant. It eventually proved to be

nearer twenty, and by the time he had reached the top, fog had blotted out much of the view to the north and northwest; nonetheless, he could see high hills or low mountains rising one behind the other for a distance of at least fifty miles. This peak he named Leffingwell Crags. When he got back to camp he found his companions thinking of going in search of him. They themselves had had supper, ten hours of sleep and breakfast since he left them and were certain he must be famished for want of food and sleep, but he wrote in his diary, "I find twenty hours (without food) no hardship so long as my mind is on the job, although when in camp I feel like eating every three or four hours."

Despite his strong inclination to remain longer, Stefansson realized that the time had come to turn southward. With luck they might make the whole distance to Kellett on the sea ice; but, if they delayed too long, would probably have to make overland crossings on both Melville and Banks Islands. It was now over four months since they had left winter quarters, and while the men were not complaining, they were beginning to long for the flesh pots of Kellett. Storkerson and Ole were both out of tobacco and Thomsen had only a little which Ole had given him. There was no lack of food; both seals, and caribou were plentiful. But the ice was already covered in places with thaw water and travelling was sloppy, disagreeable work. To make matters worse, frequent squalls of heavy, wet snow soaked them through.

On June 30, Stefansson saw his first musk-ox. He dislikes the term *musk-ox* because, as he says, it is a misnomer and carries the erroneous implication that the animal, and inferentially its flesh, has an unpleasant odour. After his return he tried to popularize the name *ovibos,* and uses it in his books, but in his diaries generally refers to them as musk-oxen. These remarkable animals resemble highland cattle in size, but they are not as once supposed, a species of cattle, but are more nearly related to the goat. In addition to long coarse hair, they are provided with a coat of fine, silky wool. Ranging once as far south as Kentucky, their habitat is now confined to the extreme northern mainland of Canada, some of the islands of the Arctic Archipelago, and part of Green-

land. Admirably adapted to forage for themselves in the far north, protected against the cold and almost immune, by reason of their sharp horns, from attack by wolves, these native Arctic animals fear no enemy but man.

It is of interest to read the first of many entries in Stefansson's diaries concerning these interesting animals: "At about 1.30 a.m. I went to the top of a 400-ft hill, half a mile inland to have a look at the bay.... Saw from this hill two musk-oxen. I have never wanted to lend a hand in the extermination of these patriarchal remnants of a race, but we had only one meal of seal meat for the dogs, two meals for ourselves, and about 3 lbs. of pemmican, besides blubber and other fat. I therefore had to shoot these poor fellows. They proved old bulls. We camped on the shore of the bay abreast of and a mile southwest from the hill and fetched the meat in two loads, sledding over bare ground half the way. Seals are difficult to get now, as one does not like to crawl snake-fashion through eight or ten inches of ice water."

Thawing produced what is known as "needle ice", making it necessary that the dogs be shod. Stefansson's account of the difficulties entailed by this situation gives some idea of exploration at its worst: "It had been my intention at the beginning of this trip to bring along four or five hundred boots but someone had blundered and when we made a search of our loads we found less than two hundred. These were made of canvas and each would be good for one day. The boot is made without much shape to it, something like a mitten without a thumb. When a hole had been worn on one side of the boot we'd turn it around so that the dog walks on one side of the boot in the forenoon and on the other in the afternoon. It is a well-known fact that thirteen dogs have fifty-two feet, but I don't think anyone realizes it fully who has not had the task of making boots for dogs day after day. It took only four days to wear out the ones we had with us. We were in a great hurry to get to Banks Island, so at first we used to sit up evenings to mend these boots, making a few additional new ones. But it soon became apparent that this was not practicable and for the last week or ten days we used

to travel two days and then stop one day for making boots. It helped a little to make some of these of sealskin or caribou skin so that they lasted a little longer, but here again there was the disadvantage that we had to watch the dogs to see that none of them ate their boots when we stopped. This was not because they were hungry but merely because their appetites were normal."[1]

The crossing of McClure Strait, between Melville and Banks islands, took a week. Owing to the unpleasantness of hunting seals on water-covered ice, they were reduced before they reached Mercy Bay, on the north coast of Banks Island, to eating sealskin, but within six hours after landing had secured two caribou, a hare and a seal.

Mercy Bay is an arctic landmark. It was discovered by Captain McClure, of the Franklin Search who wintered there in the *Investigator* the winters of 1851-2 and 1852-3. McClure eventually abandoned his ship in Mercy Bay and with his crew succeeded in reaching McClintock's base on Melville Island, whence they finally returned to England in safety. Since they had come into the Arctic from the Pacific and returned by way of the Atlantic, to them went the honour of being the first men actually to make the long-sought Northwest Passage. Then when the Eskimos on Victoria Island and the mainland learned that the *Investigator* had been abandoned, Mercy Bay became the mecca for all the surrounding territory; and during the next few years the wreck was stripped of every bit of metal and most of the wood. At length the hulk either drifted away or sank; for Stefansson and his companions found nothing but an ice anchor and a grappling hook, both presumably too heavy for Eskimos to carry.

From Mercy Bay Stefansson attempted to set a direct course overland for Kellett, but within seven or eight miles the travellers encountered a large northwesterly-running river which they were unable to ford. Fortunately its valley lay almost in the direction of their course; and, following it

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(1) Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic*, Macmillan, New York, 1921, p. 353.

upstream for eight days — a distance of about seventy-five miles —they finally found a convenient place to cross. But even at such a distance from its mouth, the river was eighty yards wide, three feet deep, and extremely swift.

From now on the trip was more than usually pleasant. The distance inland was enough to ensure freedom from fogs, and while the weather was frequently quite warm, they were not bothered by heat; and, more important still, mosquitoes were scarce. The dogs packed most of the gear; and since caribou were plentiful and fat, it was not necessary to carry any great quantity of food. They reached Kellett on August 9, 1915, and found all well; but Wilkins had not yet returned with the *North Star* from Coronation Gulf.

CHAPTER XIV

STEFANSSON IS "RESCUED"

Stefansson was busy, two days later, writing a report of the recent trip, when a ship was sighted coming in from the southeast. His first thought was of the *North Star*, but on examination through the glasses she proved to be the *Polar Bear*. He rushed off to intercept her, and when he got to the end of the sandspit she was already at anchor half a mile from shore. A whaleboat was coming toward him in which he soon recognized Captain Louis Lane. As the boat touched the beach, the Captain jumped out and almost overwhelmed Stefansson with the warmth of his greeting. Like practically everyone else in the world he had given Stefansson up for dead. He pressed him to go on board the schooner and set before him there all the food-delicacies the ship afforded — and Captain Lane always had a good cook on board — but Stefansson was not particularly hungry. Nevertheless, to please the Captain, he said he would like some canned corn, and sat eating it while the excited crew gathered round. He was more eager for news than for food, and quite naturally asked first about the fate of the *Karluk's* men. Here is part of his diary entry for August 11, containing an account of the news he received and the impression it made upon him:

"Much bad news. All but eight of Karluk men lost — of the saved he knows of only Bartlett, Hadley and Munro. This affects me deeply, but Captain Lane says the world pays no attention because of an unbelievable war of the most considerable countries of Europe. The North Star wintered east of the Coppermine — if Wilkins does not learn this he will land west of the Coppermine and probably fail to reach the Star. Alaska made one trip the same place as Star and on her

second trip was frozen in at Baillie Islands, where all her hands had scurvy and Blue died of it. That is what comes of sumptuous provisioning and idleness. Idleness alone would not be fatal if there were plenty of fresh meat. I am sorry for poor Blue, but the wonder is more of them have not gone the same way . . . .

"My ice party from Martin Point believed by all to be certainly lost, says Lane — all hope given up when Anderson in the winter reported not having seen us. My private papers and mail all handed to the Alaska to carry to Anderson. All Karluk coal either already used up or on Alaska now — she burned coal last winter in a wood country where no one else burned coal. Lane believes, and it seems so, that we shall get no reinforcements this year unless I go after them myself. He offers to charter me the Bear take me 'anywhere' for so much the day, to sell me supplies at his regular price (3 times wholesale) and release from their contract with him several good men whom he thinks I can hire. This, it seems, gives a good chance of a well-equipped base, for the Polar Bear is perhaps the best ship in the world for my uses now. It will mean spending money, but only for results, I feel confident."

It may seem strange that Stefansson should have received news of the world war so calmly, but it must be remembered that he had not passed through the preparatory period of rumour and propaganda that everyone in "civilization" had been subjected to. When one has been out of the current of affairs for two years one cannot fail to have a somewhat detached attitude toward events so remote. Then there was the general belief among the *Polar Bear* crew that the war might end at any moment. It is therefore easy to understand how the fate of the *Karluk* party and whether Wilkins would come with the *North Star* were much more weighty questions just then. When Captain Lane reported to the newspapers on reaching the outside that he had not only rescued the explorer, believed for a year to be dead, but had given him his first news of the great war, the imaginative newswriters could not resist the temptation; and many strange versions were printed of how the rugged musher of the Arctic trails,

the daring defier of polar blizzards, had broken down and cried when he was told of the war. Captain Lane never quite forgave Stefansson for denying that he had been rescued, or in need of rescue — which was obvious, of course, since Stefansson had been "found" by members of his own expedition nearly a year before.

The Captain told Stefansson of the large expedition stores that had been forwarded by the Government on board the *Ruby*, which he thought should already have reached Herschel Island. Since there seemed no other way to secure a share of these supplies, Stefansson chartered the *Polar Bear* at the rate of $1,000 a day for a trip to Herschel. Even though the whaling season is short and whalers often make large sums of money, and traders likewise, this price was exorbitant, but Stefansson was dealing with one of the shrewdest bargain-drivers in the arctic trade. Consequently, the *Polar Bear* set sail the following day (August 12) with Stefansson and his party on board, and four days later dropped anchor in the harbour at Herschel Island.

The *Polar Bear's* arrival caused great excitement in the little Arctic settlement when word went round that Stefansson was on board. He now learned how general had been the belief in his death — only three persons along the coast ever expected to see him again. When Anderson had notified the Government of Stefansson's failure to return, the opinions of leading polar authorities had been obtained, and practically all were agreed that he must have perished. The Department of the Naval Service had ceased addressing communications to him, although both Mr. Desbarats and Mr. Brock still held to the belief that he was safe. Only one or two of his friends had thought the chance of his being alive sufficient to justify their continued writing.

In addition to supplies for the expedition, the *Ruby* carried a large consignment for the Hudson's Bay Company for the establishment of a trading-post at Herschel Island. Unfortunately, most of this had been stowed on top of the expedition's cargo, resulting in a considerable delay in the unloading. Meanwhile chartering fees were mounting at an alarming rate, and Stefansson soon realized that money could

be saved if he were to buy the ship outright. The Captain was quite willing to sell — at a price — and set a value of $20,000 on his schooner and $14,000 on her cargo. This, with chartering fees of $14,000, brought the total to $48,000. It was agreed that the *North Star* should be transferred to Lane in part payment to provide him with a ship in which to take out his furs and those members of his crew who did not wish to join the expedition. Now that he had bought a ship for the special use of the Northern Section, Stefansson decided to render his independence doubly secure by the purchase of the auxiliary schooner *Gladiator*.

Serving as ice-pilot on a schooner in the harbour was Jack Hadley whom Stefansson had last seen on board the *Karluk*. Immediately arranging for Hadley's release, he re-engaged him as a member of the expedition. From Hadley he learned for the first time of the *Karluk's* drift, her crushing in the pack near Wrangel Island in the following January, the loss of eight members of the scientific staff and crew in crossing the ice from the wreck; the death on Wrangel Island of three others; and the rescue of the survivors in September 1914. Stefansson agreed with Hadley that the food which the party had lived upon was responsible for the deaths of those who had died on the island. The principal foods saved from the *Karluk* were pemmican, hard bread, tea and tinned milk. The bread had soon given out, leaving pemmican to form the main part of the diet — except for fresh meat, which was available in variable amounts. Because this meat consisted largely of the flesh of seals, some members of the party, especially those who later succumbed to disease, were prejudiced against it and confined their diet almost exclusively to the pemmican. Either not believing in the theory of "living off the country" or unfamiliar with its technique, Bartlett had not properly equipped the party to subsist on game or to secure an adequate amount for their health. For instance, shotguns, for killing wildfowl, had been left behind at the scene of the wreck; but more important still, the skin boat, purposely bought by Stefansson for such contingencies, was allowed to go down with the *Karluk*. With it, the party could

have been kept plentifully supplied with walrus meat, whereas, without it, only one walrus was secured.

When the *Polar Bear* and *Gladiator* reached the Baillie Islands, Stefansson learned that, two days after the *Polar Bear* had passed on its way westward to Herschel Island, Wilkins had gone north in the *North Star*. Stefansson hurried to Kellett in the hope of overtaking Wilkins before he should leave for Cape Alfred, but Wilkins had already gone north. Stefansson was therefore unable to transfer the *North Star* to Captain Lane, as agreed, but turned over to him the *Gladiator* instead. With the acquisition of the *Polar Bear,* the expedition personnel was increased by Henry Gonzales, formerly the mate, who on Captain Lane's recommendation became Captain; William Seymour, who was promoted to mate; Herman Killian, and John Jones, engineers; James Asasela and the Eskimo Emiu, commonly called "Split-the-wind", as sailors. Rounding out the community, were thirteen Eskimos, counting men, women and children, whom Stefansson had hired at Herschel. Among them were such old friends, as Pikalu, Palaiyak and Pannigabluk, who will be remembered as useful members of the expedition of 1908-12. Much to Stefansson's regret, Ole Andreasen, bent on making his fortune as a trader in Siberia, went out with the *Gladiator*. Although intending to continue the Kellett base, Stefansson hoped that Wilkins had already established a more northerly one, and consequently on September 3, ordered the *Polar Bear* to proceed northward, along the coast, in the hope of overtaking the *North Star*. But too much time had been lost, the wind changed, and when they rounded Cape Kellett they found the ice-pack pressing on the land. A chance remained, however, that they might get into Melville Sound by way of Prince of Wales Strait, on the east side of Banks Island, and the prow was headed in that direction. Good time was made; and by the following morning the ship was in the Strait. But when they had reached Armstrong Point, about halfway up, progress was blocked by ice, and Stefansson decided to establish his winter quarters there.

This decision was consistent with his usual tendency to look on the bright side of things, and to make the most of

what could not be helped. He enumerated in his diary the advantages, as he saw them, of having his previous plans foiled by fate: wintering on Victoria Island was convenient for the study of the so-called "Blond Eskimos" of Prince Albert Sound, whom he had visited in the spring of 1911, when he was unable to remain longer than two or three days. He was anxious not only to study the language and customs of these people in their homes but also to secure as large an ethnological collection as possible to illustrate their manner of life. When at Herschel Island, he had failed to get nautical almanacs or scientific instruments but from this base he might make a winter trip to the *Alaska*, and thus secure them. Victoria Island, discovered by Franklin and Richardson in 1826, had been partly explored by various British expeditions, but its east and north coasts were yet unmapped. In 1905, Lieutenant Godfrey Hansen of Amundsen's expedition, then wintering at King William Island, had made an attempt to finish the mapping, but had succeeded in getting only about half of it done. This would be a favourable base from which to finish the work. And, lastly, the ship safe, and equipped for two years, an additional year would be provided in the event of hard luck with the forthcoming season's ice journey.

To Storkerson was allotted the task of surveying the northeastern coast of Victoria Island. He prepared for an early start, but the roughness of the land made sledging impossible until the snow was deeper. In the meantime, he proceeded to take tide observations in Prince of Wales Strait. Stefansson gives an interesting account of the method followed:

"It was too early in the season for a snow house, so he pitched a double tent twenty or thirty yards from shore. The rise and fall of the water was observed on a long staff, graduated into inches, and driven like a post into the bottom and stuck through a hole in the ice. The hole was kept open through the warmth of the tent where a kerosene blue-flame stove was kept continually going, but when necessary water was heated and poured boiling into the hole. As the rise and fall was only a few inches between high and low tide, we recorded it in quarter inch intervals and by observations

taken ten minutes apart. The series of observations extended through one month.[1]

Despite unfavourable weather, Storkerson kept doggedly on with the mapping, but had not succeeded in closing the gap when he was required for other duties. Owing to poor visibility, he had failed to notice that the northern part of what seemed to be a long promontory at the northeastern angle of Victoria Island was another island. This was not known to be so until thirty years later when R.C.A.F. exploratory flights made the discovery. In 1952, the Board of Geographical Names belatedly recognized the nation's debt to Stefansson by naming this island after him. Pear-shaped, in reverse, it has an area of approximately 2,000 square miles.

Towards the end of September (1915) Stefansson, accompanied by five Eskimos — Illun and his wife Kutok (who had been taken on at Herschel Island), Pikalu and his wife Pusimmik, Emiu and Palaiyak (who had been taken over with the *Bear*) — travelled south along the Victoria Island coast to select a spot for a seal-hunting camp, establishing one just north of Deas Dundas Bay. In addition to its being more suitable for securing seals than nearer the ship, the location was within easy reach of the Minto Sound Eskimos whom he wished to study and from whom he hoped to buy ethnological specimens.

He explains why he had chosen Eskimos as his companions:

"The reason is that I am an ethnologist by profession, and even apart from that intensely interested in all the information that I can continually get from the natives. I have never acquired perfect command of an Eskimo dialect, although I speak the Mackenzie River one about as fluently as I do English, which is my native tongue. Fluency does not necessarily mean idiomatic correctness, and when talking with members of this group I am continually discovering mistakes which it is well for me to correct . . . ."[2]

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(1) *The Friendly Arctic* (New Edition), Macmillan, New York, 1944, p. 408.

(2) *The Friendly Arctic* (New Edition), pp. 408-409.

He goes on to record some Eskimo beliefs that were transcribed during this period:

"Not as an exhaustive account of Eskimo beliefs but merely as an illustration of what one may learn in a week's journey with Eskimos whose confidence you have, I give a synopsis of diary entries on this subject between October 2nd and October 15th. I was happy that I was able to learn anything at all, for to me it is a deplorable result of the Christianizing of the Eskimos that most of those in the vicinity of the Mackenzie delta are now unwilling to tell any ordinary person about the more interesting of their old beliefs. They still hold these firmly but they hold them in secret, talking about them in the Eskimo language when the white men present are known not to understand what they are saying, and, with me, since I am known to understand, most of them are now unwilling to talk at all. On this trip I was able to get the full confidence of Illun although his wife objected strongly to his telling the more sacred beliefs, for they have divided them according to the ideas of missionary approval into two classes — harmless and harmful.

"I shall give first some of the harmless ones.

"On October 2nd I learned from Illun, corroborated by Kutok, that the reason sleeping people can see things at a distance is that when one dreams the eyes travel. If you remember on waking that you have dreamed about things at a great distance it is because your eyes have actually been there while you were asleep. In this connection I asked whether the fact that we dream about hearing things did not imply that the ears travelled also. They both agreed that seemed reasonable but that they had never heard it so stated; privately they considered that in all probability the ears as well as the eyes travel. Still, that would not be the outer ear, for they had frequently observed that those remain while persons are asleep. When I pointed out that some sleepers have their eyes partly open with the eyeballs visible, they asserted that such people would not be dreaming at the time. In general they admitted when I cross-examined them that their belief about the eyes travelling presented difficulties. For instance, you could press on the eyelids and assure your-

self that the eyeball was underneath. They said, however, that it was generally true about many things known to be so that there were other things which appeared to be contrary. Nothing which they had ever observed had shaken their belief that in dreams the eyes do travel.

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"On October 15th I secured from Illun against the rather insistent opposition of his wife a valuable bit of the sort of secret information which is now carefully hidden by most Eskimos from missionaries or other white men, and which in the minds of the Eskimos is gradually taking on the character of our old beliefs in witchcraft. That these things are frowned upon by the missionaries has gradually brought about the Eskimo belief that, while they are true and efficacious, the ancient charms are wicked. Some Eskimos seem to think that the mere knowledge of them is wicked and likely to endanger salvation. Others consider that knowing the charms is not wicked if you never say them. Accordingly, some Eskimos who have full confidence in me will tell me that they know some charms but are afraid to tell them to me, while others will assert that they know no charms. They admit that they knew them once but claim to have forgotten them.

"Illun's powerful charm consisted of the same word repeated three times and three other words each pronounced once. One of the words had a meaning unknown to him, a point not uncommon in the ancient charms which in some cases are in their entirety composed of words either partly intelligible or not understood at all by the people of the present day. This charm was to be pronounced in a low singsong that could scarcely be called a chant. It was to be used only in cases of extremely difficult childbirth. One should wait until in his opinion the woman was about to die. The possessor of the charm would then go outside the house. He was to walk around the house once in the same direction that the sun moves around the horizon. The charm should then be pronounced distinctly and but once, and must be finished

just before one reaches the door at the end of the walk. The child may be delivered during the middle of the chant, or in a very difficult case not until the last word is being pronounced. I rather inadvertently asked Illun whether the charm was to be repeated a second time if it did not work the first time. At this he was naturally offended, saying to me with dignity that he had already said that the child was delivered during the pronouncing of the very last word; consequently one need not worry about the necessity for repetition. He warned me that if I ever had occasion to use the charm I must for a time not eat any of the native fats, caribou, mountain sheep, polar bear, seal, marmot, and the like. He said that eating butter or bacon would do no harm.

"Both Kutok and Pusimmik had said when Illun began to teach me the charm that they did not want to possess it. By the time I had learned to repeat it correctly I felt quite sure that both of the women must have learned it also, and I asked how they were going to avoid the spiritual guilt of knowledge. I was now told that the trouble in their opinion — they admitted that other Eskimos might have different views — was not with the actual knowledge of these words but with the 'possession' of them. Illun explained that he had not yet given me possession of the charm although I already knew it, but said that he would do so now. We then went outdoors and to such a distance from the house that words spoken in an ordinary tone could not have reached the ears of any one listening. Illun planted a small stick in the snow and asked me to stand motionless and keep my eyes fixed on the stick. He then went to one side mumbling some words which I could not catch. In a minute or so he told me that now he had transferred the charm to the stick and if I would go and pick up the stick the charm would be transferred from the stick to me. After picking it up I was allowed to throw it away immediately, for the transfer had been completed.

"Afterwards Illun cautioned me very solemnly about the use of the charm. It must be employed only if death seemed imminent. Every word must be pronounced exactly right. Here I asked about my accent. He said that did not matter,

for my accent did not differ more from his than the accent of one tribe differed from that of another, and he knew that this charm was in use by people belonging to various groups. But no syllable must be omitted and the words must not be pronounced in incorrect sequence.

"He gave further directions that he had not previously explained. The woman to be benefited must be by herself in a hut that had been specially constructed for her. At the commencement of the charm you must be standing at the right side of the door from the point of view of the woman if she were looking out from the house. You must begin saying the first word as you lift your foot for the first step, and should finish the last word exactly as you arrive back at the left side of the door. He emphasized that if anything was done incorrectly I should suffer some serious misfortune and should probably die within the year. I asked if the woman or child would suffer through an incorrect performance, but he said they would not except to the extent that the charm would not help them.

"In connection with this charm Illun told me that his father had possessed a man-killing spell (*inuksiun*). He had been a man of very even temper and had never had occasion to use it. Illun himself was quick-tempered, and when his father offered to teach him the charm he refused on the ground that it might be too great a temptation sometime if he were angry, leading him to commit murder. Illun said that before he became a Christian he had controlled several wicked charms but had 'thrown them away' and completely forgotten them. The one he taught me he did not consider wicked because its only purpose was to do good and that only to others. He said he had had some charms for curing himself of illness, but had discarded these because they were selfish and he had been taught by the missionaries not to be selfish." [1]

On October 19, accompanied by Emiu and Palaiyak, Stefansson left for a visit to his former acquaintances, the "Blond

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(1) *The Friendly Arctic* (New Edition), Macmillan, New York, 1944, pp. 409-414.

Eskimos" living in Victoria Island since more generally referred to under the name he has given them — the Copper Eskimos. After a week's travelling they came upon a village in Minto Inlet, built on the sea ice. The entire population, consisting of about a hundred men, women and children, came crowding out to meet them. Some proved to be among those he had seen at Prince Albert Sound in the spring of 1911. Remaining only one night in the village, they left the next morning with a load of ethnological specimens. Stefansson had tried to induce a number of families to travel with him to the winter camp so that he might have them near at hand for ethnological study, but in this he was not successful. He did, however, persuade two young men to go along.

He was naturally interested in observing among the ones they met in Minto Inlet any who showed deviations from the rest, such as light eye-colour or physical appearance suggesting a possible European inheritance. Despite all that had been said and written on the subject in the interval, he saw no reason when he came to write *The Friendly Arctic* [1] to change the views he held when writing *My Life With the Eskimos*[2], in which he had dealt fully with the subject.

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(1) First Edition, Macmillan, New York, 1921; New Edition 1944.

(2) Originally published by Macmillan, New York, in 1913 and published in the abridged edition by the same house in 1927.

CHAPTER XV

A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

Wilkins had decided to leave the expedition. Originally, as official photographer, he had been in the employ of the Gaumont Company of Great Britain. His cameras and other equipment had been lost with the *Karluk*, and since his facilities for photographic work were limited, he would have gone out during the summer of 1914 had he not realized that if he failed Stefansson no one else might bring assistance to him in Banks Island. He now felt that his especial usefulness to the expedition was ended, besides which there were pressing personal matters requiring his attention in Australia. He would join the members of the Southern Section in Coronation Gulf who proposed leaving before the freeze-up in the fall of 1916. Stefansson was sorry to lose Wilkins, on whom he had come to place more reliance than on any other member of the expedition.

The exploratory party that proceeded northward from the winter base in the spring of 1916 consisted, in addition to Stefansson, of Harold Noice and Karsten Andersen, usually referred to as "Charlie", both members of the *Polar Bear* crew. Noice was a Seattle boy, not long out of High School, who the previous year had sailed in the *Polar Bear* with the intention of taking motion pictures of arctic life. The scheme, never very sound, had fallen through and he had been glad to sign on at Nome as a foremast hand. Andersen was an adventurous Dane, some years older than Noice, who had seen much of the world before he had joined the *Polar Bear* in the spring of 1915, as a sailor.

On May 9, while following the coast, which now trended eastward, they sighted Leffingwell Crags ahead, but between

them and the larger mass of land in which the peak was situated, they recognized an ice-covered strait four or five miles in width, instead of a bay as they had previously thought. They now realized that their first new land (later named Brock) was an island about twenty miles in diameter. The larger land area had already been given the name Borden, in honour of the Prime Minister of Canada.

An extensive vacant space on the map was marked, "Crown Prince Gustav Sea", but from the current disclosed by soundings Stefansson suspected that they were really crossing a strait, and that land could not be very far away.

"Reached land 12.15 a.m. June 15," he recorded in his diary, "but did not go ashore as I knew the boys were anxious to be first. As Charlie seems to have been the first to see what is clearly identifiable as this land, I call that honour enough for him, and let Noice step ashore first." Such an act of thoughtfulness is typical of Stefansson. The following day he wrote: "This land lacks the undulating outline of Isachsen Land. Near the coast are rolling hills and knobs of gravel; inland is a dome of turtle-backed outlines, free of hills or ravines that can be seen from the coast hills here. There are erratic boulders, none very large and gravel, but no rock *in situ*. Charlie picked up some worn pebbles and small pieces of petrified wood (willow) on top of hills 200 ft. above the sea."

A beacon was built on a hill, formal possession was taken, a record deposited, and they then continued on their way, following the coast northward. While Charlie and Noice piloted the team along the shore ice, Stefansson travelled overland, finding the land fairly clear of snow and scattered with sea shells. Ice-built raised beaches supplied further evidence of the recent rising of the island. Very little vegetation was noticed. No mammals were seen, not even a lemming common on most arctic islands. Birds, however, were plentiful, especially the Hutchins goose; and during their stay they varied their fare with goose eggs and the flesh of one goose, killed as a scientific specimen. To this island, Stefansson gave the name "Meighen", in honour of the Minister of the Interior.

As in 1915, they turned south with the sun on June 22. A great deal of water now lay on the surface of the ice; traveling became difficult, the men having to wade and the dogs to swim. To make matters worse, all were afflicted with snow blindness; Charlie, especially, was in extreme pain. After landing on Amund Ringnes Island they were obliged to spend three days in camp for Charlie to recover sufficiently to continue the trip. Starting south on July 5, Charlie and Noice piloted the dogs through the pools and slushy drifts on the ice as Stefansson hunted ashore. On the 12th he shot three caribou. Two days later they crossed the sound, running as usual, a line of depth measurements. Near the southern end of Hassel Sound they delayed for thirty hours to take a series of tidal observations, at ten minute intervals. Continuing southward about fourteen miles along the coast of Ellef Ringnes Island, they came upon a camp-site of the Crocker Land Expedition under command of Donald B. MacMillan. In a cairn a record was found showing that MacMillan on a sled journey from his base at Etah, Greenland, had been there on April 23, 1916.

Stefansson's Admiralty chart (No. 2118) showed a large island extending for almost a degree of latitude, lying south of Ellef Ringnes Island and north of Bathurst Island, part of which was marked "Findlay Island", and part, "King Christian Land", but his party travelled right across the area, finding there 160 fathoms of water. The explanation seems to be that in 1853 Sherard Osborn, of the Franklin Search, sighted land to the north of Bathurst Island; and in 1901 Isachsen and Hassel of the Sverdrup Expedition, sighted land to the south of Ellef Ringnes Island. In neither case were these lands visited. Cartographers later assumed that what Osborn saw in 1853 was the south side of the same island that Isachsen and Hassel had sighted from the north in 1901, and merely dotted in a provisional coastline connecting the two. Osborn called his land "Findlay Island", and Sverdrup gave to the other the name, "King Christian Land". Both do exist but the area of each is much less than would appear from charts drawn previous to the corrections which Stefansson's explorations have made possible.

Travelling southward on the sea ice across "Findlay Island", they met with the most difficult travelling conditions that Stefansson had ever experienced; at times for as far as half a mile, the dogs were compelled to swim, towing the floating sledge. Towards the end of July the weather turned cold and a thin sheet of ice formed, obliging them to break a trail for the dogs. This was followed, on August 1, by warmer weather and rain showers, which was not much improvement. Next day, an island was sighted in the south-west; and a few miles farther two others appeared a short distance to the left of the first one. A landing was made on what seemed to be the largest of the three. Stefansson immediately began looking for caribou and soon saw a band on the smallest island. Crossing the three miles of intervening ice, he succeeded in getting seven fat bulls out of nine. Camp was moved to the kill and again there was feasting for both men and dogs.

From the top of the hill on the first island, Stefansson had seen a still larger one lying off to the northwest. Since it was lower than the first three, it had not been visible from the sea ice. Now the chance of securing game on this larger island seemed more promising; and camp was moved to the new discovery. They had no tarpaulin to convert the sledge into a boat, but inflated sealskins tied to the sledge provided the needed buoyancy when crossing the lead. While Charlie and Noice were negotiating this delicate operation, Stefansson had gone ashore to hunt; and, by the time camp was ready, had killed six caribou. Subsequently called "Lougheed Island", after a member of the Government, it proved to be approximately forty-five miles in length by an average width of about twelve, its main axis slightly west of north. The land is rolling and was well covered with vegetation; consequently the caribou were plentiful and fat. The only disadvantage was absence of fuel; there was no drift-wood, and there was an utter absence of heather or other plants that can be used for fuel on most Arctic islands.

With the coming of September, the frosts became much harder and the leads froze over. Travelling to the northwestern corner of the island, they set off on September 9, for

Borden Island, reaching its eastern shore six days later. The days were shortening rapidly, lessened even more so by continuing fog and drizzling snow. The caribou meat brought from Lougheed Island had run out, and the men were reduced to odd scraps of fat and the dogs to worn-out boots, before Melville Island was reached on October second. But the following day Stefansson killed an ovibos bull and cow. There (Cleverly Point, on the north shore of the island), they halted for three days to rest, and then headed for Liddon Gulf, on the south side. Two days later, as Stefansson was hunting ahead, he was surprised to find a sledge track apparently going northward. Following it a few miles, he noticed a light and finally saw a man running towards him. It was Natkusiak, who conducted him to a comfortable camp at Cape Grassy (at the northwestern angle of Melville Island) built of ovibos skins, lighted and warmed by a coal fire.

The presence of coal persuaded Stefansson to establish winter quarters at Cape Grassy, and to start the northern trip in the spring from there. In the meantime, however, he continued on to Kellett, thus completing a sledge journey of two hundred and twenty-nine days. Members who had worked from that base during his absence informed him of the discovery at Winter Harbour, on the east shore of Melville Island, of a supply-depot left there in 1910 by Captain J. E. Bernier, in command of C.G.S. *Arctic*. Stored in a small frame house, it consisted of about four and a half tons of groceries, including 1,000 pounds of pilot bread, 1,000 pounds of flour, 800 pounds of salt pork, 436 pounds of sugar, 360 pounds of pemmican, 80 pounds of coffee, 112 pounds of tea, 60 pounds of butter, dessiccated vegetables, tobacco, both smoking and chewing, kerosene, fuel alcohol, gasoline stoves, rifles, shotguns and ammunition, and various other articles. While Captain Bernier had stipulated in a written statement that the cache was "intended only for shipwrecked crews in case of bare necessity," and although Storkerson would not have agreed that the parties on Melville Island entirely filled that description, he had brought back to Kellett an assortment of groceries and equipment in addition to a sledge load which he had left at the head of Liddon Gulf to be taken later to

Cape Grassy. Storkerson afterwards spent some weeks at Winter Harbour with a party repairing sledges and making other preparations for the coming spring work. Realizing the tendency of some of the men, when the opportunity offered, to live entirely on groceries, Stefansson had warned them to be sure to include sufficient fresh meat in their diet to prevent scurvy, but this they did not always do.

Three bases were in use that winter — the main one at Kellett; the northern outpost at Cape Grassy; and another, also in Melville Island, at Cape James Ross, where a large quantity of ovibos meat was stored that had been killed during the summer. Altogether, the population of Banks and Melville islands numbered more than twenty, consisting of men, women and children. While, at the time, Stefansson had no such purpose in mind, the occupancy of these islands was a factor in the establishment of Canada's claim to parts of the Arctic Archipelago, hitherto of doubtful validity under international law.

The vast northern territory that Canada had acquired in 1870, so far as actual occupancy was concerned, existed only on the map, and that imperfectly drawn. In 1912 the boundary between Canada and Alaska had finally been determined by official survey; but the arctic mainland coast, particularly in its western portion, had not been surveyed. This was one of the purposes of the Southern Section of the Canadian Arctic Expedition.

Although the Section consisted primarily of six scientists — Anderson, zoologist; Jenness, anthropologist; Cox and Chipman, topographers; O'Neill, geologist; and Johansen, botanist and marine biologist, as well as Wilkins, the number of those in camp at Collinson Point that winter (1913-14) was increased by several members of the ships' crews. For part of the time, Leffingwell was a guest. Some crew members, in camps of their own, trapped nearby.

It was July 25, 1914, when the ice-bound ships were free to move eastward, arriving at Herschel Island eleven days later, the first ever to reach that Canadian arctic rendezvous flying the flag of Canada. Their ultimate destination was a

harbour on Dolphin and Union Strait, that separates Victoria Island from the mainland. It had been named by Anderson after Captain Joseph Bernard whose little schooner was anchored there when encountered by Stefansson and Anderson in 1911 and 1912. Bernard Harbour was to be the Section's base for the next two years.

Chipman and Cox had meanwhile completed the mapping of the coast from the International Boundary to the Mackenzie delta and surveyed some of the principal channels of the delta. O'Neill had conducted a geological reconnaissance of the Firth River, which flows from the Endicott Mountains into the ocean near Herschel Island and he also assisted with the mapping. Anderson began what was enventually to become a comprehensive collection of the birds and mammals of the region and also — when administrative duties would permit — assisted with the surveying.

During 1915 and part of 1916 the survey was continued both ways from Bernard Harbour, terminating at Bathurst Inlet, a total distance in a straight line of approximately 800 miles, but much farther along the indentations of the shore. As they came to them, the lower reaches of the principal rivers — Rae, Tree, Crocker — were explored.

During a considerable period of 1916 O'Neill, with the assistance at different times of various members of the group, devoted himself principally to a detailed geological mapping of what seemed to be an important copper-bearing area in the Bathurst Inlet region, of which, in his report, he had this to say:

"The area of rock carrying values in native copper, neglecting those parts of the mainland where sufficient information was not obtained, is roughly estimated to be about 60 square miles. Of this more than 10 square miles occurs in Banks Peninsula, the remainder being represented by the islands. Assuming that one cubic yard of rock weighs 1 ton and that 90 feet is the average thickness of copper-bearing rock, the available tonnage would be about 6,000,000,000 tons carrying 1/100 to ¼ of one percent of disseminated native copper; and an unestimated amount of amygdaloidal material, which assays over one percent of copper, as well as the copper

of the veins, some of which are filled with thin sheets of native copper and others carrying over 4½ percent of flake copper."

During the two years, Jenness and Johansen conducted studies in their respective fields, which by their nature required individual effort. Jenness, after some work the first autumn and winter along the Alaskan coast, began that study of the Eskimos that has since established him as an outstanding authority. Particularly valuable are his recordings of songs, folklore and shamanistic performances.

Johansen, perhaps the most industrious member of the group, made collections of plants and insects as well as freshwater and marine life. For the proper working up of his collections since his return the services of a large number of specialists have been required.

To take full advantage of the specimens and information secured by members of the Section, an "Arctic Biological Committee" was appointed by the departments of Government concerned which undertook to edit the various reports with Dr. Anderson as general editor.* Up to this writing, thirteen complete or partly-completed volumes have been produced, with several others still in preparation.

* Dr. Anderson's own papers were placed in the Public Archives of Canada under the control of an assignee. They were not made available to me for study upon request.

CHAPTER XVI

EXPLORATION IS ENDED

Stefansson had planned to leave for the northern work in January (1917) but was delayed by a slight illness. When he had recovered it was February. Then the mainspring of the better of the two pocket chronometers broke. This was serious. But there is little that a handy sailorman cannot do; and Storkerson eventually transferred a mainspring from an ordinary watch so successfully that the chronometer thereafter kept excellent time. "Of the many useful things Storkerson did for the expedition," wrote Stefansson, "this was one of the most important."

Stefansson realized that this season would probably be the last of the expedition. Much had been accomplished, yet he still hoped for more. Exploratory ice trips in 1915 and 1916 had resulted in discoveries; nevertheless, he fondly thought of making this year's eclipse them. An immense area, in which there could be land awaiting discovery, still remained blank on the map. For a time he counted on two parties, such as he had vainly hoped for the previous year. Prospects were favourable. With a base on Melville Island, they could reach their respective fields of action much sooner than ever before; he had many men to choose from; and there was an abundance of provisions. But the sledges were not of the best; the dogs were not all good ones, mostly the small Eskimo variety; and there was a shortage of good watches, only partly remedied by Storkerson's ingenuity. And then his indisposition, with the consequent delay, finally caused him reluctantly to concentrate again on a single party. Plenty of work remained for those to be left behind, such, for example, as the surveying of the east coast of Borden Island, and the northeast coast of Victoria Island.

Those chosen for the exploratory party with Stefansson were Noice, Knight and Emiu. Their advance really began on April 16, from beyond the northeastern corner of Borden Island when a party including Noice and Knight that had gone ahead to survey the east coast of the island was reorganized and sent back to Melville Island and Kellett leaving to the exploratory party the best dogs and equipment, consisting of two sledges and eighteen dogs. As Stefansson's party proceeded northward, the sledges carried a total of about 1,400 pounds, which included food — chiefly bacon and pemmican — for men and dogs for about fifteen days.

Depth of the soundings increased as they advanced till, when about a hundred miles beyond Borden Island, a sounding of 533 metres was recorded. The ice was practically motionless. Forty miles farther north the depth had decreased to 496 metres which, with the immobility of the ice, seemed to indicate the nearby presence of land. The pack was the heaviest that Stefansson had ever seen; leads were few and narrow, and consequently it was impossible to secure seals.

His diary for April 25, shows how difficult the situation had become: "The going has been soft snow to knee and hip and the dogs are played out. I had my mind made up that a decisively shallower sounding or a sealing lead should mean advance, a very deep sounding should mean retreat. The sounding (507) metres was not decisive, but as the dogs are so tired and the going so execrable I feel that it would be unjustified risk of the men and of our already gained results to go farther." Moreover for several days, Noice had been complaining of illness. Therefore, in lat. 80° 26′, the retreat began.

It was with a bitter sense of disappointment that Stefansson headed southward so early in the season; he realized that his last chance to learn whether extensive land existed west of Banks and Prince Patrick islands was now gone. "At last I fear we are faced home with little further chance to accomplish anything of worth," he wrote a few days later to his friend Carl Akeley .... "Tell Sherwood and Chapman and Andrews and Spinden and the rest that I am busy and gloomy and not in the humour for much writing, but that I hope for

their welcome home and that it will console me for whatever lack of laurel wreaths and freedom of cities there may be."

Two days later Knight and Noice were found to have scurvy which, in any case, would probably have made the return mandatory. Questioned closely, Noice admitted that when a number of them were at Winter Harbour, repairing sledges, some had lived entirely on Bernier's supplies and that while on the advance party he and Charlie had eaten very little else. Living on the *Polar Bear,* Knight had had a considerable amount of meat and fish, but he too, on the trip north, had confined his diet almost exclusively to groceries.

The nearest land, Cape Isachsen, one hundred and twenty-five miles to the southeast, was reached on May 11. Noice had been compelled to ride most of the way, while by the time they got ashore Knight was also nearly at the end of his endurance. The country was almost devoid of vegetation and there was no game in sight. But the second day, while following the coast the nature of the country changed; vegetation was abundant; soon a band of caribou was seen, and Stefansson and Emiu secured everyone of the twenty-three. Moving inland, "camp hospital" was established and the men were put on a diet of raw and underdone meat.

"In the morning meat enough for a small meal was boiled and eaten slightly underdone," writes Stefansson. "There was enough broth left over to furnish something to drink for the rest of the day and any food eaten beyond the boiled breakfast had to be eaten raw. It is one of the characteristics of scurvy, as I have seen it, that the appetite is equal to normal if not greater and there is no serious digestive disturbance until perhaps in the late stages when death is approaching. I could rely on the appetite of my patients, therefore, to lead them to the eating of plenty of raw meat. This was eaten by preference slightly frozen, at a hardness analogous to that of hard ice cream. No meat . . . is ever tough if eaten raw."

On the sixteenth day after reaching land (May 27) the men were sufficiently recovered to resume the journey, but were still weak and could travel only short distances at a time, riding alternately. In a month they were entirely recovered, but their gums were badly receded and never

afterwards returned to their normal condition. With little difficulty, Lougheed Island was reached on the last day of May. Travelling slowly southward along the west coast of the island, they stocked up with caribou meat and, when within ten miles of the camp where Stefansson and his companions of the previous year had eaten cold meals through lack of fuel, Emiu discovered a vein of coal. With plenty of food and fuel, they remained on the island till June 13, and then departed for Melville Island.

Closing out his various camps and bases on the way south, Stefansson sailed for Herschel Island in the *Polar Bear* with the remaining members of the expedition, reaching there on September 7. At Herschel, those wishing to remain in the North were discharged. Expecting to sail the schooner to Nome, and possibly to Victoria, Stefansson, after two or three days at Herschel Island, gave orders for the westward sailing, but at Barter Island, during the night of September 13, a storm came up, the ship dragged her anchor, and in the morning was fast on a sandbar. This accident, and the lateness of the season, determined Stefansson to winter where he was. And now that the chance seemed to offer, he decided to attempt a daring scheme he had had in mind for some time: to proceed as far north as possible with dog teams, establish a camp on a cake of ice, and remain drifting with the current for a year, or possibly two years, subsisting mainly on seals and polar bears. He thought it possible that the party might eventually land in Alaska, Siberia or Greenland, depending upon the direction of the currents. Mr. Desbarats was anxious to end all expense in connection with the expedition and wind up its affairs, but Stefansson did not realize how pressing were the necessities of wartime and he was convinced that the proposed ice drift might prove of great scientific value. Consequently in writing to Mr. Desbarats announcing his new plans he sought thus to justify the possible additional expense by consideration of the further fact that men otherwise idle all winter would now be profitably engaged.

He set about preparations for this new project with enthusiasm as fresh as in the spring of 1914. Most of the dogs

and equipment had been sold at Herschel Island and must now be repurchased, and new sledges made. Accordingly, as soon as the ice was safe for travel, Stefansson and Storkerson set off for Herschel Island along that now familiar coast. Leaving Storkerson there to superintend the freighting of supplies, Stefansson went on to Fort Macpherson to buy dogs; but, returning, he caught what seemed to be a severe cold (from which he, as well as all other members of the expedition, had been free till their return to "civilization"); and when he reached Herschel Island had a temperature of 104°. A room at the Mounted Police barracks was placed at his disposal, and he was given the most solicitous care and attention by everyone. The illness continued for weeks without its true nature being suspected either by patient or nurses. Finally after Constable Lamont was taken ill and died, the disease was diagnosed as typhoid.

Hoping still to make the ice trip, but realizing that the start must of necessity be postponed, he requested Storkerson to come to Herschel Island to talk over plans. By February 5 (1918), when Storkerson left for Barter Island, Stefansson was sufficiently recovered to go out of the house to see him off, but in a few hours had suffered a severe relapse, his temperature shot up to 105°, and his condition was recognized as the first stage of pneumonia.

This turn of events made Stefansson realize that he was in for an illness of weeks and perhaps months. He therefore sent a message to Storkerson directing him to take charge, and to conduct the ice trip along the lines planned.

Consequently, on March 15, Storkerson, with twelve men, fifty-six dogs and eight sledges carrying about 8,000 pounds of food and equipment, started north from Cross Island. The least competent men and the weakest dogs were sent back from time to time, until finally the party consisted of Storkerson, Knight and three others, with one sledge and sixteen dogs.

The expected westerly drift was not encountered. From April 14 to July 13, they drifted steadily eastward before the wind, which then changed, and they drifted to the northwest, a distance of 7° of longitude. The wind again changed and

they drifted northeastward, reaching, on September 3, north latitude 74°, their most northerly point. From then on, until they started for shore on October 9, they zig-zagged back and forth with the wind. At the end of 184 days' drifting, they were 70 miles farther north than when the drift began on April 8. The trip back to shore, over 250 miles of moving ice, in a very unfavourable time of year, was a considerable feat in itself. The project had occupied altogether 238 days and a total of 440 miles had been drifted. Seals had supplied a large part of the food. Innumerable soundings had been taken, and much other useful data was obtained. Stefansson's critics, ignoring (or ignorant of) the value of these data, continued to denounce the project as a publicity stunt; and it was not until 1937, when the Soviet expedition under Ivan Papanin confirmed the soundness of Stefansson's theories did he receive belated credit — but not in Canada.

Stefansson became convinced that his best chance of living was to reach the hospital at Fort Yukon about 400 miles to the southward. But when he proposed this it was decided on consultation among his voluntary nurses that such a journey would be fatal and could not be allowed. He continued to get worse, however, till everyone finally agreed that he was going to die; and then Inspector Phillips of the North West Mounted Police took the stand that if he must die, he might as well die trying to get to the hospital.

It was the first week in April when Stefansson left on a sledge specially prepared for him with bedsprings, on which he was quite comfortable. At the end of the fifteen mile drive to Stokes Point, to everyone's surprise, his fever had abated, and, for the first time, he was allowed to eat one of his favourite dishes — some frozen raw fish! Regularly thereafter he had breakfast and supper of meat and fish, sometimes frozen and raw and sometimes boiled. His temperature remained normal and he gained weight. So much had he improved that when he reached the hospital, he walked from the gate to the house. The journey had taken twenty-seven days, and he had put on thirty pounds.

"From the windows in St. Stephen's Hospital I could look south across the Arctic Circle into the 'Temperate

Zone', he wrote later. "Not only by this sign but by many others was my polar voyage over. From the isolation and virgin peace of the North we had come first to Herschel Island with carpets and rocking-chairs and news from 'the world' thrice a year or oftener; now we were at Fort Yukon with a wireless bulletin coming in every day at noon. The Germans were crushing their way every day nearer Paris and their guns were shelling it (April 1918). The electric sensory nerves of civilization reached thus far already, and ours was part of the painful and breathless suspense of the whole world. Both for good and for evil I was home after five years.[1]

To Stefansson the war had been but the dimmest of shadows. News of it had been infrequent and fragmentary, and always with the expectation that its end must be soon. The world had become used to casualty lists, to death and disaster; but these things were new to him. He must in a few weeks or months attain the orientation that to most others had come imperceptibly with the crowded years.

When word of his arrival at Fort Yukon got out, the local telegraph office was deluged with telegrams from friends who had twice mourned his death — for it had been reported and widely circulated that he had succumbed to typhoid at Herschel Island. One of his first unpleasant intimations that news values had altered was when he sent a press item to the Toronto *Globe* and had himself to pay the tolls. Under his agreement with the New York *Times,* duplicate and triplicate press dispatches were to be supplied to the London *Chronicle* and to the *Globe,* respectively; and, whenever occasion offered, he had regularly forwarded to them synopses of expedition news. Now, upon wiring the *Times,* he was informed that owing to lack of interest in anything except the war, the *Chronicle* had, in 1916, ceased to accept his articles. He had been notified of this at the time but had not received the letter. The Macmillan Company, under ordinary circumstances eager for a book by Stefansson, wired that postponement of publication till after the war, was advisable. And

(1) Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic* (New Edition), 1944, p. 685.

disquieting accounts came through friends of the circulation in Canada of charges and allegations in connection with his conduct of the expedition. These, he was informed, were being set on foot by Anderson, still with the Geological Survey, and by other former members of the Southern Section, and their friends.

In spite of the general preoccupation with the war, Stefansson's return was given considerable space in the newspapers; and various organizations in Canada and the United States invited him to address them. The Government desired, however, that he should complete his report before undertaking any extensive lecture program; and on that account only a few lecture engagements were made. He was particularly pleased to accept an invitation from the Empire Club of Toronto, before whom he had last spoken in 1913, on the eve of his departure for the North. When this date — November 11 — was set no one had any idea that it was to become one of the most significant dates in history. Stefansson was given a public reception by the Mayor and City Council, and, despite the joyful delirium that swept the city when definite news of peace was received, the lecture was well attended. After giving a short account of the results of the expedition, he launched into a vigorous and enthusiastic exposition of the possibilities of the reindeer industry in northern Canada and of the domestication of the ovibos. When he had done, his friend, Sir Edmund Walker, in proposing a vote of thanks, paid him fine tribute and in conclusion said: "On this great day, when we are celebrating the peace of the world, it does not seem to me a minor event that we are also able to celebrate the return of a man who has risked so much and done so much for this country."

CHAPTER XVII

APPRECIATION AND ANTAGONISM

Stefansson's fellow-explorers also showed their appreciation. Admiral Peary and General Greely, the two best-known figures in American Polar history, made the presentation to him of the Hubbard Gold Medal on behalf of the National Geographic Society. (He had already received the Daly Gold Medal of the American Geographical Society, of New York, that, in 1914, had elected him an Honorary Fellow in appreciation of his work on his previous expedition. Following the Hubbard Medal, came the Kane Medal of the Geographical Society of Philadelphia, the Cullum Medal of the Chicago Geographic Society, and the La Roquette Medal of the Geographical Society of Paris.)

This was Peary's last public appearance; against his doctor's orders he had got out of a sick bed to do honour to Stefansson.

"Today we add another to the long list of polar explorers, both north and south, whom our Society has welcomed and to whom our members have listened with absorbing interest," said Admiral Peary. "Six years ago in the parlour of a hotel in Rome, I said good-bye to a confident young friend of mine who was starting then for home in order to begin one of our latest polar quests. I met him here today for the first time since then. How much has happened to him in those six years I need not attempt to relate. Five and one-half years of those six this man has been there in the arctic regions adding to the sum of the world's knowledge. Five and one-half years!

"It is not my intent to go into a resumé of his work. He is going to tell you that himself, but I can note very briefly that within that time Stefansson has added more than 100,000

square miles to the maps of the region — the greatest single addition made for years in arctic regions. He has outlined three islands that were entirely unknown before and his observations in other directions, the delineation of the continental shelf, filling in of unknown gaps in the arctic archipelago and his help in summing up our knowledge of those regions are in fact invaluable.

"Stefansson is perhaps the last of the old school, the old regime of arctic and antarctic explorers, the worker with the dog and the sledge, among whom he easily holds a place in the first rank. Coming polar explorers, both north and south, are quite likely to use mechanical means which have sprung into existence within the last few years. According to my own personal impressions — aerial flights; according to Stefansson, he would like to try his chances with a submarine; but whether it be aeroplane or submarine, it will mean the end of the old-time method, with the dog and the sledge, and man trudging alongside or behind them.

"What Stefansson stands for is this: he has grasped the meaning of polar work and has pursued his task in the arctic regions section by section. He has profited by experience piled upon experience until he knows how to face and overcome every problem of the North. His method of work is to take the white man's brains and intelligence and the white man's persistence and will-power into the Arctic and supplement these forces with the woodcraft or I should say polarcraft of the Eskimo, — the ability to live off the land itself, the ability to use every one of the few possibilities of those frozen regions — and concentrate on his work.

"Stefansson has evolved a way to make himself absolutely self-sustaining. He could have lived in the Arctic fifteen and a half years just as easily as five and a half years. By combining great natural, physical and mental ability, with hard practical common sense, he has made an absolute record.

"Stefansson has not only fought and overcome those ever present contingencies of the arctic region — cold and hunger, wet and starvation, and all that goes with them — but he has fought and overcome sickness — first, typhoid, then pneumonia, then pleurisy — up in those forbidding regions, and

then has been obliged to go by sled four hundred miles before finding the shelter of a hospital and the care of a physician."

And General Greely said:

"We come together to welcome back Vilhjalmur Stefansson, whose published obituary you have read, but who insists with Mark Twain that the account of his death has been greatly exaggerated....

* * *

"In recognition both of the idealistic spirit and of the geographic importance of the discoveries made by Vilhjalmur Stefansson the Board of Managers of the National Geographic Society unanimously direct me to present to him the Hubbard Medal.

"It is to be added that the three survivors of the so-called Greely International Polar Expedition are too far advanced in years to hazard Polar work; but as explorers of the nineteenth century who first wrested from England a record held for three hundred years — that of the farthest north — they wish to honour the explorer of the twentieth century who surpasses them.

"Appreciative of Stefansson's endurance of hardships, his ability in devising new methods, his courage in testing such methods, and his standing as a typical arctic explorer, the members of the Greely Expedition 'who are about to die, salute him'."

The sincerity of these two distinguished explorers is not to be doubted, but they failed almost completely to recognize Stefansson's most outstanding achievement. They credited him with triumphing over cold, hunger, gloom and other forbidding aspects of the generally inhospitable North. What they had in mind was a sort of heroic super-endurance; whereas his real triumph was that he had come to understand the Arctic, and because of this understanding those very definite obstacles to Peary, Greely and others of their generation were simply non-existent to him. Great as Stefansson's physical exploits undoubtedly were, his chief contribution was in the intellectual field: he destroyed an arctic

concept that had endured for centuries — but he had first to destroy it in his own mind.

Anderson had not, in the interval, allowed his hostility to wane. Shortly after Stefansson's return, he wrote a letter to Dr. Isaiah Bowman, Director of the American Geographical Society, who was also secretary of the Explorers Club of New York, protesting against the proposal to elect Stefansson president. After two and a half single-spaced pages of vilification, his concluding paragraph was characteristic:

"I know this is too late to have any effect in the election matter, and I am only a non-resident member at that. If the election comes off as anticipated I shall regretfully have to file a request to be an ex-member, as a matter of principle and of protest, of honour as an ex-soldier of the United States, an officer and I trust a gentleman, a man and a Mason . . . ."

This unsuccessful attack was followed by a campaign in the newspapers which impressed many people because the statements made were by a member of the Civil Service who apparently enjoyed the confidence of his superiors. Such an anomalous situation was, of course, a direct corollary of the unfortunate division of authority that had existed since the transfer of the expedition to Canadian control.

Stefansson was well aware that Anderson's charges carried no weight with Sir Robert Borden and his colleagues. Nevertheless, he pressed for a full public inquiry. This the government did not feel was necessary but ordered a private investigation, one result of which was, that in formal recognition of Stefansson's services, Arthur Meighen, who had succeeded Sir Robert Borden as Prime Minister, caused an Order-in-Council (dated January 21, 1921) to be passed, which read:

"The Committee of the Privy Council have before them a report dated 25th November, 1920, from the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister, submitting that it is fitting that some formal recognition be made of the services rendered to Canada by Mr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson in the course of the arctic explorations with which his name is so prominently connected.

"The Prime Minister observes that on three expeditions Mr. Stefansson has spent eleven years exploring the northern

parts of the Canadian mainland and the islands and seas to the north and northwest.

"The first of these expeditions was partly supported by the University of Toronto, the second partly by the Geological Survey of Canada, while the third, the Stefansson Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-1918, was entirely a Canadian Government enterprise. Mr. Stefansson has added greatly to our knowledge of lands already known to exist and has discovered lands of large area previously unknown, thereby extending the boundaries of Canada. His work and that of the members of his expeditions have given us much valuable scientific information about our northern territories and seas. By developing a new method in arctic exploration, a method of living on the country by forage, he has called strikingly to the attention of the world the fact that the North is not so barren nor its climate so hostile to comfort, as had previously been regarded as true. He has thus foreshadowed an important extension of the boundaries of human habitation. In his writings and speeches he has been assiduous in calling to our attention the great natural resources of the North which we had previously undervalued. He has turned men's minds towards the North Country as a possible source of food supply and a home for colonists, and his work and advice have proved the greatest incentive in promoting public and private development of our northern resources....

* * *

"The Committee [the Order-in-Council continues] on the recommendation of the Right Hon. the Prime Minister, and in view of these considerations, advises that in recognition and appreciation of his distinguished services, the thanks of the Government of Canada be formally extended to Mr. Stefansson, and that a certified copy of this Minute be sent him accordingly."

This tribute was in keeping with the splendid attitude of the Government toward Stefansson from the first. The expedition, in the end, had cost half a million dollars — several times the original estimate — yet, in spite of the almost

unbearable strain of maintaining an immense army in the field and other expenses due to the war, all expedition accounts were met without cavil. Stefansson was, of course, very fortunate in having the general direction of the expedition in the hands of such a competent and appreciative administrator as George J. Desbarats. In the midst of the multitudinous demands made upon him as executive head of Canada's Naval Service in wartime, his attention to expedition matters was always most prompt and sympathetic.

Since his return from the North, Stefansson had made his headquarters in New York, where the American Geographical Society had provided him with offices free of charge in its building at Broadway and 156th Street. Much of his time, however, was spent in Ottawa, and he was pleased when Sir Robert Borden offered to propose him as a member of the Capital's leading club, the Rideau. Stefansson's enemies had failed in their charges against him, and he had been given the official thanks of the Government, but they now saw an opportunity to humiliate him. Despite his distinguished backers, his election was blocked by adverse votes ."To say that I am surprised at what happened is to put the matter very mildly . . . ," wrote Mr. Rhodes, who had seconded the nomination. "I have always had a very great admiration for you and the work which you have accomplished, and have every faith in your future, and I regret this incident more deeply than I can say. I feel sure under the circumstances you will exercise patience and I have every hope that after canvassing the situation, the result will be different another occasion. Now that you have submitted your name, I think it would be a pity to allow the matter to drop, because it makes for reflection on yourself which is entirely undeserving." Sir Robert wrote: "Pray do not feel any regret on my account. My regret is that the Rideau Club has made itself so supremely ridiculous. In my opinion it was honoured in having you seek admission as a member."

As if to emphasize the ridiculous nature of the action referred to by Sir Robert, Stefansson a few days later received a letter from the Royal Geographical Society of London informing him that "His Majesty the King has been graciously

pleased to approve the award to you of the Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society for your distinguished services to the Dominion of Canada in the exploration of the Arctic Ocean."

From time to time between lecture engagements and other distractions, he was working on the popular account of his five years in the North. In December, 1921, the book was published by Macmillan under the title, *The Friendly Arctic,* a name which is in itself a challenge to his critics — a break with the traditional view of the polar regions as a place of uncompromising rigour and ruthlessness. It consisted of more than 700 pages, with numerous illustrations and maps, several appendices, and a splendidly appreciative Introduction by Sir Robert Borden. (In 1944 a new edition was published which inclued an additional chapter.)

It is undoubtedly the greatest book on polar exploration. Taken as the story of one man's achievements over a five-year period, it is as interesting as the most thrilling tale of adventure. There is the drama of man's immemorial struggle with the elements, to which is added the clash of men's passions, prejudices and ambitions. But, more than that, it is permeated by a philosophy, which for the people of the northern part of the northern hemisphere, especially Canada and Siberia, is of vital importance. It may be thought to suffer somewhat from repetition and over-emphasis of Stefansson's particular points, but that is perhaps inevitable in a book with a mission. He takes full blame for the loss of the *Karluk*, but does not make clear the anomalous situation of which the Geological Survey members, as well as he, were the victims.

The book was well received by the public generally. Naturally, its publication set off a counter-blast form Anderson and some others members of the Southern Section. On January 14, 1922, Anderson was quoted as denying that Stefansson had any authority over the civil service group in the North; that he exceeded his authority in organizing a further exploratory expedition after the loss of the *Karluk*; and enlarged upon Stefansson's "extravagance" in buying ships, equipment and supplies, and declared that the greater part

of the half-million dollars that the expedition had cost was unauthorized. Other, more serious, "charges" were hinted at, but they have never been produced and, in fact, have never had any basis in fact.

The Government (now a new one under the leadership of Mackenzie King) remained apparently neutral. The civil service members were asked, however, to refrain from further newspaper controversy, but were allowed to make a more dignified rejoinder in a scientific journal,[1] but the whispering campaign continued unabated.

With a few exceptions, reviews in newspapers and scientific journals were favourable, some quite enthusiastic. The National Geographic Society awarded *The Friendly Arctic* the Grant Squires prize for the greatest addition to geographic knowledge during the year. And it is safe to say that had Stefansson no other claim to greatness, his name will live as the author of *The Friendly Arctic.*

Shortly after Stefansson's return, Professor C. T. Currelly, of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, urged him to consider a post at the University of Toronto and proposed to the Board of Governors that he be offered the position of Professor of Anthropology at a modest salary with freedom to engage in exploration, but on the understanding that he should lecture at the University in the intervals between expeditions and eventually settle down permanently as a professor on the staff. This Stefansson might at that time have considered, but Currelly's proposal was not accepted by the Governors. (Not till 1925 did the University have an anthropologist on its staff.)

The loss was much more the University's and Canada's than Stefansson's. Unfortunately, it reflects the attitude of Canadian universities towards him and his work. Universities in the United States have honoured him with degrees and other recognition; he has been invited to lecture at the greatest universities in England; but he has been systematically ignored by Canadian institutions.

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(1) D. Jenness, *Science*, July 7, 1922.

In 1923, I was present when the late President Burton of the University of Michigan tried vainly to persuade Stefansson to accept a chair which he proposed to establish for him to be known as "Human Geography". In spite of Dr. Burton's assurance that he should not be expected to spend more than one semester each year in residence, Stefansson declined the offer.

Michigan was the first university to confer upon him the honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, and he received a similar one from the State University of Iowa. This was most significant in view of the relations existing between Anderson and him; the University of which they were both distinguished alumni might have been excused if it had preferred to remain neutral. In 1929, he was selected to deliver the Lowell Lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston. But undoubtedly the crowning honour came to him on June 19, 1930, when the University of North Dakota conferred on him an honorary degree of LL. D. In presenting him, his friend and former teacher, Dean Joseph Kennedy, said in part: "There is an old adage that 'good boys die young'; but Vilhjalmur was not a good boy in that sense. The 'good' boy who dies young is one who had not vitality or energy enough to get into mischief; but Vilhjalmur was a good and much brighter boy in the true sense; he was overflowing with vitality and energy, and as a consequence was caught in the toils of the rules and regulations which then existed at the University. Hence he was suspended, expelled, or dismissed — it has never been interpreted which it was."

CHAPTER XVIII

HUDSON'S BAY REINDEER COMPANY

Since his return, Stefansson had persistently attempted to impress upon the Government the importance of the development of the reindeer industry in northern Canada and the domestication of the ovibos. It was fortunate that the Department of the Interior was then presided over by Arthur Meighen, a capable administrator who shared Sir Robert Borden's estimate of Stefansson and was easily convinced of the possibilities inherent in the otherwise useless grazing areas of the Far North. He arranged an opportunity for Stefansson to address, on May 6, 1919, a joint meeting of the Senate and the House of Commons. In this speech, Stefansson showed the value of both reindeer and ovibos as meat animals, and of the ovibos as a producer of milk and wool as well. He told how, thirty years before, the United States Government had imported 1,280 reindeer into Alaska from Siberia; and how in the interval these had increased to 170,000 head, after almost as many had been butchered for food. A commercial company had been organized and was already shipping reindeer meat to the United States. He recommended the establishment of the industry in the Canadian North in a large way. "Of course," he said, "we shall eventually have our whole North covered with domestic reindeer, whether we start with one thousand animals or ten thousand. But the difference is this: that if we start with ten or twenty thousand we shall have an industry that will be profitable and important in our own time, while if we start with five hundred or a thousand, we are merely building for the coming generation."

After discussing the possibilities of domesticating the ovibos, he concluded: "If we do this on a large scale, we shall

through these two animals within the next twenty-five years convert northern Canada from a land of practically no value into the great permanent wool, milk and meat producing country of the western hemisphere. Of course, there will sometime be a parallel development all over northern Siberia and there is already such a development in northern Europe. When the rest of the world has ceased to produce considerable quantities of meat and wool because of the greater profit to be obtained from cereals and orchards, this belt of the world will attain an importance unrealized today — if we continue to be eaters of meat and butter and the wearers of woollen clothes."

A few weeks later, Mr. Meighen appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the whole question of northern development, but with special reference to reindeer and ovibos. Dr. J. G. Rutherford, of Ottawa, a member of the Board of Railway Commissioners, by profession a veterinarian, was appointed Chairman; the other members were: J. B. Harkin, of Ottawa, Commissioner of National Parks, J. S. McLean, Toronto, General Manager of the Harris Abattoir Company (later, Canada Packers Limited); and Stefansson himself.

Because of the difficulty of getting the commissioners together, no action was taken during 1919, but when the Commission was convened in the following spring, several sessions were held at which many authoritative witnesses were heard. The evidence given by nearly all of them strongly confirmed Stefansson's representations. The Commission's report was not available until 1921, but before that time Stefansson had ceased to be a member because he had undertaken to establish a commercial reindeer company.

In October, 1919, through Bruno Weyers, New York agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, Stefansson had approached that Company with a proposal that it should recognize the change that time was bringing about in the North by undertaking reindeer raising on an extensive scale. Weyers had referred the matter to the Board of Governors in London, and on March 13, 1920, at the invitation of the Board, Stefansson sailed for England to discuss the subject.

Before sailing, he had made application to the Government for an exclusive grazing lease covering approximately 113,000 square miles of territory in southern Baffin Island.

Stefansson went to London armed with a letter of introduction from Weyers to Charles V. Sale, Deputy Governor of the Company. "In going abroad under our arrangement, you may feel it fortunate that your negotiations will be with as fine a group of Englishmen as can be found," Weyers wrote to Stefansson. "I wish you every success in an undertaking which seems important far beyond any trade possibilities, and I feel assured of your success."

He found Sale and his associates all that Weyers had predicted. Sir Augustus Nanton, of Winnipeg, Chairman of the Canadian Committee, at the time in England, was also consulted. The Directors already knew something of reindeer, for the Company had been operating in the region of the Kara Sea, where the trade, in addition to furs, was largely in reindeer hides. Furthermore, the Company's ships were already sailing round the north coast of Norway — where reindeer could be secured — and it was felt that the moment was most opportune for an undertaking in reindeer raising.

Returning from England at the end of April, Stefansson vigorously promoted the negotiations for the lease. After a considerable interchange of letters and telegrams, the application was approved and he was so informed by a telegram from Mr. Meighen, to which — on June 2 (1920) — he optimistically replied: "I believe country will have good reason to be grateful to yourself and the Government, to the Hudson's Bay Company and I hope to me for the inception of this enterprise which will be epoch-making." The lease was signed nine days later. Stefansson was delighted; the reindeer industry in Canada seemed to be off to a most propitious start.

The lease, in addition to grazing rights, authorized the erection and maintenance of butchering, canning and tanning establishments, and the making of harbour improvements, on condition that at least one thousand imported reindeer should be on the land by November 1, 1924, and six thousand by the first of November, 1932, with an eventual total herd of ten

thousand head, including imported animals, natural increase, and a percentage of native caribou which might be incorporated into the herds.

Following the signing of the lease, the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company, Limited, was incorporated at Winnipeg. Stefansson had suggested that the Company engage also in the domestication of the buffalo and the ovibos, but his new associates thought it better to make a success of the reindeer venture first. They were interested, however, in securing additional grazing leases, and Stefansson was urged to proceed with an application for a considerable area in northern Quebec. Negotiations for the latter dragged on for some time before the Quebec Government decided not to make the grant. An attempt was also made to secure from the Department of the Interior a lease of an extensive area east of the Mackenzie delta. This application was not granted but it is significant that eight years later the Government itself — in order to provide a meat supply for local Eskimos — arranged for a herd of some three thousand reindeer to be driven overland from Alaska to stock this very region.

The most important feature of the whole venture, in Stefansson's opinion, was the person to manage the enterprise. From the beginning, he had in mind none other than his friend and former travelling-companion, Storker Storkerson; and on his recommendation Storkerson was engaged as manager. It was decided that during the summer of 1920 he should sail from Montreal in the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer *Nascopie,* make a survey of that part of the island covered by the lease, and report his findings. Then, in 1921, he would go to Norway, purchase the number of reindeer agreed upon, and get the enterprise started in Baffin Island. Returning with a glowing account of the island's suitability for reindeer-raising, Storkerson went to England to confer with Hudson's Bay Company's officials concerning the shipment of supplies to the Island and the purchase of the first herd of deer, in connection with which he made a preliminary visit to Norway.

To Stefansson, busily engaged on a continent-wide lecture tour, everything seemed most auspicious. He was in

California when the first word reached him by telegram that all was not well — that Storkerson had resigned. Stefansson eventually learned that the trouble had been caused by a new arrangement instituted by Mr. Sale. A man named Francis Wood — who had previously bought reindeer for the Grenfell Mission — had been retained to do the purchasing; and a Captain Mikkelborg was to be responsible for their transportation. Storkerson's responsibility would begin only when the deer were landed in Baffin Island, and to this he had objected. He offered, however, to withdraw his resignation if given complete control, but this Mr. Sale refused to do, and Storkerson's resignation was "accepted with regret". "The Company of Merchant Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay" were not in the habit of being dictated to by their "servants".

Stefansson vainly urged the retention of Storkerson on the ground that Laplanders and Norwegians, who would doubtless now be placed in charge in Baffin Island, would not be familiar with a treeless region. "The more I think of it the more I am depressed," he wrote. "For one thing, the Laplanders are in winter a forest people, unfamiliar with a climate such as Baffin Island. A Norwegian such as Captain Mikkelborg presumably is, is not necessarily better fitted for the work (I hope he may be) than a Spaniard. Shall I try to get some Laplander who has been in Alaska? I hope you will favour this, for I think we are riding for a fall in Baffinland...."

The subsequent history of the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company amply bears out Stefansson's gloomy prognostications. He had done his best to avert disaster, but his advice had been ignored. The first shipment of deer consisted, instead of the minimum of one thousand as suggested by Stefansson, of only six hundred and twenty-seven animals. Stefansson was disturbed by the smallness of the herd, for reindeer are extremely gregarious and seem much more comfortable when in large herds, and are then easier to handle. Having little faith in the ability of inexperienced Lapps to meet their first winter on the treeless tundra, he did not look forward to the spring with much hope.

The visit of the *Nascopie* to Baffin Island in the summer

of 1922 disclosed a situation fully as bad as Stefansson had feared in his most pessimistic moments. Only five hundred and fifty reindeer had survived the vicissitudes of shipping and landing, and these, shortly after being put ashore, had scattered in all directions while the Lapp herders were occupied in providing a shelter for themselves and their families. These arrangements should, of course, have been made in advance. By spring only 210 remained, and it is probable that many were absorbed by caribou herds. The Lapps attributed the loss to the coldness of the weather and the lack of suitable forage; but the fact that caribou thrive in considerable numbers on the Island renders such an explanation very unlikely. No efforts were made to restock the leasehold in quantity and benefit by experience already gained at great cost. The few animals that remained disappeared during the next two seasons. Because the Company had failed to implement its provisions, the lease was eventually cancelled, and ultimately the Company itself was wound up. Thus ended a pioneering effort which surely deserved better fortune.

This unfortunate outcome to an enterprise upon which he had set his heart was a hard blow for Stefansson. The history of North America is replete with instances of the failure of pioneer undertakings, and no courage is needed for critics to discount the chances of success. Stefansson's opponents, always eager to take advantage of any opportunity to disparage him, now made the most of this one.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WRANGEL ISLAND VENTURE

In 1880, all the islands lying in the arctic north of Canada which from time to time had been discovered by British expeditions, were transferred by the Imperial Parliament to Canadian jurisdiction. Subsequently, Canada set up a claim to all lands beyond the Canadian mainland, northward to the Pole, whether discovered or not. During the years 1904 to 1911, the C.G.S. *Arctic*, under command of Captain J. E. Bernier, had visited many of the northern islands, but since then — except for Stefansson's explorations — nothing had been done to confirm Canada's claim.

This claim had been challenged by certain Danes, in Greenland (not, however, supported by their Government), who questioned the Canadian right to prohibit their killing of musk-oxen in Ellesmere Island; and some official United States maps did not show certain islands claimed by us as belonging to this country.

Following his return from the North, Stefansson had continued to urge members of the Government to see to it that Canada's claim to these and other arctic lands was confirmed by appropriate action. From time to time he discussed the possibility of a new expedition under his own leadership with various members of the Government, particularly with Mr. Meighen, and also with Sir Robert Borden who, although no longer Prime Minister, was still keenly interested in northern development. On October 30, 1920, he wrote to Sir Robert, in part as follows:

"I had the opportunity of a good talk with Mr. Meighen about the importance of Canada's exploring the whole unknown ocean so as not only to add to knowledge, but to get

a clear title to any lands that may be discovered. The signs are continually multiplying that other countries are beginning to suspect there may be considerable economic value in even the remotest lands. Any that are hereafter discovered are sure to go to those who discover them, for with a clear realization of their value a discovery is likely to be followed by occupation.

"It seems that there are many now in Ottawa who see clearly the importance of making good our claim to Ellesmere Island and the other islands in the vicinity of Greenland .... I want to urge the equal importance of an occupation of Wrangel Island and an exploration of the ocean to the north. Ellesmere Island is already valued enough by Denmark for her to question our title, but nobody has as yet taken any steps with regard to Wrangel Island. A quiet occupation by us now will probably not bring forth any protest for several years and by then our title will be clear, especially in view of the fact that it is originally a British discovery and that the only people who have occupied it for any length of time were the members of our expedition in 1914 (they were there six months) ...."

Sir Robert replied that he would discuss the matter with Mr. Meighen. Eventually it was referred to Sir James Lougheed, the new Minister of the Interior. By February, negotiations had avanced to a point where the Government had decided to send an expedition to Ellesmere Island during the coming summer. The command had been formally offered to Stefansson and he had accepted. This had been strenuously opposed by the Anderson group, but up to this point they had been unsuccessful. The strongest point in favour of Stefansson's leadership was that it would indicate a measure of continuity of occupation by Canadian exploratory parties. This was emphasized by Loring Christie, one of the most influential of the Government's advisers on external affairs.

Stefansson was glad to have an opportunity to do something about Ellesmere Island, but he was still concerned about the fate of Wrangel. It seemed a pity that the validity of the claim established by the 1914 occupation should run out through neglect. In this connection, he thought of his former

associate, the Hudson's Bay Company, to whom he suggested that it put a trading-post on the island. He received a reply that the Company might consider the proposal if the island could be claimed as British territory. Stefansson took this question to Meighen, who replied (February 19, 1921): "I have discussed the matters which you laid before me today and desire to advise you that this Government purposes to assert the right of Canada to Wrangel Island, based upon the discoveries and explorations of your expedition."

A copy of this letter, forwarded to the Hudson's Bay Company, in London, brought this reply: "Some weeks ago we authorized our Fur Trade Commissioner to take the necessary steps for the establishment of a post at Wrangel Island during the forthcoming season."

In the interval, however, Stefansson had received a letter from the Prime Minister's secretary, dated March 1, which read: "The Prime Minister asks that pending further advice you make no use of his letter to you of February 19 about Wrangel Island." The reason for this seeming right-about-face was a division of opinion among departmental heads in which the Anderson faction played its usual part.

Then, without premonition, a telegram from Harkin informed Stefansson that the Ellesmere Island expedition, so carefully planned, was abandoned. The ostensible reason was that Sir Ernest Shackleton, the antarctic explorer, had arrived in Canada with a scheme for a north polar expedition and had succeeded in securing the backing of Sir John Eaton, the Toronto department store magnate, who was ready to subscribe $100,000 if the Government would match the amount. With this wedge, Stefansson's opponents were able to split the Cabinet, which resulted in a decision to do nothing. When it is remembered that this was only a short while before the Rideau Club incident, some idea may be gained of the influence exerted by Stefansson's detractors.

Cancellation of the Ellesmere expedition marked a turning-point in the development of the North. Had it been proceeded with as planned, it would have effected the continuance of Stefansson's explorations and would most likely have resulted in his establishing himself in Canada and be-

coming a factor in its affairs. He was almost heartbroken by this unexpected blow, but within a short while had made a typical recovery and was determined to organize an expedition of his own to occupy Wrangel Island. For some time he had been discussing with Harkin the question of personnel for the Ellesmere expedition. Letters had been written in his name to a number of Canadian university presidents, asking them to nominate suitable young men for places on a possible expedition. One of these letters brought a reply from a young man at the University of Toronto, Allan R. Crawford, who gave his age as twenty, said he was eager to join an Arctic expedition, and asked for an interview. He explained that he was writing his third year exams; that his work during the previous two years had been chiefly in geology, paleontology, chemistry and mathematics. In addition, during the previous summer, he had done field work for the Geological Survey of Canada. The letter concluded with the assurance that the writer's father, Professor J. T. Crawford, of the University of Toronto, approved of his plans. Stefansson liked the letter, and wired that he would let him know later if anything could be done.

Lorne Knight and Fred Maurer, former expedition members, had been in touch with Stefansson concerning the possibility of going north again. Stefansson now sounded them out and found that they were eager to join an expedition. Knight's reply was typical: "Of course you must realize that I am very anxious to go north under your direction, and am waiting eagerly that opportunity. I have been away from the Arctic nearly two years now, and it has been quite a long two years."

Stefansson would have liked Knight to be the leader of the expedition, principally because of his experience, but he felt it was inadvisable to have an American in that post and consequently he chose Crawford, despite his youth and inexperience. Crawford would act as nominal leader, but would depend upon Knight and Maurer for advice. The expedition would be conducted by The Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company, Limited, which was incorporated at Vancouver, B.C., on June 23, 1921.

The organization of this expedition was kept secret. Crawford and Knight joined Stefansson on his lecture tour, ostensibly as assistants, in order to learn as much as possible about his views and ideas. Later, they met in Seattle, where they were joined by Maurer and Milton Galle, a young Texan, who for a short while had acted as Stefansson's secretary and who had become fired by a desire to go north.

The plan was that the four young men should go to Wrangel Island, prepared to remain two years. They would immediately upon arrival take formal possession in the name of King George V on behalf of Canada. Stefansson hoped that eventually the Government would formally recognize the island as Canadian territory: the reasons that had prompted the Prime Minister's letter of February 19 were still valid. He hoped that in time the Company (which he had largely financed himself) would be reimbursed for the cost of the expedition. In any event, he believed that by trapping the occupation could be made profitable.

Most of the outfit was bought in Seattle. Stefansson warned the young adventurers against taking meat foods to an island known to be well supplied with game. He advised them especially to include, a *umiak,* or Eskimo skin boat, which they would buy at Nome, for use in hunting walruses. Of equal importance, he assured them, was the hiring of several Eskimo families in order to have the women to make the very necessary arctic-type clothing.

To reach him in Seattle before sailing-day, Stefansson wrote a long letter to Crawford, reviewing plans already discussed and adding final advice:

"Formal instructions to you are scarcely needed as we have talked things over in general and you understand our plans," he wrote. "We must rely on the resulting understanding of the problems involved, and upon mutual good faith.

"You must usually make your own decision, preferably after consulting Knight and Maurer .... always remember the following: Although I have confidence in you, you are never-

theless in command through the accident of being British, while Knight and Maurer are not. They have valuable experience which you lack. You are consequently about in the position of a young man inheriting a property which he has no experience in managing. The wiser you are the more you will follow the advice of your experienced men, Knight and Maurer . . . ."

Arriving at Nome by passenger boat from Seattle, they sailed for Wrangel Island on September 9, 1921, in a chartered schooner, the *Silver Wave*. Their outfit consisted of traps, rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and a fairly complete equipment of tools and hardware materials. They had flashlights and spare batteries, lanterns, primus, as well as sheet-iron stoves, and chains and materials for making dog harness. They had a number of canvas tents, extra canvas and a sewing machine, rope, fishing tackle, shovels, ice picks, cooking gear. They had about five thousand pounds of staple groceries, but it was understood that these were merely emergency rations: the party was to live chiefly on fresh meat, for the island was the haunt of polar bears, while on the ice pans surrounding the island were hundreds of thousands of walruses.

Stefansson had emphasized the importance of two things: a umiak, and the hiring of Eskimo families. Soon after their arrival at Nome they made arrangements with several Eskimos, but when the time came to sail, only one, a middle-aged woman named Ada Blackjack, was on hand. The day was fine, the wind was fair and the young men were eager to be on their way. They hired Ada at a salary of fifty dollars a month (to be deposited in the bank at Nome), and decided that she was capable of doing what sewing was needed.

A umiak was not for sale at a price they considered reasonable, and they decided to pick one up at East Cape, Siberia. At East Cape, however, they were asked forty dollars for a suitable skin boat — not an excessive price — but they refused to buy it. Instead, they secured a heavy wooden dory from the Captain of the *Silver Wave*.

On the way, Crawford had begun a letter to Stefansson which he finished in time to have it taken for mailing at Nome by the *Silver Wave*. Untroubled by ice or bad weather, they reached the Island on September 15. According to Crawford's letter, the trip had been pleasant and they were optimistic about the prospects on the island.

Maurer wrote to his mother:

"We have plenty of supplies and good equipment so you need not worry as to our comfort this winter. When I went ashore this evening, I noticed fresh polar bear tracks in the sand along the beach, and if he makes a return trip our way we will have some fresh steaks pretty soon .... The old island looks familiar and when I set foot ashore today for the first time in seven years, I was a little thrilled as the memories of our former experience came to me."

Stefansson was not at all sure that the Canadian Government would act without the concurrence of the British Government — Canada was still largely in leading strings in the matter of external affairs. He was prepared to press his case in London as soon as some assurance came from Ottawa; but, with five persons on Wrangel Island, four drawing wages, it was necessary that he keep on with his lecturing in order to earn the money for these added liabilities. A balance sheet of the Company as of November 30, 1921, showed expenditures of approximately $12,000, of which Stefansson had personally put up $9,000, and had pledged himself for the remainder.

CHAPTER XX

TRAGEDY ON WRANGEL ISLAND

As the first move toward securing recognition, Stefansson had hoped that the Government would grant his company a lease on Wrangel Island; but the situation was complicated by the defeat, in December, of the Meighen Government and the accession to office of a Liberal administration under the leadership of Mackenzie King. While not necessarily opposed to Stefansson's plans or views, the Liberals were not so familiar with them as were the members of the previous Government whom he had been bombarding with information and exhortation for three years.

On March 11, 1922, Stefansson wrote a long letter to Mr. King in which he reviewed the history of the Island and requested that, if his administration would not endorse Canada's claim, at least, they should not repudiate it. These representations brought no direct encouragement, but the subject came up in the House of Commons on May 12, and Mr. Meighen, now Leader of the Opposition, asked for a statement of policy concerning the northern islands, generally, and Wrangel Island in particular. After some evasion on the part of Ministers, he asked: "Well, have we Wrangel Island?" to which George P. Graham, the Minister then leading the House, replied: "Yes, as I understand it, and we propose to retain it," and W. S. Fielding, the veteran Liberal Minister of Finance, added: "We had it in December and we have not let it go," referring to the fact that the Government had attained office in that month. After some further discussion, the Prime Minister took part in the debate and declared: "The Government has had interviews with Mr Stefansson. I do not know that it is in the public interest to disclose the full nature of these interviews, but I might say that at the present time

the Canadian flag is flying on Wrangel Island, and there are Canadians on the island, members of a previous expedition of Stefansson's. Mr. Stefansson is about to take a ship up to Wrangel Island with some of his men, and has recently had it fitted out with supplies. The Government certainly maintains the position that Wrangel Island is part of the property of this country."

In view of this pronouncement, Stefansson felt justified in hoping that the Government would soon take some action to relieve him of further responsibility for the maintenance and return of the party in occupation. In accordance with plans discussed before the expedition sailed in 1921, a supply ship must be sent if possible during the coming summer. But this would cost money. The arctic navigation season was rapidly passing, and yet no word came from the Government. At length, Stefansson appealed for financial assistance on humanitarian grounds, and the Government advanced three thousand dollars. In the meantime, Stefansson had been negotiating with Captain Joseph Bernard, at Nome, who agreed to attempt the voyage to Wrangel Island in his schooner, the *Teddy Bear*. He set sail from Nome on August 20, and returned unsuccessful on September 23, having encountered exceptionally heavy ice blocking the approaches to the island. Stefansson was satisfied that Bernard had done his best.

Notwithstanding that he had represented the party as being in danger in order to galvanize the Government into action, Stefansson was not especially alarmed concerning their safety. The possibility of their having to spend a second winter on the island had been fully considered in advance. While the young men would naturally be disappointed when ice conditions (which they could see for themselves) prevented a ship from getting through with word from outside; and some of them might be homesick, or perhaps tired of a practically exclusive meat diet, he did not fear any serious consequences from the delay. He did not know, of course, that they had disregarded his advice and were without a skin boat and on that account might not have been able to secure meat from the walrus herds which in that region cover the ice-pans.

It was essential, however, that an effort be made to reach the island during the navigation season of 1923. Harold Noice had recently arrived in New York and Stefansson arranged with him to go to Nome to take command of an expedition which would sail from there. Noice reached Nome about the middle of July, and on August 3 sailed for Wrangel Island in the motor schooner *Donaldson*, which, in the meantime, had been chartered by Stefansson, who had gone to London.

Awaiting word there of the *Donaldson's* return to Nome, Stefansson was profoundly shocked on September 1 to read in the press that Noice, reaching Wrangel Island on August 20, had found Ada Blackjack the sole survivor; that Knight's body still lay in the tent where, after having been faithfully nursed by Ada, he had died of scurvy in June; and that Crawford, Maurer and Galle had left for Siberia the previous January. The first dispatch was from the Associated Press correspondent at Nome. It ascribed the disaster to lack of food, and pictured Crawford, Maurer and Galle making a desperate dash across the hundred miles of treacherous arctic ice as the only alternative to death by starvation.

Stefansson knew that Noice had undertaken to send the exclusive story of his trip to the North American Newspaper Alliance, and he anxiously awaited his report which the London *Daily News*, an Alliance member, would publish. He confidently expected that Noice, with his arctic experience, would be able to form an estimate of the situation without being carried away by a journalistic desire for melodrama. But when the story finally appeared, he realized that a fundamental change had come over Noice. The dispatch dramatically pictured the party, incapable and inexperienced, abandoned on a lonely Arctic Island, their slender stock of supplies slowly dwindling, until finally, in desperation, Knight and Crawford, in the darkness of the long arctic night, with starving dogs and rickety sledge, had attempted a hopeless dash for Siberia, across the blizzard-swept floes. Unfortunately, Knight had developed scurvy and they were forced to return. Two weeks later the three others disappeared into the blizzard, and, of course. went to almost certain death, because their chance of reaching Siberia, according to

Noice, was only one in a thousand. Remembering the hundreds of miles that Noice had travelled with him over the ocean ice in 1916 and 1917, Stefansson was amazed to read this statement under Noice's by-line. The account then described Knight's illness and death, paying high tribute to Ada's heroism in maintaining herself by her rifle until rescued.

Noice had brought back the diary which Knight had kept from the date of his arrival on Wrangel Island until within a few days of his death, but this Noice refused to give up. When, as a result of legal action, the diary was recovered, it was for the first time possible to arrive at the true story of the tragic two years, an account which was confirmed and amplified by Ada, who shortly afterwards arrived in Seattle, where her story was carefully transcribed.

The first autumn had been very mild; snow for sledging was late in making its appearance; therefore, although bears were seen almost daily, sometimes several together, few were killed because of the difficulty of transporting the meat to camp. (If they had established a camp at the site of the first kill, bears would have been attracted by the carcass and any quantity of meat could have been accumulated on the spot.)

They lived in tents which, when enough snow came, were banked by blocks of dry snow and were quite comfortable. Plenty of driftwood for warmth and cooking, was available on the beach. Two by two they took turns living at a trapping camp some distance away.

During the summer of 1922, wildfowl were plentiful, and so were seals. Apparently, no one was greatly disappointed at the non-arrival of the expected ship, for which they were prepared by the appearance of the ice pack. Many walruses were seen on the floes, but since these huge animals usually lie on the seaward side of the pack, it was necessary to cross many large ice-cakes in order to reach them, which the hunters could not do because of the lack of a umiak. But having nothing but the heavy wooden dory, they were able to secure only two, and part of the meat from these was lost in trans-

porting it across the floes. It apparently did not occur to them to build a skin-boat of their own.

The weather during the second autumn was much less favourable than in the previous one, the snow came earlier, but there were fewer bears. Consequently, the second winter was entered upon with the prospects of a food-shortage as a distinct possibility. An occasional fox was killed, and one or two bears, but by Christmas time the party were on rations of biscuit. Nevertheless, they could probably have got through till spring on the food that remained — and they doubtless could have secured some game during the winter — if they had remained together on the island.

Months previously, however, it had been decided that Crawford and Knight should go to Nome during the winter, and Ada had been making clothing in anticipation of the trip. Therefore, on January 7, Crawford and Knight had departed, according to plan. The ice near the island was very rough and they made poor progress. For some time Knight had not been well, and he now recognized the symptoms of scurvy which, it will be remembered, he had contracted once before, when a member of the exploratory party of 1917. Because of this, they turned back on January 15, reaching the Wrangel Island camp on the 20th, the day on which the sun was seen for the first time after its mid-winter absence. A week later Crawford, Maurer and Galle set off, and since nothing has ever been found to indicate their fate, it has been presumed that they broke through thin ice and were drowned. If, as planned, Knight had been one of the travellers, this might not have happened because of his extensive experience in ice-travel.

Naturally, the sensational news story written by Noice, and syndicated practically all over the world, was followed by editorial repercussions. It was exactly the sort of thing that most people expected from the arctic regions. They had never been much impressed with the "friendly" arctic idea; that, they felt, was just a personal idiosyncrasy of Stefansson's; no one really did believe that the Arctic was anything but terrible, and now here was the proof of it. This talk of "living off the country" was all nonsense. More than that, it

was criminal, especially when inexperienced boys were lured to certain death on foolhardy missions. The newspapers, particularly in Canada, worked up to a crescendo of hysteria.

Stefansson was declared to be a scheming self-advertiser who, for the sake of providing lecture-publicity, had hoodwinked these young men into braving the terrible North and then had callously deserted them to their fate. All the islands in the North were not worth the sacrifice of a single young Canadian's life, and so on. Few of them took the trouble to inquire concerning the truth of the story on which editorials were based; it fitted in with their preconceived notions of the Arctic and they never for a moment doubted its veracity. The newspapers and their readers had been conditioned to this by the persistent campaign that had been waged against Stefansson by the Anderson faction, who now intensified their efforts.

Of course, all this was reflected in the attitude of the Government; where formerly there was indecision, now there was certainty — that Stefansson was a charlatan. During the organization stage, Stefansson's plans were kept secret and consequently his opponents did not have a chance — as in the case of the Ellesmere Island expedition — to defeat the project in advance. The occupation of Wrangel Island was a private venture, which they could do little to thwart, but despite the declaration of the Prime Minister on May 12, 1922, that "the Government certainly maintains the position that Wrangel Island is part of the property of this country," their persistent campaign had succeeded in bringing about a change of heart in the highest places. On May 31, 1923 — even before news of the tragedy was received — in answer to the question: "Who owns Wrangel Island?" asked in the House of Commons, Ernest Lapointe, Minister of Justice, had replied: "I should like to know myself"; and two weeks later, in answer to the question: "Do we own it (Wrangel Island) or not?" Charles Stewart, Minister of the Interior, had replied: "I do not think we own it."

Naturally, the tragedy most poignantly affected the families of the young men. It was rather typical of the contemporary treatment of Stefansson in the United States and in

Canada, however, that while the parents of the three Americans quite properly and sensibly realized that the death of their sons was an unfortunate accident, it must be admitted that, after making due allowance for their grief, and taking into consideration all the facts (of which they were well aware) the attitude of Allan Crawford's parents was most unhelpful.

All chance of getting either the Canadian or the British Government to recognize the Island was gone, yet Stefansson was, in effect, still holding Wrangel Island as British territory. (Noice had left on the island one white man, Charles Wells, and a dozen Alaskan Eskimos.) They could not be left there indefinitely, and to return them to Alaska would require another expedition.

Stefansson discussed his problem with Carl Lomen, President of the Lomen Reindeer Corporation, of Nome, who was then in New York. He pointed out that the island could be administered easily from Nome, suggesting that it might be converted into a profitable trading station, and that undoubtedly reindeer could be pastured there. After consulting his associates, Lomen agreed to assume possession of the island if the United States could be induced to claim it as United States territory, and undertook to send a ship to Wrangel Island during the summer of 1924, at least to remove Stefansson's party.

The Lomens contracted with Captain Louis Lane, now in command of the motor schooner *Herman* of San Francisco, to visit the island and remove the party in occupation. As previously mentioned, I was a member of this expedition. The *Herman,* although within sight of the island for three weeks, failed to get through the ice which pressed against the island, but on Herald Island, thirty-eight miles to the east, we found the last camp and the skeletons of four members of the *Karluk's* crew who had been sent by Bartlett in February 1914 as an advance party to establish a camp on Wrangel Island. Before leaving, Captain Lane raised the Stars and Stripes over Herald Island and took possession in the name of the United States, but his action was never officially ratified.

The *Herman* failed, but on August 20 the *Red October,* a Soviet ship from Vladivostok, had found ice-free waters off the island and had succeeded in making a landing. The Red Flag was raised; Wells and his Eskimo companions were arrested and taken to Vladivostok, where Wells died. The Eskimos (plus an additional one, born on Wrangel Island) were rescued by the American Red Cross and eventually reached their homes in Alaska.

Wrangel Island has been occupied ever since by a Soviet colony, and has become an important outpost. I have little doubt that the people who in the interval have formed its population would be highly amused if they were to read some of the editorials which have appeared in Canadian newspapers concerning the terrors of life on their island.

CHAPTER XXI

PROPHET OF THE NORTH

It was Stefansson's misfortune to have become the foremost exponent of the North at a time when its development involved chiefly Canada and the Soviet Union. Had he been born in Russia, he might easily have found scope for his talents and energy in that country; but neither Canada, where he was born, nor the United States, where he grew up, has during that time been much interested in the North. The attitude of Canadians, generally, had, as we have seen, been largely one of indifference. Stefansson might — as he did — advocate a course of action, but he could do nothing to initiate it. On the other hand, his former friend and associate, now become his enemy, for whom he had actually secured a post at Ottawa, was thereby in a position to frustrate his efforts. Since all roads to the accomplishment of his dreams were thus closed to him in Canada, he could still continue from New York — where he was appreciated — as the spokesman and champion of the North, and in this he has been singularly successful. In the sense that Vasco da Gama, Columbus and Magellan are associated in people's minds with specific sections of the globe, so has Stefansson, with even greater justification, become linked with the North.

For several years after his return from the Arctic in 1918, Stefansson, a bachelor, lived at the Harvard Club — when not on lecture tours or off to Ottawa, Washington or London. As a home, the Club left much to be desired, even for one so easily pleased as Stefansson. Its rooms were intended for the use of Harvard men visiting New York, not for anyone residing in the city. This made it necessary for him, from time to time, to move into a hotel until another

vacancy occurred at the Club, and sometimes these sojourns were protracted. On moving out of the Club, his effects, beyond his immediate needs, were usually left in the checkroom. After this cat-and-mouse game had gone on for a few years, a large part of the checkroom space had been preempted by him. With a pocketful of tickets, he often found it difficult — and in some cases impossible — to tell which ticket would produce which article.

This went on during the first two years of our acquaintanceship, and I frequently suggested that — despite his frequent absences — he would be better off if he were to rent an apartment. His invariable answer was that he did not have the time to go househunting; so one day, in the winter of 1924-25, I offered to find him a place. When he said he thought he would like to live in Greenwich Village, I looked nowhere else, and after an incredibly short search found an apartment at 17 Grove Street. Thus he became a denizen of "The Village," and in the next twenty-five years — until he moved to Dartmouth College — he lived successively in Grove, Bedford and Norton Streets and in St. Luke's Place.

Shortly after this, he undertook to demonstrate that one can live indefinitely on an exclusive meat diet. He and Karsten Andersen, a one-time member of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, were examined by a group of medical specialists after which the demonstration was to continue for a year (1928-1929). Each was to follow his regular daily routine, eating nothing but meat and meat products. Tea and coffee were allowed, but, of course, no sugar. So far as Stefansson was concerned, the test was bound to succeed; he had already lived for long periods on such a diet and he knew that Eskimos, as far back as could be imagined, had done likewise. His books — *Not by Bread Alone* (1946), *The Fat of the Land* (1955), *Cancer, Disease of Civilization?* (1960), and his many articles for scientific journals, have made an important contribution to dietetics.

After repeated rebuffs, Stefansson largely abandoned his efforts to spur Canadians into a realization of the importance of their North. Whenever he had a chance to lecture in Canada

he grasped it, but these were not frequent. In 1930, he was invited by the Canadian National Railways to deliver two nation-wide radio talks (The CNR was the first to have a national network.) When the talks were announced, however, Anderson prevailed upon Charles Camsell, his Deputy Minister, to bring sufficient pressure upon the appropriate CNR vice-president to have the talks cancelled; and to E. Austin Weir, Director of Radio for the railway, who had arranged the talks, was given the unpleasant duty of informing Stefansson.

When I undertook to do the biography, I felt that I must have a talk with Anderson, whom I had never met. Stefansson had more than once assured me that if I could manage to meet Anderson in some other context I should find him an agreeable person. I had my doubts about this because among those whom I had asked to check parts of my manuscript was Leffingwell to whom I wrote in December 1929. His reply was cordial, but he admitted his prejudice against Stefansson.

"I admire Stefansson as being one of the greatest travelers that ever went into the Arctic regions," he wrote, "but I dislike him very much personally and have been so irritated with various things he has done that it would be very hard for me to take an unbiased view of him. However, if you send me the chapters of his biography I will be glad to express myself as far as possible concerning what you have written. If I seem especially harsh in my criticism of him I hope you will discount it knowing my personal animus toward him."

That at least was honest. But before I had had time to send him any of the manuscript he wrote again, this time to inform me that in the interval he had received a letter presumably from Anderson warning him against me as one who for years had among other things, acted as Stefansson's "press agent, advance-agent, bill-peddler and yes-man", and he wished to have nothing further to do with me.

Nevertheless I felt that I should at least try to see Anderson; and once when in Ottawa I asked an old friend, Dr. E. M. Kindle, of the Geological Survey, whose office in the old Museum building was across the corridor from Anderson's,

to introduce me. The door was open and we walked in. Anderson was seated at his desk. "Dr. Anderson, I'd like to introduce my friend, D. M. LeBourdais," Dr. Kindle began. Anderson rose to his feet, his face flushed. "Mr. LeBourdais," he shouted, as he came round the end of his desk, "I did not invite you into my office, and I ask you to get out!" "I have no desire to intrude, if that's the way you feel about it," I replied, as I turned to go. I had an uneasy feeling that had the door been a few feet farther away I might have been kicked out. I never tried to see him again.

An inadvertent instrument in the "cold war" against Stefansson has been the *Canadian Geographical Journal,* published by the Canadian Geographical Society, organized at Ottawa in 1930, which now has "Royal" added to its name. Its affairs are conducted by a board of directors and an editorial committee, consisting in each case of about thirty members made up of senior civil servants and other persons of distinction widely distributed throughout the country.

The Society's chief undertaking is the production of the *Journal* which, pictorially and typographically, is a very creditable publication. Its editorial policy, however, bears evidence of the Anderson bias. Despite its geographical purpose, until recently, no article by or about Stefansson or his work had ever appeared in its pages, nor has any of his many books ever been reviewed until, following a change in editorial management, a biographical article on Stefansson, written by me, was published in the August 1960 issue.

The Editor, from March, 1936, until September 1, 1959, was Gordon M. Dallyn who denies having any hostility towards Stefansson, and I accept his statement. I can therefore only assume that some other person (there were always a number of Anderson sympathizers on the executive committee and elsewhere in the organization) without his knowledge was responsible for the magazine's slant. One of a number of examples may be cited: the September, 1958, issue contained a long article entitled "The Romance of Northern Exploration", by Dr. F. J. Alcock, giving an account of exploration in the Canadian Arctic from Frobisher's voyages to that of the *St. Roch,* illustrated with the portraits of ten ex-

plorers. One paragraph is devoted to the Stefansson expedition, referred to as the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-*16*," — Anderson's invariable way of describing it. Stefansson's picture is conspicuous by its absence, but there is one of Anderson! When I pointed these things out to the author he was at a loss to account for them, and I am sure that the discrimination was not intentional on his part.

Anderson never made any effort to disguise his antipathy towards Stefansson, or displayed much discretion concerning those to whom he unburdened his feelings. The vendetta was his ruling passion, well-known to his associates over a long period. That he was able to infect with his own antagonism other members of the Civil Service to some of whom Stefansson was little more than a name, is a remarkable circumstance.

Anderson died in June 1961 at the age of 85, previous to which for some time the weight of years had quenched the fires that had raged within him and his declining years were spent in a nursing home. So potent had been his influence, however, that certain of his former associates have gratuitously continued the campaign. The June 1962 issue of the *Canadian Geographical Journal* contains a biographical article on Anderson written by Dr. L. S. Russell, Chief Zoologist of the National Museum of Canada, and a one-time colleague. That Dr. Russell should have written an article about his former associate is quite fitting: Anderson's career fully justified an article; but that he should have produced the article that appeared under his name would scarcely have been expected.

Those who have read the earlier portion of this book will remember that after Stefansson, in 1907, had announced his intention to go on a one-man expedition to the arctic coast of Canada under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, Anderson, a classmate at the University of Iowa, wrote asking if he might go along. Stefansson liked Anderson and agreed with his suggestion that two men could achieve greater results at little additional cost. He discussed the idea with the Museum authorities, who agreed. The two friends travelled together to Herschel Island on the arctic coast of Canada, but owing to the non-arrival of their

supplies decided to work in the meantime along the Alaskan coast instead of proceeding eastward immediately into Canadian territory, as planned.

Stefansson, an ethnologist, was chiefly interested in studying the Eskimos, who lived along or near the coast; while Anderson, a naturalist, was chiefly concerned with studying and making collections of the fauna and flora, and his best sources would be inland. Stefansson, in *My Life With the Eskimo* (pp. 69-70), tells of the plans they adopted to suit their respective circumstances:

"At Flaxman Island, Dr. Anderson and I talked over plans for the winter in detail. From a zoological point of view it seemed most important for him to go into the mountains south of Barter Island in search of the scientifically unknown mountain sheep, which would probably prove to be a variety of the Ovis dalli, and which, by native account, were fairly abundant. He would, later on, if everything went well, go still farther south, beyond the mountains and the mountain-sheep country, into the Yukon, where he hoped to take some specimens of the also scientifically unknown caribou of northern Alaska. These plans of his eventuated very well. During the four months that intervened between this and our next meeting he secured numerous specimens of sheep, caribou, and other far northern mammals, and incidentally had his first experience of 'living on the country'.

* * *

"The experience of Dr. Anderson's party during the time they spent in the mountains of Arctic Alaska were as interesting as any during our whole expedition, and he has often told them to me, but they are his story and it is his place to tell it."

When Anderson came to do this: *Report on the Natural History Collections of the Expedition,* published as an appendix (pp. 436-527) to Stefansson's *My Life With the Eskimo,* he took only four lines to summarize that portion of his four years as a member of the *Stefansson Expedition* under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History.

Now let us see how Dr. Russell describes Anderson's activities during these four months of 1908-1909:

"After a mixed teaching and military period (he had served during the Spanish-American War) he joined the staff [sic] of the American Museum of Natural History, under the auspices of which he made a zoological exploration of northern Alaska. In the course of this work he crossed the Endicott Range from the Arctic coast to the Yukon valley, the first white man to make this journey, over what must be some of the most difficult terrain in the world." He says not a word about what Anderson did with the rest of the four years during which he was a member of the *Stefansson Expedition*!

Dr. Russell does not entirely leave Stefansson out of the picture. He goes on:

"In 1913 the Canadian Government sent out an elaborate expedition to explore the coast and islands of the western Canadian Arctic. This expedition was under the command of Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *who had done anthropological work in the western Arctic. Anderson, with his successful work in Alaska, and some previous association with the Geological Survey of Canada,* (my italics) was chosen as chief zoologist, and second in command. During the years 1913 to 1916, the Southern Party of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, under Anderson's direct command, explored the coast from the Alaska boundary to Bathurst Inlet, over 800 miles as the crow flies, and much more by the actual coast . . . ." Then follows an account of the work done by each member of the party, as described herein (pp. 132-134).

Next, he proceeds to deal with Stefansson, and here is what he says:

"In contrast to the success of the Southern Party, the Northern Party under Stefansson met with disaster. Their ship was wrecked and 16 members of the expedition lost their lives through exposure or starvation."

It must be pointed out that the above paragraph was not written by one of the protagonists of the feud, during the twenties or the thirties, when tempers were inflamed, but in 1962 by one who holds an important post in the Civil Service of Canada.

Early in 1951, when my book *Canada's Century* was on the press, my publisher and I went to Ottawa to see if we could

get some of the departments interested. In the course of our conversation with one of the department heads, I mentioned Stefansson.

"We have no use for Stefansson around here," he snapped.

"Oh, you know him?" I asked.

"Yes, I met him in the Arctic."

'Where?"

"At Aklavik."

"When was that?"

"In 1922," he replied.

I changed the subject. I knew that Stefansson had left the Arctic in 1918.

This hostility without substance is symptomatic of the treatment accorded Stefansson and his ideas in some government departments and university faculties. This man is typical of many who have never read Stefansson's books and know him only from hearsay. Some, having spent a few weeks or months in the Arctic (often only the sub-Arctic), like to pose as stout fellows and resent any suggestion that it is not a terrible place.

I had another revealing experience with the same book. I had offered the manuscript to a publisher, explaining that it was not finally checked for errors of fact, that some of the writing needed improving and that it was being submitted for his consideration only as to subject and treatment. He sent it for reading to a young geographer formerly on the staff of one of the departments at Ottawa. When the manuscript was returned to me I was amazed to find the margins and other blank spaces covered with scribbled comments. I did not ask who he might be and only learned his name some time later because he was said to have boasted of having rendered my book publishable. He had been a frequent and able contributor to the *Canadian Geographical Journal*, especially of articles on the North. The basis of his hostility was disclosed near the end of the manuscript by the heavily underscored: "More Stefansson talk!"

While Canadian universities do not seem to have any general rule by which honorary degrees are awarded, the

fact that Stefansson has received a number from universities elsewhere, but for many years none from a Canadian university is significant. How that situation was corrected is an interesting story. Harold Moore, of the Winnipeg *Free Press,* and I were luncheon guests of Stefansson at his apartment in the summer of 1937. Moore, who had not previously met him, was so impressed that he asked me to come to his room that evening (we were staying at the same hotel) to talk about Stefansson. Among other things indicative of the attitude of Canadians towards Stefansson, I mentioned honorary degrees. This gave Moore an idea: his editor, John W. Dafoe, was Chancellor of the University of Manitoba, and Moore thought that a word to him might have results. A few weeks later, a note from Moore informed me that the University would confer the degree.

Barred from active participation in arctic development, Stefansson's interest found vicarious outlet in the career of his friend Wilkins. In his *Northward Course of Empire,* published in 1922, he had predicted that the most important airways in the northern hemisphere would lie across the polar sea, and that submarines would overcome the ice barrier by going beneath it. While Wilkins and his pilot, Ben Eielson, in the first flight entirely across the Arctic Sea in 1928 were not attempting to establish a commercial route, their achievement was but the shape of things to come, as was also the case three years later, when Wilkins demonstrated the feasibility of taking a submarine under the arctic ice. The successful voyages across the polar basin of the atomic-powered U. S. submarines *Nautilus* and *Skate* in 1958 amply confirmed the predictions of both Stefansson and Wilkins, as James Calvert, Commander of the *Skate,* generously affirms in his book, *Surface at the Pole.* It was while surfacing on another historic occasion that Commander Calvert caused the ashes of Sir Hubert Wilkins (d. Dec. 1, 1958), brought there for the purpose, to be scattered over the ice at the Pole.

When, in June 1937, Soviet aviator Valery Chkalov and two companions flew non-stop in a single-engined monoplane from Moscow to a point in the State of Washington, and a month later Mikhail Gromov, piloting a similar aeroplane,

flew from Moscow to southern California, Stefansson had reason to hope that the era of "Trans Polar Commerce by Air" was about to begin. The times, however, were not yet ripe for such an advance: in an attempt to fly a regular four-engined passenger aeroplane from Moscow to Fairbanks, in August of the same year, Sigismund Levanevsky apparently crashed somewhere between the North Pole and Alaska or Canada.

The Soviet Government immediately asked the Explorers Club of New York to act as a co-ordinating agency in the search then begun. Stefansson, as President (for the second time) of the Club, lost no time in securing the assistance of Wilkins who, in the next six months, flew a total of 40,000 miles, more than half of which was over the Polar Sea. No trace of Levanevsky was found, but much valuable information was secured. It was discovered that arctic flying is better in winter than at any other time of year, and that flying by moonlight, when light is reflected from snow, is perfectly feasible. On his many flights Wilkins sought to cover every square mile of the area between the North Pole and the North American continent (as well as a large portion of the mainland), and he was able to state definitely that no land was likely to be found in that sector of the Polar Sea.

Stefansson had a hand in the flights of Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh from the United States to the Orient by the polar route in 1931, and to Europe by way of Greenland and Iceland in 1933. In 1932, he had become consultant in arctic flying to Pan American Airways, a position he held until 1946, when the U. S. Aeronautics Board refused Pan American a licence for its northern services, transferring them to other airlines.

When the United States entered the Second World War, Stefansson's specialized knowledge of arctic conditions was immediately recognized and his services were in demand. Indeed, even before that time — in 1935-36 — he and his staff of expert researchers in New York had been commissioned by the Army Air Corps to compile a Guide Book and Arctic Manual which, in 1940-42, was revised and brought up to date to cover arctic and sub-arctic Alaska, arctic Siberia,

arctic Canada and Greenland. In 1941, work was begun for the Hydrographic Office, U. S. Navy, on a compilation of volumes of sailing directions for various northern areas, which continued until 1945.

In addition to supervising these compilations, Stefansson served as consultant to a number of government departments. In 1940, he made a trip to Alaska for Pan American and the War Department, the latter at the request of the Chief of Staff to help the Commanding General of the Alaska theatre with advice on cold weather equipment and technique.

In November, 1941, advisory work for the Co-ordinator of Information was begun, and in the following year he became consultant on diet, clothing, etc., for the Office of the Quartermaster General, U. S. Army. Other services which called for advice and consultation were: Air Transport Command, Army Air Forces; Highway Transportation Division, Services of Supply and School for Special Services.

In March, 1943, he was sent to Camp Hale, Colorado, to instruct troops in cold weather techniques and to initiate tests of cold weather rations. In August, he was sent by the North Atlantic Wing, Air Transport Command, AAF, to observe conditions at bases in Labrador and Baffin Island, and to advise and assist on northern problems; and in September he served as a member of the staff of the Arctic Training School, AAF, at Buckley Field, Colorado.

During the first half of 1945, he served on the staff of Personal Naratives Office, Army Air Forces, and as "Chief of a Team of Historians," made a trip (February and March) to the Alaska theatre. Upon his return he wrote the introductory chapter for a book that was to be a history of the Air Forces in Alaska, with special emphasis on the Eleventh Air Force, but whether it was ever finished he never knew.

In 1946, Stefansson entered into a contract with the U. S. Office of Naval Research under which the latter agreed to finance the compiling and publication of what was called the *Encyclopedia Arctica*. It was to comprise twenty volumes which would contain about five million words, covering every phase of the arctic and sub-arctic regions around the world. Stefansson, as editor, recruited a staff of researchers versed

in the necessary languages, with specialists in a variety of fields. The managing editor was Olive Wilcox, Stefansson's chief secretary from 1919 until her death in 1956. I was asked to write on various Canadian aspects, chiefly geographical, but also biographical and economic, to which I devoted the better part of two years.

Although he still continued as the unofficial Ambassador of the North, keeping up an unceasing correspondence with explorers and scientists in every part of the world, the *Encyclopedia* became his principal interest. His disappointment can therefore be imagined when, in January, 1952, the Office of Naval Research informed him that the project would be dropped.

Stefansson was never given any adequate reason for this drastic step; but, looking back on the event, it seems evident that such an outcome was inevitable. For years, Stefansson had been extolling the achievements of the Soviets in the development of their northern regions, and making invidious comparisons as between Canadians and Americans, on the one hand, and the Soviets on the other, in order to stimulate the former to greater effort. It was one thing, however, for him, a lecturer and writer of books, pamphlets and articles on a subject of which he was an authority, to publicize Soviet successes, but it was quite another matter — in a developing cold war atmosphere — for a department of the United States Government to do so. The *Encyclopedia Arctica* could not fail to demonstrate the Soviets' superiority in this important sphere; in fact, if the project had been continued to the end it would have provided them with the finest endorsement they could have wished for — that of the United States of America.

What eventually became the greatest private collection of books on the polar regions and associated subjects (second only to that in the Institute of the Arctic at Leningrad) was begun by Stefansson in the latter part of 1929. Writing to explain delay (an unusual thing) in answering letters, Olive Wilcox, wrote: "For the last two months we have been in the throes of collecting an Arctic, Antarctic, etc. library, and when Stef sets out to collect a library he collects a library!"

I knew what she meant. The collection soon filled his office-apartment and overflowed into the next one. When this was filled, books were transferred to the hillside farm he had bought at Bethel, Vermont, till the horsebarn — still redolent of its previous tenants — was full. "Horse stalls make very good book bays," Stefansson proudly explained as he showed me round.

The main library in New York was never without its quota of students, always welcome once Stefansson was sure they were serious in their desire to learn about the Arctic. When, in December, 1951, it was moved to the Baker Library at Dartmouth College, to be known as the "Stefansson Collection," it consisted of 25,000 volumes, 20,000 pamphlets and many valuable manuscripts. Stefansson's wife (formerly Evelyn Schwartz Baird, to whom he was married in 1941) was appointed librarian of the Collection, and Stefansson himself became Consultant, Program of Northern Studies at Dartmouth.

While the Government of Canada had a large part in the opening of the West, governments will need to become even more greatly involved in the development of the North. Yet, until recently, none has ever included such a project in its political platform. The Borden Government did not take over the Stefansson expedition in 1913 because the Conservative party had any consuming interest in the North. This was due to Stefansson's persuasive ability added to Sir Robert's personal enthusiasm. The Liberal Opposition viewed the affair with amused tolerance and were wont to refer to the islands discovered by Stefansson and named by him for members of the Government as the "Tory Archipelago".

Since Canada's only hope of becoming a highly industrialized nation is through the exploitation of the mineral wealth of the North, the development of cheap power, and the establishment of secondary industries based upon these resources, this apathy on the part of Canadians is not easy to understand. Not till after the Second World War was much interest shown. As compared with Siberia, of course, Canada lagged far behind. Nevertheless, there were signs that some Canadians — especially mining people — were becoming

aware of its importance. At a number of places, in most cases served chiefly by air, thriving communities, such as Whitehorse, in the Yukon, and Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories, have developed in spite of many difficulties.

This new stirring in the North had its influence on Government; and in 1953, for the first time, a department was formed whose chief purpose was the administration of northern affairs. On December 8 of that year, Hon. Louis St. Laurent, the Prime Minister, introduced a bill to create the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. In referring to lack of interest in the past, he said: "It has been said that Great Britain acquired her Empire in a state of absence of mind. Apparently we have administered these vast territories of the North in an almost continuing absence of mind." (Mr. St. Laurent's simile was aptly chosen. The type of administration that these territories have been subjected to from the first can only be described as colonial.)

He pointed out, further, that "this will be the first time that this designation 'Northern Affairs' will have appeared in the name of a department of the Government of Canada." In summing up, he said: "It is for all these reasons that it has been felt that it would be desirable to have an energetic young minister be conscious that his principal responsibility will be to devote his attention to the northern affairs of this nation in that area which is forty per cent of the area of the whole of Canada." That young man [Lesage] has since become the Prime Minister of the Province of Quebec.

Not to be outdone by their opponents, the Conservatives, when assuming office in 1957, adopted a program providing for intensive northern development. The chief proponent of this policy was Hon. Alvin Hamilton, a former Saskatchewan teacher, who was given the direction of the new department. Whether, as some say, he infected the Prime Minister, or whether it was the other way round, the two were soon talking from the same script.

As one who had predicted the use of submarines under the arctic ice, Stefansson — had he been present to hear them — must have derived great satisfaction from the words

of Alvin Hamilton, speaking on September 17, 1958, at Edmonton:

"Some day the ice-covered as well as the ice-free waters of the world may become arteries of undersea transportation of great atomic submarines carrying commercial cargoes. For Canada, the vista is one of access to great resources on our arctic coastal lands and on the off-lying continental shelf, which are still today remote and inaccessible. It may be fanciful, but certainly it is not fantastic to visualize submarine cargo ships on the world's oceans within ten — or more conservatively, twenty years. I need not stress the fact that a submarine service between Canada and Europe, along the shortest sea route, across the top of the world, would have the most far-reaching implications for the development of our North."

Although bush flyers had increased the accessibility of the North from the early twenties onward, it was not till the first regular passenger services were inaugurated that Stefansson's predictions concerning trans-polar commerce by air were fulfilled. On September 1, 1951, the Frobisher Airport, on Baffin Island, was turned over by the Royal Canadian Air Force to the Department of Transport for operation as a civil airport. Within two days, the first aircraft — belonging to Pan American — had come in to open the San Francisco-Paris polar route; next day, its mate arrived from the east. Since then, a steady stream of traffic has passed through the airport.

Aside from aviation, the first real breakthrough occurred in 1958 when R. Thorsteinsson and E. T. Tozer, of the Geological Survey, using light aircraft, conducted a reconnaissance of Mackenzie King,[1] Borden and other islands discovered by Stefansson in 1915-16, which establish them as part of an immense sedimentary basin having excellent oil and gas possibilities. Since then, the mineral resources of the continental shelf surrounding the arctic islands have caused the

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(1) When it was discovered that Borden Island was divided by a strait the southern portion was named "Mackenzie King".

Government to look with increased favour upon northern development. Examination of the possibilities of the continental shelf was begun in 1959, but in 1961, to speed the operation, a party of seventy scientists and other personnel — greatly increased in 1962 — was established at Isachsen, on Ellef Ringnes Island. It may be remembered that it was at Isachsen that Stefansson, in 1917, cured expedition members suffering from scurvy by feeding them partly raw caribou steaks.

Stefansson's critics were fond of deprecating his competence as a geographer, and therefore the following Ottawa news release dated August 9, 1961 must have been a matter of considerable satisfaction to the 82-year-old explorer:

"*SURVEY PARTY FINDS NOTE LEFT BY FAMOUS ARCTIC EXPLORER.*

"Deep inside Canada's arctic on a tiny, unnamed island off the northwest coast of table-flat Prince Patrick Island, a knot of men huddled over a crisp, bluish scrap of paper extracted seconds earlier from a rusted cocoa tin found beneath a small stone cairn.

"The finger of one of the men travelled slowly beneath the neatly penned lines .... 'have on hand about five days' provisions for men and dogs, but are depending on seals for food and are burning blubber. Have on hand 100 pounds of seal meat and 75 pounds of blubber. Men, sleds and all dogs (13) well ....'

"The men were members of a Department of Mines and Technical Surveys topographical party working on the Polar Continental Shelf Project, and extensive scientific investigation of the continental shelf, north and west of the arctic archipelago, the waters above, and the adjacent islands and seas.

* * *

"The note found by the survey party represents another link established by the Department's scientific expeditions with past dramas of the Canadian arctic. It was left by members of the first Arctic expedition sponsored by the Canadian Government nearly half a century ago.

"Author of the note was Vilhjalmur Stefansson, leader of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, as it was known, whose men built the cairn containing the note on their visit by dog team and sledge 46 years ago to the remote little island in Satellite Bay, off Point McClintock.

"In announcing discovery of the cairn and its contents, Mines and Technical Surveys Minister Paul Comptois said Stefansson's note 'is a testimonial to the perseverance, bravery and navigational skill of a great explorer whose findings have proved most valuable to the Polar Continental Shelf Project and other Canadian arctic expeditions.'

* * *

"Stefansson's note, written in ink in a neat, easily legible style, was dated June 14, 1915 and reads:

" 'S. Storkerson, Ole Andreasen, C. Thomsen and V. Stefansson of the Canadian Arctic Expedition are camped on this island today, June 13, at camp bearing 96 degrees, distant between four and five miles from the west end of this island we got N. Lat. 77 degrees, 23 minutes, 53 seconds; W. Long. 118 degrees, 50 minutes. Our time is probably somewhat in error. We intend going a few miles north of Irelands Eye if we find landfast ice, thence towards Markham Island, then south through Hecla and Griper Bay somewhat west of Markham Island to Winter Harbor to check our longitude, then to Mercy Bay and Cape Kellett, the winter quarters of the expedition, which we left February 20 last. We have on hand about five days' provisions for men and dogs, but are depending on seals for food and are burning blubber. Have on hand 100 pounds seal meat and 75 pounds blubber.'

" 'Men, sleds and all dogs (13) well.'

" '(Signed) V. Stefansson,'

" 'Commander, Canadian Arctic Expedition'

" '*To the Finder.* Please forward this to the Hon. the Minister of Naval Services, Ottawa, Canada.'

* * *

"No less remarkable than the discovery intact of the cairn and the note, is the accuracy with which Stefansson established his position, despite adverse navigational circumstances. Using a pocket chronometer, described as crude by comparison with today's instrument, and unable to check its accuracy, having been away from his main base for four months, Stefansson in his calculations came relatively close to his exact position.

"Frank Hunt, a member of the survey which found the cairn, said a tellurometer traverse of the site showed Stefansson's determination of his position to be 24 miles too far west and 5.7 miles too far south. Stefansson's note intimates that his time might have been wrong and Hunt has calculated that the error in Stefansson's position could be accounted for if his chronometer had been six minutes, 52 seconds slow."

* * *

This evidence out of the past may have helped to establish Stefansson's place in the estimation of Canadian geographers. During the first week of June, 1962, Canada's learned societies gathered at McMaster University for their annual meetings, among them the Canadian Association of Geographers. The address of President William G. Wonders, head of the Department of Geography at the University of Alberta, was based on Stefansson's *The Northward Course of Empire,* published in 1922, and a telegram was sent to Stefansson by the president on behalf of the Association expressing "professional and personal regards".

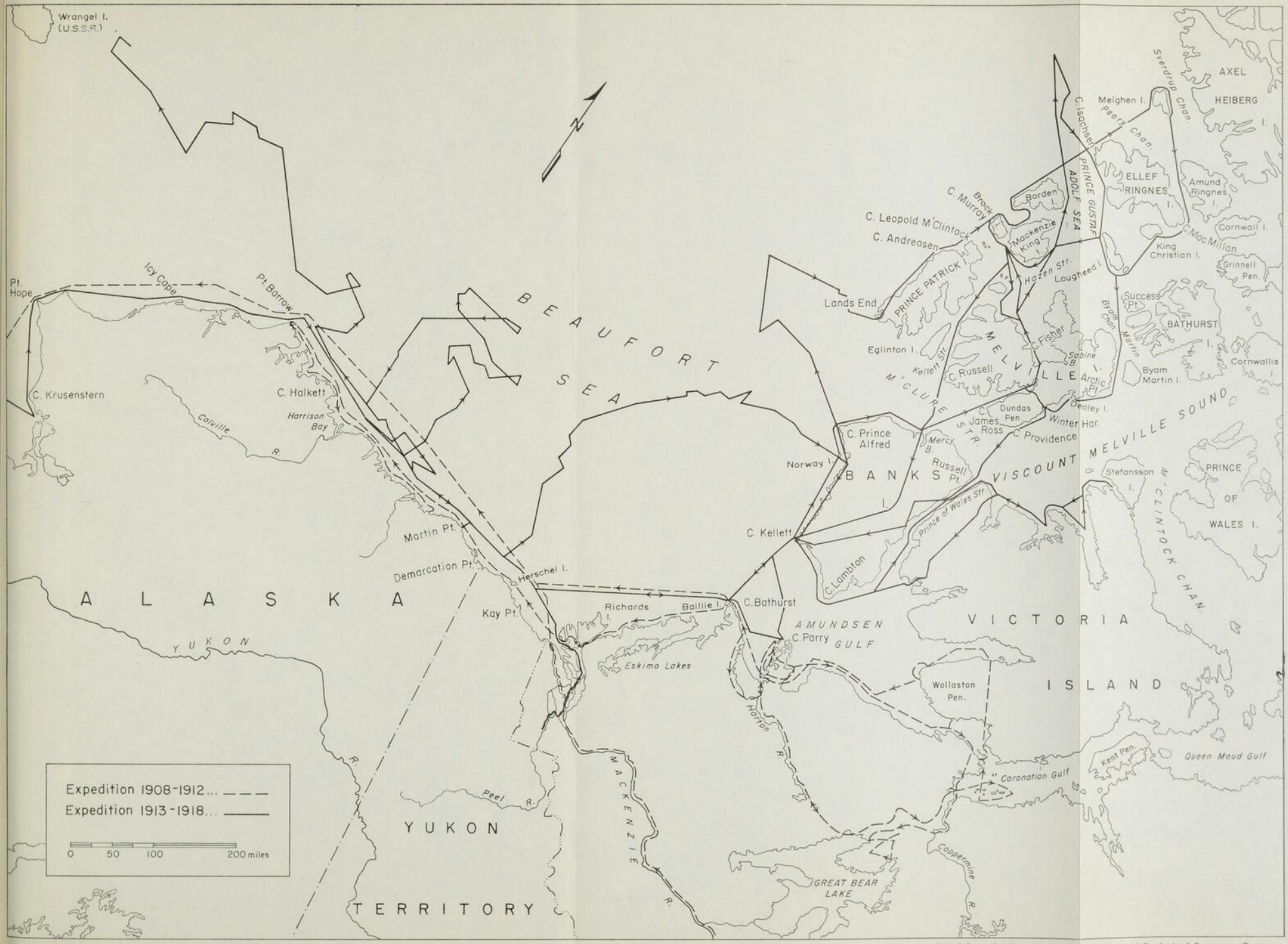
Already ample compensation had been made for a hurt of long standing. During the writing of this narrative, I found that I did not have the date of the Rideau Club rejection, and I wrote to Stefansson to see if he could supply it. Not sure himself, he wrote to an old friend, a member of the Club, asking that he get someone to look up the records. When the Management Committee learned that Stefansson had been subjected to such an indignity, they made him an Honorary Member, increasing the number then existing from three to

four: three Governors-General — Vanier, Alexander, Massey — and Stefansson!

The hand of time had gone full term!

Stefansson died on August 26, 1962. At a small gathering on August 20 to celebrate the completion of the first draft of his Autobiography, he suffered a stroke from which he did not recover. He was buried in Pine Knoll Cemetery, near Hanover, New Hampshire, and a widely-attended memorial service was held at Dartmouth College two days later.

THE END



Courtesy of Geographical Branch, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Ottawa.

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